

PETICHA

הפתיחה

REBBE YEHUDAH LEIB HALEVI ASHLAG
THE BAAL HASULAM

WITH COMMENTARY BY
REBBE AVRAHAM MORDECHAI GOTTLIEB

CHAPTERS 1-2

ASHLAG
KABBALAH

הפתיחה

PETICHA



פתיחה לחכמת הקבלה

Opening to the Wisdom of Kabbalah

Rebbe Yehudah Leib HaLevi Ashlag
The Baal HaSulam

with commentary by
Rebbe Avraham Mordechai Gottlieb

Translated from Hebrew
Chapters 1–2

פתיחה לחכמת הקבלה

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Hebrew commentary by Rebbe Avraham Mordechai Gottlieb

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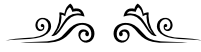
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Introduction

Rebbe Yehudah Leib HaLevi Ashlag *ztz"l*, known as the Baal HaSulam, attained the state of *devekut* — union with God. Among the precious spiritual wisdom we are blessed to have received from the Baal HaSulam is *Peticha LeChochmat HaKabbalah*, “Opening to the Wisdom of Kabbalah”, known simply as the *Peticha*.

In the *Peticha* the Baal HaSulam presents us with deep insight into the spiritual root of reality. The *Peticha* is a condensed outline of the Baal HaSulam’s monumental work *Talmud Eser HaSefirot*, explaining the Arizal’s *Etz HaChayim*, “The Tree of Life”.

This book is a translation of the beginning of the *Peticha* and also an explanation of the text by Rebbe Avraham Mordechai Gottlieb. Rebbe Gottlieb is a disciple of the Baal HaSulam’s son and disciple Rebbe Baruch Shalom HaLevi Ashlag *ztz"l*. Rebbe Gottlieb’s commentary brings this spiritual wisdom to an unprecedented level of clarity.

Each section of the *Peticha* is presented in the original Hebrew followed by the translation. The translation then appears again with a translation of Rebbe Gottlieb’s commentary interspersed in the text. To help the material be more easily understood, the translation is not always literal and concepts are sometimes restated using different words. Some of the text is not translated and some of the commentary is not included. This is not an academic translation, but rather an attempt to provide an accessible introduction to this spiritual wisdom. The translator asks forgiveness for any mistakes.

The *Peticha* is meant to be learned slowly and carefully, ideally with a friend or spiritual study group. The Baal HaSulam explains that this wisdom is not meant to be learned as an intellectual pursuit but rather to attain inner transformation.

“Open for me an opening the size of the eye of a needle,
and I will open for you the supernal gates.”

Zohar

פתיחה לחכמת הקבלה

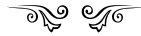


(א) רבי חנניא בן עקשיא אומר: "רצה הקב"ה לזכות את ישראל לפיכך הרבה להם תורה ומצוות, שנאמר ה' חפץ למען צדקו יגדיל תורה ויאדיר" (מכות כ"ג ע"ב). ונודע שזכות היא מלשון הזדככות, והוא ע"ד שאמרו ז"ל: "לא נתנו מצוות אלא לצרף בהן את ישראל" (ב"ר רפמ"ד). ויש להבין ענין הזכות הזו שאנו משיגין ע"י תורה ומצוות, וכן מהי העביות שבנו, שאנו צריכים לזכותה ע"י התורה ומצוות. וכבר דברנו מזה בספרי, פנים מסבירות, ותלמוד עשר הספירות. ונחזור כאן בקיצור: כי מחשבת הבריאה היתה כדי להנות לנבראים, כפי מתנת ידו הרחבה יתברך ויתעלה, ומכאן הוטבע בהנשמות רצון וחשק גדול לקבל את שפעו ית', כי הרצון לקבל הוא הכלי על מדת התענוג שבהשפע, כי לפי מדת גדלו ותוקפו של הרצון לקבל את השפע, כן הוא מדת התענוג והחמדה שבהשפע, לא פחות ולא יותר. והם מקושרים זה בזה, עד שאין לחלק ביניהם זולת בהיחס - שהתענוג מיוחס להשפע, והרצון הגדול לקבל את השפע מיוחס להנברא המקבל. ובהכרח ב' אלה נמשכים מהבורא ית', ובאו בהכרח במחשבת הבריאה, אלא שיש לחלק בהם על דרך הנזכר, אשר השפע הוא מעצמותו ית', כלומר שהוא נמשך יש מיש, והרצון לקבל הכלול שם הוא השורש של הנבראים, כלומר, הוא השורש של חידוש, שפירושו יציאת יש מאין, כי בעצמותו ית' ודאי שאין שם בחינת הרצון לקבל ח"ו. וע"כ נבחן שהרצון לקבל האמור, הוא כל החומר של הבריאה מראשה עד סופה, עד שכל מיני הבריות המרובות ומקריהן שאין להן שיעור, ודרכי הנהגתן שכבר נתגלו והעתידים להתגלות, אינם רק שיעורים ושינוי ערכים של הרצון לקבל. וכל מה שיש בהן באותן הבריות, דהיינו כל מה שמקובל בהרצון לקבל המוטבע בהן, כל זה הוא נמשך מעצמותו ית' יש מיש, ואינו כלום מבחינת הבריאה המחודשת יש מאין, כי אינו מחודש כלל, והוא נמשך מנצחיותו ית' יש מיש.

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CHAPTER 1

FOUR ASPECTS IN THE FORMATION OF THE COMPLETE VESSEL



1. Rabbi Chananya ben Akashya says: “God wanted to purify Israel and therefore gave them a lot of Torah and *mitzvot* — spiritual learning and spiritual practice.” This is like what the Sages say, “The *mitzvot* were given to purify Israel.” We need to understand this purification that we attain through Torah and *mitzvot*, and understand what coarseness in ourselves we need to refine. We have already discussed this in my books *Panim Masbirote* and *Talmud Eser HaSefirot*. To repeat briefly: The purpose of creation is to give pleasure to the created beings, this gift being in accordance with the Creator’s supernal generosity. A great desire to receive this *shefa* (abundant goodness) was therefore imprinted in the souls, because the desire to receive is the vessel for experiencing the pleasure in the *shefa*. The degree of desire to receive the *shefa* determines the degree of pleasure experienced from the *shefa* — no more and no less. They are so intimately connected one to the other that we do not differentiate between them except in terms of their relationship — the pleasure is associated with the *shefa*, and the desire to receive the *shefa* is associated with the created being who receives the *shefa*. These both emanate from the Creator and are rooted in the Creator’s thought of creation. The *shefa* comes from the essence of the Creator “something from something” — from that which is — while the desire to receive is “something from nothing” — something newly created — and is the root of the created beings. This is because in the essence of God there is, of course, no aspect whatsoever of a desire to receive. We can therefore say that this desire to receive that we are speaking about is the entire material of creation from beginning to end. All the countless types of created beings, and all their happenings beyond measure, and all their behaviors in the past and that which will be in the future, are nothing other than different measures and values of the desire to receive. Everything in

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the created beings, meaning everything received in the desire to receive imprinted in their nature, all emanates from God's essence. It is not at all something newly created — it emanates from the eternity of God.

1. Rabbi Chananya ben Akashya says: “God wanted to purify Israel and therefore gave them a lot of Torah and *mitzvot* — spiritual learning and spiritual practice.”

We see here that the only purpose of Torah and *mitzvot* is to purify ourselves. This purification is acquired through Torah and the spiritual work of *mitzvot*.

This is like what the Sages say, “The *mitzvot* were given to purify Israel.”

Tzoref, the Hebrew word in this verse meaning “purify” has the same root as the Hebrew word for “goldsmith”. It also means “to clean” and “to combine”. The craft of a goldsmith is to clean gold of its impurities. The goldsmith separates the waste and combines the clean parts of the gold. Our spiritual work is to remove our impure aspects and combine our good aspects. When all Israel throws away the impurity of individual self-concern which divides us, we will become unified as one entity.

When gold comes from the earth it is full of impurities and does not look precious. Through being refined over and over, the impurities slowly fall away until pure gold remains. Likewise, we need to refine ourselves time after time. There are ups and downs along the way.

We need to understand this purification that we attain through Torah and *mitzvot*, and understand what coarseness in ourselves we need to refine.

The opposite of refinement is coarseness. The intention is not necessarily physical coarseness but also spiritual coarseness, meaning a desire to receive spiritual pleasures. People who care only about themselves are

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called unrefined and coarse, and this is true even of people who desire spirituality. So the question is — what is the coarseness within ourselves that we need to refine through Torah and *mitzvot*?

It is very important to delineate what we need to purify in ourselves. Although many holy books discuss overcoming our *yetzer hara*, our negative inclination, what this *yetzer hara* actually is, however, is very obscure. The *yetzer hara* is described as having many aspects — pride, craving, depression, jealousy, and so on. With all these different aspects we don't even know where to begin. As the nature of divine light is to delineate everything simply and clearly, as the light itself is simple — the Baal HaSulam is about to delineate in the clearest possible terms: What disconnects us from God? What do we need to work on?

To repeat briefly: The purpose of creation is to give pleasure to the created beings, this gift being in accordance with the Creator's supernal generosity.

Does the Creator's desire to give goodness to creation connote lack? Does the Creator lack giving goodness to creation? The answer is no. We are not able to understand this because all our desires are an expression of lack. In divine reality, however, the desire to give goodness does not come from lack.

A great desire to receive this *shefa* (abundant goodness) was therefore imprinted in the souls, because the desire to receive is the vessel for experiencing the pleasure in the *shefa*. The degree of desire to receive the *shefa* determines the degree of pleasure experienced from the *shefa* — no more and no less.

God's desire to give goodness necessitated the creation in our souls of a desire to receive the goodness. This is because feeling goodness depends on a desire to receive the goodness. This is like, for example, two people eating the same meal but one of them enjoys it much more than the other. The difference is their appetite. The person with a big appetite enjoys the meal a lot. The person without an appetite, even if given a feast, is not able

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to enjoy the meal. The desire to receive is the vessel that feels pleasure from what is given. The size of the desire to receive determines the amount of pleasure felt from the *shefa*.

They are so intimately connected one to the other that we do not differentiate between them except in terms of their relationship — the pleasure is associated with the *shefa*, and the desire to receive the *shefa* is associated with the created being who receives the *shefa*.

Here we are talking about the thought of creation, meaning the thought of the Creator to create reality. In this “thought of God”, the desire to receive and the *shefa* are attached to one another. The Creator is not like a person who needs tools to work — the thought of God itself is the action. Therefore, in the thought of creation there instantly appears the desire to receive filled with the *shefa* and the divine pleasure that God desires to bestow. The desire to receive is the vessel of the created being, and the *shefa* is the light of the revelation of God. The enjoyment results from the connection between the *shefa* and the desire to receive. Even though in God’s thought of creation the *shefa* fills the vessel with pleasure and nothing separates between them — there is a differentiation. The *shefa*, which corresponds to the pleasure, comes from God’s essence. The vessel, which is the desire to receive, does not exist in the essence of God and is the essence of the created being.

These both emanate from the Creator and are rooted in the Creator’s thought of creation.

“These both” refers to the *shefa* and the desire to receive.

The *shefa* comes from the essence of the Creator “something from something” — from that which is —

The essence of the *shefa* emanates from the essence of God. We have no comprehension of the essence of God, but can comprehend only the light that emanates from the essence — only what God wants us to comprehend. Since we have a spiritual axiom that “we have no comprehension of the

essence of God”, we need to say that what God wants the created beings to comprehend is not the essence of God, but rather an aspect of God associated with the created beings.

We find that the concept of “the Creator’s thought of creation” is already a concept of relationship between the Creator and the created beings. This is the most primal state that contains the root of all the created beings. It is no wonder that there is desire to receive here because the desire to receive is included in the thought. This thought is not the essence of God, but rather something especially created for the created beings, as we said above.

In the language of Kabbalah the Creator’s thought of creation is called *Ein Sof*, meaning unlimited. At this point, the desire to receive does not cause any disconnection from the Creator. The divine light is clothed 100% in this vessel of receiving. After this primal state called *Ein Sof* a disconnection and separation called *tzimtzum* will occur that we will learn about later.

while the desire to receive is “something from nothing” — something newly created — and is the root of the created beings. This is because in the essence of God there is, of course, no aspect whatsoever of a desire to receive.

Even though the desire to receive emanates from God, it is described as “something newly created” because God has no desire to receive. This is wondrous because in physical reality we are not able to give what we don’t have. God, however, created something that did not exist in God. In divine reality there is no desire to receive at all. Desire to receive means lack, and God is complete to the end point of perfection and contains no lack. Desire, longing, and lack are not applicable to God at all.

We can therefore say that this desire to receive that we are speaking about is the entire material of creation from beginning to end.

There are only two aspects:

- 1) the Creator
- 2) the creation

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The created being's desire to receive separates it from the totality of the Creator. The desire to receive is the entire material of the creation from beginning to end.

The desire to receive is divided into four parts hinted at in the four letters of the divine name ה-ו-ה-י :

1) The first aspect of desire to receive is in minerals.

Movement is what determines the developmental level of the desire to receive. In minerals the desire to receive is the force in the center of an atom around which the particles move. Since the desire to receive in minerals is very rudimentary and undeveloped, we only see movement in a general way, like the movement of the earth and moon.

On a microscopic level minerals are not static. There is a lot of movement in every particle. This movement attests to the desire to receive that is the central core of every particle. The movement is not visible from the outside, however, because the desire to receive of minerals is undeveloped.

2) The second aspect of desire to receive is in plants.

The desire to receive in plants is more developed than the minimal desire to receive in minerals. Since the desire to receive in plants is more developed, we see movement. The movement is not individual independent movement, but rather movement common to the nature of each species of plants.

3) The third aspect of desire to receive is in animals.

In animals the desire to receive is even more developed. Each animal feels its individuality, has independent feelings, and has individual movement. Animals also have motives of honor, power, and other desires beyond the realms of eating and drinking also found in plants. There is clearly more desire to receive in an animal than in a plant.

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4) The fourth aspect of desire to receive is in humans.

In humans there is psychological movement beyond what exists in animals. Humans can comprehend the world outside themselves in a way that animals cannot. Humans are able to contemplate the past and future in a way that animals cannot. Humans are cognitive of different places in the world in a way that animals are not. Also, humans are able to be happy for the joys of others and feel sadness for the sorrows of others in a way that animals are not. Clearly, the human desire to receive is developed beyond measure relative to animals' desire to receive. Also, human intellect is more developed and therefore able to serve the desire to receive in a maximum way.

