

Shaar HaYichud The Gate of Unity

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Chapter Seven

Now, before we proceed to [explain] the detailed knowledge of the Chaining Down of the worlds (*Seder Hishtalsbelut*), we must precede with a matter which was mentioned previously (in chapter four). This specifically refers to the connection of the particulars to the general principle. As is known to those who delve into the *Zohar* and other authentic texts of Kabbalah, in the [study of the] *Hishtalsbelut* and the investment of the *Partzufim*¹, it is necessary for each person to know the [explanation of the *Seder Hishtalsbelut*] in short form. Beginning with the Simple Unity at the beginning of all things, until the end of all things, which is at the end of our lowly world, it all is literally bound with one “knot”². This is similar to a chain which goes from beginning to end and chains down from cause to cause etc.

The first light of the simple unity which is known as “the cause of all causes”³ is also called “First” or “Preceding”⁴, as stated⁵, “I am first and I am last”. “I am first” refers to *Malchut* of *Ain Sof* (The Infinite) after the first *Tzimtzum* which is known as “the empty place”⁶. “I am last” at the end of everything, is the aspect of *Malchut* of *Malchut* of *Asiyah*, which is the source of existence of this lowly world. “The beginning is bound to the end and the end to the beginning”⁷. They are literally as one, like a chain whose lowest link is bound to its

¹ *Partzuf* literally translates as “face” or “stature”. However, this refers to the various categories of *Sefirot* which form a particular “stature”. For example, the *sefirah* of *Chochmah* forms the stature of *Abba* – father. It may have a “union” with the *sefirah* of *Binah* which forms the stature of *Imma* – mother. This is to say that there is a unification of these two “statures” and the “seminal” flash of insight enters into the comprehensive intellect of *Binah*. The reason each of them forms an entire “stature” is because each stature represents its own general “mode of conduct”, which itself contains many particulars, and may “unite” with other “statures” to produce different effects down here on earth. Although at this point, all this sounds very “mechanical”, everything will be explained and fully understood later, in the second part of the book (Chapters 10-54).

² This is to say, it is one continuum, like one entity. In other words, “He is the cause of all causes” and the entire chaining down of the worlds from beginning to end, are all affected by Him, and do not act on their own, or even exist on their own. There is no interruption from beginning to end. Rather, it is like a “chain” of cause and effects, where each link is connected to the link above it.

³ See *Zohar* Bereshit 22b

⁴ This is to say, He is the first, and is the primal causer of everything which follows in the chaining down of the worlds.

⁵ Isaiah 44:6

⁶ See *Etz Chaim (Drush Igullim V'Yosher) Shaar 1, Anaf 2*

⁷ See *Sefer Yetzirah*, Chapter 1, Mishnah 7

highest link⁸. This is the meaning of the verse⁹, “See now that I, I am He”, without any change at all from beginning to end.

Now, although it is known that there are a multitude of particular details in the chaining down from beginning to end, the entire purpose of man is the contemplation of all the particular details from beginning to end, to bind them all into one general unity with the Simple Unity, which is called “first”. This is as stated, “See now that I, I am He”, literally, and as stated¹⁰, “I HaShem have not changed”. This is the pivotal point upon which the contemplation of the particulars must be founded, so that all [the particulars] are drawn to this general principle, as previously explained.

Now, the explanation of this matter for beginners [is as follows]: The order of the multitude of [details] of the chaining down of the line and thread¹¹ (*Kav V'Chut*) which is drawn out after the first *Tzimtzum*, is known briefly as follows: At first, before the first *Tzimtzum*¹² there was “He and His Name alone”¹³. This refers to the Essence of the Unlimited One blessed be He (*Atzmoot Ein Sof*), and His light and ray which is called “His Name”¹⁴. It was all in the aspect of His essence, literally in an aspect of Infinity, and He filled all “empty space”¹⁵. Afterwards, He made a *Tzimtzum*¹⁶ within Himself, and there remained an aspect of an Impression (*Reshimu*) of what was withdrawn, within this “empty space”. From this impression (*Reshimu*) He drew out the line and thread (*Kav V'Chut*), in an aspect of both

