

The Light *of the* Zohar



Parshas Beshalach:
*Uniting the Light of Chochma and the
Vessels of Binah Together as One*

*The Frightening Secret of Yichud in
Times of Smallness and the Light of Atik*



R' JOEY ROSENFELD

— *The Light of the Zohar* —

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Vessels of Binah Together as One**



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נִיאָמַר יי' אֶל מֹשֶׁה מַה תַּצַּעֲק אֵלַי. מַלֵּה דָא הָא אוֹקְמוּהּ בְּסִפְרָא דְצִנִּיעוּתָא, וְתַמְנָן הוּא כְּתָא דִּילִיָּה, נִיאָמַר יי' אֶל מֹשֶׁה. ר' יְהוּדָה פִּתַּח וְאָמַר, (יוֹנָה ב' ב') נִיתְפַּלֵּל יוֹנָה אֶל יי' אֱלֹהֵיוּ מִמַּעַי הַדְּגָה, מַה כְּתִיב לַעֲלִילָא, נִימְנָן יי' דְּגָדוּל. נִימְנָן: כְּמָה דְּאֵת אָמַר (דְּנִיָּאֵל א' ה') נִימְנָן לֵהֶם הַמֶּלֶךְ דְּבַר יוֹם בְּיוֹמוֹ. אֲשֶׁר מִנָּה אֶת מַאֲכֻלָּכֶם.

אָבֵל הָאֵי קָרָא הָכִי מִבְּעֵי לִיָּה, נִימְנָן יי' אֶת יוֹנָה לְדָג, דְּהוּא מִנָּה הוּא דְמִשְׁדָּר לִיָּה. אֲלֵא נִדְאִי, הֵהוּא דְג הוּא הֵנָּה מִנָּה לִיוֹנָה, לְנִטְרָא לִיָּה מִן שְׂאָר נוֹנֵי יָמָא, וְיִהְיֶה גִיז בְּגִיָּה. נִכִּינָן דְּאֲעֲלִיָּה בְּגִיָּה, חֲמָא יוֹנָה בְּמַעוּי, פּוֹתִיָּא דְאֵתֵר יָמָא (נ"א פּוֹתִיָּא דֵאֲתֵר דְּמַעוּי) כְּמוֹ הִיכְלָא בְּרַבָּא, וְתִרְכִין עֵינֵי דְהֵהוּא נוֹנָא, דְּנִהְרִין כְּשִׂמְשָׁא, וְאִבְנִי טִבָּא הֵנָּה בְּמַעוּי, דְּנִהְרִי לִיָּה, וְהֵנָּה חֲמִי כָל מַה דִּי בִימָא וּבִתְהוֹמוּי.

וְאִי תִימָא, אִי הָכִי, מֵאִי דְכְּתִיב, (יוֹנָה ב' ג') קָרָאתִי מִצָּרָה לִי, הָא לֹא אֲתַחֲזִי, דְּכָל הָאֵי קוּחָא הֵנָּה לִיָּה. אֲלֵא נִדְאִי, כִּינָן דְּאֲחֲמִי לִיָּה הֵהוּא נוֹנָא, כָּל מַה דִּי בִימָא וּבִתְהוֹמוּי, מִיָּת, דְּלֹא יָכִיל תִּלְתִּי יוֹמִין לְמַסְבֵּל. כְּדִין עֲקַת לִיָּה לִיוֹנָה.

דְּאָמַר רַבִּי אֱלֶעָזָר, כִּינָן דְּחֲמָא יוֹנָה כָּל הֵהוּא קוּחָא, הֵנָּה חֲדָי. אָמַר קוּדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא, וּמַה תִּבְעֵי יִתִּיר, לֵהָא אֲעִילְנָא לָךְ הָכָא. מַה עֲבַד, קִטְל לֵההוּא נוֹנָא וּמִיָּת, וְכָל שְׂאָר נוֹנֵי יָמָא, הוּוּ סַחְרֵי סַחְרֵיָּה דְהֵהוּא נוֹנָא, דָּא נִשְׁיָךְ לִיָּה מֵהָאֵי גִיסָא, וְדָא נִשְׁיָךְ לִיָּה מֵהָאֵי גִיסָא. כְּדִין חֲמָא יוֹנָה גְרָמוּי בְּעֻקּוֹ, מִיָּד נִיתְפַּלֵּל יוֹנָה אֶל יי'.

