

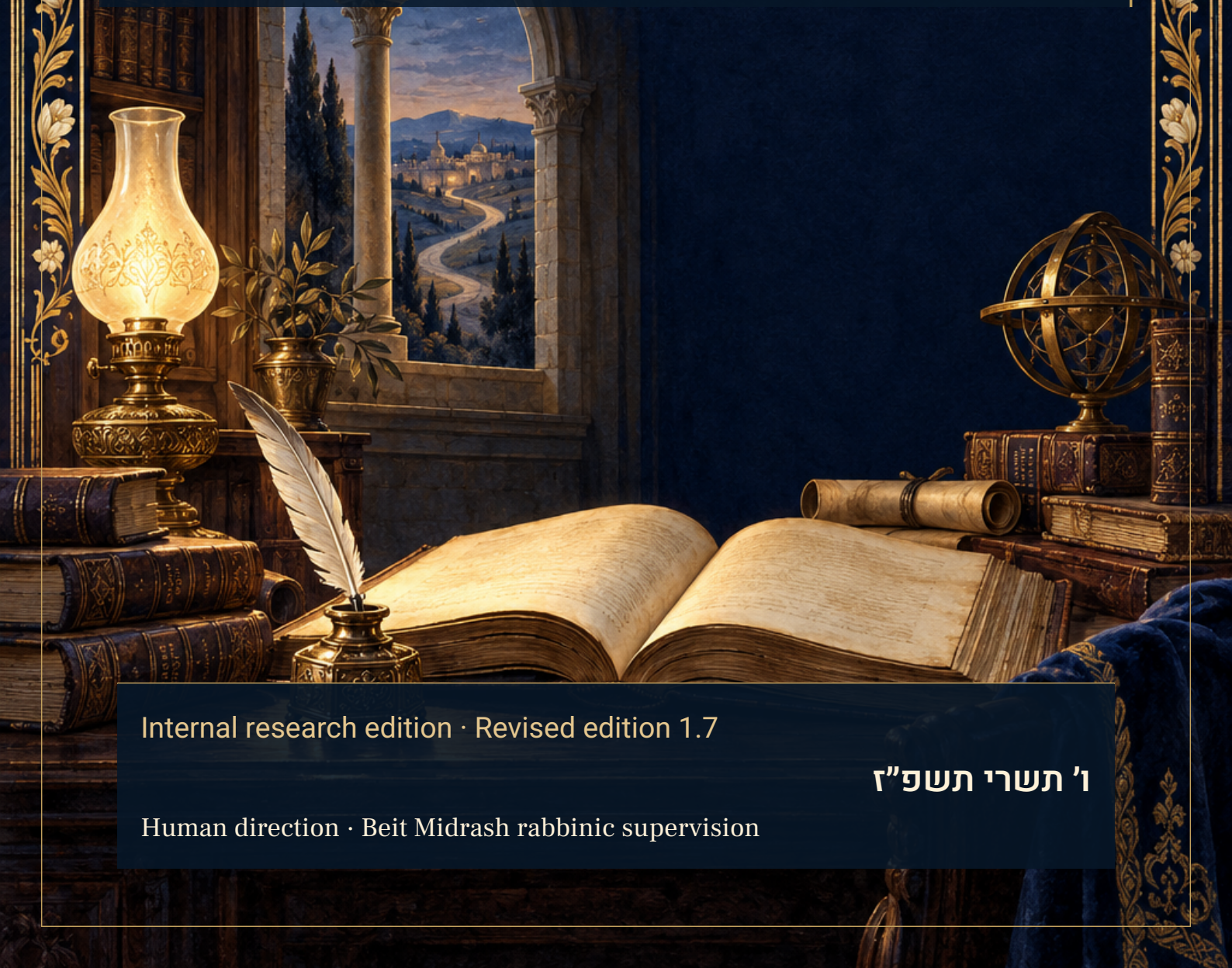
Beit Midrash YeshivahAI

In the series

Daily Tanya Explorations

The Beginning of Created Existence

Source, Receiver, and Chayyut — Sources, Arguments, and Limits



Internal research edition · Revised edition 1.7

ו' תשרי תשפ"ז

Human direction · Beit Midrash rabbinic supervision

Contents

1. What this study is asking	· 2	8. What changed during Rounds R1–R4	· 22
2. Continuity with the preceding booklet	· 4	9. Model comparison and editorial assessment	· 24
3. The passage in context	· 6	10. Canonical claim ledger	· 26
4. The central conclusion in one page	· 7	11. Source register and verification status	· 29
5. Detailed answers to Questions 1–17	· 8	12. Unresolved questions and decision to close the research rounds	· 32
6. The two mappings of the thirty vessels	· 20	13. Editorial conclusion	· 34
7. Heichalot, circles, angel bodies, and remaining questions	· 21		

1. What this study is asking

The passage at the center of this study is one of the densest passages in Tanya. The Alter Rebbe writes that the beginning of created existence is the vessels of the ten sefirot of Beriah, Yetzirah, and Asiyah, together with the lights of nefesh and ruach. These are created from the level called the neshamah of those sefirot, which is divinity and is identified with the thirty vessels of Malchut of Atzilus. He then says that, in Atzilus itself, the heichalot and the bodies of the angels are formed from the externality of the divine vessels and are themselves a form of yesh.

The reader is immediately confronted with an apparent contradiction. A few lines later the same epistle insists that the created yesh has no prior cause or reason and is brought into being only by the power of the Essence. If the created existence

has no intermediate cause, why does the passage describe a source, vessels, lights, worlds, and levels? And if an or, a spiritual light, is normally associated with concealment of self and nullification, why are nefesh and ruach included among the first forms of yesh?

The user also asked about the distinction between yesh ha-ne'etzel, yesh ha-nivra, and physical yesh; the thirty vessels of Malchut; the appearance of heichalot and angel bodies in Atzilus; the phrase “angel bodies” (gufot); the proof from Job; and the comparison with an alul in relation to its ilah. These are not separate curiosities. They all test whether the word yesh is being used in one fixed sense or in several related senses.

