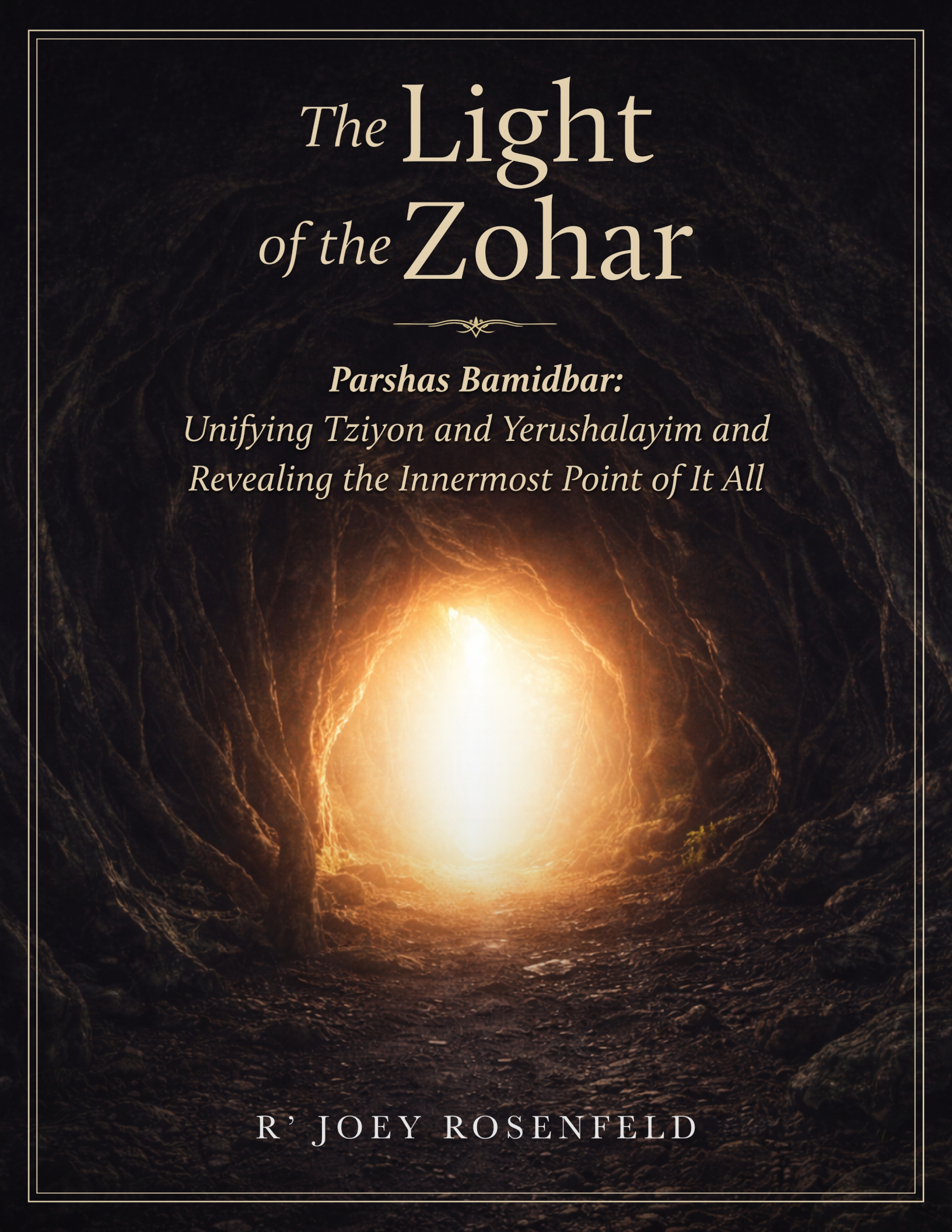


The background of the entire page is a photograph of a dark, cavernous space, likely a cave. In the center, there is a bright, glowing light source, possibly a fire or a large opening at the end of a tunnel, which illuminates the surrounding rocky walls and floor. The light creates a strong contrast with the dark surroundings, highlighting the textures of the rock.