All the countless types of created beings, and all their happenings beyond measure, and all their behaviors in the past and that which will be in the future, are nothing other than different measures and values of the desire to receive.

The general intention of “all the countless types of created beings” is the four aspects of mineral, plant, animal and human.

These aspects also exist within every person:

- 1) The mineral aspect within ourselves is the desire to receive basic needs. This means our minimal needs of food, water, and sleep.
- 2) The plant aspect within ourselves is the desire to receive physical pleasures more than the minimum.
- 3) The animal aspect within ourselves is the desire to receive honor and power.
- 4) The human aspect within ourselves is the desire to receive wisdom.
- 5) The divine aspect within ourselves is the desire to receive the pleasure of experiencing God.

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These five types of desire to receive exist within all humanity and are what differentiate us from one another. We are differentiated by our desires to receive and the measures of our desires to receive, and nothing else. The desire to receive also differentiates between the experiences we each go through and the desire to receive is what differentiates between our different behaviors. Even within ourselves, the desire to receive is what differentiates between our inner states of experience.

Everything in the created beings, meaning everything received in the desire to receive imprinted in their nature,

This is everything that satisfies the desire to receive, meaning every type of pleasure and enjoyment.

all emanates from God's essence. It is not at all something newly created — it emanates from the eternity of God.

Every type of pleasure, from the lowest pleasures to the highest ones, all emanate from God. This means that pleasure is not something newly created, but flows from the essence of God. The type and level of pleasure we experience depends on the vessel we have to experience the pleasure. At the source, however, everything is undifferentiated divine oneness.

Summary of this section:

The Baal HaSulam is discussing the thought of creation, meaning the thought of the Creator to bestow goodness to created beings. This primal state is called *Ein Sof*. *Ein Sof* includes all the divine light that God desires to give to the created beings and also all the desire to receive, the vessel of the created beings. The light is clothed in the desire to receive in complete union.



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ב) וכפי האמור, כלול הרצון לקבל בהכרח תכף במחשבת הבריאה, בכל ריבוי ערכים שבו, ביחד עם השפע הגדול שחשב להנותם ולהעניקם. ותדע, שז"ס אור וכלי שאנו מבחינים בעולמות עליונים, כי הם באים בהכרח כרוכים יחד, ומשתלשלים יחד ממדרגה למדרגה. ובשיעור שהמדרגות יורדות מאת אור פניו ומתרחקות ממנו ית', כן הוא שיעור ההתגשמות של הרצון לקבל הכלול בהשפע. וכן אפשר לומר להיפך - אשר כפי שיעור ההתגשמות של הרצון לקבל בהשפע, כן הולך ויורד ממדרגה למדרגה, כמ"ש להלן. עד המקום הנמוך מכולם, דהיינו שהרצון לקבל מתגשם שם בכל שיעורו הראוי, נבחן המקום ההוא בשם עולם העשיה, והרצון לקבל נבחן לבחינת גופו של אדם, והשפע שמקבל נבחן למדת תוכנם של החיים שבגוף ההוא. ועד"ז גם בשאר בריות שבעוה"ז. באופן, שכל ההבחן שבין העולמות העליונים לעוה"ז הוא - כי כל עוד שהרצון לקבל הכלול בשפעו ית' לא נתגשם בצורתו הסופית, נבחן שעודו נמצא בעולמות הרוחניים, העליונים מעוה"ז, ואחר שהרצון לקבל נתגשם בצורתו הסופית, הוא נבחן שכבר הוא מצוי בעוה"ז.

2. As has been said, there is necessarily and instantly included in the thought of creation the desire to receive in all its myriad measures together with the great *shefa* that God thought to bestow to give pleasure to creation. Know that this is the secret of light and vessel that we discern in the upper spiritual worlds. They necessarily come attached together and progressively descend together from level to level. As the levels descend from the revelation of the divine light and become distant from God, the desire to receive included in the *shefa* materializes. It is also possible to say the opposite — as the desire to receive within the *shefa* materializes, there is a descent from level to level, as will be explained. The levels descend until the lowest level where the desire to receive is materialized in its entire measure. This is called the world of *Asiya*. The desire to receive is the body aspect of a person, and the *shefa* received is the measure of life in the body. It is like this with all the created beings in the world. The entire differentiation between the upper spiritual worlds and this world is that as long as the desire to receive included in the divine *shefa* is not materialized

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in its final form, it is considered to be within the spiritual worlds above this world. When the desire to receive becomes materialized in its final form it is considered to be in this world.

2. As has been said, there is necessarily and instantly included in the thought of creation the desire to receive in all its myriad measures together with the great *shefa* that God thought to bestow to give pleasure to creation.

The term “necessarily” indicates two ideas:

1) The desire to receive is necessarily included in the thought of creation because otherwise we would be speaking about the essence of God. The essence of God is the only entity that does not have desire to receive, and the Sages teach that “we have no comprehension of God’s essence at all.” None of the Kabbalists speak about this essence. The Kabbalists speak only about the relationship between the Creator and the creation, the creation being the desire to receive. Therefore, the desire to receive is necessarily included in the thought of creation.

The Baal HaSulam writes in *Talmud Eser HaSefirot*, “In what way is *Ein Sof* differentiated from the Creator and called *Ein Sof*? The differentiation is that *Ein Sof* includes the desire to receive.” *Ein Sof* is the thought of the Creator to give goodness to the creation. *Ein Sof* already includes the creation. The concept of “desiring to give goodness to the creation” attests to a relationship and connection to creation. The creation is, as we have said, the desire to receive.

2) The desire to receive is necessarily included in the thought of creation together with the great *shefa* that God wants to give because, unlike ourselves, God does not need anything to carry out an action. Regarding God, there is no past, present and future. The future serves God like the

present. Since God's desire is to give goodness to the creation, the creation is immediately created with all of the goodness that God desires to bestow.

in all of its myriad measures

In the thought to give goodness to creation there was immediately created the desire to receive with all its attributes that will be delineated throughout all the spiritual worlds and then revealed in the souls throughout all the generations.

together with the great *shefa* that God thought to bestow to give pleasure to creation.

The light that is shining in the created beings in the thought of creation includes all the light that will ever be revealed in the spiritual worlds and the souls throughout all the generations. We find that the thought of creation includes all of reality, the light and the vessel, down to every last little detail.

Know that this is the secret of light and vessel that we discern

The light is the *shefa* that God desires to give to the souls. The essence of this light is the revelation of God to creation. The vessel is the souls' desire to receive this light because it contains endless pleasure.

in the upper spiritual worlds.

The Hebrew word *olam* means world and also means hidden. A world is a spiritual level. The spiritual levels are called worlds, *olamot*, because each one hides a measure of the divine light from the created beings. The light is only revealed according to the level of the spiritual world, meaning our level of spiritual refinement.

We need to understand what "upper" means in the term "upper spiritual worlds" since spiritual reality transcends physical space. It is not like some people think, that God and the upper spiritual worlds are found in the heavens above us. God does not take up any space and there is no

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space devoid of God. The meaning of “upper” is upper in importance. The worlds are spiritual levels. The spiritual levels where God is more revealed are considered more important because the purpose of creation is more revealed there. The upper spiritual worlds are states of consciousness that we can experience while living here on the physical earth. Being in this world or upper spiritual worlds is not a matter of being in a particular place, but rather depends on our state of consciousness.

They necessarily come attached together and progressively descend together from level to level.

The light and the vessel necessarily come together:

1) Because there is no understanding of the light itself. The light is only experienced through being clothed in a vessel.

2) The source of the vessel, in the thought of creation, is attached to the light. Therefore, when the vessel progressively descends from level to level it progressively descends with its light. The concept of progressively descending from level to level means the gradual progression through which the vessel becomes coarse and consequently its experience of the light becomes diminished. This will be discussed in great detail.

As the levels descend from the revelation of the divine light and become distant from God, the desire to receive included in the *shefa* materializes.

Spiritual reality is beyond the concept of space. Descent means a differentiation in attribute from the Creator. Ascent means a similarity of attribute to the Creator. The Creator’s attribute is “The good and the giver of good”. The created beings ascend as they progress in this direction and want to give to others. The created beings descend as they move in the opposite direction and increase their desire to receive for themselves. A level further from the revelation of the divine light means that this level has more desire to receive the *shefa* and less desire to give. The materialization

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of the desire to receive means an increase in the desire to receive for one's own self-benefit. We are not speaking here about physical space.

It is also possible to say the opposite — as the desire to receive within the *shefa* materializes, there is a descent from level to level, as will be explained.

Both of these last two sentences are really one, except that the first sentence is from the perspective of the level going down, and the second sentence is from the perspective of the materialization of the desire to receive.

What is the difference between the levels we are speaking about? A level is defined as a particular measure of divine revelation. The souls descend from the thought of the Creator, descending from level to level. This means that the souls descend through different levels in which the experience of God is progressively diminished. Soul means light and vessel — *shefa* and the desire to receive the *shefa*.

The first of the two sentences we are discussing is from the perspective of the descending levels. The Creator formed a progression of levels that the soul needs to descend through. Descending from level to level is the materialization of the desire to receive within the soul. This means that the desire to receive becomes more focused on its own self-benefit and the desire to give becomes diminished. The second sentence is from the perspective of the soul. As the desire to receive in the soul increases, it necessitates its descent from level to level. This is because it is unable to experience the divine revelation in the way it could before the desire to receive increased. These two sentences are discussing the same idea from different perspectives.

until the lowest level where the desire to receive is materialized in its entire measure.

The desire to receive arrives at its maximal state — desiring to receive entirely for its own self-benefit and not desiring to give at all.

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This is called the world of *Asiya*.

This world is called the world of *Asiya*, the world of “doing”, because this is where we perform Torah and *mitzvot*. Another reason this world is called *Asiya* is because in this world God is hidden and we need to work with *emuna*, belief. Acting with *emuna* is not an intellectual understanding, but rather involves “doing” beyond our understanding.

The desire to receive is the body aspect of a person,

The body spoken about here is not our physical body of flesh and bones but rather an aspect of our soul. Our soul has a spiritual part and a body part. The light is the spiritual part, and the desire to receive is the body part. It is called body in relationship to the light.

the *shefa* received is the measure of life in the body.

The level of life that the desire to receive experiences depends on the level of the desire to receive. For example, if a person wants to receive physical animalistic pleasures, then the substance of the life in this body is animalistic. The *shefa* received is a *shefa* of pleasure clothed in animalistic desires and nothing more. If a person desires intellectual pleasures, then intellectual pleasures are the substance of the life in this body. If a person desires spiritual pleasures, then spiritual pleasures are the substance of life in this body.

Why are some people’s desires more physical and other people’s desires more spiritual? This is discussed in the Baal HaSulam’s book *The Giving of the Torah* in the chapter “Freedom”. The Baal HaSulam explains that our tendencies are inherited and are also affected by society, friends, and the people we associate with. Our inherited spiritual tendencies are strengthened by learning holy books and being in the presence of spiritual people. Learning from the holy books of people who have attained union with God ignites in us an inner yearning that inspires us to live more spiritual lives. Learning from holy books and being in the presence of holy people are so important in Judaism because this is how we actually transform.

It is like this with all the created beings in the world.

All the created beings in the world, including the various types of minerals, plants, and animals, all come from the Creator's thought of creation called *Ein Sof*. There is no aspect of reality that is not included in this thought.

Therefore, the soul of an animal is also comprised of light and vessel, in other words *shefa* and a particular measure of desire to receive. The soul of an animal also progressively descends from the thought of creation through all the spiritual worlds until arriving in the material world. This means that, at its source, the soul of an animal is in a state of holiness and connected to a high spiritual root. The spiritual level of animals, however, does not depend on the animals but rather on humanity. When we ascend in holiness, the souls of animals ascend with us. When we descend in holiness, the animals also go down.

The entire differentiation between the upper spiritual worlds and this world is that as long as the desire to receive included in the divine *shefa* is not materialized in its final form,

Its final form means that the desire to receive has become coarse to its maximum degree. It wants to swallow up everything for its own benefit and has no comprehension of the desire to give.

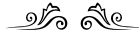
it is considered to be within the spiritual worlds above this world. When the desire to receive becomes materialized in its final form it is considered to be in this world.

This is not speaking about the material physical world of planet earth, but rather "this world", "*olam hazeh*", is a spiritual concept. When the soul reaches its lowest state, meaning that the desire to receive reaches its most coarse state, then it is in the soul state called "this world" or "*olam hazeh*". We can also say the opposite: A person living in the physical world with elevated consciousness is in the upper spiritual worlds.

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Summary of this section:

The desire to receive and the *shefa*, called vessel and light, progressively descend from the thought of creation by way of the spiritual worlds until arriving at this world, *olam hazeh*. *Olam hazeh* means the lowest state in which the desire to receive becomes coarse to its maximum degree and the light is reduced to a minimum.



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ג) וסדר ההשתלשלות האמור עד להביא את הרצון לקבל על צורתו הסופית שבעוה"ז, הוא על סדר ד' בחינות שיש בד' אותיות של השם בן ד'. כי ד' אותיות הוי"ה שבשמו ית' כוללות את כל המציאות כולה, מבלי יוצא ממנה אף משהו מן המשהו. ומבחינת הכלל הן מתבארות בהע"ס: חכמה, בינה, ת"ת, מלכות, ושרשן. והן עשר ספירות, כי ספירת התפארת כוללת בעצמה שש ספירות הנקראות חג"ת נה"י, והשורש נקרא כתר. אמנם בעיקרן הן נקראות חו"ב תו"מ, וזכור זה. והן ד' עולמות הנקראים: אצילות, בריאה, יצירה, עשיה. ועולם העשיה כולל בתוכו גם את העוה"ז. באופן שאין לך בריה בעוה"ז שלא תהיה מחודשת מא"ס ב"ה, דהיינו במחשבת הבריאה, שהיא בכדי להנות לנבראיו, כנ"ל. והיא בהכרח כלולה תיכף מאור וכלי, כלומר מאיזה שיעור של שפע, עם בחינת רצון לקבל את השפע ההוא. אשר שיעור השפע הוא נמשך מעצמותו ית' יש מיש, והרצון לקבל את השפע הוא מחודש יש מאין, כנ"ל. ובכדי שהרצון לקבל ההוא יבא על תכונתו הסופית, הוא מחויב להשתלשל עם השפע שבו דרך ד' העולמות: אצילות, בריאה, יצירה, עשיה. ואז נגמרת הבריאה באור וכלי, הנקראים גוף ואור החיים שבו.

