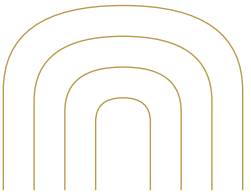
HEKHAL · READER'S EDITION



עץ חיים, שער א, דרוש עגולים ויושר — הקו

The Line

Kav

Hekhal Targum Project (machine-assisted draft; pending scholarly review)

PROVISIONAL EDITION · MACHINE-ASSISTED · NOT YET REVIEWED BY A CREDENTIALED EDITOR

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והנה אחר הצמצום הנ"ל אשר אז נשאר מקום החלל ואויר פנוי וריקני באמצע אור הא"ס ממש כנ"ל הנה כבר היה מקום שיוכלו להיות שם הנאצלים והנבראים ויצורים והנעשים ואז המשיך מן אור א"ס קו א' ישר מן האור העגול שלו מלמעלה למטה ומשתלשל ויורד תוך החלל ההוא כזה. וראש העליון של הקו נמשך מן הא"ס עצמו ונוגע בו. אמנם סיום הקו הזה למטה בסופו אינו נוגע באור א"ס ודרך הקו הזה נמשך ונתפשט אור א"ס למטה. ובמקום החלל ההוא האציל וברא

Now after the aforesaid contraction, when there then remained the place of the void, and empty and vacant air, in the very midst of the light of the Infinite as above, there was now a place in which the emanated and the created and the formed and the made could come to be. And then He drew from the light of the Infinite a single straight line, from His circular light, from above to below, and it cascades down and descends within that void, like this [diagram]. And the upper head of the line is drawn from the Infinite itself and touches it; but the terminus of this line below, at its

end, does not touch the light of the Infinite. And by way of this line the light of the Infinite is drawn and spreads downward. And in the place of that void He emanated and created and formed and made all the worlds, all of them. And this line is like a single thin channel through which the waters of the supernal light of the Infinite spread and are drawn down to the worlds that are in the place of that air and void. And we shall now explain a little of the matter the Kabbalists inquired into, to know how there is a head, a middle, and an end in the aforesaid sefirot. Now since the head of that line touches the light of the Infinite on the upper side, while its end is not drawn down to the place of the light of the Infinite that surrounds beneath the worlds, and is not joined to it, therefore 'head' and 'end' rightly apply to it; for had it received the influx of the Infinite by way of both extremities, the two extremities would be aspects of heads equal to one another, and there would then be no aspect of above and below. So too, were the Infinite drawn from all the surrounding sides of the place of that void, there would be neither above nor below, neither front nor back, neither east nor west nor north nor south; but since the light of the Infinite is drawn by way of a single line and a

ויצר ועשה כל העולמות כולם וקו
זה כעין צנור דק א' אשר בו
מתפשט ונמשך מימי אור העליון
של א"ס אל העולמות אשר
במקום האויר והחלל ההוא.
ונבאר עתה קצת ענין חקירת
המקובלים לדעת איך יש ראש
תוך סוף בספירות הנ"ל. אמנם
בהיות כי הקו ההוא ראשו נוגע
באור א"ס מצד העליון וסופו אינו
נמשך למטה עד מקום אור הא"ס
הסובב תחת העולמות ואינו דבוק
בו לכן אז יצדק בו ראש וסוף כי
אם דרך ב' הקצוות היה מקבל
שפע הא"ס היו ב' הקצוות בחי'
ראשים שוים זה לזה ולא היה אז
בחי' מעלה ומטה. וכן אם היה
הא"ס נמשך מכל סביבות צדדי
המקום החלל ההוא לא היה לא
מעלה ולא מטה לא פנים ולא
אחור לא מזרח ולא מערב וצפון
ודרום אך בהיות אור א"ס נמשך
דרך קו א' וצינור דק בלבד יצדק
בו מעלה ומטה פנים ואחור מזרח
ומערב וכמ"ש בע"ה בענף זה
בכלל דברינו:

thin channel alone, above and below, front and back, east and west rightly apply to it, as I shall explain, God willing, in this branch in the general body of our discourse.

PROVISIONAL DRAFT (PENDING SCHOLARLY REVIEW)





An orientation

This edition sets the verbatim original-language text beside a fresh English rendering and a critical apparatus: a

running commentary on the passage, notes on the controlled vocabulary and the rendering chosen for each term, and cross-references to the lexicon and to related sections. It is a provisional scholarly draft, released openly for correction and not yet reviewed by a credentialed editor.



the-line

The line (kav) is the channel-emanation mode of the discourse: after the contraction leaves a round void, Ein Sof draws a single straight line of light from its surrounding circular light down into the void, as a thin channel (tzinor daq) along which all emanation descends. The geometry is figurative of a process in the divine life, not a diagram of physical space (the symbolic-imaginal reading; Wolfson stresses that the spatiality is itself

meaningful rather than either literal extension or disposable metaphor). The doctrinally load-bearing point is the asymmetry: the line's head touches the Infinite, its foot does not, and Vital argues that precisely this asymmetry is what constitutes orientation (above/below, head/foot, the very possibility of a directional cosmos). Were the light supplied from both ends or from all sides equally, there would be no 'above' and 'below' at all. The thinness of the channel is the same measure-and-limit mechanism that lets the emanated receive in measure (be-middah) rather than the boundless light of the Emanator. *Elliot R. Wolfson 2005*

tzimtzum

The back-reference to 'after the contraction' carries forward the central literal-vs-figurative dispute without re-deciding it: on the literal reading (tzimtzum kifshuto, Vilna Gaon / Nefesh ha-Chaim Sha'ar 3) the line is light re-introduced into a space genuinely emptied of the Infinite; on the figurative reading (tzimtzum she-lo kifshuto, Habad / Tanya Sha'ar ha-Yichud ve-ha-Emunah) the 'withdrawal' was never real, so the line and the surrounding light are continuous, and the apparent gap is a concealment from the creature's standpoint. The present passage's claim that the line's head 'touches' the Infinite while its foot does not is read differently under each pole (see the

ambiguity record), which is exactly why the body preserves Vital's image without resolving it. *Gershom Scholem 1941*

the-vacated-space

The vacated space (makom ha-chalal / avir panui ve-reikani) is kept strictly spatial and is never conflated with ayin (the divine Nothing). That the worlds are emanated, created, formed, and made 'in the place of that void' is the structural ground of the acosmism question: if the Infinite never truly withdrew from this space (figurative reading), the worlds' apparent independent existence is provisional from the divine standpoint; if it did (literal reading), the void secures a real ontological gap. The fourfold 'emanated / created / formed / made' (he'etzil / bara / yatzar / asah) anticipates the four worlds ABYA, not yet named here.

Editorial decisions

- **the-line.** Render the kav concretely as 'line' and carry the figurative-not-physical frame in apparatus; preserve the head-touches/foot-does-not asymmetry as the doctrinal crux. Both secondary citations (Wolfson 2005, Scholem 1941) have not yet been verified against the printed sources. *(2026-06-11)*

Colophon

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