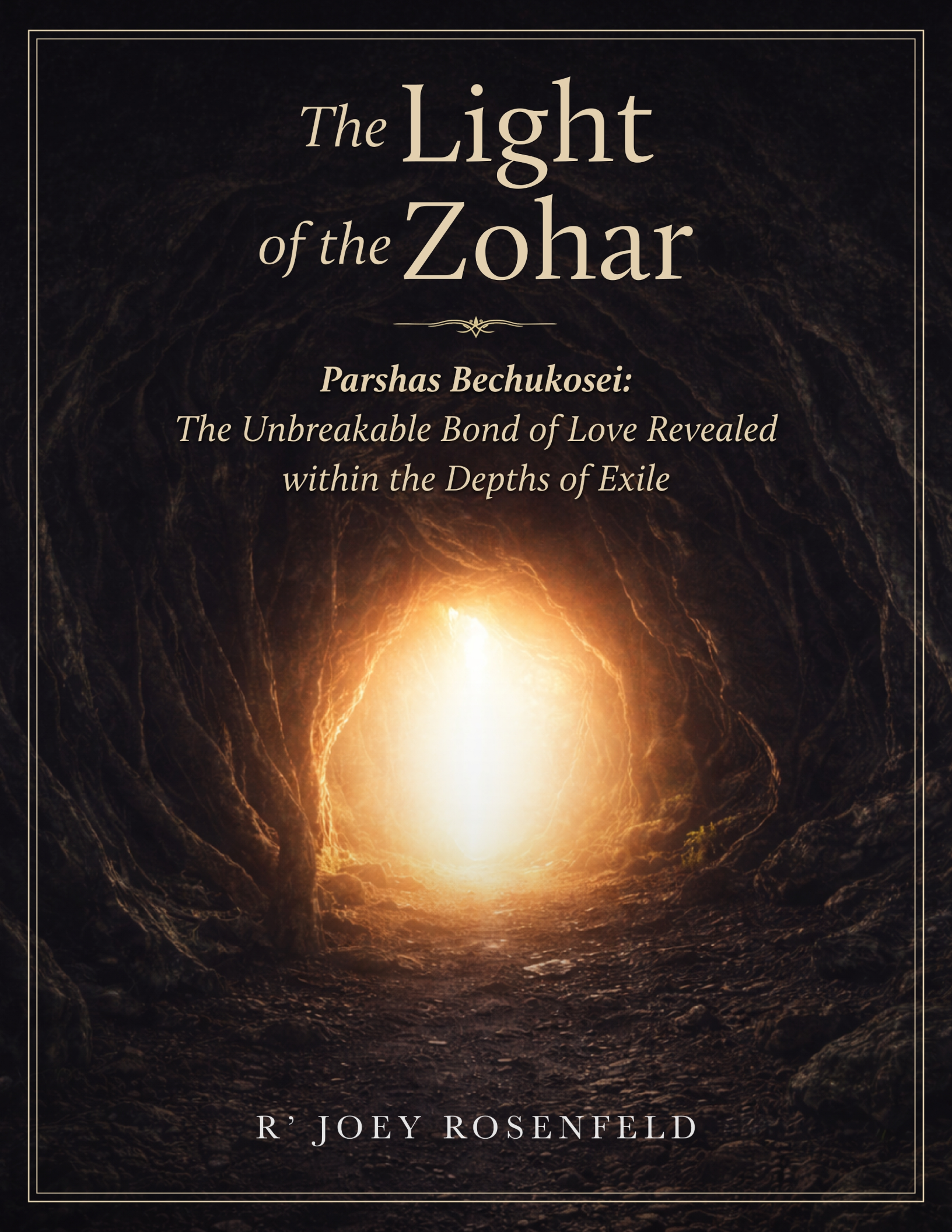


The background of the entire cover is a photograph of a dark, cavernous tunnel. The walls are rugged and textured, with some small plants visible on the right side. A bright, warm light emanates from the end of the tunnel, creating a strong contrast with the dark surroundings. The light is circular and has a soft, glowing edge.