בְּקִדְמִיתָא דְג, וְהִשְׁתָּא דְגָה. כְּמָה דְּאֵת אָמַר, (שְׁמוֹת ז' כ"א) וְהַדְּגָה אֲשֶׁר בִּיאֹר מִתֵּה. וְכִדִּין כְּתִיב, קָרָאתִי מִצָּרָה לִי. וְלֹא כְּתִיב הִיָּתִי בְּצָרָה, אוֹ יִשְׁבַּתִּי בְּצָרָה, אֲלֵא קָרָאתִי, מֵהֵהוּא עֲקוּ דְעֲאֻקִּין לִי נוֹנֵי יָמָא. מִבְּטָן שְׂאוּל שְׁוַעֲתִי, דְּהָא מִיָּת. וְלֹא כְּתִיב מִבְּטָן חִי, אוֹ מִבְּטָן דְּג, אֲלֵא דְנִדְאִי הֵנָּה מִיָּת. כִּינָן דְּצִלִּי צִלּוֹתִיָּה, קִבִּיל לִיָּה קוּדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא, וְאַחֲרֵיהּ לִיָּה לֵהָאֵי נוֹנָא, וְאַפִּיק לִיָּה לִיבְשִׁתָּא לַעֲיִינִיהוֹן דְּכָלָא. דְּכְּתִיב, נִיאָמַר יי' לְדָג וַיִּקָּא אֶת יוֹנָה. וְחֲמוּ כְּלָהוּ, עֲבִידְתָּא דְקוּדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא. מַה כְּתִיב, נִיתְפַּלֵּל יוֹנָה אֶל יי' אֱלֹהֵיוּ מִמַּעַי הַדְּגָה, לֵאדָּתֵר דְּהֵנָּה קִשִּׁיר בִּיָּה, מִשְׁמַע דְּכְּתִיב יי' אֱלֹהִיוּ, וְלֹא כְּתִיב נִיתְפַּלֵּל אֶל יי' וְלֹא יִתִּיר, אֲלֵא יי' אֱלֹהִיוּ. אוֹף הָכָא, נִיאָמַר יי' אֶל מֹשֶׁה מַה תַּצַּעֲק אֵלַי. אֵלַי דִּיִּיקָא.

דְּבַר אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל נִיסְעוּ. נִיסְעוּ מִלֹּאסְגָּאָה מְלִין, לֹאוּ עֵידְנָא דְצִלּוֹתָא הִשְׁתָּא. נִיסְעוּ, וְכִי לֹאֵן אֲתֵר פִּקְדִּין לֹון דִּינְטִלוֹן, דְּהָא עַל יָמָא הוּוּ שְׂרָאָן. אֲלֵא אֲהַדְרִי לַעֲלִילָא, דְּכְּתִיב מַה תַּצַּעֲק אֵלַי, דְּהָא כְּלָהוּ בְּאֲתֵר דָּא קִיָּיִמִי. נַעַל דָּא נִיסְעוּ, יִנְטִלוֹן מִן דָּא, דְּלֹאוּ עֵידְנָא הוּא.

“And Hashem said to Moshe: Why do you cry out to Me?”

This matter has already been established in the Sifra d’Tzniuta, and there its secret is revealed.

“And Hashem said to Moshe.”

Rebbe Yehudah opened and said: “And Yonah prayed to Hashem his God from the belly of the fish” (Yonah 2:2). What is written earlier? “And Hashem appointed a great fish.”

“And He appointed”—as it says, “And the king appointed for them a daily portion” (Daniel 1:5), meaning: He assigned and prepared their sustenance.

But if so, the verse should have said: And Hashem appointed Yonah for the fish, since it is Yonah who was being directed and assigned. Rather, certainly, the fish itself was appointed for Yonah—to guard him from the other fish of the sea and to conceal him within it.

And once Yonah entered inside the fish, he saw within its belly an expanse of the sea, like a vast palace. The two eyes of that fish shone like the sun, and a precious stone was inside it, illuminating him. Through this light he saw everything that was in the sea and in its depths.

If you say: if so, why does it say, “I cried out from my distress” (Yonah 2:3)? For no distress seems present—there was such spaciousness!

Rather, certainly, once the fish showed Yonah all that was in the sea and its depths, Yonah died, for he could not endure such a vision for three days. Then distress overtook him.

As Rebbe Elazar said: when Yonah first saw all that spaciousness, he rejoiced. The Holy One, blessed be He, said: What more do you seek? I have brought you here.

What did He do? He caused that fish to die. And then all the other fish of the sea surrounded it—this one biting from one side, that one biting from the other. Then Yonah saw himself in anguish, and immediately Yonah prayed to Hashem.

At first it says fish (דג), and afterward female fish (דגה), as it is written: “And the fish in the Nile died” (Shemot 7:21).

Only then is it written: “I cried out from my distress.” It does not say: I was in distress, nor I sat

in distress, but I cried out—from the crushing confinement imposed on him by the fish of the sea.

