



Under the Auspices and Guidance of
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Light from the Leshem

Authentic Kabbalah Teachings from the Torah
On Topics Concerning the Divine Workings of Our Reality

Essays from the Writings of the Rav Shlomo Elyashiv,
the Baal HaLeshem, of Blessed Memory

Translations and Elucidation of Selected Chapters from
his Grand Collected Writings, entitled

Leshem Shabo V'Achlama

By

The Rav Shlomo Elyashiv, the Baal HaLeshem,
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Translation into English by Zerach Moshe Fedder

Article One

Existence is Rectified

via the Masculine and the Feminine

From the Book of The Knowledge – Part One, First Essay

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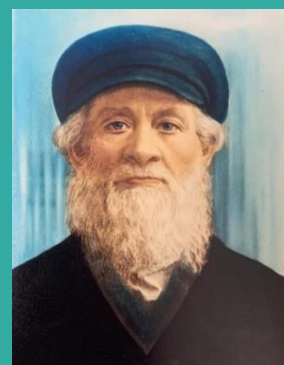
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The Baal HaLeshem, zt"l



Kabbalah | Light from the Leshem

Presenting The Writings of Rav Shlomo Elyashiv in English

The Rectification of Reality via the Masculine and the Feminine¹

The function of *Chesed/Kindness* and *Gevura/Justice* in the Universe

Understanding the function of divine attributes² of *Chesed/Kindness*³ and *Gevura/Justice*⁴ and the issue of rectifying the masculine and feminine aspects of the universe (that is mentioned everywhere⁵) involves understanding that both pairs⁶ are actually referring to one matter. For the attributes of *Chesed/Kindness* and *Gevura/Justice* are in truth, aspects of the masculine/feminine interaction with creation: Kindness is masculine, and Justice is feminine.

Yet, they are not ultimately, nor entirely the same matter. Because they, respectively, refer to the aspects of lights and vessels⁷. The attributes of *Chesed/Kindness* and *Gevura/Justice* are the lights. Rectification of masculine and feminine aspects of creation (as are mentioned everywhere⁸) essentially refer to the repairing of the vessels⁹. This is to say that masculine/feminine qualities serve as the vessels through which the essence of the attributes of Kindness/Justice can manifest themselves and go from being in their hidden state to being revealed.

Kindness is rectified by the Masculine and Justice by the Feminine

Hence, this rectification¹⁰ refers to the repair of the distinct aspects of the male and the female. For through the male and female vessels, the attributes of Kindness and Justice are become revealed and hence are actualized in their existence. That is to say, the light of Kindness becomes en clothed within the vessel of maleness, which has become repaired to receive it. Then the masculine unites with Kindness, and they become one essence together. Then too, the light of Justice becomes en clothed within the vessel of femaleness, which has become repaired to receive it. Then the feminine unites with Justice, and they become one essence together.

¹ Book of The Knowledge, Part 1, Essay 1, Sign 2, Letters 1-4, | אותיות א-ד, סימן ב', דרוש א', חלק א', סימן א', סימן ב', אותיות א-ד

² Briefly, the Kabbalah system explains the workings of how the Infinite interfaces with the finite. Ten attributes/measurements were created by the Creator to enable interaction with creation.

³ In Hebrew: חסד – Kindness, Lovingkindness, Being Charitable, also possibly Grace.

⁴ In Hebrew: גבורה – Justice, Strength, Sternness, or Severity, also possibly Heroic.

⁵ In Kabbalistic literature.

⁶ i.e., Kindness/Justice and masculine/feminine

⁷ Refers to a basic structural concept found in the Kabbalah. Any given entity consists of light that resides in a vessel. For example, human beings have both bodies and souls, where the body becomes a vessel for the light of the soul.

⁸ In Kabbalistic literature.

⁹ Prior to the creation of our current world existence, there was a cataclysmic, metaphysical event known as the shattering of the vessels. In this phase of world existence, our work is to repair these vessels. A deeper and more detailed explanation about these concepts will be available in future essays.

¹⁰ Of these masculine and feminine vessels.

