

Beit Midrash YeshivahAI

In the series

Daily Tanya Explorations

Perception and Creation in Atzilut

Two questions in Iggeret HaKodesh 20
Sources, arguments and the limits of the
conclusions



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ו' תשרי תשפ"ז

Human direction · Beit Midrash rabbinic supervision

Introduction — the difficulty lies in the word “pnimiyut”

This booklet studies **the opening of Epistle 20 in Iggeret HaKodesh, a section of Tanya**. Tanya is the foundational work of Chabad Chassidism, written by Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, the Alter Rebbe. Chassidism explains the relationship between G-d, the human being, and the world, and the inner meaning of Torah and mitzvot. Iggeret HaKodesh is the fourth section of Tanya. Here we will study the beginning of one of its epistles and investigate two questions that arise within it. Readers who have never studied Kabbalah or Chassidism will find the necessary terms explained in the first chapter.

The first question concerns an apparent contradiction about the sefirot themselves. The sefirot are the aspects through which Divine revelation is described. At the opening of Epistle 20, their kelim, or “vessels”—the aspects that define how revelation appears—are said not to be an “existent entity and an apprehensible essence.” Yet Epistle 19 states that Moses attained **the pnimiyut, the inward dimension, of the sefirot themselves: Netzach, Hod, Yesod, and Malchut**—the four lower sefirot in the system. Immediately after denying apprehensible essence, Epistle 20 also mentions his attainment from the upper section of Netzach. Netzach is one of those very sefirot, and its vessels are included among the vessels to which the denial applies! How can the vessels of the sefirot be said not to have an apprehensible essence while prophetic apprehension of their inward dimension is also affirmed?¹

This goes beyond the general question of how a human being can apprehend Divinity. **The same sefirot appear on both sides of the apparent contradiction: the denial of apprehensible essence and the affirmation of inward attainment.** Calling

1. Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh 19 and 20. Epistle 19; Epistle 20. The two epistles are the primary source of the difficulty. The documented checks used transcriptions.

Netzach “a lower level” does not remove it from the sefirot of Atzilut. Conversely, we must not decide in advance that pnimiyut necessarily means essence. The relationship between those terms is precisely what needs investigation. This preserves the force of the question without presupposing its answer.

The second question arises a few lines later. The discussion began with the sefirot of Atzilut, which the epistle describes as Divinity. Suddenly angels and the animal’s spirit enter the discussion. Why should an example from a different level explain the subject at hand? Both questions require more than replacing one term with another. We need to establish what is being said, what it concerns, and the role of each example within the argument.

The Head of the Beit Midrash brought these questions together with the Rebbe’s notes and asked that the epistle be examined as a whole. Three artificial-intelligence systems participated in the virtual Beit Midrash. ChatGPT coordinated the research and its documentation; Grok and Claude submitted answers and critiques, relayed by the Head of the Beit Midrash. This describes working tools and their assigned roles, not three authorities in Torah. The human participant asked the questions, passed on the material, and insisted that the difficulty should not disappear inside a convenient explanation.

Across four rounds, distinctions were proposed between panim and achorayim, between the source of prophecy and the object apprehended, between revelation and essence, and between bitul and perception. Some distinctions were retained; others proved too broad. Even genuine sources were sometimes quoted in the wrong context. The most important correction was not always the discovery of another book. Sometimes it was reading the paragraph immediately before a quotation.

The outcome is not the same for both questions. **The second question has a well-supported answer within the structure of**

the argument. The first retains a plausible direction, but the necessary connection between the two formulations in Tanya has not been fully proved. This distinction appears throughout the booklet, not only in a final qualification. Closing the rounds means that the present work has been brought to a documented stopping point; it does not mean that every difficulty has been settled.

For a first reading, the companion booklet, **Perception and Creation in Atzilut — Reader's Edition**, may be the best starting point. It explains the concepts and the outcome without recounting the review process. The present booklet is for readers who also want to see why certain answers were insufficient, how the positions changed, and what remains to be examined.

Translation note: English renderings of primary-source passages in this booklet are our own translations. They are not quotations from the published English Lessons in Tanya. The Hebrew text remains the basis of the analysis.

Ten findings from the inquiry

1. Netzach remains a sefirah of Atzilut even when revelation comes to Moses from it. It cannot be removed from the subject under discussion in order to solve the question.
2. Pnimityut at a particular level is not necessarily identical with “My face” in the verse. The application of this distinction to the present case must nevertheless be proved.
3. A thing's lack of independence, the recipient's bitul, and the absence of apprehension of essence are three distinct matters.
4. Epistle 19 describes prophecy as actual revelation. Here it cannot be reduced to a general awareness that something exists.

5. The source from which prophecy proceeds is not necessarily the object seen in it. The Ramak, Rabbi Moshe Cordovero, explicitly makes such a distinction.
6. Chana Ariel describes the partzuf of NeHY revealed to Moses as beli mah. This brings us closer to the issue, but does not explicitly provide its entire solution.
7. The example of angels tests the limit of hishtalshelut. Its relevance does not depend on an angel and a sefirah occupying the same level.
8. The animal's spirit is the positive example of spiritual derivation. The animal's body marks the limit that this derivation does not explain.
9. Yesh me'ayin is not restricted to physical matter. The epistle also includes created spiritual entities.
10. Correcting attribution, distinguishing commentary from an added note, and acknowledging limits of access are part of the inquiry itself, because the weight of the evidence depends on them.

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A. The concepts and the primary question

Why Epistle 20 deserves particular attention

Iggeret HaKodesh contains thirty-two epistles; Kuntres Acharon follows as a separate section. Epistle 20 is an extensive and profound epistle, with a distinctive setting for its composition. The Tzemach Tzedek records that the Alter Rebbe wrote it in the days before his passing, in the village of Piena. This testimony is also cited in a discourse of the Rebbe and at the beginning of Shiurim BeSefer HaTanya.²

Its importance also lies in its subject. The epistle brings several fundamental questions into one sustained argument: how the sefirot are united with Ein Sof; the Creator’s power to bring a new existence into being; why a sequence of spiritual levels does not by itself explain the coming into being of physicality; and what

2. On the thirty-two epistles and Kuntres Acharon as a separate section: the Rebbe’s talk on Shabbat Chayei Sarah 5726, section 9, in an unedited transcription; it also mentions continuous numbering used by the Tzemach Tzedek. On composition in Piena: “Shelach Lecha Anashim,” 5734, section 2, quoting the Tzemach Tzedek and referring to Derech Mitzvotcha 170a; also the introduction to Shiurim BeSefer HaTanya, Epistle 20. The transcriptions and quotation of the Tzemach Tzedek’s testimony were read; the Derech Mitzvotcha page itself was not viewed. No claim is made that this is the longest epistle or the last work the Alter Rebbe wrote.

this teaches about the value of mitzvot performed with physical things. At its conclusion, this profound inquiry reaches human action, especially charity. Its opening therefore needs to be understood within the whole argument.

This booklet focuses on two questions arising from the opening, rather than providing a complete commentary on the epistle. We will refer to the continuation where it helps to understand them. Before reading the original passage, we will explain its recurring terms: sefirot, light and vessel, Atzilut, yesh me'ayin, cause and effect, and pnimiyut. No prior knowledge of those terms is assumed.

How to read the language of the epistle

The **sefirot** are the attributes and aspects through which divine revelation and the governance of the worlds are described. They are not ten bodies or ten gods. When the epistle speaks of the ten sefirot of Atzilut, it emphasizes their unity with Divinity. **Atzilut, Beriah, Yetzirah, and Asiyah** name levels in the order of coming into being, not geographical places. The last three—Beriah, Yetzirah, and Asiyah—are abbreviated BiYA. The epistle distinguishes the vessels of Atzilut from created existence in the other worlds.

