



***Authentic Kabbalah - Sephardic Studies
Benei Noah Studies -- Anti-Missionary/Anti-Cult Materials***

Sefer Sha'arei Kedusha The Gates of Holiness by Rabbi Haim Vital

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Part Three - Gate One Dealing with the Sefirot and Their Relationship to the Heavens and the Earth.

Now, the Supernal Emanator who emanated all the worlds is called Ayn Sof (Infinite), therein is no image, not by name or with any letter, not even with the crown of a letter, nothing at all. Even contemplation at this level is impossible.

Five worlds (levels) were emanated, one being the soul, to the one below it. They are: Adam Kadmon (Primordial Man) referred to in the Tikunim (of the Zohar) and in the language of the Gaonim as "brightness." The second world is Atzilut, the third Beriah, the fourth Yetzirah and the fifth, Asiyah. These five worlds are called one general Havaya. For the crown of the Yod is Adam Kadmon, Yod is Atzilut, first Hey is Beriah, Vav is Yetzirah, and the final Hey is Asiyah.

Being that Adam Kadmon is so highly concealed, it is not represented by any letter, but only by the crown of the Yod, and the Ayn Sof has not even the image of a crown. Therefore, we refer to only the four worlds of Atzilut, Beriah, Yetzirah and Asiyah for they are complete letters. These four together are called Havaya.

These four [worlds] are also divided into nine levels. These are Hokhma, Binah, the six appendages of the Tiferet and Malkhut. The four are [also] called four supernal foundations, which are the four worlds Atzilut, Beriah, Yetzirah and Asiyah and they are divided into nine sefirot.

However, the crown of the Yod, which is Adam Kadmon, is the fifth supernal world. [He] includes them all. [He] alone is the source of the four foundations, which are the four worlds Atzilut, Beriah, Yetzirah and Asiyah. These are divided into nine sefirot. However, the crown

of the Yod, which is Adam Kadmon, the fifth supernal world that includes them all and within Him alone is the source of the four foundations, which are the four worlds Atzilut, Beriah, Yetzirah and Asiyah. We thus find that there are never [counted] more than the four foundations alone. The general rule is that the Ayn Sof is not included within any count whatsoever.

Afterwards, to start, all the worlds are united and are one. They are one Name of YHVH. Afterwards they are subdivided to the four foundations, without their source, which is Adam Kadmon the crown of the Yod, which is the tenth sefirah, supernal; above all, which is called Keter. Afterwards the four foundations are divided into nine sefirot as mentioned.

All this is included within two parts. They are the Emanator and all that is emanated. This then is what is written in Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer, that prior to creating the universe, meaning our universe, He and His Name were one. For the Ayn Sof, which is called He and the emanated which are included in His Name which is one YHVH, they are all one, as the [power] of the flame is concealed with the coal.

Now, we have explained that all the worlds are included within the Name YHVH that is divided into four foundations and nine sefirot. In this same way, each world is subdivided in this fashion. For example, the world of Atzilut, which is the letter Yod and is called Hokhma, is subdivided into all the aspects described. Within it is one complete YHVH divided into four foundations and ten complete sefirot as described regarding the union of all the worlds exactly.

This is the way it is with each of the five worlds mentioned. In this way we go further and subdivide the matter to the utmost degree until we find that even within this lowly world, there isn't the most simplest of creations that is not made up of the four letters of YHVH and include ten sefirot. This is all to show that all is created by the power of the blessed Emanator and there is none other than He.

Another different introduction is that all these levels and aspects from the heights of Adam Kadmon until the depths of this physical world, all of them are one above the other and one within the other. For the one that is highest is cloaked within the one below it, like a soul in a body. However, not all of the upper [world] is cloaked in the lower, only the smallest, lowest aspect of the upper is cloaked by the entire lowest [world].

This is the way it is until the completion of [all] the worlds. In this way all the worlds are united, every aspect of them, even this lower world. In every detail of them, all is in this way. For this one is above that one and this one is within that one, until all of them are like garments one to the other. All of them are garments for the Ayn Sof and [serves as] a neshama to all neshamot.

However, within each world of these five there is a difference in how the light radiates, until where it reaches. This is in order for there to be a difference between this and that. There are also differences within the details of the four foundations within each world, as with the details within the details. This [however] is not the place to explain all this.

