

Shaar HaYichud The Gate of Unity

By

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Chapter Twenty

Now, before the details of the ten *sefirot* of [the world of] *Atzilut* can be explained, we must preface [by explaining] the matter of *Nekudah*-Point, *Sefirah*-Emanation, and *Partzuf*-Stature.¹

As is known, the general difference between the aspect of *Tohu* (Chaos) and the aspect of *Tikkun* (Rectification) is that the ten *sefirot* of *Tohu* (Chaos) are only in an aspect of “points”, which are the aspects of the *Ketarim*² (Desires).³ [In contrast,] in the world of *Tikkun*-Rectification, the [*sefirot*] come in an aspect of division in which each *sefirah* [is divided] into ten, and therefore, the aspect of “Rectification” automatically comes about.⁴ This is the inter-inclusion [of the *sefirot*] by means of the name of 45 (*Ma”H* – ם"ח).⁵

Now, the explanation of these matters is known, that the aspect of *Nekudot*-Points is the aspect of an essence before it spreads forth. This is similar to a point, which does not spread forth. An example [of this] is the light of the quality of *Chessed*-Kindness. The aspect of the essential quality of kindness is the aspect of its *Keter* (Desire).⁶ However, what is meant here is not the aspect of the essential quality of *Chessed*-Kindness as it is embedded and rooted within the essence of the soul, which is called the *Yechidah* (Singular), as mentioned previously, since [the way it exists embedded in the essence of the soul] is [still] totally in an aspect of a *Heyulie*, (as mentioned previously in chapters 10 and 11). Rather, what is meant here is in regard to the aspect of the revelation of the desire for a **particular** [act of]

¹ In Kabbalistic texts these three aspects are often referred to as *Akoodim*, *Nekoodim* and *Beroodim*, as will be explained shortly.

² *Ketarim* is plural for *Keter* – Crown, which is the aspect of pleasure and desire.

³ That is to say, the aspect of *Tohu* – Chaos is the revelation of the essential desire, as it is in essence. As will be explained, since they are absolutes, one essential desire cannot compromise and become coexist with its opposite.

⁴ This is because each particular *sefirah* contains something of its opposite within it and therefore strikes a sympathetic chord with it. For example *Chessed* – Kindness contains ten *sefirot*, including *Gevurah*-Might, and can therefore be joined with it etc.

⁵ As previously explained, the name of *Ma”H* (45) represents the aspect of sublimation to G-dliness, as in the verse, “*V’Nachmu Mah* – And what are we”. As mentioned previously, the “inner” name of 45 (*Ma”H*) is the aspect of the Essence of the Infinite Light-*Atzmoot Ohr Ein Sof* as it is revealed in the *Kav* -Line. It is through the sublimation of the qualities of *Tikkun* to G-d that they do not oppose and negate each other. This is because, in their true essential source, in the Essence of G-d, they are not in conflict and are actually, literally as one (as explained in chapters 10 and 11). This is also, as is explained elsewhere, the reason why the angels of kindness (the camp of *Michael*) and the angels of judgment (the camp of *Gavriel*) do not clash and destroy each other. It is solely because of their sublimation to their common and essential source in G-d.

⁶ The desire for kindness is the essential light and motivation of all that follows after it.

kindness, [as it becomes revealed] from its concealment in the essential *Heyulie* of kindness. [Now], even this [revealed] desire has not yet spread forth [from its essential state]. Rather, it [exists] as it is, beyond⁷ reason whatsoever for this desire, [such as the reason for] why he desires to reveal kindness etc. Certainly, [as of yet], there are no divisions into the various different ways [that this kindness may be expressed]. Even if his intellect leans specifically to *Chessed*-kindness, [nonetheless] it is not divided into different ways [of how the kindness will come out]. [This is because] although the [aspect] of intellect which leans essentially towards kindness and merit is the aspect of the *Chochmah* (Insight) of the essential *Chessed* (Kindness), nonetheless, it too, is only in an aspect of a *Nekudab*-Point.⁸ Likewise, [the aspect of] the *Netzach* (Conquest) of this *Chessed* (Kindness) [also] comes in the way of a *Nekudab*-Point.⁹

We [therefore] find that though the aspect of the essential kindness which comes into revelation, includes ten [*sefirot* within it, i.e.] desire, intellect and emotions, nonetheless, there are no recognizable divisions within them. Rather, they are all [included] in an aspect of a single point. This is the aspect of *Akudim*-Bound¹⁰, wherein [the *sefirot*] were all bound up in a single vessel.