This internal edition therefore separates four questions that are often compressed into one:

- **Who has the power to create?** Only the Divine Essence can bring something into being from absolute non-being.
- **How does that power operate in the ordered worlds?** It operates through divine light and vessels that are completely united with their source.
- **What kind of thing is produced?** There are spiritual created beings, emanated structures, and physical created existence; the word yesh is relational and contextual.
- **Where does the kabbalistic boundary fall?** Etz Chaim states that the neshamah remains divine, while “from ruach onward” belongs to the world of separation. The source gives the boundary clearly, but the present sources do not give a complete philosophical reason for why the boundary is placed precisely there.

The phrase “true yesh” (yesh ha-amiti) is used in later Hasidic explanations and in the wider discussion, but it is not the wording of the central sentence in Iggeret 20. The text of each

source must be quoted before a later formulation is attributed to it.

The goal is therefore a precise, limited answer. We do not erase the mystery by saying that every distinction is merely psychological. We also do not turn the distinctions into separate creative powers. The vessels and lights explain the order and form of the created worlds; the Essence alone explains the possibility of creating yesh at all.

Method and human oversight

This work belongs to the YeshivahAI Study House series. The study was directed by a human Torah researcher and assisted by ChatGPT, Grok, and Claude in the roles of source-finding, comparison, criticism, and drafting. Model agreement is not an independent proof. A claim is treated as established only when its source, location, context, and verification status are recorded. The sources below were read mainly as identified digital transcriptions, not as photographs of first editions or manuscripts; that distinction is preserved throughout. Where a page was available through a digital transcription but its printed pagination or scan was not checked in place, the register says so explicitly.

2. Continuity with the preceding booklet

This study continues the previous booklet, Attainment and Emanation in Atzilus, which examined the opening movement of Iggeret HaKodesh 20. That booklet left several distinctions in place:

1. A relational or emanated yesh is not automatically the same thing as a created yesh.

2. The existence of a spiritual order does not mean that physical existence can be explained as an ordinary continuation of that order.
3. The example of angels in the earlier discussion tested a mechanism of spiritual transmission; it did not prove that the angels mentioned there were specifically angels of Atzilus.
4. The rule in Tanya chapter 39 concerns ordinary angelic stations and is explicitly qualified by the phrase “ordinary angels.”
5. Non-independence, nullification, and apprehension of a thing’s essence are related but not identical questions.
6. The earlier booklet’s question about Moses’ apprehension of the inner aspect of netzach, hod, yesod, and Malchut remains open. This study does not claim to solve it.

The previous booklet also used the word “light” mainly in the context of the sefirot of Atzilus. The present passage forces a refinement: or can describe a functional relation of life and illumination to a vessel even when, relative to its source, that light is a created entity. A definition that was correct in the limited context of Atzilus cannot be silently expanded into a rule that every light is divine.

The continuity is thus real but not mechanical. The earlier booklet asked how spiritual transmission differs from the creation of a physical body. The present study asks where created existence first appears in the spiritual order and how divine source, receiving vessels, and created lights relate to one another.

3. The passage in context

The relevant sequence in the epistle is as follows:

1. The divine light and vessels in Atzilus are united: Ihu vegarmohi chad — “He and His vessels are one.”
2. The externality of the vessels of Atzilus gives rise to structures that are already called a form of yesh: the heichalot and angel bodies of Atzilus.
3. The souls of angels and human souls before their descent into Beriah, Yetzirah, and Asiyah are described differently: they are not independent yesh but resemble divinity in a tremendous contraction.
4. The “worlds” seated in the skull of Arich Anpin are treated with the cautious phrase “it is close to say” that they are not worlds in the same sense as the heichalot.
5. The epistle then states that no prior cause or reason exists for the created yesh. Only the Divine Essence creates it.
6. In order for the resulting existence to possess boundary and measure, the Infinite Light is clothed in the vessels of the ten sefirot of Atzilus and creates through them and through their descent into the lower worlds.

The passage therefore moves from source, to emanated structures, to created spiritual existence, to physical existence, and finally to the reason that the ordered vessels do not constitute a second creator. The order of presentation is not itself a complete ladder of nullification. In particular, the comparison with an alul is a local comparison of modes of formation, not a universal chart of every possible degree of bitul.

Working translation of the central sentence

“Now, the beginning and first appearance of created existence is the vessels of the ten sefirot of Beriah, Yetzirah, and Asiyah, and

also the lights of nefesh and ruach. They were created from the aspect of the neshamah of the ten sefirot of Beriah, Yetzirah, and Asiyah, which is divinity; these are the thirty vessels of Malchut of Atzilus.”

The translation is explanatory rather than a new critical edition. The Hebrew wording “she-hu Elokut” is retained in the source register as the common textual form; the present study does not emend it to “she-hi.”

4. The central conclusion in one page

The apparent contradiction disappears once three distinctions are kept apart.

Distinction	What it identifies	Status in the present discussion
Divine source clothed below	The thirty vessels of Malchut/ Nukva of Atzilus that become the neshamah for the lower worlds	Divine; their descent does not turn them into created vessels
Receiving vessels	The local vessels of the sefirot of Beriah, Yetzirah, and Asiyah, including the local vessel associated with the neshamah	Created and limited
Lights in the receiving system	Neshamah, ruach, and nefesh as lights relative to their vessels	Neshamah remains divine; ruach and nefesh belong to the created world of separation

These are distinctions of source, receiver, and function. They should not be imagined as three unrelated entities stacked in space. The vessel of Malchut of Atzilus is the divine source that becomes a neshamah for a lower receiver. The receiver is a different vessel. The words “light” and “vessel” describe what a thing does in relation to another; “divine” and “created” describe what it is relative to its source.

This is why a light can be created. An or may mean “the life that illuminates a vessel,” while its own status relative to the source may already be that of a created existence. Likewise, a vessel can be divine in Atzilus and serve as the divine neshamah of a lower world without becoming a created vessel.