The Light *of the* Zohar



*Parshas Bamidbar:
Unifying Tziyon and Yerushalayim and
Revealing the Innermost Point of It All*

R' JOEY ROSENFELD

— *The Light of the Zohar* —

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R' JOEY ROSENFELD

The Water of Moshe Rabbeinu and the Fire of Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai

The Zohar opens again by returning to the essential work that underlies all of the shiurim on the Zohar HaKadosh: the unification of Moshe Rabbeinu and Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai. Moshe Rabbeinu represents the Written Torah, clarity, stillness, calmness, and the light of Chochmah. Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai represents the fire of Pnimiyus haTorah, movement, concealment, process, and the intensity of Binah. Externally these two lights appear to stand in opposition to one another. The light of Moshe is smooth unity while the light of Rebbe Shimon is fragmentation, movement, and inner struggle. Moshe is compared to water while Rebbe Shimon is compared to fire. Yet the ultimate goal is not to choose one over the other. The purpose of all things is to reveal how the wholeness of Moshe can only become complete when it descends into the fire of Rebbe Shimon.

But it is the wondrous union between the light of Moshe and Rebbe Shimon that reveals the lights of Keter itself. Keter is the place where Chochmah and Binah are no longer experienced as opposites. It is the hidden unity that contains both wholeness and brokenness simultaneously. This becomes the secret of Mashiach Tzidkeinu, the one who teaches humanity how to transform bitterness into elevation. Amalek is

gematria “mar,” bitterness, fragmentation, and concealment. Mashiach transforms “mar” into “romemut Kel,” the elevation of consciousness upward toward HaKadosh Baruch Hu. The revelation of Mashiach therefore emerges specifically through the unification of Moshe and Rebbe Shimon. Wholeness alone remains incomplete because it cannot yet descend into concealment. Brokenness alone remains trapped in fragmentation. Redemption only appears when both dimensions become unified together.

Entering the Midbar Through the Beis HaMikdash

Sefer Bamidbar can only properly begin after Sefer Vayikra. Vayikra reminds the soul of the main thing, which is the Mishkan, the *korbanos*, and the Beis HaMikdash itself. The Beis HaMikdash is the point where heaven and earth kiss. It is the place where infinity becomes present within finitude and where HaKadosh Baruch Hu is encountered in an active and revealed way. Before entering the concealment of the Midbar, the soul must first immerse itself in the memory of revelation. One must remember the Kohen Gadol, the Kodesh HaKodashim, and the work through which divine presence once rested openly in the world. Even after the churban we retain tefillah, teshuvah, yearning, and brokenheartedness. Yet all of these are

anticipations of the rebuilding itself. First the soul must remember Yerushalayim, and only then can it survive the Midbar.

The Midbar is described as the frightening in-between territory of existence. It is the liminal space between one stage and another, filled with concealment, uncertainty, mirages, and bewilderment. Jewish life often feels like wandering through a desert without water, without clarity, and without the ability to pave a path forward. Yet the only way to survive the Midbar is to remember that hidden within it lies the future Beis HaMikdash. “*Mi-midbar matanah*” means that the desert itself eventually becomes the place of gift and revelation. Har HaBayis itself is concealed within the Midbar. The task of the soul is to transform the desert into the mountain of HaKadosh Baruch Hu. Concealment itself eventually becomes the place where revelation emerges.

Living Within the Time of Bamidbar

The Zohar HaKadosh opens Sefer Bamidbar by teaching that the Torah is not merely a text that we study, but a reality that we inhabit. The Baal HaTanya explains that a person must “*live with the times*,” meaning that the parshah is not simply relevant to our lives, but that our lives themselves are unfolding within the illumination of the parshah. The things a person experiences are not random occurrences detached from Torah. Rather, they are expressions of the spiritual framework awakened by the weekly reading itself. When Klal Yisrael enters

Bamidbar, the soul also enters Bamidbar. The person begins to encounter wandering, uncertainty, movement, and concealment. Yet the Midbar is not merely emptiness. It is one of the deepest forms of divine revelation because it teaches the individual how to move even without clarity.