Everything Created by G-d was Created as being Male or Female

For behold, Chazal¹¹ have said¹²: “Everything that the Holy One, Blessed be He, created in His world, He created as male and female. Even the leviathan, etc.” Not only humankind and animals, but also all types of plants and everything else. As it is written in the Midrash,¹³ “The incident of one female palm tree, etc.”¹⁴ Also see the lengthy explanation of the Gaon of Vilna.¹⁵

The issue at hand here is that all the entirety of existence, as well as all particular sub-realities, and their particulars and the particulars of their particulars, etc., were all made from the influx of the lights of kindness and justice that pour out of and were revealed from the Ayn Sof,¹⁶ yt”S.¹⁷ For only through them are all actions performed, as will be explained below.

For it is known, that the root and the beginning of the revelation/manifestation¹⁸ of the creation’s entire existence, comes out via the world of ‘the Kav/Line and Tzimtzum/Contraction.’¹⁹ Hence, we see that this world²⁰ too, is simply an aspect of the attributes of Kindness and Justice, for the Tzimtzum/Contraction is essentially an aspect of Gevura/Justice and the Kav/Line is essentially an aspect of Chesed/Kindness. Because ultimately, the entirety of reality, both in general and in particular, is only composed of the lights of Kindness and Justice. Therefore, these lights are en clothed in vessels that have the characteristics of male and female because they are the vessels for the lights of the Kindness and Justice. Then, the lights of Kindness and Justice bring into being, all of existence, through these vessels of maleness and femaleness (from being in a state of potential into actualization).

¹¹ The Rabbis of the Mishnaic and Talmudic periods.

¹² Talmud Baba Batra 74, B - ב, בתרא ע"ד, ב - ב

¹³ Midrash Bereshit Rabba, Chapter 41, Sign 1 – א' ס"א, ב"ר פ' מ"א

¹⁴ “Rabbi Tanhuma said: There was once an incident involving a female palm tree that was situated in Hamtan, and it would not produce fruit. A certain palm farmer passed by and saw it. He said: ‘This palm is yearning toward Jericho.’ Once they pollinated it [from that Jericho palm], it produced fruit.” (Translation from Sefaria.org) This midrash is apparently being quoted to show that even plants are created as male and female.

¹⁵ See the Gaon of Vilna’s commentary on the Book of Formation/*Sefer Yetzirah*, Chapter 3, Mishna 3 | ספר יצירה פ"ג, משנה ג'. Also, the words of the Chachamoni and Raavad there [i.e., in the *Sefer Yetzirah*] express the same ideas. Which the Leshem will now be presenting to us in this essay.

¹⁶ In Hebrew: אין סוף translates literally as Without End. This refers to the initial undifferentiated manifestation of G-d’s will. His will is so synonymous with The Holy One, blessed be He, Himself, that the *Ayn Sof* is often used as a term to refer to the Creator, Himself.

¹⁷ The Author uses the common Hebrew abbreviation יתברך שמו or ית"ש (*Yitbarach Shemo* which translates to “Blessed be His Name”) often after mentioning G-d in his writings. Writing out this entire phrase in the translation at every juncture had effect of breaking up the continuity of the flow of the text in English. So, in order to leave the feel of the original text and to not remove from praising the Holy One, blessed be He, (G-d forbid!) the translator decided to abbreviate *Yitbarach Shemo* as yt”S in English as a reasonable compromise.

¹⁸ In Hebrew: גילוי – This world means both to reveal and to manifest in English, so both have been left in the translation.

¹⁹ In Hebrew: קו וצמצום When the Creator decided to begin creation, everything was filled with His undifferentiated Will, known as the *Ayn Sof*. In order for there to be a “place” for the worlds to come into being, He removed Himself (The *Ayn Sof*) from a spherical “area” within the *Ayn Sof*. This is known as the *Tzimtzum/Contraction*. Then a “*Kav Dak/Thin Line*” returns to the “empty” spherical area, which begins the process of creation. In the parlance of the Leshem, this stage of creation, (i.e., *Kav and Tzimtzum*) is understood to be a “world” or stage of Divine manifestation.

²⁰ Of “*Kav/Line and Tzimtzum/Contraction*” – which is the highest level of duality in creation.

Source for the Teaching of “The Masculine and Feminine” Presented²¹

As it is written in the *Idrah Zuta*²² “At the time that *Atika Kadisha*²³, the concealed one of all the concealed²⁴, had the desire to rectify, **He rectified everything as masculine and feminine**²⁵. In a place [i.e., in a *Sephirah*] where the masculine and feminine were included together, they do not have real existence, but rather had another manner of existence of masculine and feminine^{26,27}.”