⁸ The first way to understand this is like a chain, in the literal sense. When one shakes the top link, because the bottom link is totally bound to it through the intermediary links, it too will shake. This is to say, even the lowest link, our lowly world, is totally affected and controlled by G-d. Furthermore, the ultimate desire is specifically for what will come out down here, in this world. In other words, “the first” desire, and “the end” action, are equal. Everything in between only exists to facilitate what will come out at the end. The middle is therefore transparent in relation to it. For example, when two people are speaking to each other over a telephone, there are a multitude of particular intermediary processes that take place. Even without the telephone, when two people speak to each other, there are a multitude of processes which take place, as will be explained. Nonetheless, the entire chain of processes is instantaneous and transparent, and the speech at the end is literally bound with his initial intent and desire, without a single iota of change at all. A deeper explanation of this statement is that it is specifically in the “lowest link” where the revelation of “the highest link” is possible. This is to say that this chain may be compared to a “necklace”. It is specifically the last link which binds directly to the first link of the chain. Similarly, we are taught that it is specifically down here in this world where the revelation of “*Ein Od Milvado* – There is nothing besides Him” is possible (see *Derech Chayim*), so much so, that even the soul of Moshe had to descend to this world, specifically, in order to attain this higher level of awareness. However, the main point here is the first explanation that G-d causes everything, from beginning to end.

⁹ Deuteronomy, Ha'azinu 32:39

¹⁰ Malachi 3:6

¹¹ This will be explained later in greater detail. In general, this refers to the limited ray of revelation of the entire chaining down of the worlds.

¹² *Tzimtzum* refers to the act of the withdrawal of revelation of the Infinite Light, i.e. the Infinite revelation of G-d.

¹³ Pirke D'Rabbi Elazar, Chapter 3

¹⁴ As will be explained later, a name draws out the essence of the one named. So for example, when someone calls someone by name, it draws out the attention of his essential identity, i.e. the person himself. Furthermore, a name is a description which reveals that which it describes. Therefore, the Infinite Light, the Infinite revelation of G-d, is called “His Name”.

¹⁵ See *Etz Chaim*, the terminology there is “He filled all existence”.

¹⁶ He restrained the revelation of the Infinite Light and “withdrew it”.

encompassing and pervading [lights]¹⁷. The Infinite Light before the withdrawal (*Tzimtzum*) is called “The upper purity”,¹⁸ while the general encompassing light of this line (*Kav*), at its beginning,¹⁹ is called “The lower purity”,²⁰ as is known. Afterwards, through a *Tzimtzum* (withdrawal), *Malchut* of the Infinite was drawn down to become *Keter* of *Adam Kadmon*. [Then,] from *Malchut* of *Adam Kadmon* there came *Keter* of *Atik Yomin* and *Arich Anpin*. From *Malchut* of *Arich Anpin* there came *Keter* of *Abba* and *Imma*. From *Malchut* of *Abba* and *Imma* there came *Keter* of *Zeir Anpin*, and [likewise] from *Zeir Anpin* to *Nukvah*, until from *Malchut* of *Atzilut* there came *Keter* of *Briyah*. In this manner [there chained down] from *Briyah* to *Yetzirah*, and from *Yetzirah* to *Asiyah*, until the aspect of *Malchut* of *Malchut* of *Asiyah*, which is the end of everything.

We find that the “end of everything”, which is *Malchut* of *Malchut* of *Asiyah* is bound with the “beginning of everything”, which is the aspect of *Malchut* of the Infinite (*Ain Sof*) which contracted to become *Keter* of *Adam Kadmon*. This is as stated in the beginning of *Etz Chaim*²¹, in the *Shaar HaKlallim*, and is the meaning of “I am first, and I am last”²², as previously explained.

