



Published on www.bilvavi.net

[Home](#) > Fixing Your Fire - 009 Anger | Extremity

Fixing Your Fire - 009 Anger | Extremity

Wind-of-Fire: Opposition

With *siyata d'shmaya*, let us continue to discuss the element of fire and its resulting trait, anger. Now we will discuss anger that stems from “wind” of fire, which, as we mentioned briefly in the first chapter, is the idea of opposition.^[1]

First we will outline the four branches of **wind-of-fire** (its subdivisions of earth, water, wind, and fire), and then we will go through each of these in more detail. At first these outlines will sound ambiguous, but they will be explained as we go along, with Hashem’s help:

- (1) **“Earth”**-of-wind-of-fire is when a person is regularly living in extreme situations, where he has to contend with some kind of opposition.
- (2) **“Water”**-of-wind-of-fire is when a person enjoys opposition.
- (3) **“Wind”**-of-wind-of-fire is when a person is guiding and giving direction through opposition.
- (4) **“Fire”**-of-wind-of-fire refers to the wars fought in the world, which result from opposition.

Earth-of-Wind-of-Fire: Living Based On Extremes

Let’s begin with **earth-of-wind-of-fire** [where one is regularly in a situation of extremity and opposition].

The words of the Rambam^[2] are well-known: when one wants to improve a negative character trait, he must go in the opposite extreme of that trait, until he can eventually arrive at ‘the middle point’ (also called “the golden path”) between the two extremes, which is the goal.

However, there are some people who live all the time in extremes, both when it comes to their *avodas Hashem* and in their general way of thinking, because they have a more extreme kind of personality, where they will only function at extremes. They will live a life where they will regularly be at opposition with something, because they are drawn towards living in an extreme mode.

The Sages say that the world stands on three pillars – Torah, *avodah*, and *chessed*. We will see here how a person with an extreme nature will act within the areas of Torah learning, *tefillah* (*avodah*) and *chessed*.

“All Or Nothing” Attitude In Torah Learning

A person who can only operate at extremes might be the type of person who can learn Torah all day, from day until night, but if he is somehow forced away from learning for some time of the day, he won't learn open up a *sefer* for the rest of day. Either he puts in a full day of learning, or he puts in nothing.

Sometimes it happens that a man learning in *Kolel* all day, who has three sessions a day of in-depth Torah study, will get thrown off schedule, due to various things that come up which he has to take care of; and indeed, every single person will inevitably encounter various issues that bombard him and which take him away from normal routine. But if a person only operates in extremes, once he sees that he has to miss part of his day in the *Kolel*, he won't show up for the rest of the day either.

He has an “all or nothing” approach. On one day, this kind of person will attend all of the study sessions in the *Kolel*, fully immersed in the words of Abaye and Rava, but on another day, when various issues come up and he has to be absent for part of the day, he sees no point in returning to the *beis midrash* for the remaining time of the day.

He won't even see a reason to learn the *Daf Yomi* that day, and he might not even bother saying the words of *Kerias Shema*, which is the minimal obligation of Torah learning. Either he does it “all” or he does “nothing” - he will not settle for anything else in between.

Anyone with some *daas* (mature understanding) can see that that this is not a sensible approach to live life. But this is the mindset of a person who has a dominance of **earth-of-wind-of-fire** (extreme mentality): he has an “all or nothing” attitude. Either he is totally in it, or he is totally out of it.

“All or Nothing” Attitude in Prayer

When it comes to the area of *tefillah* (prayer), we know that sometimes a person feels like his heart is more opened, and sometimes it is closed, which is a normal occurrence to every person. In some people, when their heart is open, they will *daven* with fervor, but when their hearts feel closed, they feel like they cannot pray *Shemoneh Esrei* for more than 2 or 3 minutes, and they will quickly finish and get it over with.

If a person doesn't feel like *davening* from his heart right now, the sensible reaction would be that although he can't concentrate fully right now as he would like to, at least he can concentrate on the meaning of the words, and have some minimal level of concentration, which certainly counts. Why should he throw in the towel just because he feels like he can't concentrate fully? But a person who lives in extreme modes will not think like that.