The phrase “without any prior cause or reason” excludes a created intermediate power that could independently explain the new yesh. It does not exclude divine clothing and mediation. The epistle explicitly says that the Infinite Light is clothed in the vessels in order “to create through them and through their agency.” The vessels give form, boundary, and measure; they do not possess a second, independent creative power.

All created existence, including spiritual existence, depends on the power of the Essence. Physical existence has an additional distinction: the transition from spiritual reality to physical matter cannot be explained by merely adding more stages of spiritual descent. That additional leap reveals the creative power more openly, although it does not mean that spiritual beings were created by a lesser power.

The sources establish the neshamah/ruach boundary as a kabbalistic fact: from the level of ruach onward, the system is called the world of separation. They do not, in the sources examined here, provide a final abstract reason why the boundary must be precisely there. That question is recorded as open rather than covered over by a slogan.

5. Detailed answers to Questions 1–17

Q01. What does “the beginning of created existence” mean, and in what sense are there levels of yesh?

“Beginning” here means the first appearance of created existence in the order being described. It does not mean that the

first created item became the independent source of all later creation. The grammar itself points in this direction: the things called the beginning are immediately said to have been created from the level of neshamah.

There are levels of yesh because the word can describe several relations. A vessel in Atzilus is bounded and differentiated, yet the epistle calls the vessels of Atzilus divine. An emanated structure may be called yesh ha-ne'etzel because it is a distinct emanated form that remains connected to its source. A spiritual being in Beriah, Yetzirah, or Asiyah is a created yesh. Physical existence is a still more concealed form of created yesh.

These are not simply points on one scale of “how much nullification.” The differences involve the thing itself, its source, its mode of formation, and the degree to which it is experienced as an independent existence. “Beginning” marks the boundary of created yesh in the system under discussion; it does not replace the Essence as the source of the act of creation.

Q02. How can “created from the neshamah” coexist with “without any prior cause or reason”?

The two statements answer different questions. “Without any prior cause or reason” denies a prior created essence that develops into the new yesh by ordinary cause-and-effect. It also denies an independent intermediary that would possess the power of creation on its own.

It does not deny divine clothing in vessels. The continuation of the epistle says that, so that the created yesh can have boundary and measure, the Infinite Light is clothed in the vessels of the ten sefirot of Atzilus and creates “through them and through their agency.” The vessels are completely united with the divine light; they are the means by which unlimited creative power produces a limited result, not a second source of existence.

Thus “from the neshamah” describes the channel and form of the creative process. “Only from the Essence” describes the unique source of the power to create yesh from absolute non-being. There is no contradiction unless the word “cause” is made to include every form of divine clothing. The epistle itself does not use it that way.

Q03. Is spiritual yesh also created by the power of the Essence, and what is special about physical yesh?

Yes. The passage itself includes the vessels of the lower worlds, and the lights of nefesh and ruach, within the beginning of created yesh. The later discussion of the epistle does not restrict the power of yesh me'ayin to matter. Spiritual vessels, souls, and angels are also created existences.

Physical yesh has a special distinction in the mode and visibility of the creative act. An identified digital transcription of Derech Mitzvotcha, “The Root of the Commandment of Prayer,” states that physical matter cannot be produced merely by adding more stages of spiritual descent. Even a very large number of spiritual contractions does not itself explain the appearance of coarse physical matter. Consequently, in physical creation the power of the Infinite is revealed more openly than in the formation of spiritual created beings, even though the spiritual beings are also created yesh me'ayin.

This “greater revelation” is objective in the act of formation. It is not a claim that a physical body consciously recognizes the Divine Essence more clearly than an angel. We must separate the rank of the created being, the leap in its formation, the revelation of creative power, the being’s subjective sense of independence, and the purpose of a dwelling below.

Q04. How should we distinguish yesh ha-ne'etzel, spiritual created yesh, and physical yesh?

The word yesh is not a single rigid technical category in every sentence.

Yesh ha-ne'etzel. This can describe an emanated form that is distinct and measured but remains connected to its source. Later Hasidic language can also call Atzilus as a whole “yesh ha-ne'etzel” in relation to the Divine Essence, while still insisting that its vessels are divine in the language of the epistle. The term is relational and must be read in context.

Spiritual created yesh. This includes the vessels and lights of Beriah, Yetzirah, and Asiyah, as well as spiritual structures such as heichalot and the bodies of angels. Their spirituality does not make them emanations or divine. They are still created existences.

Physical yesh. This is the most concealed and materially concrete form. It is not the only yesh created by the Essence; its distinction is that the leap into physicality cannot be explained by ordinary spiritual sequence and therefore displays the creative power with special force.

The safe formulation is a map of uses, not a universal three-box taxonomy. The same term can shift its emphasis depending on whether the comparison is to the immediate source, to the Divine Essence, or to a lower receiver.

Q05. How can the lights of nefesh and ruach be created while the neshamah is divine?

The key is to separate two systems of description. “Light” and “vessel” describe the relation of life and illumination to a receiver. “Divine” and “created” describe the source and ontological status of that life. The two pairs do not automatically line up.

The neshamah in this passage is the divine source of life that descends from the thirty vessels of Malchut of Atzilus and becomes a neshamah for the lower worlds. The local vessel that receives it is a different vessel and is created. The light of the neshamah remains divine because it is the divine source as it is clothed below.

Ruach and nefesh are also called lights because they animate and illuminate their vessels. Yet the sources describe the level “from ruach onward” as belonging to the world of separation. Their light is therefore created relative to its source, even though it remains an or relative to its vessel.

This is more precise than saying merely that ruach and nefesh are “lower.” The sources give the boundary as a fact of the kabbalistic structure. They do not provide in this passage a complete philosophical derivation of why the boundary must be exactly between neshamah and ruach. The explanation identifies the distinction and its function; it does not pretend to close every question about its first cause.

Q06. Does this distinction apply in Atzilus as well as in Beriah, Yetzirah, and Asiyah?

The sentence “the beginning of created existence is the vessels of the ten sefirot of Beriah, Yetzirah, and Asiyah and the lights of nefesh and ruach” is speaking about the lower worlds. It should not be expanded into a rule that the lights of nefesh and ruach in Atzilus are created.