(In contrast, the aspect of the Essence of the Infinite Light before the *Tzimtzum* cannot yet be called by the terms “beginning” or “end” since it is still an aspect of the light of His Essence as it is before being drawn down to influence below. This is as stated, “You are holy and Your Name is holy”²³, as is known.)

Now, after [one contemplates the particulars] is the unification. Through the thorough contemplation (*Hitbonenut*) of all the particulars of the chaining down (*Hishtalshelut*), from the beginning of all things, which is *Malchut* of the Infinite until *Malchut* of *Asiyah* specifically, they should then all be drawn to the First Source, which is the aspect of the Essence of the Infinite Light before the *Tzimtzum*. This is the general intention of the first verse of the *Shema*²⁴ recital, [which is] the “Upper Unity”²⁵. [In other words, Hear ‘o Israel, the L-rd our G-d] the L-rd is One” refers to His simple unity before the first *Tzimtzum*. About this it states in *Sefer Yetzirah*²⁶, “Before One what can you count?” [This is to say, G-d is] higher

¹⁷ This refers to *Igullim* and *Yosher*, which will be explained later.

¹⁸ *Tihiru Ila’ah* – The Upper Purity

¹⁹ This limited band of revelation is drawn from the *Reshimu* – Impression, at its beginning and ends down here at our lowly world (*Olam HaShafel*). Therefore, only its beginning, which is the general encompassing light of the entire chaining down of all the worlds, is called the “lower purity”.

²⁰ *Tihiru Tata’a* – The Lower Purity

²¹ *Etz Chaim* – The Tree of Life, from the Holy Rabbi Yitzchak Luria (the Arizal).

²² This is to say, “I am first” with the first *Tzimtzum* of *Malchut* of *Ain Sof*, and “I am last” with the last *Tzimtzum* of *Malchut* of *Malchut* of *Asiyah*. In other words, what will come out in the end action is according to what came up in the beginning desire, and I am the cause of it all.

²³ This is to say, He is Holy and removed from Creation, and His Name, the Infinite Light, is Holy and removed from Creation.

²⁴ Deuteronomy, V’Etchanan 6:4

²⁵ See Zohar Bereshit 18b. The first verse of the *Shema* is the “Upper Unity”, while the second statement of the prayer is the “Lower Unity”.

²⁶ See *Sefer Yetzirah*, Chapter 1, Mishnah 7

than the ten *sefirot*²⁷. This is as stated²⁸, “You are One but not in enumeration²⁹” of the ten *sefirot*, as is known.

However, the general intent of “Blessed be the glorious name of His kingship forever”³⁰, which is the “lower unity”³¹, is the aspect of *Malchut* of the Infinite after the *Tzimtzum*. About this it states³², “Your kingdom is the kingdom of all the worlds”, until *Malchut* (Kingdom) of *Asiyah*. This is the aforementioned matter of “I am first and I am last”. Now, this entire unification and “binding” from the beginning to the end, which follows the contemplation of the multitude of intermediary particulars, is only like a single detail in comparison to the general principle which includes them all³³. This general principle is the aspect of the general encompassing of the Circle (*Igul*) which encompasses the Line (*Kav*)³⁴. [Moreover,] it too is considered to only be a detail in comparison to the Essence of the Infinite Light before the *Tzimtzum*,³⁵ which is called the “Upper Purity”. [This “Upper

²⁷ The original Hebrew of the *Sefer Yetzirah* is “*Lifnei Echad mah attah sopher?*” The word “*sopher*” shares the same etymological root as the “*sefirot*”. Furthermore, it means “to count”. The indication of this *Mishnah* is that the Infinite Light of G-d before the *Tzimtzum*, is “one, but not in a way of enumeration”, since it is higher than being a “first” to a “second”. Furthermore, we learn that it is higher than the ten *sefirot* and is not made up of them. That is to say, He has no beginning or end.