Light and vessel are technical terms expressed through an analogy. “Light” denotes revelation; “vessel” denotes the aspect that gives its appearance a particular definition. The image of light passing through a vessel may help at the beginning, but the physical properties of the analogy must not be transferred to what it describes. Here the vessels themselves are Divinity, while also being described as possessing limit and measure. This tension is the starting point of the epistle, not a flaw to be removed from the explanation.

Ein Sof, “without end,” denotes unlimited Divinity. **Yesh me'ayin**, “something from nothing,” does not describe matter emerging from empty space. Here it denotes a coming into

being that cannot be explained as the gradual development of something comparable to its result. **Ilah ve'alul**, cause and effect, names a source and a result related through derivation. The epistle describes the effect as encompassed by its cause and nullified before it. It does not assume that everything called **hishtalshelut**, a chain of development, throughout the literature must operate in precisely the same way.

Tzimtzumim, contractions, here means limitations and concealments within spiritual revelation. The term does not refer only to a reduction in quantity: the question is whether spiritual derivation, even after many such limitations, can explain the coming into being of a physical body.

Yesh, an existent entity, is not always a body. A spiritual yesh can be a created reality. Even the expression “a something” can describe a relationship to a higher source without identifying the subject with the created yesh of Beriah. We therefore need to ask in each sentence which yesh is being discussed and in relation to what it receives that description.

Essence, mahut, means what a thing itself is, as distinct from merely knowing that it exists. The question here is what content of apprehension the epistle denies; defining the word alone does not resolve the difficulty.

NeHYM abbreviates Netzach, Hod, Yesod, and Malchut; **NeHY** denotes the first three of these. **Ze'ir Anpin**, abbreviated **Za**, names the structure of the six attributes from Chesed through Yesod. A **partzuf** is a structure of interconnected aspects, not a physical face. The **upper section of Netzach** is a particular aspect within the sefirah of Netzach. Finding the exact source in the writings of the Ari, Rabbi Yitzchak Luria, for this expression in connection with Moses' prophecy was one of the research aims that remained incomplete.

Panim and achorayim, “face” and “back,” describe aspects rather than physical directions. In Epistle 19, panim is described

as the sefirah united with its Emanator, and achorayim as the aspects that can descend and be revealed to lower beings.

Pnimityut, inwardness, may indicate depth within a particular level. We must not assume in advance that every use of pnimityut is identical with every use of panim. Nor can we assert a difference without examining the context.

Beli mah is the designation the epistle applies to the sefirot, connecting it with the denial of an existent entity and an apprehensible essence. **Bitul**, nullification, does not mean simple nonexistence. In this discussion it describes the absence of an independent standing in relation to the divine source. This is precisely where care is needed: something in a state of bitul may be revealed, and bitul alone does not prove the limits of its apprehension.

The central passage in Epistle 20

The passage that gave rise to the questions follows in our English translation. The Hebrew Research Edition presents it without vowel points and expands certain abbreviations for readability. The content of the complete unit is retained. The questioner's full original text, including the English notes supplied with it, is preserved in the archive.³

“He and His lights are one; He and His vessels are one in them.” This refers to the ten sefirot of Atzilut: “His lights” are the lights, and “His vessels” are the vessels, all of which are Divinity, unlike in Beriah, Yetzirah, and Asiyah, etc. It is necessary to understand well how Ein Sof is one with “His vessels,” namely the vessels, when the vessels are in the category of limit and finitude, as is written in Etz Chaim.

The intention, however, is to say that they are Divinity capable of creating something from nothing, like Ein Sof, and not

3. Iggeret HaKodesh 20, from the opening through “the animal’s spirit from the Face of the Ox.” The vocalized wording and the questioner’s notes were preserved in the R01 file snapshot. The Hebrew quotation was prepared from the passage supplied by the questioner, removing vowel points, adjusting punctuation, and expanding some abbreviations, without an intended change of content. The English passage here is our translation of that unit.

merely through a chain of cause and effect. What the Ramak wrote concerning a chain of cause and effect, as also appears in the holy Zohar, in the portion Bereshit, refers to the development of the sefirot within the sefirot themselves, in the aspect of the vessels. These are called “beli mah” in Sefer Yetzirah, for they are not in the category of an existent entity and an apprehensible essence, just as no thought apprehends Ein Sof at all, and as it is written, “My face shall not be seen.” Moses our teacher’s prophecy and apprehension were from the upper section of Netzach of Ze’ir Anpin.

In a chain of development, the effect is encompassed by its cause and nullified in existence before it, like the sun’s radiance within the sun, as is written in the Ramak’s Pardes. Even very many contractions will not suffice to produce dense physical matter like earth through the development of spirituality from separate intelligences, even those of the angels. They can produce only “the animal’s spirit” from “the Face of the Ox,” as explained elsewhere; examine it there.

Two distinct requirements of proof

Question A — the same vessels of the sefirot on both sides of the difficulty. Epistle 20 denies “existent entity and apprehensible essence” of the vessels of the sefirot; Epistle 19 affirms Moses’ apprehension of the pnimiyut of NeHYM, which are themselves sefirot of Atzilut. The Head of the Beit Midrash did not consider it sufficient to say that Moses did not apprehend supernal Chochmah, the divine attribute of wisdom. Netzach itself belongs to the ten sefirot, so apprehension within it also requires explanation. The answer must show why the positive apprehension does not fall within what is denied. Pointing to a lower level, to Moses’ bitul, or to Netzach’s role as a conduit is insufficient. Nor may pnimiyut be reduced to outward knowledge, or the revealed level removed from Atzilut or from beli mah.

Question B — the relevance of the example. The vessels of Atzilut and angels do not occupy the same level. The question is whether the epistle compares their levels or uses the example of angels to examine a different claim: what can come into being through hishtalshelut. The distinction between these readings determines whether the difference in level undermines the example or fits its intended role.

The Rebbe's notes supplied by the questioner require close reading. The note on unity in action does not authorize us to remove the vessels' Divinity. The note concerning the yesh of Beriah prevents us from reducing the entire discussion to matter. The note concerning the yesh of Asiyah highlights the transition to the question of physicality. Notes 10, 17, 18, and 21 refer to the numbering in the English edition supplied, not to the source notes of this booklet.⁴

B. What the sequence of the epistle teaches

Three stages of argument, and two different questions

The beginning of the epistle seeks to explain how a limited vessel can be called one with Ein Sof. The answer points to the power of creation yesh me'ayin. The note transmitted in the Rebbe's name emphasizes unity in the act of bringing into being. Two facts must be retained together: the vessels do not become unlimited in every respect, and this does not remove them from the category of Divinity. Any interpretation that gives up either fact answers a different question.

Next comes a qualification of the Ramak's and the Zohar's statements concerning cause and effect. The word "that is" identifies the domain in which the sequence of the sefirot is being explained here. It should not be read as a declaration that derivation through cause and effect never occurs anywhere else.

⁴. Lessons in Tanya, Epistle 20, Part 9, the notes marked as the Rebbe's. Numbers 10, 17, 18, and 21 refer to that edition; 19–20 are references, not two additional substantive claims. Shiurim BeSefer HaTanya in Hebrew was used to separate the commentary from the added notes.

The epistle itself goes on to give the positive example of the animal's spirit deriving from the Face of the Ox. The qualification concerns using this mechanism to explain the creation of yesh, not erasing it from all created spirituality. The third stage examines repeated contractions. Even when spiritual derivation passes through many levels, it does not explain how dense physical matter arises. The example of angels enters at this point. This supplies the structural reason for moving from Atzilut to created spirituality: what is now being examined is the capacity of a way of coming into being, rather than the identity of the source's level.

