

Shaar HaYichud The Gate of Unity

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Chapter Twenty Three

[We must] now [understand] the aspect of *Keter* [more] particularly, [to understand] how it is the aspect of an intermediary. In its inner aspect it possesses something of the last level of the Emanator,¹ while in its external aspect it is the root and head of the Emanated,² as stated³ in *Etz Chaim*.⁴ Moreover, it is known that the first three *sefirot*⁵ of *Atik Yomin* are separate and exalted and do not become invested within the emanated. This is [the meaning of the statement,⁶] “[The King who alone is exalted...] who transcends the days of the world”.⁷ Because of this it is called “*Atik Yomin* – The Ancient of Days”. [*Atik*] shares the same etymological root as “*HaMa’atik Hareem* – Who **removes** Mountains”.⁸ [In other words, *Atik Yomin*] is **removed** from the days of the world.⁹ Now, all this is well known.

Now, we must understand this in a manner of particulars, since *Atik Yomin* and *Arich Anpin* are considered to be one,¹⁰ except that in general, the aspect of *Atik Yomin* is considered to be the end of the Infinite World, whereas the aspect of *Arich Anpin* is the root and beginning of the Emanated [worlds], as stated¹¹ in *Etz Chaim*.¹²

As is known, the explanation of these matters is that these [two levels of *Keter*] are the aspects of pleasure and desire.¹³ Now, we observe that within every desire there is a

¹ This refers to the aspect of *Adam Kadmon*, as explained in chapter nineteen.

² This refers to the world of *Atzilut* – Emanation.

³ See *Etz Chaim*, Shaar 42 (*Shaar Drushei ABY”A*), Chapter 1.

⁴ In other words, *Keter* is like a link in a chain, the top of which is connected to the link above it, and the bottom of which is connected to the link below it.

⁵ In Hebrew these are called the, “*Gimmel Reishin* – Three Heads”, and refer to the three upper *sefirot* of *Keter*. These are *Keter*, *Chochmah* and *Binah* of *Keter*.

⁶ See *Yotzer* blessing.

⁷ The particulars of the investment of *Atik Yomin* within *Arich Anpin* and the world of *Atzilut* – Emanation, will be explained in the next chapter. However, generally speaking, the meaning of the verse is as follows: The name *Atik Yomin* – Ancient of Days really has two parts, “Ancient”, which means “Removed” and “Days”. As mentioned previously, “days” always refers to the seven lower emotional *sefirot*, which correspond to the days of the world. Therefore, it is understood that the seven lower *sefirot* of *Atik Yomin* have some relationship with the “days” of the worlds, while the upper three *sefirot* remain “Removed” and transcend all Creation. They are unlimited, i.e. above “time” and “days”. This then is the meaning of the reference to the statement, “Who transcends the days of the worlds etc”.

⁸ Job 9:5

⁹ That is, it is still completely unlimited, and above “days” and time etc.

¹⁰ That is, they are two aspects of the single entity of *Keter*.

¹¹ See *Etz Chaim*, Shaar 42 (*Shaar Drushei ABY”A*), Chapter 1.

¹² See footnote four, and the analogy of a chain.

¹³ That is to say, *Atik Yomin* corresponds to pleasure, while *Arich Anpin* corresponds to desire.

pleasure, and if not for the pleasure there would be no desire for the thing at all. This is like the desire for wealth or honor. If not for the pleasure of [wealth or honor], he would have no desire for them at all. Therefore, seemingly, pleasure is the internal aspect of desire.¹⁴

However, we observe the opposite as well, that if there is no desire there is no pleasure. That is, he will derive no pleasure whatsoever from something he has no desire for. If so, then desire is internal to pleasure.

What we see is that the one cannot exist without the other, because desire cannot exist without pleasure, and pleasure cannot exist without desire. According to this, we must say that the two are one, because it is only by means of their being bound together as one, that [*Keter*] exists. All this [holds true] whether it is the simple essential pleasure and desire, or whether it is a composite pleasure and desire, that the soul spreads forth and is drawn after, even though it is not of [the soul's] essence, but is [rather] a separate thing from it.¹⁵

Generally, we see that the nature of the soul is to be drawn after something pleasurable, to the point that its entire essence could be drawn after [it] and invested in it. [This is] like a composite pleasure for a specific [thing], which is separate [from the essence], such as honor, wealth, insight, or the emotional [traits] of kindness, judgment,¹⁶ conquest, and self aggrandizement, or the like. [This is true of] anything that the soul craves, such as lusting for all worldly pleasures, and the like. Although none of these [desires] are in an aspect of an essential *Heyulie* pleasure and it is only that the soul is drawn after them and lusts for them, nonetheless, from this we see that the essence of the soul is in an aspect of a *Heyulie* of pleasure. It is for this reason that it is drawn to composite pleasures and flees from pain, which is the opposite of pleasure.

