

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
Copyright © 2004

Chapter Ten

We must now understand all the particulars of the four worlds of *ABY”A*¹ in a specific manner. In other words, we must understand all the specifics in the matter of the ten *sefirot* of *ABY”A*, their lights and vessels, and their vestments, one within the other. Moreover, we must understand all their particulars, even how each *sefirah* divides into its particular specifics. For example, [we must understand] even the aspect of *Chessed* of *Malchut* of *Chochmah* of *Malchut* of *Chessed*, and the like. [Furthermore, we must understand] the matter of the unifications and inclusions [of the *sefirot*] in the aspect of the *Keter* of each world. [*Keter*] is the aspect of the intermediary between the upper world and the world which is below it. Briefly, this general principle is known, that from the aspect of *Malchut* of the upper [world], there comes about the *Keter* of the lower [world]. This [principle] applies even to the highest levels².

However, all those who contemplate should first contemplate upon the primal source, which is called³ “the source of everything” (*Mekora D’Koola*). That is, [he should contemplate] the Essence of the Infinite Light (*Atzmoat Ohr Ein Sof*), [even] before the aforementioned first *Tzimtzum* which is called “the empty place” (*Makom Panooy*). There too [he should contemplate] in a particular manner, specifically. This [contemplation] is known as the “elongation of the *אהד* – One”⁴, [signifying that one is to contemplate] upon the Simple Unity (*אהדות הפשוטה*), specifically.

¹ This is an acronym for the four worlds, *Atzilut*, *Briyah*, *Yetzirah* and *Asiyah*.

² This paragraph is like an introduction to this second part of the book. The Mittler Rebbe will now begin to explain the entire order of the chaining down of the worlds, from their very beginning to their very end. This will be done in a manner of particulars. That is, the particulars of each stage and *sefirah* of the entire chaining down will all be explained. In this way, a person who toils to understand the given explanations will be capable of understanding and applying the principles he has learned even to the fifth power, and further, as mentioned above. As explained in preceding chapters, the purpose of knowing the explanations and order of the chaining down in a manner of particulars is so that the depth of it will be brought close to a person in an inner way. The general explanation and essential point has already been explained in chapters seven, eight and nine. Although the Mittler Rebbe will not explain every single particular detail, since such a book would have to be infinite, he nonetheless sets forth the entire knowledge necessary for one to understand all the particulars. This is as he states in the beginning of chapter five.

³ See Zohar Bereshit 33a. (*Mekora D’Koola*)

⁴ In the *Shema* recital, when reciting the verse, “Hear ‘o Israel, the L-rd our G-d, the L-rd is one”, Jewish law dictates that one is to lengthen the word “One – *אהד*”. During this time, he is to contemplate G-d’s absolute unity. This is learned out from the word “One – *אהד*” itself. The first letter ‘א – *Aleph* is the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and has a numerical value of 1. Furthermore, it represents the “*Alupho Shel Olam* – The Master of the universe”, who is absolutely singular. The next letter, ‘ח – *Chet*, has a numerical value of Eight, and corresponds to the seven heavens (or firmaments) and the earth. The next letter ‘ד – *Dalet*, has a numerical value of four, and corresponds to the four directions. We are taught that one is to

In general, this [Simple Unity] is divided into three levels, each of which includes ten *sefirot*⁵. These [three levels are called] *Yachid* - Singular, *Echad* – One, and *Kadmon* – Primordial. All of this is still within the aspect of the Essence of the Infinite Light (*Atzmoot Obr Ein Sof*) before the aforementioned first *Tzimtzum*.

The aspect of *Yachid* – Singular, connotes that He is literally alone⁶. This is higher than the unity of parts which is called *Echad* – One, as is known. Accordingly, in the aspect of the actual Essence of the Infinite Light it is not yet fitting to discuss the matter of the ten *sefirot* at all. For example, [to say] “*Malchut* of the Infinite” would automatically imply an understanding that it was preceded by the aspect of *Keter* and *Chochmah* etc. Now, in truth, even the aspect of the Essence of the Infinite Light which is called “Alone” includes ten *sefirot* within itself. However, they are called⁷, “He is wise, but not with a knowable wisdom etc”, to the point where we say, “He is not of any of these attributes at all”, as is known.