Torah Or: Chochmah, the animal's spirit, and its body

The reference to the discourse “Yavi'u Levush Malchut,” “Let them bring a royal garment,” in Torah Or mattered in two ways. First, Chochmah itself may be called “a something” in relation to its source, without being identified with the created yesh of Beriah. Second, the animal's soul and its body are not presented as results of the same mechanism. Derivation from the Face of the Ox is explained with regard to the soul; the coming into being of the physical body requires a different discussion.⁵

Both points prevent misleading simplification. We cannot say that all spirituality is “nothing” in the same sense, or that everything other than physical matter comes into being through hishtalshelut alone. Later the epistle itself includes the vessels of the sefirot of Beriah, Yetzirah, and Asiyah, and the lights called nefesh and ruach, among the entities created yesh me'ayin. The local example does not permit an opposite generalization about all spiritual coming into being.

The reference to Torah Or was offered as an example of the “elsewhere” mentioned in the text. The inquiry maintained a distinction between locating a relevant source and proving that it

5. Torah Or, Megillat Esther, “Yavi'u Levush Malchut,” and the explanation concerning Chochmah and the coming into being of the animal's soul and body. Torah Or transcription; Torah Recordings. The reference in Shiurim is presented as a possible source, not an exclusive identification.

is the only source the Alter Rebbe intended. The discourse's content supports the answer without requiring an exclusive bibliographical identification.

Why the angels do not have to be “the final link”

In the first round, it was proposed that angels are closer to matter, so that if a body does not develop from them through hishtalshelut, all the more so it will not develop from the higher sefirot. For such an argument to constitute proof, an additional premise is required: descent in spiritual level increases the capacity to produce matter through that same mechanism. This premise was not established. Nor was it proved that the angels in the example are the lowest spiritual level.

These assumptions are unnecessary for understanding the passage. The example shows that even when the starting point is the spirituality of angels, the result described through hishtalshelut is spirit. Moving from the sefirot to angels is not a shortcut to the production of earth. The difference in level, which the questioner rightly identified, therefore does not disqualify the example.

Tanya Chapter 39 teaches that angels have their abode in Yetzirah, while higher angels are in Beriah. This does not automatically locate every angel mentioned throughout the literature. Moreover, Epistle 20 later mentions the bodies of angels of Atzilut. This fact prevents generalization, but does not prove that the angels in the opening example are those particular angels.⁶

“Even”—and what should not be loaded onto it

The added note in Shiurim BeSefer HaTanya gives the wording “even [from separate intelligences] of the angels.” It helps us read the words as one phrase, rather than as two classes that must occupy separate positions on a scale. The adjacent

⁶ Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Chapter 39: the passage on the angels' abode in Yetzirah and the accompanying note on higher angels in Beriah. The bodies of angels of Atzilut are mentioned later in Epistle 20. Chagigah 13b was used in the inquiry as background to the Face of the Ox, not to map the worlds.

commentary explains the matter and form of angels as spiritual. Here, too, the layers must be distinguished: the marked addition is one layer; Rabbi Yosef Wineberg's explanation is another.⁷

The Reshimot on Tanya discuss the syntax, and an editorial note quotes the addition to Shiurim. A question mark also appears in the printed body of the text. Its origin in the manuscript was not established. Punctuation should not become the foundation for a decision, nor should the mark be attributed to the editors merely because the edition contains their notes.

A well-supported answer to Question B remains: **the inquiry is extended to created spirituality, and the result that hishtalshelut can explain is delimited.** This reading preserves both the positive example and its limit, without requiring a binding kal vachomer, an argument from a lesser case to a greater one.

C. Moses' apprehension: what became clear and what remains

What Epistle 19 does not allow us to bypass

Epistle 19 says that Moses' apprehension did not reach the pnimiyut of supernal Chochmah. The achorayim of Chochmah are clothed in Binah, and through the order of transmission they reach NeHYM; there his apprehension reached pnimiyut. The epistle also describes NeHYM as the vessels conveying influence down to the recipient, and prophecy as actual revelation.⁸

This excludes two shortcuts. First, we cannot say that Moses knew only that a spiritual source existed, without actual revelation. Second, we cannot say that because he apprehended a comparatively lower level, that level no longer belongs to the

⁷. Shiurim BeSefer HaTanya, Epistle 20, around "even very many" and "even." Reshimot on Tanya, section 20, pp. 47–48, especially the editors' Note 11. The Reshimot were read through a decoded text layer; the manuscript was not examined.

⁸. Iggeret HaKodesh 19, the passages on Moses' apprehension, NeHYM as vessels conveying influence, and the definition of panim and achorayim. The text. References to Likkutei Torah of the Ari and Sha'ar HaNevuah appear there. Locating the "upper section" wording in the Ari's source was not completed.

vessels of Atzilut. The answer must accommodate both statements rather than replacing either with a weaker formulation.

Nevertheless, Epistle 19 itself links apprehension of the pnimiyut of NeHYM with the verse “You shall see My back, but My face shall not be seen.” This is significant: pnimiyut does not become an absolute synonym for “My face” in every context. It is possible to speak of inwardness within a level that is outward relative to a wider structure. This possibility reduces the immediate appearance of contradiction, but still does not define why that inwardness is not an “apprehensible essence.”

Source, object, and mediation

The **source** is where revelation comes from; the **object** is what the prophet apprehends; **mediation** is how revelation reaches him. These three questions are related, but answering one does not necessarily determine the answers to the others.

In Pardes Rimonim 6:6, the Ramak distinguishes the prophets’ drawing from the sefirot from their understanding within the heichalot, the spiritual “chambers.” Thus, a statement locating prophecy in a sefirah does not by itself prove that the prophet saw the essence of that sefirah. This is a significant source for distinguishing the **source** of revelation from the **object** apprehended.⁹

Sha’arei Kedushah 3:6 describes Moses as ascending to Atzilut and actually seeing from there, through clothing in Beriah by way of passage. This clothing is described differently for the other prophets. The source requires us to retain both sides: actual seeing from Atzilut, and mediation that is not the same as complete clothing. Passage through Beriah alone does not establish that essence was not apprehended.¹⁰

⁹. Rabbi Moshe Cordovero, Pardes Rimonim 6:6: drawing from the sefirot and understanding in the heichalot; the sun-spark analogy also appears near the end. 6:3 discusses the encompassing of the effect. The two locations must not be merged into a single reference for all the formulations.

¹⁰. Rabbi Chaim Vital, Sha’arei Kedushah 3:6, the description of Moses’ prophecy and passage through Beriah. Read in transcription, not in a scan of a printed edition.

Comparison between the sources is useful, but does not permit their immediate combination into one system. “Tiferet” in the Ramak, “Atzilut” in Rabbi Chaim Vital, and “the upper section of Netzach” in Tanya are not three identical names. Neither do they, by themselves, establish three conflicting systems. There may be a difference between root and conduit, or between a general description and a detailed one. The proposal remains a proposal until the connection is proved.

The closest source: Chana Ariel

Two important parallels were found in Chana Ariel, the work of Rabbi Yitzchak Aizik of Homil. The Naso discourse describes the image of the beli mah of the vessels of Atzilut apprehended by Moses, connecting it to the upper section of Netzach and the outer partzuf. The discourse “Veha’asafsuf” in Behaalotecha sets out distinctions between wisdom, the soul’s drawing nourishment from its root, the vision of prophets, and Moses’ prophecy.¹¹

Its value is not merely the appearance of similar words. Chana Ariel explicitly keeps Moses’ prophecy within a vessel of Atzilut. It describes the partzuf of NeHY that is seen as beli mah, and connects reception with Moses’ bitul. This strengthens the possibility of actual revelation that does not turn what is revealed into an independent entity and does not remove it from Atzilut.

On this basis, ChatGPT proposed combining two lines of distinction. The first concerns **the aspect revealed**: inwardness within an outer partzuf. The second concerns **the way it is received**: revelation in bitul, rather than reception by an independently standing entity. This is an interpretive proposal grounded in explicit connections in the source. It is not a statement by Chana Ariel placing the two epistles side by side and resolving their apparent contradiction.

