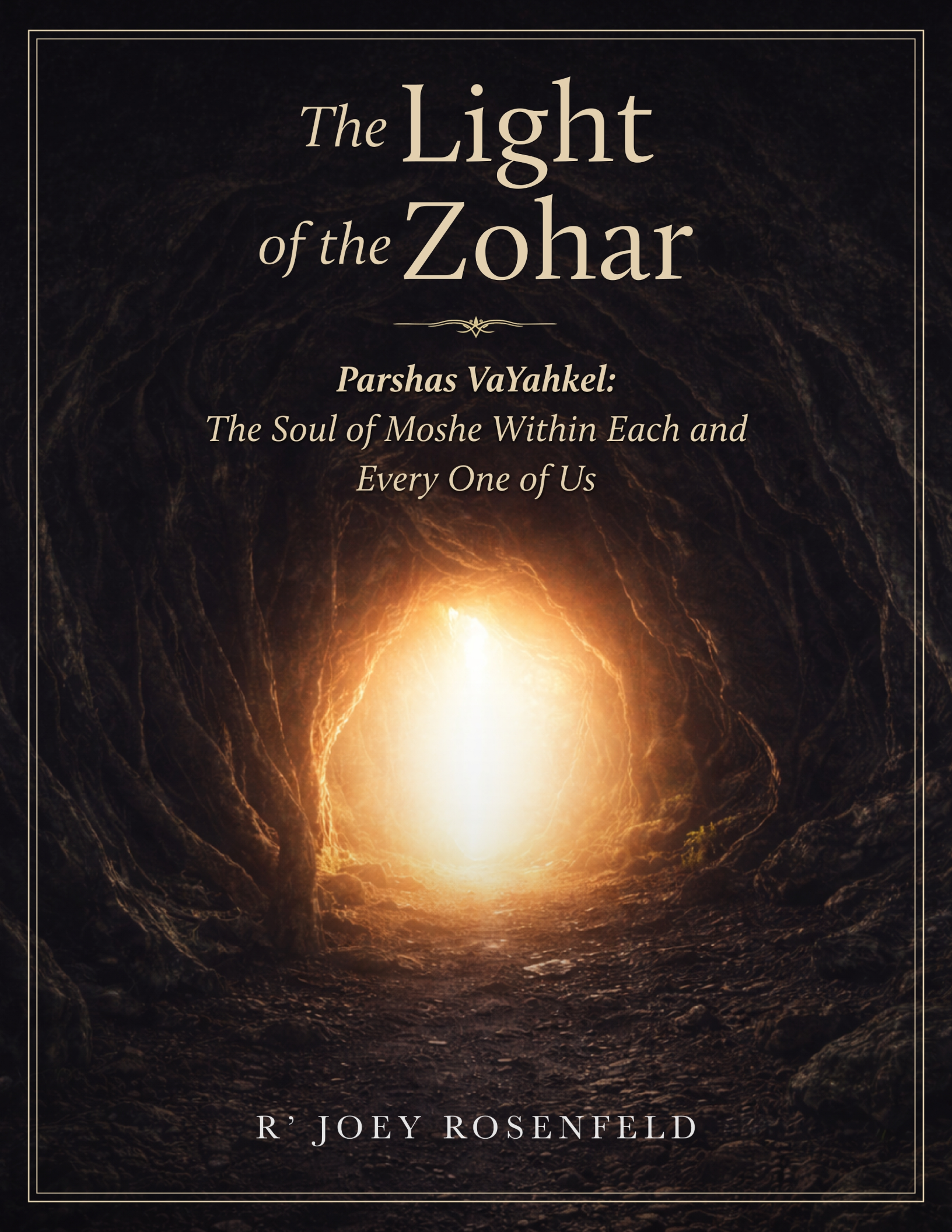




The Light *of the* Zohar



*Parshas VaYahkel:
The Soul of Moshe Within Each and
Every One of Us*

R' JOEY ROSENFELD

— *The Light of the Zohar* —

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Every One of Us**



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רבי חייא ורבי יצחק ורבי יוסי, הוו אַזלי באַרחא, עד דהוו אַזלי, פגע בהו רבי אבא. אמר רבי חייא, ודאי שכינתא בהדן. כד מטא לגבייהו, אמר רבי אבא, כתיב, (מלכים א ח' ט"ז) מן היום אשר הוצאתי את עמי את ישראל ממצרים לא בחרתי בעיר מכל שבטי ישראל ואבחר בדוד וגו' לבנות בית להיות שמי שם. האי קרא, לאו רישיה סיפיה, ולא סיפיה רישיה, דכתיב לא בחרתי בעיר, ואבחר בדוד, מאי האי עם האי. ואבחר בירושלם מבעי ליה.