3. The progression of the desire to receive until it attains its final form in this world, *olam hazeh*, corresponds to the four aspects of the four-letter divine name. The four letters of the divine name י-ה-ו-ה encompass all of reality, with no aspect of reality being left out at all. These four aspects are generally described as the ten *sefirot*: *Chochma*, *Bina*, *Tiferet*, *Malchut*, and their source. They are ten *sefirot* because the *sefira* of *Tiferet* includes six *sefirot*: *Chesed*, *Gevura*, *Tiferet*, *Netzach*, *Hod* and *Yesod*. The source is called *Keter*. The main aspects, however, are *Chochma*, *Bina*, *Tiferet* and *Malchut*. Remember this. These are the four spiritual worlds called: *Atzilut*, *Briya*, *Yetzira* and *Asiya*. The world of *Asiya* includes within it *olam hazeh*. There is no creature in this world that was not newly created in *Ein Sof*, meaning the Creator's thought of creation, the thought to give pleasure to the created beings, as we said before. Every created being necessarily and immediately includes light and vessel, meaning a measure of *shefa* together with a desire to receive that *shefa*. The measure of *shefa*

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comes forth from the essence of God — “something from something”. The desire to receive the *shefa* is new — “something from nothing”, as we said before. In order that this desire to receive will come to its final form, it needs to descend with the *shefa* by way of the four spiritual worlds: *Atzilut*, *Briya*, *Yetzira* and *Asiya*. Then the created being, comprised of vessel and light, is finished. The vessel is the body and the light is the life within it.

3. The progression of the desire to receive until it attains its final form in this world, *olam hazeh*, corresponds to the four aspects of the four-letter divine name.

The name יה-ו-ה-י.

י *yud*

ה *hey*

ו *vav*

ה *hey*

The four letters of the divine name יה-ו-ה-י encompass all of reality, with no aspect of reality being left out at all.

The four letters of יה-ו-ה-י allude to the four all-inclusive aspects of the desire to receive described above as the aspects of mineral, plant, animal and human. There is also a fifth aspect alluded to by the tip of the letter י *yud*. This is an aspect of our desire to receive that is even higher than the human level of the desire to receive.

These four aspects are generally described as the ten *sefirot*: *Chochmah*, *Bina*, *Tiferet*, *Malchut*, and their source.

How are there ten *sefirot* — this is only five?

Answer:

They are ten *sefirot* because the *sefira* of *Tiferet* includes six *sefirot*: *Chesed*, *Gevura*, *Tiferet*, *Netzach*, *Hod* and *Yesod*. The source is called

***Keter*. The main aspects, however, are called *Chochma, Bina, Tiferet* and *Malchut*.**

The four essential aspects are *Chochma, Bina, Tiferet* and *Malchut*. The six *sefirot* within *Tiferet* are details of this one *sefira*. The *sefira* of *Keter*, the highest level, is not included in the essential aspects of the *sefirot* because, even though *Keter* is the source of the light below, *Keter* transcends our comprehension.

The *sefirot* correspond to the four letters of ה-ו-ה-י:

י corresponds to *Chochma*

ה corresponds to *Bina*

ו corresponds to *Tiferet*

ה corresponds to *Malchut*

Since *Keter* is beyond our comprehension and can only be understood relatively, it does not have a corresponding letter in the divine name ה-ו-ה-י. *Keter* corresponds to the tip of the י.

These are the four spiritual worlds called: *Atzilut, Briya, Yetzira* and *Asiya*.

The worlds and the *sefirot* are both spiritual levels — what is the difference? The difference is between general aspects and their details. For example, the physical world has many components: land, ocean, sky and so on, with each of these components comprised of many details. This has roots in spiritual reality. The general spiritual levels are called worlds and their details are called *sefirot*. A level means a level of experiencing God — everything spoken about in this wisdom is about experiencing God.

There are generally speaking four main levels of experiencing God called the four worlds. Why are they called worlds? The Hebrew word for world, *olam*, also means hidden. They are called worlds because the light of God is progressively hidden in them. In *Atzilut* the light shines strongly. In *Briya* the light is less revealed. In *Yetzira* the light is even less revealed. In *Asiya* the light is revealed minimally.

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Each world contains the four essential *sefirot*: *Chochma*, *Bina*, *Tiferet* and *Malchut*. The *sefirot* in each world are specific levels of that world.

The *sefirot* of *Atzilut* all have characteristics of the *sefira* of *Chochma*.

The *sefirot* of *Briya* all have characteristics of the *sefira* of *Bina*.

The *sefirot* of *Yetzira* all have characteristics of the *sefira* of *Tiferet*.

The *sefirot* of *Asiya* all have characteristics of the last *sefira* *Malchut*.

The world of *Asiya* includes within it *olam hazeh*.

The lowest level of a spiritual world is the highest level of the world beneath it. The world of *Asiya* is the lowest spiritual world and its lowest aspect touches *olam hazeh*, this world. *Olam hazeh* means receiving in order to receive.

We always need to remember that the spiritual worlds are not places in physical space, but rather states of consciousness.

There is no creature in this world that was not newly created in *Ein Sof Baruch Hu*, meaning the Creator's thought of creation, the thought to give pleasure to the created beings.

All the created beings are born in the Creator's thought of creation called "the desire to give goodness to the created beings".

What goodness does God desire to give? As there is no pleasure greater and more wonderful than experiencing God, the essence of the goodness that God desires to give is — experiencing God.

The Creator desires to give goodness and has no desire to receive at all. In contrast, the essence of the created beings is the desire to receive. In order for this opposite creation to come from the Creator, there is a gradual process of detachment. The first stage is the "thought of creation" called *Ein Sof*. God's desire to give goodness brings into being all the souls in complete perfection. After *Ein Sof*, the created being descends through the

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spiritual worlds until arriving at *olam hazeh*, this world. In the beginning, the desire to receive is united with the desire to give. Descent through the spiritual worlds means that little by little the desire to give diminishes and the desire to receive increases. This causes the created being to become distanced from the Creator. At the end of this process the created being has no desire to give at all and only a desire to receive. This is called *olam hazeh*, and we are born from this aspect. Although the type of pleasure we desire changes over time, we desire pleasure at every stage of our lives.

Question:

Why does creation need to come from the Creator in a gradual process of detachment? God can do anything. Why can't God create beings directly, without these gradual stages?

Answer:

Of course God is able, but this progression is for our benefit. The stages are like rungs on a ladder designed for our souls to be able to ascend. The more rungs there are, the more easily we can ascend.

Every created being necessarily and immediately includes light and vessel, meaning a measure of *shefa* together with a desire to receive that *shefa*.

We need to remember that *shefa* means experiencing God.

Then the created being, comprised of vessel and light, is finished. The vessel is the body and the light is the life within it.

This happens specifically in *olam hazeh* where there are no sparks of wanting to give and the created being only desires to receive. Now there is an actual creation, completely distant from the Creator. We then need to work to come close to the Creator. The work includes aspects of heart and mind — the spiritual work of giving and believing.

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Summary of this section:

The light and vessel descend by way of the four letters: ה-ו-ה-י. The *shefa* and the vessel progressively descend from the “thought of creation” through the four worlds *Atzilut*, *Briya*, *Yetzira* and *Asiya* until arriving at *olam hazeh* where the desire to receive is most manifest.



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ד) והצורך להשתלשלות הרצון לקבל על ד' בחינות האמורות שבאבי"ע, הוא מפני שיש כלל גדול בענין הכלים – אשר התפשטות האור והסתלקותו היא עושה את הכלי רצוי לתפקידו. פירוש: כי כל עוד שהכלי לא נפרד פעם מהאור שלו, הרי הוא נכלל עם האור ובטל אליו כנר בפני האבוקה. וענין הביטול הזה הוא - מפני שיש הפכיות ביניהם הרחוקה מקצה אל הקצה, כי האור הוא שפע הנמשך מעצמותו ית' יש מיש, ומבחינת מחשבת הבריאה שבא"ס ית', הוא כולו להשפיע ואין בו מבחינת רצון לקבל אף משהו, והפכי אליו הוא הכלי, שהוא הרצון הגדול לקבל את השפע ההוא, שהוא כל שורשו של הנברא המחוּדש, הנה אין בו ענין של השפעה כלום. ולפיכך בהיותם כרוכים זה בזה יחד, מתבטל הרצון לקבל בהאור שבו. ואינו יכול לקבוע את צורתו אלא אחר הסתלקות האור ממנו פעם אחת, כי אחר הסתלקות האור ממנו הוא מתחיל להשתוקק מאד אחריו, וההשתוקקות הזאת קובעת ומחליטה את צורת הרצון לקבל כראוי, ואח"כ כשהאור חוזר ומתלבש בו הם נבחנים מעתה לב' ענינים נבדלים - כלי ואור, או גוף וחיים. ושים כאן ענין כי הוא עמוק מכל עמוק.

4. The desire to receive needs to descend progressively through the four stages of *Atzilut*, *Briya*, *Yetzira* and *Asiya* because of a general principle concerning vessels: the light shining and then departing is what makes the vessel fit for its role. Explanation: As long as the vessel has never been separated from the light, it is nullified to the light like a candle to a large fire. This is because the light and vessel are complete opposites of one another. The light is the *shefa* that God desires to bestow to creation and it emanates from the essence of God. The light is completely giving with no aspect whatsoever of desiring to receive. The vessel is the opposite. The vessel is the great desire to receive the *shefa* and is the root of the newly created being that has no aspect of giving at all. Therefore, as long as the light and vessel are bound together, the desire to receive is nullified by the light within it. The form of the vessel is only set once the light has departed from it. After the light departs, the vessel begins to yearn greatly for the light. This longing sets the proper form of the desire to receive. Afterwards, when the light returns and is clothed in the desire to receive,

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they are now considered two separate aspects: vessel and light, or body and life. Contemplate this, as it is the deepest of the deep.

4. The desire to receive needs to descend progressively through the four stages of *Atzilut*, *Briya*, *Yetzira* and *Asiya* because of a general principle concerning vessels:

The Baal HaSulam is explaining why there needs to be a progression through the four stages associated with ם-ל-ם-׳ for the desire to receive to emerge complete.

the light shining and then departing is what makes the vessel fit for its role.

The vessel's role is to receive the light.

Explanation: As long as the vessel has never been separated from the light, it is nullified to the light like a candle to a large fire.

In relation to our souls, the vessel is our longing to receive the light.

This is because the light and vessel are complete opposites of one another. The light is the *shefa* that God desires to bestow to creation and it emanates from the essence of God. The light is completely giving with no aspect whatsoever of desiring to receive. The vessel is the opposite. The vessel is the great desire to receive the *shefa* and is the root of the newly created being that has no aspect of giving at all.

The light is completely giving and has no desire to receive. The vessel is completely receiving and has no desire to give.

The vessel is nullified by the light because they are opposites — the light is completely giving and the vessel is completely receiving. This is perplexing. Wouldn't the vessel be nullified by the light only if it were similar to the light? The reason will now be explained:

The form of the vessel is only set once the light has departed from it. After the light departs, the vessel begins to yearn greatly for the light. This longing sets the proper form of the desire to receive. Afterwards, when the light returns and is clothed in the desire to receive, they are now considered two separate aspects: vessel and light, or body and life. Contemplate this, as it is the deepest of the deep.

The light desires to give and the vessel desires to receive. This is a great match. The light shines to fill the vessel's desire to receive, and the vessel receives the light that wants to fill it. As long as the light is filling the vessel, however, the vessel is nullified by the desire of the light to fill it and the essence of the vessel, which is lack, is not revealed. Afterwards, when the light departs, the vessel longs for the light and the vessel's desire to receive becomes revealed.

Before the departing of the light the vessel is nullified by the light and therefore not able to fully appreciate what it is receiving. After the light departs from the vessel, the vessel develops a longing for the light. When the light returns to the vessel, the light and vessel are now separate entities and the vessel can fully experience what it is receiving. A vessel can only fully receive after developing lack and longing.

The vessel is nullified by the light in the first stage, called the *sefira* of *Chochma*. *Chochma* desires to receive but has no longing. What is the difference between desiring and longing? For example: We are sitting at this moment because we desire to be sitting. We are not longing to be sitting, however, because we do not long for what we already have. This first stage, *Chochma*, desires the pleasure of the light but has no longing because there has never been a separation from the light. The desire is filled with the light. In the next stage, *Bina*, the light becomes separated from the desire to receive and the vessel develops longing. Afterwards, when the light returns to the desire to receive, since the light and the desire have become separate entities, the light can be fully experienced. This is the *sefira* of *Malchut*, which will be explained in the next section.

ה) ולפיכך, צריכים לד' בחינות שבשם הוי"ה, הנקראות חכמה בינה ת"ת מלכות:

כי בחי"א הנקראת חכמה היא באמת כל כללותו של הנאצל אור וכלי, כי בה הרצון לקבל הגדול, עם כל כללות האור שבו הנק' אור החכמה, או אור החיה, כי הוא כל אור החיים שבהנאצל המלוכש בהכלי שלו. אמנם בחינה הא' הזו נבחנת לכולה אור, והכלי שבה כמעט שאינו ניכר, כי הוא מעורב עם האור ובטל בו כנר בפני האבוקה.

ואחריה באה בחי"ב, והוא כי כלי החכמה בסופו הוא מתגבר בהשוואת הצורה לאור העליון שבו, דהיינו שמתעורר בו רצון להשפיע אל המאציל, כטבע האור שבתוכו שהוא כולו להשפיע. ואז ע"י הרצון הזה שנתעורר בו, נמשך אליו מהמאציל אור חדש הנקרא אור חסדים, ומשום זה כמעט שנפרש לגמרי מאור החכמה שהשפיע בו המאציל, כי אין אור החכמה מקובל רק בהכלי שלו, שהוא הרצון לקבל הגדול בכל שיעורו, כנ"ל. באופן שהאור והכלי שבבחי"ב משונים לגמרי מבחי"א, כי הכלי שבה הוא הרצון להשפיע, והאור שבה נבחן לאור החסדים, שפירושו – אור הנמשך מכח הדבקות של הנאצל בהמאציל, כי הרצון להשפיע גורם לו השוואת הצורה למאציל, והשוואת הצורה ברוחניות היא דבקות, כמ"ש להלן.

