

Shaar HaYichud The Gate of Unity

By
The Holy Rabbi Dov Ber of Lubavitch

Translated and Annotated by Shimon Markel
Edited by Rabbi A. Markel
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Chapter Twenty Nine

Now, [it must be understood], even in the *Hitbonenut* – contemplation of the Lights and Vessels (*Orot V'Kelim*) of [the world of] *Atzilut*, in a more particular manner, that the primary intent is only [to understand] the matter of “He and His life force are one, [and He] and His organs are one”, that, in truth, there is no difference between “He and His life force are one” and “He and His organs are one”.¹ This is because even though the Lights are “*Bli Mah* – without whatness”, [that is, they are intangible], while the Vessels are in an aspect of “*Yesh* - somethingness” [and are therefore tangible], nevertheless, from the angle of the Essence of the Emanator, He actually made the root for the existence of the Vessels before making the root for the existence of the Lights.² The fact that the Vessel comes about from the “thickening” of the Light [poses no contradiction to this], since the root and source [of the vessels] preceded this.³ This [source] is called the “Simple [Primal] Matter – *Chomer Pashoot*” or “The *Heyulie* Matter” which precedes the “Form – *Tzoorab*” [of the Lights].⁴

¹ This is to say that in their Essential source, there is no difference between the two matters at all. This is because, as will soon be explained, the source of the Lights (*Orot*) is from *Chessed* of the Infinite Light, while the source of the Vessels (*Kelim*) is from *Gevurah* of the Infinite Light. However, as explained in chapters 10 and 11, the two qualities of *Chessed* and *Gevurah* of *Atzmoot*-The Essence, are literally one and the same Essential power. That is, they are so totally and completely one with the Essence of G-d that they cannot even be considered as being “unified” with each other, as explained before at length.

² As will soon be explained, the simple primal matter (*Chomer Pashoot*) which is the source of the Vessels (*Kelim*) is the aspect of the *Reshimu* – Impression. This source of the tangibility of the Vessels precedes the source of the Lights and is from the aspect of the radiance of the *Kav* – Line.

³ As explained previously, the Vessel is created from the “thickening” of the Lights. This is to say that the Vessel is created through the merging of intangible Light (*Ohr*) with the tangible Substance (*Chomer*). When these two merge together a Vessel is created. However, the obvious question is, “Where did the substance of the vessels come from to begin with, so that it can merge with the lights?” The answer is that the “Simple primal substance – *Chomer Pashoot*” (of the *Reshimu*) which is the source of the vessels, actually preceded the radiance of the light of the *Kav* – Line.

⁴ Although the Lights are intangible and are therefore “close” to the Essence of the Emanator, while the Vessels which are tangible, are therefore “distant” from it, nonetheless, this is only from our perspective as created beings. From His perspective however, the source of the Vessels was made before the source of the Lights. The source of the vessels is the Simple *Heyulie* Substance (*Chomer HaPashoot HaHeyulie*) which preceded the Form (*Tzurah*). We therefore see that from the angle of the revelation of the chaining down of the worlds (*Seder Hishstalshehut*), the Lights precede the Vessels and are closer to the Essence of the Emanator, but in regard to their source, the Vessels preceded the Lights. This indicates in relation to the True Essence of G-d, the two are actually completely equal, literally, and that they both chain down from the True Essence of G-d equally. This is the meaning of the Talmudic opinion that, “The heavens and the earth were created as one”, i.e. they are literally equal in relation to the Essence of G-d. (See *Likkutei Biurim* of Rabbi Hillel of Paritch, Chapter 29.)

The explanation of this matter is known, and may be understood through the well know preface regarding the matter of vessels which actually limit. That is, there are two kinds of limitations (*G'vool*):

The first is the essential potential power to limit. An example of this are the vessels of the brain which limits or the eye which limits, and the like. However, this is still only in potential rather than in actuality. For example, in the hand there is the potential power to limit every physical movement before it actually limits any movement.⁵

Now, although the actual revealed limitation is, literally, exactly like the spiritual potential power to limit of the hand, which is the root and source for the actual limitation, nevertheless, there is no comparison between the potential power to limit and the actual limitation [itself].⁶ Firstly, one is spiritual and essential while the other is physical and separate from the essence. Secondly, the potential power to limit is not actual limitation. Rather, [the person] limits his strength according to his will and choice, and it is [therefore] not a limitation of necessity, that is to say, [it is not] that he does not have the power to spread forth further. Rather, he does not desire to spread forth further. [Therefore], this is only [that which] makes limitations, while [it itself] is not truly limited. [In other words, it is not] like an actualized limitation, which is truly limited. (This is in accordance with what is explained elsewhere regarding the matter of the innerness of the vessels and the externality of the vessels, as will be explained with the help of G-d.)⁷