The Light *of the* Zohar



*Parshas Bechukosei:
The Unbreakable Bond of Love Revealed
within the Depths of Exile*

R' JOEY ROSENFELD

— *The Light of the Zohar* —

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The Light of Rashbi Within Concealment

The Zohar HaKadosh reveals the secret of finding HaKadosh Baruch Hu specifically after revelation appears to have disappeared. The light of Moshe Rabbeinu represents clarity, direct illumination, certainty, and the unmistakable awareness that Hashem is present within the world. The light of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, however, emerges specifically within concealment, within the vessels of Binah, within the experience of fragmentation and distance. The Zohar is therefore not merely a mystical commentary, but a book of remembrance that teaches the soul how to remember Hashem even after the obvious signs of connection have fallen away. It teaches that even when a person feels removed from holiness, an irreducible trace of the Divine Presence still remains hidden within the depths of the self. This is why the Zohar speaks in the language of exile, night, concealment, Aramaic translation, and subterranean caves. The entire sefer is dedicated to revealing that even within the darkness itself there remains a hidden bond of love that cannot be severed. Instead of denying concealment, Rabbi Shimon enters directly into concealment and uncovers the light hidden within it. The deepest revelation of Rashbi is therefore that the places which appear most distant from Hashem are often the very places where the deepest forms of connection are waiting to emerge.

The Tochachah and the Experience of Distance

Parashas Bechukosai confronts the soul with the terrifying possibility that a person can lose their sense of connection to HaKadosh Baruch Hu. The Tochachah describes a world where blessing appears to withdraw, where clarity darkens, and where exile enters directly into consciousness itself. Every person knows this experience on some level, because every person eventually encounters moments where the light recedes and certainty disappears. The night arrives, vulnerability returns, and the soul begins wondering whether connection still exists at all. The Zohar does not deny the existence of this concealment, nor does it attempt to soften the harshness of exile. Instead, it reveals that within the concealment itself there remains a hidden point that never disappears completely. There is always an inward remainder of holiness, even when everything external appears fractured and broken. The soul may lose access to the higher illuminations of certainty, but it never loses the innermost possibility of Emunah. The Tochachah therefore becomes not merely a description of punishment, but the revelation of the hidden place where unconditional love is uncovered beneath all external forms of distance.

The Secret of Creating the Name

The Zohar HaKadosh in Parashas Bechukosai opens a profound doorway into the mystery of redemption by revealing that the revelation of the Divine Name is dependent, so to speak, upon the awakening of the human being below. The Zohar teaches on the verse “וַיַּעַשׂ דָּוִד שֵׁם” that Dovid HaMelech “made” a Name for HaKadosh Baruch Hu. At first glance this language appears impossible. Can a human being create the Divine Name? Can finite existence add anything to the Infinite One Himself? Yet the Zohar insists that through Dovid HaMelech’s work, through his attachment to Torah, through his midnight songs and yearning, he revealed the Divine Name within the world. The Name was always there, hidden within concealment, but it awaited the awakening of Malchus below in order to become manifest.

This is one of the deepest foundations of Pnimityus HaTorah. HaKadosh Baruch Hu desired a world in which revelation would emerge specifically through the participation of limited beings living within concealment. The Infinite One, whose presence fills all worlds and surrounds all worlds equally, chose to create a reality in which His revelation within consciousness depends upon the yearning of those below. Therefore the work of the Jewish people is not merely to receive revelation from above, but to awaken it from below. The soul longs for redemption, imagines redemption, searches for redemption, and in doing so draws

the hidden light of redemption into the world itself.

This is the secret of the *shemo shel Mashiach*, the name of the redeemer. Every person must create within themselves a living image of what redemption means. The human being must become capable of envisioning a world illuminated by the unity of HaKadosh Baruch Hu. Through that longing, through that inward crowning of the Divine Presence, the light of Mashiach begins revealing itself. The revelation above unfolds in accordance with the desire below. The awakening of the lower worlds becomes the vessel through which the upper worlds shine.