The wandering of the Midbar corresponds to the forty-two journeys of Klal Yisrael. These forty-two journeys are rooted in the Shem *Mem-Beis*, the forty-two letter name of HaKadosh Baruch Hu, which represents movement from below to above. Even when a person feels that life is moving aimlessly, there remains an inner structure guiding every stage. The Midbar teaches that “*al pi Hashem yisau*,” that every movement and every pause emerges from divine direction. The person therefore learns that concealment itself can be purposeful. Wandering is not proof that one has been abandoned, rather it is part of the process through which the soul is led. The apparent absence of destination conceals a deeper form of guidance, and the Midbar transforms confusion into spiritual work.

The Zohar then reveals that wandering itself can eventually become holy. The *chavraya kaddisha* wander from place to place, and their movement itself becomes Torah. This wandering ultimately reaches its fulfillment in Gan Eden, where HaKadosh Baruch Hu promises, “*etayel imachem beGan Eden*,” that He will stroll together with the tzaddikim. A stroll has no urgency because every step is already

complete within itself. The destination is found inside the movement. Exilic wandering therefore transforms into companionship with HaKadosh Baruch Hu. The Midbar teaches the soul how to move without despair. Even the feeling of being spiritually displaced becomes a pathway toward intimacy with the *Ribbono Shel Olam*.

Rebbe Abba and the Wisdom of Contraction

The first teaching of the Zohar in Bamidbar begins unexpectedly with Bereishis. Rebbe Abba opens with the verse "*Vayivra Elokim es ha'adam betzalmo*." The Zohar immediately returns to the beginning because the first response to wandering is always a return to the source. Rebbe Abba represents the light of Chochmah, specifically the wisdom of contraction and the application of measure. His greatness lies in the ability to receive the overwhelming light of Rebbe Shimon and reduce it into vessels that others can receive. Chochmah understands not only what can be grasped, but also what cannot yet be grasped. Rebbe Abba therefore becomes the scribe of the Zohar because he possesses the ability to preserve infinite light through concealment. This itself becomes the first remedy for the Midbar experience.

The Zohar explains that every beginning remains eternally present. Hidden within every branch is the light of the root itself. Even when a person feels trapped among

the outermost branches of confusion and fragmentation, the source remains concealed within them. This is the secret of returning to Bereishis. Rebbe Shimon repeatedly opens new teachings because the light of Torah is always the light of a new opening. The fact that something was previously understood does not prevent it from being understood again at a deeper level. Every revelation later becomes concealment relative to a higher revelation. Yet the newer revelation does not destroy the previous one. The soul survives exile through the ability to begin again.

The Zohar insists that Torah must always be seen anew. It is not enough to reread the verse; one must "look" into it again. The wisdom of Rebbe Abba is the wisdom of fresh sight. Every level of revelation remains true within the framework where it was first revealed. Growth therefore occurs through expansion rather than negation. The previous understanding was not false; it simply concealed deeper layers still waiting to emerge. This becomes the secret of the "*psichah*." The person who enters Bamidbar must rediscover beginnings. Even in concealment, the possibility of creation remains present. The Zohar therefore continuously returns to the beginning because beginnings themselves never disappear.

Adam HaRishon and the Unity of Opposites

The Zohar describes Adam HaRishon as a being composed simultaneously of above and below. Part of the individual is oriented toward *shamayim* while another part is oriented toward *aretz*. The human being contains both transcendence and embodiment within a single existence. Before the transgression, these opposites functioned in harmony. Adam HaRishon unified revelation and concealment, spirit and body, expression and receptivity. The Zohar describes him as a light extending “*misof alma ad sof alma*,” from one end of reality to the other. Humanity possessed the ability to perceive both the depths above and the depths below simultaneously. The split that later defined human consciousness had not yet emerged. The wonder of Adam was precisely the coexistence of opposites within unity.

This harmony existed through the secret of “*du-partzufim*.” The individual contained both masculine and feminine principles within the self. The masculine represented expression, movement outward, and ascent toward *shamayim*. The feminine represented receptivity, cultivation, and rootedness below. Yet both dimensions existed within every person. The *tzelem* and the *demus*, the spiritual imprint and the bodily form, functioned together harmoniously. The *nefesh* and the *guf* were not enemies. The orientation upward and the orientation downward completed one another. Adam

HaRishon therefore embodied the miracle of oppositional unity.

