

Shaar HaYichud The Gate of Unity

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Chapter Fourteen

We must now understand the aspect of the Line and Thread (*Kav V'Chut*), which is drawn from the aspect of the aforementioned *Reshimu*, in a particular manner. Firstly, we must understand the general matter of [the *Kav* – Line]; that it is the literal opposite of the aspect of the aforementioned *Reshimu* – Impression. This is because a point¹ indicates the concealment and withdrawal of everything, so that only a single point remains. Moreover, this point or impression specifically indicates an aspect of the absence of spreading forth below. In other words, the matter [of a point] is the absence of extension and revelation to a length and width. This is like the form of the letter *Yud* (י) which has no inner space, as is known.

Now, regarding the matter of the *tzimtzum* of [the *Reshimu*] from above, in other words, that [everything] remains in the aspect of a point alone, it is possible that its opposite³ can come from this. This is because, the result of the [*Tzimtzum*] is that everything becomes included in the [*Reshimu*] in a brief and “hinted” manner, and the like. On the contrary, this is the main cause of all revelation of influence [from the *Reshimu*], as mentioned previously.⁴

However, at first glance, the fact that this point indicates a complete absence of spreading forth below, certainly could be considered to be a complete and true *Tzimtzum*. [That is,] it completely hides and conceals, making it impossible for light to come and [be revealed] below. This being the case, how is it possible that the opposite [of this point], which is the drawing down and spreading forth of the *Kav* – line, can be drawn from it?

¹ As mentioned in the previous chapters, the *Reshimu* – Impression is compared to a point, in which there is a complete withdrawal, with no extension or revelation outward. In contrast, the *Kav* is a thin band of limited revelation which is drawn from the *Reshimu*. At first glance, these seem to be opposites. A point represents total withdrawal, while a line signifies revelation.

² The *Reshimu* – Impression is compared to the letter *Yud* (י) which is the shape of a point. In contrast, the *Kav* is compared to the letter *Vav* (ו) whose beginning is a *Yud* (י).

³ i.e. revelation, which is the opposite of concealment.

⁴ The Rebbe begins by posing a question. How is it that the revelation of the *Kav* can come out of its opposite, which is the total concealment of the *Reshimu*. However, the fact that the *Reshimu* contains the entire Infinite Light within it in the form of a short, “hinted” summary, resolves the difficulty. On the contrary, it is specifically because of this that revelation can take place. This is the main point of this paragraph. However, in the next paragraph the Rebbe points out the fact that this *Reshimu* indicates a complete concealment, like a point, which does not extend into revelation, whatsoever. How, then, is it possible that a line (*Kav*) of revelation should be drawn from the **complete** concealment of a point (*Reshimu*)?

Rather, as is known, the [explanation of the] matter is that, in truth, a point and a line are not two opposites, for a line is drawn from a point, and by the joining of many points, a line is made. Rather, the [explanation of the] matter, as is known, is that a point is like a *Heyulie*⁵ relative to a line (*Kav*). It [therefore] is similar to every [type] of *Heyulie* or simple substance. [This is to say that] though it [itself] is specifically the absence of spreading forth, nonetheless, this is not a necessary imperative altogether,⁶ but is, rather, only because the essential nature of a *Heyulie* is that, as of yet, it is higher than [being in] an aspect of spreading forth. Therefore, it has not [yet] descended from its essential state.

[For example,] this is like the *Heyulie* – ability [of the soul] of an animal to enliven [the body] in a revealed fashion, as this [ability] is still included within its essence, and has yet to spread forth to enliven [the body]. Similarly, it is like the *Heyulie* power of movement as it is in the essence, before it spreads forth to [actually] move. This is likewise like the [essential] power of growth before it spreads forth to [cause actual] growth. The same [is true of the essential] power of the intellect before it spreads forth to [actually] conceptualize, and there are many other matters similar to this.

It is, therefore, understood that this absence of spreading forth, cannot be called a true *Tzimtzum*, in and of itself⁷. On the contrary, all [subsequent] revelations and spreading forth [of the line], exist from this essential *Heyulie*.⁸

In this manner we may understand the aspect of a point relative to a line. [That is], the lack of spreading forth is only because it is an essential aspect that, as of yet, is higher than the aspect of “spreading forth”.

Now, although [the *Reshimu*] comes about through the *Tzimtzum* of everything, so that nothing remains except for a single point, as mentioned above, however, this itself indicates

⁵ A *Heyulie* is a potentiality which is an ability. That is, it does not have to spread forth into revelation, but if the possessor of the ability so desires, he can bring forth his ability. (This was explained earlier in chapters 2, 10 and 11.) Likewise here, as will be explained, a point is a potential for a line (and likewise, a line is a potential for a plane).

⁶ For example, when one observes a flint stone, he does not see fire at all. Nonetheless, this does not mean that the flint lacks the ability to bring out fire. In other words, just because, at the moment, the flint is not bringing out fire, it still has the *Heyulie* ability to do so.