What can be said about *Atika Kadisha*, also refers to *RADLA*²⁸. The intention here is to say that the Light of the *Ayn Sof*, yt’’S, becomes en clothed and unified within *RADLA*. When G-d desired to reveal His Light to all of reality, He did so only via the lights of *Chesed*/Kindness and *Gevura*/Justice²⁹. Since he desired to repair them, he made vessels for the lights, in order to bring them out from hiddenness into revelation/manifestation, from being in potential into actualization. For it is known that vessels provide the means for rectifying the Lights.

The Example of the Body as a Vessel and the Soul as Light

For example, the body serves as a vehicle for the rectification of the soul. For via the body, the soul is provided with a place for its existence in this world, enabling the soul to complete every matter that it was created for to become completed. Therefore, He established everything as masculine and feminine.

²¹ In this section, the Leshem brings down and discusses a quote from the Zohar. He does this to show a source for the concept that everything is rectified via maleness and femaleness. It is beyond the scope of this essay to explain the details of all the other Kabbalistic concepts that are also mentioned here in detail. The footnotes below will provide you with a brief, minimal overview in order to enable you to get the gist of context of this passage.

²² *Idrah Zuta*, Page 290, א – ר"צ ע"א

The *Idrah Zuta* or the ‘Lesser Assembly’ is one of the sections of the Zohar that deal exclusively with descriptions of the upper worlds and their activities.

²³ *Atikah Kadisha* is the Highest *Partzuf* in *Atzilut*, that represents the upper aspect of the *Sephirah* of *Keter*. It represents the Supernal Will as manifest in the world of *Atzilut*. So, more simply stated for the purpose of understanding this essay, *Atikah Kadisha* means the manifestation of G-d’s will, in the upper worlds.

²⁴ In Hebrew: סתום, literally, closed off or blocked.

²⁵ I.e., that G-d created everything via the principle of “masculine/feminine,” as the Leshem will explain further in this essay.

²⁶ The Leshem will further explain, the meaning of “another manner of existence of masculine and feminine” later on.

²⁷ The following is the full section of this passage from the Zohar in the Hebrew translation of the Baal HaSulam, further translated into English by this translator, for those who wish to further examine its contents:

“בשעה שעתיקא קדישא. הסתום מכל סתומים רצה לתקן, תקן הכל כעין דכר ונוקבא. דהיינו שהעלה המלכות לבינה, ונעשתה המלכות לבחינת נוקבא בכל הספירות, שכל ספירה נכללה מדכר ונוקבא. אבל במקום שנכללו דכר ונוקבא בכל ספירה לא נתקיימו, אלא בקיום אחר של דכר ונוקבא.”

“At the time that *Atika Kadisha*, the concealed of all concealed desired to rectify, He rectified everything as masculine and feminine. That is to say that he raised the *Malchut* to *Bina*, and the *Malchut* was made into the aspect of feminine for in all the Sefirot, for each *Sefira* was includes aspects from Maleness and Femaleness. But where Male and Female were included in every *Sefira*, they did come into existence, but had a another/different Male/Female existence.”

²⁸ In Aramaic: רדל"א - רישא דלא אתידע. In English: The Head that is Unknown to Itself. Rav Chaim Luzzato defines *RADLA* in the 138 Gates of Wisdom, Gate 88 in this manner: “*RADLA* is the upper emanation from which all the inner connections between kindness and justice (literally MA and BAN) are established. Yet it is an emanation that is not comprehensible.” This is to say, the separate lights or emanations of ‘Kindness and Justice’ come out of and are ‘recognizable’ only after their emanation from *RADLA*.

²⁹ This is to say, the Divine Will becomes en clothed in *RADLA* which then emanates out and reveals, manifest and repairs all of existence via the lights of Kindness and Justice.

Each Vessel Must Contain its Appropriate Light for Existence to Unfold Properly

As we said above³⁰, “In a place [i.e., in a *Sephirah*] where the masculine and feminine were included together, they do not have real existence.” This is to say, that the matter of rectifying the male and female is precisely that the light of Kindness should be particularly in a male vessel by itself, and the light of the Justice should be particularly in a female vessel by itself. So that each one resides its own special, designated vessel by itself.