ואחריה באה בחינה ג', והוא – כי אחר שנתמעט האור שבהנאצל לבחינת אור חסדים בלי חכמה כלל, ונודע, שאור החכמה הוא עיקר חיותו של הנאצל, ע"כ הבחי"ב בסופה התעוררה והמשיכה בקרבה שיעור מאור החכמה, להאיר תוך אור החסדים שבה. והנה התעוררות הזו המשיכה מחדש שיעור מסוים מהרצון לקבל, שהוא צורת כלי חדשה הנק' בחינה ג' או תפארת (ת"ת), ובחי' האור שבה נק' אור חסדים בהארת חכמה, כי עיקר האור הזה הוא אור חסדים, ומיעוטו הוא אור חכמה.

ואחריה באה בחינה ד', והוא – כי גם הכלי דבחי"ג בסופו התעורר להמשיך אור חכמה במילואו, כמו שהיה בבחי"א, ונמצא התעוררות הזו היא בחינת השתוקקות בשיעור הרצון לקבל שבבחי"א, ונוסף עליו, כי עתה כבר נפרד מאור ההוא, כי עתה אין אור החכמה מלוכש בו אלא שמשתוקק אחריו, ע"כ נקבעה צורת הרצון לקבל על כל שלימותה. כי אחר התפשטות האור והסתלקותו משם, נקבע הכלי כנ"ל, וכשיחזור אח"כ ויקבל בחזרה את האור, נמצא הכלי מוקדם להאור. וע"כ נבחנת בחינה ד' הזאת לגמרי כלי, והיא נקראת מלכות.

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5. We, therefore, need the four aspects of the divine name **י-ה-ו-ה**, called *Chochma*, *Bina*, *Tiferet* and *Malchut*:

The first aspect, *Chochma*, includes all of the creation, light and vessel. This aspect is the entire desire to receive, together with all its light. The light is called the light of *Chochma*. The light is also called the light of *Chaya*, the light of life, because it is all the light of life clothed in its vessel. This first aspect is considered completely light and the vessel is almost unrecognizable, because the vessel is combined with the light and nullified to it like a candle to a large fire.

After that, comes the second aspect. The vessel of *Chochma*, in its end stage, overcomes its nature and becomes similar to the upper light within itself. There arises in the vessel of *Chochma* a desire to give to the Creator, a desire to be similar to the light within itself that is completely giving. When this desire arises, the Creator shines a new light into the vessel called the light of *Chasadim*. In this second stage, *Bina*, there is almost a complete separation from the light of *Chochma*. This is because the light of *Chochma* is only received by its own vessel, which is the desire to receive just mentioned above. Therefore, both the light and the vessel in the second aspect are completely different from the light and vessel in the first aspect. The vessel in the second aspect is the desire to give and the light is the light of *Chasadim*, which comes from the creation's attachment to the Creator. The creation's desire to give causes it to become similar to the Creator, and in spirituality, similarity is attachment. This will be explained later on.

After that, comes the third aspect. The light of *Chochma* is the essential life force of creation. Therefore, when the light within the creation diminishes to the level of the light of *Chasadim* without any *Chochma* at all, the second aspect, in its end stage, is aroused to draw forth some light of *Chochma* to shine within the light of *Chasadim*. This arousal draws forth a certain amount of desire to receive. This is a new vessel called the

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third aspect, or *Tiferet*. The light in this vessel is called “light of *Chasadim* with an illumination of *Chochma*”. The main aspect of the light is light of *Chasadim* and there is also a small measure of light of *Chochma*.

Afterwards comes the fourth aspect. The vessel of the third aspect, in its end stage, is also aroused to draw forth the light of *Chochma*. A longing arises to receive again all the light that was received in the first aspect. Since the light of *Chochma* is no longer clothed in the vessel and the vessel is separated from the light, there is longing for the light. The desire to receive is now fully formed. As discussed above, the shining of the light and then its departure are what form the vessel. Afterwards, when the light returns, the vessel precedes the light. This fourth aspect is the completion of the vessel and is called *Malchut*.

5. We, therefore, need the four aspects of the divine name י-ה-ו-ה, called *Chochma, Bina, Tiferet* and *Malchut*:

The shining of the light and then its departure are what make the vessel fit for its role of receiving the light.

The first aspect of י-ה-ו-ה is called *Keter*. This is the cause and source of all creation — God’s desire to give goodness. Since we have no comprehension of God, *Keter* has no corresponding letter in the divine name and it is only hinted to by the tip of the letter *yud*.

This *sefira* is called *Keter* because:

- 1) *Keter* means crown. Just as a crown is not part of a person’s body, God’s desire to give goodness is not part of creation, but rather the source of creation.
- 2) *Keter* is related to the word *kitor* meaning surround or focusing on

a purpose until the purpose is realized. God's desire to give goodness surrounds all creation, bringing us to our purpose — attaining the exalted level that is able to receive God's goodness.

3) *Keter* is related to the word *mekater* meaning encompass. God's desire to give goodness encompasses and is in control of everything. God's desire to give goodness brought us into being and gave us the desire to receive pleasure. God's desire to give goodness brought into being the spiritual work of Torah and *mitzvot* and is the essence of the reward. God's desire to give goodness is the inner essence of all reality and is the beginning and end of everything.

The first aspect, *Chochma*,

This is the letter *yud* י of ה-ה-ו-ה.

includes all of the creation, light and vessel. This aspect is the entire desire to receive, together with all its light.

God's desire to give goodness to the created beings, called *Keter*, created the created beings together with all the light that God desires to bestow. The essence of the created beings is the desire to receive pleasure. Our desire is our capacity to receive and in the language of Kabbalah it is called — vessel. All the light that God desires to give and all the vessel to receive this light are born together in the *sefira* of *Chochma* — 100% of the light and 100% of the desire to receive. This is all the light and all the desire to receive that exists in reality.

The light is called the light of *Chochma*.

Chochma means wisdom. This light is called *Chochma* because it is the light of God and all the wisdom of the Torah emanates from it. The purpose of the wisdom of the Torah is to reveal God. All external wisdoms also come from the light of *Chochma*. The laws of nature and everything in the physical world have roots in the upper spiritual worlds and are structured according to the *sefirot*. The essence of all wisdom is the revelation of God.

The light is also called the light of *Chaya*, the light of life, because it is all the light of life clothed in its vessel.

Light means experiencing God. *Chaya* means life. This light is called *Chaya* because awareness of God is what enlivens us. Someone on the spiritual path realizes that living is experiencing God. For someone not on the spiritual path, living is also experiencing God — except the person doesn't realize it. The person feels unsatisfied in life but doesn't know why. The light is called *Chaya* because if we are not living with at least some degree of awareness of God, we are without life. It is not possible to draw real life from physical pleasures. The holy Zohar explains that all physical pleasures are only a micro-illumination, an extremely small amount of light, given to sustain us when we are disconnected from our spirituality. This tiny measure of pleasure keeps us alive, but doesn't give us much satisfaction in life.

This first aspect is considered completely light and the vessel is almost unrecognizable, because the vessel is combined with the light and nullified to it like a candle to a large fire.

This nullification was discussed above in section four.

After that, comes the second aspect.

This is the first *hey* ה of ה-ו-ה-י.

This aspect is called *Bina*.

The very beginning of *Bina* is the moment the vessel realizes it is receiving and is therefore different than the Creator who is giving.

The vessel of *Chochma*, in its end stage, overcomes its nature and becomes similar to the upper light within itself.

The nature of *Chochma* is to receive, but it overcomes its nature to be similar to the light which is giving.

There arises in the vessel of *Chochma* a desire to give to the Creator, a desire to be similar to the light within itself that is completely giving.

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The light of *Chochma* arouses the vessel to feel that it wants to give instead of receive. This happens at the end of the stage of *Chochma* and begins the stage of *Bina*.

The characteristic of *Bina* is the desire to give. It would be a mistake, however, to think that *Bina* does not desire to receive. Desire to receive is the nature of creation and does not become nullified. There is desire to receive in all the levels we speak about, including *Bina*. Speaking about that which has no desire to receive would be speaking about God, and we have no comprehension of God. *Bina* has desire to receive but doesn't want to use it. This is, for example, like on *Yom Kippur* when it is forbidden to eat. Our bodies want to eat, but we don't fulfill this desire. Similarly, *Bina* has a desire to receive but doesn't want to use it. *Bina* only wants to give.

When this desire arises, the Creator shines a new light into the vessel called the light of *Chasadim*.

Chasadim means loving kindness. This light develops the vessel's enjoyment in giving.

What is the difference between light of *Chasadim* and light of *Chochma*?

Rebbe Baruch Shalom Ashlag *ztz"l* explains:

Light of *Chasadim* is wanting to be in complete unconditional service to God every moment because of God's exaltedness. This is the desire to give. Light of *Chochma* means experiencing God.

The progression we are learning about in the *Peticha* is "from above to below" and the light of *Chochma* precedes the light of *Chasadim*. From the perspective of our spiritual work, which proceeds "from below to above", it is opposite: the light of *Chasadim* precedes the light of *Chochma*. First, we need to attain the light of *Chasadim* and be willing to serve unconditionally. Afterwards, the light of *Chochma* is revealed. The higher our state of giving, the more we become able to experience God.

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In truth, it can also be the other way: an experience of God causes us to give. In this case, the light of *Chochma* arouses us to give and we consequently receive the light of *Chasadim*. Then, the light of *Chasadim* brings us to an even deeper experience of God.

Question:

We learned that *Chochma* contained all the light. How do we understand there being a new light that was not in *Chochma*?

Answer:

1) When it said in the *Peticha* that *Chochma* includes all the light, the meaning is all the light of God's desire to bestow goodness. This light of *Chochma* is called the light of the purpose of creation, and this is the light we were created to experience. Another light, *Chasadim*, is called the light of *tikun*, fixing. The role of this light is to prepare us for our purpose. We were not created to give, but rather to receive God's gift of goodness. The goodness is the light of *Chochma*, the light of experiencing God. To be able to experience the goodness, however, we first need to attain the state of giving. The light of *Chasadim* develops our desire to love and give and prepares us to be able to experience the light of *Chochma*.

2) The light of *Chochma* contains the light of *Chasadim*. This is because the light is one. The way the light becomes revealed, however, depends on the vessel. In *Chochma*, the vessel wants to receive and therefore only the light of *Chochma* is revealed. The light of *Chochma* itself influences the vessel to want to give and consequently a new type of light, *Chasadim*, is revealed in *Bina*.

In this second stage, *Bina*, there is almost a complete separation from the light of *Chochma*. This is because the light of *Chochma* is only received by its own vessel, which is the desire to receive just mentioned above.

The *Peticha* is describing the four stages *Chochma*, *Bina*, *Tiferet* and *Malchut* through which a complete vessel is formed. It was explained that

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the shining of the light and its departure is what makes the vessel fit for its function. The shining of the light is in *Chochma* and the departure of the light is in *Bina*. Although the departure of the light makes it possible for the vessel to experience lack, this is not why *Bina* deflects the light. *Bina* deflects the light of *Chochma* because she wants to give and not receive. At the end stage of *Bina*, however, the lack of the light of *Chochma* begins to be felt.

The vessel of *Bina* wants to give and not receive. Since the vessel for the light of *Chochma* is the desire to receive, *Bina* no longer has a vessel for the light. So why does the *Peticha* say: “there is almost a complete separation from the light of *Chochma*”? Why isn’t there a complete separation?

Reasons why in *Bina* there is **almost** a complete separation from the light of *Chochma*:

1) Since the light of *Chochma*’s nature of giving is what causes the vessel to want to give instead of receive, some measure of the light needs to remain in the vessel. The light is not in order that the vessel receive, but rather to instill the desire to give in the vessel.

The light of *Chochma* is the light of experiencing God and performs two functions:

1. The light gives immense pleasure to the receiving vessel.
2. The light influences the vessel to become a giver and not a receiver.

Bina deflects only the first aspect of the light of *Chochma*. The separation is not complete because the second aspect of the light of *Chochma* remains in *Bina*.

2) It says in this section of the *Peticha* that “the light of *Chochma* is the essential life force of creation.” For this reason it is not possible for creation to be without *Chochma*. Even if the desire is only to give, there needs

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to be some minimal reception of *Chochma*, some minimal measure of experiencing God. *Bina* only deflects the light of *Chochma* that is beyond the essential life force that needs to remain.

3) *Bina* is able to receive but chooses not to. *Bina*'s separation from the light of *Chochma* is not considered complete because *Bina* can still receive the light of *Chochma* if she wants to.

4) The Arizal says, "When light departs it leaves an impression." *Bina* remembers the light of *Chochma* because she originally had the light. *Bina*'s memory of the light is why the separation is not complete.

5) In truth, the light of *Chochma* and the light of *Chasadim* are one light — the light is one. The difference between them is relative to the vessel that receives the light. The separation from the light of *Chochma* is because the vessel is now interested in giving and therefore desires *Chasadim* instead of *Chochma*. The separation is not complete because the separation can't be complete. The light is one light.

Therefore, both the light and the vessel in the second aspect are completely different from the light and vessel in the first aspect.

The vessel in the first aspect *Chochma* is the desire to receive, and the light drawn forth is the light of *Chochma*. This is not so in the second aspect.

The vessel in the second aspect is the desire to give and the light is the light of *Chasadim*, which comes from the creation's attachment to the Creator.

There are two types of vessels:

- 1) vessels that enjoy receiving
- 2) vessels that enjoy giving

The first vessel is the vessel of *Chochma*. This vessel draws forth the light of *Chochma* and experiences pleasure from receiving. The second vessel

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is the vessel of *Bina*. This vessel draws forth the light of *Chasadim*, which gives the vessel a new nature that experiences pleasure from giving.

First we need to make an effort to give, then the light of *Chasadim* shines in us and a new nature of feeling great pleasure from giving arises.

The creation's desire to give causes it to become similar to the Creator, and in spirituality, similarity is attachment.

Bina desires to give.

The meaning of *Bina*:

1) *Bina* is related to the word *hitbone'noot*, meaning contemplation.

Chochma means wisdom. The Sages say, "A wise person sees what will result." The simple meaning is a wise person sees the outcome of a matter. In spiritual terms, a wise person sees how every situation leads to experiencing God. The same way that contemplation precedes wisdom, *Bina*, desiring to give, precedes *Chochma*, experiencing God.

In the progression from above to below the light always precedes the vessel. This is because the light creates the vessel. In our spiritual work from below to above, the vessel always precedes the light. First we need to attain *Chasadim*, afterwards we attain *Chochma*.

2) *Bina* means understanding. This relates to a concept our Sages speak about of "understanding a matter from a matter". The vessel understands that God is giving and therefore also wants to give.