The Zohar explains that this split language in the verse reflects the doubled structure of humanity itself. “*Betzalmo*” and “*betzelem Elokim*” correspond to two dimensions within the self. The masculine and the feminine are not merely biological categories, but spiritual orientations existing within all people. One dimension seeks outward revelation while the other cultivates inward receptivity. The person contains both heavenward aspiration and earthly rootedness. Before the transgression of Adam, these dimensions remained unified internally. The masculine contained its feminine counterpart and the feminine contained its masculine counterpart. Human wholeness consisted in this internal integration. Adam existed as a complete harmony of opposites.

The Fracturing of the Human Being

After the transgression, the Zohar says that “*itma’atu partzufin*,” the faces became diminished. The connection between above and below is fractured. Humanity lost the ability to naturally inhabit both worlds simultaneously. The soul still knew there was something above, but could no longer grasp it directly. The body became heavy and dominant. The orientation toward transcendence weakened while the pull toward materiality intensified. The self became internally torn. The body and soul no longer felt naturally unified. Human

existence became characterized by conflict rather than harmony.

The births of Kayin and Hevel reflected this continued fragmentation. Kayin represented acquisitiveness, ownership, and earthly rootedness. Hevel represented fragility, transcendence, and spiritual openness. Their conflict externalized the split already present within the human condition. The inability of Kayin and Hevel to coexist revealed that *shamayim* and *aretz* had not yet been repaired. Even the birth of *Sheis* only partially restored balance. *Sheis* represented the *kav ha'emtzai*, the middle pillar that could begin reuniting opposites. Yet the world still lacked complete harmony. Humanity continued searching for the restoration of Adam HaRishon's original wholeness. History itself became the process of repairing this tear.

The Avos and the Repair of the Split

The Zohar explains that Avraham Avinu begins the process of reuniting *shamayim* and *aretz*. Avraham repairs the right side through the power of *chesed*. He reveals that transcendence must descend into ordinary life. Eating, hospitality, speech, and generosity all become vehicles for divine revelation. Avraham reconnects earthly action to heavenly consciousness. The split between spirituality and embodiment begins to soften through his work. Heaven no longer remains distant from daily life. Through Avraham, kindness becomes the channel through

which the upper worlds descend into the lower worlds. The fracture within Adam HaRishon slowly begins healing.

Yitzchak then repairs the left side through *gevurah* and restraint. He reveals holiness within discipline, contraction, and boundary. The powers of limitation themselves become sanctified. Yaakov ultimately unifies both sides through the *kav ha'emtzai*. Through Yaakov, right and left are harmonized together. The worlds of *chesed* and *gevurah* are sewn back into unity. Yet even this is not the final completion. The Zohar explains that the world is only fully prepared through the emergence of the twelve shevatim and the seventy souls descending into Mitzrayim. The true purpose of creation is the revelation of Klal Yisrael itself. The Jewish people become the collective vessel capable of uniting heaven and earth.

Torah, Mishkan, and Yerushalayim

The world reaches completion only through Matan Torah and the building of the Mishkan. Torah represents the descent of divine light from above. The Mishkan represents the vessel prepared below to receive that light. Neither is complete without the other. The Torah without vessels remains abstract transcendence. The Mishkan without Torah remains an empty structure. Their union restores the harmony lost after the transgression of Adam HaRishon. Through Torah and Mishkan together, heaven and earth reunite. This becomes the fulfillment of creation itself. The world

becomes capable once again of containing revelation.

The Zohar explains that this union ultimately culminates in Yerushalayim. Yerushalayim represents the union of *yirah* and *shleimus*, of Torah and Mishkan, of *yesod* and *malchus*. Everything in the world ultimately seeks return to Yerushalayim. The center point of creation, the Even HaShetiyah, becomes the place where concealment and revelation kiss one another. Every city and every place ultimately yearns to reconnect there. Yerushalayim is therefore not merely geographical. It is the spiritual center through which all fragmentation seeks reunification. The soul itself longs for Yerushalayim because it longs for inner wholeness. All roads eventually seek to return to that original point of unity.