²⁸ See Introduction to Tikkunei Zohar 17a

²⁹ This is to say, he is One, but not a numerical one. This again signifies that G-d is beyond the enumeration of the ten sefirot, and is absolutely singular. He creates them, but is beyond them, and cannot be counted by them or amongst them. Let us return to the originally quoted verse of the *Shema*, “Hear ‘o Israel...the L-rd is One”. What has been brought out of this verse is not just that there is “only one G-d” as opposed to two etc, but rather, that only G-d exists. He is an absolute, singular being. In other words, this “one” is not a numerical “1”, but rather signifies G-d’s absolute singularity.

³⁰ In the daily *Shema* prayer, this is the statement which immediately follows the first statement of “Hear ‘o Israel”.

³¹ See tractate Psachim 56a, and Zohar Bereshit 18b

³² Psalms 145:13, “*Malchutcha Malchut Kol Olamim*”. The literal translation is “Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom”. However, it can also be translated as, “Your kingdom is the kingdom of all the worlds”. (*Malchut* is Kingdom). This signifies how G-d not only brings all worlds into existence, but that He is the ruler of them all.

³³ In other words, the entire chaining down of a particular line of revelation is literally as nothing in comparison to the general encompassing power which includes the entire chaining down within it. This may be understood through the following analogy of a human being who desires a dwelling place. This desire for a dwelling place includes every kind of dwelling place within it. The revelation of a particular desire for a “brick house” is literally like nothing compared to the potential of the original desire for a dwelling place, and is only a particular of this general desire. Furthermore, the particular desires for the brick house, such as a kitchen and a bedroom are only particulars of the general desire for the brick house. Furthermore, the desire for a sink in the kitchen is only a particular of the general desire for the kitchen, which is a particular desire of the general desire for the house, which is a particular desire of the general desire for the dwelling place. Furthermore, even the entire desire for a dwelling place is only a glimmer of revelation of this person’s capacity for desire. Likewise, the revelation and actualization of our lowly world is only like the most particular detail of revelation of inherent potential of the lowest order of angels of the lowest world of *Asiyah*. Furthermore, the lowest order of angels of the world of *Asiyah* is similarly, only the most finite fraction of revelation of the potential of the world above them etc. This continues to the point where the entire chaining down, of all of the worlds, are all only a limited ray of revelation and are literally not even a detail in comparison to the potential of G-d’s Infinite Light before the *Tzimtzum*. Nonetheless, the original desire and intent is seen down here in this lowly world, specifically, because “the end is bound with the beginning”, as will be explained.

³⁴ This is the general encompassing light, which encompasses the entire band of limited revelation. These two aspects, *Igullim* – Circles and the *Kav Yashar* – the Straight Line, will be explained later at great length.

³⁵ See footnote 33.

Purity”] is even higher than being an aspect of a “general principle” for “particular details”, since we have already stated that “He is Holy” and removed in the aspect of His Essence³⁶. This is the explanation of the statement³⁷, “the Singular One, Life of the world.” From this aspect of “*Yachid* – Singular”, [influence] is drawn down by means of the aforementioned first *Tzimtzum*, to become what is called “the life of the worlds” of *ABY”A*,³⁸ which are within the *Kav*³⁹ in an encompassing and pervading manner, as is known. This will suffice those of understanding.

It is necessary for a person to know and implant in his soul all the explanations of the chaining down of the worlds. After the explanations of all the particular details in the order of the chaining down (*Seder Hishtalsbelut*) have been explained to a person, then he should constantly accustom himself throughout his life [to contemplate them] in his mind and heart, so that he will be proficient in all the details, specifically. [Through this,] he will [be capable of] making a summation of the entire length, including [the entirety of it] from beginning to end as one. This [should be done] to such a degree that in a single moment of contemplation within his soul, [when he contemplates] “the end of everything”, which is the comprehension of physical creation of “something out of nothing”, [i.e. the creation] of the physical planets and the four physical foundations, and all the other particulars of this lowly world, [he will see that there rests upon them the aspect of *Malchut* of the Infinite, literally]⁴⁰. This is as stated⁴¹, “Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who has created these”. “Lift up your eyes on high” with an actual physical sight, “and behold who has created these” into a completely physical something, through the most final *Tzimtzum* concealment. It is literally in this [“end of everything”] where *Malchut* of the Infinite which is the “beginning of everything”, and is even higher than the source of *Atzilut*, [it is specifically here that it] rests, in an infinite aspect, specifically⁴².