So, in this manner, the male and female each reside as separate Partzufim³¹, which can later connect and reunite as two separate entities joining together. But when these two complete lights are contained within one vessel, they can have no practical existence³² and stand in place³³. Because they are two opposites that oppose each other and thus cancel out each other. For since one is Kindness and one is Justice, their shared vessel cannot tolerate them. This is the explanation of the statement: “In a place [i.e., in a *Sephirah*] where the masculine and feminine were included together, they do not have real existence.”³⁴

Even though it is the case that we have stated, that it is a necessity for each light have a vessel that has been appointed particularly for it, nevertheless, in truth, it is necessary that each vessel also include a small amount of light from the second type of light. This is to say, that the male vessel holds mainly *Chasadim*/Kindness lights, but also contains *Gevurot*/Justice lights which are subordinate³⁵ to the Kindness lights, and that the female vessel holds mainly *Gevurot*/Justice lights, but also contains *Chasadim*/Kindness lights which are subordinate³⁶ to the Justice lights. Thus, the secondary light that is found in each vessel is only marginal in its function there. Each vessel contains a small amount of its opposite type of light within it. For it is necessary for each vessel to include, precisely, both types of light as will be explained below.

³⁰ Idrah Zuta, Page 290, A – ר"צ ע"א – אדרא זוטא ד' ר"צ ע"א, see footnote 20.

³¹ In Hebrew: פרצופים A type of spiritual entity, similar to a *Sephirah*, found especially in the world of *Atzilut*. See the glossary for further information.

³² Here “existence” means that light and vessel are properly encloded to be able to continue their influence, when the lights and vessels are not properly aligned, they are called in the parlance of the Zohar, ‘non-existent’ because they do not have any influence when they are not encloded properly.

³³ i.e., do not have any influence.

³⁴ In the original text, at this juncture, the Leshem describes cases in the upper worlds where there is more than one full light in a vessel (in the world of *Akudim*) and how why this state does not allow for continuation of “real existence.” The translator decided not to include this small section because to make it comprehensible to the reader would necessitate explaining several major complex kabbalistic concepts which are beyond the scope of this essay.

³⁵ In Hebrew: תפלים also could be translated as accessory, adjunct, or minor. The Hebrew term is the antonym of the term ‘essential’ in English.

³⁶ See above footnote.

In conclusion, the following are the rules and behavior concerning the rectification of masculine and feminine that we have been discussing, and thus a summary of the details of the aspects of the rectification of masculine and feminine:

- 1) That the lights of Kindness and Justice are enclothed precisely into their given vessels. Each light is enclothed in the vessel that is specific for it.
- 2) That each vessel additionally also includes a minor amount of the second type of light.
- 3) That each vessel is repaired in such a precise manner that the lights in them, cannot be used except for, in a lesser, constricted, and interruptible manner.³⁷

The Characteristics of the Lights of Kindness and Justice, Like Water and Fire

In order to clearly delineate this entire subject,³⁸ one needs to begin with understanding that the Emanator,³⁹ ית"ש, decreed that these lights have special qualities. The core characteristic of *Chesed*/Kindness is to connect and unite and the core characteristic of the *Gevura*/Justice is to create separation and to cause distancing. As the Gaon of Vilna explains:⁴⁰ “For they have the aspects of water and fire. For the way of water is to cause things to stick together, so that everything becomes attached together, as does flour that becomes a sticky dough when water is added to it. The way of fire, on the other hand, is to separate. For everything that gets consumed by flame disintegrates into ash. Thus, everything that becomes moist sticks together and everything that dries out breaks apart and disintegrates. For it is known that the secret of bitter herbs⁴¹ is to chew it well and the secret of incense⁴² is to grind it thoroughly. It is also known⁴³ that the Holy Name of ע"ב has the same numerical equivalent to *Chesed*/Kindness (both equal 72) and the Holy Name of ר"ו has the same numerical equivalent to *Gevura*/Justice (both equal 216), and they are both general and specific⁴⁴.”

³⁷ This is to say that the lights that come out from the vessel are of lesser intensity, more constricted and are not coming out constantly. Sometimes they stay within the vessel and do not flow out of it.

³⁸ Concerning the lights of Kindness and Justice residing in the masculine and feminine vessels.

³⁹ In Hebrew: המאציל, i.e., the Creator, G-d.

⁴⁰ In his commentary on the Tikkunei Zohar, the sixth Tikkun from the last 11 Tikkuns, page 167:a, beginning quote “In accounting of Kindness” – הגר"א בפירושו על התיקונים תיקון ו' מי"א תיקונים האחרונים קס"ז ע"א דה"מ בחושבן חסד.