Torah as the Revelation of HaKadosh Baruch Hu in This World

Rebbe Elazar teaches that wherever words of Torah are spoken, HaKadosh Baruch Hu becomes revealed there. Torah is not merely information or wisdom. It is the very revelation of the divine name itself. The Baal HaTanya explains that learning Torah is like calling out the name of HaKadosh Baruch Hu. Every sugya and every sefer becomes another form of crying out toward the Ribbono Shel Olam. The more a person learns, the more they draw divine presence into the world. Torah therefore creates "*dirah be'tachtonim*." The upper worlds descend

into ordinary reality through speech and learning. The divine name becomes present within human consciousness.

The Zohar explains that mitzvot also ascend upward and testify before HaKadosh Baruch Hu. Every mitzvah performed below creates movement above. The action itself stands before the Ribbono Shel Olam and declares that a human being awakened it through earthly effort. Yet the Zohar also insists that the original awakening always began above. Human initiative itself is secretly rooted in divine arousal. The mitzvah therefore creates unification between above and below. The worlds become joined through human action. The lower world ascends while the upper world descends. This becomes the secret of "*yaaseh shalom li*," creating peace above and peace below simultaneously.

Simcha and the Consciousness of Yerushalayim

Rebbe Elazar explains that true joy can only emerge from Yerushalayim. Simcha is not merely emotional happiness. It is the inner harmony created when opposites become unified. Yerushalayim is the place where Torah and Mishkan, heaven and earth, become one. Outside of Yerushalayim, joy remains incomplete. The soul experiences fragmentation because the worlds have not yet fully reunited. The consciousness of Yerushalayim therefore becomes essential. Even before physical redemption arrives, the mind must

become attached to Yerushalayim. The person must orient all existence toward that inner center point. Only then can authentic joy begin emerging.

Rebbe Abba encounters a person rejoicing in Bavel and challenges him. At first glance it appears that Rebbe Abba wishes to diminish the person's joy. Yet the opposite is true. Rebbe Abba seeks to elevate that joy into the consciousness of Yerushalayim. The Arizal explains that "*batash*" represents the collision of opposites that ultimately reveals deeper unity. Rebbe Menachem Mendel of Shklov interprets "*batash*" as *roshei teivos* for "*b'itachon, t'ov, and s'imcha*." Rebbe Abba therefore awakens within the person the hidden spark of Yerushalayim. Even while physically in Bavel, the individual can attach inwardly to redemption. The simcha becomes transformed from ordinary pleasure into holy yearning.

Tasting the Joy of Redemption Within Exile

The Zohar then addresses an apparent contradiction. One verse commands "*ivdu es Hashem besimcha*," while another commands "*ivdu es Hashem beyirah*." Rebbe Elazar explains that complete joy belongs to the consciousness of redemption and Yerushalayim. Exile, by contrast, contains trembling, concealment, and incompleteness. Yet Rebbe Yehuda asks a powerful question. If joy only arrives after redemption, how could redemption ever begin? The answer is that exile itself contains anticipation of

redemption. The simcha within Galus is the joy of already moving toward redemption even prior to its actual arrival. Once the soul begins turning toward Yerushalayim, redemption has already begun.

Rebbe Yehuda reveals that yearning itself possesses redemptive power. A person still standing in exile can already hear the whisper of "*hisna'ari me'afar kumi*." HaKadosh Baruch Hu awakens the soul from within the dust itself. The anticipation of redemption already contains the beginning of redemption. This resembles Yaakov Avinu, who while still in the house of Lavan already possessed the spirit necessary to leave. Once the soul desires departure, exile begins weakening. The person has not fully escaped, yet inwardly they are already moving. Redemption therefore begins as consciousness before becoming external reality. The whisper itself becomes the beginning of geulah.

The Midbar as the Place of Revelation

The Zohar concludes by revealing that the Midbar itself becomes the gift, *Matanah*. The desert becomes the place where Torah is given. Revelation emerges specifically through emptiness and bittul. The person who makes themselves "*like a Midbar*" becomes capable of receiving divine light. Most separations between above and below are intensified by ego and self-assertion. The stronger the grasp of selfhood, the thicker the partitions

become. Yet when a person softens the intensity of ego, openings begin appearing within the barriers themselves. Light from above descends while longing from below ascends upward. The Midbar therefore becomes not the absence of revelation, but the very place where revelation begins.