אלא כד קודשא בריך הוא אית רעותא קמיה למבני קרתא, אסתכל בקדמיתא, בההוא רישא דנהיג עמא דקרתא, ולבתר בני קרתא, ואייתי לעמא ביה. הדא הוא דכתיב לא בחרתי בעיר, עד דאסתכלנא בדוד, למהוי רעיא על ישראל. בגין דמתא וכל בני מתא, כלהו קיימין ברעיא דנהיג לעמא, אי רעיא איהו טבא, טב ליה, טב למתא, טב לעמא. ואי רעיא איהו בישא, ווי ליה, ווי למתא ווי לעמא. והשתא אסתכל קודשא בריך הוא בעלמא, וסליק ברעותיה למבני ליה, ואוקים ברישא לדוד, הדא הוא דכתיב ואבחר בדוד עבדי. (ס"א ואוקים ברישא דדרא לרבי שמעון וחבריה למיקם קמיה)

מלתא חדתא שמענא. פתח ואמר, (תהילים קמ"ו:ה') אשרי שאל יעקב בעזרו שברו על יי' אלהיו. וכי אל יעקב, ולא אל אברהם, ולא אל יצחק, אלא אל יעקב. בגין דיעקב לא אתרחיץ באבוהי, ולא באמיה, כד ערק קמי אחוי, ואזל יחידאי, בלא ממונא, כמה דאת אמר (בראשית ל"ב:י"א) כי במקלי עברתי את הירדן הנה, ואיהו אתרחיץ ביה בקודשא בריך הוא, דכתיב, (שם כח) אם יהיה אלהים עמדי ושמרני וגו'. וכלא שאיל מקמיה דקודשא בריך הוא, ויהב ליה.

שברו על יי' אלהיו. שברו, ולא אמר תקותו, ולא בטחונו, אלא שברו. אל תקרי שברו, אלא שברו. דניחא להו לצדיקיא, לתברא גרמייהו, ולאתברא תבירו על תבירו, וכלא על יי' אלהיו. כמה דאת אמר, (תהלים מה) כי עליך הורגנו כל היום. כי עליך נשאנו חרפה.

כגוונא דיעקב, דכתיב וירא יעקב כי יש שבר במצרים, דהא תבירו דגלותא, חמא דהוה ליה במצרים, ושוני תוקפיה בקודשא בריך הוא. ובנוי דיעקב סבלו תבירו דגלותא, ולא אשתנו מגו רזא דמהימנותא דאבהתהון ושמא דקודשא בריך הוא הוה בגלותא רגילא בפומייהו.

ועל דא כתיב במשה, (שמות ג) ואמרו לי' מה' שמו' מה'. בגין דהוו ידעי ליה, ולא אנשו ליה לעלמין, וסבלו תבירו דגלותא על קודשא בריך הוא, ובגין כך זכי לפורקנין ולנסין ולארתון סגי אין.

ואתון קדישין עליונין, דסבלין תבירו דגופא מאתר לאתר על קודשא בריך הוא, על אחת כמה וכמה דזכאין אתון למעבד לכו נסין ופורקנין, ותזכון לחיי עלמא דאתי. אזלו כלהו כסדא.

Rebbe Hiyya, Rebbe Yitzhak, and Rebbe Yosi were walking along the road. As they were going, Rebbe Abba met them. Rebbe Hiyya said: "Surely the Shekhinah is with us." When Rebbe Abba reached them, he said:

It is written (I Kings 8:16):

"From the day that I brought My people Israel out of Egypt, I did not choose a city from all the tribes of Israel... but I chose David... to build a House that My Name may be there."

This verse — its beginning is not its end, nor is its end its beginning. For it says, "I did not choose a city," and then, "I chose David." What has this to do with that? It should have said: "I chose Jerusalem."

Rather, when the Holy One, blessed be He, has the desire to build a city, He first looks at the head who will lead the people of that city. Afterwards He builds the city and brings the people into it. This is the meaning of: "I did not choose a city" — until I first looked to David, that he be the shepherd over Israel.

For the city and all its inhabitants stand upon the shepherd who leads the people. If the shepherd is good — good is it for him, good for the city, good for the people. But if the shepherd is evil — woe to him, woe to the city, woe to the people.

And now the Holy One, blessed be He, looks upon the world and it has arisen in His will to build it; therefore He first establishes David at its head. This is the meaning of: "I chose David My servant."

(Another version: "He first established at the head of the generation Rebbe Shimon and his companions to stand before Him.")

"I have heard a new teaching." He opened and said (Psalms 146:5):

"Happy is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is upon the Lord his God."

Why "the God of Jacob" — and not the God of Abraham or the God of Isaac?

Because Jacob did not rely on his father or his mother when he fled from his brother and went alone, without wealth, as it is said (Genesis 32:11):

"For with my staff I crossed this Jordan."

Rather, he relied upon the Holy One, blessed be He, as it is written (Genesis 28):

"If God will be with me and guard me..."

And he asked everything from before the Holy One, blessed be He, and He granted it to him.

“Whose hope is upon the Lord his God.”

It says “his hope (shivro),” and not “his expectation,” nor “his trust,” but “his breaking (shivro).”

Do not read it as shivro (his hope), but as shivro (his breaking).

For it is pleasing to the righteous to break themselves and to be broken upon brokenness — and all for the sake of the Lord his God. As it is said (Psalms 44):

*“For Your sake we are killed all the day;
for Your sake we bear reproach.”*

Like Jacob, of whom it is written:

“Jacob saw that there was shever (grain/breaking) in Egypt.”

For he saw that the breaking of exile was there in Egypt, and he strengthened himself in the Holy One, blessed be He.

And the sons of Jacob endured the breaking of exile, yet they did not depart from the secret of their fathers’ faith. The Name of the Holy One, blessed be He, was constantly upon their lips in exile.

Therefore it is written regarding Moses (Exodus 3):

“And they will say to me: What is His Name?”

Because they already knew Him and never forgot Him forever. They endured the breaking of exile for the sake of the Holy One, blessed be He, and therefore they merited redemption, miracles, and many signs.