To him, it's all or nothing. If he can't get it fully right, he doesn't bother trying at all, and he gives up from the start. In the scenario of *davening*, either he will despair from davening at all and he won't *daven*, and if he does *daven*, it is just to be *yotzei*^[3], and he won't try concentrating at all.

“All or Nothing” Attitude When It Comes To Kindness

Now let's see how this attitude can also exist when it comes to *chessed* (acts of kindness).

There are some people who will engage in acts of *chessed* that can take up their entire schedule of the day, fully involved in helping people in some way, where they are tremendous *baalei chessed*. But on some days, they will not feel like helping anyone at all. They won't want to have any guests at their Shabbos table or have anyone come to the house, when they are going through this mode. When this kind of person is in “*chessed*” mode, he will have guests for Shabbos and set up the table

beautifully, going out all of the way to make it the best possible experience, but when he's out of *chessed* mode, he does not set the table at all – not even the *leichter* (candelabra) that normally graces the table.

Seeking Extremes vs. Perfectionism

We gave here three examples of this kind of nature where a person vacillates between extremes. We should know that there are two possible causes for a person to move back and forth between extremes.

In some people, it is because they are “*mevakshei shleimus*”, those who seek perfection, as described in the beginning of *Mesillas Yesharim*. When a person is seeking *shleimus* perfection, either this comes from the deep desire to become an *adam hashaleim* (complete and holy person), which stems from the soul's true desire for *shleimus*; or it stems from the negative trait of conceit. That is a separate matter, which we aren't discussing here.^[4]

Here we are discussing someone who will only act in either one of two extremes. When he wants to get it right, this is not stemming from a desire for *shleimus* that he has, but from his extreme approach towards everything. Sometimes he is found at the extreme of seeking *shleimus*, but it's not because he's seeking *shleimus*; it's because he is being drawn towards one of two extremes. This kind of person is not seeking to do things perfectly; it is just that he pursues an extreme. *Shleimus* may meet up with one of the extremes, but it is not *shleimus* which he seeks.

How indeed can one know if he is seeking *shleimus* or if he is just seeking an extreme? If he sees that every time he seeks an extreme that he is seeking *shleimus*, then his agenda is not to be extreme, but to seek *shleimus*. But if he is seeking to be extreme in a way that doesn't bring him closer to *shleimus*, then it clearly does not come from a desire for *shleimus*. It is rather coming from the fact that he is drawn towards an extreme.

Here is an example that brings out the difference between the desire for perfectionism (which stems from the desire for *shleimus*) and extremity: When a father goes shopping for basic needs in the home, sometimes he will also make sure to buy some extra treats for the children, even though they don't need these things, in order to show love for the children. Another type of father, though, will come home with lots of treats for the children one day, giving them many gifts all the time, and on some days, he will only buy a smaller amount of treats and give it out to some of the children, where some of the children won't get anything at all.

This is not an outcome of perfectionism, but from a nature in which a person will operate in either one of two extremes. There is either a lot or there is nothing at all.

The desire for *shleimus* can be manifest in learning Torah, in *davening*, and in *chessed*. One may seek to have *shleimus* in his Torah learning, *shleimus* in his *davening*, and *shleimus* in *chessed*. But a person must know if his desire for *shleimus* in these areas is indeed coming from a desire for *shleimus*, or if perhaps it is because he is drawn towards an extreme. One should differentiate if it is an extreme that he is pursuing out of a need for *shleimus*, or if it is just about being drawn towards an extreme and it is not because he is seeking some kind of *shleimus*.

Extreme Thinking\Beliefs

We so far gave a few examples which apply to our physical world, in the scenarios of learning Torah, *davening*, doing *chessed*, and buying gifts to children. These are all areas of physical action and behavior, where a person will act in either one extreme or another. However, those are just external manifestations of extremity. Usually, extremity does not begin with a person's behavior, and it is

rooted in one's particular thinking patterns. Even more, it can also be because the entire personality of the person is to be extreme.

Here are some fundamental examples of how we can see this.