“From the belly of Sheol I cried out”—for he had died. It does not say from the belly of life, nor from the belly of a fish, but rather from the belly of Sheol, because indeed he was dead.

Once he prayed his prayer, the Holy One, blessed be He, accepted it, revived the fish, and brought Yonah out onto dry land before the eyes of all. As it is written: “And Hashem spoke to the fish, and it vomited Yonah onto dry land.” And all saw the deed of the Holy One, blessed be He.

What is written? “And Yonah prayed to Hashem his God from the belly of the fish.”

From the place to which he was bound—thus it says Hashem his God, and not merely Hashem.

So too here: “Why do you cry out to Me?” — to Me, specifically.

“Speak to the Children of Israel and let them journey.”

Journey—not with many words. Now is not the time for prayer.

“Let them journey”—but to where were they commanded to go, since they were standing by the sea?

Rather, return to what was said above: “Why do you cry out to Me?” For all of them are standing in this very place. Therefore it says: Let them journey—let them move from here, for this is not the time.

Drawing the Light of Moshe into the Vessels of Rebbe Shimon

Be'ezras Hashem, we are continuing with our weekly series of shiurim on the Zohar, drawing down the light of Moshe Rabbeinu into the vessels of Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai. This is not merely a poetic image; it is the basic architecture of Torah and our lives. Moshe Rabbeinu is *Chochma*, the watery depths of simple unity, *bittul* in its deepest form, revealing the quiet presence of *Ohr Ein Sof* that rests only in a space of nothingness. Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai is the world of *Binah* as it appears from within concealment: the realm of vessels, details, conflict, and the felt distance that forms the texture of human experience.

The Water of Moshe's Chochma and the Fire of Rashbi's Binah

This is the work of bringing the water of Moshe Rabbeinu—*min hamayim meshisihu*—into the flames of the Zohar HaKadosh, into the *medura* of Rebbe Shimon, which is the secret of the *Butzina Kadisha*, the burning desire that animates the Zohar itself.

This meeting point is the *chibur* of *chochmah* and *binah*: the *chochmah* of Torah as it descends from Moshe Rabbeinu, and the *Binah* of the Zohar as revealed through Rebbe Shimon. As the Ramchal explains, the strenght of Rashbi is entirely what he receives from Moshe Rabbeinu. That thread, *the chut*, is the awakening of *nishmas* Moshe Rabbeinu within the *pnimiyus* of Rebbe Shimon, enabling the light of the Zohar to be revealed.

That light itself is the secret of *Teivas Noach*: a protected inner space of *Chochma* that allows for calmness, containment, and preparation for redemption even before redemption itself arrives, while the stormy waters of *Binah* are still raging outside.

Likkutei Moharan as the Vessel for Moshe (Shir Naim) and Rashbi (Lechu Chazu)

Rebbe Nachman explicitly places himself within this same chain of Torah. In *Likutey Moharan*, we experience him as a continuation of Moshe Rabbeinu, Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai, the Arizal, and the Baal Shem Tov HaKadosh, all within the secret of

Yechidei Hadoros, the five singularly unique Tzaadikim through whom Hashem revealed new expressions of Torah and depth.

The structure of *Likutey Moharan* itself reflects this. After the *haskamos* and the *hakdamah* of Rebbe Nosson, the sefer opens with *Shir Na'im*, the song Rebbe Nachman wrote about his own *neshama*, reflective of the *neshamah* of Moshe and Mashiach. It is a song rooted in *binah*, yet it speaks about Moshe Rabbeinu, who is *chochmah*. This becomes the doorway through which Moshe is grasped, the vessel of *binah* expressing the light of *chochmah*.

Immediately following this comes *Luchu Chazu*, a vision. Vision is *chochmah*, yet the subject is Rebbe Shimon, who embodies *binah*. Here, *chochmah* expresses itself through *binah*. Together, these two openings form a living demonstration of the unity between *chochmah* and *binah*.

Chochmah Within Binah (Havein B'Chochma), Binah Within Chochmah (Chochom B'Binah)

This mutual interinclusion is the ongoing relationship between *chochmah* and *binah*. *Chochmah* gives over the element of *Binah* that exists within it, and *Binah* returns the element of *Chochmah* that exists within it. Each contains the other.

After this exchange, *Chochmah* remains *chochmah* composed of *chochmah* and *binah*, but the *binah* within *chochmah* is now elevated, having passed through *binah*. Likewise, *binah* is composed of *binah* and *chochmah*, but the *chochmah* within *binah* has now been clarified and returned.

This process allows for a true *chibur amiti* between the Torah of Moshe and the Zohar HaKadosh, between Moshe Rabbeinu and *nishmas Rashbi*, between the *klal* and the *prat*, between abstraction and lived expression.