And you, supernal holy ones, who endure the breaking of the body from place to place for the sake of the Holy One, blessed be He — all the more so you are worthy that miracles and salvations be performed for you, and that you merit the life of the World-to-Come.

They all went together as one.

Vayakhel and the Gathering of Daas

B'ezrat Hashem, we continue our series on the Zohar, illuminating the book of Moshe Rabbeinu through the understanding of Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai, and illuminating the understanding of Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai through the light of Moshe Rabbeinu. To understand why this point in the Zohar appears specifically in this week's parsha, we begin with the opening of Parshas Vayakhel: וַיִּקְהַל מֹשֶׁה אֶת הָעָם.

The entire parsha revolves around the daas of the Tzaddik. It is the daas of Moshe Rabbeinu, the daas of Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai, the daas of the true Tzaddikim who possess the natural capacity to unify the apparent disparity of Klal Yisrael around them.

Conscious and Unconscious Connection to the Tzaddik

Whether a person in Klal Yisrael is consciously connected to the nekudah of Tzaddik yesod olam, to the *butzina d'nehora* of Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai, or only unconsciously connected, as the Ba'al HaTanya describes in Sefer HaTanya, every person is connected to the Tzaddik hador. Some know it and some do not. Some are connected in

more revealed places and some in more concealed places.

The revelation of the daas of the Tzaddik, the gilluy of the daas of Moshe within every individual, means that when Tzaddikim share Torah, it is as if they are speaking to each and every person directly.

The Voice of Moshe Within Every Yid

All the Tzaddik does is allow the voice of Moshe to speak to the point of Moshe within each person, awakening the daas of Moshe in every Yid, in the secret of כְּדֹת מֹשֶׁה וְיִשְׂרָאֵל. In this way, the scattered sparks of Moshe are gathered back to their singular source, moving from the rectification of Adam HaRishon through Dovid HaMelech all the way to Mashiach Tzidkeinu.

This is the secret of Adam—aleph, dalet, mem: Adam, Dovid, Mashiach. The gathering of the daas of Moshe does not mean that Moshe or the Tzaddik forcibly takes those points of daas and adds them into some external collective structure.

A Magnetic Gathering

Rather, as Rebbe Nachman describes, the revelation of the Tzaddik is magnetic. It reorients the nekudos tovos within each person. This is what Mashiah Tzidkeinu will do: through the secret of תורה רפ"ב in Likutey Moharan, he will awaken within every Yid the nekudah of Tzaddik within them, the good point, the point of daas, revealing their deepest portion in Moshe and Mashiah.

The light of the Tzaddik reorients us toward the unwavering search for goodness hidden beneath external concealment. It is not forceful. It is a path of pleasantness.

Vayakhel After Yom Kippur

As Rashi points out, וַיִּקְהַל מֹשֶׁה אֶת כָּל עַדְת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לַמַּחֲרָת יוֹם הַכִּיפּוּרִים took place כשירד מן ההר, the day after Yom Kippur, when Moshe descended from the mountain. Moshe gathered together the daas, the inner knowing, within each soul of Bnei Yisrael.

The daas of Moshe can gather the daas of Klal Yisrael because they are not truly separate. They are scattered sparks of the same general mind of Moshe. This gathering takes place after forgiveness for the cheit ha'eigel, after

Moshe sacrifices himself for Klal Yisrael, after the revelation of the Tzaddik yesod olam who shows that the purpose of creation is the protection of nishmas Yisrael, the salvation of the Jewish soul, and its discovery of the secret of Moshe hidden in the heart of each one of us.

Lo Yada Ish Es Kevuraso

This is the secret of וְלֹא יָדַע אִישׁ אֶת קְבֻרָתוֹ. Haman thought he could attack us in the month in which Moshe Rabbeinu died. What he did not understand is that the very concealment of Moshe Rabbeinu reveals the daas of Moshe within each and every person.

When the general Moshe Rabbeinu passes away and the overt *giluy* of the Tzaddik is hidden, the point of Moshe within us awakens. The Meor Einayim explains that we do not know where Moshe is buried because he is buried in the innermost point of every person's heart.

The Inner Kodesh HaKodashim

Moshe is buried in the Kodesh HaKodashim, in the place of the yechidah shebanefesh, in the secret of מִבֵּין שְׁנֵי הַכְּרוּבִים, whose roshei teivos spell Moshe. From between Chochmah

and Binah there is revealed the secret of Keter, the **רישא דלא אתיידע**.

It is the neshama of the Tzaddik that rests by the Kosel HaMa'aravi, that place irreducibly bound to the daas of Moshe. The Beis HaMikdash is daas: the point of connection between above and below, in the secret of the Mishkan.

The Beis HaMikdash as Daas

The temple of the King rests in the mind, in the daas of Moshe taking revealed form so that HaKadosh Baruch Hu can rest His Shechinah upon the true Tzaddik. The passing of Moshe is like the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash, the collapse of the Mishkan—the apparent departure of the Tzaddik, who ascends above and thus seems to withdraw from Klal Yisrael.

But that very concealment creates our task: to uncover our own nekudos tovos, to discover the capacity of the Jewish neshama, the daas of Moshe, to survive even its own disappearance and reveal its light from within ourselves. Haman thought he could strike when the daas of Moshe appeared to fall into stuckness.