¹¹. Rabbi Yitzchak Aizik of Homil, Chana Ariel, Naso, “Veyishalchu Min HaMachaneh”; Behaalotecha, “Veha’asafsuf.” Permanent revision 2743524. These transcriptions were not compared with print in this inquiry; no verified print page number is supplied.

A true statement, in the wrong context

Grok found wording in Behaalotecha that denies seeing the vessel of the sefirah and used it as an explicit proof concerning Moses' prophecy. Reading the sequence showed that the sentence occurs in the section on wisdom and the soul's drawing nourishment from its root. The author then explicitly turns to prophetic vision. A statement cannot be transferred from one section to another without proving that it applies.

Grok withdrew the attribution in Round 4. Claude confirmed the correction. This does not undo Chana Ariel's entire contribution; it prevents the booklet from using evidence stronger than what we possess. The explicit statements in the Moses section—a vessel of Atzilut, the partzuf of NeHY, beli mah, and bitul—remain. An explicit denial of Moses' seeing the vessel cannot be established by moving a sentence from the preceding section.

Three claims that need to be narrowed

In his final response, Claude proposed a new reading: if beli mah means “without the essence of vessels,” there is no such essence for Moses to apprehend; and if the pnimiyut of NeHYM refers to the light clothed within them, the contradiction again disappears. This is an interesting proposal, but at three points it goes beyond what the sources establish.

First, Epistle 19 says that NeHYM are revealed, and that the light is clothed within them. It does not say that apprehension concerns only the light and does not concern the vessels. Second, panim is not defined simply as a list of all levels above NeHYM. Panim and achorayim also describe aspects within a sefirah. Third, the wording “without the essence of vessels” is explicit in Chana Ariel, but the interpretation that there is no essence capable of being apprehended is a further step. The author himself keeps the revelation within a vessel of Atzilut.

The questioner's difficulty must therefore not be changed into a question about a separate, independent vessel. He asked about

apprehension of a vessel united with its Emanator. Lack of independence alone does not mean lack of apprehension of essence. The same consideration applies to the recipient's bitul: it explains a feature of reception, but without evidence it does not determine what exactly was seen.

The qualification is part of the answer

The strongest current direction distinguishes inward revelation in a particular aspect from the essence whose apprehension is denied, while retaining the revealed aspect within Atzilut and within beli mah. It has a basis in the sources read. What is missing is proof that the apprehension acknowledged in Epistle 19 really falls outside the scope of the denial of essence in Epistle 20.

It is not necessary to find an author who asked our question in precisely the same words. A valid inference from sources can also establish an answer. But such an inference must not be replaced by a list of correct concepts, or by a claim that only a quotation is missing when the proof has already been completed. **Question A remains a plausible direction with a defined gap in its application.**

D. Four rounds: how the inquiry changed

Round 1 — the immediate explanation and the remaining difficulty

From the outset, ChatGPT formulated the two requirements of proof separately. For Question A, relative inwardness, the mediation of prophecy, and the soul's root were examined. For Question B, it was proposed that the move to angels tests the mechanism of hishtalshelut. Grok and Claude gave their first answers before receiving the individual questions prepared for

them. Failure to answer those questions was therefore not recorded as a fault.¹²

Grok proposed the “inwardness of the conduit” and distinguished possibility from evidential support, but sometimes described the question as no more than a substitution of concepts. Claude at several points declared the question settled, and placed a kal vachomer at the center of the second answer. He supplied useful references in Etz Chaim and Pardes, alongside a mistaken attribution to the Alter Rebbe of a reference to the preceding epistle.

The critique preserved the difficulty: a conduit is also a vessel of Atzilut, and the pnimiyut of a lower aspect still requires explanation. For Question B, the distinction between level and mechanism was retained, while the premises of the kal vachomer and “the final link” were examined.

Round 2 — fewer declarations, closer attention to application

Eight questions were sent to Grok and ten to Claude. Both answered by identifier. Grok narrowed the distinction between prophecy and thought, withdrew the requirement that the example come from outside Atzilut, and acknowledged that “the inwardness of the conduit” was not a decisive answer. Claude withdrew the supposed reference to Epistle 19 and the attribution of Wineberg’s words to the Rebbe. He also removed the kal vachomer’s status as a necessary criterion of a successful answer.

At the same time, the criticism of ChatGPT became sharper: passage through Beriah does not by itself prove the absence of apprehension of essence. The inference was restricted accordingly. A different claim attributed to ChatGPT—that it denied actual seeing from Atzilut—was not accepted, because the

¹². The R01 file snapshot and the reviewers’ original responses are preserved in the research folder. The R02 documentation explicitly records that the initial questions had not yet been passed to the reviewers when they gave their responses. Model version names were not supplied.

report explicitly retained actual seeing. Self-correction must also be accurate about the claim being corrected.

The source in Pardes 6:6 became more significant, but comparison with Sha'arei Kedushah and Epistle 19 remained limited. By the end of this stage, Question B had a good structural answer, while the missing connection in Question A was more clearly defined. In preparation for Round 3, the Chana Ariel passages, the Reshimot, and the sun analogy in Pardes were added.

Round 3 — a close source and new errors

Five questions to Grok and six to Claude focused on Chana Ariel, the syntax of “even,” and the limits of general rules. The reviewers accepted the significance of the connection between Netzach, beli mah, and bitul. Claude withdrew the inclusion of light-to-vessel and Atzilut-to-Beriah as examples of cause and effect in the present discussion. Grok narrowed a general rule against transition from one kind to another.

The new source also produced new errors. Grok transferred the sentence denying vision of a sefirah's vessel to Moses. Claude stated that the Behaalotecha page did not exist and proposed replacing the reference with Naso. A check found the page, the permanent revision, and the expression whose presence had been denied. The methodological conclusion was simple: failure of access is not evidence of nonexistence.

Both suggested concluding with a qualification. The research coordinator first required a short correction round: the summary could not retain a proof quoted out of context or remove a valid source. No further broad search was opened. Five focused questions were assigned for Round 4.

Round 4 — correction of the evidence and a qualified conclusion

Grok answered two questions and Claude three. Both accepted the existence of Behaalotecha and the statement that the partzuf of NeHY is beli mah. Grok withdrew the application of the wisdom passage to Moses and the added condition “as an essence in its own right.” The report about the PDF was also corrected: inability to extract text does not prove the absence of a text layer.

Claude accepted the corrections and proposed the new reading examined in the preceding chapter. His observation concerning the combination of pnimiyut and achorayim was retained. The claims of apprehension of light alone, the mapping of panim solely by height of level, and the absolute denial of essence were restricted. The result is not a compromise between models, but an editorial judgment based on the sources and the limits of the evidence.

The conclusion was that a fifth round was unnecessary for presenting the existing finding honestly. The exact source in the Ari’s writings, verification of Chana Ariel against print, and a marked Hebrew version corresponding to Note 18 were retained as gaps. None authorizes the invention of a reference. None is a reason to conceal the progress already made.

E. Register of all proposals — T01 to T48

The identifiers below belong to the central research record. Grok used a different local numbering system in Round 1; its correspondence is recorded in the archive. “Proposed by” means a documented appearance in this inquiry, not a claim to historical priority for an idea. Each entry retains the claim, its development, and its status. The detailed exchange remains in the archive.

Three descriptions recur in the entries: **explicit** means that the claim itself is stated in the source; **supported** means that the source and its context directly support the reading under discussion; **plausible** means an inference supported by sources whose precise connection still requires proof. Each description applies to the particular claim beside it, not automatically to the answer as a whole. An explicit element can therefore support a proposed answer that remains plausible. Each entry retains its stated qualifications.

The original difficulties and opening proposals

T01 — the pnimiyut of Netzach and the denial of essence.