The explanation of the matter is that in truth, just as the Essence of the Infinite (*Atzmoot Ein Sof*) is an absolutely simple light, so is this [the case] with His light and ray which is called the Infinite Light⁸ (*Obr Ein Sof*). As mentioned previously, this is the meaning of “Before the creation of the world there was He and His name alone⁹”. This [level] is what is called the “upper purity”.¹⁰ This is the matter of the revelation of the light of His Essence, specifically as it is. This [level] is called *Yachid* – Singular. That is, there is nothing besides Him that the terminology of “unity” or “singularity” may be applied to. This is the meaning of¹¹ “He is one, but not in enumeration” of ten.

However, from the fact that they stated, “He is wise, but not with a knowable wisdom etc”, it is, nonetheless, [apparent] that there are various categories and levels [such as] wise,

contemplate how G-d’s absolute unity and singularity (‘ן) remains the same in the seven heavens and the earth (‘ן) and in all the four directions (‘ד). The word ךחא also signifies the unity of the ten *sefirot*. The first letter ‘ן represents the first *sefirah* of *Keter*, to which all the other *sefirot* are bound. The second letter ‘ח represents the next eight *sefirot*, from *Chochmah* through *Yesod*. The last letter ‘ד represents the *sefirah* of *Malchut*. The reason for this is because the root of the word *Dalet* is *Dal* which means poor. *Malchut* is called poor for it is a receptacle which has nothing of its own, only what it receives from the 9 *sefirot* which are above it. (Another reason the ‘ד corresponds to *Malchut* is because of the numerical value of ‘ד, which is four. *Malchut* transmits the four *sefirot*, *Tiferet*, *Netzach*, *Hod* and *Yesod* to the next world, as will later be explained.) Here though, the main point of the Rebbe is that one is to contemplate how G-d’s unity is before the *Tzimtzum*, and before any creation at all. This level is called *Achdoot HaPshoota* – the Simple Unity. The Rebbe will now continue and explain the aspect of the Essence of the Infinite Light before the *Tzimtzum*.

⁵ The obvious question here is, “Did we not just say that this level is an Absolute Singularity? How then can it be divided into three levels, each of which includes ten *sefirot*, thus totaling thirty levels?” This will soon be explained and understood.

⁶ This is to say that only He, the Essence of His being, exists.

⁷ See Introduction to Tikkunei Zohar.

⁸ In other words, just as He is absolutely simple and removed from all complexity of description and particular parts, i.e. He is absolutely singular, so too his light and ray, the revelation of Himself, is absolutely simple etc.

⁹ In other words, just as He is “alone”, so His name, the revelation of Himself, is “alone”. This is also the meaning of “You are holy, and Your Name is holy”. In other words, just as He, in Essence, is “holy and removed”, so is His Name, the Infinite Light, “holy and removed”.

¹⁰ *Tehiroo Ila’a*

¹¹ Tikkunei Zohar 17a

understanding, merciful etc. [Nevertheless,] all of this is not [stated] in regard to His Essence, but only in regard to what He estimated within Himself in potential, that which is destined to be in actuality after the aforementioned first *Tzimtzum*¹² (As written in *Mikdash Melech*¹³, quoting the *Arizal* himself, and as explained elsewhere at length.)

This is also the meaning of the first general teaching of the *Zohar*¹⁴, “In the beginning of the rule of the King, He engraved an engraving in the upper purity”. The explanation of this is that in the aforementioned Essence of the revelation of His simple light, which is called the upper purity, “He engraved an engraving”, which is the matter of engraving letters. “The beginning of the rule [of the King]”, refers to when it arose in His simple desire. This is the aspect of *Keter*¹⁵, whereas the aspect of the letters which He engraved is the aspect of *Malchut*¹⁶ of the Infinite Light. If this is the case, then there is a beginning and end, a *Keter* and *Malchut*, even in the aspect of the Essence of the Infinite Light. The explanation of this is that it arose in His simple thought and desire, “*Ana Emloch* – I shall rule”. All of this is still totally within His Essence. [That is, it] still precedes the matter of the estimation within himself, in potentiality, of what his revealed desire for Kingship will be, after the first *Tzimtzum*, which is called the “empty place”¹⁷.