At the beginning of the epistle, the lights and vessels of Atzilus are described as divine. The created yesh within the context of Atzilus appears in a different way: the heichalot and bodies of angels are formed from the externality of the divine vessels. The souls of the angels and of human beings before their descent into the lower worlds are described as resembling divinity in a tremendous contraction and as not being independent yesh.

The phrase “and likewise in Atzilus” therefore signals a structural analogy, not an identity of every lower-world category. It tells us that even in Atzilus there are formed structures that are called yesh, while the sefirotic lights and vessels themselves remain divine.

Q07. What are the thirty vessels of Malchut, and why do they become the neshamah of the lower worlds?

Etz Chaim, Gate 44, distinguishes three sets of ten associated with the female principle, Nukva/Malchut of Atzilus: inner, middle, and outer or posterior vessels. In the local mapping, the inner ten descend into the vessels of Beriah and become its neshamah; the middle ten descend into Yetzirah and become its neshamah; the outer ten descend into Asiyah and become its neshamah.

Source vessels of Malchut	Receiving world	Role there
Ten inner vessels	Beriah	Neshamah, the divine life of that system
Ten middle vessels	Yetzirah	Neshamah, the divine life of that system
Ten outer/posterior vessels	Asiyah	Neshamah, the divine life of that system

This local mapping must not be confused with the general mapping found in the later Hasidic explanation: inner/Chabad is associated with the general neshamah of Beriah, middle/Chagat with the general ruach of Yetzirah, and outer/Nehi with the general nefesh of Asiyah, with inter-inclusion within every world. The two mappings use “neshamah” in different relational frameworks.

There is also a numerical caution. Gate 44 discusses the relation between the twenty-seven vessels of Zeir Anpin in one context and the completion supplied by Nukva, while another passage

describes ten sefirot with three sets of vessels. We should not infer from the number thirty alone that every mention of thirty vessels must mean exactly the same configuration. The epistle itself names Malchut, so no numerical inference is needed to identify its source.

The reason these vessels are called neshamah is functional and ontological at once: they are the divine source of life for the lower system, not the local created receiver that they animate.

Q08. Is “which is divinity” a textual error that should read “which is divine” in the feminine?

The commonly available digital transcriptions read she-hu Elokut (“which is divinity,” grammatically masculine in form). No critical apparatus, first edition, or manuscript was opened in this research. The possibility of a different textual witness remains open, but a grammatical discomfort is not permission to emend the text.

One may propose a syntactic explanation: the masculine form can refer to the stated matter, the aspect, or the divine category rather than mechanically to the feminine noun neshamah. That is a grammatical possibility, not evidence about the original wording. The research therefore preserves the common form and records the variant question without making it carry the weight of the theological explanation.

Q09. What is the yesh in Atzilus: the heichalot and the bodies of angels, or the sefirotic vessels themselves?

The epistle makes the distinction explicitly. The vessels of the ten sefirot of Atzilus are divine. From the externality of those divine vessels, the heichalot of Atzilus are formed, and the bodies of the angels of Atzilus are also a form of yesh.

The heichalot are structures or “palaces” that provide an environment for the relevant forms of illumination. The body of

an angel is the defined, receiving side of an angelic existence. Neither should be identified with the divine sefirotic vessels themselves. The word “externality” marks the mode in which the formed structure relates to the divine source; it does not turn the divine vessels into ordinary created matter.

Q10. Why are the heichalot mentioned before the angel bodies, and what does the clothing of circles add?

The order of mention does not prove a hierarchy. It may be a literary movement from the larger structure to beings within it, or from the environment to its inhabitants, but this remains an interpretive proposal. No source examined in these rounds states that heichalot are higher or lower than angel bodies on the relevant scale.

The circles (igulim) describe an encompassing or surrounding mode of influence, in contrast with ordinary inward clothing. Etz Chaim, Gate 42, warns against a mechanical explanation in which the heichalot are simply large enough containers for the encompassing lights. The text says that the encompassing lights cannot contract even within the very large houses and palaces. The heichalot are therefore not a vessel that swallows the makif as an ordinary internal light.

The cautious reading of “the circles are clothed in them” is a relation of manifestation, surrounding presence, or structured place—not a claim that the makif fits inside an interior container. The older explanation that the circles enter a heichal merely because the heichal is a sufficiently large vessel is rejected.

Q11. How can there be angels of Atzilus if Tanya chapter 39 says that the station of angels is in Yetzirah?

Tanya chapter 39 speaks of “ordinary angels,” and its gloss immediately notes higher angels in Beriah. Three terms must be distinguished:

- **Station or dwelling (mador):** the world in which a particular class performs its service.
- **Root:** the higher source from which a being derives.
- **Mode of formation:** whether the discussion concerns emanation, clothing, or created existence from the externality of a vessel.

The general location of ordinary angels in Yetzirah does not exclude higher angelic levels or the bodies of angels mentioned in the present passage. Nor does it prove that the angels in the opening of the epistle are the same angels as those in the Atzilus passage. The previous booklet’s caution is retained: an example of angels in a discussion of spiritual transmission is not automatically a proof about angels of Atzilus.

Q12. What is an angel body in Atzilus, and how is it different from the angel’s soul?

The body of an angel in this passage is the defined and receiving side of an angelic existence, formed from the externality of the divine vessels and therefore called a form of yesh. The phrase prepares for the immediate contrast: “but the souls of the angels that emerged from the union of kisses, and likewise human souls before their descent into the lower worlds, are not independent yesh; they resemble divinity in a tremendous contraction.”

The term “body” here does not mean flesh, weight, or a physical corpse. It also should not be filled in with a specific material such as fire or air without a source that addresses angel bodies of

Atzilus. Etz Chaim uses “body” in several structural and parzufic senses; that helps classify the word but does not, by itself, provide a complete definition of the particular angel body in the epistle.

Q13. Why does the epistle mention angel bodies and not human bodies in Atzilus?

