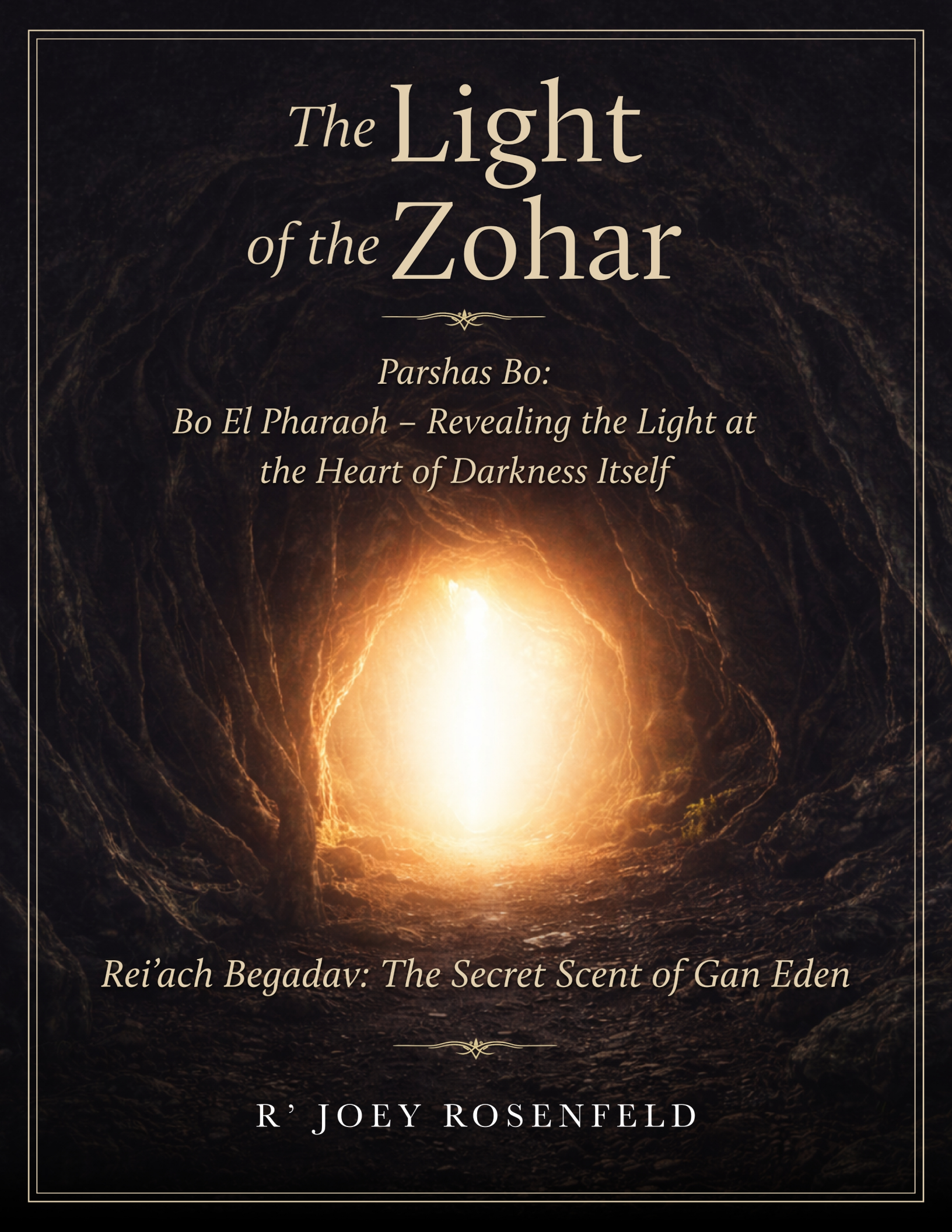




# *The* Light *of the* Zohar

*Parshas Bo:*

*Bo El Pharaoh – Revealing the Light at  
the Heart of Darkness Itself*

*Rei'ach Begadav: The Secret Scent of Gan Eden*

R' JOEY ROSENFELD

אמר רבי שמעון, השתא אית לגלאה רזין, דאינון מתדבקין לעילא ותתא, מה כתיב בא אל פרעה, לך אל פרעה מבעי ליה, מאי בא. אלא, דעייל ליה קודשא בריך הוא, אדרין בתר אדרין, לגבי תנינא חדא עלאה תקיפא, דכמה דרגין משתלשלין מניה. ומאן איהו. רזא דהתנין הגדול.