The allegory for this, as is known, is from the powers of the soul, as they come into revelation from desire until action. All of these [powers] and their specifics exist in the concealed light of the essence of the soul, which is called the aspect of *Yechidah*¹⁸. For example, when a person [who] desires kindness and goodness, [desires] to do a particular act of goodness, this comes about because he possesses this attribute of kindness and goodness in the aspect of the essence of his soul, which is called *Yechidah*. It is for this reason that this

¹² The explanation of this is that although the ten *sefirot* do exist within the Essence of the Infinite Light before the *Tzimtzum*, they cannot be considered as descriptive qualities. That is to say, since they do not exist as entities separate from the Essence itself, they therefore cannot be described as anything separate from the Essence. Since the Essence is indescribable, its qualities are likewise indescribable. When it states that these qualities exist, as in “He is wise etc”, this is not a statement of description at all. Rather, it is only an informative statement that the Creator of these qualities is Himself not lacking them. For, otherwise, from where did these qualities originate? This is further supported by the statement, “Shall He who formed the eye not see etc?” However, if he does possess these qualities, how can we say that there is no division? The above statement of the *Tikkunim* therefore continues and informs us, “He is not of any of these attributes altogether”. The Rebbe will soon explain how the *sefirot* do exist, yet at the very same time there is no existence apart from the Singular Essence of the Infinite Light.

¹³ See *Mikdash Melech*, *Zohar* volume one, 15a.

¹⁴ See *Zohar Bereshit*, 15a

¹⁵ As mentioned previously, and as will be expounded on later, *Keter* is the faculty of pleasure and desire.

¹⁶ *Malchut* is the aspect of the letters, i.e. the receptacles for the light of the desire and the other attributes which precede it. This will be explained in great detail later on. Furthermore, the “letters” which were “engraved” are “*Ana Emloch* – I will be King”.

¹⁷ This is to say that G-d, even in His Essence, possessed within Himself the ability for all of these attributes and all the particulars thereof. This is true even before any estimation of the potential of His Kingship in Creation, such as “who He will rule over etc.” Rather, even before any estimation at all, G-d possessed and continues to possess this ability. Nonetheless, these Essential attributes do not describe Him in any way whatsoever, for they are not separate from Him. This will now be explained.

¹⁸ *Yechidah* means Singular. This level of the soul is its very essence, which is bound and connected to the Singular Essence of G-d. It is for this reason that it is called *Yechidah* (fem.), for in it is vested the Singular – *Yachid* (masc.).

desire for kindness comes into revelation from its concealment¹⁹. Furthermore, we must say that, certainly, this desire for kindness in the essence of his soul exists in a way of an essential *Heyulie*²⁰ power. [That is to say] it includes within itself everything that he may come to desire of kindness and goodness, in every particular specific that may be asked of him. If this is the case, we must say that prior to his revealed arousal of desire and will to express his kindness in this particular deed, it was included in the essential *Heyulie* desire for kindness. It then came out of the *Heyulie* state to become revealed in this particular act. Furthermore, we observe that in the [revealed] desire for kindness, there is intellect, wisdom, emotions, thought, speech and action²¹. It is therefore certain that in the source of this desire for kindness, while it was concealed in the essential *Heyulie* desire for kindness, there too, it included these divisions of intellect, emotions, thought, speech and action which it possesses. However, in the aspect of the essential *Heyulie* desire for kindness, as it exists prior to being expressed into a particular thing, even though there too there are divisions of intellect and emotions etc, nevertheless, they are included and unified with an ultimate [unity].

This likewise applies to any other particular essential qualities, such as the quality of *Gevurah* - Judgment, *Tiferet* – Beauty (or Mercy), or *Netzach* – Conquest, and the like²². [This is so,] until the attribute of *Malchut*, which is the quality of leadership. Certainly, it too includes ten [qualities, such as] the desire and will for kingship, the wisdom [for kingship], emotions, thoughts, [speech and action] etc. However, before it comes to an aspect of revelation in a particular thing, such as ruling over a specific country etc, they were absolutely included and unified in the aspect of the essential *Heyulie* desire for kingship. [This is] similar to [what was explained] regarding the aforementioned essential *Heyulie* desire for kindness.