Three meanings must be separated:

1. The physical human body belongs to physical Asiyah and is not a body located in Atzilus in the sense of the epistle.
2. A human body may have a higher root, but the root is not identical with the physical body itself.
3. “Body” in the language of the parzufim can mean a structural set of vessels rather than a physical organism.

The immediate literary reason for mentioning angel bodies is that the next sentence contrasts bodies with angel souls, and then with human souls before descent. That explains the selection of the example without proving a complete reason for every editorial choice in the passage. The broader question of the root of the human body is not solved here.

Q14. Are the “worlds seated in the skull” another form of yesh like the heichalot?

No. The epistle uses a deliberate qualification: “It is close to say that the thousands and myriads of worlds seated in the skull of Arich Anpin and Zeir Anpin are not actual worlds like the heichalot of Atzilus and a form of yesh, but rather like the souls of the angels that emerged from the union of kisses.” They are called “worlds” relative to the skull and beard, but not because they are independent created worlds in the same sense as the heichalot.

The Zoharic parallels were located in two separate contexts: one in Idra Zuta explicitly associated with the skull of Zeir Anpin, and another in Idra Rabba associated with Arich/Atika. These parallels help locate the imagery but do not prove that the Tanya sentence is a verbatim quotation from one continuous passage, nor do they remove the epistle's phrase "it is close to say." Ohr HaTorah, Shemot, page 199, was not opened in the present research and is not claimed as independently verified.

Q15. "Gufot" or "gufim": is the wording strange, feminine, or connected to corpses?

Gufot is a legitimate plural of guf in the language of rabbinic and medieval texts. The Rambam uses the form in a cosmological context—"the holy and great bodies"—where it plainly does not mean corpses. The suffix does not by itself make the noun feminine, and one cannot infer a mystical distinction merely from the choice between gufot, gufim, and gufin.

The grammatical agreement in the passage should be studied within the style of the author and period. The present research found no textual or kabbalistic source proving that the choice of gufot carries a special theological nuance. It is therefore a valid lexical form, not a hidden proof of death or a reason to emend the text.

Q16. What does "He places defect in His angels" prove, and what does it not prove?

The verse is Job 4:18: "Behold, He puts no trust in His servants, and in His angels He places defect." Rashi reads teholah as a term of folly or imperfection. In the epistle, the verse supports the claim that even angels are not in absolute nullification and perfection.

The verse by itself does not identify the world of Atzilus, the bodies of angels as opposed to their souls, or the exact

kabbalistic mechanism by which an angelic body is formed. Those are applications made by the Alter Rebbe and by later commentary. A biblical proof can support the general point of imperfection without independently proving the entire mystical structure in which it is used.

Q17. Why is the relation of an alul to its ilah used as the comparison for nullification?

The local answer lies in the earlier lines of the same epistle. Before the passage under discussion, the Alter Rebbe says that, in the chain of emanation, the alul is surrounded by its ilah and is nullified in its presence “like the radiance of the sun within the sun.” Therefore the passage is not choosing alul as a rival to the sun-ray analogy. The analogy has already been used to describe the relation under discussion.

The comparison is useful because it marks a mode of formation and apprehension. An alul has some apprehension of its ilah and is nullified through that apprehension; the created yesh has no comparable proportional relation between its own essence and the creative power that brings it into being. The contrast is “there is an intelligible relation and measure” versus “there is no comparable relation,” not “this is the highest possible degree of bitul.”

The phrase should not be converted into an absolute ladder in which every alul is less nullified than every relation of light and source. Nor should “like the radiance of the sun” be detached from its local context. The research does not need to decide every distinction between ilah/alul and or/maor in every Hasidic text in order to explain why this comparison works here.

6. The two mappings of the thirty vessels

A central error in the early rounds was the attempt to force two different mappings into one table.

6.1 The local mapping of Malchut

Etz Chaim Gate 44, chapters 1–2, presents the thirty vessels of Nukva/Malchut of Atzilus as descending into the lower worlds and becoming their neshamah. The source vessels remain divine; the local vessels of each lower Nukva are separate receiving vessels.

Ten inner vessels	Beriah	Neshamah of the local receiving system
Ten middle vessels	Yetzirah	Neshamah of the local receiving system
Ten outer/posterior vessels	Asiyah	Neshamah of the local receiving system

The words “within the vessels” matter. The source is not identical to the local receiver, even though the source becomes its neshamah. This is the clearest way to prevent the sentence “the vessel is created and only its light is divine” from being applied indiscriminately to the thirty source vessels themselves.

6.2 The general mapping of nefesh–ruach–neshamah

The later Hasidic source used in the research maps the three general groups of Atzilus vessels to the general spiritual profile of the three lower worlds: inner/Chabad to the general neshamah of Beriah, middle/Chagat to the general ruach of Yetzirah, and outer/Nehi to the general nefesh of Asiyah, while also teaching inter-inclusion within every world.

That mapping does not erase the local statement that the three groups of Malchut vessels each become a neshamah to the world into which they descend. The word “neshamah” is being used relative to different systems. A general map of the life of the

worlds and a local map of the source of each world's divine life can coexist.

6.3 The essential caution

Do not say that the general “ruach of Yetzirah” is automatically the same thing as the created ruach-light of the specific passage. Do not replace Malchut with Zeir Anpin merely because another source uses the phrase “vessels of Atzilus” or “external vessels of Zeir Anpin.” The number, partzuf, and relation must be read in each source.

7. Heichalot, circles, angel bodies, and remaining questions

7.1 Heichalot and circles

The heichalot are not identical with the divine vessels of the sefirot. They are formed from the externality of those vessels and provide the structural context in which encompassing modes of illumination are related to the world. Etz Chaim's language is deliberately cautious: the encompassing lights are too great to contract even within very large houses and palaces. Therefore the language of “clothing” cannot be reduced to ordinary internal containment.

7.2 Angel bodies

The epistle's “angel bodies” are the structured, receiving aspect of an angelic existence. The source material does not justify a more detailed physical description. The contrast with the souls of angels is more secure than any attempt to describe their substance.