In *Chareidi* society, we find different extremes, as with everything else in Creation, which contain extremes. There are some people whose observance to Torah is doubtful, and at the other end of the extreme, are the people who connect themselves to what they consider as the *Chareidi* society. Why do people connect themselves to *Chareidi* society? With some people, it was because they were born *Chareidi* and they grow up *Chareidi*. Others, though, were not born into *Chareidi* society, and they connected themselves with *Chareidi* society. Why does a person 'become' a *Chareidi*? Some people do so because they were searching for truth, and they conclude that the truth is found in *Chareidi* society. Others, though, connect to *Chareidi* society because they wanted to make a huge overhaul in their life, and it is usually because they have an extreme mentality.

If this kind of person would have been born secular, he wouldn't believe in anything that is even remotely religious, *chas v'shalom*; that is one extreme. If this kind of person is found amongst Torah society (and this is often the case with many *baalei teshuvah*, who have travelled from one extreme to the other extreme), he is at the other extreme. Sometimes, unfortunately, there are *baalei teshuvah* who return to the other extreme, *Rachmana litzlan*, when they see that their extreme change of lifestyle didn't do anything for them. But even if nothing negative results from extreme mentality, it is the very way of extreme thinking that is the problem.

If a person only thinks in extremes, he can never find a middle point. Either he is at one extreme or at the opposite extreme; everything he does has to always be at an extreme.

Why doesn't this kind of person realize that he is acting entirely out of an extremist mentality? It is because it is all under a disguise of Torah, so he doesn't see his motivations. He will connect himself to a certain sect or community of religious Jewry because he thinks that this is where the true Torah is found, and that everyone else lives incorrectly.

He might write an entire book explaining why only his version of Judaism is the correct one and the truthful one, and that everyone else in the world has it all wrong. But it is all because he has a deep problem of not being able to admit that he is drawn towards being extreme. It could even be that he has found a truthful place to connect himself to, but that is not his motivation. His thinking patterns and his beliefs are extreme, and that is what leads him.

It is similar to a child's thinking, which sees things only in terms of black or white, good or bad, happy or sad, rich or poor – he only will only see things in terms of extremes. As a child gets older, his thinking begins to mature a bit and he sees that it's not always so black or white. There are levels in between. There are people who are not so wealthy but they aren't poor, and there are people who aren't poor but that doesn't make them wealthy, with many levels in between.

There are adults, as well, who haven't changed in their thinking patterns that much since they were children. Just as when they were children they only saw things in extreme terms, so do they continue to think in this way when they are mature adults. This kind of person will only see the extremes of a matter and he never considers that there may be a middle point in between them. He only sees two sides, right or left, therefore, he identifies himself as belonging to one of the two sides.

It seems to him that he is clear about everything he sees. If we tell him that there's a middle ground between the two extremes, this will be a very vague concept to him, because in his mind, he is clear that there only two possible options to take, and he is clear which one is correct and which one is

incorrect.

(Some people seek extremities because it offers them a sense of clarity in a matter, and it is clarity which they are mainly interested in. But we are not discussing that aspect, and that merits a discussion of its own. Here we are discussing a person who seeks extremity because his nature is to be drawn towards extremes, and not because he seeks clarity of a matter.)

The depth of why a person seeks extremities is not simply because he seeks something extreme, but because he likes to uncover a state of opposition to something, and he gets vitality from this. This is a deep insight to anyone who understands this.

When People Gain Vitality From Opposing Others

When a person is gaining vitality from uncovering opposition towards something, this is **earth-of-wind-of-fire**, which is what we are discussing here.

A person might not always be aware that this is his motivation is seeking an extremity, because it is a motivation that is very deep in the soul, where a person wants to gain a life-giving vitality from the very state of uncovering opposition towards something. He doesn't seek "the middle point" in between the extremes, because that wouldn't give him vitality - he only gets vitality from something that opposes something else. He chooses a particular extreme because that is a place where he can keep getting vitality from.

When one sect of Judaism opposes another sect, that is but the result of this deep aspect in the soul: a person feels that one of the extremes is the place where he belongs, he gets his vitality from it, and when he is in that extremity, he lives off the fact that he is opposing something. He might think he is pursuing the truth, but many times it does not come from a desire for truth, but from a desire for opposition.

Opposition is really an inner force in the soul. The wars in the world that are fought are but a result of this inner force of opposition, and we will discuss this later when we discuss **fire-of-wind-of-fire**, which is when opposition leads to war with others. But even when opposition doesn't lead to actual war with others, it still becomes the very patterns and movements of the soul, where a person regularly receives a negative kind of vitality from it.