Nidmeh Lahem Lematah

Yet it is specifically from that place of stuckness, where Moshe seems buried below, near Baal Peor, in the place of ugliness, heresy, anger, and temptation, that Moshe emerges most powerfully.

Chazal say that when they counted to the center of the Torah, they arrived at the elongated vav in **כָּל הַלֵּךְ עַל גְּחוֹן**, the pasuk describing creeping impurity. The Tzaddikim teach that it is precisely in that elongated vav of the nachash that nishmas Moshe Rabbeinu is buried.

The Hidden Vav of the Nachash

The galus and hester of Moshe are buried in the descent from Har Sinai into the eigel, in the place of Baal Peor. But specifically from there, the daas of Moshe reemerges. This is the secret of **מְחִקֵּק**.

Ramchal explains that the secret of Mechokek is the power of the Tzaddik to locate himself within concealment and eat his way out from within concealment itself—belittling the smallness from the inside, poking holes in the darkness, revealing light inside hiddenness.

Eating Through Concealment

At a certain point, all that remains is the thin outer shell of darkness, while inwardly it has already decayed. Then all Klal Yisrael must do is break through, because the wall has already rotted from within. The Sitra Achra, in truth, no longer has substance.

At that point the nachash is transformed into the daas of Mashiach, in the secret of their shared gematria, 358. This is the fullness of the daas of Moshe Rabbeinu. Specifically after Yom HaKippurim, after the descent from Har Sinai into the post-traumatic reality of the eigel, Moshe reveals that the singular purpose of the Tzaddik yesod olam is for the sake of Klal Yisrael.

You Cannot Blame Them

Moshe Rabbeinu can say to HaKadosh Baruch Hu: You cannot blame them for the cheit ha'eigel. It is like a child given money and sent toward struggle by the parent. You cannot blame Nishmas Yisrael.

This is the true orientation of daas: a vision fixed on the inherent goodness of all things. When the Tzaddik gives us the ability to uncover the positive points within ourselves, we begin to

realize that it is not our fault and it was never our fault.

The Opposite of Shame

It is not our fault. Ultimately, **כי כל העם בשגגה**. This is not a relinquishing of responsibility; it is the only place from which responsibility can truly be received, because it is the opposite of shame. Shame says: this is all my fault; I ruined something perfect. But that is not the truth. Nothing was ever perfect.

The Process of Being Human

We are all moving through the perpetual cycle of Har Sinai, cheit ha'eigel, teshuvah—again and again. This is the process of being human: trying to reduce the falls and illuminate the highs. A person will always struggle. The Tzaddik comes and says: this very place is where you can rise again.

וַיִּקְהַל מֹשֶׁה לְמַחֲרַת יוֹם הַכִּיּוּרִים כְּשִׁירָד מִן הָהָר. The Torah uses lashon *hif'il*: Moshe actively gathered the nation, the daas of Klal Yisrael. Yet **שְׁאִינוּ אוֹסֵף אֲנָשִׁים בִּידֵיָם**. Moshe did not force people to come close to the daas of the Tzaddik. He did not compel connection.

They Gathered Through His Presence

Rather, **הן נאספין על פי דיבורו ותרגומו איכניש**. They gathered through the presence of the Tzaddik. The daas of Moshe, the presence of Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai—as we see in the Zohar, whenever Rashbi was present there were tears of revelation, a re-preparation for Matan Torah.

Moshe Rabbeinu, Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai, the Arizal, the Baal Shem Tov, Rebbe Nachman, the Vilna Gaon, the Rashash, the Ramchal, the Baal HaTanya—all the true Tzaddikim gather Jewish souls together, and through the positive points in their Torah they gather the positive points of nishmas Yisrael.

The Secret of Targum

Rashi says **תרגומו איכניש**. Why? Because **וַיִּקְהַל** means gathering in an active form where the people come on their own. The secret of targum is that I do not even know what the lashon hakodesh of the Tzaddik is saying. I do not know what Moshe is trying to reveal. I do not know why my heart is drawn toward Moshe Rabbeinu.

Drawn Without Understanding

But when Moshe is present, when the daas of Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai shines, when the light of **צדיק באמונתו** and **ועמך כולם צדיקים יחיה** awakens the hidden point of Tzaddik within us, I do not need to understand why I am drawn. I simply am. Every neshama comes closer, whether through directly perceiving the words of the Tzaddik or, as Rashi says, by way of targum, by way of *achorayim*, through the mask of Moshe.

Equidistant to the Tzaddik

The Baal HaTanya explains that every neshama in Klal Yisrael is equally related to the Tzaddik hador, to the revelation of HaKadosh Baruch Hu's light through **ועמך כולם צדיקים**, through the power of a Jew never truly to fall. And with that orientation toward Parshas Vayakhel, we can begin to understand a remarkable point in the Zohar on this week's parsha: the story of Yonah ben Amittai.

Yonah at the Bottom of the Ship

It is the story of the day after Yom Kippurim, the light of Yom Kippur, the ketores, and the whole secret of Yonah ben Amittai, who, despite receiving

prophecy, finds himself at the bottom of the ship, in unconscious slumber.

And it is specifically from there that the Tzaddik reorients himself. Specifically from the *ירכתי הספינה*, from the deathlike experience of nishmas Yisrael drawn into the body, as the Zohar describes, the secret of redemption begins to emerge.

