

Shaar HaYichud The Gate of Unity

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Chapter Five

After having explained the need to contemplate specifically in a particular manner, it follows, of necessity, that one must know all the particular levels in all the details of the chaining down of the worlds (*Seder HaHishtalshelut*) of *Atzilut*, *Briyah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah*, so that one may contemplate them. These particulars cannot be understood by everyone through the general teachings [of Kabbalah and Chassidus]. Therefore, whatever needs explanation in each detail, will all be explained in a special pamphlet¹, so that a person of understanding² will automatically understand them and will know many other details³.

However, it is first necessary to introduce one more point (which also will be explained in detail) of how *Hitbonenut* contemplation should be done. This is extremely necessary for all those who truly desire closeness to G-d and do not merely seek to fulfill their obligations, and deceive themselves [that they are thereby truly serving G-d] etc. As known, every contemplation upon the G-dly matter of the creation of something from nothing, each contemplation according to its place [in the order of things], includes two matters;

The first is the aspect of the sublimation of the “something” to the “nothing”. This begins with the comprehension of the relativity of limited beings⁴, by understanding how their existence is derived from the “nothingness”. This is brought close to the intellect through various explanations and analogies and the like, until the truth of it becomes well settled in his mind.

¹ This refers to the second part of this book from chapter 10-54, where the Rebbe explains all the details upon which one should contemplate.

² In the original Hebrew “a person of understanding” is called by the term “*Mayvin*”. This means a person who actively engages in analyzing a subject until he understands it, i.e. *Hitbonenut*. These two words are different conjugations of the same three letter root. *Hitbonenut* (Analysis) is the act of understanding and a *mayvin* is the person who understands.

³ In other words, the Rebbe will explain all of the principles and particulars of the entire *Seder Hishtalshelut* (Chaining down of the worlds). (This is as stated in the Rebbe’s introduction, that he “will explain a summation of everything that is possible for a human being to bring close to his mind and heart...Including all the particulars of the entire *Seder Hishtalshelut*”). One who properly contemplates and understands the second part of this book (in a way of *Tvunah*) will also come to understand things that were not said outright. (He will even be capable of understanding particulars up to the 5th power (and more), as the Rebbe promises in the beginning of chapter 10.) It is for this reason that this book is called “the Key to Chassidus” (see HaYom Yom).

⁴ That is, one is to understand the properties and limitations of created beings, and understand how they derive their existence and are totally dependent on the G-dly “nothingness”. More importantly, one must realize that this relates specifically to himself. These are not merely abstract concepts, but relate to him personally, for he is not outside of the equation.

The second matter is the aspect of the G-dly “nothingness” which creates him, and how He [G-d] is totally separate, relative [to created beings], since He has no limitations. This matter is concealed from the eyes of the intellect and cannot be grasped completely. However, the truth of it will, nonetheless, flash like lightning in his brain, so that he will glimpse it, as it is. However, although it is in an aspect of concealment, it will be as true for him as if he saw it with physical sight⁵.

This is the difference between the aspect of the “sight” of *Chochmah*, [and the aspect of the “hearing” of *Binah*]. The sight of *Chochmah*, the *Koach Ma”b*⁶ (the power of “what”), is the sight of the soul which sees, but not with tangible sight. Rather, it is a flash of intellectual sight which is beyond complete comprehension. Therefore, the arousal which results from it is nothing but the aspect of sublimation, which is the complete absence of awareness of self.

The aspect of the “hearing” of *Binah*, on the other hand, comes with complete comprehension, literally. This is to say that he comprehends how the “something” comes into existence from the “nothing”, as explained above. The resulting arousal is a tangible feeling of joy and good-heartedness. The more he grasps, the better he feels and the more he delves into it, the more he grasps.

In contrast, the aspect of the “sight” of *Chochmah* is the opposite. The more he delves into it, the more the G-dly “nothingness” which creates, becomes removed and astounding to him. This astonishment over the awesome gap and absence of any comparison [between G-d, who is beyond all limit, and himself], grows and grows, until he is bewildered and consternated over it etc⁷.

According to the above, all those who contemplate in a particular manner [rather than a general manner] will become [aware of] these two aspects through their contemplation; the concealed⁸ aspect and the revealed⁹ aspect. Accordingly, the arousal which is born of it [is comprised of] two opposites; “His heart is worried within him”¹⁰ because he comprehends the astounding greatness of the G-dly “nothing” which creates, but he is [simultaneously] joyful because of his thorough grasp of how all that exists comes into being.

This may be understood by example of one who contemplates in a particular manner into the coming into being of the planetary orbits from the G-dly “nothing”, which comes about from the aspect of the external vessels of *Malchut* of *Malchut* of *Asiyab*. In other words, he comprehends how it is only from the external vessels and is merely a glimmer of a glimmer,

⁵ G-d’s *existence* is true for him as if he saw it, literally. However he cannot comprehend *what* it is that he saw, since that remains concealed.

⁶ The letters of *Chochmah* (חכמה) can be rearranged to spell *Koach Mah* (כוח מה), meaning “the power of ‘what’”. This represents the aspect of the sublimation to G-d of *Chochmah*, as in the verse, “*V’Nachnu Mah – and what are we*”.

⁷ Parenthesis of the Rebbe: (as it is written in Chassidic Manuscripts).

⁸ This is the delving into the G-dly “nothingness” which is concealed, as explained above.

⁹ This is the delving into the created, and how they are created “something from nothing”, which is revealed.