ומשה דחיל מניה, ולא קריב אלא לגבי אינון יאורין, ואינון דרגין דיליה, אבל לגביה דחיל ולא קריב, בגין דתתא ליה משתרש בשרשינ עלאין.

כיון דתתא קודשא בריך הוא דדחיל משה, ושליתון ממנו אחרנין לעילא, לא יכלין לקרבא לגביה. אמר קודשא בריך הוא, (יחזקאל כ"ט:ג') הנני עליך פרעה מלך מצרים התנים הגדול הרובץ בתוך יאוריו. וקודשא בריך הוא אעטרך לאגתא ביה קרבא, ולא אחרא. כמה דאת אמר, אני ה', ואוקמוה רזא דתתמא דהתנים הגדול הרובץ בתוך יאוריו לאינון מארי מדין, דיצעין ברזין דמאריהון.

Rebbi Shimon said: “Now is the time to reveal mysteries—mysteries that bind what is above with what is below. For it is written, ‘*Come to Pharaoh*’; it should have said, ‘*Go to Pharaoh*.’ What is the meaning of ‘*Come*’?

Rather, the Holy One, blessed be He, brought Moses inward—chamber after chamber—toward a single, exalted, mighty serpent, from whom many levels unfold and descend. And who is this? It is the secret of the great serpent.

Moses feared him, and therefore drew near only to the rivers—the lower levels that belong to him. But to that inner being he did not draw near, for he feared him, since he saw that he was rooted in supernal roots.

When the Holy One, blessed be He, saw that Moses was afraid—and that even the appointed messengers above were unable to approach him—He said: ‘*Behold, I am against you, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great serpent who lies within his rivers*’ (Ezekiel 29:3).

Thus the Holy One, blessed be He, Himself had to engage him in battle—and no other. As it is said, ‘*I am Hashem*.’ And the sages established this as the secret wisdom of **the great serpent who lies within his rivers, known to the masters of judgment, who are versed in the** mysteries of their Master.”

## ***Bo El Pharaoh - Revealing the Light at the Heart of Darkness Itself***

Beezrat Hashem, we are continuing with our weekly teachings on the Zohar HaKadosh. The essential point here is to awaken our need and ability to draw down the Torah and light of Moshe Rabbeinu into *keilim*, the vessels and garments of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai. Moshe Rabbeinu is the light of *chochmah*, reflective of the infinite light of Hakadosh Baruch Hu that can only rest in a place of absolute bittul, as the Baal HaTanya explains. It is specifically within *chochmah*—corresponding to the world of Atzilut, within the radical self-nullification of the soul of Moshe Rabbeinu—that *Ohr Ein Sof* can reveal Itself fully.

This is why the true tzaddikim operate in the aspect of a *shliach tzibbur*, leading and illuminating the people through bittul. They are *shluchoi tzibbur* because they actively negate themselves to such a degree that the baseline result of that

bittul is the emergent presence of the Shechina, Hashem's presence in this world. Moshe Rabbeinu is the

embodiment of this: "*Shechinah medaberet mitoch grono*", nullified to a degree of translucency. Moshe is the revelation that the infinite light of Hakadosh Baruch Hu can descend and congeal into limited letters of finite revelation, taking shape within the contours of this worldly reality.

### ***Light and Levush***

If Moshe is the light, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai is the garment that reduces the intensity of the light in order to reveal it. If Moshe is the secret of *Shema Yisrael*, then Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai is the secret of *Baruch Shem Kevod Malchuto*. He is lower unity, the *levushim* of Torah, the garbing of the infinite so that it can become receivable to the lower levels.