Crying Out From the Abysmal Depths

It is specifically *מִבְּטֵן שְׂאוֹל*, from the deepest chaos and hopelessness, that a person cries out to HaKadosh Baruch Hu. Rebbe Nachman said this was his entire inyan. The whole Zohar is oriented to that same process. From there the Zohar turns to a point about Dovid Malka Meshicha on Daf Kuf-Tzadi-Ches, Amud Aleph.

Walking Along the Path

רבי חייא ורבי יצחק ורבי יוסי הוו אזלי באורחא. Rebbe Chiya, Rebbe Yitzchak, and Rebbe Yosi were walking along the path. Again: three friends on the path, an image of wandering with ideas rather than demanding immediate closure. This is the hermeneutical playfulness of the Zohar, the *שעשועין*—as they were

moving, they were also aware that they were moving.

The Unity of Maaseh and Machshavah

In that self-awareness there emerges the unity of thought and action. *Ma'aseh* is what I am doing. *Machshavah* is my ability to be aware of what I am doing while I am doing it. This is *kavana*: the joining of my inner awareness to the act itself. *הוו אזלי באורחא*—they were walking the path while present to the walking.

The Three Become Four

עד דהוו אזלי, פגע בהו רבי אבא. Then they encountered Rebbe Abba. Now the three become four.

The three always make room for the fourth. *Yud*, *hei*, and *vav* become *Yud-Kei-Vav-Kei*. Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov make room for the fourth leg of the chariot, Dovid Malka Meshicha.

The Fourth Leg

Shacharis, Mincha, and Maariv make room for Tikkun Chatzos or *hisbodedus*. The three meals of Shabbos make room for Melaveh Malkah. The three legs of the Avos require the fourth leg of Dovid Malka Meshicha.

So the three companions meet the fourth, Rebbe Abba. And Rebbe Chiya says: וְדָאֵי שְׂכִינְתָא בְּהָדָן. Now the Shechinah is certainly among us.

The Presence of the Shechinah

Why? Because the Shechinah is the final hei of the Shem Havayah, Malchus. Once the fourth is present—once the Avos are connected to Dovid, the three tefillos to hisbodedus, the three meals to Motzaei Shabbos—the Shem Havayah is complete. Then HaKadosh Baruch Hu's presence becomes manifest.

Rebbe Abba Opens the World

As they approached him, Rebbe Abba said: מִן הַיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר הוּצֵאתִי אֶת עַמִּי אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם לֹא בָחַרְתִּי בְּעִיר... וְאֶבְחַר בְּדָוִד.

Rebbe Abba opens the world with a pasuk. He opens pockets of air in which the letters become words, the words become a sentence, and the sentence becomes a house of experience in the Zohar.

Re-entering the Batim of the Chavraya

When we read the derashos of the Chavraya in the Zohar, we re-enter the *batim* they built for us. This is the secret of the Zohar as an *ir miklat*, as

the Ramchal explains at the opening of Adir BaMarom.

It is also the secret of the Zohar as Noach's *teivah*: the revelation of Binah, the womb of secrecy and protection in the midst of battle, in the raging sea itself.

The Zohar as Teivah

This is the secret of the neshama's survival within the body, the secret of Yonah ben Amittai descending into the *yarkesei hasfinah*, the secret of Moshe descending from Har Sinai to gather the *daas* of Klal Yisrael. The pasuk says: from the day I took Bnei Yisrael out of Mitzrayim, לֹא בָחַרְתִּי בְּעִיר, I did not choose a city, וְאֶבְחַר בְּדָוִד, but I chose Dovid. It begins with a place and ends with a person.

The Tzaddik Is the Place

And the neshama of Dovid is the place—הִנֵּה מְקוֹם אִתִּי. The secret of *makom*, of Malchus, is that it has nothing of its own and yet reveals whatever passes through it. לֵית לִיהּ מִגְרָמִיהּ כְּלוּם.

This is the secret of הַמְּקוֹם יִנְחָם אֶתְכֶם, the Makom HaMikdash, the place of translucency where *shamayim* and *aretz* are unified in simple presencing.

HaKadosh Baruch Hu says He was looking for a place in which to build a house for His Name, like the Mishkan, yet the pasuk ends with Dovid. The Zohar says: **האי קרא לאו רישא סיפא ולא סיפא רישא**.

Usually the secret is **נעוץ תחילתן בסופן**—beginning in end and end in beginning. But here that unity is not obvious. The pasuk starts with a city and ends with Dovid.

How the City Becomes Dovid

The question becomes: how does the city become Dovid, and how does Dovid become the city? This is the secret of *Ir Dovid*, of Tzion, Yerushalayim, and the Kodesh HaKodashim, because the Tzaddik is the place.

ליה לבחר בירושלים איבעי ליה. It should have said that HaKadosh Baruch Hu chose Yerushalayim. Why begin with the search for a place for the Shechinah and conclude with Dovid?

First the Head of the People

The answer is: when HaKadosh Baruch Hu's will awakens to build the city, the Beis HaMikdash, the geulah, He first looks at **רישא דנהיג עמי דקרתא**—the head who leads the people of the city. He does not first look for the place. He

looks first for the king, the melech, the Tzaddik yesod olam, the Tzaddik hador.

He looks for the one who channels the daas of Moshe in that generation, the magnetic force that draws hearts back to Yerushalayim, that gathers the nekudos tovos, as Rebbe Nachman describes at the end of Torah רפ"ב, the Tzaddik who gathers together the prayers of the children and weaves those good points into the *niggunim* of the future.

