

# Shaar HaYichud The Gate of Unity

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## Chapter Twelve

We<sup>1</sup> must now understand the explanation of the aforementioned concept of the first *Tzimtzum*, and the aspect of the *Reshimu* (Impression) which remained. Although it is known to those who are familiar [with these concepts], nonetheless, there are many particular details in it. One must delve very deeply into this [matter], for it is pivotal to true union with the Essence of the Infinite Light. [That is, the understanding of this is pivotal to the realization of] how everything, even the entirety of the chaining down of the *Kav*, is literally as nothing before Him. [This should be contemplated] to the point that a person is capable of focusing his desire, with self sacrifice, upon the Essence of the Infinite Light alone<sup>2</sup>. This is as stated<sup>3</sup>, “You are He, G-d, Alone etc”. This is [also] the meaning of, “The King who is exalted, alone”, [which refers to] the aspect of *Malchut* of the Infinite before the *Tzimtzum*. That is, “He is exalted” even “over the days of the world” of *Adam Kadmon*, which are called “the days of antiquity”, as previously mentioned. This is [also] the explanation of the verse, “The heavens, and the heavens of the heavens, cannot contain You”<sup>4</sup>. “The heavens” refers to the aspect of the general encompassing [light] which follows the *Tzimtzum*. “The heavens of the heavens” refers to [the Infinite Light] before the *Tzimtzum*. “They cannot contain You” even in the way of a “vessel for a vessel”, as in “He engraved an engraving in the upper purity”<sup>5</sup>. This will suffice for those of understanding.

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<sup>1</sup> This first paragraph serves as an introduction to the next several chapters.

<sup>2</sup> In other words, when a person contemplates and truly realizes that everything in existence is literally nothing, while G-d alone is the only true something, he loses all interest and value in limited created entities, and only desires G-d.

<sup>3</sup> Nechemia 9:6

<sup>4</sup> Kings I, 8:27

<sup>5</sup> That is, no limited entity can possibly contain the essence of G-d, not even in an indirect manner, such as being a “vessel for a vessel”. The doubled terminology of “*Glif Glifu* – He engraved an engraving” indicates that the letters which were “engraved” in *Kadmon*, are not the “letters” of the Essence of G-d Himself, but only an engraving of the letters of the Infinite Light which spreads forth from the Essence, called *Echad*. However, the Essence of the Infinite Light itself, *Yachid*, which is one with the Essence of G-d, cannot be contained whatsoever. (The concept of a “vessel for a vessel” will be explained later in the book.) This verse was stated by King Solomon at the completion of the erection of the Holy Temple. He said, “The heavens and the heavens of the heavens cannot contain you, but this house will?” As explained previously, all created existence is literally equal and nothing before G-d. Furthermore, no effect can ever describe its cause. It is only G-d, the “cause of all causes” who can choose to reveal the Essence of Himself in whatever way He desires. It is only because G-d **chose** to reveal His Essence in the Holy Temple and in the Torah and the Commandments that it is at all possible. This is because He is not limited by the limitations of limited beings. Therefore, although it is impossible to grasp G-d’s essence through our own efforts, no matter how great those efforts are, nonetheless, it is quite possible and not at all difficult for G-d to reveal His Essence to anyone and anything, should He desire to do so.

This [concept<sup>6</sup>] is further [emphasized by] the verse, “Who have I in the heavens but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside You”<sup>7</sup>. “Who have I in the heavens” refers to the general encompassing [light] before the *Tzimtzum*, which is called “the heavens of the heavens.” “There is none upon earth that I desire beside You”, refers to the aspect of the *Kav V’Chut* (Line and Thread), which is the aspect of the general pervading [light]<sup>8</sup>.

Now, as is known to those who have done the analysis, there are various different analogies and ways to explain the matter of the *Tzimtzum* which is called “the empty place”. [However,] they all arrive at one general point; that in order for the Infinite Light to be expressed in a limited way, in the aspect of a line<sup>9</sup>, it was necessary for Him to restrain His essential light, so that it would remain concealed in His Essence. [This is necessary, so that] not all of it would shine forth, but only an infinitesimal amount. This is in order that the light could afterwards be drawn down [into revelation] in [a way of] a qualitative leap of [diminished] value<sup>10</sup>.