Extremity In Personality and Emotions

Now we will see how extremity is also manifest in one's personality.

Most people are not overly sad or particularly happy, and they just live in a routine way, getting emotional only sometimes at certain events which are either joyous or saddening. But when a person has an extreme kind of personality, he is always found in some kind of extreme emotion. At any given moment, either he is happy or sad - one of two extremes - but he is never in between.

We must know that these kinds of people are really suffering inside their own souls. They are tangled up inside themselves, at an alarming rate.

The truth is that it is impossible for a person to be happy all the time, in the lifestyle of today. That would be living all the time within an extreme. If a person doesn't know how to find 'the middle point' of life, his emotions will function only at extremes, and he will not be able to live normally.

Earlier, we have seen how extremity is manifest in action and in thoughts\beliefs. Now we are speaking about extremity in emotions. Every person has emotions in his soul which are granted to us

by Hashem, as well as various feelings that have come to us based upon how we chose to act throughout our life. There are some people, though, who were either born this way, or because they became like this, who have a personality of extreme emotions. These kinds of people will either be very sad one day, or very happy on another day. They are constantly vacillating between two opposite extremes.

When it comes to emotions, no person can survive if he stays on one extreme. Unlike the areas of behavior and thoughts\beliefs, where a person can choose to place himself on one extreme, a person cannot survive when he stays in one extreme emotion. But what will happen with a person who has an extreme nature? His nature will draw him to choose a certain extreme emotion to stay on [either happiness or sadness], and since he cannot stay on one extreme emotion for his entire life, he will have to choose another extreme emotion to stay connected with. But when he does this, he inevitably will not be able to handle it, and then he will fall into the opposite extreme! He will keep moving back and forth between extreme emotions, and this vicious cycle keeps repeating itself and it is the ongoing story of his life.

This is a form of *Kaf HaKela* (spiritual suffering)[\[5\]](#) on this world! I am not exaggerating with this term. It is simply *Kaf HaKela*, because it is the very idea of *Kaf HaKela*. There is *Kaf HaKela* in emotions, and also in place to place, and there are all other kinds of *Kaf HaKela*. But *Kaf HaKela* is always about being thrown around from one end to another. That is the case with this kind of person.

Every person has movements in his soul, but the movements are usually not that sharp, so it doesn't feel like such a jolt. But if a person has an extreme personality, his extreme experience of emotions will throw him around from one kind of emotion to another emotion, throughout the day, and this is suffering for the soul to go through. If he hears of a tragedy, he will feel like he is getting thrown into the emotion of pain, and then when he hears of something joyous, he feels like he is thrown into this as well, and the transition feels confusing to him. His emotions are constantly in movement and there is no particular pattern that they are following, so is quickly passing from one kind of emotion to another.

Sometimes a person is aware of this, and sometimes he is less aware of it. When the inner movements are sharp, when one moves from one extremity to another extremity within his emotions - at a certain point, it will feel unbearable for him. Most people cannot handle strong interchanging emotions. It goes beyond what they can really handle, and the inner movements feel very sharp and jolting.

To illustrate, the world is always revolving, but we don't feel this movement. In order to feel movement of the world, we would have to feel an earthquake, and then we can feel the world moving. Just as slight physical movements are usually not felt by us, and by the same token, most people do not sense slight movements in their soul. However, the more a person is sensitive to his feelings and to his soul, the more he can feel even slight movements in his soul; he feels more things.

The Gemara says that the lives of people with overly emotional personalities are not considered to be lives, and *Rashi* explains, because they suffer all the time from all of these constant emotional reactions.[\[6\]](#) People who are very emotionally sensitive people are constantly feeling every kind of inner movement in their soul, and they also feel all of the clashes of these movements within, when different emotions in their life intercede with each other. The constant transition of these many different kinds of emotions takes its toll on their inner state, preventing them from living a tranquil life.

Here we are discussing in particular a person with an extreme personality (**earth-of-wind-of-fire**). This kind of person never has a "simple", normal day in his life. You should know that these kinds of

people have much internal suffering. In many cases, they are simply *cholei nefesh*, they are ill in their souls – simply put.

