

ספר יצירה א:ד

SEFER YETZIRAH 1:4

עשר ספירות בלימה עשר ולא תשע, עשר ולא אחת
עשרה, הבן בחכמה וחכם בבינה, בחון בהם וחקור
מהם והעמד דבר על בוריו והשב יוצר על מכונו:

Ten Sefirot of Nothingness, ten and not nine, ten and not eleven, Understand with Wisdom, be wise with Understanding, examine with them and probe from them, make each thing stand on its essence, and make the Creator sit on His base.

This portion speaks mainly about the first three Sefirot: Keter (Crown), Chochmah (Wisdom), and Binah (Understanding).

TEN AND NOT NINE

- ☞ The highest faculty in humanity is will. The will corresponds to the first S'firah, Keter (Crown). In an attempt to describe the Creator, we could be tempted to say that It is pure Will. This is the same as trying to describe Creator as love or spirit. These are human traits and if we were to use a human trait, why not use the highest which is Will.
- ☞ If we say that Creator is pure Will, we would then be saying that Creator is identical to Keter. But Keter is a S'firah and was created by Creator. Therefore we cannot say that Creator is pure Will, since Will is among It's creations and there is really no word that we can use to describe Ein Sof.
- ☞ The Sefer Yetzirah states, "ten and not nine," so that we do not equate Keter with the Creator. If we were, then there would only be nine Sefirot and not ten. Since there are ten Sefirot, Will is nothing more than a S'firah and is therefore inferior to Creator.
- ☞ The Sefer Yetzirah also states, "ten and not eleven." This is to inform us that Creator, the Infinite Being, the Ein Sof, is not to be included among the Sefirot. If that were the case there would be eleven and not ten.
- ☞ Creator is in a completely different category from the Sefirot and is not to be counted among them. Because of this, we cannot even describe Creator by qualities such as will, wisdom, love or strength. When the Tanach (Hebrew scriptures) speaks of these qualities, it is actually referring to the Sefirot and not to Creator. As we climb the Sefirot, we may think we are actually reaching the Creator. The Sefer Yetzirah warns that there are only ten steps, not eleven, and that the Creator is always beyond our reach. This is why we refer to the Creator as Ein Sof (Infinite One). We can climb higher and higher, reaching toward infinity, but one can never attain it.

UNDERSTAND WITH WISDOM

☞ The first step is to “understand with wisdom, and to be wise with understanding.” This means we have to go back and forth between verbal Binah consciousness, and nonverbal Chochmah consciousness. Chochmah consciousness is very important in reaching the Sefirot.

EXAMINE WITH THEM

☞ Once a person is able to experience the Sefirot, they must use them to examine and test them. The Hebrew word used here is (בחון) “Bachan”, which means to test things for their intrinsic quality as they are at the immediate moment. When someone has an awareness of the Sefirot, they can examine anything in creation and determine the S’firah to which it belongs.

PROBE FROM THEM

☞ Chakar - means attaining the ultimate knowledge of a thing.

MAKE EACH THING STAND ON ITS ESSENCE

☞ “Make each thing stand” says that when one “probes from them,” they elevate the thing that they probe.

MAKE THE CREATOR SIT ON HIS BASE

☞ Machon - is the word for base and in several places it is seen as the place where Creator sits.

Universe	Content	Level
Atzilut (Nearness, Emanation)	Sefirot	Nothingness
Beriyah (Creation)	The Throne	Something from Nothing
Yetzirah (Formation)	Angels	Something from Something
Assiyah (Making, Action)	Shade of the physical	Completion

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