These [two, pleasure and pain,] are two lines which are equally counterbalanced, literally.¹⁷ Commensurate to the spreading forth of the soul to become filled with light from pleasurable things, so will its light become completely diminished and withdrawn by pain and anguish.¹⁸ From this we see that the essence of its being is pleasure. However, the principle [proof for this] is from the fact that it¹⁹ will flee and become withdrawn due to pain. This is a

¹⁴ In other words, it appears that pleasure is the cause of desire, and therefore the more inner of the two.

¹⁵ This means that the two are interdependent and necessary to each other, whether it is a simple essential pleasure and desire, like the desire and pleasure to live, or whether it is a composite desire and pleasure, such as the desire for wealth, which is not an essential desire.

¹⁶ Or... love and hate etc.

¹⁷ This has already been explained at great length in chapter six.

¹⁸ Commensurate to a person's pleasure in any given thing, to that degree will be his pain in the absence of this pleasure. The lack of the pleasure comes about because of an opposing force, so, for example, one's pleasure in being alive is not revealed until an "opposing force" comes to bring his life to an end (G-d forbid). It is specifically then, that his pleasure in being alive becomes revealed as a consequence of the agony he feels in its opposite. For example, a person does not realize or appreciate how much he enjoys breathing until he no longer can breathe. Of course, this is not to say that he did not appreciate and delight in breathing prior to this. However, usually a person is not conscious of the pleasure of breathing. What reveals this pleasure is the opposing force, when he cannot breathe. From this we see that the pleasure in something and the agony experienced when it is missing, are literally commensurate to each other. According to how much pleasure he has in any given thing, will be how much agony he will have when he does not have it.

¹⁹ The soul...

greater proof [of this phenomenon].²⁰ It is for this reason that the early Kabbalists decreed and stated that pleasure is considered to be of the essence of the soul, and they stated²¹ that “There is nothing loftier than pleasure”. However, this is not [entirely] true. Rather, the essence of the soul becomes **filled** with great pleasure, and its entire essence is drawn after it, to the point that it may expire when it is almost entirely drawn into it.²² This is like [the verse,²³] “my soul expires etc”. The reverse is likewise true, that it will expire and its light will be completely and absolutely diminished by the intensity of extreme pain [or anguish], as is known.²⁴

Now, an even clearer proof [of this] is from what we observe regarding even the particular powers of the soul; that it is mainly the pleasure in a particular power which establishes its existence at all times. For example, [regarding] the power of the quality of kindness; although it is essential and natural in the nature of [one who is] good to bestow goodness, [nonetheless,] its principal existence [comes about from] the pleasure, in that he takes pleasure in influencing goodness. The true existence of his good nature is that by nature he takes great pleasure from [bestowing] goodness, to the point that the main vitality of his soul comes about through the pleasure [that he derives by doing acts of] goodness and kindness.²⁵

The reverse is true of someone who is cruel by nature. This only means that his entire vitality is the pleasure [that he derives] from perpetrating evil and cruelty, as is known. Likewise, the primary existence of the quality of Victory is the immense pleasure [which he derives], to the point that the entire vitality of his soul is drawn into being triumphant over his fellow.²⁶ Should he not be victorious, he may [actually] become ill.²⁷ Similarly, this is the case with each and every particular quality, including Insight (*Chochmah*) and Desire (*Ratzon*). Their principal existence and source is the pleasure [of them], as is clearly observable that without the pleasure in conceptualization a person will not have the power to innovate any insight.²⁸ This is in accordance with the statement,²⁹ “Were it not... for the pleasure in

²⁰ The proof from the fact that the soul flees and withdraws from pain is greater than the proof from pleasure. This is because, usually, matters that give us the greatest pleasure are not consciously felt. For example, the essential pleasure of being alive is usually not felt or appreciated until one’s very life is at stake, G-d forbid. It is specifically pain, which is the opposite of pleasure, which is the great indicator of where one’s pleasure lies.

²¹ See *Sefer Yetzirah*, Chapter 2, *Mishna* 4.

²² The very essence of the soul itself cannot be described as “pleasure”, for it is a quintessential singularity which is beyond any description or definition, whatsoever. Rather, the essence of the soul is only **drawn after** pleasure and finds its expression by means of pleasure, nonetheless, it itself is beyond pleasure, and does not require pleasure to exist. Rather, it is specifically pleasure which draws the light of the soul into the body, thus enlivening it with great vitality. On the other hand, pain and anguish causes the light of the soul to withdraw, into itself.

²³ Psalms 84:3

²⁴ This is because, as mentioned above (and in chapter 6), pleasure and pain are two sides of the same coin.

²⁵ In other words, “the nature of kindness and goodness” is the same as saying “the nature to **enjoy** kindness and goodness”. The same principle holds true in regard to any other qualities and characteristics.

²⁶ His competitor...

²⁷ An example of this can be seen in athletes, whose entire life is invested in “winning” the Olympic gold medal etc.