⁷ In other words, in a point, the lack of spreading forth alone cannot be called a true and complete *Tzimtzum*. Rather, it is a *Heyulie* which has not yet come into revelation. This is in accordance with the analogies given by the Rebbe in the previous paragraph.

⁸ As mentioned previously, the *Kav* – Line of revelation of the chaining down (of the worlds) is drawn from the point of the *Reshimu*. Just because the “point” of the *Reshimu* has not yet spread forth, we are not forced to say that this is a true and complete *Tzimtzum*. Rather the point of the *Reshimu* is only a *Heyulie* and just like all *Heyulie* powers, the fact that they are not necessarily spreading forth into revelation does not mean that they are lacking this ability and cannot spread forth. Rather, it is from the essential *Heyulie* itself that all revelation comes. For example, just because one is not moving, we do not say that he lacks the power of movement. He does indeed possess the power of movement, but for the time being his power of movement is completely within its *Heyulie* potential, and is not spreading forth into revelation. Moreover, when he finally does move, it is from this same essential *Heyulie* which was withdrawn into itself that this movement comes into revelation.

that the entire aspect of the essence is included in it. Since this is the case, it therefore does not spread forth downward.⁹

This is analogous to a student who is in the presence of his teacher. As long as he is preoccupied with absorbing [the teachings] and is [focused], similar to a point, with a concentration (*Tzimtzum*) of his whole essence, he cannot “give out” by influencing his fellow [student, with explanations of the teachings]. However, after he has received [the teachings], the opposite is true. [Then,] it is from this very *Tzimtzum*, in which he was [focused in] the aspect of a point, that influence to his fellow [student]¹⁰ spreads forth and is drawn out, as explained elsewhere. From all this we understand that the line which extends from the point is just like the aspect of spreading forth from an essential *Heyulie*.

However, [in regard to] the fact that it is drawn out in an aspect of a “short line”, it is explained elsewhere that just as a point is the aspect of a *Heyulie* relative to a line, likewise, a line is the aspect of a *Heyulie* relative to the aspects of the length and breadth of a plane.¹¹ As is known, although the *Kav* comes with a drawing down and spreading forth from above downward, nonetheless, it is not [yet] a specific manner of drawing down [or revelation] whatsoever. Rather, it is only that the light has been drawn down from above to below.¹² It is through this that the aspects of “above” and “below”, from influencer to recipient, comes about. This is not the case in regard to the *Heyulie* of a point, in which there is no up or down, beginning, middle, or end, as known.

(This is the [meaning] of the statement in *Etz Chaim*,¹³ that the whole essential [purpose of the] radiance of the *Kav* is solely to bring about the aspects of “up” and “down”¹⁴, as will be explained.)

This [*Kav*] is analogous to a “Builder’s Rod”, which is not [counted] into the measurements of the length and width of the area of the building, itself.¹⁵ Nonetheless, with [the builder’s

⁹ The example for this will now be given by the Rebbe. It is like a student who is receiving from his teacher. During this time he must be completely focused like a point, and cannot be thinking any other thoughts or even analyze the teachings. Likewise, during that time he cannot be relating the teachings to his fellow student. Rather, his entire being must be completely focused on the teacher. Furthermore, complete focus indicates that his whole being is invested into this. However, it is specifically because of this focus that he is capable of relating the teachings to his fellow student, afterwards. If he was not entirely focused like a “point”, while he was receiving the teachings, he will not be capable of relating them to his fellow student etc.

¹⁰ In other words, it is only because he was completely invested into the subject, like a point, that he is afterwards capable of drawing out explanations to his fellow student. If he was not invested like a point, then he would be incapable of drawing forth influence etc. We see then that the revelation of the line, which follows the point, comes specifically because of the focus of the point.

¹¹ In other words, as soon as there are two points there is already a line. This is the case even though the line is very short. This short line already represents an expression from the essential *Heyulie* of a point, and is no longer a point. Nonetheless, this short line is not yet a **specific** revelation to the recipient. Rather, all it does is create the dimensions of “up” and “down”, and makes the relationship of an “Influencer” and a “Recipient” possible. The Rebbe will now begin to explain the aspect of this short line, which is the *Heyulie* for all subsequent revelations, and is called the *Kav HaMidah* – The Measuring Line.

¹² This is to say that it is only the first extension of expression from the point of the *Reshimu*.

¹³ See *Etz Chaim*, Drush Igullim V’Yosher, Shaar 1, Anaf 2.