Through those *niggunim* the tefillos ascend and draw down the light of the Shechinah. When the desire for geulah emerges, HaKadosh Baruch Hu first looks to the head of the nation.

First the Shepherd, Then the City

ולבתר בני קרתא—only afterward does He build the city and make it a dwelling place. This is what the Zohar means: **לא בחרתי בעיר עד דאתסתכלנא בדוד למהוי רעיא על ישראל**.

There is no building of the city until the Tzaddik is revealed, until the *rosh bayis* is revealed. There is no house without the master of the house, without **ועמך כולם צדיקים**, without the innerpoint of Tzaddik shining through the Tzaddik yesod olam.

Crown Dovid First

That “*Tzaddiko shel Olam*” is HaKadosh Baruch Hu Himself, and from there the light expresses itself through the soul of Moshe Rabbeinu, the light of Rashbi, and the light of all the true Tzaddikim. So when HaKadosh Baruch Hu wants to build the Beis HaMikdash, He first seeks out the Tzaddik and crowns him king-Dovid HaMelech, that soul of Malchus, that roots of Mashiach—to stand at the head of the generation. Only then does He build the city. כלא קיימן ברעיא דנהיג ליה. The people stand upon the shepherd who leads them.

If the Shepherd Is Good

אי רעיא איהו טבא, טב ליה, טב למסא, טב לעמא. If the shepherd is good, then it is good for him, good for the city, and good for the people.

If the Tzaddik is good, if the hidden כ"ט, the *ohr haganuz*, is revealed through *nishmas Yisrael*, through the nekudah of goodness that can descend into the aftermath of *shevirah* and receive the *yud-gimmel middos harachamim* through the ketores—then all is טוב. If the shepherd is bad, woe to him, woe to the city, woe to the people.

VeErchar BeDovid Avdi

So HaKadosh Baruch Hu surveys the world, desires to build the Beis HaMikdash, and אוקים ברישא לדוד—places Dovid at the head. The stone that the builders despised which will ultimately be revealed to be the apex of the system.

This is the secret of מלכות גנוז ברדל"א, the descent that appears low, discarded, even taken from the trash—מאשפות ירים—yet is placed at the head. This is ואבחר בדוד עבדי.

My servant Dovid, not My son. My servant. The son who chooses to become like a servant. The one who has *hassagah* of a son yet chooses to live beyond *hassagah* like a servant, in the secret Rebbe Nachman calls the בן שנהפך לעבד.

There is the *eved* who knows nothing, the *ben* who knows everything, and the *ben* who chooses to act as an *eved*, who, despite knowing, chooses to rest in the truth that the deepest knowledge is to know nothing.

Lights of Purim

These are the lights of Purim: the lights of Moshe Rabbeinu, who dies only to emerge from within that very disintegration of *daas*, so as to reveal the true depths of *daas*, my own inner *nekudah* of Moshe, my own *nekudah* of Tzaddik, my own *nekudah* of Mashiach, and return it to the Tzaddik hador. To bring it as *terumah* for the Mishkan. To let Moshe awaken our positive points, and for us to return those positive points to Moshe, so that he can build the Mishkan of Hashem, the resting place of the *Shechinah*.

The Secret of Chiddush

This is the secret of Dovid HaMelech, the servant chosen by HaKadosh Baruch Hu. As R' Yitzchak Meir Morgenstern points out in the name of the Rebbe Rashab, the entirety of *Hemshech Samech-Vav* revolves around this point: to be a *בן שנתהפך להיות עבד*, to have *mochin* of Chochmah and grasp like a child who has access to the innermost chambers, yet relinquish the demand for mastery in favor of *תכלית* *הידיעה שלא נדע*, and to serve with the simplicity, wholesomeness, and joy of the humble servant.

מילתא חדתא שמענא. We have heard something new. The whole purpose of the world is to bring about chiddush.

Malchus and Newness

There is no *chiddush* without *Ohr Ein Sof* descending from the highest levels to the lowest, which is the secret of Malchus. Malchus is the lowest because it is the deepest vessel for revealing that all true newness comes only from the Infinite.

Every expression of Malchus, every expression of self, reveals the truth of truth in its own singularly unique way: *ayin*, absolute nothingness, the secret of *malchus ha'gnuzah b'Radla*, the secret of being a true servant of Hadhem. And from there comes true novelty, מילתא חדתא שמענא.

Chamesh and Sameach

חמ"ש is the secret of מילתא חדתא שמענא, because its *roshei teivos* spell *chamesh*. It is also the secret of the *kotzo shel yud*, which is the fifth level that rests upon the four letters of Hashem's Name: the *yud*, the *hei*, the *vav*, and the *hei*.

The process through which Hashem reveals Himself reflects itself in the descent from *kotzo shel yud*, which holds the *Ohr Ein Sof*, through the *yud* of Chochmah, into the *hei* of Binah,

through the *vav* of Ze'ir Anpin, and down to the final *hei* of Malchus.

It is also the *roshei teivos* of שמחה, because joy emerges wherever there is a revelation of *chiddush*, wherever more *Ohr Ein Sof* is revealed.

Every Chiddush Draws Down Light

Every chiddush in Torah, in joy, in family, in peach, in tefillah- every true reorientation- draws down light from the deepest depths, from the *Ohr Ein Sof* itself, beyond our grasp and yet always present.