Unifying Chochma Within Binah and Revealing Kesser

The work of the Zohar is to unify these two realms. To draw the light of *Chochma* down into *Binah* without losing the potent light of *Chochma*. After drawing the light down, we then return from *Binah* back into *Chochma* without erasing the wondrous secrets that *Binah* revealed to us. When a person experiences separation between *Chochma* and *Binah*, then they feel the split between the whole and the part, between the calm of unity and the agitation of division, the result is *merirus*, a deep bitterness that is not only emotional but spiritual in its nature. It is the pain of perceiving a fracture in reality.

The only way to properly deal with that bitterness is not to bypass it, but rather to descend down into the separation itself, and from within that place of constriction to reveal the inherent unity between the two levels. Not a unity that flattens the difference between *Chochma* and *Binah*, but a unity that is greater than the sum of its parts—a whole that

contains both of them within each other, revealing the light of *Kesser*.

The Descent into Binah and the Ascent into the Pnimiyus of Chochma and Atik

Once we begin to understand that these two planes of Moshe and Rebbe Shimon, *Chochma* and *Binah*, light and dark, are fundamentally one in their unified root, it gives a person the courage to go down into the terrain difficulty. Not because anyone seeks it, and not because anyone should seek it. Nobody asks deliberately to be thrown out of *Chochma* into the realm of conflict and concealment. Nobody wants to feel distant from HaKadosh Baruch Hu. Nobody wants the heaviness of disconnection.

Binah Reveals a New Light that Chochma Alone Cannot Reveal

But when life brings a person into the territory of *Binah* and concealment, we have to know what the goal is. The goal is not merely to run back to *Chochma*. The goal is not to sprint back into the original calm, to re-enter the cool ease of the nothingness that preceded the fall, as if nothing happened. Once we

are in the fall, we have to dig down and discover what the descent can teach, and what the darker territory of *Binah* can reveal.

If we simply run back to the original light of *Chochma* and stop there, we have missed the point. The descent was only for the sake of revealing a deeper ascent—an ascent that includes the wondrous light that we grasped during the descent. And then, when we rise back into *Chochma*, we rise into the inner interiority of *Chochma*, revealing the light of *Atik* which holds Something and Nothing together as one.

Kesser as the Unity of the Whole and the Part, Ani v'Ayin at Once

This is the secret: when we take the *kelim* and the *pratim* of *Binah* and we lift them back up into *Chochma*, and then from there we lift it beyond the original place of *Chochma*—revealing the lights of *Kesser*. *Kesser Elyon*, the unity between *Ayin* and *Ani*, between the self-nullification of Moshe Rabbeinu and the self-experience of Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai. The ups and the downs are not accidents. They are the two sides that exist so that the singular point of all

can be revealed—the point that contains both *Chochma* and *Binah* within each other.

Chochma alone is too pure. *Binah* alone is too heavy. The revelation of *Kesser* is when both are held together, when the whole and the part are unified, when above and below are not enemies but aspects of the same unity. And only then does a person begin to sense the secret of unity between ascent and descent.

Mitzrayim as Binah and Concealment of Particularity

With this we can begin to see the entire story of *Yetziat Mitzrayim* in a new light. *Mitzrayim* is the realm of *Binah*. *Mitzrayim* is the *Metzar Ya"m*—the constriction of fifty, the narrowing of the *Nun Sha'arei Binah* into the forty-nine gates where purity and impurity mirror each other. It is the realm of fragmentation, the world of *pratiyut*, the feeling that reality is divided into competing forces. It is the place of struggle, severity, and concealment.

And therefore, the process of redemption is not merely leaving a geographic location. It is the

clarification of *Binah*. It is the refinement of particulars. It is learning how to survive disunity without surrendering the truth of unity. The world of *Binah* is the place where the laborious work is performed, and the danger of ascending out of *Binah* is to treat that work as meaningless once we escape into the freedom of *Chochma*.

Yam HaChochma and the Temptation of Forgetting the Light of Binah

When Klal Yisrael reached *Krias Yam Suf*, they stood at the border between *Binah* and *Chochma*. The *Yam* represents *Chochma*: the seamless unity of wisdom. On the surface, the sea looks selfsame everywhere, a calm expanse that contains within it depths we cannot see. It is the symbol of the quiet *Ayin* that rests beyond the somethingness of *Binah*.

And the temptation at that moment is obvious. After the traumatic confines of *Mitzrayim*, who would not want to throw all the concealment of particularity away? Who would not want to forget the difficulty? Who would not want to run into the sea of *Chochma* and leave all constriction behind?