After that, comes the third aspect.

This is the *vav* ך of ה-ו-ה-י.

This aspect is called *Tiferet*.

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The light of *Chochma* is the essential life force of creation.

We were created to experience God. This is the light of *Chochma*. The light of *Chasadim*, giving, is light that prepares us for our purpose, but is not the purpose itself. Therefore, the essential life force of the created being is the light of *Chochma*.

Bina deflects the light of *Chochma* and desires instead the light of *Chasadim*. Although *Chasadim* is also light and pleasure, since *Chochma* is the essential life force of creation, at its end stage, *Bina* also desires the light of *Chochma*.

Question:

If the light of *Chochma* is the essential life force of creation, how can there be so many people living without awareness of God?

Answer:

Real life is awareness of God. Without any awareness of God we are not considered to be alive.

Therefore, when the light within the creation diminishes to the level of the light of *Chasadim* without any *Chochma* at all, the second aspect, in its end stage, is aroused to draw forth some light of *Chochma* to shine within the light of *Chasadim*. This arousal draws forth a certain amount of desire to receive.

The desire to receive always remains in *Bina*, its just that *Bina* doesn't want to use it. When *Bina* is aroused to desire the light of *Chochma*, a measure of *Bina*'s desire to receive is aroused.

This is a new vessel called the third aspect, or *Tiferet*.

Bina gives birth to the third aspect called *Tiferet*.

Tiferet unifies the two opposite types of light: *Chochma* and *Chasadim*. The beauty of this *sefira* is these two lights shining in union. *Chochma*

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intensifies our sense of self, and *Chasadim* lessens our sense of self. When *Chochma* and *Chasadim* are in harmony it is beautiful. Therefore, this *sefira* is called *Tiferet*, meaning beautiful.

The light in this vessel is called “light of *Chasadim* with an illumination of *Chochma*”. The main aspect of the light is light of *Chasadim* and there is also a small measure of light of *Chochma*.

Bina and *Zer Anpin* (another name for *Tiferet*) are both aspects of giving that desire *Chasadim*. The difference is that *Zer Anpin* also desires some light of *Chochma* because it is impossible to live without the light of *Chochma*. The main aspect of *Zer Anpin* is *Chasadim* and its lesser aspect is a small illumination of *Chochma*. *Zer Anpin* desires only the measure of *Chochma* that it needs to live.

Afterwards comes the fourth aspect.

This is the final *hey* ה of י-ה-ו-ה.

This aspect is called *Malchut*.

The vessel of the third aspect, in its end stage, is also aroused to draw forth the light of *Chochma*. A longing arises to receive again all the light that was received in the first aspect.

The reason it says “also aroused” is because both *Bina* and *Zer Anpin* are aroused at their end stages to draw forth *Chochma*. *Bina*, at the end, is aroused to draw forth a minimal illumination of *Chochma*. *Zer Anpin*, at the end, is aroused to draw forth all the light of *Chochma* that originally shined in the *sefira* of *Chochma*.

Zer Anpin is aroused to draw forth all the light of *Chochma* because:

- 1) The pleasure of the minimal illumination of *Chochma* in *Zer Anpin* arouses a desire to draw forth all the light of *Chochma*.
- 2) There is realization that the purpose of creation is not that creation

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receive only a minimal illumination of *Chochma*, but rather all the light of *Chochma*.

Since the light of *Chochma* is no longer clothed in the vessel
Bina previously deflected the light of *Chochma*.

and the vessel is separated from the light, there is longing for the light.
The desire to receive is now fully formed.

The vessel is separated from the light and develops great longing for the light. Because of this longing, when the light returns to the vessel it no longer nullifies the vessel like it did in *Chochma*. There are now two distinct entities — vessel and light.

Question:

When the light returns to shine in the vessel doesn't longing disappear and the vessel become once again nullified by the light?

Answer:

When the light initially filled the vessel the light nullified the vessel. This means that the created being does not experience itself as separate from the light. Afterwards, when the light returns to shine in the vessel, the vessel maintains its awareness that it is a vessel for the light. This is because the vessel has now experienced lack and longing.

As discussed above, the shining of the light and then its departure are what form the vessel.

Light departs only for the benefit of creation. The departing of the light develops a vessel that can fully experience the light.

When we say the light departs, it is not like it sounds. Light doesn't depart. The divine light is always in a state of absolute rest. The meaning of the light departing is that the vessel doesn't see the light anymore. Everything we are discussing is in terms of the vessel's experience. Since the vessel no

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longer experiences the light, it is as if the light departed. In truth, God's light neither shines nor departs. These terms describe the perception of the vessel.

Afterwards, when the light returns, the vessel precedes the light. This fourth aspect is the completion of the vessel and is called *Malchut*.

Malchut only desires to receive and has no aspect of giving.

The purpose of this entire system of progressive stages the *Peticha* is describing is to give birth to creation — the complete desire to receive revealed in *Malchut*. Since God has no desire to receive, the desire to receive is the entire essence of what was created. God created the desire to receive to bestow upon it goodness and pleasure.

The meaning of *Malchut*:

1) *Malchut* means kingdom and alludes to control. The main attribute of *Malchut* is the desire to receive pleasure and all of creation is controlled by this desire.

2) The spiritual worlds are designed to enable us to experience the divine light. We experience the light to the extent that giving becomes more important to us than receiving. This is controlled by *Malchut*.

Detachment from receiving is called *masach*, screen, in Kabbalah. Developing the desire to give is called *ohr chozer*, returning light. *Masach* is associated with being in awe of God. *Ohr chozer* is associated with being in love with God.

3) *Malchut* alludes to self-control. We need self-control to attach to God's light.

4) In *Malchut* the fact that God is in control is revealed. *Malchut* is the vessel for the light and when the light appears, it reveals that God's goodness is controlling everything.

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ו) ואלו ד' ההבחנות הנ"ל ה"ס עשר ספירות הנבחנות בכל נאצל וכל נברא, הן בכלל כולו שהן ד' העולמות, והן בפרט קטן ביותר שבהמציאות. ובחי"א נקראת חכמה או עולם האצילות. ובחי"ב נקראת בינה או עולם הבריאה, ובחי"ג נקראת תפארת או עולם היצירה, ובחי"ד נקראת מלכות או עולם העשיה.

ונבאר את ד' הבחינות הנוהגות בכל נשמה: כי כשהנשמה נמשכת מא"ס ב"ה ובאה לעולם האצילות היא בחי"א של הנשמה. ושם עוד אינה נבחנת בשם הזה, כי השם נשמה יורה שיש בה איזה הפרש מהמאציל ב"ה, שע"י ההפרש הזה יצאה מבחינת א"ס ובאה לאיזה גילוי לרשות בפני עצמה, וכל עוד שאין בה צורת כלי, אין מה שיפריד אותה מעצמותו ית', עד שתהיה ראויה להקרא בשם בפני עצמה. וכבר ידעת שבחי"א של הכלי אינה ניכרת כלל לכלי וכולה בטלה להאור, וז"ס הנאמר בעולם אצילות שכולו אלקיות גמור, בסוד "איהו וחיוהי וגרמוהי חד בהון". ואפילו נשמות שאר בעלי החיים בהיותם עוברים את עולם האצילות נחשבים כעודם דבוקים בעצמותו ית'.

6. These four aspects mentioned above are the secret of the ten *sefirot* distinguishable in every created being and all creation. They are the all-encompassing four spiritual worlds and are in the smallest details of reality.

The first aspect is called *Chochma*, or the spiritual world of *Atzilut*.

The second aspect is called *Bina*, or the spiritual world of *Briya*.

The third aspect is called *Tiferet*, or the spiritual world of *Yetzira*.

The fourth aspect is called *Malchut*, or the spiritual world of *Asiya*.

An explanation of these four aspects that function in every soul:

The first aspect of the *neshama* is when it is drawn forth from *Ein Sof* to the spiritual world of *Atzilut*. In *Ein Sof*, the soul is not yet called *neshama* because the name *neshama* alludes to there being some separation from the Creator — an emergence from the aspect of *Ein Sof* that reveals the

soul's existence. As long as the soul does not have the form of a vessel, there is nothing separating it enough from the essence of God to merit having its own name. You already know that in the first aspect the vessel is completely nullified by the light and is not recognized as a vessel. This is the secret of the spiritual world of *Atzilut* being complete Godliness and the secret of: "The essence, the light and the vessels are one." Even the souls of other forms of life, when they pass through the world of *Atzilut*, are considered unified with God's essence.

6. These four aspects mentioned above are the secret of the ten *sefirot* distinguishable in every created being and all creation. They are the all-encompassing four spiritual worlds and are in the smallest details of reality.

Even the smallest details of reality contain these four essential aspects.

The first aspect is called *Chochma*, or the spiritual world of *Atzilut*.

The second aspect is called *Bina*, or the spiritual world of *Briya*.

The third aspect is called *Tiferet*, or the spiritual world of *Yetzira*.

The fourth aspect is called *Malchut*, or the spiritual world of *Asiya*.

Each of the four spiritual worlds contains ten *sefirot* which are details of that world. In each world one *sefira* is dominant and gives the world its character.

The dominant *sefira* of the world of *Atzilut* is *Chochma*.

The dominant *sefira* of the world of *Briya* is *Bina*.

The dominant *sefira* of the world of *Yetzira* is *Tiferet*.

The dominant *sefira* of the world of *Asiya* is *Malchut*.

An explanation of these four aspects that function in every soul:

Everyone's soul has gone through this progression.

The first aspect of the *neshama* is when it is drawn forth from *Ein Sof* to the spiritual world of *Atzilut*.

The soul progresses from the Creator's desire to give goodness that is called *Ein Sof* or *Keter*, and arrives at a spiritual state called the *sefira* of *Chochma*. In *Ein Sof* the soul exists in the realm of God's thought. In the *sefira* of *Chochma* the soul's desire to receive is actually born. The vessel is born with the light, filled with the light, and nullified by the light, as discussed above.

In *Ein Sof*, the soul is not yet called *neshama* because the name *neshama* alludes to there being some separation from the Creator —

Neshama means soul and also means breath. Our breath distinguishes us as individual beings, so the name *neshama* alludes to there being some independence.

an emergence from the aspect of *Ein Sof* that reveals the soul's existence.

The created being's existence becomes revealed when it makes some independent movement. This movement, called breathing, indicates the appearance of an independent being. In the *sefira* of *Chochma*, although the soul is born, the vessel is full of light and nullified by the light. The vessel doesn't move because the vessel has not yet developed self-awareness.

As long as the soul does not have the form of a vessel, there is nothing separating it enough from the essence of God to merit having its own name. You already know that in the first aspect the vessel is completely nullified by the light and is not recognized as a vessel.

In the first stage, the vessel is born with the light and nullified by the light, as discussed above. Since the vessel has not yet developed the desire to receive and makes no independent movement, the vessel is not yet called by the name *neshama*.

This is the secret of the spiritual world of *Atzilut* being complete Godliness

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The progression of the spiritual worlds that the *Peticha* is describing is from “above to below”. The progression of our spiritual work and development is from “below to above”. From above to below, *Atzilut* is the first stage. From below to above, *Atzilut* is the highest spiritual level we can attain. This is the exalted spiritual level of *teshuva me’ahava* — returning in love. A person who attains the level of *Atzilut* attains awareness of divine providence and sees how everything in reality flows only from God’s bestowal of goodness. *Atzilut* is a state of eternal love and is the final level of attaining union with God.

Although *Atzilut* is the highest level from the perspective of our spiritual development, the *Peticha* is describing the progression from above to below. From this perspective, the soul in *Atzilut* is completely nullified by the light and does not yet merit the name *neshama*.

and the secret of

the verse from the Zohar:

The essence the *Keter* of *Atzilut*

the light the light of *Chaya* of *Atzilut*

and the vessels the vessels of *Atzilut* **are one.**

In the world of *Atzilut* the vessels are in union with the light and *Keter*.

The land of Israel is associated with the spiritual level of *Atzilut*. The Torah says that “God’s eyes are always on her.” At the spiritual level of *Atzilut* we attain awareness that “God’s eyes are always on her,” meaning that we become aware of God’s providence. We see that every single situation in our lives, and in every person’s life, is divinely orchestrated to help us progress spiritually and experience God’s goodness.

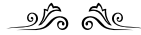
Even the souls of other forms of life, when they pass through the world of *Atzilut*, are considered unified with God’s essence.

Animal souls are also comprised of light and vessel and come from God’s desire to give goodness. God’s desire to give goodness is the source of everything. The experience of God’s goodness depends on the vessel.

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On the subject of *neshama*:

Neshama alludes to what enlivens us — the light. Light means experiencing God. Since the light is only experienced according to the vessel, our experience of the light is relative to the quality and measure of our desire to receive and our attainment of the desire to give. The Baal HaSulam explains that God gives each person a particular desire to receive. The desire to receive, together with the light that shines in it, is each person's unique *neshama*. When we attain the desire to give, we become able to experience and enjoy the unique light of our *neshama*.



הפתיחה

ז) ובעולם הבריאה כבר שולטת בחינה הב' הנ"ל, דהיינו בחינת הכלי של הרצון להשפיע, וע"כ כשהנשמה משתלשלת ובאה לעולם הבריאה, ומשגת בחינת הכלי ההוא אשר שם, אז נבחנת בשם נשמה, דהיינו שכבר יצאה ונתפרדה מבחינת עצמותו ית', והיא עולה בשם בפני עצמה להקרא נשמה. אמנם כלי זה זך מאוד, להיותו בהשואת הצורה להמאציל, וע"כ נחשבת לרוחניות גמורה.

7. In the spiritual world of *Briya* the second aspect is dominant and the vessel desires to give. When the soul develops and arrives at the world of *Briya* and attains that vessel, the soul is called *neshama*. The soul becomes separated from God's essence and ascends to a name of her own — *neshama*. This vessel, however, is very refined because it is aligned with the Creator, and is therefore considered completely spiritual.

7. In the spiritual world of *Briya* the second aspect is dominant and the vessel desires to give. When the soul develops and arrives at the world of *Briya* and attains that vessel, the soul is called *neshama*.

When the soul wants to be similar to the light of *Chochma* that is shining in her, meaning she wants to be a giver rather than a receiver, the soul has arrived at the world of *Briya*,

The soul becomes separated from God's essence and ascends to a name of her own — *neshama*.

Question:

We have learned that the desire to give attaches the created being to the Creator. Here it says the desire to give separates the created being from the Creator. How do we understand this?