If so, it is automatically understood [in regard to] the essential *Heyulie* attributes of *Keter*, *Chochmah*, *Binah*, *Chessed*, *Gevurah*, *Tiferet*, *Netzach*, *Hod*, *Yesod* and *Malchut*, [all of] which are in the essence of the soul, that it is not fitting to speak of them using a terminology of

¹⁹ This is to say that it is because in essence he is a kind person that any kindness comes out into revelation through his kind deeds. The evidence for this essential kindness is from the fact that he constantly does acts of kindness. His emotions are emotions of kindness, and his thoughts are kind thoughts. If he was not kind in essence, then where did the kindness come out from?

²⁰ See Chapter Two, footnote 17. A *Heyulie* power is an ability, as opposed to a potential. This will now be explained in greater detail with many more analogies.

²¹ This is to say that in the revealed desire for kindness, there is the desire for kindness, the intellectual kindness of thinking kind thoughts in kind terms, there is the wisdom of what type of kindness is necessary, there are the emotions of kindness, there is kind speech, and finally the kind act. For example, when a kind person encounters a poor person, first there is the desire of kindness towards this individual. Then, he thinks, “I should help this person out”. He then contemplates the best manner in which to help this person, such as whether to give him money, or to give him food, for, if he gives him money he may go and purchase alcohol etc. There are the kind emotions of pity and mercy, and then the gut emotions which move him to act upon it and reach into his pocket and act upon this desire. There is also the kind speech, that he speaks kind and uplifting words to this impoverished individual. Certainly, all of these particulars exist in the essence of the soul of the kind person, in the *Heyulie* desire for kindness. For, otherwise, where did they come from?

²² In other words, just as the essential *Heyulie* desire for kindness includes its particular divisions within itself, similarly, the essential *Heyulie* desire for judgment includes its particular divisions within itself. For example, there is the desire for judgment, intellect of judgment, emotions, thought, speech and action of judgment etc.

“unification” or “inclusion”, [stating that they are “unified”] in the essence of the soul which is called *Yechidah*. This is because they are not separate from the essence, whatsoever.

For example, with the aforementioned attribute of the *Heyulie* desire for kindness which is embedded in the essential nature [of the kind person, it cannot be spoken of as separate from his essence]²³. The essence of the soul itself is even higher than being [called] an “essential desire for kindness”, since this [kindness] is only a particular part of the actual essential being which is ultimately simple. However, although [this desire for kindness] is only a single particular which is drawn from the essence, it is nonetheless impossible to say about it that it “unifies” with the *Heyulie* attribute of *Netzach* – Conquest, which is [also] embedded in the essence of the soul. This is because the two are both absolutely united with the essence, and are not at all separate from the self.

By way of analogy, the power of movement which is actually included in the essence of an animal even before it moves, altogether, is not at all separate from the essence of the animal. Now, in the revelation of this [*Heyulie*] power of movement, [that is, when the animal] makes a particular movement, it divides into many particular ways [to move]. It is [nonetheless] impossible to state that all the particular movements were “included” and “unified” while the power of movement was included in the essence of the animal. This is because at that point it was not within the category or definition of a “movement” at all, not generally and not particularly.

This is likewise [the case] with the aspect of the revelation and spreading forth of the life force to enliven the entire body, while it is still completely included in the essential spirit of life. [This life force] divides into [various powers, such as] sight to the eye, and hearing to the ear etc. Certainly, even before it came forth to materialize in the eye and ear in actuality, there was included [in this life force] a spiritual power and life force of sight for itself, and a spiritual power and life force of hearing for itself etc. Nonetheless, before the essence of the soul came to the category of the spreading forth of life force, even though it was included in it, nonetheless, it is in the same way that the aforementioned power of movement is included in the essence of the animal²⁴.

It is only applicable to [use a terminology of] inclusion and unification of “sight” and “hearing” when [these forces] are **destined** and **prepared** to come into revelation in actuality, to enliven [the body]. However, while they were still completely included in the essence of the soul, it was as if this [aspect of] “spreading forth of life force” was completely nonexistent. This is because the essence of the soul itself is much higher than the aspect of “spreading forth”, except that it includes within itself this [**ability**] to spread forth [and enliven] as well, just as the essence of the animal includes within itself the power of movement, as explained above.

²³ In other words, we do not say that he is in possession of the power of kindness, but rather, we say that he himself is a kind person.