But this is exactly where the danger lies. If we enter *Chochma* by denying *Binah*, then we have only traded one illusion for another. We will imagine that *geulah* contradicts *galus*, that light contradicts darkness, that the goal erases the process. And then the *geulah* itself will be incomplete, because it will still contain a hidden contradiction at its core.

Pharaoh Draws Us Closer and the Pleasure of Atik within the Descent into Binah

This is why the Baal Shem Tov, on the words *u'Pharaoh hikriv*, teaches that Pharaoh brought the Jewish people closer to *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*. Not merely back to where they were before, but closer than close. Because the descent reveals something that cannot be known in the heights: that I am connected even when I do not feel connected.

The fall is not merely a *cheit*, not merely missing the point as "*lehachti et hamatara*" conveys, not merely an

accident to be erased as quickly as possible. The descent is a doorway into a deeper form of presence. As Rebbe Nachman explains, there is a point where a person can fall the deepest fall, and in the next second—without duration and without deviation—be as close, if not closer, to the light of HaKadosh Baruch Hu than they were before. This is not a technique. It is a disclosure of the innermost point of what it means to be a *Yid*: Hashem is with me no matter where I am. When I come to realize that Hashem is with me even in the darkness, a deep sense of pleasure emerges within the mind, the pleasure of *Atik* revealed specifically through the particular heartstrings of *Binah*.

Gam Ki Elech and the Question of Revealing Hashem within the Darkness

It is impossible to imagine finding HaKadosh Baruch Hu in the low places of *Binah* until, God forbid, we fall there. But once we are there, it becomes incumbent upon us to hold onto one singular point. Not to answer every question, not to map every consequence, not to solve the entire problem of how

and why. Those questions may matter later, but they are not the first thing.

The first thing is the one necessary question we need to ask: is Hashem here also?

And the answer a *yid* must cling to is *gam ki elech b'gei tzalmavet lo ira ra ki ata imadi*. HaKadosh Baruch Hu is with us in the descent. And because He is with us in the descent, we can ascend, not only back into *Chochma*, but into the inner interiority of *Chochma*, into *Atika*, into the interiority of *Kesser*.

“Mah Titzak Elai”: New Level of Atik that Includes Chochma and Binah as One

This is what is happening at *Krias Yam Suf*. Moshe Rabbeinu and *Bnei Yisrael* stand at the edge of leaving *Binah* and entering into the Yam of *Chochma*. And the concern is that they will return only to the original back to the original *Chochma*, throwing away the entire process of *Mitzrayim* which enables the true ascent of things back into *pnimiyus of Chochma* which is the level of *Atik*.

HaKadosh Baruch Hu says: *Mah titzak elai*. Do not scream to Me in the old way. Do not relate to Me only through the frameworks where *Binah* and *Chochma* are seen as opposites. Do not assume that *Binah* must be left behind when ascending back to *Chochma*, rather undercover the secret of both lights working together within *Kesser*.

Now it is time for a new understanding. It is time to enter *Chochma*, but not as a retreat away from *Binah*. Rather we must enter back into the interiority of *Chochma* which is the deeper unity of *Atik*. The matter is not only dependent on *Chochma*. The matter is “*Atika talya milsa*”, light of *Kesser* that contains both polarities of existence together in unity.

Yonah ben Amittai and the Unity Between the Nevuah and the Sea

This is why the Zohar reads this entire passage through the story of Yonah ben Amittai. Yonah is the soul who wants to run away from the prophecy rooted in *Binah* into the sea rooted in *Chochma*. He is the one who imagines that the unity of sea will cleanse him from all constriction of the dryland. He is the one who tries to escape *Binah* by

drowning himself in the unity of the *Yam*.

But the Zohar will not allow us that simplicity. There is a delicate call here, a cautious warning; when a person throws themselves into the *Yam HaChochma*, it cannot be for the sake of denying *Binah*. The opposite is true. We must ascend into *Chochma* for the sake of bringing the experience of *Binah* into *Chochma*, revealing the interiority of *Chochma* which is *Atik*. We must make sure that the goal does not negate the process, in order that the eventual *geulah* includes a trace of the prior *galus* within it as transformed meaning and revelation.

Rebbe Yehuda and the Secret of Malchus Holding Chochma and Binah

This teaching is brought through Rebbe Yehuda, because Rebbe Yehuda carries the secret of *Malchus*. Yehuda is the *Shem Havayah* with a *daled*— the unity of *Chochma* and *Malchus*, fullness and deficiency at once. *Malchus* understands what it means to live below while being rooted above. *Malchus* knows the necessity of holding both sides of the paradoxical unity. Therefore Rebbe Yehuda is the one who can teach us how

Chochma must include *Binah* within itself, and how *Binah* must be lifted back into *Chochma* in order to reveal *Kesser*.