It is because of this that the aspect of the ten *sefirot* of *Tohu*-Chaos cannot unite or become inter-included with one another. Rather, they are [disjointed points,] one beneath the other, as stated, “He reigned and he died etc”.¹¹

⁷ The text reads “without reason”. Nonetheless, it is without reason because at this point it is “beyond” reason.

⁸ This is to say that although the desire possesses ten *sefirot*, they are all completely bound up with the desire, and are “enslaved” and controlled by it. Therefore, the intellect of the desire is not really a rational objective intellect, but is, rather, driven to support and facilitate the desire. The same holds true of all of the other qualities and faculties of *Tohu* – Chaos. They are all bound up with the desire and enslaved by it.

⁹ The same holds true of all the particular *sefirot* of the essential desires of *Tohu* - Chaos. They are all bound up with the desire and are completely enslaved to it.

¹⁰ The two levels of the world of *Tohu*, plus the level of the world of *Tikkun* correspond to the three worlds of *Akudim*, *Nekudim* and *Brudim*. These terms, which mean “bound”, “speckled” and “splotched”, have their source in the Torah account of how Lavan (Leah and Rachel’s father) tried to swindle Yaakov out of the wages due him for tending Lavan’s flock. After working without pay for fourteen years in return for marrying his daughters, Lavan agreed that Yaakov would receive his payment with those goats that were born with “bands” around their ankles (*Akudim*), small speckles (*Nekudim*) or large splotches (*Brudim*). These Torah terms hint at the three above mentioned levels of *Nekudah*, *Sefirah* and *Partzuf*. The term *Akudim* (bands) represents the level of *Nekudah*, in which the *sefirot* are all “bound” up in a single vessel and are thus indistinguishable from each other. They are all expressed in the essential desire, such as the essential desire for kindness, for example, similar to a band which is circular, representing that it is bound up within itself. The small speckles (*Nekudim*) represent the level of *sefirah*, in which the particular divisions of each *sefirah* are recognizable, but nonetheless, remain disjointed and do not interconnect to work in conjunction as a unified system. The large splotches (*Brudim*) represent the level of *Partzuf*, in which the *sefirot* are recognizable as distinct qualities, but nonetheless, unite and connect to work in conjunction as a unified system. This is comparable to the merging of many specks into one large splotch.

¹¹ This verse refers to the eight Kings of Edom, who were the descendants of Esav, the brother of Yaakov. Esav and Yaakov represent the two worlds of *Tohu* – Chaos, and *Tikkun* – Rectification. In Kabbalah, these eight Kings are referred to as the “Kings of *Tohu*”. Because these are the “Kings of *Tohu*”, the one must die before the other can reign. This is because the essential points of the world of *Tohu* are incompatible with each other, and cannot coexist. For example, in *Tohu* the essential desire for kindness, though it is composed of intellect and emotions, cannot join with the essential desire for sternness. This is so even though sternness too, is composed of intellect and emotions. The reason for this is because the intellect and emotions of the desire to be kind are absolute kindness and exist solely to justify the kindness,

An example of this is an essential desire for kindness which comes into revelation. Although it includes intellect etc, nonetheless, it cannot join with an essential desire which is its opposite, [such as an essential desire] that comes in an aspect of judgment. [This is the case] even though it too includes intellect, [albeit, one] which essentially leans towards judgment. This is because they do not have a vessel within which two [essential] opposites, such as these, can become inter-included.

We can tangibly observe that a person whose intellect essentially leans towards kindness cannot, in any way, tolerate his opponent, who is a person whose intellect essentially leans towards judgment. (This is analogous to the debates between the academies of Shammai and Hillel, and the like.¹² Even if his opponent poses difficult questions [on his views], which he is unable to logically answer, he will remain silent, but he will [find it] impossible to acknowledge [the correctness of his opponent's opinion]. [Neither will he be able] to retract [his opinion] and align himself with the opposite view, whatsoever.¹³)

However, the aspect of *Tikkun*-Rectification is when a quality comes to spread forth from its [essential] point (*Nekudah*), outside of its essential desire and intellect. In other words, this is like when the attribute of *Chessed*-Kindness gives rise to a desire and intellect to have a kind disposition toward his fellowman, [specifically] because he did him a favor. [This is to say that] it is not because his [own] essential goodness and kindness becomes revealed, as a necessary consequence of the natural goodness in the essence of his soul. On the contrary, he may be cruel by nature. However, he will desire to do [acts of] goodness to someone who was gracious to him and who saved him from death, or the like. [Moreover,] his intellectual disposition towards him will always lean towards [thoughts of] kindness and merit, and the like. This is called **composite** kindness and goodness. It is not at all the simple essential kindness which stems from his [essential] nature. The same [principle] is true of the opposite [quality], which is the composite quality of judgment. Towards his enemy, who has done him much harm, his desire and intellect will lean towards [judging him as being] guilty, even though he [himself] may be a kind and merciful person in his essential nature.