Avodah Letzorech Gavoah

The Zohar reveals that this relationship between above and below is the secret of *Avodah Letzorech Gavoah*, the ascendent purpose of serving G-d. Human action appears small and fragile, yet the entire structure of revelation depends upon it. Chazal teach that without Klal Yisrael crowning HaKadosh Baruch Hu as King, it is as if His Kingship would remain unrevealed within creation. The Infinite light itself is beyond all change, beyond all concealment, beyond all description, yet the revelation of that light within the consciousness of created beings unfolds specifically through human effort and desire.

This is why the tzaddikim speak of the mysterious partnership between divine knowledge and human choice. Everything

comes from above. Every awakening, every thought, every movement toward holiness is already rooted in the Infinite light of HaKadosh Baruch Hu. Yet once the world of *tzimtzum* emerges, once concealment appears and the human being experiences distance and limitation, the entire structure changes. Within the experience of creation, it appears as if revelation depends on us. The human being opens spaces within reality through which the Divine Presence may shine.

The Zohar repeatedly returns to this mystery. The *chevraya* speak words of Torah below and those very words awaken lights above. Torah becomes the bridge between concealment and revelation. The awakening below summons forth the hidden abundance above. Therefore the tzaddikim give names to HaKadosh Baruch Hu. Just as Adam HaRishon named creation, and just as every generation seeks the name of Mashiach, so too the soul calls out to HaKadosh Baruch Hu through particular traits and names. Through these names the Infinite Essence reveals itself within graspable form. The Name is not created in essence, but it becomes revealed through the yearning and recognition of the lower worlds.

Dovid HaMelech and the Midnight Awakening

Dovid HaMelech embodies this work more than any other figure. The Zohar describes how Dovid would arise at the midpoint of the night and sing praise to HaKadosh Baruch Hu until

dawn emerged. Midnight represents the deepest concealment, the place where the world appears empty of light. It is specifically there that Dovid awakens. He does not wait for revelation to descend from above. He creates the vessel for revelation within darkness itself.

This is the secret of “he awakens the morning.” Dovid HaMelech is not woken up by the day, rather he awakens the dawn. Redemption does not merely descend automatically from heaven. The soul awakens toward redemption from within concealment itself. The yearning of Malchus becomes the birthplace of light. Therefore the Zohar says that Dovid “made” the Name. Through his songs in darkness he revealed the hidden light already concealed within reality.

This is also the mystery of the possibility of *chilul* Hashem. If human beings possess the ability to conceal the Divine Name through their actions, then they also possess the ability to reveal that Name through their actions. Concealment and revelation are both entrusted to the consciousness of man. The world of *tzimtzum* allows for both exile and redemption. The human being stands at the center of that mystery.

Malchus and the Poverty of the World

The Zohar then moves into the secret of Malchus, the realm of apparent emptiness and concealment. Malchus appears impoverished because it possesses nothing of its own. It is the world of brokenness, fragmentation, exile, and

distance. Yet precisely because Malchus is empty, it becomes the vessel capable of receiving everything.

The work of the soul is to look upon this apparent emptiness and refuse to abandon it. The tzaddik enters desolation and discovers a Name hidden there. The soul enters concealment and uncovers the hidden light buried within it. This is the deeper meaning of *tzedakah*. The human being gives fullness to emptiness, not by escaping the broken world, but by revealing the hidden Divine Presence already concealed within it.

The *Tochachah* itself emerges from this mystery. Externally the curses appear terrifying, signs of abandonment and rupture. Yet the Zohar insists that the Tochachah conceals an inner love. The harshness belongs only to the external surface of Malchus. Beneath the concealment rests an unbreakable bond between HaKadosh Baruch Hu and Klal Yisrael. The task of the soul is to descend into concealment and uncover the hidden love concealed within judgment itself.