The Head of the Beit Midrash's opening question. Netzach belongs to the sefirot, and apprehension of pnimiyut is stated concerning NeHYM. Every round returned to this difficulty. Final status: a well-grounded question; the proposed direction is not a complete proof. It would be resolved by a demonstrated connection between the scope of the two statements, not by the number of sources accumulated.

T02 — the difference in level within the example.

The Head of the Beit Midrash's opening question. Angels are not vessels of Atzilut, so the example appeared unsuitable. The difference was retained as a fact; rejection of the example was not accepted, because what is being tested is the capacity of hishtalshelut. The structural answer became well-supported without asserting identity of levels.

T03 — unity in the act of bringing into being.

ChatGPT in Round 1, following Note 10 supplied by the questioner; adopted by Grok and Claude. The note explains unity with regard to creation. Status: supported, with a qualification. It does not imply that the vessels are separate from Divinity, or permit the epistle's statement of their unity to be removed.

T04 — relative yesh and created yesh.

ChatGPT in Round 1, drawing on Torah Or and Note 18.

Chochmah as “a something” relative to its source is not identical with the yesh of Beriah. The distinction was preserved throughout the inquiry. Status: supported. Each use must specify the relationship rather than making yesh a term with one unvarying meaning in every passage.

T05 — knowledge of existence alone.

In Round 1, ChatGPT examined whether Moses’ apprehension could be narrowed in this way. Epistle 19 and Sha’arei Kedushah describe revelation and actual seeing. The possibility was therefore rejected as an exclusive answer. This does not deny every distinction between essence and existence; it rejects using that distinction without fitting it to the source’s wording.

T06 — inwardness within outwardness.

Appeared in ChatGPT’s Round 1 work, with parallel formulations from both reviewers. The distinction is supported by Epistle 19 and the Shiurim commentary. After four rounds it remained a useful foundation, but does not by itself remove the pnimiyut of NeHYM from the scope of “apprehensible essence.” Its use as a complete resolution was restricted.

T07 — seeing through Beriah.

In Round 1, ChatGPT proposed a distinction between source and revelation with the aid of Sha’arei Kedushah. The Ramak added support for the form of the distinction. In Round 2, the reviewers’ criticism was accepted: passage through Beriah alone does not prove the absence of apprehension of essence. The distinction was retained; the supposedly sufficient proof was withdrawn.

T08 — Moses' soul-root and bitul.

Examined by ChatGPT in Round 1; Claude added bitul and “What are we?” At first, no specific connection sufficient to resolve the question was found. Chana Ariel raised the status to an explicit connection with the subject. Ultimately it remained a supported feature of the manner of reception, not a sole proof concerning the object perceived.

The structure of coming into being and the limits of the example

T09 — the scope of “that is.”

ChatGPT in Round 1. The phrase delimits the local statement from the Ramak, rather than denying every derivation outside Atzilut. Reading Pardes and the positive example of the animal's spirit strengthened this interpretation. Status: a supported reading of the context. It should not be expanded into a comprehensive theory of all the Ramak's formulations.

T10 — the example tests a mechanism.

ChatGPT in Round 1; developed in parallel by Grok and Claude. The move to angels examines what spirituality can bring into being through hishtalshelut. Final status: supported. The formulation remained after removing the requirement of a kal vachomer, the assignment of a necessary world, and the assumption of a final link.

T11 — the animal's spirit is the positive result.

The source was supplied by the questioner, and the point was formulated in ChatGPT's initial research. The epistle allows derivation of the spirit and sets the body as its limit. Status: explicit and supported by Torah Or. It must not be misstated as though the animal's spirit also cannot develop from the Face of the Ox.

T12 — yesh me'ayin in spirituality as well.

ChatGPT in Round 1, based on the continuation of the epistle; both reviewers retained the fact. The vessels of BiYA and the lights called nefesh and ruach prevent reduction of the discussion to matter. Status: explicit. Distinguishing the creation of spiritual yesh from derivations within it assists explanation, but is not an explicit formulation of every detail of the mechanism.

T13 — the abode of angels and its qualifications.

The questioner mentioned Tanya Chapter 39, and the inquiry verified the distinction between Yetzilah and higher angels in Beriah. Status: explicit in its context. It does not automatically identify the local Face of the Ox or every occurrence of “angel.” A mapping of worlds from Chagigah alone was not accepted.

T14 — perhaps these are angels of Atzilut.

In Round 1, ChatGPT examined the later mention of the bodies of angels of Atzilut. The fact exists, but identifying the angels in the example with them was not proved. The possibility is not used as an answer. It is retained to distinguish the existence of a level from identifying a particular case with it.

T15 — the opening prepares for the conclusion.

In Round 1, ChatGPT proposed a connection between the Face of the Ox and earth, and the later discussion of offerings, Malchut, and action. Initially this was a structural reading. The Reshimot strengthened part of it through a suggestion concerning earth. Status: a supported direction, preserving the Rebbe's tentative wording.

T16 — yetzirah as the name of an action.

In Round 1, ChatGPT pointed out that Note 17 on the formation of the sefirot does not locate them in the world of Yetzirah. Status: a valid linguistic distinction. The English wording was retained; a marked Hebrew original was not found. A noun denoting an action must not be turned into the name of a world without further evidence.

Claims that were narrowed or withdrawn

T17 — a required kal vachomer.

Claude in Round 1 presented it both as the explanation and as a criterion for a good answer. In Round 2 he removed the criterion; in Round 3 he withdrew the argument as a necessary structure; in Round 4 he also corrected an unnecessary reason offered against it. Status: neither proved nor required. A possible rhetorical reading is not a proof.

T18 — angels are the final link.

Grok and Claude in Round 1. Both withdrew the necessity in Round 2. Being lower than Atzilut does not establish being lower than all spirituality. Status: withdrawn for lack of support; unnecessary to Question B. Its failure does not imply that angels are not below Atzilut in the context under discussion.

T19 — prophecy is not thought.

Grok in Round 1. The distinction between faculties of apprehension exists, but the epistle brings together thought, panim, and Moses' prophecy. In Round 2 the claim was reduced to an assisting consideration. Status: insufficient as an answer. The limit of the object still needs definition even when the mode of apprehension changes.

T20 — a particular philosophical polemic.

In Round 1, Claude attributed the choice of “separate intelligences” to a precise intention to oppose an emanation model. Pardes and the Guide of the Perplexed provide genuine background. In Round 2, the parallel was separated from the author’s intention. Status: supported background; a particular polemical intention remains conjecture. Maimonides challenges the model rather than simply adopting it.

T21 — contraction is only quantitative.

Claude in Round 1. The general rule was broader than needed. He withdrew it in Round 2; alternative examples that had not been proved were subsequently corrected as well. Status: rejected as a sweeping rule. The passage denies the production of physical matter through spiritual hishtalshelut; there is no need to classify every contraction as quantitative.

T22 — the example must be outside Atzilut.

Grok in Round 1, explicitly withdrawn in Round 2. The structure allows examination of created spirituality, but does not require a specific world to be assigned in order to answer. Status: the necessity was withdrawn; the core explanation that the mechanism is being tested was retained.

T23 — the Alter Rebbe refers to the preceding epistle.

In Round 1, Claude attributed to Epistle 20 wording that was not found in it. The reference examined belongs to the Shiurim commentary. Claude withdrew the attribution in Round 2. Status: a corrected misattribution. The substantive connection with Epistle 19 remains valid without the supposed reference.

T24 — drawing from the sefirot, understanding in the heichalot.

ChatGPT introduced Pardes 6:6 in preparation for Round 2; the reviewers confirmed the wording. Status: explicit in the Ramak. It does not establish identity with every detail of the pnimiyut of NeHYM in Tanya, or with passage through Beriah in Sha'arei Kedushah. The source is retained as a basis for comparison.

