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## Fixing Your Earth [Laziness] - 011 Shifting Between Extremes

*Wind-of-Wind-of-Earth: The Extreme Nature Which Cycles Between Movement and Non-Movement*

With *siyata d'shmaya* we will continue here to learn about the element of earth, and its resulting trait of laziness. In this lesson we will learn about laziness that stems from **wind-of-wind-of-earth**.

As explained in the past, earth in the soul causes a person to be unmoving, or to move very slowly, due to the heaviness in the earth.

Wind-of-earth will cause a person to move a bit past where he is, whereas wind-of-wind will make a person move a lot. In the previous lesson, we discussed the two pairs of “opposite” elements: fire and water, and wind and earth. We also mentioned the words of the *Gra*, that on This World, the primary opposite elements are wind and earth, while fire and water are the primary opposite elements in Heaven.

The nature of **wind-of-wind-of-earth** contains not only the opposing natures of wind versus earth, but also the opposite natures of wind-of-wind versus earth. Since there are two different opposing natures here, the result is a more “extreme” kind of inner contradiction in the soul. There is a dominance of earth here, which brings on inner “heaviness” that results in laziness, yet there is also a lot of wind here, due to the wind-of-wind, which demands its movement. This causes an extremity in the person’s nature. This is not the only extreme nature we can find, but it is one of them.

*An Extreme Nature of Intense Mood Swings and Immaturity*

Most people do not live in an extreme way, and they live closer towards the center between two extremes. Although no one is perfectly balanced, most people are living somewhat closer to a middle line between two extremes. But there are some people who regularly live with extremity in their life. They don’t choose the middle road in life. They aren’t drawn towards becoming more balanced and centered. They will stay more on an extreme. Anyone who is familiar with someone with this kind of personality will immediately recognize what we are talking about – he is a kind of person who has a more extreme personality, on a regular basis.

This kind of person will be moving a lot one day, and he will move very quickly, even violently. He will get a lot done and he will be very productive, when he’s moving. This is their wind-of-wind at work. But when aren’t on the move, their ‘earth’ makes its heavy appearance: they will go to sleep, sometimes for hours on end, completely stopping everything in their life. They vacillate between

these two extremes, of intense movement and no movement at all, in an ongoing cycle. This is an extreme way of living.

Anyone with this nature is a very moody kind of person. He has intense mood swings throughout the day, going from one extreme to another. He will be intensely joyous during one part of his day, and at another part of his day, he is terribly sad. The mood swings are not just commonplace in his life, they are violent shifts between one extreme emotion to a completely opposite extreme of another emotion.

This kind of person also has an immature nature in his soul, which is called *katnus* (childishness) – he tends to see everything in terms of either ‘black or white’. His thinking is usually “Either, or” and he can’t see anything in between. He has a child’s perspective that carries into his adulthood.

One moment he can be very joyous, and a moment later he is very sad. It seems that he doesn’t know how to be happy. But the truth is that he does feel truly happy at times, and it is just that he can quickly become sad, because he has a nature to swing between two extremes.

Very few people with this nature succeed in attaining a balance in their personality. Although it is true that most people do not become completely balanced in their personality, it is also true that most people do not either become totally extreme. Most people will attain some kind of balance in their personality, as they mature through life. But a person with a nature of **wind-of-wind-of-earth** will usually stay with a more extreme personality throughout his life, since the very idea of attaining a balance is so foreign to his perspective. His extreme nature accompanies him in every aspect.

### *Three Different Reasons For An Extreme Nature*

When a person has a very extreme kind of nature, where he is constantly going through a cycle of extreme ups and downs, it may come from the deep inner **contradiction** between earth and wind-of-wind. Or, his extreme may come from a heavy amount of **fire** in the soul.

When an extreme nature comes from having a lot of fire in one’s personality, a person will have intense upward movement [i.e. he will grow, overcome challenges, and attain his ambitions, by “burning up” his previous levels and aiming for a higher level], but since fire tends to be extreme in its movement, the person will have a relapse soon after he ascends. That is why a person with a strong amount of fire in his personality will often have a lot of ups and downs. With fire, the issue is that the movements of a person are extreme. But when we are dealing with the nature of **wind-of-wind-of-earth**, the extremity comes from a deep inner contradiction in the soul.

When a person has a lot of fire in his personality, his “outer” fire may weaken, which will mean that he will appear dismal, but his inner spiritual fire may remain strong. Indeed, there is always an inner fire which remains lit in the soul, for there is always *“A constant fire shall burn on the Altar, it shall not be extinguished.”*

But here we are discussing one who has strong amount of **wind-of-wind** in his soul, who is contradicted in his nature by a heavy amount of earth. There is a contradiction in the very structure of his soul. This kind of person has a very moving soul, which doesn’t stay put in any one state, because he feels like he always has to be moving. But when he moves, he often uses all his energy, and then he becomes exhausted, so he falls back into his element of earth, and he becomes non-moving.