They have extreme patterns in their personality, and the feelings in their soul are extreme and they feel the extremity of it, and they can't handle the extremity on such a continuous basis, so they are often vacillating between their extreme emotions in order to avoid staying in one of the extremes. They will be sad one day and happy on another day, but never in between.

A person can never be calm when he has this nature, and his soul is always being shaken up. He doesn't feel anything stable in his life. When this kind of person keeps going through his emotional rollercoaster, he feels like he doesn't know who he is and what is happening inside himself.

This kind of person will need much more help, because, as we said before, these kinds of people are *cholei nefesh* (ill in their souls). Therefore, we cannot give the full solution to here to those who have extremity in their very personality, who have constant interchanging emotions. We have only mentioned it here in order to complete our discussion, which is about extremity, but we will not actually discuss here how this kind of person can be helped, because it is not the place here to discuss it.

We will mainly discuss here how to fix the nature of extremity when it comes to the areas of action and thinking patterns\beliefs, which we described earlier, and perhaps we will touch a little bit upon how we can treat someone who faces constant extreme emotion, but we will mainly speak about the first two areas of extremity: when people act extreme in their behavior and in their thinking patterns\beliefs.

Helping An Extreme Person Become More Balanced In His Actions

When a person's behavior is extreme, the solution is to get him come to the 'middle point' in between the extremes.

This seems to go against the advice of the Rambam, who says that in order to come to the middle point, one must go towards the other extreme of how he is acting. However, we must know that this rule of the Rambam doesn't apply to every person, even though it is certainly true. If a person has an extreme nature, he must go to the middle path, not to the other extreme. Only by first finding the middle path to begin with can he go against his nature.

With most people, who do not have that much extremity in their nature, they should go from one extreme to another when trying to improve their character, as the Rambam advises. But if someone has a generally extreme personality, going to the opposite extreme will only feed his already extreme nature. They instead have a different *avodah*: they must seek the middle point to begin with.

We cannot give exact rules for this idea, but this is the outline of the solution for an extreme person: he needs to seek the middle point in between the two extremes, because it is only the middle point which can nullify his extreme nature.

As we have explained, this is not what most people need to do. Most people need to take the Rambam's advice, of going to the opposite extreme. But with people who have a very extreme nature, which we are discussing here in this chapter, they will need to make sure that they never be in an extreme. If they ever have to go opposite of their nature, which they inevitably will have to do, they should not go completely to the other extreme. They will need to remain a little close to the extreme that they are currently found in, far away from the other extreme.

Why should they do this? So that they can train their soul not to follow extremes. Although they will

need to travel towards the other extreme, they need to leave a little bit of “space”, so to speak, where they can come back a little closer to their old extreme. (This excludes anything that is required of *halachah*, of course).

Helping An Extreme Person Change His Thinking Patterns

When it comes to changing extreme thinking patterns, this is a bit harder to do than changing extreme action. A person chooses one extreme which represents his beliefs, because he believes that this is where the truth is found, and therefore, it is harder for him to change his mindset. It is not only his thinking patterns that are involved; he has attached this to what he feels is the truth, so it will be very hard to get him to budge from there.

Hard as it is, we still need to get him to move away a bit from his extreme beliefs. We should get him to think, “Maybe the truth is found at the other extreme?” We need to root him out from his extreme thinking patterns.

It will take a long time for him to get there, though. He will not be able to change his temperament at the age of 17 or 18 – he will not be able to get there before the age of 40 or 50. Only by then will he have firmly developed his beliefs, to the point that he has chosen one of two extremes. During the interim, we need to get him to get used the idea of traveling away from extremity.

For example, we can try to get him to choose some kind of extremity in life which he will decide to move away from; at the same time, we should advise him not to totally move towards the opposite extreme, and he should make sure he can easily find his way back to his original extreme. In this way, he takes small steps to move away from the extreme that he is at and he can slowly make his way towards the opposite extreme, and he still leave some ‘space’ for himself in the meantime to get back to his old extreme; the point of this is so that he shouldn’t become “extreme” as he tries going towards the opposite extreme, because then the purpose is defeated.