This is analogous to the brilliance of a deep and broad concept [as it exists in the] essence of the teacher. In order for him to draw [this concept] to the student, who is not [intellectually] comparable to him, the teacher must conceal the entire depth of his comprehension within himself, so that all that is left is but an aspect of an impression, which is like a single point from all the depth and breadth. This is not to say that [his understanding] was completely withdrawn and concealed. Rather, it is like one who relates a teaching in a brief way. He has the entire depth and breadth of the logical arguments in his intellect, only that during the time that he states his ruling briefly, they are temporarily included and concealed in his essence. However, as soon as he is questioned [about it] he can expand on the subject. Only that in order for the student to understand, through this short [ruling], he conceals [the depth and breadth of it] within himself temporarily, as explained elsewhere at length<sup>11</sup>.

Now, the impression, which remained like a point, is not a complete and true *Tzimtzum* (withdrawal). [A true and complete *Tzimtzum*] would be like one who completely withdraws [revelation] and completely conceals, [in which case] the student lacks all [revelation]. Rather, [the explanation of] the matter is that included in this short [ruling] is the entire length. Not a single thing missing, not even half a thing. This is similar to how the short rulings of the *Mishnah* included the entire length of the logical debate of the *Talmud*. This is [likewise] similar to how the entire logical debate is not concealed from one who knows it,

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<sup>6</sup> That is, the concept of a person realizing the nothingness of all of Creation, and focusing on the Essence of G-d with singular desire and self sacrifice.

<sup>7</sup> Psalms 73:25

<sup>8</sup> After having addressed the fact that the comprehension of the matter of *Tzimtzum* is pivotal to the realization of G-d’s True reality and the arousal of desire towards the Essence of G-d alone, the Rebbe will now begin to actually explain the concept of *Tzimtzum* itself.

<sup>9</sup> In other words, in order for there to be a revelation of a single limited line of revelation, it was necessary to bring about the matter *Tzimtzum*. That is, there must be a restraint of the infinite revelation, in order to bring about a finite revelation. This was explained in the previous chapter through the allegory of one who is attacked by a wild animal (G-d forbid), and will now be explained further.

<sup>10</sup> That is, in order for there to be a revelation of finite and limited, it is necessary for there to be a withdrawal of the revelation of the Infinite and Unlimited.

<sup>11</sup> See Likutei Torah, Vayikra (in the additions) p.52, c.3 and on. Also see Ma’amarei Admor HaEmtza’I, Vayikra, book 2, page תתקכא and on.

even while he reviews it to himself briefly. We find that his knowledge of the length encompasses the entire revelation of the brief [teaching], in a concealed way. [However,] it is not completely withdrawn, as [in the case of] forgetfulness or the like, as is explained elsewhere at length<sup>12</sup>.

The second type of analogy, which is the life of the soul [as it is invested] in the body, also brings out the same point as above. This is that in order for there to be a change from the essential spiritual life of the soul, to a [physical] life of flesh, it is necessary for there to be an initial concealment and contraction of the light of the soul. This is because there is no comparison between them. Nonetheless, the soul is affected by the occurrences of the body. Therefore, even the light of the physical life [force] is connected and bound with the spiritual light of the essence. This is similar to [how the aforementioned] physical growth is bound to the spiritual power of growth. However, when one's [physical] limb becomes severed [G-d forbid,] this does not cause a loss to the spiritual light and life force of that limb. The proof of this is from [the fact that] a blind person can give birth to a whole person, as is known. This [shows that] the spiritual [life force] is merely concealed, but it still exists, hovering over the physical life force of the body. This is called "*Tz'elem Ish* – The form of man". This is similar to how the aforementioned [breadth and length of] knowledge which is concealed, [encompasses the brief teaching] etc. (All of this is explained elsewhere at length.)