The Soul's Attachment to Yerushalayim

The only way through the Midbar is attachment to Yerushalayim. Yerushalayim is the *Even HaShetiyah*, the foundation stone at the heart of the Kodesh HaKodashim, and the point where all opposites become unified. Dovid HaMelech could not sleep because he was perpetually searching for the Makom HaMikdash. Similarly, the soul must keep its eyes fixed upon Yerushalayim even while wandering through concealment. Every individual must redeem the Yerushalayim hidden within their own heart. The Midbar can only be survived through yearning for the place where heaven and earth reconnect. Yerushalayim represents the place where Moshe Rabbeinu rests, "*mibein shnei hakeruvim*," the innermost point of divine revelation. The soul therefore survives exile through attachment to this hidden center point.

The tzaddikim constantly sought to redeem Yerushalayim from concealment. Their work and mission was to restore Yerushalayim to "*nachalas Yaakov bechirecha*," bringing holiness back from the hands of foreign forces into its rightful

place. Yet this redemption is not merely geographical. Every person must redeem the hidden Yerushalayim within themselves. The soul itself contains a concealed holy city waiting to be rebuilt. The tzaddikim illuminate Yerushalayim so that others can attach themselves to it as well. The work is therefore both collective and personal. One must uncover the point where the upper and lower worlds meet. Yerushalayim becomes the center through which all fragmentation seeks reunification.

Tzion and Yerushalayim

The Zohar explains that the center point always possesses a two-tiered structure: *Tzion* and *Yerushalayim*. These are not separate realities but two stages of a singular process. Tzion is the innermost point, the hidden beginning, the first emergence of holiness prior to actualization. It is the *Even HaShetiyah*, the Kodesh HaKodashim, the "*makom ha'aron eino min hamiddah*." Tzion represents the pure interiority of divine potential before it descends into external form. It is associated with Yosef HaTzaddik and with the hidden light of *yesod*. Yerushalayim, by contrast, is the externalized vessel that emerges from Tzion. Tzion is the inner point while Yerushalayim is the revealed city built around it.

Tzion therefore represents the hidden purity that exists prior to manifestation. It is the concealed world of yearning, *mesiras nefesh*, hope, prayer, and

irreducible goodness. On the level of Tzion, all twenty-two letters of the Aleph-Beis already exist in unity. This is why the Simchas Beis HaShoevah revealed the light of Tzion so powerfully that even ordinary acts became illuminated by holiness. Tzion is the innermost *tzelem*, the pure idealistic truth hidden within existence. Yet most of the time Tzion remains concealed. It exists silently beneath the surface of ordinary life. The soul contains this point even when it cannot yet reveal it outwardly. Tzion therefore becomes the hidden center of holiness within the person.

Yerushalayim is the externalization of Tzion into lived reality. Yerushalayim is the vessel, the *demut*, and the embodiment of the inner vision within the physical world. It represents Malchus descending into concealment and constriction. Every person lives with these two levels within themselves. Tzion is the hidden inner truth while Yerushalayim is the external life through which that truth attempts to emerge. For the tzaddikim there is little separation between the two. For most people, however, there remains a painful gap between the inner and outer self. The spiritual work is therefore to draw Tzion into Yerushalayim. The hidden inner holiness must illuminate the externalized reality of ordinary life.

The Fire of Yerushalayim

Because it represents the externalization of Malchus, Yerushalayim possesses a dangerous duality. Because it is more susceptible to holiness, it is also more susceptible to destruction. Yerushalayim is therefore heavy, sharp, fiery, and intense. The same fire that can illuminate can also burn. When disconnected from Tzion, Yerushalayim becomes a place of fragmentation and externality. Yet when Tzion is drawn into Yerushalayim, the outer world becomes illuminated by the inner point. This becomes the work of our generation. The task is to bring the hidden light of Moshe Rabbeinu into the territory of Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai. The inner point of Tzion must become visible within the externalized city of Yerushalayim.