⁴¹ Chewing and thus moistening bitter herbs, lessens the bitterness of the herb, which is meant to be an example of Kindness sweetening something harsh.

⁴² This is to say, that in order to use the sweet incense, it must be ground to dust to be used, i.e., a process of justice/strength.

⁴³ The Gaon of Vilna is explaining the relationship between Kindness and Justice through Divine names and their relationship in Gematria. A thorough explanation and discussion of this here, is beyond the scope of this essay. The main reason that the Leshem quotes the Gra here is to describe the natures of Kindness and Justice.

⁴⁴ The Leshem bring further places where the Gaon of Vilna discusses these matters: “He also write about this in the book Yahel Oor, in Hechal 6, page 30:a. Beginning text: throws out” - וכן כתב גם כן בספר יהל אור בהיכלות פקודי היכל ו' דף ל' עמוד א דה"מ זריק, ע"ש

Actions are Initiated via Awakening which then Perpetuates Movement

Furthermore, we see concerning all pursuance of matters of action and deeds, that both action within the mind that is initiated and comes forth when a person contemplates and also actions of actual doing via physical strength of a person in his physical activities and actions; all such actions and deeds only come out and continue because of the process known as, awakening⁴⁵. Whether the awakening is in a person's mind, in his intellectual process or if it is the awakening of his strength to do a physical action; every awakening is an awareness of a movement of the powers of the mind or the powers of the body.

These awakenings and movements occur at every movement and then transmutes and becomes another duplicated event. In other words, each movement passes on its capacity by producing a new movement. This refers to the conception of fragmentation and multiplicity. For both the powers of the mind and the body move from one capacity to another in a manner which reveals a multiplication of movement as each one then fuels the other, which then continues and illuminates outward and through such processes, new actions are produced (whether they are actual physical actions or intellectual representations, i.e., the birth of renewed intellectual inner-realities).

Gevura/Strength has the Characteristic of Causing Action

Hence, we see these processes explained above, can only occur via the characteristics of *Gevura/Strength*⁴⁶, for its power is to cause an awakening, movement, and manifestation of power outward.

The Characteristic of *Chesed/Kindness* is to be Motionless, Silent and Unified

For *Chesed/Kindness*'s characteristic is to cause unification. Its qualities are to be motionless and silent, to become intensified within itself. This is to say, all its potential is united within itself, causing all its powers to merge into one essence. Hence, there can be no revelation from *Chesed/Kindness* to that which is outside itself, toward others, because no action can proceed from it. Thus, there is not any manner for revelation from out it at all. For whenever the term of *Chesed/Kindness* is mentioned, it is termed with the quality of simplicity⁴⁷ and we do not find this usage concerning *Gevura/Strength*. We never see the phrase, 'simple' *Gevura/Strength* ever mentioned. Because when *Chesed/Kindness* is in a solitary⁴⁸ state, its forces⁴⁹ become completely unified together and no multiplicity can be ascertained at all. *Chesed/Kindness* is in a state of fundamental simplicity and has no manifestation at all.

⁴⁵ In Hebrew: התעוררות also could be translated as instigation, arousal, activation, stimulation.

⁴⁶ Here the translator is using the word "strength" for *Gevura* because it is closer to its functioning in reference to the discussion of its activity here in these paragraphs.

⁴⁷ In Hebrew: פשוט. As in the sense of not being complex in any manner. Simple, Single, Unified as One

⁴⁸ i.e., alone by itself, without interactions with *Gevura/Strength*

⁴⁹ In Hebrew: כוחות, powers, forces, potential activity

The Action of *Gevura/Strength* Awakens and Perpetuates Movement

On the other hand, the light of *Gevura/Strength* when completely isolated, without any tempering or interaction⁵⁰ from the light of *Chesed/Kindness*, (as it is fitting to be⁵¹) *Gevura/Strength* manifests its forces⁵² in all possible ways and there is no stopping its drive⁵³ as it manifests itself in constant activity. Hence the terminology of calling it 'simple' does not apply because *Gevura/Strength* is actually completely the opposite of this.

Summary of the Characteristics of *Chesed/Kindness* and *Gevura/Strength*

What we derive from all of this is that it is impossible to perceive of any action from absolute⁵⁴ *Chesed/Kindness*. For one cannot discern any awakening and nor any movement, nor any manifestation of potential power from it. Its essence is completely isolated from anything else.