For this reason the book of Psalms only mentions the greatness of G-d in a simple manner, [as it is pertinent to] the greatness and wondrousness of the acts of G-d in the [physical] heavens and the earth, and its physical hosts, specifically. It makes no mention or praise of His greatness [as it is pertinent to] the upper spiritual worlds and the highest heights which

³⁶ This is to say, the Essence of the Infinite Light before *Tzimtzum* can in no way be considered a “general principle” which includes “particular parts and details”, since then He would not be an absolute Infinite Singularity. Rather, we have already stated that he is “Holy” and removed from the entire Creation, since creation is a limited finite band of revelation, while He is an absolutely Infinite Singularity. Since He is not a composite being, like any created entities, this cannot be considered a “general principle” that includes “particulars”. Rather, He is an absolutely simple singularity. This will be explained in greater detail in chapter 10.

³⁷ See the *Baruch She’amar* and *Yishtabach* prayers of the morning prayers, “*Yachid Chay HaOlamim*”

³⁸ This is an acronym for the worlds *Atzilut*, *Briyah*, *Yetzirah* and *Asiyah*.

³⁹ This is the general finite line of revelation.

⁴⁰ In other words, when he looks around at existence, he will immediately recognize that he is being brought into existence at every moment by G-d Himself. The entire chaining down of the worlds will become transparent to him. As in the example given previously with the telephone, although there are a multitude of intermediaries between one person and the other, nonetheless, they are talking to each other, essence to essence, literally. Furthermore, although there are a multitude of intermediaries, the intermediaries are totally transparent to them.

⁴¹ Isaiah 40:26

⁴² This is to say that one is then capable of “gazing heavenward” and immediately recognizing how all of Creation is literally an act of the Infinite G-d. Moreover, he recognizes this immediately.

precede even the world of *Atzilut*. This is because, as previously mentioned, “the beginning is specifically bound to the end.” This is [also] as stated, “See now that I, I am He”⁴³, and that the Essence of the Infinite Light is what encompasses [all of existence]. This will suffice for those of understanding.

This, then, is the true intent in the contemplation of the particulars, as previously explained⁴⁴. (Even though according to the calculation of the [multitude of] details in the chaining down of the worlds, there is a very vast distance between the beginning and the end, nonetheless, in truth, it is very close, without any interruption and concealment in between. This is as stated, “See now that I, I am He” and⁴⁵ “There is no other besides me as an intermediary”. This will suffice for those of understanding.)

(This is likewise as stated⁴⁶, “[Lo, this only I have found,] that G-d has made man upright; but they have sought out many calculations”. “That G-d has made man upright” [refers to the] Primordial Man (*Adam Kadmon*), from the beginning of the line (*Kav*) until the “heel” of the Primordial Man (*Adam Kadmon*), which concludes at the end of the world of *Asiyah*⁴⁷. It is all one complete [matter] from beginning to end. [However,] “They have sought out many calculations” [referring to] the aspect of Circles (*Igullim*), with separations and divisions, one above the other⁴⁸.)

All of the above may be understood, in a very brief way, from the aspect of the *Ketarim*⁴⁹ of each world. In the aspect of the *Ketarim* there is no aspect of “chaining down” from cause to effect in a way of distance in levels, at all⁵⁰. For example, the aspect of the simple desire in the Essence of the Infinite Light, as stated⁵¹, “When it arose in His simple desire”, that is, the aspect of *Malchut* of the Infinite itself is what arose in his simple thought, [as in the

⁴³ This is to say, “I am He with the first *Tzimtzum*, and I am He with the last *Tzimtzum*”.