²⁴ In other words, all that exists is the singular essence of the soul. This power of spreading forth to enliven a body is not separate from the essence in any way whatsoever. Furthermore, just as the power of movement of the essence can not at all be considered “movement”, so too, this power to spread forth and enliven a body cannot be considered anything at all, more than an ability of the essence itself. This is to say that it has no actual existence separate from the essence of the soul itself, and can therefore not be considered as anything unto itself. All that exists at this point is the singular essence of the soul itself.

If so, then how is it fitting or proper [to use terminologies] such as the aspects of “unification” and “inclusion” of the particular light and life force? [Rather,] it is only fitting in regard to the particular divisions of life force which are **destined** and **prepared** to spread forth into revelation. From this we are forced to say that all these particulars which spread forth [into revelation], [exist] completely included within the essence, for if this was not the case, then where did these particulars in the spreading forth of revelation come from?²⁵ This is like the light and rays which are included in the essence of the sun. [In other words,] concealed within [the sun] are all the particular ways of the spreading forth of the rays etc. This will suffice for those of understanding.

We find that there are three levels, one following the next, which are drawn from the actual essence of the soul, which is called *Yechidab*. The first [level] is the ten essential *Heyulie* powers, like the essential *Heyulie* desire for kindness, and the like. They are absolutely and totally included in [the essence]. [This is] like the inclusion of the power of movement in the essence of the animal, or like the inclusion of the [power] to “spread forth life force” which is included in the essence [of the soul], as explained above. In regard to these [*Heyulie* powers] it is not fitting to use a terminology of “unification of separate parts together”. This is because they are completely included in the essence, and it is as if they have no existence at all²⁶, as explained above.

The second [level] is the aspect of the spreading forth of the ten powers, as they are prepared to come into revelation. This is like when the essential *Heyulie* desire for kindness comes to do a particular act of kindness. [However, this is] still before it is drawn out into actuality. It is only **destined** and **prepared** to come out to this particular [act of kindness]. Here, [in this level,] the matter of “unification” of the many particulars which are within it, is applicable. For example, [included within this is] the intellect and the emotions of this desire for kindness which are drawn from their concealment in the general *Heyulie*.

The third [level] is when it is drawn to that particular [act of kindness], only it did not yet come out into [actual revelation] due to some lacking or obstacle. However, the preparation itself is already complete. The only thing that is missing is for it to come out and be revealed in actuality. In other words, he already estimated within himself in a particular manner, [everything that is necessary to bring] this thing into actuality. This is to say that he estimated within himself in potential²⁷ what is necessary [for him] to bring [this revelation] into actuality.

In the aforementioned allegory of the power of movement, [this can be seen] when it is prepared and destined to come into revelation in a particular [movement]. In the example of the spreading forth of life force to enliven the body, [this can be seen] when it is prepared to

²⁵ In other words, from the fact that we observe these particulars once they are revealed from their source, we must say that they exist in their source, for otherwise, where did they originate from?

²⁶ In other words, they have no existence apart from the essence of the soul at all. It is therefore not proper to say that they are “united” in the essence, since they are not separate to begin with. Furthermore, it is as if they have no actual existence at all, as in the aforementioned example of the power of movement. There is no “movement” in the essence, not in a general way, nor in a particular way.

²⁷ “*Shi'er B'Koach*” can also be translated as; He estimated in his strength or power, how much is necessary to bring this action into actuality. This will be understood from the Rebbe's following analogy.

come out [of the essence]. At this point, all the particular life forces [like sight and hearing] are completely included in a general unity. After this, he estimates within himself and prepares within his power of movement, how to move in a particular way. Similarly, [regarding the example of the influx of life force], there is the estimation of the revelation and spreading forth of the spirit of life, as he prepares within himself to enliven [a body] in actuality. Another example is the power of growth, as it is prepared to grow in actuality. Here too, there are these three levels. Furthermore, [all three of these levels] are before anything came out into actuality. For example, in the [power of] movement [this entire estimation] is before any actual physical movement. Or, in the spiritual life force, [this preparation] is before it actually comes into a physical body. Then, there is a change from a spiritual existence to a physical existence, such as a physical movement and physical life force. The same is true in the example of the physical growth. For this [change of existence] it is necessary for there to be an initial *Tzimtzum* - contraction and restraint in the revelation of this spiritual [*Heyulie*]. This is so that there may be [a transition] from spiritual to physical (as will be explained in chapter 12).

End of Chapter Ten