But the behavior of *Gevura/Strength* is exactly the opposite. It is constantly in a state of self-awakening and it never rests and is never quiet, rather it constantly moves and manifests itself in everything with all its powers and reveals its individual powers, in an unending manner. Then too, every individual power within *Gevura/Strength* is constantly in a state of awakening, in a constant state of arousal and manifestation and actualization of its potential. So, it is thus found to be the case, that all activity can only be manifested via *Gevurot/Strengths*⁵⁵.

Outcomes of the Interaction Between *Chesed/Kindness* and *Gevurot/Strengths*

This is precisely what unfolds throughout the entire world creation process, which involves the invocation of name, *Elokim*⁵⁶ thirty-two times, in the description of the creation process of the universe as is found in beginning of the Book of Genesis.

Nevertheless, when the *Gevurot/Strengths*⁵⁷ are alone, by themselves, there is no stopping their drive⁵⁸ and they are always in action. Hence, it is also impossible for them to bring out any manner of organized reality and it is also impossible for them to actually exist as such. This explains how the world of *Tohu/Chaos*⁵⁹ was formed and destroyed. For due to forcefulness of *Gevurot/Strengths*, the vessels were shattered, scattered, and multiplied into many miniscule sparks, in an unending manner, and then they began to fade away and eventually ceased to exist^{60,61}. For it is impossible for any complete and orderly reality to come into being and exist in actual reality, except when *Gevura/Strength* is fully in cooperation and in tandem with the light of *Chesed/Kindness*.

⁵⁰ In Hebrew: התבסמות literary perfumed. The term implies softening of the harshness of *Gevura/Strength*.

⁵¹ This is to say, accordingly, that there should be interaction under usual circumstances.

⁵² In Hebrew: כוחות, powers, forces, potential activity

⁵³ In Hebrew: רוחם, literally their spirit.

⁵⁴ In Hebrew: פשוט. As in the sense of not being complex in any manner.

⁵⁵ The term, *Gevura* sometimes appears in plural, emphasizing its tendency to create multiplicity.

⁵⁶ The Name of G-d, *Elokim* (אלוקים) is a name that represent the *Gevura/Justice* aspect of G-d's manifestation and the act of creation presented in Genesis is describing the unfolding of manifestation, division and multiplicity of both spiritual forces and created beings.

⁵⁷ The term, *Gevura* sometimes appears in plural, emphasizing its tendency to create multiplicity.

⁵⁸ In Hebrew: רוחם, literally their spirit.

⁵⁹ In Hebrew: תהו the world known as *Tohu/Chaos* existed in the stage of reality before our current stage of reality. The world of *Tohu/Chaos* was the result of the shattering of the primordial vessels and became superseded by our current stage of reality known as the world of *Tikkun/Rectification*. It was a time where reality was almost completely composed of *Gevurot/Strengths*.

⁶⁰ In Hebrew: מתו literally, they died.

⁶¹ As will be explained, G-d willing, further on in Essay 6. כמו שיתבאר בעה"י לקמן דרוש ו'.

The Primary Root Essence is Chesed/Kindness

For in truth, the primary essence and the root of all reality actually only comes out via the light of *Chesed/Kindness*. Because the existence and revelation/manifestation⁶² of *Gevura/Strength* itself, is only due to virtue of the existence of *Chesed/Kindness*, as it is written,⁶³ “*Chesed/Kindness* will build the world⁶⁴.” For the light of *Chesed/Kindness* originates and reveals/manifests the light of *Gevura/Strength*, through which all actions then commence, through which all of the entirety of existence then unfolds.

The Root of *Gevurot/Strengths* is the *Tzimtzum/Contraction*

Hence, the root of all *Gevura/Strength*, is the *Tzimtzum/Contraction*^{65,66}. Nevertheless, the *Tzimtzum/Contraction* by itself has no revelation at all because it is analogous to *Gevurot/Strengths* and the way of element of fire, to which the Rabbis⁶⁷ refer to as “darkness” and even though it is this element is the basis of all illuminating fire, it, nevertheless, at its origin, is darkness. The reason for this is because of the nature of power of *Gevurot/Strengths*. For *Gevurot/Strengths* have two distinct qualities that are the opposite of each other. Because when it is by itself in its essence, *Gevurot/Strengths* becomes, in actuality, the power of concealment, hiding itself from itself, thus being darkness.