Answer:

1) In *Chochma* there was no awareness of receiving. In contrast, *Bina* is fully aware of her receiving. This awareness is the separation. The reason *Bina* chooses to give is because she feels the weight of her receiving.

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2) *Bina* deflecting the light is the first action made by the creation and the action separates creation from Creator. In *Chochma* this is not the case because the creation has no self-awareness and makes no independent movement.

For these two reasons the soul emerges from the essence of God. The soul attains her name, *neshama*, because the vessel has attained a state of independence.

This vessel, however, is very refined because it is aligned with the Creator, and is therefore considered completely spiritual.

Since the vessel is only concerned with giving, it is aligned with the Creator.

There are two aspects to what is happening here:

1) The soul becomes a spiritual entity separate from the Creator, meaning the vessel is no longer nullified by the light as it was in *Chochma*. The soul's independent existence is born.

2) When the soul is born it only wants to give. This connects the soul to God.

A baby in its mother's womb is part of the mother and not yet considered an independent being. This is like the *sefira* of *Chochma* in which the vessel is nullified by the light. When a baby is born it becomes an independent being but is connected to the mother and receives all its nourishment from her. This is like the *sefira* of *Bina*. On the one hand, the vessel is no longer nullified by the light and has become an entity of its own. On the other hand, the vessel is connected to the Creator because it desires to give. Afterwards, in the *sefirot* of *Zer Anpin* and *Malchut*, the solidification of the desire to receive causes the vessel to become progressively disconnected from the Creator. This process is similar to a child growing up and becoming independent.

considered completely spiritual.

The difference between spirituality and materiality will be discussed in section 11.

הפתיחה

ח) ובעולם היצירה כבר שולטת בחינה הג' הנ"ל, שהיא כלולה מעט מצורת הרצון לקבל, וע"כ כשהנשמה משתלשלת ובאה לעולם היצירה ומשגת הכלי ההוא, יצאה מבחינת הרוחניות של הנשמה, ונקראת בשם רוח, כי כאן הכלי שלו כבר מעורב בעביות מועטת, דהיינו מעט הרצון לקבל שיש בו. אמנם עדיין נבחנת לרוחניות, כי אין שיעור עביות זאת מספיק להבדילה לגמרי מן עצמותו ית' להקרא בשם גוף עומד ברשות עצמו.

8. In the spiritual world of *Yetzira* the third aspect is dominant. This aspect contains a small amount of desire to receive. Therefore, when the soul develops and arrives at the world of *Yetzira* and attains that vessel, it is no longer the spiritual aspect of *neshama* and is called by the name *ruach*. Now a small measure of coarseness is mixed into the vessel, meaning the vessel has some desire to receive. This aspect is still considered spiritual, however, because the measure of coarseness is not enough for the soul to be entirely distinct from God's essence to be called a body and be considered independent.

8. In the spiritual world of *Yetzira* the third aspect is dominant. This aspect contains a small amount of desire to receive.

This third aspect called *Zer Anpin* begins to desire the light of *Chochma*. The desire is for only a small amount of the light.

Therefore, when the soul develops and arrives at the world of *Yetzira* and attains that vessel

The vessel of *Yetzira* is the vessel of *Zer Anpin*.

it is no longer the spiritual aspect of *neshama* and is called by the name *ruach*.

Since the soul now has some coarseness, meaning some desire to receive,

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it descends from the *neshama*'s purity, meaning it descends from the *neshama*'s attribute of pure giving. The soul is now called *ruach*, an aspect lower than *neshama*.

Now a small measure of coarseness is mixed into the vessel, meaning the vessel has some desire to receive. This aspect is still considered spiritual, however, because the measure of coarseness is not enough for the soul to be entirely distinct from God's essence to be called a body and be considered independent.

Even though there begins to be some desire to receive, the principle characteristic of *Zer Anpin* is the desire to give. *Zer Anpin*'s attribute of giving attaches it to the Creator.



הפתיחה

ט) ובעולם העשייה כבר שולטת בחינה הד', שהיא גמר הכלי של הרצון לקבל הגדול, כנ"ל. וע"כ משגת בחינת גוף נפרד ונבדל לגמרי מעצמותו ית', העומד ברשות עצמו. והאור שבו נקרא נפש, המורה על אור בלי תנועה מעצמו. ותדע שאין לך פרט קטן בהמציאות שלא יהיה כלול מכל האבי"ע.

9. In the spiritual world of *Asiya* the fourth aspect is dominant. The vessel is now the full measure of desire to receive and is complete. The vessel attains an aspect of being a body that stands on its own completely separate from God's essence. The light in the vessel is called *nefesh*, alluding to light without movement. Know that every tiny detail of reality is comprised of all four aspects of: *Atzilut*, *Briya*, *Yetzira* and *Asiya*.

9. In the spiritual world of *Asiya* the fourth aspect is dominant. The vessel is now the full measure of desire to receive and is complete.

In the fourth aspect, *Malchut*, the desire to receive attains its maximum measure. There is no longer a desire to give.

The vessel attains an aspect of being a body that stands on its own completely separate from God's essence.

The soul being separate from God's essence means that the soul doesn't feel the existence of God.

As long as the soul has an aspect of giving, it is connected to the Creator. In this fourth stage, *Asiya*, the soul no longer desires to give and only desires to receive. This separates the soul from God.

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The light in the vessel is called *nefesh*, alluding to light without movement.

Question:

We experience God's light differently depending on our vessel, but the light itself never changes or moves. So what does it mean that *nefesh* in particular alludes to light without movement?

Answer:

One meaning of the word *nefesh* is "without movement". In spiritual terms, movement means trying to develop spiritually by giving. Since the vessel of *Asiya* desires to receive and has no desire to give, the vessel makes no movement. The light that shines in *Asiya* is considered a light without movement because light shines according to the vessel.

Know that every tiny detail of reality is comprised of all four aspects of: *Atzilut, Briya, Yetzira* and *Asiya*.

Every detail of reality is rooted in the four aspects and comes into being through this progression.

Summary of the last four sections:

The *Peticha* is describing the soul's descent through the spiritual worlds and describes the characteristics of the worlds. The soul develops through the worlds of *Atzilut, Briya, Yetzira* and *Asiya*. When the soul arrives at the world of *Asiya*, the aspect of *Malchut*, the desire to receive is manifest in its full measure and there is no desire to give.



הפתיחה

י) והנך מוצא איך שהנפש הזאת שהיא אור החיים המלוּבש בהגוף, נמשכת יש מיש מעצמותו ית' ממש, ובעברה דרך ד' עולמות אבי"ע, כן היא הולכת ומתרחקת מאור פניו ית', עד שבאה בכלי המיוחד לה הנקרא גוף, ואז נבחן הכלי לגמר צורתו הרצויה. ואם אמנם גם האור שבה נתמעט מאד, עד שאין ניכר בו עוד שורש מוצאו, עכ"ז ע"י העסק בתורה ומצוות ע"מ להשפיע נחת רוח ליוצרו, הוא הולך ומזכך את הכלי שלו הנקרא גוף, עד שנעשה ראוי לקבל את השפע הגדול, בכל השיעור הכלול במחשבת הבריאה בעת שבראה. וזה שאמר רבי חנניא בן עקשיא: רצה הקב"ה לזכות את ישראל, לפיכך הרבה להם תורה ומצוות.

10. We see here how the *nefesh*, the light of life clothed in the body, is drawn “something from something” from the essence of God. When the light passes through the four spiritual worlds of *Atzilut*, *Briya*, *Yetzira* and *Asiya* it becomes diminished until arriving at its particular vessel, called “body”. Then the form of the vessel is considered complete. Although the light in the vessel is extremely diminished, so much so that the vessel is no longer aware of its source, by engaging in Torah and *mitzvot*, with the intention of being pleasing to God, we progressively purify our vessel called body. We then become able to receive all the great *shefa* that we were created to receive. This is the meaning of what Rabbi Chananya ben Akashya says: “God wanted to purify Israel and therefore gave them a lot of Torah and *mitzvot*.”

10. We see here how the *nefesh*, the light of life clothed in the body, *Nefesh* is the minimal illumination of light that enlivens our desire to receive.

is drawn “something from something” from the essence of God.
God is the source of all the light.

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When the light passes through the four spiritual worlds of *Atzilut*, *Briya*, *Yetzira* and *Asiya* it becomes diminished

Passing down through the spiritual worlds means that the desire to receive increases and the ability to give decreases.

until arriving at its particular vessel, called “body”.

As mentioned above, the body spoken about here is not our physical body but rather an aspect of our soul.

Then the form of the vessel is considered complete.

This is the desire to receive in its most manifest form with no connection to giving.

Although the light in the vessel is extremely diminished, so much so that the vessel is no longer aware of its source,

This is when we are unable to feel that God is our source.

by engaging in Torah and *mitzvot*, with the intention of being pleasing to God, we progressively purify our vessel called body.

By engaging in the spiritual learning of Torah and the spiritual practice of *mitzvot*, with the intention of attaining the desire to give, we develop the desire to give and attain union with God.

We then become able to receive all the great *shefa* that we were created to receive.

We become able to receive God’s light and experience God.

This is the meaning of what Rabbi Chananya ben Akashya says: “God wanted to purify Israel and therefore gave them a lot of Torah and *mitzvot*.”

The essence of God is within us. This is what is called the light. The light is always here but our desire to receive is unable to experience the light and feel God’s existence. Through the spiritual work of Torah and *mitzvot* we develop and attain the desire to give and become able to feel the light of God within us more and more.

הפתיחה

יא) ועם זה תבין גדר האמיתי להבחין בין רוחניות לגשמיות: כי כל שיש בו רצון לקבל מושלם בכל בחינותיו, שהוא בחי"ד, הוא נקרא גשמי, והוא נמצא בפרטי כל המציאות הערוכה לעינינו בעוה"ז. וכל שהוא למעלה משיעור הגדול הזה של הרצון לקבל נבחן בשם רוחניות, שהם העולמות אבי"ע הגבוהים מעוה"ז, וכל המציאות שבהם. ובזה תבין שכל ענין עליות וירידות האמורות בעולמות העליונים, אינן בבחינת מקום מדומה ח"ו, רק בענין ד' הבחינות שברצון לקבל, כי כל הרחוק ביותר מבחי"ד נבחן למקום יותר גבוה, וכל המתקרב אל בחינה ד' נבחן למקום יותר תחתון.

11. With what we have discussed we can understand how to truly differentiate between spirituality and materiality: When the desire to receive is complete, meaning the fourth aspect, it is called material and exists in the physical world. Everything above this great measure of desire to receive is considered spiritual. These are the spiritual worlds of *Atzilut*, *Briya*, *Yetzira* and *Asiya* which are above the physical world. We can now understand that the concept of ascending and descending spoken about with regard to the upper spiritual worlds is not about some kind of imaginary space, God forbid, but rather is about the four aspects of the desire to receive. Higher means farther from the fourth aspect and lower means closer to the fourth aspect.

11. With what we have discussed we can understand how to truly differentiate between spirituality and materiality:

People generally consider what we can see and experience through our five senses to be physical and what we can't see to be spiritual. This understanding is not true at all.

When the desire to receive is complete, meaning the fourth aspect, it is called material and exists in the physical world.

A person can be engaged in activities that are thought of as spiritual, for

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example, learning Torah and meditating wearing *tallit* and *tefillin*, but according to the Baal HaSulam's definition, if the person is doing these things for self-gratification, this is the pinnacle of materialism.

Everything above this great measure of desire to receive is considered spiritual. These are the spiritual worlds of *Atzilut*, *Briya*, *Yetzira* and *Asiya* which are above the physical world.

A person can be engaged in physical activities, for example: eating and drinking, but if the intention is to be in service to God, it is considered spiritual.

We can now understand that the concept of ascending and descending spoken about with regard to the upper spiritual worlds is not about some kind of imaginary space, God forbid,

The spiritual realm transcends the dimensions of physical space.

but rather is about the four aspects of the desire to receive. Higher means farther from the fourth aspect and lower means closer to the fourth aspect.

The more we desire to receive, the more we are disconnected from God. This is called lower. The more we desire to give, the more we are connected with God. This is called higher.

The upper spiritual worlds discussed in the holy books are not places in physical space but rather states of consciousness within us. Heaven and hell are also states of consciousness. It is important to know that the entire Torah is describing states of consciousness. The Baal HaSulam explains that our spiritual development entails going through everything described in the Torah. The creation of the world, Noah entering the ark because of the flood, everything our ancestors went through, the descent to Egypt, redemption from Egypt, the splitting of the sea, traveling in the desert, and so on, all delineate states of consciousness that we experience along the path of spiritual development. The Torah is not a history book, God forbid, but rather describes the spiritual process that each and every one of us is personally going through in every generation.

CHAPTER 2
THE NEW VESSELS OF RETURNING LIGHT



יב) אמנם יש להבין: כיון שכל עיקרו של הנברא ושל כל הבריאה בכללה, הוא רק הרצון לקבל בלבד, ומה שיותר מזה אינו לגמרי בכלל בריאה, אלא נמשך יש מיש מעצמותו ית', א"כ למה אנו מבחינים את הרצון לקבל הזה לעביות ועכירות, ואנו מצווים לזכות אותו על ידי תורה ומצוות, עד שזולת זה לא נגיע אל המטרה הנעלה של מחשבת הבריאה?

12. The main aspect of the created being and of all creation is the desire to receive. What is beyond the desire to receive is not creation, but rather emanates “something from something” from the essence of God. So why do we consider this desire to receive to be coarse and requiring purification through Torah and *mitzvot*, for us to arrive at the exalted purpose of creation?

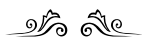
12. The main aspect of the created being and of all creation is the desire to receive. What is beyond the desire to receive is not creation, but rather emanates “something from something” from the essence of God. So why do we consider this desire to receive to be coarse and requiring purification through Torah and *mitzvot*, for us to arrive at the exalted purpose of creation?

The desire to receive is the force that propels creation and motivates us to progress. The aspiration for pleasure motivates us to create, invent, and develop. All inventions, innovations, technology, art, and so on — are

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developed because of our desire to receive. The desire to receive motivates us to learn Torah and motivates us to want to develop spiritually.

The desire to receive also motivates all our destructive actions. Unregulated, the desire to receive can destroy the world.