¹⁴ Clearly, this statement of the *Etz Chaim* refers to this primal aspect of the *Kav* – Line of Revelation, which is known as the *Kav HaMidah* – The Measuring Line.

rod, the builder] measures all the measurements of the length and width [of the building]. [However, the builder's rod] itself is only like a short line, but it includes all possible measurements of length and width.¹⁶

Likewise, the form of the *Kav* – Line is an aspect of a *Heyulie* relative to the expanse of the letters and gives them their length and width, such as the lines of the letter *Beit* (ב), as stated elsewhere.¹⁷

According to this, even the beginning of the extension of the line from the point, although it comes in an aspect of spreading forth and drawing down, nonetheless, it is still an aspect of a *Heyulie*, which includes many different ways that a length and width may be drawn out within measure. This is why it is called the *Kav HaMidah* – The Measuring Line, as is known. This is indicated by its form, which is essentially short, and merely issues forth from above to below. Nonetheless, included within this issuance is everything which was concealed in the *Heyulie* of the point, except that it [now] comes in a way of being drawn down.

This [ability] comes from the power of the essential light which is concealed in the essence of the influencer, before being concentrated (*Tzimtzum*) into a single point.¹⁸ However, now it comes [into revelation] solely by way of a line, and not as it [originally] was in the essence of the influencer, where it was with the great expanse of the actual essence. In this *Kav* – line, the light of the essence only comes according to the capacity of the recipients.¹⁹ However, it nonetheless possesses a likeness to the light of the essence that is concealed in

¹⁵ For example, a ruler or yardstick is not the size of a building. Nonetheless, one is capable of measuring the dimensions of any building with this measuring rod.

¹⁶ Similarly, this *Kav HaMidah* – Measuring Line may be understood through the teacher/student relationship. The *Kav HaMidah* represents the teacher's ability to “measure” the student. This is to say that before he can begin an actual line of explanation, he must first “measure” exactly how “long” or “broad” the line must be. If he is speaking to his intellectual equal, the line need not be very long, and he does not have to bring the concept down so far. In contrast, if he was teaching young children, the line must be much longer in order to bring the concept down to their intellectual capacity. It is clear that this “short line” precedes the actual line of explanation and revelation to the recipients, and is only a “measuring line” to “size up” the recipient and assess what he is capable of receiving.

¹⁷ That is, one is capable of writing any letter with this line, but it itself does not constitute any of the letters. It is merely a *Heyulie* – a potential ability to bring about the dimensions of the length and width of a plane. (On another note, this short line is the potentiality for tangible “letters” of explanation and expression, while it itself is higher and more essential than the “letters” of tangible explanations and expressions.)

¹⁸ This ability to bring forth a length of expression and explanation comes specifically from the essential knowledge of the influencer and is totally unified with him. It is not something separate from him, but is an essential ability like any other ability. That is, if he so wishes, he can choose to express himself in the limited revelation of a line. Furthermore, he is capable of bringing this depth down, even to the comprehension of a child. This is specifically because he comprehends the concept essentially, as explained in chapter two. Likewise here, regarding the *Kav HaMidah*, it is an essential ability of G-d, that since He is all-capable and possesses an essential knowledge of Himself, He is therefore capable of expressing Himself in a limited fashion.

¹⁹ As in the analogies given previously, were the teacher to express his knowledge according to his own understanding of the subject, he would not be revealing anything to a recipient who is not on his level of knowledge or intellectual capabilities. On the contrary, it would actually be concealing knowledge, since it would be totally above the “head” of the student. It is specifically this “line of measurement” which allows one to “assess” and “measure” the recipient and formulate a line of expression or explanation that is tailored to the capabilities of any recipient, each student according to his level and capabilities.

the point,²⁰ except that it [now] comes [into revelation] in a manner of being drawn down. It therefore comes in the form of a *Kav* – line. This [*Kav* – line] is an aspect of a *Heyulie* for all the light and influence [given] to the recipients.²¹ This will suffice for those of understanding.

End of Chapter Fourteen

²⁰ Continuing the previous example, although this is like a lessened explanation, such as an allegory given to a student in order to convey a deep concept, it nevertheless has a similarity to the essential light of the concept, which it comes to explain. Otherwise the allegory would not “fit” with the concept. Furthermore, it is through this “lessened explanation” and “secondary light” that the student will come to grasp the essential light of the essence of the concept itself.

²¹ Because of the fact that this *Kav HaMidah* - Line of Measurement, represents the ability to express and reveal influence to **any** recipient on **any** level, it itself cannot actually be considered to be limited at all. This is to say that, this too, is the same infinite ability of G-d. For, with this line he can reveal Himself on any level, whether it is the highest spiritual level in the highest worlds, or even to us lowly, insignificant and limited creatures. Therefore, this “line” is the *Heyulie* ability to assess and measure any line of revelation to any recipient. As will be explained in the following chapter, the three aspects spoken about up to this point; the Infinite Light, *Tzimtzum* & *Reshimu*, and the Measuring Line, represent three equal abilities in G-d’s essence (although they do follow one from the other). The Infinite Light indicates G-d’s ability to reveal Himself Infinitely, as He is in His essence, the *Tzimtzum* and *Reshimu* indicate G-d’s infinite ability to conceal Himself infinitely and withdraw all revelation completely and the *Kav HaMidah* – Measuring Line indicates G-d’s infinite ability to reveal Himself on any level between the two extremes of absolute revelation and absolute concealment, to any recipient on any level.