

כ

Kaf

“Actualizing Freedom”

Invocation Verse:

כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתְךָ יִאמְרוּ וּגְבוּרַתְךָ יְדַבְּרוּ

K'vod Malkhutekha Yomeiru Ugevurat'kha Y'dabeiru

Of the glory of Your kingdom they will speak, of Your power they will tell!

(Psalm 145:11)

Meaning and Mystical Associations:

Kaf is related to the power to actualize potential. In the *Sefer Yetzirah*, *kaf* is one of the seven “double letters,” and represents Dominance, the astrological planet of Mars, the left eye in the human body, and Wednesday in time.

Text

הוּא הָיָה אוֹמֵר, אִם אֵין אָנִי לִי, מִי לִי. וּכְשֶׁאָנִי לְעַצְמִי, מָה אָנִי. וְאִם לֹא עַכְשָׁיו, אֵימָתִי

He used to say, “If I am not for myself, who will be for me?

And if I am for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?

Pirkei Avot 1:14

Kabbalah Commentary

(Based partially on The Aleph Bet by Rabbi Yitzhak Ginsburgh)

Kaf represents power to actualize potential, hinted at by the meaning of *kaf*: “palm of the hand.” Also, the letters that spell out *kaf* are *kaf* and *peh*, which can be seen as an acronym for *ko'akh* – strength/potential, and *po'al* – actual. *Hassidut* teaches that our initial thought upon awakening in the morning should be that all existence is constantly actualized by the Divine in every moment. There is also a practice of then placing palm upon palm for chanting *Modeh Ani*. The tone of this gesture is one of subjugation, of placing our will in alignment with the Divine Will. This is also hinted at by the word *kipa*, the sacred head covering, and *Keter*, which means “crown.” The Divine will is pictured as both “above” us, and also adorning us, since it is our own higher potential.

Kaf, then, represents the decisive will that you need to actualize your full spiritual potential. It reminds us, as does the *Pirkei Avot* text, that although spiritual freedom is about surrender and dropping of all struggle, paradoxically we can only do this if we fully commit to it – no one can do it for us!

אִם אֵין אָנִי לִי, מִי לִי – *Im ayn ani li, mi li?*

If I am not for myself, who will be for me?

It is super important, therefore, to know that you have this power! And furthermore, this is a Divine power – you, in essence, are not separate from the Divine:

וְכִשְׁאַנִּי לְעַצְמִי, מָה אֲנִי – *ukh'she'ani l'atzmi, mah ani?*
If I am for myself, what am I?

You are Reality; you are the Divine in form, waking up to Itself. And furthermore, this practice and realization is not something you need to come to after a period of time:

וְאִם לֹא עַכְשָׁיו, אֵימָתַי – *v'im lo akhshav, eimatai?*
And if not now, when?

Practice

***Kaf* Meditation and Chant**

Bring to mind that you are here to “bring heaven down to earth” and that the most important aspect of this work must be done *now*. Bring yourself into connection with this moment, giving your Presence lovingly, without being seduced by anything in your experience as you chant: *K'vod Malkhutekha Yomeiru Ugevurat'kha Y'dabeiru*