[Through this] it may likewise be understood [regarding how it is] in the upper realms, in the root and source of the vessels which limit the light. That is, [we may understand] the source and root of their power to limit, which is drawn from the same Essence from which the lights themselves are drawn.⁸ For example, the source of the existence of the light of a desire is from the concealed essential source of all desires. Now, the potential power to limit is also drawn from there. This limits the strength of the spreading forth of the light of the desire, so as not to spread forth further [than desired]. This is so that the “reasoning for the desire” could come about.⁹ This is because if the power and the light of the desire would not cease, the “reasoning for the desire” could never come about.¹⁰

⁵ That is, this is still the essential potential power to limit of the hand, and is not yet an actual limitation of any specific movement of the hand.

⁶ For example, although the **actual** limitation of an actual specific movement is exactly like what was determined in the potential power to limit, nonetheless, the two are not comparable.

⁷ This will be explained in the next chapter, with G-d's help.

⁸ In other words, just as the Lights are emanated from the essential desire and *Heyulie* power of the Essence of G-d to emanate, so likewise, the various limitations of the Vessels are also drawn from the essential potential *Heyulie* power to limit. Moreover, as explained in chapters ten and eleven, not only are these two powers equal, but they literally are one and the same power, except that from the perspective of the source of the Lights, G-d is called “the True Nothing – *Ain Ha'Ameete*”, while from the perspective of the Vessels He is called “the True Something – *Yesh Ha'Ameete*”.

⁹ This refers to *Chochmah* of *Keter*, which is generally called the “hidden reasoning for the desire”, as previously explained.

¹⁰ This rule applies not only to the Desire – *Keter*, and “the Reasoning for the Desire – *Chochmah* of *Keter*” but also to the entire chaining down of the worlds. As mentioned before, the Essential inner light of the *sefirot* is a completely intangible “nothingness”. In order for this light to be drawn down to a lesser level, self-limitation is necessary. An example of this is when a person has a desire for something. In order for his desire to be conveyed to a recipient, such as the craftsman who will construct the object of his desire, he

This is controlled by the *Kav HaMidah*-The Measuring Line, which makes all the actual limitations of the lights. In the same manner it makes all the actual limitations of the vessels of the ten *sefirot* which limit, and dictates how they will actually limit.¹¹ However, their root and source is not the aspect of true limitation, but rather, it determines the type of limitation.¹²

(This comes from the *Kav HaMidah* – The Measuring Line, from the aspect of *Gevurah* of *Ohr Ein Sof*- Sternness of the Infinite Light. This is the power to gather in, which is similar the power to spread out, since they are two lines of equal balance.¹³ This is because [being that G-d is] “All Capable” (*Kol Yachol*) [He therefore] also possesses the power to limit (as explained elsewhere).¹⁴ It was explained above¹⁵ that this is the aspect of the *Reshimu* – Impression, which is the source of the limitations of the vessels of the ten *sefirot* of [the world] of *Atzilut*. The aspect of the *Kav* – Line, which is drawn from the *Reshimu* – Impression, is the source of all the Lights, as is explained elsewhere at length.)

Therefore, although the aspect of the Vessels of [the world of] *Atzilut* actually limit¹⁶ through the aspect of the [four] names *A”v*, *Sa”G*, [*Ma”H* and *Ba”N*] which are called “Letters”,

must limit his desire and define it. For example, he must state, “I want a table”. If he does not say, “I want a table” and instead only says “make *it* for me”, the craftsman cannot make anything. Rather, in order for the light of this desire to be expressed, it must be limited within the “vessels” and “letters” of description, and he must state, “I would like you to make a table for me”. Without this self-imposed limitation, of limiting himself to this specific definition and these specific words, there could be no transition from one level to the next, and no expression of his inner desire to the outside. Rather, only the simple self-expression of his essence itself could exist. This concept will be discussed later on the subject of the “letters”.

¹¹ This was explained in chapter fifteen.