Nishmas Yisrael has the power to draw that infinite light of Hashem from the *Yesh Ha'Amiti*, The True and Essential Existence, and reveal it below through the power of *chiddush*: to build the Beis HaMikdash, to build the Mishkan, to reveal a dwelling place down below for Hashem.

Rebbe Abba Opens Another Opening

All this emerges through those five stages- Keter, Chochmah, Binah, Ze'ir Anpin, and Malchus. Then Rebbe Abba opens again: פתח ואמר.

אשרי שאל יעקב בעזרו שברו על ה' אלקיו.

Why is the pasuk emphasizing Yaakov? Did Avraham and Yitzchak not also

trust HaKadosh Baruch Hu? The Zohar answers: Yaakov did not rely on his father or his mother when he was exiled from his brother, left alone, with no possessions. In that place he relied solely on Hashem. This is the existential condition of all of us: כי אבי ואמי עזבוני. Nishmas Yisrael, in the form of Yaakov Avinu, loses father and mother, Chochmah and Binah, the awareness of Hashem in our minds and in our hearts.

The Existential Space of Yaakov

He loses the light of father and mother because of his brother Eisav. From the place where unity should have unfolded, he is cast into concealment. It is a concealment within a concealment..

But it is specifically there, like Dovid HaMelech, when Yaakov is left with no stable worldly footing that he discovers the true source of his support. He crosses over the divide with nothing but his staff.

כי במקלי עברתי את הירדן.

The Apex of Knowledge is Unknowing

מקלי is *roshei teivos* of the truth that His holiness is always beyond ours, קדושתו למעלה מקדושתכם that His infinitude exceeds all human grasp. אמרתי אחכמה. והיא רחוקה ממני. I thought I would know, and I discovered that true knowing is not-knowing. After Yaakov loses everything- father, mother, brother, money- he has, in a sense, lost the whole *Shem Havayah*. And then he places all his trust in HaKadosh Baruch Hu, corresponding to the *kutzo shel yud* itself.

If You Are With Me

אם יהיה אלקים עמדי ושמרני. If You are with me and guard me, then I will return, then I will do what is asked. This is Yaakov's *tekifus ha'daas*, his intensity and clarity of vision which is simply a reflection of the *daas* of Moshe Rabbeinu within him. Yaakov is the externalization of Moshe; Moshe is the inwardness of Yaakov. And both are bound up with the light of Dovid HaMelech, the secret of the emergent redemption.

Immediately/Miyad: The Light of M'oshe, Y'aakov, and D'ovid

Yaakov, Moshe, and Dovid are *roshei teivos* of מיד. This is the secret of תיכף ומיד—Moshe, Yaakov, Dovid, the power of the Tzaddikim to all but demand the redemption, thereby hastening its arrival.

These are three manifestations of the *daas* of Moshe, revealed through the Malchus of Dovid and through the Tiferes of Yaakov, and like Dovid, Yaakov has nothing of his own and he places all trust in HaKadosh Baruch Hu alone.

The Boldness of Bitachon

The Leshem Shevo V'Achlama explains that this is the intensity and courage of bitachon: the certainty that what the Tzaddik wants is what HaKadosh Baruch Hu wants to reveal, because Moshe, Rashbi, and all the true Tzaddikim are *mashpia* the *daas* of HaKadosh Baruch Hu into the world and into the heart of every soul.

That is what Yaakov is doing when he says: I have nothing, but I will force Your hand, כביכול. If You are with me, I will be with You.

As brazen as it seems, this work is not called *lo lishmah*. Someone who gives

tzedakah on condition that his child live, someone acting from externality and mixed motives, is nevertheless considered authentic, because the most essential thing there is is the *maaseh* itself.

It does not matter that I am not yet pure. I still say: HaKadosh Baruch Hu, I will be with You if You are with me.

Everyday Akeidah

It is Yaakov who teaches that the Tzaddikim, and we with them, are willing to undergo whatever we must, again and again, for HaKadosh Baruch Hu. We break our minds, push beyond our boundaries, and reveal that we are capable of more than we thought yesterday.

A little calmer. A little slower. A little quieter. A little humbler. Slower to anger, less animalistic in our instincts. Even the small refinements of daily life– how we speak, how we eat, how we respond– become moments of *avodah*. Each of these moments of self overcoming is a form of *mesirus nefesh*.

The Persistent Affirmation of Meaning

All of this traces back to the greatest *mesirus nefesh*, the Akeidas Yitzchak. In

truth, a person passes through a small Akeidah countless times each day whenever they choose to act for the sake of HaKadosh Baruch Hu and not for their own sake.

Every mitzvah contains that element, every restraint contains that element, every choice to remain aligned with meaning rather than impulse is a form of offering oneself up to Hashem. It is the persistent affirmation of meaning from within the difficulty itself.

Malchus as Bittul

This is the secret of Dovid HaMelech, the king of Klal Yisrael. Dovid possesses nothing of his own, yet he becomes the vessel for everything. This is the mystery of מלכות גנוז ברדל"א: the nothingness that becomes everything precisely because it is translucent enough to allow the Infinite light of Hashem to pass through it. The secret of *bittul* is the secret of Malchus, and the roots of *bittul* lies in Chochmah–in the secret of אבא יסד ברתא– because Chochmah itself is the flash of self-nullification before the Infinite.