The Torah itself is *Toras Moshe*—that is the light of Moshe, the infinite light of Hakadosh Baruch Hu that shines forth from within Moshe's complete bittul. But the *levushim*, which are the openings through which we attempt to begin to understand even the depth of that baseline text, can only be received through the vessels of Rashbi. This is the relationship between Moshe and

Rashbi, Toras Moshe and Toras Rashbi: the *chitzoniyus* that reveals itself through *tzimtzum* becomes the garment that is given to Torah so that Torah can shine forth.

The light cannot shine without a *levush*. Light alone blinds. It is not susceptible to human grasp. Even when the light undergoes diminution and enters a vessel, the vessel exists to conceal potency so that the light can be revealed in a measurable, bite-size way. Even though the garments reveal the light, nevertheless the essential measure of light remains infinite. The *levush* hides as much as it reveals, because the light in its essence—the light of Moshe Rabbeinu, the aspect of *Toras Hashem temimah*—remains infinite.

### ***Toras Hashem Temimah and the Limits of Grasp***

The Baal Shem Tov and the Vilna Gaon zy" a both explain that *Toras Hashem temimah* means, that even after all possible iterations of revealed Torah have been collected into one place, it is still as if the depth of the Torah has not even begun to be opened. No matter

what has been said, it has not even scratched the surface of its unfathomable depth of perfection. Torah is the name of Hakadosh Baruch Hu, and the name of Hakadosh Baruch Hu beckons back to that which is being named, *keveyachol*—it represents the Infinite One, blessed be His name.

The *levushim* and the reduction lens of Rashbi are the attempt to grasp by way of metaphor, drawing down the light of *Chochma* by way of *binah* and *da'as*, bringing the Torah down into understanding and lived experience. This is Rashbi's light: not a replacement for Moshe's light, but a vessel that allows Moshe's Ohr to be received.

### ***Oros and Keilim as the Structure of Metzius***

This dynamic exists wherever anything is created, wherever anything expresses itself in existence—ourselves, the world, other people. Everything is a composite of two stages: *oros* and *keilim*. *Oros* reflect the lights of infinitude, the beyond-definition nature that cannot be grasped. *Keilim* represent the vessels with the miraculous capacity to contain

that light without being destroyed. The *kli* maintains itself before the infinite, transmutes the intensity, and allows it to come down in bite-size, fractalized pieces—still containing within them the essence of the infinite.

The secret of *tzimtzum*, the emergent process of a *levush* is the secret of a *kli* is that it is a concealment that reveals.

### ***Ma"r: M'oshe, R'ashbi, and the Sweetening of Bitterness***

This is the relationship between Moshe and Rashbi. When we properly allow light and vessel to unify, that is the secret of Mashiach's arrival, when the light of Infinitude settles and rests within the space of limitation. . *Eimasai ka'asi Ma"r*—Mar is *roshei teivos* M'oshe Rabbeinu and R'ebbe Shimon bar Yochai. Just as Rebbe Nachman begins *Likkutei Moharan: shir na'im vlchu chazu*—the song of Moshe and the vision of Rashbi. These two *tzaddikim*, the *Ma"r*, give us the capacity to sweeten all bitterness because they represent the baseline binary of *oros* and *keilim*. Without the vessel the light is inaccessible; without the light the vessel

is meaningless. But the unification of both creates a proper receptacle for holding infinity within finitude, so that we can go all the way back up to the root source of the Torah itself, the secret of *mi'bein shnei hakruvim*.

### ***M'i'bein S'hnei H'akruvim: The Light of Moshe Through the Vessels of Rashbi***

The two *kruvim* that sit atop the Aron are Moshe Rabbeinu and Rashbi. And what comes out from *mi'bein shnei hakruvim* is the *roshei teivos* Moshe—the hint that the combination of Moshe and Rashbi is the entry point into the revelation that we have not even begun to understand the light of Moshe.