This is accomplished by drawing the soul of Moshe Rabbeinu into the Kodosh HaKodashim. Moshe represents the hidden interiority of Tzion while Rebbe Shimon represents the revealed externality of Yerushalayim. The work of the tzaddikim is to draw the hidden light into the revealed world. Every person participates in this task through tefillah and yearning. One must beg HaKadosh Baruch Hu to reveal the inside within the outside. The external world should become transparent to the inner light concealed within it. This becomes the secret of redemption itself. The worlds are healed when the hidden point of Tzion illuminates the externality of Yerushalayim. Redemption is therefore

the revelation of inwardness within ordinary reality.

Blessing Emerging from Tzion

The Zohar begins its teaching on the verse “*Yevarechecha Hashem miTzion.*” All blessing emerges from Tzion because Tzion is the innermost point of divine flow. “*Ki sham tzivah Hashem es haberachah*” means that all vitality originates from this hidden center. Rebbe Shimon revealed these teachings most deeply at the Idra Zuta near the end of his life. At that stage Rebbe Shimon himself ascended from the revealed realm of Yerushalayim into the concealed world of Tzion. Yet afterward the work becomes drawing the light of Tzion back downward into Yerushalayim. Torah first emerges from Tzion before becoming revealed as “*dvar Hashem miYerushalayim.*” The innermost light precedes all external revelation. Blessing therefore always begins invisibly before it manifests outwardly.

Rebbe Yehuda asks Rebbe Shimon from where Klal Yisrael draws their blessing. Rebbe Shimon responds with a cry of pain over the world’s inability to see inwardly. Humanity remains trapped looking only at externality while ignoring the hidden root of existence. Yet when Klal Yisrael are worthy, all the worlds become nourished through a singular holy tree. This tree is the Etz Chaim, the hidden light of *yesod* and Tzion. Yosef HaTzaddik gives sustenance to all existence from this concealed place. Everything becomes

blessed through attachment to the hidden center. The Ohr HaGanuz remains concealed within Tzion waiting to reveal itself. When that light emerges, all existence becomes unified and sustained.

The Revelation of Tzion

The Zohar describes Tzion as the place where all blessing continuously flows without interruption. On the level of Tzion there is “*ein od milvado*” in an unveiled way. The mountains of Tzion, representing Netzach and Hod, reveal the light of Yesod. “*Ki sham tzivah Hashem es haberachah chayim ad ha’olam*” means that life itself emerges from this concealed center point. Tzion is described as “*nehiru de’alma*,” the illumination of all worlds. “*MiTzion michlal yofi Elokim hofia*” means that beauty radiates outward from this hidden interiority. When the light of Tzion becomes revealed, all existence enters a state of joy, compassion, and completion. Everything becomes integrated into wholeness.

Ultimately however, Tzion is only the hidden inner dimension of reality. The world in which most people actively function is Yerushalayim. Tzion represents the hidden interiority while Yerushalayim represents the externalized world of action and concealment. The challenge is therefore drawing the light of Tzion into Yerushalayim itself. The hidden center must illuminate the revealed world. The task is not escape into inwardness, but transformation of outward existence. This becomes the

secret of physical mitzvos. Human action below awakens revelation above. The external world itself becomes the place through which inner holiness is drawn forth.

Torah Above and the Awakening Below

Rebbe Elazar opens with the verse “*Simchu es Yerushalayim.*” The Torah is beloved before HaKadosh Baruch Hu because wherever words of Torah are spoken, divine presence descends there. HaKadosh Baruch Hu and all the heavenly forces come to listen to Torah being learned below. The Torah itself becomes the divine name being called out within the world. Not only does divine presence descend, but the enemies of holiness also fall away before the light of Torah. The Zohar then explains the deeper secret of mitzvos. Every mitzvah performed below ascends before HaKadosh Baruch Hu and declares that a human being awakened it through earthly action. Human effort below therefore awakens divine revelation above.