הפתיחה

יג) והענין הוא, כי כמו שהגשמיים נפרדים זה מזה ע"י ריחוק מקום, כן נפרדים הרוחניים זה מזה ע"י שינוי הצורה שבהם. ותמצא זה גם בעוה"ז, למשל ב' בני אדם הקרובים בדעתם זה לזה, הם אוהבים זה את זה, ואין ריחוק מקום פועל עליהם שיתרחקו זה מזה. ובהפך – כשהם רחוקים זה מזה בדעותיהם, הרי הם שונאים זה את זה, וקרבת המקום לא תקרב אותם במאומה. הרי ששינוי הצורה שבדעתם מרחקם זה מזה, וקרבת הצורה שבדעתם מקרבם זה אל זה. ואם למשל טבעו של האחד הוא הפוך בכל בחינותיו כנגד טבעו של השני, הרי הם רחוקים זה מזה כרחוק המזרח ממערב. ועד"ז תשכיל ברוחניות, שכל הענינים של התרחקות והתקרבות וזווג ויחוד הנבחנים בהם, הם משקלים של שינוי צורה בלבד, שלפי מדת שינוי הצורה הם מתפרדים זמ"ז, ולפי מדת השואת הצורה הם מתדבקים זה בזה. ועם זה תבין שהגם שהרצון לקבל הוא חוק מחויב בהנברא, כי הוא כל בחינת נברא שבו, והוא הכלי הראוי לקבל המטרה שבמחשבת הבריאה, עכ"ז הוא נעשה עי"ז נפרד לגמרי מהמאציל, כי יש שינוי צורה עד למדת הפכיות בינו לבין המאציל, כי המאציל הוא כולו להשפיע ואין בו מנצוצי קבלה אפילו משהו ח"ו, והוא, כולו לקבל ואין בו מנצוצי השפעה אף משהו. הרי אין לך הפכיות הצורה רחוקה יותר מזה, ונמצא ע"כ בהכרח, כי הפכיות הצורה הזו מפרידה אותו מהמאציל.

13. The reason is because just as physical matters are separated by distance, spiritual matters are separated by having different attributes. For example, people with similar opinions love one another, and physical distance doesn't affect their love. People with opposite opinions hate one another, and physical closeness doesn't bring them close. The similarity or difference of opinions determines the closeness or distance. If one person's nature is in every respect the exact opposite of another person, the people are as distant from one another as can be. This is similar in spirituality. All spiritual matters of distance, closeness, coupling and unification are measures of similarity or difference. To the extent that entities are different from one another, they are separate from one another. To the extent that they are similar, they are connected. With this we can understand that even though the desire to receive is intrinsic to the created being and is the

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vessel for the purpose of creation, nevertheless, it causes the created being to be completely separated from the Creator. The Creator is entirely giving and has absolutely no aspect of receiving whatsoever, and the creation is entirely receiving and has no aspect of giving whatsoever. There is no opposition more distant than this, and this separates the creation from the Creator.

13. The reason is because just as physical matters are separated by distance, spiritual matters are separated by having different attributes. For example, people with similar opinions love one another, and physical distance doesn't affect their love.

Rebbe David of Lelov traveled to spend the high holy days with his Rebbe, the Seer of Lublin. Rebbe David didn't make it to Lublin for *Rosh Hashana* and stayed in a village along the way. On *Rosh Hashana* night he raised his cup and said "*LeChayim!*" to the Seer of Lublin. In answer to his student he said, "My table is long and reaches Lublin."

The similarity or difference of opinions determines the closeness or distance. If one person's nature is in every respect the exact opposite of another person, the people are as distant from one another as can be.

For example: Yaakov and Eisav were together in the womb of their mother Rivka. The Sages say, "When Rivka passed near a place of idol worship, Eisav wanted to come out. When she passed near the place where Shem was learning Torah, Yaakov wanted to come out." In terms of physical distance, they were certainly close, but in terms of their attributes, there was a tremendous distance. Likewise, difference of opinion causes distance between people even if they are physically close.



הפתיחה

יד) ובכדי להציל את הנבראים מגודל הפירוד הרחוק הזה נעשה סוד הצמצום הא', שענינו הוא – שהפריד הבחי"ד הנ"ל מן כל פרצופי הקדושה, באופן שמדת גדלות הקבלה ההיא נשארה בבחינת חלל פנוי וריקן מכל אור. כי כל פרצופי הקדושה יצאו בבחינת מסך מתוקן בכלי מלכות שלהם, שלא יקבלו אור בבחי"ד הזו. ואז בעת שהאור העליון נמשך ונתפשט אל הנאצל, והמסך הזה דוחה אותו לאחוריו, הנה זה נבחן כמו הכאה בין אור העליון ובין המסך, המעלה אור חוזר ממטה למעלה, ומלביש הע"ס דאור העליון. כי אותו חלק האור הנדחה לאחוריו נק' אור חוזר, ובהלבשתו לאור העליון, נעשה אח"כ כלי קבלה על אור העליון במקום הבחי"ד.

כי אח"ז התרחבה כלי המלכות באותו שיעור האו"ח, שהוא אור הנדחה שעלה והלביש לאור העליון ממטה למעלה. והתפשטה גם ממעלה למטה, שבזה נתלבשו האורות בהכלים, דהיינו בתוך אור חוזר הוא. וה"ס ראש וגוף שבכל מדרגה, כי הזווג דהכאה מאור העליון בהמסך, מעלה אור חוזר ממטה למעלה, ומלביש הע"ס דאור העליון בבחינת ע"ס דראש, שפירושו שרשי כלים, כי שם עוד לא יכולה להיות הלבשה ממש. ואח"ז כשהמלכות מתפשטת עם האו"ח ההוא ממעלה למטה, אז נגמר האור חוזר ונעשה לבחינת כלים על אור העליון, ואז נעשית התלבשות האורות בכלים, ונקרא גוף של מדרגה ההיא, שפירושו כלים גמורים.

14. In order to save the created beings from this vast separation, *Tzimtzum Alef* (The First Constriction) was made. *Tzimtzum Alef* means that the fourth aspect, *Malchut*, is separated from all the *partzufim* (spiritual levels) of holiness so that the great measure of receiving remains without light. All the levels of holiness come from a *masach*, a screen, set in the vessel of *Malchut* which keeps it from receiving the light. When the upper light emanates and shines to the created being, the *masach* deflects the light. The impact between the upper light and the *masach* elevates returning light from below to above, clothing the ten *sefirot* of the upper light. The returning light clothes the upper light and afterwards becomes the vessel for receiving the light in place of the fourth aspect, *Malchut*.

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After the light is deflected and clothes the upper light from below to above, the vessel of *Malchut* expands to the measure of the returning light. The *Malchut* expands from above to below and the lights become clothed in the vessels of returning light. This is the meaning of the head and body of every spiritual level. The upper light is deflected by the *masach* and returning light elevates from below to above, clothing the ten *sefirot* of the upper light. This is called the head aspect and is only the root of the vessels because they are not yet able to actually clothe the light. Afterwards, when the *Malchut* expands with the returning light from above to below, the returning light is complete and there are now vessels for the upper light. The light is clothed in these vessels. This is called the body of the level, meaning that the vessels are complete.

14. In order to save the created beings from this vast separation, *Tzimtzum Alef* (The First Constriction) was made. The separation between the created beings and the Creator is because the created beings are receiving and the Creator is giving.

***Tzimtzum Alef* means that the fourth aspect, *Malchut*,**
The fourth aspect is the aspect of receiving in order to receive.

is separated
by the Creator

from all the *partzufim* (spiritual levels)

Partzuf literally means “face” and alludes to a particular measure of experiencing God. When we see our friend’s back we are not certain who it is. When we see our friend’s face we are certain that it is our friend. “Face” alludes to revelation.

A *partzuf* contains a head aspect and a body aspect. “Head” means calculation and planning. “Body” means performing the action.

of holiness so that the great measure of receiving remains without light.

The *tzimtzum* of the fourth aspect defines holiness as an aspect that contains no receiving for itself and is only giving.

All the levels of holiness come from a *masach*, a screen, set in the vessel of *Malchut* which keeps it from receiving the light.

Overcoming our desire to receive by not receiving the light is called making a *masach*. We need to remember that the upper light is only revealed to us when we fully yearn to be close to God and have done everything necessary to merit the revelation of the light. Then, when the light is revealed, in spite of our great yearning for it, we need to decline receiving the light. If we were to receive the light before we complete the necessary spiritual transformations, we would receive the light for our own self-benefit. This would blemish our experience of God's glory.

When the upper light emanates and shines to the created being

The light does not move. The light shining to the created being means that the created being perceives the light.

the *masach*

The *masach* is set in the vessel of *Malchut*.

deflects the light.

This means that *Malchut* stops the light from entering its vessel. *Malchut* forgoes receiving the light even though she desires it very much.

The impact between the upper light and the *masach*

Impact means there is a conflict between two different understandings.

Malchut has two different understandings:

1) Since God created the creation in order to give goodness to the creation, it is necessary to receive all the goodness, meaning all the light.

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2) The created being needs to attain closeness with God by giving and not receiving.

This dilemma results in *Malchut* deciding not to receive the light and she deflects the light. This entails immense spiritual work because the light contains so much pleasure and is so desirable. Even though the vessel has great yearning for the light, it forgoes receiving it because it prefers closeness with God.

elevates returning light from below to above, clothing the ten *sefirot* of the upper light.

The *Baal HaSulam* writes in his book *Panim Me'irote* that the *masach* is the origin of spiritual work and the returning light is the origin of the reward.

The work of the *masach* is, for example, like a person who wants to rest but works instead to earn a salary. The person acts in opposition to the desire to rest, and works. Acting in opposition to our desire is defined as work.

Created beings desire to receive pleasure and enjoyment. The action of the *masach* is the opposite — to deflect the light and not receive. The desire to receive certainly exists, but the created being decides not to use it. The created being forgoes this immense light of the revelation of God that contains pleasure beyond measure because receiving for self-benefit distances the created being from God and the created being prefers to be in alignment with God.

The *masach* is the created being striving to not make use of the desire to receive. This is extremely difficult work and it is done to receive a reward. What reward? The created being makes this effort in order to get from God a new nature of desiring to give. The reward is the desire to give.

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After the light is deflected by the *masach*, a small illumination from the deflected light returns to shine within the created being. This light develops within the created being the desire to give. This is why the returning light is considered the origin of the reward.

Since the created being had light before the *tzimtzum*, the *tzimtzum* was not made for the created being to receive light. The *tzimtzum* was made for the created being to attain the desire to give.

The impact between the upper light and the *masach* elevates returning light from below to above clothing the ten *sefirot* of the upper light.

There are two types of returning light here:

1) returning light that is reflected

This is the light that arrives at *Malchut* and is reflected back because *Malchut* prefers closeness to God over receiving.

2) returning light that clothes

The immense effort to reflect the light even though the light is so desirable, causes a small illumination of the light to return and shine within *Malchut*. This light develops in *Malchut* a new nature of desiring to give and endows *Malchut* with great pleasure in giving. Since *Malchut* desires to give pleasure to the Creator, and the Creator desires to give goodness to creation, *Malchut* calculates what portion of the light she is able to clothe. “Clothe” means being able to receive the light not for self-gratification but only because God wants to give. This means receiving the light in a state of giving to God.

What does it mean “from below to above”? That which is less important is called “below”. That which is more important is called “above”. “From

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below to above” is when the lower, instead of receiving, wants to give to above. When the created being develops the desire to give, it attains alignment with God and therefore goes up in importance.

The returning light clothes the upper light and afterwards becomes the vessel for receiving the light in place of the fourth aspect, *Malchut*. The entire purpose of the *tzimtzum* is for the created being to attain the desire to give. This is the returning light that clothes.

The term “clothe” means “receive”. We heard from our spiritual teacher Rebbe Baruch Shalom HaLevi Ashlag *ztz”l* that when speaking about material matters we use the term “receive” and when speaking about spiritual matters we use the term “clothe”.

After *Malchut* receives the illumination from the returning light and develops the desire to give, she contemplates how she can give to God. She arrives at the conclusion that since God desires to give, she can give to God by receiving the light. If the light is received without proper assessment, however, it will fall to the realm of receiving in order to receive. This is because the desire to receive is the root nature of the created being. The vessels of giving, that are the aspect of returning light, are a new nature. The created being, therefore, always needs to check if the intention is for the sake of giving, since the root nature of receiving is always capable of awakening. *Malchut* needs to measure her strength and calculate what portion of the light she is able to receive only because she wants to give to God, and what portion of the light contains pleasure so great that if she receives it, it will be for her own self-benefit. This is the concept of the returning light ascending from below to above, clothing the ten *sefirot* of the upper light. The desire to give ascends from *sefira* to *sefira* and measures its strength in relationship to the light in each *sefira*. This means determining what it is able to receive in order to give, and what it is not able to receive in order to give.

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Four aspects are functioning together:

1) the coarseness

This is the amount of desire to receive. On a spiritual level, this is defined as the amount of yearning a person has for God.

2) the *masach*

This is the power of resistance to not make use of the coarseness and not receive what the vessel desires.

3) the returning light

This is the desire to give.

4) the clothing of the upper light

The degree of coarseness determines the amount of resistance and size of the *masach* that is necessary. The amount of resistance determines the amount of returning light (desire to give) that is developed in the created being. The amount of desire to give determines the amount of light that becomes clothed in the vessels of the created being.

Question:

How can light be a vessel?

Answer:

Malchut says, "I want to receive the light." This is *Malchut* drawing forth the light. Then *Malchut* deflects the light. This power of resistance is called *masach*. We explained that the action of *Malchut* deflecting the upper light is the root of spiritual work. The work is opposing the desire to receive the light that contains immense pleasure. We explained that because of this work *Malchut* merits a reward. The reward is that a small illumination of the deflected light returns and shines in the vessel of *Malchut*. This illumination develops in the vessel of *Malchut* a new nature that loves and desires to give. This desire to give is called returning light and it clothes the

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direct light, meaning that it becomes a vessel for receiving the direct light, as we previously discussed. We see that it is specifically by deflecting the light that the created being is able to receive.

The law of *tzimtzum* means that the light no longer shines in a vessel that receives for its own self-benefit. We find that it is through the returning light, the state of giving, that the created being becomes able to receive the light. The returning light becomes the vessel for receiving in place of the fourth aspect.

What is the meaning of “**in place of**”? The fourth aspect is the desire to receive in order to receive. Before the *tzimtzum*, the fourth aspect was the vessel for the upper light. After the *tzimtzum* and the rectification made by the *masach* and the returning light, the returning light becomes the vessel for receiving. This means that the vessel of receiving is the desire to give. Then, reception is possible because it is not for self-benefit, but rather in order to give. When there is no returning light, meaning no desire to give, there is no receiving of the upper light.