T25 — the upper section as the highest point of apprehension.

Grok and Claude proposed an explanation for this wording in Round 1. The precise source in the Ari's writings was not located; Chana Ariel supplies a significant parallel. Status: a proposed explanation and a bibliographical gap. A reference to Sha'ar HaNevuah must not be presented as though the sentence itself had been found there.

T26 — Wineberg's commentary treated as the Rebbe's note.

Both first-round responses blurred these layers. The attributions were corrected in Round 2. Status: the correction was accepted. The commentator's words remain an important interpretive source, but do not become the Rebbe's words through their proximity to a marked addition.

New findings for Round 3

T27 — the explicit connection in Chana Ariel.

ChatGPT introduced Behaalotecha and Naso in preparation for Round 3. The sources connect Moses, Netzach, a vessel of Atzilut, beli mah, and bitul. Status: an explicit and useful connection. Applying all these elements to the denial of an apprehensible essence is our interpretive work, not an explicit answer given there.

T28 — what is revealed remains Atzilut and beli mah.

ChatGPT before Round 3, confirmed by the reviewers after the access corrections. Status: supported by the parallel passages. This is a necessary condition for any answer: the level cannot be removed from the group discussed by the epistle. This very fact preserves the force of the difficulty.

T29 — two lines of distinction.

ChatGPT's proposal before Round 3: an outer partzuf on the side of revelation, and bitul on the side of reception. The reviewers accepted the components. Final status: a plausible direction, not a resolution. Combining two valid distinctions still requires proof that they remove the apprehension from the scope of the denial.

T30 — the layers surrounding “even.”

ChatGPT before Round 3, following the Reshimot and Shiurim. The body of the note, the editors' note, and the Rebbe's addition were separated. Status: a supported distinction. Two ontological classes cannot be inferred from the word alone; the question mark cannot be attributed to author or editor without an appropriate check.

T31 — the sun-spark analogy.

Located in ChatGPT's research before Round 3, in Pardes 6:6. The reviewers confirmed it. Status: the reference was found, and the general search was removed from the list of gaps. Its context is the unity of what extends from the source with its source. Merely finding the image does not prove its precise application to every effect.

T32 — a general and a detailed description need not conflict.

Before Round 3, ChatGPT criticized presenting the different locations as conflicting systems. Claude corrected his formulation. Status: a valid principle for comparison. Atzilut and Netzach of Atzilut may be general and particular; Tiferet and Netzach require further examination of roles, rather than automatic identification.

T33 — earth and practical commandments.

Research before Round 3 found a suggestion in the Reshimot introduced with “perhaps.” Status: the existence of the suggestion is explicit; its content remains a suggestion. It illuminates the purpose of the epistle and is not a syntactic condition for resolving the example. Tentative wording must not be strengthened to support a summary.

T34 — hishtalshelut broadly, and cause and effect specifically.

ChatGPT’s criticism of Claude’s Round 2 examples, withdrawn in Round 3. Light-to-vessel and Atzilut-to-Beriah were not confirmed as examples of the specific mechanism. Status: the distinction is retained. In particular, the spiritual yesh that the epistle explains through yesh me’ayin cannot simply be included within it.

T35 — not an empirical observation.

Claude called the animal’s spirit an observable proof. Before Round 3 he was asked to correct the description, and did so in that round. Status: the source is a Kabbalistic and Chasidic tradition that was read, not an experiment or observation conducted by us. Correcting the label preserves the kind of evidence without negating the source’s authority.

T36 — Hebrew wording for Note 21.

Found in Shiurim and retained in the research before Round 3. Status: the Hebrew wording was verified in a transcription. Notes 17–18 did not receive a corresponding identification as marked Hebrew additions in that check. A translation back from English must not be given the status of an original Hebrew text.

Source corrections and closure

T37 — the Behaalotecha page exists.

In Round 3, Claude stated that it did not. Before Round 4, ChatGPT verified the page and a permanent revision. Claude explicitly withdrew the claim. Status: the claim of nonexistence was disproved. Failed access was a limitation of the check, not grounds for changing a correct reference.

T38 — the expression “which is also beli mah.”

Grok did not locate it in Round 3; Claude denied that it had been verified. It was found in the paragraph on “You shall see” and confirmed in Round 4. Status: found in the transcription. Behaalotecha must not be replaced with Naso, and reading the website must not be treated as viewing a printed edition.

T39 — the wisdom sentence is not a sentence about Moses.

In Round 3, Grok relied on the denial of seeing the vessel as an explicit proof about Moses. ChatGPT checked the context; both reviewers accepted the correction in Round 4. Status: the attribution was withdrawn. Application to Moses would require a separate inference not contained in the quotation itself.

T40 — three distinct matters.

ChatGPT before Round 4: the vessel's lack of independence, the recipient's bitul, and the absence of apprehension of essence are not identical. Grok acknowledged that "as an essence in its own right" was a condition he had added. Status: the criticism was accepted. The question concerns a vessel united with its Emanator; no assumption of an independent vessel is needed to ask it.

T41 — the limited force of Note 18.

ChatGPT before Round 4, accepted by Claude in Round 4. The English wording is retained as a marked note; the lack of Hebrew does not erase it. Conversely, finding Hebrew would not by itself prove its relationship to the pnimiyut of NeHYM. Status: the distinction between verification and proof was accepted.

T42 — the text layer and punctuation.

In Round 3, Grok inferred that there was no readable text layer; the research documented a layer that had been decoded. In Round 4 he corrected this to a limitation of access. Status: the correction was accepted. The origin of the question mark in the manuscript remains open; reading a text layer is not visual inspection or examination of handwriting.

T43 — disagreement between the Ramak and Rabbi Chaim Vital.

Claude proposed a substantive difference in the nature of apprehension. The critique before Round 4 retained the need to compare source, object, and mediation using the same terms. Status: neither disagreement nor identity was proved. Different formulations alone are insufficient to decide between the possibilities.

T44 — without the essence of vessels.

In Round 4, Claude proposed an ontological reading that would solve the difficulty: there is no vessel-essence to apprehend. Status: the wording in Chana Ariel is explicit; the conclusion that there is no essence capable of being apprehended is a further application. It was not accepted as a resolution concerning Moses' prophecy.

T45 — pnimiyut means the light alone.

Claude in Round 4. Epistle 19 distinguishes NeHYM from the light within them, but also describes NeHYM as being revealed. Status: the exclusivity was not proved. The vessels cannot be removed from the object of apprehension merely by mentioning the light clothed within them.

T46 — pnimiyut and achorayim in the same apprehension.

In Round 4, Claude emphasized Epistle 19's application of the verse. Status: an important observation that was accepted. The conclusion that panim simply means everything above NeHYM was restricted, because panim and achorayim also describe aspects within a sefirah. The observation strengthens a direction without completing its application.

T47 — Chana Ariel quotes Epistle 20.

In Round 4, Claude emphasized an explicit quotation concerning creation from the divine Essence. Status: the connection was accepted. It does not follow that every subsequent part of the discourse directly explains the sentence about apprehensible essence, or that the author has already resolved its relationship with Epistle 19.

T48 — the gap concerns proof of application.

ChatGPT's closing formulation after Round 4. Resolution must not be made dependent solely on an explicit quotation, and the gap must not be presented as merely bibliographical. Status: the governing editorial conclusion. The answer will become stronger when it is shown why the acknowledged apprehension is not included in the essence whose apprehension is denied.