The Waters of Teveria

The Zohar places Rebbe Yitzchak and Rebbe Yehuda near the waters of Teveria at midnight. Teveria becomes the symbol of Malchus itself. It is the hidden place, the watery depth, the realm of imagination and concealment. The waters of the Kinneret reflect the secret of *techeiles*, the chain of association leading from sea to sky to the Kisei HaKavod. Teveria

represents the mysterious capacity to perceive hidden connections where externally no connection appears.

Rebbe Yitzchak represents Gevurah, the constriction and severity of tzimtzum. Rebbe Yehuda represents Malchus, the concealment of kingship within exile. Together they stand in the darkness near the waters of Teveria. Yet even there they refuse to separate themselves from the Tree of Life. Even within concealment the soul continues speaking words of Torah. Even in exile the bond remains alive.

This is the deepest work of all. The soul must discover how to remain attached precisely in the place where attachment appears impossible. Redemption is born not from escaping concealment but from uncovering the hidden Divine Presence within concealment itself.

The Love Hidden Within Exile

The culmination of the Zohar arrives with the verse “וְאֵלֶיךָ יָשׁוּב וְאֵלֶיךָ יָשׁוּב וְאֵלֶיךָ יָשׁוּב.” Even in the land of their enemies, HaKadosh Baruch Hu says that He will never reject Klal Yisrael. Rabbi Elazar reveals that this covenant is rooted not merely in obligation but in love. The relationship between HaKadosh Baruch Hu and Klal Yisrael possesses an irreducible intimacy that no exile can sever.

The Zohar gives a mashal of a man whose beloved is found in a foul-smelling marketplace. If not for his beloved being there,

he would never enter such a place. Yet because she is there, the entire marketplace becomes fragrant in his eyes. The place itself is transformed through love.

So too HaKadosh Baruch Hu says to Klal Yisrael: even when you find yourselves in exile, even within the darkest concealment, I remain with you because you are My kallah. The bond itself transforms the place of exile. The tannery becomes the perfume shop. The foul odors become sweet fragrances because love uncovers the hidden essence concealed beneath external appearance.

This is the deepest revelation of Mashiach. Redemption is not merely the removal of darkness. Redemption is the uncovering of the hidden love that was present within darkness all along.

Revealing the Name of Mashiach

The entire avodah returns finally to the mystery of the Name. To reveal the Name of Mashiach means to uncover the irreducible bond between HaKadosh Baruch Hu and Klal Yisrael even within concealment. It means to stand within the concealment of Malchus and nevertheless sing toward the dawn like Dovid HaMelech. It means to uncover the hidden fragrance buried within the shuk shel borski. It means to believe that even in exile the covenant remains unbroken.

HaKadosh Baruch Hu allows the human being to participate in revelation itself. He allows us,

so to speak, to create the Name through our yearning, our Torah, our songs, and our faith. The Infinite One descends into the world of free choice and grants significance to human longing. Through that longing the hidden light of Mashiach begins to shine.

And in that way the soul transforms concealment into revelation, exile into intimacy, and the empty spaces of Malchus into vessels overflowing with the light of Ein Od Milvado.

The Emunah That Remains After Everything Falls Away

The Zohar teaches that after all external forms of revelation disappear, one final point still remains within the soul. That point is the light of the Shechinah, the hidden residue of Divine Presence that survives even within the deepest concealment. The language used to describe this point is the Malchus of the Kesser of Malchus, the Emunah that remains after everything else has collapsed. Sometimes a person can still access ordinary faith, a direct feeling of trust and connection to HaKadosh Baruch Hu. Sometimes even that disappears, and all that remains is Mesirus Nefesh, the willingness to sacrifice oneself for the sake of faith even without feeling anything internally. Yet there are moments when a person cannot even access that strength, and all that remains is the belief that somewhere within themselves there still exists the capacity to believe again. That final point is the deepest level of Emunah

because it survives even after every other structure has broken apart. It is the hidden pulse of the Shechinah within Nishmas Yisrael, the quiet certainty that HaKadosh Baruch Hu has not abandoned the soul. The greatness of this Emunah is specifically that it exists within darkness rather than outside of it. The purpose of creation is therefore uncovered not through escaping concealment, but through discovering the hidden point of faith concealed inside concealment itself.