We thus find that as the light radiates from above to below there is no sefirah that does not include within it all ten sefirot, each sefirah and sefirah subdividing into thousands and tens of thousands of sefirot. This is also the way it is with the radiance of the light from within to without, it follows this pattern [so that] the innermost of all is called Keter and that which is outside it is Hokhma and outside it is Binah and outside it are the six appendages of Tiferet and outside of them all is Malkhut.

Thus, each and every aspect is subdivided in this fashion into thousands and tens of thousands of specific details. Being that we have already discussed this with regards to the other worlds, now we will discuss the matter of Asiyah. Therefore, we will discuss its matter in great brevity, [but] only that which we need for our chosen lecture here.

Now, there are seven Heavens. The highest is called Aravot, because it includes the three first sefirot of Asiyah. These [three] are the Sphere of Intellect, the Surrounding Sphere, and the Sphere of the Constellations. The five spheres (Shatzam'han), Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the Sun and Venus [correspond to the sefirot] (HaGaT'NaH) Hesed, Gevurah, Tiferet, Netzah, and Hod. The sixth sphere of Yesod combines within it both Mercury and the Moon. The final one is called Vilon and does not serve [any purpose except that it brings about morning and evening] (Hagigah 12b). This is the sefirat Malkhut of Asiyah.

[The Malkhut of Asiyah] is also subdivided into ten sefirot therein. They are the Keter of Vilon, [followed by] the four foundations fire, air, water and earth of the lower world [which correspond to the] Hokhma, Binah, six appendages of the Tiferet and Malkhut [of the Malkhut of Asiyah]. We thus find that the Malkhut of the Malkhut [of Asiyah] is the foundation of the earth, the vessel and form for the whole [physical] world. Within this foundation of earth will be found all the "generations" which consist of the four foundations mentioned, according to the secret that "everything has come forth from the earth."

Now let us explain from above to below, which is the same as from inner to outer. Now, the foundation of earth contains within it ten sefirot. The Keter of them in the most concealed of them and is called the Yehida of the foundation of the earth. Outside of it is the Hokhma [soul called] Hayah. Outside it is the Binah Neshama, and outside it are the six appendages of the Tiferet Ruah and outside it is the Malkhut Nefesh of the foundation of earth. This Malkhut [is also] divided into ten sefirot therein.

The outermost [aspect] of this Malkhut [of the Malkhut of the Malkhut of Asiyah] is the foundation of the physical earth (underneath our feet). Therein lies no spirituality, but only crude matter called "inanimate." All that is within it is called the inanimate nefesh soul. In similar manner is the foundation of water. For the most external [aspect] of the Malkhut is called the water which causes to flower and is [also] called the "shoot." All within this is called the flowering soul. Also in this way are the foundation of air and the foundation of fire, which are the living and the speaking [souls].

Therefore, the four of them are together are:

- 1) the inanimate [soul] –
- 2) nefesh; the vegetative [soul] –
- 3) ruah; the living [soul] and
- 4) neshama; the speaking [soul].

Hayah and Vilon are the Yehida. As we have already explained, each aspect contains all the others.

This is what is to be found in the works of the philosophers, what [they] call the "forces" [of nature], when they say that within the flowering soul is the power to animate, the power to grasp [the life force], the power to consume and the power to push off. They also say [with regards to the] living (animal) soul that it is called moving and feeling, for it has within it the power to arouse and the power to associate and the power to form (ideas) etc... This is the way it is with them all.

What we learn from all this that even the outermost [aspect] of Malkhut, regardless of whatever aspect it be, it serves as the body of those aspects. However, we do say that the body of true crude matter applies other than to the outermost final Malkhut of Asiyah (enumerating) from above to below and from inner to outer. It is this final point [the most external aspect of Malkhut] which is the foundation of the completely crude earth. [Our Earth] is the body that is most crude and physical of all the worlds together.

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- Gate 2 – Admonitions of the Sages
- Gate 3 – Rewards for Keeping the Mitzvot
- Gate 4 – Punishment for Evil Midot
- Gate 5 – Punishment for Evil Actions
- Gate 6 – Punishments for Violating Negative Commandments
- Gate 7 – Reward for Observing Positive Commandments
- Gate 8 – The Gates of Repentance

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- Gate 1 – Essence of the Words
- Gate 2 – Essence of Man
- Gate 3 – Hindrances to Prophecy
- Gate 4 – Conditions for Prophecy
- Gate 5 – Qualities of Prophecy
- Gate 6 – Levels of Prophecy
- Gate 7 – Ruah HaKodesh in our Days
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