Accordingly, it is understood that there are many different ways in which the composition [of one's desires] are formed, according to the composition of his emotions towards [any given] thing. This is like love or hate which are dependent upon something, as mentioned

whereas the intellect and emotions of the desire to be stern are absolutely stern and exist solely to justify the sternness. Because they are absolute opposites, they are incompatible with each other and cannot coexist simultaneously. The one must be destroyed before the other can be revealed. This brings about chaos, and is called "The death of the kings of *Tohu*". The breakdown of the *sefirot* of *Tohu* is referred to as the "*Shevirat HaKelim* – The Shattering of the Vessels", and will be discussed later in the book.

¹² Now, it must be pointed out that the example of the disputes between the academies of Shammai and Hillel is not a true example of the breakdown in *Tohu* – Chaos. This is because although their views essentially differed from each other, even in regard to the practical application of certain commandments, nonetheless, when it came to actual the fulfillment of the commandments, they followed the view of the majority, as Jewish Law (*Halacha*) prescribes. However, this is not the case in regard to the "Kings of *Tohu*", in which there is no possibility of compromise and cooperation. The one essential desire must "die" before the other one can "reign".

¹³ This shows that the intellect is not a true intellect but is completely bound up with the point of the essential desire.

above. It is therefore possible to find something that, from one angle, he loves, and his desire and intellect are entirely for goodness and kindness [towards that thing], while from another angle of the very same thing itself, he hates it. [This is to say that] his desire and intellect is turned towards harming and punishing [the very same thing]. [Because of this,] it is possible for there to be an intermediary [composite] aspect, which includes *Chessed*-Kindness and *Gevurah*-Judgment together as one.

This is in accordance with the statement¹⁴, “[In the same matter] where His judgment is, [there He enumerates good deeds]”, in regard to King Saul who killed the Gibeonites. [Simultaneously, King David was reprimanded] for not properly eulogizing [King Saul]. [This is an example of] two opposites at once.¹⁵ Similarly, regarding King Solomon’s marriage to the daughter of Pharaoh it states¹⁶, “My anger has been aroused etc”. However, Song of Songs was said in reference to [G-d’s] joy over the building of the Holy Temple, as stated,¹⁷ “On the day of the joy of His heart”. [This is an example of] joy and anger, one thing and its opposite, as one.¹⁸ Similarly, [regarding the flood] it states¹⁹, “[I will not again curse the ground any more for man’s sake;] for the impulse of man’s heart is evil from his youth.” However, previously it was stated,²⁰ “And G-d saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, [and that all the impulse of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.] And G-d repented [for having made man on earth] etc.”²¹ As is explained elsewhere, all of this comes about from the aspect of the qualities of *Tikkun*-Rectification, which are composite aspects. In other words, they spread forth [outside of their essence] and do not result from the essential [nature] alone.²² Therefore, it is possible for there to be an inter-inclusion of one thing with its opposite.

In contrast, [regarding] the *Nekudab*-Point of *Tohu*-Chaos; even when it is made into a division of ten [*sefirot*], [nonetheless] it is only [in the aspect of] a *Sefirah*-Emanation.²³

¹⁴ See Tractate Yevamot 78b, Rashi there. Also see Tzefanya 2:3.

¹⁵ In other words, both judgment and kindness were shown toward a single individual, King Saul.

¹⁶ Jeremiah 32:31, also see Tractate Nidda 70b.

¹⁷ See Zohar, Terumah 143a.

¹⁸ The verse regarding G-d’s anger actually states, “My anger and my fury has been aroused from the day that they built it etc.” The Talmudic Sages stated that this refers to King Solomon’s marriage to the daughter of Pharaoh. However, it was King Solomon who built the Temple, and about that G-d was joyous. These are two opposites towards a single individual.

¹⁹ Genesis 8:21

²⁰ Genesis 6:5,6

²¹ In other words, G-d desired to destroy the earth and brought about the flood because “man is evil” etc. However it was for this very same reason that G-d said he will never again destroy the earth, because “man is evil” etc. Here, we see two opposites results from the very same matter.

²² Because of this the qualities of *Tikkun* are objective and rational, as opposed to the qualities of *Tohu*, which are subjective and irrational.