Hashem's Perpetual Presence

The Zohar interprets the verse “*VeNasati Mishkani Besochechem*” as the revelation that HaKadosh Baruch Hu leaves His Shechinah with Klal Yisrael even in exile. The Mishkan becomes a mashkon, a collateral that guarantees the permanence of the relationship between Hashem and His people. Even when revelation withdraws and the world enters concealment, HaKadosh Baruch Hu leaves behind the most precious element of Himself within the hearts of Klal Yisrael. The mashal given by the Zohar is of someone who loves another person so deeply that before departing they leave behind their most treasured possession as proof that they will eventually return. The Shechinah therefore becomes the eternal reminder that exile is never abandonment. The fact that the Shechinah remains within Klal Yisrael means that the bond itself survives every concealment and every distance. The soul may feel disconnected externally, but inwardly the covenant remains fully intact because the

Shechinah still dwells within it. This is why the Zohar insists that the Mishkan remains with Klal Yisrael even during the harshness of galus. The hidden presence of the Shechinah becomes the guarantee that no exile can ever completely sever the relationship between HaKadosh Baruch Hu and His people.

Yehoshua and the Guardianship of the Shechinah

After the sin of the Eigel, Moshe Rabbeinu removes the Ohel from the camp and entrusts it to Yehoshua bin Nun. The Zohar explains that this does not mean the Shechinah departed from Klal Yisrael completely, but rather that the Shechinah required guardianship during a time of spiritual fracture. Yehoshua becomes the faithful guardian of the mashkon because he embodies the quality of the moon in relation to the sun. Moshe Rabbeinu represents the overwhelming illumination of the sun, while Yehoshua represents the diminished but enduring light of Malchus that survives even after revelation withdraws. This is why Yehoshua never leaves the Ohel, because his entire task is to guard the hidden continuity of the Divine Presence during exile. The Tzaddikim of every generation inherit this responsibility of preserving the hidden light of the Shechinah within Klal Yisrael. Even when the people themselves struggle to remember the covenant, the Tzaddik safeguards the inner continuity of faith until the light can once again become revealed. The Shechinah therefore never

disappears from the world entirely, because it remains protected within the hearts of the faithful. The existence of the Tzaddik is itself proof that the covenant between Hashem and Klal Yisrael can never truly be broken. Through the Tzaddik, the hidden continuity of Divine love survives every concealment.

The Deer That Turns Back

Rebbi Yitzchak then opens with the verse “*Domeh Dodi Litzvi*,” comparing HaKadosh Baruch Hu to a deer that runs away while continuously turning its head backward to gaze at its beloved. The image captures the entire paradox of exile and concealment described throughout the Zohar. HaKadosh Baruch Hu appears to withdraw, revelation appears to depart, and the soul experiences distance and longing. Yet even within the movement of concealment, the Divine Presence continuously turns back toward Klal Yisrael. The deer never fully abandons the beloved because the entire concealment exists only to deepen desire and awaken longing. The Zohar describes HaKadosh Baruch Hu descending through all the worlds simply to gaze through the cracks in the walls at His beloved children. Even when the palace has been destroyed and the queen has been exiled, the King continuously returns to look upon the child He left behind as collateral. The walls of concealment themselves become filled with hidden openings through which Divine love continues flowing into the world. This is the secret of “*Meitzitz min bacharakim*,” the

Divine gaze peering through every crack within exile. Concealment therefore becomes not the absence of love, but the hidden choreography through which love becomes even deeper and more eternal.