Yesh Shever BeMitzrayim

The pasuk says: **וירא יעקב כי יש שבר במצרים**. Yaakov saw that there was *shever* in Mitzrayim. On the surface this means sustenance, grain. But the word also contains the resonance of *shvirah*, a breaking rooted in the primordial worlds of chaos and the shattering of the vessels. Yaakov saw that there was a breaking in Mitzrayim.

Hope Inside the Chaos

Within that breaking, Yaakov perceived possibility. The chaos itself awakens hope. The descent itself becomes the doorway to ascent. From the collapse that follows Har Sinai, from the shattering of the *eigel* and the revelation of teshuvah, emerges the deepest proclamation: **אין יאוש בעולם כלל**.

There is shever, but there is also **יש שבר**, there is something there, a residual trace of meaning from within which rebuilding is always already taking place.

Yaakov Saw the Trauma of Exile

The Zohar explains that Yaakov foresaw the trauma of exile in Mitzrayim. He saw the shattering that the Jewish people would endure. Yet instead of retreating from that vision, **שוי תקוותיה**,

בקודשא בריך הוא – he placed his hope directly in HaKadosh Baruch Hu. Rather than withdrawing from the reality of exile, Yaakov stepped forward into it with bitachon.

They Never Shifted From Faith

The children of Yaakov endured the breaking of exile – **סבלו תבירו דגלותא** – yet **לא אשתנו מיגו רזא דמהימנותא**. They did not shift from the secret of faith. Faith remains a secret even when a person tries to understand it. As the Baal HaTanya explains, *emunah* ultimately rests beyond comprehension, rooted in the impossible paradox that upholds opposites in unity. It stands upon the paradox of **אני ואין בבת אחת** – the simultaneous reality of something and nothingness.

This paradox is the secret of Malchus, the secret of Dovid HaMelech, who reveals the light of Yerushalayim and the daas of Moshe Rabbeinu. Even in exile, the Jewish people did not allow the name of HaKadosh Baruch Hu to disappear from their mouths. **ושמא דקודשא בריך הוא בגלותא רגיל בפומייהו**

Even the Apikorsus of a Yid

This does not mean they were always consciously invoking the Shem Hashem. It does not even mean they were always praying. But every word uttered by the Jewish soul- even words of rebellion or doubt- ultimately contains the hidden resonance of the Divine Name. As R' Simcha Bunim of Pshischa explains, once prophecy ceased there is no longer a clear category of *apikorsus*. If one listens deeply enough, even the cry of denial carries the whisper of שמע ישראל ה' שמע אלקינו ה' אחד beneath it.

The Name in Exile

Thus the Zohar says: ושמא דקודשא בריך הוא בגלותא רגיל בפומייהו. Even in exile, the name of HaKadosh Baruch Hu remained present in their speech. This is why, when Moshe Rabbeinu says, ואמרו לי מה שמו, the Jewish people will ask him the name of Hashem.

Why would they ask? Because they already knew the name.

דהוו ידעי ליה ולא אנשו ליה לעלמין—they knew Him and never forgot Him, even in exile. They wanted to test Moshe Rabbeinu: does he truly know the name that they themselves had preserved through the darkness?

The Merit of Bearing It for Hashem's Sake

They knew Hashem even within the *shvirah*. They endured the breaking of exile על קודשא בריך הוא—for the sake of HaKadosh Baruch Hu. And therefore, says the Zohar, they merited redemption, miracles, and signs. Because these holy souls- these אותיות, are the living letters of Klal Yisrael- they descend from the highest heights above to bear the fractures of the body and the world for the sake of HaKadosh Baruch Hu. How much more so will merit redemption and the life of the world to come. But the world to come- עלמא דאתי -is not only a future state. It is the world that is constantly emerging into consciousness even now.

They Walked Away as One

After this teaching, the Zohar says: אזלו כולהו כחדא. They all continued walking together as one. And the Zohar moves on to further teachings. But this point of light remains: the daas of Moshe Rabbeinu is revealed specifically through the *bittul* of every Yid. Our task is to gather the sparks of Moshe within ourselves and return them to the Tzaddik, bringing Moshe into Eretz Yisrael.

The Holy Books of the Tzaddikim are Passageways

This happens through connection to the words of the Tzaddikim in the *sefarim hakedoshim*.

Especially those sefarim in which the *neshama* of the Tzaddik truly resides—Likkutei Moharan, Leshem Shevo Ve'Achlamah, the *maamarim* of the Admor Ha'emtzai, Chazal themselves. Every teaching of Torah carries the imprint of the Tzaddik who revealed it. The sefer itself is only a passageway to the light of the soul through whom the teachings emerged. As the Zohar explains in Parshas Vayakhel, the various forms of books serve as conduits between *Tórah Shebichsav* and *Tórah Sheba'al Peh*. The book is a portal, a bridge through which the soul of the author—the Tzaddik—continues to speak.

Redemption Through the Sefer

This is the meaning of the famous phrase: **בְּהַאי סְפָרָא יִפְקֹון מִן גְּלוּתָא בְּרַחֲמֵי**. Through this sefer they will leave exile with mercy. It does not mean only that one day redemption will emerge from these teachings. It means that properly studying these sefarim- connecting to the daas of the Tzaddik and awakening the daas within ourselves- is in and of itself a form of present redemption. It is the gathering of the scattered sparks of Moshe Rabbeinu within Klal Yisrael. And through that gathering, the Mishkan is rebuilt within the heart, the Shechinah rests once again, and the light of Mashiach begins to reveal itself even now.