The Fish, the Sea, and the Trace of Binah that Will Always Remain

Running away from the particularities of prophecy rooted in *Binah*, Yonah enters the protective inside of the big fish—the spaciousness of *Chochma*—shielded from the “small fish” of *Binah* which reflects the proliferation of particulars. In that infantile state of pure *Chochma*, Yonah experiences clarity like the sun. He sees the depth of all things, the chambers of pure unity. In that place of calmness devoid of effort, one might come to mistakenly think: this is the end. This is redemption itself.

The Zohar however asks a fundamental question: if this is the clarity of *Chochma*, then why does Yonah cry out from within concealment, *karasi mi-tzara li*? Where is the sense of constriction coming from?

From Within the Stillness of Chochma, Yonah Cries Out for the Movement of Binah

The answer is that *Chochma* alone cannot be sustained in this world. For the ultimate goal is not to remain in the denial of particulars of *Binah*, rather we must unify the two realms to reveal the higher light of *Kesser*. Therefore HaKadosh Baruch Hu kills the great fish, undoing the momentary bliss of *Chochma*. The protective sheath of *Chochma* departs, and suddenly Yonah is surrounded by the biting fish—the particularities of *Binah* returning, inducing the apparent anxiety of difference and the pain of division. This is where the true form of *tefillah* begins. Not *tefillah* as escape from concealment, but *tefillah* as the integration of above and below at once.

Tefillah as the Work of Binah that Brings Chochma Back to Life

Once Yonah feels the bites of the small fish of *Binah*, he can no longer pretend that *Binah* is irrelevant, and so he cries out in the hopes of integrating it into *Chochma*. Not because he is abandoning

Chochma, but because he is learning that the stillness of *Chochma* must be alive with the movement of *tefillah*. *Chochma*, which is rooted in a sense of wholeness, must carry the capacity to hold the concealment of *Binah* within it.

It is only then that HaKadosh Baruch Hu brings the big fish of *Chochma* back to life. A new form of *Chochma* emerges, a *Chochma* that can include *Binah* within itself. Only then is Yonah spit back onto dry land, the space of prophecy and separation. Not as a collapse back into the constriction of *Binah*, but as the ability to draw the illumination of the sea's *Chochma* back onto the dryland—*Chochma* within *Binah*, *Binah* within *Chochma*, and the light of *Kesser* is revealed through their unification.

Moving Forward and the Quiet Light of Silence That Carries Everything

The same process takes place with the Jewish nation as we stood at the threshold of the sea, ready to escape the constriction of *Mitzrayim*. HaKadosh Baruch Hu says to Moshe: *Daber el Bnei Yisrael veyisau*. Travel. Not only physically forward, but upward in *hasaagah* and grasp. It is not the time for

the old mode of crying out which is rooted in a fear of *Binah*, the old mode that assumes the answer is to flee concealment and particularity. It is time to enter the sea and reveal *Atika*, the wondrous unity of *Chochma* and *Binah* at once.

Revealing the Dryland Within the Sea and the Sea Within the Dry Land

It is time to reveal the *yabasha* of *Binah* within the *Yam* of *Chochma*. To be above and below at once. To uncover the value of the particulars of *Binah* within the general light of *Chochma*, and then to bring the *Yam* back into the *yabasha*, so that the light of unity can be revealed within the lowest places, the purpose of all of creation..

This is the secret of *atem tachrishun*: the silence that does not deny darkness, but rather a silence that uncovers the truth that HaKadosh Baruch Hu is running the show in each and every one of our lives, in each and every descent and ascent, until the coming of the *Mashiach*. May we be *zocheh* to find this unity in the words of Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai, and to live it, quietly, faithfully, and completely.

— *The Light of the Zohar* —

Parshas Beshalach:

**The Frightening Secret of Yichud in
Times of Smallness and the Light of Atik**



R' JOEY ROSENFELD

אמר רבי יצחק, כדון, כד אתנהיר כלא כחדא, נעביד ימא נימוסין עלאין, נאתמסרו בידוי עלאין ונתתאין. ובגין כן, קשיא קמי קודשא בריך הוא כלא, כקריעת ים סוף, וכלא הכי אוקמוה. מאי טעמא. בגין דקריעת ים (בראשית ר"ס ע"א) סוף בעתיקא תליא.

אמר רבי שמעון, חד איילתא אית בארעא, וקודשא בריך הוא עביד סגיא בגינה, בשעתא דהיא צונחת, קודשא בריך הוא שמע עאקו דילה, וקביל קלה. וכד אצטריך עלמא לרחמי למי, היא יהבת קלין, וקודשא בריך הוא שמע קלה, וכדון חייס על עלמא, הדא הוא דכתיב, (תהילים מ"ב:ב') קאיל תערוג על אפיקי מים.