²⁸ It is clearly observable that specifically those who derive pleasure from the subject of their studies will have new insights in that subject. This is because it is, specifically, pleasure which arouses the faculty of *Chochmah*-Insight (or any other faculty or quality). One who does not take pleasure in his studies will certainly not have insights in the subject.

[Torah] study etc”.³⁰ [Moreover], as is known regarding the matter of,³¹ “A man’s wisdom illuminates his face”,³² that it is the “*Lachloochit* – Moisture” within which is the *Heyulie* for pleasure, which is the source for the conceptualization of any concept.³³

However, it is only in regard to desire that we observe that without desire there cannot be pleasure.³⁴ We find this [phenomenon] even in all the particular qualities. For example, if [a person] does not desire kindness or judgment, he will have no pleasure in them at all.³⁵ Similarly, if he does not desire to become intelligent, he will find no pleasure in [intellectual pursuits] at all.³⁶ Likewise, if he does not at all desire victory, he will have no pleasure in victory. [The same is true of] self aggrandizement or all other worldly pleasures, such as wealth or honor and the like. Without desire, there is no pleasure in them, whatsoever. In other words, because this entire matter is that since the whole essence of the soul is drawn after the pleasure and desire,³⁷ therefore, all its particular powers also [derive] their principal existence from the pleasure and the desire.³⁸

The absence of [pleasure and desire in any particular matter] is the pain of the matter, this being the opposite of pleasure. If something [stands in] opposition to [his] desire, although, [in and of itself], it is not [necessarily] a painful thing, he will automatically be agonized by it.

²⁹ See *Zohar, Toldot* 138a.

³⁰ The *Zohar* relates: Rabbi Yitzchak the son of Rabbi Yossi was traveling from Kaputkia to Lud. He encountered Rabbi Yehuda. Rabbi Yitzchak said to him, “Say that our associates, the Sages of the Mishnah, should be awoken to this matter; that the *Yetzer Hara* (lust) should be banished from the world, except during the time of marital relations.” [Rabbi Yehuda] answered him, “By your life! The *Yetzer Hara* (lust) is necessary for the world, just as rain [is necessary] for the world. If not for the *Yetzer Hara* (lust), there would be no pleasure in learning [Torah].” In other words, the pleasure in study (to the point that he lusts for it) is its **most** necessary component.

³¹ Ecclesiastes 8:1

³² He derives great pleasure from his studies. Therefore “it illuminates his face”. If he did not truly enjoy it, he would not study.

³³ It is explained (Tanya, chapter 1) that the foundation of water is the source of all pleasures. Moreover, it was explained previously, that in order to have a flash of insight one must be “sublimated” to the subject. This sublimation was called “The hidden pleasure”. That is, he is **so** engrossed in the subject that he becomes totally unaware of himself. All he is aware of is the subject in which he is occupied. Moreover, he is so totally engrossed in it, that he is not even aware of the pleasure of it. This is why it is referred to as “**hidden**” pleasure. As soon as he becomes conscious of himself and of the pleasure, he actually loses the deep concentration of being engrossed in the subject and he will lose the pleasure. It is this “sublimation” and “hidden pleasure” of the entire self to the subject matter which is the source of **all** insights.

³⁴ That is, all the other qualities require pleasure in order for them to exist. However, the quality of desire is equal to that of pleasure, and can actually be the cause for pleasure, as will be explained. In contrast, all other qualities are the effects of these two, pleasure and desire, which are actually one, as mentioned above.

³⁵ An example of this is a parent who must discipline his child, even though he really does not desire to be stern. Therefore, he certainly derives no pleasure from this.

³⁶ This is true even though he may usually derive pleasure from intellectualization, if he is involved in something else which is important to him, during that time he will have no desire for intellectualization, and will therefore derive no pleasure from it.

³⁷ Parenthesis of the Rebbe: (For, [just as with pleasure,] the desire also draws forth the entire soul, to the point where it can expire because of its desire for something, as is known.)

³⁸ In other words, just as generally the two are interdependent, so too particularly, the two are interdependent. This is true even of the tiniest particular in all existence. In order for it to have any existence at all, G-d must have a particular desire and pleasure for it specifically, from which it receives its vitality. If this were not the case, it could not exist.

For example, if he desires to love his enemy, he will delight in him. On the other hand, if he no [longer] desires one whom he does love, he will be agonized by him.³⁹ Similarly, if he enjoys something which is hateful and damaging to him, he will desire it, or if he is pained by something that he loves, he will no [longer] desire it. This is because the desire and the pleasure are one essence, and it is impossible to know which precedes [the other]. At times the one is internal and the other is external, while at [other] times the opposite [is true]. [However,] the one cannot be found without the other, for if there is no pleasure there is no desire, and if there is no desire there is no pleasure. [This is the case] whether it is a simple [desire or pleasure] or whether it is a composite [desire or pleasure], as mentioned above. This will suffice for those of understanding.

End of Chapter Twenty Three

³⁹ For example, if at the moment he desires to be alone, then even the presence of someone who he loves will be disturbing to him, because he has no desire for this person at the present time.