¹⁰ See Tractate Chagigah 13a

which radiates within the soul of the planet as it grasps that which gives it its existence. Likewise, he understands how the angels of the world of *Briyah*, (“In which *Imma* (*Binah* of *Atzilut*) resides”), comprehend the G-dly power of *Malchut* of *Malchut* of *Atzilut* which brings them into existence. He grasps these concepts in a way of comprehension, and he becomes aroused by the greatness of the Creator, and how they [the angels and planets] are constantly sublimated [to Him], as stated, “And the hosts of the heavens bow down to You”, in their orbits etc. However, the aspect of the G-dly “nothingness”, the essential creative force of *Malchut* of *Asiyah*, is concealed from his grasp. However, it is automatically **forced** into his comprehension, because the understanding of how the “something” comes into existence has become true for him.¹¹ Furthermore, it is only comprehended in a concealed way, specifically because of the astonishment over the total absence of comparison.

This is likewise so in the contemplation of the particulars of the world of *Atzilut*, in its lights and vessels. For example, the contemplation on the light of *Chessed* of *Malchut* of *Atzilut*, or the contemplation on the light of *Chessed* of *Chochmah* of *Atzilut*, to understand how they were emanated. This can be comprehended by way of analogy from how light is emanated into revelation from its concealment in the essence¹², here below [in the physical world]. This is also similar to how Moshe, “emanated from his spirit”¹³, and the like. Furthermore, although the emotive attributes (*Midot*) of the world of *Atzilut* are only in the aspect of sources,¹⁴ and are separate from the G-dly influence as it is within Creation¹⁵, he will, nonetheless, comprehend how they come into being. However, the aspect of the true “nothingness” which shines upon them from the light of the essence [of G-d], which emanates them, cannot be grasped even through intellectual comparisons. Rather, it may only be [grasped] in a concealed fashion, which is the aspect of the intellectual sight, which is higher than actual comprehension and grasp. This is like the saying, “No thought can grasp You”, which refers to the thought of *Binah*. In other words, this is the opposite of comprehension¹⁶, for the more he delves [into it], the more astounding will the essential light

¹¹ See chapter 4, footnote 10. After comprehending how our entire universe is brought into existence by only a glimmer of a glimmer of waste-matter from the lowest order of angels of the world of *Asiyah*, by logical necessity, one is forced to say that our entire universe is as nothing compared to it. Nonetheless, the existence of these beings, and the G-dly creative force itself, remains concealed.

¹² The analogies for this will be given later in chapter 19. In general though, through understanding the allegory, like the revelation of the light of the soul to enliven the body etc, one can then understand how things are above.

¹³ Moshe “emanated” a spirit of prophecy to the elders. However, this was only an emanation and revelation, rather than the essence of the spirit of prophecy of Moshe himself. This will also be explained later at length, in the explanation of the “emanation” and revelation of the concealed.

¹⁴ That is to say, the *sefirot* of the world of *Atzilut* are still totally unlimited and undefined. They are called by *Sefer Yetzirah*, “Ten *sefirot* without whatness”. That is, the *sefirot* of *Atzilut* are themselves undefined, and are only the sources for what will later come into defined created existence. However, he will comprehend the nature of this as well, as will later be explained.

¹⁵ That is, they are the source of the divine influence, but they, themselves, transcend Creation. Rather, it is the light of *Malchut* of *Atzilut* which becomes invested within creation. The source of the light of *Malchut* of *Atzilut*, are these emotive attributes of *Atzilut* (*Zeir Anpin*). The light of *Zeir Anpin* itself does not become invested within creation, and is completely removed from it, remaining only as “the source”. This will be explained at length in the second part of the book.

¹⁶ That is, comprehension means a total “something”, which is a completely concrete and tangible description. The “Undefinable” is therefore clearly ungraspable in a way of comprehension. Rather, the more one delves into it, the more astonished he will become.

of the Emanator be for him. The indication of this [type of arousal] is that a very great aspect of sublimation is born [in him]¹⁷.

[From all the above] we find, that of necessity the [opposite] aspects of sublimation and joy which branch out and are born of the *Chochmah* and *Binah* [i.e. contemplation] of each particular, specifically come together, as one. This is true of all *Hitbonenut*-contemplation of each particular detail, specifically. These two aspects¹⁸ are interdependent. If he has no joy from the thorough comprehension of the “something”, then he will also not come to the astonishment and sense of distance in his inability to grasp the “nothingness”. The degree of his joy is, literally, commensurate to the degree of his sublimation, for his comprehension of the created is commensurate to his astonishment at the separation of the Creator. This is an important principle [which applies to] every *Hitbonenut*-contemplation, whether general or particular.

(In contrast, if it appears to someone that he thoroughly grasps the aspect of creation, but he is lacking in sublimation to the Creator, then, without a doubt, it is a certainty that he has not grasped anything. Likewise, if someone imagines that he possesses the aspect of sublimation through the realization of the wondrousness of the Creator, but he does not thoroughly comprehend the manner of how [everything] has come into being, it is a false imagination and he has no sublimation whatsoever. These two are interdependent and commensurate to each other, for the above mentioned reason. This is known to all those who have tasted true *Hitbonenut*, and do not at all delude themselves. This is likewise understood by those who are accustomed to the teachings of *Chassidut* from their youth. However, a great many people delude themselves in all this, in many different ways etc.)

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¹⁷ In other words, according to the depth of his delving into this aspect of the sight of *Chochmah*, the more astounding and removed the essence of G-d will be for him. The more astonishing it is, the more sublimated will he be to the essence of G-d, as explained previously.

¹⁸ This refers to the aspect of the sublimation and the joy, which are born of the particular contemplation. These two aspects, the *Chochmah* and the *Binah*, are interdependent, and therefore the sublimation and the joy are also interdependent.