7.3 Angels of Atzilus

The mention of angel bodies in Atzilus is not contradicted by the general statement about ordinary angelic dwelling in Yetzirah. A

dwelling place, a root, and a mode of formation are different categories. The passage itself is speaking about the formation of bodies from the externality of Atzilus's vessels.

7.4 The order of examples

The order—heichalot and then angel bodies—does not prove a scale. “From the structure to the beings within it” is a possible literary reading, but it remains a proposal. It must not be printed as if the Alter Rebbe stated a hierarchy.

7.5 “Yesh ha-ne'etzel” as a relational term

The phrase is used in later Hasidic language to describe Atzilus as a bounded emanated existence relative to the Essence. It can also be applied by a commentator to a structure within Atzilus. It does not mean that all such structures are divine in the same way as the sefirotic vessels, nor that the vessels cease to be divine because they have limitation.

8. What changed during Rounds R1–R4

The research rounds were not four repetitions of one answer. Each round corrected a different weakness.

R1 — Initial formulation

The first response correctly identified the main logical distinction: “first beginning” is not an independent creative source, and spiritual yesh is also created by the power of the Essence. It also correctly warned that the phrase “as an alul to its ilah” is a local comparison, not necessarily the highest point in every map of nullification.

The weaknesses were equally important. The initial explanation of the thirty vessels risked treating the general mapping of vessels and worlds as the exact local mapping in the epistle. The treatment of nefesh and ruach was still too close to “lower means

created.” The textual question she-hu/she-hi was not resolved. The source of the Zoharic language of the worlds in the skull had not been fully located.

R2 — Splitting claims and correcting overstatement

The second round corrected the false attribution of the phrase “the created yesh was formed from the true yesh” to Iggeret 11. The phrase was found in a commentator’s presentation, not in the Alter Rebbe’s wording of that epistle.

The round also corrected the tendency to call the local alul nullification “partial” in a way that created an unproved global ladder. The source distinguishes modes of relation; it does not require a universal percentage chart of nullification.

R3 — Direct kabbalistic sources

Etz Chaim Gate 44 became the central source for the local mapping of the thirty vessels and for the statement that “from ruach onward” belongs to the world of separation. The search also located direct digital transcriptions of Derech Mitzvotcha on the difference between spiritual and physical formation, and two separate Zoharic parallels for skull imagery—one connected with Zeir Anpin and one with Arich/Atika.

R3 also corrected an explanation of the encompassing lights. Etz Chaim does not say that the heichal is simply large enough to contain the makif. It says that the makif is too great to contract even there.

R4 — Structural closure

R4 was a short structural audit. Both Grok and Claude accepted the need to distinguish divine source vessels, local receiving vessels, and the lights of the lower system. Claude explicitly withdrew the over-broad sentence that “the divinity in the epistle refers only to the light while the vessel itself is created.” Grok preserved the distinction between the local mapping and the

general mapping and correctly noted that Etz Chaim itself does not always use the literal word “created” for every local vessel.

The latter is a source-attribution correction, not a reversal of the conclusion. Iggeret 20 itself calls the vessels of the lower worlds the beginning of created existence. Etz Chaim supplies the architecture of source vessels entering local vessels; the 5566 material, where cited, clarifies the relation of local vessel and light; it is a later Hasidic source, not the wording of the Alter Rebbe in Iggeret 20.

R4 clarified the status of the Derech Mitzvotcha references. Relevant passages were available in identified digital transcriptions and parallel sections during the research process, but the printed pagination 129a–130b was not verified from a scan in place. The source register therefore preserves the distinction between reading a transcription and verifying a printed page; no model’s inability to access a page is treated as a refutation of material read elsewhere in the research.

Why the rounds are now closed

The central contradiction has been resolved, the main mappings have identifiable sources, and the remaining gaps are narrow and already recorded. A fifth round would not currently have a defined source that could change the central conclusion. The unresolved questions are preserved rather than disguised as solved.

9. Model comparison and editorial assessment

This assessment concerns the work done in this study, not general model ability. All three models saw overlapping material during the process, so agreement is not independent evidence.

Participant	Strong contributions	Weaknesses corrected during the rounds	Editorial assessment
ChatGPT	Maintained continuity with the earlier booklet; separated source, function, and ontology; integrated the final structural distinction	Initially compressed the “no independent cause” point too much; temporarily treated the general vessel mapping as if it solved the local mapping; had to correct source-status claims	Strong synthesis and continuity; requires active self-audit against over-compression
Grok	Located and repeatedly checked Etz Chaim Gate 44; preserved the distinction between general and local mappings; corrected the Zoharic attribution and the makif explanation	Sometimes presented already-existing caveats as new discoveries; R4 was cautious about wording but left the local-vessel status dependent on an unread source before the Tanya text itself was recalled	Strong source discovery and willingness to retract; concise structural criticism
Claude	Identified key parallels, corrected the Iggeret 11 attribution, and explicitly withdrew its over-broad “only the light is divine” sentence	Initially overclaimed the closure of the thirty-vessel mapping; initially denied the Zeir Anpin Zoharic parallel; sometimes treated inability to access a page as if it downgraded a source already read in the research	Strong self-correction and provenance awareness; initial confidence required close checking

Editorial assessment without model scores

The three assistants contributed differently. ChatGPT maintained continuity and produced the main synthesis, but needed correction when a broad mapping was treated as if it solved the local mapping. Grok repeatedly located and checked Gate 44, preserved the distinction between local and general mappings,

and corrected the Zoharic attribution and the explanation of the makif. Claude was particularly useful in retracting the false attribution to Iggeret 11 and in forcing explicit provenance statements, although some of its intermediate source judgments were themselves corrected. These are editorial observations about this project, not authority rankings; model agreement is not evidence.

10. Canonical claim ledger

The P-numbers below are the canonical claim identifiers for this research edition. They are distinct from the S-numbers used for sources. Earlier round labels may be mentioned in the research history, but no historical label is silently reused for a different claim.