¹² This is to say that the source of the actual limitations is only the potential *Heyulie* power and ability to Limit. However, this power itself is actually an infinite power, and is not limited whatsoever. Therefore, although the actual limitation is bound to the *Heyulie* power to limit, nonetheless, the two are of an entirely different category and quality, as explained above.

¹³ We explained before that the *Kav* – Line is the intermediary infinite conduct of “*HaGadol*, *HaGibor*, *V’HaNora*” (*Chessed* is the infinite revelation (*Ohr Ein Sof*), *Gevurah* is the absolute concealment (*Tzimtzum* and *Reshimu*) and *Tiferet* is the *Kav*-Line, which unites these two absolutes to bring about infinite levels of limited revelation between the two extremes. We see that all three powers are infinite. Here, however, it appears that the Rebbe is calling the *Kav* – Line, *Gevurah* of the Infinite Light (*Ohr Ein Sof*). Rather, it must be understood that the *Kav*-Line bears two properties, the power to reveal and the power to limit. Here the Rebbe is specifically referring to the power of the *Kav*-Line to limit and measure, which is why it is called *Kav HaMidah* – The **Measuring** Line. This ability of the *Kav*-Line to measure and limit, is drawn from the *Tzimtzum* and *Reshimu*, which is the power of *Gevurah* and self-restraint of the *Kav*-Line, is drawn from the aspect of the revelation of the Infinite Light (*Chessed* of the *Ohr Ein Sof*). Now, these two lines are literally one power, and are in absolute equilibrium, as was explained at length in chapter 15.

¹⁴ See *Avodat HaKodesh*, Section 1, Chapter 8. Also see *Derech Emunah* (by the same author, Rabbi Meir Ibn Gabai), Chapter 2.

¹⁵ See Chapter 13.

¹⁶ This is to say that in comparison to the potential *Heyulie* ability to limit as it is in the *Kav* and *Reshimu*, the vessels of the world of *Atzilut* are considered to be actual limited vessels. In other words, they actually limit the Lights (*Orot*) of the world of *Atzilut* by means of the four names (i.e. limiting descriptions) *A”v*, *Sa”G*, *Ma”H* and *Ba”N* etc. (However, the vessels of *Atzilut* are only considered to be matters of actual

however, this is only due to the potential power to make limitations within the Essence of the Emanator [Himself].¹⁷ This, then, is the meaning of “He and His organs are one”, i.e. that [the Vessels] come about from the power of the *Ein Sof* - The Infinite One Himself, in the same way that, “He and His life force are one”, in regard to the aspect of the Lights.

(However, in truth, even the aspect of the vessels of the ten *sefirot* of [the world of] *Atzilut* are potential limitation (*Koach HaGvool*) rather than actual limitation (*Gvool B'Po'el*). It is only when the light and influence is limited to [create] “something” from “nothing” in [the worlds of] *Briyah*, *Yetzirah* and *Asiyah*, that they can be considered to be actual limitation (*Gvool B'Po'el Mamash*), as will be explained with the help of G-d.¹⁸)

According to the above, when one focuses his intention on the names of *A"v*, *Sa"G* [etc.] which are in an aspect of vessels which actually limit, this itself [constitutes] focusing his intention upon the source of the names of *A"v*, *Sa"G* etc, which are the source of the Light of [the world of] *Atzilut*. (This is the Essential Name – *Shem Ha'Etzem*, which indicates the essence of the source, as previously explained.) In other words, [his intention] is [focused] on the source of the existence of the Vessels, [about which it states] “He and His organs are one”, as explained above.¹⁹ This is because the actual limitation (*Gvool B'Po'el*) is unified with the potential power to limit (*Koach HaGvool*), which brings about this actual limitation. [This

limitation in comparison to the essential *Heyulie* power to limit. However, as explained before, even the vessels of *Atzilut* are intangible and are not yet considered **actual** limitation.)