We have not begun to understand what *Toras Moshe* is, and we have not begun to understand the secret of descending down—how the light enters into its *levush*, how infinite hovers above and rests within the finite form of this world, and how the garment ultimately does not conceal the light but rather reveals it with newfound intensity and brilliance.

## ***Entering the Palace of Pharaoh***

What we will touch upon here, not exhaustively but essentially, is one of the deepest and most decisive teachings of the Zohar: the Zohar of Parshas Bo, where Moshe Rabbeinu is commanded to enter into the palace of Pharaoh.

The entire unfolding of the Mitzrayim experience, in one form or another, is the process of extracting Moshe Rabbeinu the redeemer from the house of Pharaoh itself. Moshe Rabbeinu represents *da'as*—connective knowing, revealed consciousness which holds the clear recognition of *Ein od milvado* in lived reality. Moshe is the revelation of the concealed light of unity, the *Ohr Ki Tov* planted at the heart of existence itself, the *da'as* that knows that Hakadosh Baruch Hu fills all moments, all places, and all states of being. It is the light of redemption.

Mitzrayim, by contrast, is the *klipah* of *da'as*, the opposite side of knowledge. It is *da'as* in exile, the darkened mind that forgets about Hashem's constant presence. Pharaoh is the concealment of *da'as*, the state in which the presence of Hakadosh Baruch Hu is no longer

apparent, where reality appears fractured, populated by secondary forces, as if there exist powers with autonomous will. The descent into Mitzrayim—and the redemption from it—is not the story of Hashem hovering above concealment. It is the story of descending *into* concealment itself, to reveal that the concealment itself is nothing but another modality of divine revelation. It is not simply the destruction of the darkness, rather it is the revelation of the light from within the heart of darkness itself.

## ***From Desolation (Shimamah) to Proper Nouns (Shemos)***

This is the ultimate purpose of *Sefer Shemos*, as the tzaddikim explain, namely the transformation of *shimamah*—desolation—into *shemos*, names. Rooted on the banks of the Nile, it is the passage through the death-darkened space of Mitzrayim, *ervas ha'aretz*, the root source of all exiles, revealing that the light of Hakadosh Baruch Hu ascends even from there, specifically from there.

This is why Moshe's entire life story

unfolds the way it does: hidden at birth, brought into the palace of darkness, running away to Yisro, his marriage to Tzipporah, beholding the burning bush, this confrontation with foreign wisdom, his attempt to draw close to the *eirev rav*, his battles with angels, even the royal visage attributed to him that suggests problematic characteristics. All of this forms the inner architecture of concealment that allows Moshe to redeem the *da'as* of Klal Yisrael from within Mitzrayim itself.

### ***Come Forth To (Bo), Rather than Go Towards (Lech)***

The pasuk says: *Bo el Pharaoh*—come to Pharaoh. The Zohar immediately asks: why *Bo*? Why “come”? It should have said *Lech el Pharaoh*—go to Pharaoh. Why does Hakadosh Baruch Hu speak as if He is calling to Moshe from within Pharaoh's palace itself?

The answer is foundational. Hakadosh Baruch Hu is not instructing Moshe to approach an external evil. He is revealing to Moshe that He Himself is already there. *Bo* means: come to where I already am. Enter the house of

Pharaoh and discover that even there, at the heart of darkness is where the light of Hakadosh Baruch Hu dwells.

*Bo* moves from *beis* to *alef*—from multiplicity to unity, from apparent separation towards the revelation of the *Alufo shel Olam*. The command is not to destroy the palace from the outside, but to enter the belly of the beast and reveal that even there, nothing exists outside the infinite unity of Hashem.