²³ See footnote 8. The difference between the *Nekudah* and *Sefirah* can be understood in the following manner. Because the *Nekudah* (Point) is an essential, undiluted desire, it becomes completely irrational, often bringing about the opposite of the desired effect. As a result, each desire must be completely eradicated before it can be replaced by a different one. An example of this principle is the case of a very narrow minded person who is incapable of compromise. When such a person is kind, his kindness knows no restraint. He will be indiscriminately kind to everyone and he will be excessive in this kindness. Eventually, though, his kindness will, of necessity, break down because he will find himself being severely taken advantage of, and will become completely drained, both monetarily and emotionally. Such a person might then swing to the opposite extreme, becoming overly suspicious of others, excessively callous of

[However,] it is not a *Partzuf Adam*-Stature of Man, wherein there is the aspect of the inter-inclusion of all opposites.²⁴

Rather, it is specifically in the aspect of *Tikkun*-Rectification, in which each point spreads forth, out of its essence, that they can become inter-included through the abundance of many different vessels, within which they are composed.²⁵ This will suffice for those of understanding.

This, then, is [the meaning of] the statement in *Sefer Yetzirah*, “He took fire and water and mixed them one with the other”. In other words, [this is] the aspect of the composition of fire and water [together], specifically **not** [as they are] their essential state,²⁶ as explained elsewhere at length.

their needs and extremely unkind. This approach too, will eventually break down, when people begin disliking and avoiding him because of his mean spirit. The above principle applies when the desire comes in the form of an essential point, in which the intellect and emotions are “slaves” that are “driven” to fulfill it in an absolute manner in which there are no compromises. This may be compared to the uncompromising fanaticism of a Moslem fundamentalist terrorist who is hell bent on pushing his agenda no matter what the outcome. This level of *Tohu* is called *Nekudah* (Point). Besides the *Nekudah* (Point) there is another level in *Tohu*, called *Sefirah*. This is when the point divides into ten recognizable traits. Because of this, there is the appearance of rational behavior. It **appears** to be an objective, reasonable intellect which is open to compromise. In truth, however, here too the intellect, emotions and actions exist merely to facilitate the desire that drives them. An example of this is a Christian missionary. He talks and acts as if he is an objective, reasonable person, but in reality he is neither reasonable nor objective. In reality he is completely bent on converting you to his religion and his speech and actions are there merely to facilitate this. This is why he knocked on your door in the first place. Though it appears that a reasonable conversation is taking place, if he is refuted in debate, he will automatically revert back to the essential point of the irrational desire in which there is no compromise and no recognizable intellect at all, such as saying, “It is true because I know it in my heart”, etc. In summary, *Tohu* is when the light (revelation) of the desire is too strong for the vessels and overpowers them, so that they can no longer be objective but rather become completely unrestrained and driven by the desire.

²⁴ *Tikkun* (rectification) is also called by the term *Partzuf*, which means “face” or “personality”. This is because in *Tikkun* there are recognizable divisions of the *sefirot* into ten, each of which is divided into subsequent divisions of ten etc. The concept of a *partzuf* is the inclusion of all opposites, like a human being, who has many facets to his personality, all of which join to make him who and what he is. Besides this, his physical body too is made up of many parts with different and even opposite natures and functions, and yet, not only do they not contradict each other, but they work in conjunction as a unified system. Each organ performs the function it is suited for while allowing the others to perform their function. Furthermore, in order to perform properly, every organ depends on the others for its health and vitality, for example, if a person has nagging foot pains, this will affect his brain and he will have difficulty concentrating on his studies. This mutual coexistence and symbiosis is not possible in *Tohu*, where the *sefirot* exist as pure essences and are therefore incompatible with their counterparts. It is specifically in *tikkun* that mutual coexistence and symbiosis can exist, since in *tikkun* each point comes about as an extension outside of its essence. It is specifically then that they can be included one with the other through the many various types of vessels for expression, of which they are composed etc. The vessel integrates something of each *sefirah* (as will be explained later). This being the case, they all find expression in it.

²⁵ See previous footnote. This will be understood more clearly later in the book, with a thorough explanation of the inter-inclusion of the vessels.

²⁶ As they exist essentially, it is impossible for these two opposites to coexist. However, the physical water which we have in our world is a composite which possesses something of the element of fire within it. Likewise, physical fire possesses something of the element of water within it. In truth, it would be impossible for a physical world to exist, altogether, from the essential desires of *Tohu* – Chaos. (This is as explained by the Ari’zal and the Alter Rebbe that the statement that “G-d created worlds and destroyed them” refers not to the physical world, which is a composite world, the source of which is *Tikkun*-

End of Chapter Twenty

Rectification, but rather, it refers to the worlds of *Tohu* – Chaos, in which one *sefirah* cannot coexist with the other and therefore each *sefirah* must “die” before the next one can “reign”, as previously explained.) Rather, our physical world is a composite world, in which all the *sefirot* are interrelated and interdependent and, therefore, one *sefirah* and its opposite can join.