Likewise, when the spiritual power of movement comes into an [actual] physical movement, it becomes constrained within itself. Nonetheless, the physical movement is connected and bound to the spiritual [power of] movement. There are many other examples of this as well, such as the matter of having insight into a particular concept, which comes from the power of conceptualization [of his soul], which rests upon him in a concealed [fashion]<sup>13</sup>.

However, [we must now] understand the aspect of the *Reshimu* – Impression, which indicates the withdrawal of everything into concealment, so that only an impression of everything remains. This is better understood by other analogies and matters. For example, it is like the blueprint<sup>14</sup> that the architect drafts. He is capable of constructing the [entire] building from the small lines of the blueprint. The entire length of the construction is included briefly in the blueprint.

Another example [of a *Reshimu* – impression] is like someone who makes a sign [for himself] as a memory aide. The sign [or mnemonic] has no [actual] relation to the essence of the matter, but is merely a memory aide, as stated<sup>15</sup>, "Make signs for yourself". This is a much greater concealment than the [aforementioned allegory of one who] teaches the summary of the law, which includes the entire [logic] within it. [For, in that example] there is at least some relationship between the short summary and the lengthy [explanations].

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<sup>12</sup> See Likutei Torah, Vayikra (in the additions) p.53, c.3. Also see Sefer HaMa'amarim תרמ"ז, p.48

<sup>13</sup> This means that in order for there to be a particular flash of insight into a particular field of knowledge, it is necessary for there to be a *Tzimtzum* in his essential power of conceptualization (*Koach HaMaskil*).

<sup>14</sup> The Hebrew word for "Impression" is "*Reshimu*". It is worthy to note that this shares the same root as "Blueprint – *Roshem*".

<sup>15</sup> Jeremiah 31:20

There is another analogy for this *Reshimu* – Impression, which implies an even greater *Tzimtzum* – Restraint and concealment. It is like a person who throws a stone. The power which propels it is separate from the essence [of the thrower]. Nonetheless, the entire power of movement is invested within [the stone] in a concealed fashion. However, there is a great distance of separation from the essential power [of movement] which is in the hand. In contrast, this is not the case with the power of movement itself, when he physically moves himself<sup>16</sup>. [In this case] it is vested within the physical in a more revealed [manner], as mentioned previously.

There is an [analogy of] even greater concealment than this [example of the thrown object], which is similar to the concept of the impression which [one makes] only as a reminder. This is like when one hints with his hand to a very deep concept or idea. The physical movement is totally separate from the spiritual thought, but nonetheless, the concept is understood through [the movement].<sup>17</sup> An even greater concealment is how the light of an intellectual [concept] is [invested] within the [physical] movements of one's fingers when he writes it down, as explained elsewhere at length. Now, all of the above bring out the same point, as mentioned above. This is that the aspect of the essence remains concealed and included within this impression and point. This will suffice for those of understanding.

#### End of Chapter Twelve

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<sup>16</sup> That is, when a person moves his own hand, or if he moves an object in his hand, the aforementioned distance and separateness is absent. In other words, it is directly observable that it he, himself, is moving the object. However, in the case of a thrown object, it is not readily observable who originally propelled the object. Nonetheless, although it is not readily observable, nonetheless, it was thrown by someone. Furthermore, should the thrown object inflict some sort of damage, the thrower of the object whose power of movement was invested within it, will be held accountable. So, in the case of a stone that is thrown, he is directly responsible for it, although, to someone who did not witness the original throw, it appears to be propelled independently of the thrower.

<sup>17</sup> This is like the V for victory. This gesture is very meaningful to all who understand its symbolism, especially during times of adversity, but by itself it is nothing more than two fingers held up in the form of a V. It has no real co-relation to the concept being conveyed. Nonetheless, when this gesture was popularized by Sir Winston Churchill during the Second World War, it became a source of great hope and encouragement to millions of people throughout the world. This is similar to an analogy of someone who ties a string around his finger as a reminder of something. This little string might bring to mind very deep and profound concepts, but only to one who knows its meaning. The string itself is not at all related to the concepts, for after all, it is only a string.