He has extremes in his movement, from upward to downward movement, until he stops moving in his soul, when he feels exhausted. He plummets from extreme upward movement to a state of absolute inner heaviness in the soul, and after some time, his wind-of-wind returns again and he gets moving again, and after using up all his energy so quickly, he becomes exhausted, until he feels like he can’t

move. He may become melancholy from this, because he doesn't want to move, and as a result, he may go to sleep for a long time.

When a person is regularly used to this pattern, he becomes "dry" in his soul, and in that state, he is apt to become very depressed, reaching the total state of his earth. It is a vicious cycle of always going from one extreme to another, from a lot of movement, followed by exhaustion, melancholy, and laziness, then returning to extreme movement again - where the cycle repeats.

### *"Kaf HaKela" In The Soul*

Chazal refer to this as the intense spiritual suffering of the soul known as "*Kaf HaKela*" [which feels like getting pulled in many different directions at once]. On a simple level, the punishment of *Kaf HaKela* is that the soul feels like it is continuously being flung from one side of the world to other, which is rooted in the contradicting desires that the soul may have. While this is true, here we are describing a kind of personality which is a deeper kind of *Kaf HaKela* for the soul: when a person is continuously shifting between different extremes within his own personality. So it is not simply a punishment which comes from some external factor. Even the destructive angels which are created from a person's sins are not simply a punishment to the soul, but a revelation of the soul's unfixed state. It is a state where the soul moves violently between different extremes, and it is a suffering of "*Kaf HaKela*" which stems from the person's very perspective of always shifting between extremes. That perspective, itself, is *Kaf HaKela* for the soul.

When a person has this state of "*Kaf HaKela*" in his soul, he can never feel serene, because whenever he does anything, a different part of his personality is pulling him in the opposite extreme. The impaired **wind-of-wind-of-earth** in his soul causes him to exhaust himself from constantly using all up his energy, and when that is the case, he cannot have pleasure in his movements. Instead, his movements are simply stressful and exhausting.

Normally, movements are a source of pleasure for a person. A person is able to have deep pleasure just from his exertion in Torah learning even before he arrives at clear understanding, and this is a pleasure from movement. But when a person is moving because he has a lot of **wind-of-wind-of-earth** in him, this movement doesn't feel pleasurable. It will only feel exhausting to him. Extreme movement is generally not enjoyable, even if a person may have a nature to enjoy extremities [a nature which we have discussed in other lessons].

After becoming exhausted from using up his energy, he feels an inner heaviness, and soon after he will want to start moving again. So he can never be serene, and he won't feel pleasure when he's moving. He never has *menuchah* (serenity), because wherever he is, he wants to be somewhere else - he cannot feel calm inside himself.

This is the extreme nature that results from impaired **wind-of-wind-of-earth**. There are also others who don't have the nature of **wind-of-wind-of-earth**, but they can still have extremity in their personalities, and they will act extreme in different areas, even though they do not have a dominant nature of **wind-of-wind-of-earth**. Even so, the nature of **wind-of-wind-of-earth** is the root of all extremity in the soul.

### *The Root of the Solution: Analyzing The Complexities of Each Thing*

Now we shall discuss the root of the rectification for this nature.

First we will describe the change of perspective that is needed, which speaks to the mind, and then we will speak of how to bring this perspective into the heart and into one's actions, so that one can practically act upon this change of perspective.

One needs to have the perspective that the entire Creation is complex, consisting of many different forces. This is also referred to as *maaseh merkavah*, which is the concept of the vast complexity of the Creation. Nothing in Creation can stand alone on its own, and it is always complemented by some other force. Only Hashem is One. Since each thing in Creation has a force that opposes it, there is always an integrating force that combines together the two opposite forces, which serves as the balance between them.

Thus, when one has a deep inner contradiction in his soul - such as **wind-of-wind-of-earth**, which contains the extreme of wind-of-wind versus the other extreme, earth - this is the very antithesis to *maaseh merkavah*. This is because the "rule" of *maaseh merkavah* necessitates that any two opposite forces be harmonized, but when a person has two different extremities that remain unfixed in his soul, there is no integration between his opposite forces. Instead, each force in his soul remains apart from the other. There is no integration in his soul - there is only separation.

Initially, when one becomes aware of the elements in his soul, he sees his elements of earth, water, wind and fire as separate forces which each stand apart from each other. But one can gain a deeper perspective towards his soul, where he sees that each force in his soul is complemented by any other force, and that there is no force in his soul which stands alone. Even more so, each part in the soul contains an opposite power which actually completes it. When one absorbs this perspective in his mind, he should view the reality in his soul this way.