¹⁷ In other words, the vessels have a source in the Essence of the Emanator **independent** of the Lights. They receive their limitations according to the Essential *Heyulie* ability and desire to Limit, as it is in the Essence of the Infinite One (*Atzmoot Ohr Ein Sof*). This is because, as explained above, a Being who is **truly** infinite also possesses the ability to limit. Nevertheless, His ability to limit is also infinite and in no way limits **Him**. Rather, G-d's power to limit is the **direct** source of all limitations throughout the entire chaining down of the worlds. (In other words, there are two separate types of chaining down. There is the chaining down of the lights and the chaining down of the vessels. Now, the substance of the vessels is literally the same the *Heyulie* Substance mentioned above and derives its existence directly from there. In contrast, the form (*Tzurah*) and vitality of the vessels is from the aspect of the chaining down of the lights. However, both these aspects are literally rooted in the very Essence of the Infinite Light, and as they relate to Him, they are literally one and the same power, as explained above. This explains why the Zohars states, “He and His organs are one” and “He and His life force are one”, as two separate statements, rather than expressing them as one statement, such as, “He and His organs and life force are one”. This is to teach us that, contrary to what we would have thought from the statement that the vessels come about from the “thickening” of the light, we must understand that this only refers to the **form** of the vessels. However, the **substance** of the vessels exists independently of the light and receives its existence directly from the Essence of the Emanator just as the light receives its existence directly from the Emanator.

¹⁸ That is, even the external “letters” and Vessels of the world of *Atzilut* are still completely intangible, just as the flash of insight from *Chochmah* to *Binah* (*Omek HaMoosag*) is still completely intangible. Rather, they are only the **source** for the actual “somethingness” and tangibility of the worlds of *Briyah*, *Yetzirah* and *Asiyah*. This was already explained in the preceding chapters, and will be explained further later.

¹⁹ In other words, when a person grasps the external vessels of the world of *Atzilut*, he is grasping the “actual limitation” of the Lights. However, this “actual limitation” is literally exactly according to what was determined in the essential **source** of the vessels, within the essential *Heyulie* ability to limit. This is because although there is no comparison whatsoever between the actual limitation and the potential power of limitation, nonetheless, the actual limitation is literally bound up and connected to its source, which is this ability to limit. Moreover, the actual limitation is literally exactly according to the essential desire to limit in this specific manner. In this respect there is no difference between it and the essential desire even to a hair's breadth, so to speak. Therefore, the external names of the world of *Atzilut* are, nevertheless, still considered to be part and parcel of the Essential Name (*Shem HaEtzem*).

may be understood] by way of analogy, from the potential power to limit of the hand which is unified and bound to the actual limitation of the movement, as mentioned above. (This is most certainly true of the Vessels of the Brain, Heart [and Liver], which cannot yet be considered to be actual limitation (*Gvool B'Po'el*), as explained above. Rather, they limit and describe the Lights only so that they may be recognizable as a tangible existence. Nonetheless, the [Vessels] are rooted in the Essence just as the Lights are rooted in the Essence. These [two powers] are equally balanced, and literally have a single source, that [source being] the aspect of *Ein Sof* - The Infinite One, literally. This is because just as the Infinite Light spreads down [without limit], so too it [exists above] without end.²⁰ These [two powers, i.e. the infinite ability to reveal and the infinite ability to restrain revelation] are *Chessed* and *Gevurah* of the *Atzmoot* – Kindness and Sternness of the Essence.

However, regarding the Lights and Vessels [as they are] in their source, it is the reverse of [how they are] in their revealed aspect. This is because as they are revealed, the aspect of restraint - *Tzimtzum* is in the Lights, and the kindnesses of spreading forth, is in the Vessels. This is because even though the [Vessels] limit [the Lights, nonetheless,] all spreading down [of influence] comes about specifically through them. However, in their source, the opposite is true. The restraint-*Tzimtzum* is in the *Reshimu*-Impression, which makes potential limitation, while the spreading forth of kindnesses-*Chassadim* is in the lights, which comes about from the aspect of the *Kav*-Line. This is explained elsewhere, and will suffice for those of understanding.²¹

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²⁰ That is, just as G-d can infinitely reveal the Infinite Light (*Chessed*), likewise, He can infinitely contain and withdraw its revelation into Himself (*Gevurah*).

²¹ In other words, from our perspective as the recipients, the Infinite Light (*Chessed*) is restrained and concealed (*Tzimtzum* and *Gevurah*), and that which is revealed to us is only comes through the limiting vessels (*Gevurah*). This is to say that to us, the right (*Chessed*) is concealed and is the left (*Gevurah*), is revealed, and, as was explained before, revelation being an expression of *Chessed*. In contrast, in their source it is the opposite. The right (*Chessed*) is the revelation of the Infinite Light and the left (*Gevurah*) is the *Tzimtzum* and *Reshimu*. All of this may be understood through the analogy of two people. When one person stands facing another, to the other person, the right hand is on the left and the left hand is on his right. However, from the angle of the person himself, right is right and left is left.