ID	Claim	Status	Source basis
P01	“Beginning” marks the first appearance of created yesh in the system, not an independent source of creation	Established in transcription	S01
P02	“Without any prior cause” excludes an independent intermediary, not divine clothing in unified vessels	Established in transcription	S01
P03	Spiritual yesh is also created by the power of the Essence	Established in transcription	S01, S25
P04	Physical yesh reveals the power of the Essence more openly	Established in transcription and comparative source	S10, S25
P05	The thirty vessels of Malchut of Atzilus are the source of the neshamah of Beriah, Yetzirah, and Asiyah	Established in transcription	S01, S23, S30

ID	Claim	Status	Source basis
P06	The local vessels of the lower worlds are the beginning of created yesh	Established in transcription	S01, S23
P07	Source vessel, descending neshamah, and receiving vessel are roles in one relation, not three independent beings	Supported structural interpretation	S23; S21–S22
P08	A local neshamah vessel can be created while its neshamah light is divine	Established in transcription	S22
P09	Nefesh and ruach are lights functionally but created in status	Established in transcription	S23, S22
P10	The first inner reason for the neshamah/ruach boundary remains open	Open	S23, S22
P11	The local map is inner → Beriah, middle → Yetzirah, outer/posterior → Asiyah, all as neshamah	Established in transcription	S23
P12	The general NRN mapping remains distinct from the local mapping	Established in transcription; S11 unedited	S11, S20, S21
P13	Zeir Anpin must not be silently substituted for Malchut	Established in transcription	S11, S23; S20 identified transcription
P14	Yesh ha-ne'etzel is a relative, graded term rather than a rigid category	Partly established	S13–S14; commentary and unedited teaching
P15	The sefirotic vessels of Atzilus are divine	Established in transcription	S01, S12
P16	Heichalot and angel bodies are yesh formed from the externality of the vessels	Established in transcription	S01

ID	Claim	Status	Source basis
P17	Surrounding lights do not contract into the heichalot even in the ordinary internal sense	Established in transcription	S29
P18	The reason for the order heichalot → angel bodies	Open	No explicit source
P19	Tanya chapter 39 does not exclude every higher angelic level	Established in transcription with limited inference	S02
P20	The body of an angel in Atzilus is not sufficiently defined in the present research	Open	S16, S23; no direct source sufficient
P21	The skull-worlds are not necessarily “worlds” in the same sense as the heichalot	Locally established	S01
P22	Separate Zoharic parallels were found for Zeir Anpin and Arich/Atika	Established in transcription	S15, S28
P23	She-hu Elokut is the common form; no first-edition witness settles the textual question	Open textual question	S01 and digital transcriptions
P24	Gufot is a regular plural, without proof of a special Kabbalistic nuance	Established linguistically	S06–S07
P25	“As an effect relative to its cause” is a local test of mode of formation	Established in transcription	S01
P26	Cause and effect should not be presented as a universal scale of all nullification	Supported editorial interpretation	S01
P27	The attribution of “the created yesh was formed from the true yesh” to Iggeret 11 is false	Established in transcription	S17
P28	The Moses/inner-Netzach–Hod–Yesod–Malchut question from the previous booklet remains open	Open	No new source

ID	Claim	Status	Source basis
P29	The wording of Iggeret 11 itself is: “the explanation is only true faith in the Creator of the beginning—that is, that creation is yesh me’ayin”; the commentator’s wording must not replace it	Established in transcription	S17
P30	The passage on 129b describes a leap from spirituality to physicality that cannot be explained by multiplying stages of spiritual descent, and thereby a greater revelation of Infinite power	Established in identified digital transcription; no print scan	S25
P31	The passages on 130a–130b connect the end of the line, returning light, and “the beginning is rooted in the end”; sovev is light, not the Essence itself	Established in identified digital transcription; no print scan	S26–S27; S01

11. Source register and verification status

The S-numbers in this register are stable research-source identifiers for this edition. They are not recycled model-claim numbers. Earlier round claim numbers are historical references only; no source identifier is reassigned to a different work elsewhere in the booklet.

The following register identifies the sources used in the synthesis. “Digital transcription read” does not mean that a scan or manuscript was checked.

ID	Source and location	Verification and use
S01	Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh 20, Hebrew text and Chabad edition	Relevant passage and surrounding continuation read as digital text; primary source for the central distinctions
S02	Tanya, Likutei Amarim 39, chapter	Digital text read; qualification “ordinary angels”

ID	Source and location	Verification and use
S03	Tanya, Likutei Amarim 52, chapter	Digital text read; Malchut's clothing in the lower worlds
S04	Tanya, Likutei Amarim 18, chapter	Digital text read; contextual use of nefesh-ruach-neshamah
S05	Tanya, Likutei Amarim 36, chapter	Digital text read; purpose of a dwelling below, not a complete answer to this passage
S06	Job 4:18 with Rashi, text	Digital text read; general imperfection of angels
S07	Rambam, Foundations of the Torah 4:12, text	Digital text read; lexical evidence for gufot
S08	Ohr HaTorah, Shemot, p. 199	Referred to in commentary but page not opened; not used as independently verified proof
S09	Etz Chaim, Gate 47, chapter 12, as cited in a commentary note	Reference not resolved; the digital Gate 47 layout examined elsewhere has a different chapter count
S10	"Mitzvatah Mi-she-tishka ha-chamah," 5738, sections 3–4, Chabad	Relevant digital transcription read; discourse is not treated as the Alter Rebbe's own wording
S11	"Amar Rabbi Alexandri," 5731, Chabad	Relevant digital transcription read; the passage is an unedited teaching and is used for the general mapping only
S12	Etz Chaim, Gate 42, chapter 5, text	Digital transcription read; relation of Atzilus vessels to lower-world nefesh-ruach-neshamah
S13	Lessons in Tanya commentary on Iggeret 20	Commentary read in the relevant sections; not all commentary is attributed to the Rebbe
S14	"Bereshit Bara," 5716, Chabad	Digital transcription read; unedited teaching on relative yesh ha-ne'etzel
S15	Zohar III, 292b, Idra Zuta, text	Digital transcription read in context; explicit Zeir Anpin parallel
S16	Etz Chaim, Gate 42, chapter 4, text	Digital transcription read; distinction among garments, circles, palaces, and structural "bodies"