This becomes the secret of drawing Tzion into Yerushalayim. Just as awakening occurs below, awakening is stirred above as well. The mitzvah creates “*shalom le’eila*” and “*shalom letata*,” peace above and peace below simultaneously. Human action within the external world awakens the hidden interior light. This is why Yerushalayim is so essential. The hidden unity of Tzion cannot remain concealed

forever. It must eventually reveal itself within the world of embodiment and action. The person who performs mitzvos below becomes a partner in revealing the hidden light. Redemption therefore depends upon earthly action. The external world itself becomes the arena through which inward holiness is revealed.

Joy and the Redemption of Yerushalayim

The Zohar explains that true joy can only emerge through Yerushalayim. Simcha is not merely emotional pleasure but the revelation of inner unity within external reality. The joy of Tzion remains hidden inwardly, but Yerushalayim reveals that joy outwardly. This is why all unifications occur within Yerushalayim. The union of husband and wife, Torah and mitzvos, Mashiach ben Yosef and Mashiach ben Dovid, all emerge there. Yerushalayim is the place where inwardness becomes embodied. Yet when Klal Yisrael are detached from Yerushalayim, true joy cannot fully emerge. The outer world remains fragmented and disconnected from its inner source. Redemption therefore depends upon restoring the hidden light to outward reality.

Rebbe Abba encounters a person rejoicing in Bavel and rebukes him. The issue is not that joy is forbidden, but that complete joy belongs specifically to Yerushalayim. Exile requires inward redemption while outward reality remains concealed. Rebbe Abba’s “*batash*” represents the collision that awakens deeper consciousness. The

Arizal interprets *batash* as the encounter between opposites that eventually reveals unity. Rebbe Menachem Mendel of Shklov explains that *batas* hints to “*b’itachon, t’ov, and s’imcha*.” Rebbe Abba therefore seeks to awaken within the individual the hidden yearning for Yerushalayim. Even while physically in exile, the soul must remain internally attached to redemption. Joy without yearning becomes spiritual forgetfulness.

Simcha and Yirah at Once

The Zohar then addresses the contradiction between “*ivdu es Hashem besimcha*” and “*ivdu es Hashem beyirah*.” Are we meant to serve HaKadosh Baruch Hu with joy or with trembling? The answer depends upon one’s relationship to Yerushalayim. When Klal Yisrael are attached to Yerushalayim and focused on redeeming the external world, *avodah* becomes joyful. The person already tastes the unity of Tzion within Yerushalayim. Yet when the soul becomes trapped within externality for its own sake, *avodah* becomes characterized by trembling and concealment. The person loses sight of the hidden inner light. Simcha emerges when the worlds become unified. Fear dominates when the split between inner and outer remains unresolved.

Rebbe Yehuda then asks how redemption could ever begin if joy only arrives afterward. The answer is that yearning itself already contains redemption. “*Ki besimcha teitzei*” means that the

movement out of exile already grants access to future joy. Just as Yaakov Avinu possessed Ruach HaKodesh while fleeing Lavan because he was already moving toward Eretz Yisrael, so too the soul experiences redemption once it begins yearning for Yerushalayim. The desire itself transforms the person. One who yearns for Yerushalayim already partially inhabits it. Redemption therefore begins internally before becoming externalized. The longing itself becomes the first revelation of redemption. Yearning is already a hidden form of arrival.

Rising Up From Within the Dust Itself

The Zohar concludes with the verse “*hitna’ari mei’afar kumi*.” Redemption emerges specifically from within the dust itself. The dust of exile becomes transformed into the very place from which holiness rises upward. The hidden light within externality is awakened from inside concealment itself. Tzion and Yerushalayim become reunited. The inward point finally illuminates outward existence. At that moment true joy spreads throughout all worlds. The mountains, valleys, trees, and roads themselves begin singing with divine consciousness. The entire world becomes drawn into the wedding celebration of redemption. Existence itself becomes illuminated from within.

This is the *avodah* of our generation. The task is to reveal the hidden goodness within Yerushalayim and within the external world altogether. When life feels

harsh, fragmented, and externalized, the person has forgotten the hidden illumination of Tzion within it. One must learn "*lirot betuv Yerushalayim*," to see the goodness concealed within reality. The

"*tov*" of Yerushalayim is the light of the Tzaddik Yesod Olam hidden inside existence. Through drawing Tzion into Yerushalayim, the Midbar itself becomes transformed into Har Elokim.