Even for those people whom we said need will to take the path of the Rambam, going to the opposite extreme - this does not mean that the person should go totally into the other extreme. He should go towards the opposite extreme, but he should not go to it totally.

Thus, when one has a dominance of **earth-of-wind-of-fire** (extremity), he needs to be trained to go towards another extreme without going totally towards it. When it comes to the realm of changing his extreme orientation in the realm of his behaviors, he should leave some “space” where he can come back a little closer to his previous extreme, and not go totally towards the opposite extreme.

The point is that one is leaving one extreme and he is going towards the opposite extreme, he needs to leave some “space” for himself, both within his actions and within his thinking/beliefs, so that he shouldn’t totally follow the other extreme.

This “space” he leaves over might seem like a divergence from truth for him, but a person gains a humbling feeling from it, by distancing himself from something he thought was true. In a subtler sense, he has reached an even greater level of truth in this way.

Arriving At Bittul (Self-Nullification)

This ultimately rectifies a person who staunchly believed in one extreme, who originally couldn’t see any truth in anything else.

He believed that only his way of thinking was correct, and that everyone else is wrong. He believed that he is the one person who gets everything right, and he failed to think that maybe there is truth

with other people in the world. He had been so confident in himself that only his way is the right one, and that everyone else was wrong. Why didn't he seek out more truthful people and connect himself to them? Maybe they know better than he does? It is therefore a very great *bittul* (self-nullification) for him to accept that there is truth elsewhere in the world, which is no less truthful than his own way of thinking.

If a person knows for sure that the rest of the world is found in falsity, then there is no need for him to have this *bittul*. But if there are other holy and pure Jews out there in the world who think and act differently than he does, even if it appears to him that they are mistaken, he needs to have some kind of *bittul* to them, by realizing that there can be truthful points contained in others.

The soul will actually feel calmed from this *bittul*, because it will have reached a place where there are no oppositions, and all it feels is a sense of being nullified. This power of *bittul* in the soul is a deep form of salvation for a person. (On a deeper note, a person must understand that we don't comprehend what the truth is in any case. This is a separate matter which we are not discussing here).

There are a few people stubbornly remain on a certain extreme because they feel that they are doing so "*lishmah*" (for pure motives). These people are not actually being guided by their beliefs. They are simply unaware that they have an extreme personality. Their *avodah* as well requires them to move a bit out of their extreme and towards the opposite extreme, and at the same time to make sure that they don't go totally into the opposite extreme.

The Depth of Bittul (Self-Nullification)

In the ideal and complete state of our soul, the soul sees a separation between its inner essence and its outer "garments". The essence of our soul is the "*cheilek eloka mimaal*", "portion of G-d above", which is totally removed from all physical and emotions and actions of This World. All actions and emotions are but "garments" of the soul itself. When one realizes and palpably recognizes that his actions are not his essence, but his "garments" - if he can clearly makes this distinction - this is the deepest part of the rectification process. With that perception, one realizes that all of his abilities are simply his garments, not his essence.

If someone isn't at that perception yet, he will immediately ask, "What does that mean? Who am "I", then? If there is no "I" after I nullify myself, where do I exist, if there is nothing?" The answer to this is that this is the true meaning of absolute *bittul* (nullification).

Someone who hasn't yet built his own "I" properly will destroy himself through *bittul*, and he has destroyed his own structure before it has been built. The Sages state that "Hashem builds worlds, and then destroys them" - we see from this that first there is building and then there is destruction, but destruction must not become before building. In terms that apply to us personally, first we must "build" our "I" by recognizing its abilities well, and only after we have solidly built our "I" can we "destroy" our "I" and feel nullified to Hashem.

After a person has recognized his soul's abilities and he knows of all the aspects of his personality, which he recognizes as his "I", now comes the deeper aspect, which is to recognize that the essence of the *neshamah* (Divine soul) is called a "*cheilek eloka mimaal*" at its root. Therefore, the "I" and all that it contains is entirely a "garment" that wraps around the essence of the *neshamah*. Arriving at this point enables a person to act from an entirely different place in himself.

(Acting and living from this deep place of *bittul* in oneself should only be done at temporary times and not on a permanent basis, because we cannot live in this state totally right now.)