ID	Source and location	Verification and use
S17	Tanya, Iggeret 11, text	Digital transcription read to correct a false attribution
S18	Etz Chaim, Gate 47 index and chapters 1–2, index	Digital transcription read; did not resolve the commentary’s Gate 47 chapter 12 reference
S19	Etz Chaim, Gate 42, chapter 12, as a possible alternate location	Checked as a possible location; not established as the intended target of the commentary reference
S20	Torah Or, Supplements, Vayakhel, section 20	Identified digital transcription read; no print scan was checked. Supports a general three-part vessel mapping, with Zeir Anpin context
S21	Maamarei Admor HaZaken 5566, vol. 1, p. 78, page	Identified digital transcription page read; no print scan or first-edition verification; supports the relation between general and particular nefesh–ruach–neshamah
S22	Maamarei Admor HaZaken 5566, vol. 1, p. 96, page	Identified digital transcription page read; no print scan or first-edition verification; supports the local vessel/light distinction
S23	Etz Chaim, Gate 44, chapters 1–2, chapter 1, chapter 2	Digital transcription read directly; primary kabbalistic source for the local mapping and the neshamah/ruach boundary
S24	Derech Mitzvotcha, Root of the Commandment of Prayer, 129a, digital text	Identified digital transcription page read; no print scan or first-edition verification; opening sequence on the line, Malchut, and “the beginning is rooted in the end”
S25	Same work, 129b, digital text	Identified digital transcription page read; no print scan or first-edition verification; spiritual and physical yesh, the additional leap, and greater revelation of Infinite power
S26	Same work, 130a, digital text	Identified digital transcription page read; no print scan or first-edition verification; end of the line, returning light, and “the beginning is rooted in the end”

ID	Source and location	Verification and use
S27	Same work, 130b, digital text	Identified digital transcription page read; no print scan or first-edition verification; surrounding light is illumination, not the Essence itself
S28	Zohar III, 128b, Idra Rabba, text	Digital transcription read; separate Arich/Atika skull parallel
S29	Etz Chaim, Gate 42, chapter 3, text	Digital transcription read; makif cannot contract even in large palaces
S30	Derech Mitzvotcha, "Knowledge of Divinity," 49b–50a, 49b, 50a	Identified digital transcription read; Atzilus vessels as neshamah to lower worlds
S31	Maamarei Admor HaZaken 5566, vol. 1, p. 130, page	Identified digital transcription page read; no print scan or first-edition verification; additional relative light/vessel language, not enough to define an Atzilus angel body

Sources deliberately not upgraded beyond their status

No first-edition scan or manuscript was opened for the textual question she-hu/she-hi. The exact printed page of Ohr HaTorah, Shemot 199, was not opened. The specific Gate 47 chapter 12 reference remains unresolved. Those gaps do not undermine the central explanation because the central mapping and the source/receiver distinction are supported by Iggeret 20, Etz Chaim Gate 44, and the identified 5566 digital pages.

12. Unresolved questions and decision to close the research rounds

The following questions remain open:

1. What is the first inner reason, beyond the structural statement of Etz Chaim, for the boundary between divine neshamah and created ruach/nefesh to fall precisely there?

2. What is the complete kabbalistic definition of an angel body in Atzilus?
3. Is there a sourced reason for the order “heichalot, then angel bodies” beyond a plausible literary or structural reading?
4. Is there a manuscript or first-edition witness that supports she-hi rather than the common digital she-hu?
5. What exactly is the source intended by the commentary’s reference to Etz Chaim Gate 47, chapter 12?
6. What does Ohr HaTorah, Shemot 199, add to the classification of the worlds in the skull?
7. The previous booklet’s question concerning Moses and the inner aspect of netzach–hod–yesod–Malchut remains outside the present conclusion.

These are real open questions, but they do not leave the central problem unresolved. The rounds have met the conditions for closure: the decisive sources have been read at the stated level, central claims have been assigned a status, major overstatements have been corrected, and the remaining questions depend on specific sources not yet in hand. A fifth round repeating the same requests would not be productive without one of those sources.

The editorial decision is therefore:

- Close Rounds R1–R4 for this study.
- Preserve all original responses, including rejected proposals and model corrections, in the research archive.
- Use the present synthesis as the basis for the Hebrew and English internal editions and for the shorter Hebrew and English reader booklets.
- Mark open questions honestly in the internal edition and, where needed for the reader’s understanding, in brief cautious language in the reader edition.

13. Editorial conclusion

The phrase “the beginning of created existence” does not contradict the statement that the created yesh has no prior cause. The first phrase maps the beginning of created existence within an ordered system; the second identifies the only source of the power to create yesh from absolute non-being. Divine vessels and lights provide the channels, forms, and measures of the result, but they do not become an independent creator.

The apparent contradiction concerning nefesh, ruach, and neshamah comes from treating “light,” “vessel,” “divine,” and “created” as if they were four names for the same axis. They are not. The thirty vessels of Malchut of Atzilus are the divine source that becomes neshamah for the lower worlds. The local vessels of those worlds are created receivers. The lights of ruach and nefesh are still lights in relation to their receivers, but are created in their own status, while the neshamah remains the divine life descending from the source.

The physical world is not unique in requiring the power of the Essence; every created yesh requires it. It is unique in the additional leap from spiritual reality to physical matter and in the greater revelation of creative power that this leap displays. The heichalot and angel bodies of Atzilus do not contradict the divinity of the sefirotic vessels; they are formed from the externality of those vessels and therefore occupy a different level of relation. The souls of angels, the worlds in the skull, the word gufot, and the alul comparison must each be read in their local context.

The result is not a claim that every mystery has been dissolved. It is a disciplined map of what the sources establish, what they explain by structure, what they suggest, and what they leave open. That is enough to move from repeated source-hunting to responsible writing.