The ascension of the returning light from below to above is the “head” of the spiritual level. In this stage there is no actual reception. There is only calculating to what extent the light can be properly received. This state is known as *shorshei kaylim*, the root of the vessels. Afterwards, when the calculation has been completed, the *Malchut* extends to the “body”, meaning that she now receives what she previously determined she is capable of receiving in order to give.

After the light is deflected and clothes the upper light from below to above, the vessel of *Malchut* expands to the measure of the returning light.

After the *masach* deflects the light, *Malchut* opens to receive according to the measure of the returning light.

The *Malchut* expands from above to below

The Creator is above in importance and the created being is below in importance. The light emanates from the Creator to the receiving vessels of the created being, above to below. *Malchut* expanding from above to below means that the created being now receives the light that it previously determined was permissible to receive.

and the lights become clothed in the vessels of returning light.

Malchut now receives the upper light within her desire to give. She does not receive for her own self-benefit at all, but receives only in service to God.

This is the meaning of the head and body of every spiritual level. The upper light is deflected by the *masach* and returning light elevates from below to above, clothing the ten *sefirot* of the upper light.

As we explained, as a result of the deflection the created being develops a vessel of giving. This vessel is called returning light. It is called returning light because it develops from the light that returns to shine in the created being. It is also called returning light because it comes from the created being returning and deflecting the light. Once this new nature of giving exists, the desire ascends from below to above, in the direction of giving to God.

This is called the head aspect and is only the root of the vessels because they are not yet able to actually clothe the light.

This is the stage of calculating what can be received in order to give, meaning received for love of God, and what is not able to be received in order to give, meaning that it would not be received for love of God, but received for love of oneself.

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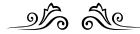
Afterwards, when the *Malchut* expands with the returning light from above to below,

The light emanates from above to the receiving vessel below.

the returning light is complete

The returning light has completed its function.

and there are now vessels for the upper light. The light is clothed in these vessels. This is called the body of the level, meaning that the vessels are complete.



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טו) הרי שנעשו בחינת כלים חדשים בפרצופין דקדושה במקום בחי' ד אחר הצמצום א', שהם נעשו מאור חוזר של זווג דהכאה בהמסך. ויש אמנם להבין את אור חוזר הזה – איך הוא נעשה לבחינת כלי קבלה, אחר שהוא מתחילתו רק אור נדחה מקבלה, ונמצא שמשמש תפקיד הפוך מענינו עצמו?! ואסביר לך במשל מהויות דהאי עלמא: כי מטבע האדם לחבב ולהוקיר מדת ההשפעה, ומאוסה ושפלה בעיניו מדת הקבלה מחברו. ולפיכך הבא לבית חברו והוא מבקשו שיאכל אצלו, הרי אפילו בעת שהוא רעב ביותר יסרב לאכול, כי נבזה ושפל בעיניו להיות מקבל מתנה מחברו. אכן בעת שחברו מרבה להפציר בו בשיעור מספיק, דהיינו עד שיהיה גלוי לו לעינים, שיעשה לחברו טובה גדולה עם אכילתו זו, הנה אז מתרצה ואוכל אצלו. כי כבר אינו מרגיש את עצמו למקבל מתנה, ואת חברו להמשפיע, אלא להיפך, כי הוא המשפיע ועושה טובה לחברו ע"י קבלתו ממנו את הטובה הזאת. והנך מוצא, שהגם שהרעב והתאבון הוא כלי קבלה המיוחד לאכילה, והאדם ההוא היה לו רעבון ותאבון במדה מספקת לקבל סעודת חברו, עכ"ז לא היה יכול לטעום אצלו אף משהו מחמת הבושה. אלא כשחברו מתחיל להפציר בו, והוא הולך ודוחה אותו, הרי אז מתחילים להתרקם בו כלי קבלה חדשים על האכילה, כי כחות ההפצרה של חברו וכחות הדחיה שלו בעת שהולכים ומתרבים, סופם להצטרף לשיעור מספיק המהפכים לו מדת הקבלה למדת השפעה, עד שיוכל לצייר בעיניו שיעשה טובה ונחת רוח גדול לחברו עם אכילתו, אשר אז נולדו לו כלי קבלה על סעודת חברו. ונבחן עתה, שכח הדחיה שלו נעשה לעיקר כלי קבלה על הסעודה, ולא הרעב והתאבון, אע"פ שהם באמת כלי קבלה הרגילים.

15. After *Tzimtzum Alef*, new vessels are made in the *partzufim* of holiness in place of the fourth aspect. The new vessels are made from the returning light reflected by the *masach*. The returning light begins as light deflected from reception and then becomes a vessel of receiving. How can we understand the returning light functioning in a role opposite to itself? I will explain with an example. We naturally value the attribute of giving and consider receiving from others lowly. Therefore, a person who comes to the house of a friend and is asked to eat, even if the person is very hungry,

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declines eating. This is because the person feels embarrassed to receive from the host. When the host urges, to the extent that it becomes clear that the friend will do the host a big favor by eating the meal, the friend agrees to eat. This is because the friend no longer feels that eating the meal is receiving a gift, but rather the opposite, that eating the meal is doing the host a favor. We see that even though hunger and appetite are the vessels for eating, and the person is hungry and has appetite to receive the host's meal, nevertheless, the person is unable to eat because of feeling ashamed. When the host urges and the friend continues to resist, there begins to develop within the friend a new vessel for eating. The host's urging and the friend's resistance continue and increase until eventually the friend's receiving of the meal transforms into an act of giving. When the friend feels that eating the meal is a favor to the host that will give the host great enjoyment, the friend is able to receive the meal. We see that, even though hunger and appetite are the normal vessels for reception, the power of resistance becomes the main vessel for receiving the meal.

15. After *Tzimtzum Alef*, new vessels are made in the *partzufim* of holiness in place of the fourth aspect.

Two comments about new vessels:

1) Until we have the new vessels, all our happiness and enjoyment in life come from receiving. After the new vessels, all of our happiness and enjoyment in life come from giving.

2) The giving does not depend on feeling pleasure and enjoyment. When we merit the returning light, we feel pleasure in giving, but the giving is not in order to feel the pleasure. The pleasure develops within us a love for others in such a way that it becomes our nature to give unconditionally. We then give even when it is not pleasurable and even when we suffer from the giving. In order for our personality to be completely transformed in this

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way, we first need to feel pleasure and enjoyment when giving to others. Then, after this new nature of giving is developed within ourselves, we can give without pleasure being the condition for the giving.

We can contemplate what the Baal HaSulam says in the book *Matan Torah*:

“We have discussed the answer to the question, “How is it possible to become attached to God?” The Sages said it means “to become attached to God’s attributes.”

This is for two reasons:

1) Spiritual attachment is not a measure of closeness of physical space but rather a measure of similarity and alignment.

2) The soul is only separated from the essence of God by the desire to receive that God embedded in it. Therefore, when we separate the desire to receive from our soul, we return to our original attachment to the essence of God.

All this is theoretical, however, because “to become attached to God’s attributes” doesn’t explain how to actually do this. It doesn’t explain how to detach from the desire to receive implanted in our nature and attain the desire to give.

We explained that a person drowning in a river needs to hold the rope firmly. We also explained that until a person is engaged in the spiritual work of Torah and *mitzvot* with a pure intention to give, the person is not holding the rope firmly. So the question remains — where can we find motivation to strive to give with our whole heart? We are not able to move without wanting some benefit for ourselves. How can we attain a state of giving to God that is not conditional on wanting to receive anything? A machine doesn’t work without fuel, so where do we find motivation to do this?

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The answer is that when we attain some comprehension of God's exaltedness, giving to God becomes an act of reception. When we attain proper comprehension of God's exaltedness, we have motivation to strive with all our heart and soul and strength because we realize there is no reception more important than giving to God. Obviously, if we have not yet comprehended God's exaltedness, we do not perceive giving to God as an act of reception, and therefore when we truly intend to do something only for God, without any benefit for ourselves, we immediately lose our motivation. We become like a machine without fuel because we are naturally unable to move a muscle without hoping to benefit from the movement. This is even more so with regard to the Torah's requirement that we strive with all of our heart and soul. We are certainly only able to do this if we receive enjoyment from it."

We see from the Baal HaSulam's sublime words that we need pleasure and enjoyment in order to move. Before our rectified state of *tikun*, we experience pleasure and enjoyment from receiving. After the *tikun*, we attain a new nature of giving and we experience pleasure and enjoyment from others enjoyment. This is achieved through realizing the exaltedness of God and the exaltedness of others. When we are giving to someone very important, we feel great pleasure when giving. If we do not feel happy and joyful when giving, this means that God (or the person we are giving to) is not important enough to us. Our work is to strive to increase our awareness of God's importance and the importance of our friends. When we relate to our friends as the most important people in the world, we are happy to give to them. Without feeling the importance of others we are not able to truly give. Although enjoyment is necessary to be able to give, we don't need to focus on attaining this joy. Rather, we can focus on the enjoyment and happiness of those we are giving to.

הפתיחה

To further clarify the concept of giving:

If we give something but don't lack what we gave, this is not considered "giving". Giving entails giving up something. Giving is bound up with suffering because otherwise we are not considered to have given. It is only by developing awareness of the exaltedness of God and the importance of others that the sufferings of our desire to receive become beloved to us. These sufferings become precious to us because they are what we are giving, and we enjoy being able to give.

Spirituality is pleasure, not suffering. The question is what we are enjoying — giving or receiving?

We naturally value the attribute of giving and consider receiving from others lowly.

We actually prefer receiving over giving. Society, however, glorifies the person who makes an effort to give and looks down upon the person who receives and doesn't care about others.



טז) ומדמיון הנ"ל בין אדם לחברו, אפשר להבין ענין הזווג דהכאה הנ"ל, ואת האו"ח העולה על ידו, שהוא נעשה כלי קבלה חדשים על אור העליון במקום בחי"ד. כי ענין ההכאה של אור העליון המכה בהמסך ורוצה להתפשט אל בחי"ד, יש לדמותו לענין ההפצרה לאכול אצלו, כי כמו, שהוא רוצה מאד שחברו יקבל את סעודתו. כן אור העליון רוצה להתפשט להמקבל. וענין המסך המכה בהאור ומחזירו לאחוריו, יש לדמותו לדבר הדחיה והסירוב של חברו לקבל את סעודתו, כי דוחה את טובתו לאחור. וכמו שתמצא כאן, אשר דוקא הסירוב והדחיה נתהפכו ונעשו לכלי קבלה נכונים לקבל את סעודת חברו, כן תוכל לדמות לך, כי האו"ח העולה ע"י הכאת המסך ודחיתו את אור העליון, הוא שנעשה לכלי קבלה חדשים על אור העליון, במקום הבחי"ד ששמשה לכלי קבלה מטרם הצמצום א'. אמנם זה נתקן רק בפרצופי קדושה דאבי"ע, אבל לא בפרצופי הקליפות ובעוה"ז, שבהם משמשת הבחי"ד עצמה לכלי קבלה. וע"כ הם נפרדים מאור העליון, כי השינוי צורה של הבחי"ד מפריד אותם, וע"כ נבחנות הקליפות וכן הרשעים למתים, כי הם נפרדים מחיי החיים ע"י הרצון לקבל שבהם. כנ"ל באות י"ג עש"ה, ודו"ק בזה, כי אי אפשר להסביר יותר.

16. From this analogy of the host and the friend we can understand how the returning light becomes a new vessel for the upper light in place of the fourth aspect. The upper light impacting the *masach* and desiring to shine to the fourth aspect is like the host urging the friend to eat. Similar to the host wanting the friend to receive the meal, the upper light wants to shine to the receiver. The *masach* deflecting the light is similar to the friend declining to receive the meal and pushing the host's goodness away. In the example, it is precisely the friend's refusal to receive the meal that becomes the proper vessel to receive the meal. This is similar to the way the returning light that comes from the *masach* deflecting the upper light becomes the new vessel for receiving the light instead of the fourth aspect that was the vessel of receiving before *Tzimtzum Alef*. This, however, is only fixed in the *partzufim* of holiness of *Atzilut*, *Briya*, *Yetzira* and *Asiya*, and not in the *partzufim* of the outer shells and this world that use the fourth aspect as a vessel for receiving and are therefore separated from the upper

light because the difference in attribute of the fourth aspect separates them. For this reason, the outer shells and those who are evil are considered to be dead, because the desire to receive within them separates them from the source of life. This is like what was discussed above in #13. Contemplate this deeply as this is as much as can be explained.

16. From this analogy of the host and the friend we can understand how the returning light becomes a new vessel for the upper light in place of the fourth aspect.

The returning light is the desire to give. When a person receives the desire to give from God and yearns to give to God, the person realizes that the only way to give to God is by receiving God's goodness and enjoying it, because this is all that God desires. The person, therefore, receives the upper light — not for self-benefit, but in order to give to God. The person uses the vessel of receiving in order to give. We find that it is specifically through the returning light, the desire to give, that the desire to receive comes to be used. This is why the returning light is considered a new vessel of reception.

Similar to the host wanting the friend to receive the meal, the upper light wants to shine to the receiver.

God desires to give goodness.

In the example, it is precisely the friend's refusal to receive the meal that becomes the proper vessel to receive the meal.

This is because the refusal to receive the meal transforms the friend from receiver to giver.

This is similar to the way the returning light that comes from the *masach* deflecting the upper light becomes the new vessel for receiving the light instead of the fourth aspect that was the vessel of receiving

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before *Tzimtzum Alef*.

Before the *tzimtzum*, the fourth aspect, the desire to receive, functioned as the receiving vessel. After the *tzimtzum*, the returning light, the desire to give, becomes the receiving vessel.

We are only able to receive the upper light when we have developed the desire to give. Then, our experiencing the pleasure of the light is not rooted in self-gratification, rather we receive the light in service to God in a state of complete joy and happiness. We experience God's light in the ultimate way — as an act of giving and love.



Thanks to *Hashem* for the completion of chapters one and two.
The *Peticha* contains twenty chapters.

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“Through learning the inner spiritual wisdom of Torah,
giving becomes more important to us than receiving.”

Rebbe Avraham Mordechai Gottlieb

We are blessed with an abundance of holy books containing treasures of spiritual insight from the Baal HaSulam, Rebbe Baruch Shalom HaLevi Ashlag and Rebbe Avraham Mordechai Gottlieb all discussing the details of spiritual development and inner transformation.

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