F. Evaluation of the models' work

What was measured, and what was not

This evaluation concerns only the responses and checks preserved in this inquiry. It is not a laboratory test of general ability, a ranking of model versions, or proof of which model is preferable for every Torah research project. The model versions and the times at which their responses were written were not supplied. Access to repositories was unequal, and some material was transmitted by human copying. The scores are ChatGPT's reasoned editorial judgment, including its own **self-assessment**. The ten criteria and weights from the working handbook were retained. Scores for the overall course of work include errors that were later corrected; those errors are not erased retrospectively. Evaluation of the final response is separate, so that the reader can also see the improvement. The scale is 1–10, and the average is the sum of each score multiplied by its weight. Missing information was not scored as zero, and no scores were inferred for responses absent from the archive.

Criterion	Weight	ChatGPT	Grok	Claude
Accuracy of substantive content	15%	8	7	7
Attribution and reading in context	15%	8	6	6
Separation of proof and conjecture	15%	9	8	6
New sources and evidence	10%	8	7	8
Verification and transparency	10%	8	7	6
Logic and depth	10%	8	8	7
Correction of error	10%	9	9	9
Peer criticism	5%	9	8	8
Clarity and usefulness	5%	8	8	7
Conclusion and its limits	5%	9	9	7
Weighted average for the course of work	100%	8.4	7.5	7.0

ChatGPT — preserving the question, and criticism of its own inference

The main contribution was preserving the conditions of the question: Netzach within Atzilut, apprehension of pnimiyut that is not merely knowledge of existence, and spiritual yesh that also requires yesh me’ayin. Added contributions include locating the Ramak’s context, the Chana Ariel sources, the layers in the Reshimot, and the separation of the wisdom section from the Moses section. These support the scores for accuracy, sources, and peer criticism.

The substantive weakness was the proposed use of mediation through Beriah to deny apprehension of essence, without sufficient proof. The criticism was accepted. The two-part proposal is also not a proof, and the editor must avoid raising its status because it was the editor’s own formulation. The high scores for distinctions and the final conclusion depend on the qualification actually being maintained in the booklet. Self-assessment is not an external examination, and the rating grants the editor no authority over the Torah conclusion.

Grok — increasing caution, alongside a major contextual error

Grok contributed a useful distinction between possibility, evidential support, and a demonstrated rationale. It explained the sequence of connecting words well and distinguished a bibliographical gap from a substantive one. Its later-round responses were focused, and its withdrawals were explicit. These explain good scores for logic, clarity, and correction.

However, “the inwardness of the conduit” was not proved to explain the denial of essence, and the demand that the example be outside Atzilut was excessive. The contextual error in Chana Ariel was particularly significant because it was presented as the strongest proof concerning Moses. Failure to locate the expression and the report about the PDF also required correction. The score for the course of work keeps these failures visible even though the final response is more cautious.

Claude — useful sources, and a tendency toward early resolution

Claude contributed useful references to Etz Chaim, Pardes, and the Maimonidean background, and ultimately offered an important observation about the combination of pnimiyut and acharayim in Epistle 19. It explicitly withdrew mistaken attributions, the final-link claim, the rule that contraction is only quantitative, and the report that Behaalotecha did not exist. Willingness to correct is not incidental, and received a high score.

Nevertheless, the argument was repeatedly presented with greater certainty than the evidence supported: first as a decisive answer, then as a required kal vachomer, and finally through three new upgrades in Round 4. The record also includes mixing the commentator’s words with the Rebbe’s notes, attributing a reference absent from the primary text, and inferring nonexistence from an access failure. These reduce the scores for

attribution, verification, and separation of proof from conjecture, without negating the genuine contributions.

Quality of the final response

On a focused assessment of **the accuracy of the conclusion and its limits** at the end: ChatGPT—9, as a self-assessment; Grok—9, because its final wording retains the gap without adding a condition; Claude—7, because its overall qualification is correct, but the claims concerning light alone and the definition of panim solely by height of level still need narrowing. These are not new averages across all ten criteria, and should not be directly compared with the overall-course averages as though they were the same calculation.

The important comparative result is not the numerical gap. Criticism helped when each model had to identify the sentence it changed and preserve the limit of the evidence. General agreement was insufficient. The specific withdrawals made it possible to prepare a more reliable booklet.

G. Texts, sources, and archival gaps

Eight central sources in reading order

The following order begins with Tanya, continues through its commentary and related Chassidic texts, and ends with Pardes Rimonim as comparative background. This is a teaching order, not the chronological order in which the books were written. It corresponds to the Reader's Edition source list; the additional research sources and their verification status remain documented below and in the notes.

1. **Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Chapter 39** — the abode of angels in Yetzirah, with higher angels in Beriah mentioned in the accompanying note; background to the difference in level raised by the second question.

2. **Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh 19** — Moses' apprehension of the pnimiyut of NeHYM and the definitions of panim and achorayim; the positive side of the difficulty concerning apprehension.

3. **Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh 20** — the source of both questions: the denial of existent entity and apprehensible essence, and the animal's spirit deriving from the Face of the Ox.

4. **Shiurim BeSefer HaTanya, Epistle 20** — an explanation of the epistle's argument, alongside marked additions by the Rebbe; the two textual layers must remain distinct.

5. **Torah Or, Megillat Esther, "Yavi'u Levush Malchut"** — the distinction between the derivation of the animal's soul and the coming into being of its body, with background to "Chochmah is found from ayin."

6. **Chana Ariel, Behaalotecha, "Veha'asafsuf"** — Moses' prophecy through the partzuf of NeHY, which is "also beli mah"; reading the context prevents a statement in the wisdom section from being transferred to Moses.

7. **Chana Ariel, Naso, "Veyishalchu Min HaMachaneh"** — the parallel discussion of the "image of beli mah of the vessels of Atzilut" and the outer partzuf.

8. **Pardes Rimonim, Gate 6, Chapters 3 and 6** — the cause encompassing the effect, the sun analogy, and the distinction between the source of sustenance and the object of understanding; important background that does not by itself prove its application to the pnimiyut of NeHYM in Tanya.

What was read, and how

Epistles 19 and 20, the passages from Pardes, Sha'arei Kedushah, Torah Or, and Chana Ariel were read in digital transcriptions. The Reshimot were read from a decoded PDF text layer. No claim is made here that the manuscript was examined or that a complete visual examination of the printed edition was conducted. A transcription is a useful study tool, but it is not a photograph of the original or independent evidence for every punctuation mark.

A report of “verified on the page” in an early response was not automatically converted into a claim that the reviewer had seen a scan of a printed edition. The reviewers clarified the kind of reading involved. At the same time, a quotation in a commentary remains a quotation in a commentary; a search excerpt is not a page that has been read; and a Hebrew translation from English is not the Rebbe's Hebrew wording.

The source in Likkutei Sichot, volume 30, proposed by Claude was not read as a complete page within the documented inquiry and therefore does not carry the booklet's conclusions. The precise source in the Ari's writings for the upper section of Netzach was not located. A reference to Sha'ar HaNevuah was found in the Reshimot, but a direction to examine a source is not the result of that examination. These are defined gaps, not claims that no source exists.¹³

Layers that must remain distinct

Iggeret HaKodesh is the Alter Rebbe's text. The Shiurim BeSefer HaTanya commentary is Rabbi Yosef Wineberg's, alongside marked additions by the Rebbe. The Rebbe's Reshimot are a separate work, and the edition examined also contains editorial notes. Chana Ariel is a separate author's work, although its

¹³. Background sources include Etz Chaim, Gate 42, Chapter 2, on limit and measure; Guide of the Perplexed 2:22, background to the relationship between matter and a separate intelligence; and Sefer Yetzirah 1:2, “ten sefirot beli mah.” Tikkunei Zohar 3b and 17a were discussed as distinct sources for the formulation of unity and the denial of apprehension by thought. It should not be claimed that all these works were read in their entirety.

closeness to Chabad teaching makes it an important interpretive source. Each source can contribute; their authority must not be combined in a sentence that none of them wrote.