וכד בעיא לאולדא, היא סתימא מכל סטריין, כדון אתיין נשויאת רישא בין ברכהא, וצונחת נרמת קלין, וקודשא בריך הוא חייס עלה, (רי"ט ע"ב) ונמין לקבלה חד נחש, ננשיך בעריתא דילה, ופתח לה, וקרע לה ההוא אתר, ואולידת מיד. אמר רבי שמעון בהאי מלה, לא תשאול ולא תנסה את יי', ונהכי דייןקא.

Rabbi Yitzchak said: At that moment, when everything was illuminated as one, the sea enacted supernal laws, and authority was entrusted into the hands of both the upper and the lower realms. Because of this, everything became difficult before the Holy One, blessed be He—like the splitting of the Sea of Reeds—and all of this was established in that way.

Why is this so? Because the splitting of the Sea of Reeds depends upon Atika (the Ancient One).

Rabbi Shimon said: There is a single doe in the land, and the Holy One, blessed be He, performs many deeds on her behalf. At the moment when she cries out, the Holy One, blessed be He, hears her distress and accepts her voice.

And when the world requires mercy for water, she raises her cry, and the Holy One, blessed be He, hears her voice, and then He has compassion upon the world.

This is what is written: “As the doe cries longingly for the channels of water” (Psalms 42:2).

And when she is about to give birth, she is constricted from every side. Then she comes and places her head between her knees, cries out, and raises her voice.

And the Holy One, blessed be He, has compassion upon her, and He prepares a single serpent to meet her, which bites her womb, opens it, splits that place for her, and she gives birth immediately. Rabbi Shimon said concerning this matter: Do not ask, and do not test Hashem—and this is exact.

The Yichud of Smallness and the Frightening Secret of Splitting the Sea

Be'ezras Hashem, we are continuing with our weekly shiurum on the Zohar HaKadosh. What we approach here is one of the deepest places in the Zohar, a place the Arizal himself did not want to fully reveal: the secret of *Krias Yam Suf* and the *yichud* of smallness. This is not merely the narrative retelling of redemption, but the inner structure of redemption itself, specifically as it emerges from absolute concealment. It is the secret of *yichud* within *katnus*, the unification that takes place precisely in smallness, constriction, and obscurity of concealment. Though this topic reaches into the highest worlds, our intention is not mastery but contact with the introductions: to allow the simple resonance of these words to touch lived experience and awaken us towards a thought of *teshuvah*.

Hidden within the Zohar's account of *Krias Yam Suf*, within the pain, pressure, and narrowing that precedes redemption, is one of the deepest revelations the Arizal identifies with

Shvi'i shel Pesach. Redemption, we learn here, does not arise from expansion or clarity, but from a point where all directions feel closed and concealed.

Rebbe Yitzchak and the Language of Constriction and Tzitzum

The Zohar opens this sugya with *Amar Rebbe Yitzchak*. This itself is significant. Rebbe Yitzchak represents *gevurah*, *tzimtzum*, and constriction. Redemption from Mitzrayim is not a smooth unfolding but a pressure field event, a forceful birth. Every emergence from exile requires a narrowing that pushes reality beyond itself into something new. This is the quality of Yitzchak, and therefore it is Rebbe Yitzchak who speaks at the opening of the teaching.

When *Klal Yisrael* arrived at the Yam, Rebbe Yitzchak says, they saw legions upon legions of celestial forces, *chayos* and *malachim* arranged above and below, surrounding them. These forces were not abstract visions; they were revealed as protection, as shade from the frightening experience. In that moment, *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* allowed

Klal Yisrael to see how reality itself bends to shelter them, how unseen dimensions are constantly active on their behalf.

The Simultaneity of Protection and Pain

Yet in the very same instant, the Zohar tells us, *Klal Yisrael* saw suffering from every direction. Before them, the sea rose in towering waves. Behind them surged the forces of *Mitzrayim*. Above them hovered accusations and judgments. From all sides there was pressure, fear, and exposure. This simultaneity is crucial: the revelation of protection and the experience of pain are not sequential but concurrent. The same moment that reveals unbearable constriction, also reveals Divine shelter and protection.

The Inner Moshe of Each and Every Jew Cried Out

Confronted with this, *Klal Yisrael* cried out. The Torah records *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* saying to Moshe, “*Mah titzak elai*”—why are you crying out to Me? On the revealed level, Rashi explains this in practical terms. But the Zohar

uncovers something far deeper. Moshe Rabbeinu is not separate from *Klal Yisrael*; he is their inner core, the heart of the nation and each individual soul.. If the Torah says Moshe cried out, the Zohar is revealing that every inner Moshe within each Jew was crying out. This was not articulated prayer but a cry beyond words.