More on the Interactions between Chesed/Kindness and *Gevura/Strength*

But when a miniscule amount of illumination from the light *Chesed/Kindness* reaches *Gevurot/Strengths*, behold, it becomes inflamed and illuminates without end⁶⁸. This is exemplified by the state of the *Tzimtzum/Contraction* after the *Kav/Line*⁶⁹ (known as the *Tiharu Eelyah*⁷⁰) enters into it.⁷¹ Through this example we see the attribute of fire, whose manifestation can occur only when it has something to hold onto and act upon, for otherwise, it is hidden and concealed.

Thus is the case with all manifestations of *Gevurot/Strengths* when they are completely without any influence from *Chesed/Kindness* at all, then they become completely hidden and concealed, being in a state of darkness. So, as we stated directly above, when the *Gevurot/Strengths* are alone, they are always in action and there is no stopping their drive, and as it was during the world of *Tohu/Chaos*, the actual meaning of this is not that they did not have any *Chesed/Kindness* at all,

⁶² In Hebrew: גילוי which has the connotation of both revealing and manifesting.

⁶³ תהלים פ"ט: ג - Psalms 89:3

⁶⁴ In Hebrew: עולם חסד יבנה

⁶⁵ During the moments when the Creator decided to begin creation, everything was filled with His undifferentiated Will, known as the *Ayn Sof*. So, in order for there to be a “place” for the worlds to come into being, He removed Himself (The *Ayn Sof*) from a spherical “area” within the *Ayn Sof*. This event is known as the *Tzimtzum/Contraction*.

⁶⁶ As is described in the Etz Chaim, Gate Iggulim and Yosher, Branch 2, ענף ב', האמור בעגולים ויושר,

⁶⁷ Literally the First Ones, In Hebrew: ראשונים

⁶⁸ Using a physical analogy, *Gevurot/Strengths* can be understood as the potential power of fire, without any fuel, it is dormant and dark, once it is in contact with the fuel of *Chesed/Kindness*, it becomes inflamed and illuminating.

⁶⁹ A *Kav Dak/Thin Line* of *Ayn Sof* light enters into the empty spherical area that was created by the *Tzimtzum/Contraction* as described by the Arizal in the beginning chapters of Iggulim and Yosher, Etz Chaim.

⁷⁰ In Aramaic: טיהרו עילאה literally, Supernal Afternoon, i.e., the brightest light possible, the strongest light, which has none that is higher than it.

⁷¹ i.e., *Gevura/Strength*, the *Tzimtzum/Contraction* receives illumination from the *Kav/Line*, i.e., *Chesed/Kindness*.

rather that they did not receive enough influence from *Chesed/Kindness*⁷², in the proportion to what was really needed in order to become perfumed,⁷³ and become sweetened⁷⁴ to their suitable level.

But if the *Gevurot/Strengths* had been in the world of *Tohu/Chaos* without the illumination of *Chesed/Kindness* at all, then they would not have come out to rule as kings⁷⁵ at all and would have remained completely in concealment. Because the main essence of all reality only comes from the light of *Chesed/Kindness*, but its' coming out depends upon the power of action from the *Gevurot/Strengths* to reveal what it actually is and to bring out all its powers that are stored within it, and to position it into its proper and full way.

Hence, it is because of the light of *Gevurot/Strengths* that all action becomes initiated, as we have described above. Thus, it now becomes clear that the creation of all reality and its manifestation can only occur by the means of the cooperation and sharing between the lights of *Chesed/Kindness* and *Gevurot/Strengths*, together precisely. For if each one stands on its own, alone, as its own essence, they are completely in concealment, and we have described above.

Nonetheless, please note that the reason for the concealment of the essence of the light of *Chesed/Kindness* is quite different from reason for the concealment of the essence of the light of *Gevurot/Strengths*. For the reason that *Chesed/Kindness* is concealed is because it is stationary and quiet and united within its own essence. It is never revealed except through the initiation of action. But the reason that *Gevurot/Strengths* stays hidden is because it banishes⁷⁶ itself from all other present, hiding itself and indeed its concealment is due to its action⁷⁷. Hence, the disappearance⁷⁸ of each type is for almost the exact opposite reason.

⁷² This was the situation in the world of *Tohu/Chaos*, as the Leshem explains extensively in the first half of the volume of The Book of the Knowledge. דע"ה חלק א'.