For Notes 17–18, a gap remains between the marked English wording and the identification of a marked Hebrew original. The gap is documented. It does not erase what was transmitted in English, and the entire answer to Question A must not be made dependent on a future discovery. Even if verification is completed, it will still be necessary to prove what falls within the denial of apprehension and what does not.

What was preserved, and what we do not possess

The opening question, ChatGPT's research reports, claim registers, source maps, numbered questions, and the responses from Grok and Claude actually relayed in Rounds 1–4 were preserved. Withdrawals and objections not adopted by the summary were preserved too. Archived snapshots of the round files are linked, making it possible to trace a change without rewriting the preceding version.¹⁴

This is nevertheless not a complete system export of the original conversations from all three systems. The reviewers' responses were preserved from the text relayed by the Head of the Beit Midrash. The first archive also documents normalization of spacing and line divisions. We do not possess the original writing times, model versions, or all of their search activity. A model's report that it read a source is not independent verification of everything it read.

The earlier research file on Epistle 19 provided continuity through summaries that were examined; its entire sequence of rounds was not rechecked here. Within the four research rounds, Gemini appears only in the initial preparations and did not participate in the active documented rounds. No missing

¹⁴ The research conclusion folder after R04 contains the two original final responses, the closing claim register, the source report, and the R04 file snapshot; it also preserves the chain of snapshots from earlier rounds. This booklet is a separate analytical edition and does not replace the original material.

research response from Gemini is being awaited. No message absent from the record was reconstructed from a colleague's later comments, and no priority was assigned to an idea without documentation.

After Edition 1.3 was produced, improvement reports were received from Grok and Gemini. Their proposals were checked against the booklets, and the Head of the Beit Midrash approved the editorial recommendations for Edition 1.4. Improvements to explanation, translation, and layout were accepted. Three alleged defects were rejected after visual inspection: the English assessment table already had correct headings, the Hebrew reading map included the letters vav and zayin, and the English Research Edition already contained the eight-source list. The reports and editorial decisions were preserved separately. This is a booklet-editing stage, not a fifth research round; it does not change the participants in Rounds 1–4 or the stated levels of certainty.

H. Conclusions and possible further work

For the question concerning coming into being, a well-supported answer was found: the transition from sefirot to angels tests the capacity of hishtalshelut in created spirituality as well. The derivation of the animal's spirit does not explain the coming into being of its body. The discussion requires neither identity between angel and sefirah, nor a kal vachomer, nor identification of the final link. Yesh me'ayin continues to include spiritual yesh too.

For the question concerning apprehension, a plausible direction was found: the pnimiyut of a particular level is not necessarily the panim excluded from sight; the revealed partzuf of NeHY remains beli mah; and Moses' reception is described in terms of bitul. Yet it has not been proved why apprehension of the pnimiyut of NeHYM does not fall within "apprehensible essence"

in Epistle 20. This is not a bibliographical footnote, but a limit of the present proof.

Three kinds of further work may be useful. The first, and substantive, need is a source or valid inference defining precisely how the denial of essence applies to the apprehension under discussion. The second is locating the exact source in the Ari's writings for the upper section of Netzach. The third is visual verification of the Chana Ariel texts and the relevant added notes. These must not be confused: completing the second or third would not by itself resolve the first.

The booklets can therefore be issued without declaring that everything has been solved. The value of the inquiry also lies in preserving the precision of the question, removing insufficient answers, and separating one supported answer from a proposal still requiring proof. The study remains open at the right point, without repeating rounds that have no new target.

Index of concepts and proposals

Light and vessel — Chapters A–C; T03, T21, T34, T39, T44–T45.

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Full references and research documentation

This is the full reference catalogue. Numbers refer to notes in the booklet; the sequence for study is given in the eight central sources.

Torah sources and commentaries

Note 6. Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Chapter 39: the passage on the angels' abode in Yetzirah and the accompanying note on higher angels in Beriah. The bodies of angels of Atzilut are mentioned later in Epistle 20. Chagigah 13b was used in the inquiry as background to the Face of the Ox, not to map the worlds.

Note 8. Iggeret HaKodesh 19, the passages on Moses' apprehension, NeHYM as vessels conveying influence, and the definition of panim and achorayim. The text. References to Likkutei Torah of the Ari and Sha'ar HaNevuah appear there. Locating the "upper section" wording in the Ari's source was not completed.

Note 1. Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh 19 and 20. Epistle 19; Epistle 20. The two epistles are the primary source of the difficulty. The documented checks used transcriptions.

Note 3. Iggeret HaKodesh 20, from the opening through "the animal's spirit from the Face of the Ox." The vocalized wording and the questioner's notes were preserved in the R01 file snapshot. The Hebrew quotation was prepared from the passage supplied by the questioner, removing vowel points, adjusting punctuation, and expanding some abbreviations, without an intended change of content. The English passage here is our translation of that unit.

Note 4. Lessons in Tanya, Epistle 20, Part 9, the notes marked as the Rebbe's. Numbers 10, 17, 18, and 21 refer to that edition; 19–20 are references, not two additional substantive claims. Shiurim BeSefer HaTanya in Hebrew was used to separate the commentary from the added notes.

Note 7. Shiurim BeSefer HaTanya, Epistle 20, around "even very many" and "even." Reshimot on Tanya, section 20, pp. 47–48, especially the editors' Note 11. The Reshimot were read through a decoded text layer; the manuscript was not examined.

Note 5. Torah Or, Megillat Esther, "Yavi'u Levush Malchut," and the explanation concerning Chochmah and the coming into being of the animal's soul and body. Torah Or transcription; Torah Recordings. The reference in Shiurim is presented as a possible source, not an exclusive identification.

Note 11. Rabbi Yitzchak Aizik of Homil, Chana Ariel, Naso, "Veyishalchu Min HaMachaneh"; Behaalotecha, "Veha'asafsuf." Permanent revision 2743524. These transcriptions were not compared with print in this inquiry; no verified print page number is supplied.

Note 2. On the thirty-two epistles and Kuntres Acharon as a separate section: the Rebbe's talk on Shabbat Chayei Sarah 5726, section 9, in an unedited transcription; it also mentions continuous numbering used by the Tzemach Tzedek. On composition in Piena: "Shelach Lecha Anashim," 5734, section 2, quoting the Tzemach Tzedek and referring to Derech Mitzvotcha 170a; also the introduction to Shiurim BeSefer HaTanya, Epistle 20. The transcriptions and quotation of the Tzemach Tzedek's testimony were read; the Derech Mitzvotcha page itself was not viewed. No claim is made that this is the longest epistle or the last work the Alter Rebbe wrote.

Note 10. Rabbi Chaim Vital, Sha'arei Kedushah 3:6, the description of Moses' prophecy and passage through Beriah. Read in transcription, not in a scan of a printed edition.

Note 13. Background sources include Etz Chaim, Gate 42, Chapter 2, on limit and measure; Guide of the Perplexed 2:22, background to the relationship between matter and a separate intelligence; and Sefer Yetzirah 1:2, "ten sefirot beli mah." Tikkunei Zohar 3b and 17a were discussed as distinct sources for the formulation of unity and the denial of apprehension by thought. It should not be claimed that all these works were read in their entirety.

Note 9. Rabbi Moshe Cordovero, Pardes Rimonim 6:6: drawing from the sefirot and understanding in the heichalot; the sun-spark analogy also appears near the end. 6:3 discusses the encompassing of the effect. The two locations must not be merged into a single reference for all the formulations.

Documentation of the research rounds

Note 12. The R01 file snapshot and the reviewers' original responses are preserved in the research folder. The R02 documentation explicitly records that the initial questions had not yet been passed to the reviewers when they gave their responses. Model version names were not supplied.

Note 14. The research conclusion folder after R04 contains the two original final responses, the closing claim register, the source report, and the R04 file snapshot; it also preserves the chain of snapshots from earlier rounds. This booklet is a separate analytical edition and does not replace the original material.

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