The Lofty Silence of Atik that Rests Beyond Words

The response, “*Mah titzak elai*,” is not a rebuke. It is a revelation. There is a place where words are no longer the correct mode of communication. Redemption here does not emerge through speech, argument, or even *tefillah* as we know it. The Zohar explains that this moment was dependent on *Atika Stima’ah*—the most concealed level of Divine unity. Redemption is not rooted in merit, logic, or fairness. It emerges from a unity so transcendent that it cannot be grasped by human consciousness, even as it remains intimately bound to it.

This is the secret of serving Hashem beyond any rational grasp, *l’ma’ala mi-ta’am va-da’as*, the secret of *hesech*

ha-da'as through which Mashiach arrives. It is not a distraction, but rather the surrender of conceptual grasp for the sake of a higher form of faith. At *Krias Yam Suf*, Moshe Rabbeinu and all of Klal Yisrael were instructed to be silent, because the matter was not addressable within the frameworks of human understanding, it remained rooted in the loftiest level of *Kesser*.

Safra d'Tzniusa and the Revelation of Concealment

The Zohar anchors this teaching in the *Safra d'Tzniusa*, the most concealed stratum of the Zohar itself. Its concealment is not due to our unworthiness of grasping it, but because it reveals concealment as revelation itself. It speaks from the place of *Reisha D'Lo Isyada*, the unknowable head. Here, "*Mah titzak elai*" is re-read: not as distance, but as intimacy. It wasn't a time to scream out to Hashem from a place of distance, but rather a moment of awareness that Hashem has always already been with me. Hashem Himself must be revealed, because everything depends on *Atika*.

This is the deepest form of *tznius*: not hiding something away, but encountering something so present, so pervasive, that it cannot yet be named. As the Ramchal explains, the *yichud* is not graspable precisely because it fills all of existence without remainder.

The Light of Atik Yomin Revealed at the Sea

At the sea, with nowhere to turn, this ancient unity was revealed. *Atika Kadisha* shone forth, and with it emerged a transcendent desire- *ehkeh asher ehkeh*—permeating all worlds. Light itself became luminous in its totality. Rebbe Yitzchak returns, speaking gently, in *amirah* rather than *dibbur*, revealing that in this moment all limitations were handed over. Nature itself was suspended. The sea became pliable, not because of force, but because the root of all differentiation was momentarily unveiled.

This is why *Krias Yam Suf* is described as difficult, even *kavyachol*, for *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*. It is not a technical miracle, but a disclosure of the deepest key, an undoing of the apparent divisions between light and dark, good and bad,

knowing and not-knowing. From this place emerges *Az Yashir* -the song of future redemption- rooted in *ruach ha-kodesh* that arises when a Jew senses unity even without seeing revealed goodness.

The Ayalas HaShachar, the Cry of Birth, and the Ascent of Malchus

Rebbe Shimon deepens the image. He speaks of a single *ayala*, a doe whose birthing passage is impossibly narrow. This is *Malchus*, the *ayalas ha-shachar*. When birth is delayed, when pressure peaks, the *ayala* cries out. That cry is heard immediately. *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* responds with compassion, opening the passage at the very moment of maximum constriction.

Just before revelation, concealment intensifies from all sides. The *ayala* lowers herself and cries, a cry beyond articulation. This is “*ana zamin l’mehevei*”, the readiness to be. In response, *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* brings forth the *nachash*, the staff of Moshe, the paradoxical force that transforms poison itself into healing. The *nachash* becomes the *matteh*; the *matteh* becomes

the *nachash*. This power tears open the womb and allows birth.

Not Knowing as the Gate of Redemption

Rebbe Shimon concludes with a warning: do not ask, do not attempt to understand. This is not dismissal but guidance. The Zohar gives us letters, not explanations. Even the Arizal paid a certain price for touching this depth. The ultimate secret is that redemption remains a secret, even when partially revealed. It is forever *l’maala m’ta’am v’da’as*.

B’Atika talya milsa. The splitting of the sea, the reversal of the *nachash*, the emergence of comfort from apparent absence, all depend on this hidden secret. Redemption appears when a person can stand before the sea, acknowledge concealment, and still whisper *ehkeh asher ehkeh*. This is the *yichud* of *katnus*, the song of the future, the simplicity of *Tehillim* and *tefillah* said with *temimus*. May this secret open the womb of the *ayala*, awaken the dawn, and bring a *geulah sheleimah bimheirah v’yameinu, b’rachamim Rebbem*.