⁴⁴ As explained in chapter four, the particular contemplation of the details should always be brought back to this general intent.

⁴⁵ See Tikkunei Zohar 120a

⁴⁶ Kohelet 7:29

⁴⁷ This refers to the aspect of *Yosher* – Straight Line, and Tikkun – Rectification, which will be explained later. This is to say, it is one continuum from beginning to end, without any interruption or cessation.

⁴⁸ As opposed to the aspect of *Yosher* and *Tikkun* in which all the *sefirot* are included one with the other and are bound to one another from beginning to end, the aspect of *Igullim* is like concentric circles, in which one is above the other, and they are disconnected. This leads to the aspect of *Tohu* – Chaos, where there is division and separation as opposed to a unified system. All this will be explained later in great detail.

⁴⁹ This word is the plural of *Keter*. The *sefirah* of *Keter* corresponds to the faculty of “pleasure” and “desire”, as will be explained at great length later.

⁵⁰ That is to say, there is no distance from the Essence of G-d in the *sefirah* of *Keter*. In this, the *sefirah* of *Keter* is different than all the other *sefirot*. This can be understood by analogy from the desires of human beings. This is to say that all desires that a person has is because he desires them in his essence. If he would not desire them in his essence, then they would not arise at all into his thoughts, emotions or actions etc. Furthermore, the final action is what arises in his desire first. This is, likewise, the case in the aspect of the *Ketarim* of everything in existence, as will be explained. In contrast, in the aspect of “cause and effect” there is a distance between the cause and the effect, in that the effect can never grasp its cause, as is known.

⁵¹ See introduction of Etz Chaim, and Shaar 1, Anaf 2

statement] “I shall rule”,⁵² which is much higher than the desire to Emanate (*Atzilut*) or to Create (*Briyah*) etc. Those [desires] are still only an aspect of a *Heyulie*⁵³. From this first [simple desire], there is a *Tzimtzum* – lessening to the “Primal Desire”, which is called *Keter* of *Adam Kadmon*⁵⁴. Afterwards, [there came] the desire to Emanate which in general is the aspect of *Keter* of *Atzilut*. Afterwards was the desire to Create, which is *Keter* of *Malchut* of *Briyah*⁵⁵, following which [there came] *Keter* of *Malchut* of *Yetzirah*,⁵⁶ until the aspect of *Keter Malchut* of *Asiyah*, which is the desire to actualize. This is as stated⁵⁷, “Whatever HaShem desires he did...” [Similarly,] below in man, what difference is there between the aspect of his desire and essential *heyulie* in which there were included four desires. For example, the desire for his essential self and his most final desire to actualize, all came from and are rooted in one source⁵⁸. Likewise, there is no difference between His [G-d’s] simple desire which was drawn down to become the desire for emanation, and His simple desire which was drawn down to become [the aspect of] “Whatever HaShem desires he did” at the end of our world of action. This will suffice for those of understanding.

End of Chapter Seven

⁵² As stated in the Zohar on “*VaYimloch*”. These words, “I will rule – *Ana Emloch*” is the original simple desire which arose in His simple thought.

⁵³ See chapter 2, footnote 17

⁵⁴ This is the desire for *Adam Kadmon* – Primal Man, which will be explained later.

⁵⁵ *Keter* – corresponds to desire, while *Malchut* corresponds to action. This then is the desire to actualize the world of Creation - *Briyah*.

⁵⁶ This is the desire to actualize the world of Formation - *Yetzirah*.

⁵⁷ Psalms 135:6

⁵⁸ This is to say, his innermost desires and outermost desires are all rooted in his very essence, and there is no difference between them. Likewise, G-d’s highest desire for emanation etc, and the lowest desire for actualization of this physical world are literally equal.