It seems simply that a person who achieves this *bittul* is going through a form of “accepting suffering with love”, and that is how it appears to be; it is certainly an ability of our personality to be able to accept suffering with love, but we are referring to a deeper aspect of the personality. For a few moments, each person on his own level can act from an entirely different place in himself, where he feels totally nullified to Hashem.

This is not about just knowing that one must do Hashem’s will; that is something which anyone who keeps *mitzvos* can understand. We are speaking here of a more inner level, where one acts from a place of self-nullification, because he realizes that it is only the garments of his soul which act, and therefore it becomes easier to switch extreme movements. One who is found in this point in the soul is found in a different place entirely than what was discussed until now; he will be able to easily switch over from one extreme to another.

To another person, he might seem like he is suffering as he moves between extremes, resembling one who is going through the suffering of *Kaf HaKela*; but the truth is that he is actually in a place of true *menuchah* (serenity), because he is able to have a mastery over his movements - for it is the very essence of the soul where he is acting from, and that essence can “wear” itself in whatever “garment” it needs at the moment.

Of course, a person is always a human being with physical limitations, which ultimately prevents him from being a totally spiritual being, even after he exposes his *neshamah\cheilek eloka mimaal*. But once he reaches this place of self-nullification, he will acquire an ability to easily switch between extremes - and then he will be able to easily rectify his extreme nature. Sometimes he will be able to go in one extreme, sometimes he will be able to go in the other extreme, and sometimes he will get to the middle point between the extremes. He can “wear” all of these movements like garments.

Understandably, this last point we explained (of shedding one’s “I” and uncovering the essence of the soul, which is *cheilek eloka mimaal*, or *bittul\self-nullification*), is not a point that most people will get to. What is closer to home with most people, however, is that a person can rectify an extreme nature by training himself to go a little bit towards the opposite extreme of where is right now, and to make sure that he doesn’t go totally towards it.

That will be true both when it comes to the area of extremity in his actions and extremity in his thinking\beliefs.

Helping A Person With Extreme Emotions

As for those with an extreme personality, who have extreme emotions on a regular basis, we will mention here a brief piece of advice that can be helpful to this kind of person, although we must emphasize as we mentioned before that these people are really bordering on mental\emotional illness, and they will need much more help than this little piece of advice we are about to say.

This is what they can do: they should try to hold onto a little bit of their previous emotional state, even as they are shifting into another emotion that is completely different. Of course, a person will not be able to hold onto the previous emotional experience completely, but he can try to hold on to it a little bit. That much, he should be able to do.

In order to help himself for this, we can suggest that he try holding onto some kind of imaginative thought that will help retain the previous emotional experience, and vividly imagine it in front of him; or he may find holding onto a certain object helpful for this, and imagine that he is “holding” onto some of the previous experience.

As we said, though, this little piece of advice is only a small part of the help that this kind of person

will need, because when a person has an extremity in the realm of his personality\emotions, he is very sensitive to the constant shifts between his feelings that he goes through on a daily basis, which throws him around between many different kinds of emotions in one day. Therefore he will really require much Heavenly compassion, in order to be fully helped.

[1] Editor's Note: After delivering this *shiur*, the Rav was asked, "What does opposition have to do with anger?" The Rav answered that anger is but the result of a deeper root, "opposition". The root of anger is the force of opposition, and the reaction of anger itself is the result of the force of opposition. Thus, in these next four chapters (***Fixing Your Fire: Anger: #009-#012***), which discuss **wind-of-fire** (opposition), the Rav will not be discussing "anger" per se, but the root which leads to anger, which is "opposition."

[2] *Rambam Hilchos De'os*

[3] to fulfill his *halachic* obligation

[4] this was discussed in ***Fixing Your Fire: Conceit_015_Aiming For Perfection***

[5] *Kaf HaKela* (lit. "The Flinging Ladle), a spiritual form of suffering where a person feels like he is being 'flung' all over the universe.

[6] see *Pesachim 113b*: "The lives of three kinds of people are not lives: Those who are overly compassionate, those who are ill-tempered, and those who are *anini hadaas* (delicate)."

Source: <https://bilvavi.net/english/fixing-your-fire-009-anger-extremity>