⁷³ In Hebrew: להחבסם literary, to become perfumed, scented. The term implies a tempering or softening of the harshness of *Gevura/Strength*

⁷⁴ In Hebrew: להמתיק literary, sweetened. In the Kabbalah parlance, *Gevura/Strength* become 'sweetened' through the addition of *Chesed/Kindness*, i.e., the harshness of Justice is refined and softened via Kindness.

⁷⁵ The Kabbalistic subject of the Primordial Kings (Aramaic: מלכין קדמאין) that ruled before the creation of this world, during the time of the world of *Tohu/Chaos*, during the time of the shattering of the vessels, is, not surprisingly, quite a deep and extensive topic, beyond the scope of this essay. (The Leshem himself dedicates 100s of pages to this topic!)

Suffice it to say, just in order to understand what is being presented here, these spiritual entities known as the primordial kings, were almost completely composed of *Gevurot/Strengths* with a minimal amount of *Chesed/Kindness*. Yet, without a miniscule amount of *Chesed/Kindness*, they could not have come into existence even for a moment. In fact, one of the main reason's given for the shattering of the vessels was that they did not have enough *Chesed/Kindness*, to maintain their existence. This example is brought to show us that their must be a minimal mixture of *Chesed* and *Gevura* for something to come into existence.

⁷⁶ In Hebrew: לסלק can also be translated as: removes, clears away, dismisses.

⁷⁷ i.e., it disappears due to being overactive and, so to say, disintegrating.

⁷⁸ Or concealment, more precisely, that they do not come into and/or maintain their existence.

Cooperation and Harmony between Chesed/Kindness and Gevura/Strength Manifests and Maintains All Existence

Thus, it now becomes clear from our discussion above, that what we presented concerning the coming into existence of all of reality, is precisely through the means of the cooperation and sharing between the lights of *Chesed/Kindness* and *Gevurot/Strengths*, both of them together. For it is necessary that there be some amount of each of them, in the proper proportion, in order for any entity to come into existence.

Because if the portion of *Chesed/Kindness* is less than is fitting, then it is impossible for any existence to emerge that would have order and be able to be kept in existence at all. And if the portion of *Gevurot/Strengths* is less than it should be, then existence would spread without a limit or boundary⁷⁹. As the Rabbi's of the Talmud teach us⁸⁰: "At the time that the Holy One, blessed be He, created the world, it went on expanding similarly to two weaves of wool and warp, until the Holy One, blessed be He, rebuked it and brought it to a standstill, as it is said, 'The pillars of heaven tremble, and are astonished at his rebuke.' (Job 26:11)"

For the nature of *Chesed/Kindness* is to spread without limit and only through the presence of *Gevura/Strength* is *Chesed/Kindness* able to come into existence in a measured manner. This is what we refer to as the "rebuke" mentioned in the quote above. In any case, it is necessary to have both the entities of *Chesed/Kindness* and *Gevurot/Strengths*, each one in its proper amount in order to have any existence on any level of our reality.

In conclusion, there are three qualities that are shared by both *Chesed/Kindness* and *Gevurot/Strengths*:

1. They both stay completely concealed when they are alone, as their own essence. For *Chesed/Kindness*, this is because it is stationary and quiet within all its powers, alone by itself, having the quality of simple unity. For *Gevura/Justice*, this is because it disperses away from everything other than itself, hiding itself completely from anything else.
2. They cannot remain in continued existence when each type of light has only the smallest amount possible from the other. For if the main essence is of *Chesed/Kindness*, it spreads without limit,⁸¹ and if the main essence is *Gevura/Justice*, then it continues to act without limit because it awakens with all its powers and goes from strength to strength. It becomes inflamed and causes further and further disintegration and separation of sparks of light without end and without order until the sparks of light dissipate out of existence.
3. When they are both in cooperation and in proper proportion to each other, then they create an ordered and sustainable reality.

Finally, the essence of existence itself is from *Chesed/Kindness*, and yet its activation, arrangement, and formation and all its rectification come from the action of the light of *Gevura/Justice*. Because it awakens within the light of *Chesed/Kindness* the capacity to put all its powers into action and bring it out from the unknown to be revealed and become manifested. Thus does the light of *Chesed/Kindness* become revealed and shine via the light of *Gevura/Justice*, in all its grace and goodness, and through this, it brings about the completion all of reality in harmony.

⁷⁹ Until it disintegrates into nothingness.

⁸⁰ א"ב, א Tractate Hagigah 12A

⁸¹ Until it completely vanishes.