As a result, in whatever he encounters, he should analyze the different parts of each thing, the complexity of each thing, and what opposes it. One should get used to seeing the different parts of what each thing is made of: the thing itself, its opposite, and how they harmonize.

### *Countering Extreme Thinking*

Applying to this to our subject - a person with a nature of **wind-of-wind-of-earth** - such a person is often exhausted from always using up his energy, and then he will want to sleep for a long amount of time. What can he think, to stop himself from falling into this state? He should challenge his own extreme thinking, as follows.

He should try thinking about the following (though this will not help that much if he tries this as he's actually exhausted, because during that time, the *yetzer hora* dominates and his thinking will be cloudy. Instead, he should practice this kind of thinking before he gets exhausted): "I want serenity right now, I want to rest and sleep - but is there really such a thing as total serenity or total sleep...?"

Deep down, he wants to become totally serene, but he must become aware that this is an extreme way of thinking and that there's no such thing as becoming totally serene.

To illustrate the idea better, consider a person who is suicidal, G-d forbid. He thinks that his situation will be different, by running away from life. He thinks all will be well and that he will have total serenity. This comes from a false belief of heresy, which is also called the "empty void" in the soul. Even if one doesn't reach that point, he may have a total "empty void" in his soul whenever he is thinking from that place in himself.

So, too, the extreme thinking, of wishing to be in a total state of rest and serenity, is a kind of thinking that comes from the place of the "empty void" that is in the soul. One must realize that if he has extreme thinking, it comes from a subconscious desire in the soul to enter into complete emptiness, which stems from the "empty void" in the soul, the source of all heresy.

There are two different extremes in Creation - on one extreme, there is *Ain Od Milvado*, the fact that there is nothing besides for Hashem, and at the other extreme, a person believes that there just a

nothingness in Creation, which is total heresy. When a person thinks that there is only emptiness and nothingness in Creation, when he is in a state where he feels no movement at all, he is really stuck inside the false perspective that comes from the “empty void” in his soul.

The main remedy for such a person is to believe that everything in the Creation is complex, so he needs to see what each thing is made of. He should see that even when he is serene, he is not totally serene. One can only become partially serene, but we never have total serenity as long as we are in this current era of Creation. And the Sages state that even in the Next World, Torah scholars do not have total serenity.[\[1\]](#)

So he should slowly get used to this change of perspective, that there is no such thing as being in a state of total rest or serenity. He shouldn't even desire it, because it's non-existent. It should be the famous words of the Ibn Ezra, that the pauper who doesn't even desire to marry the princess. Thus, when a person wishes for total serenity, he should be aware that this comes from the empty void in the soul, which wants to enter into a state of total emptiness, and that this is a form of heresy.

There are two root kinds of heresy: Either when a person denies the Creator, or, a person denies the Creation, by thinking that there is nothing but total emptiness in Creation. The true perspective is that there is a Creator, and that He has created many creations, and that He has also created an empty void in Creation, where a person can feel nothingness. But when a person is only aware of the perspective that comes from empty void in his soul, he will make the mistake of thinking that he can become totally serene. This is the root of the faulty perspective that stems from impaired **wind-of-wind-of-earth**.

Instead, a person should see the complexity of Creation within each thing he encounters. This breaks his way of thinking which thinks in terms of extremes. One should analyze a force in his soul and then see what its opposite is. For example, when one wants *menuchah* and he wants to go to sleep, as he is lying on his bed, he should be aware that he is also moving, breathing, etc. He should try moving his fingers and feet and he can see that he is still moving. In this way he realizes that there is no such thing as becoming totally serene. Then he gets the idea that there is no such as total non-movement, because he is always moving somewhat.

The more one realizes this perspective, the more he uproots his extreme way of thinking which has become so used to thinking in terms of extremes. He becomes aware of his movements even within his state of non-movement, and in this way, he comes to realize that he cannot ever be in a state of total non-movement. The same is true for when he's moving: he should be aware as he's moving that he cannot always be moving, and that he will need to rest soon. In this way, he sends a message to himself that he can never stay in any one extreme - there is always an opposite state that complements the one he is in now.

### *In Conclusion*

Through this, the person with a nature of impaired **wind-of-wind-of-earth** slowly chips away at his extreme thinking, by learning that it is impossible to always stay in any one extreme. From getting used to this kind of thinking, he will give more balance to his soul, and his nature of quickly shifting between different extremities will be lessened. Although he will still not attain a total balance (which is impossible, because no one becomes perfectly balanced) from getting used to this change of perspective, he will still come a lot closer to staying in the middle point.

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[\[1\]](#) Berachos 64a

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