### ***Pharaoh as Revelation Through Resistance***

There is the aspect of Pharaoh and an and there is the aspect of the house of Pharaoh. Rebbe Nachman teaches that Pharaoh is a language of *pri'ah*, of emergence and expansion. *U'Pharaoh hikriv*—as the Baal Shem Tov explains—means that through pursuit, through resistance expressed by way of concealment, the good is clarified. Difficulty forces the soul to discover a goodness that exists deeper than all difficulty. Pharaoh is the same letters as *oref*, the backside of the neck representing the concealment of *da'as*. True knowing connects the mind and

body through the bridge of the neck, revealing the unified alignment of all things. The husk of *da'as* as expressed in Pharaoh himself is the sense of disconnection and distance. Moshe is summoned to enter the *oref*—the backside of awareness, the shadow-side of consciousness, the klipah of *da'as* where knowledge is concealed and grasped only through shadows. This is the realm of the *gimel reishin*, the highest potencies of light which are hidden within the harshest husks of darkness, the deepest concealment of *Mitzrayim*, where the final plagues unfold: *arbeh*, *choshech*, and *makas bechoros*.

*Arbeh*, the locust reveals the paradox of *tzimtzum* described as the paradoxical logic of “the locust whose exoskeleton emerges from within itself— revealing how darkness can feel utterly real while being utterly unreal at the same time. *Choshech* confronts the question of *tzimtzum* itself. *Makas Bechoros* confronts the question of beginnings, the encounter with the origin. These are not punishments; they are revelations of a reversed structure at the deepest level of existence.

## ***The Belly of the Snake***

This is why Moshe Rabbeinu is buried in the belly of the snake. For when Chazal counted their way to the center of the Torah, they came to find the enlarged vav of *gachon*—the central letter of the Torah, the belly upon which the snake slithers—and it is there says the Tikkunei Zohar that we encounter the hidden place of Moshe's burial. Moshe's *da'as* is the capacity to reveal light from within concealment itself, and as such it is hidden within the thickest concealment possible, shining its light specifically there.

Moshe's knowledge is not reserved for moments of clarity, calm, and spiritual illumination alone. His *da'as* extends down into chaos, confusion, fear, and breakdown, and reveals Hashem there as well. The burning bush, the whisper of *Baruch Shem Kevod Malchuso l'olam va'ed*, the unity revealed within concealment—this is Moshe's path.

## ***Between Heresy and Desire***

Rebbe Nachman teaches that Moshe stands between heresy and desire. *Shmad* is gematria 344. *Ratzon* is 346. Moshe is 345. He is the bridge between these diametrically opposed extremes, thereby revealing their inherent unity. The tzaddik must touch both above and below, just as the *nachash* was meant to retrieve diamonds from above and remove waste down below. This is the secret of Moshe's staff turning into a snake and back again. The vav that flips upon itself. Darkness and light become equal terrains of Divine revelation. This is the inner meaning of Geulas Mitzrayim.

## ***Idrin Batar Idrin, Room After Room, Purim After Purim***

The Zohar describes Hashem drawing Moshe *idrin batar idrin*—room after room—toward the *tannin hagadol*, the great serpent represented in Pharaoh, the core of apparent absence. Each room is a deeper layer of concealment, familiar to every human being: overwhelm, memory, anticipation,

resistance, collapse.

The yetzer hara draws a person downward room by room. But here, Hashem draws Moshe inward to reveal the deepest secret. To reveal the light of Hashem's infinite presence, even within the spaces that seem to deny that presence. The secret being revealed to Moshe is how all of the darkness is ultimately sustained by the inner light the hovers at its core. In a leap year the additional month is Adar II, *idrin batar idrin* becomes Adar after Adar—the double Purim, the sweetening of both the circular and straight Leviathan, the rectification of tzimtzum itself.

## ***Fearing the Foundation of Opposition***

Moshe was not afraid of evil's outgrowths. He was afraid of its *shores*. He could not understand how the primal concealment—*choshech kadmon*—could emerge from infinitude. This is the mystery of *tzaddik v'ra lo*, the question that has no intellectual resolution.

Moshe could approach the rivers that flowed from the concealment, but not the source itself. When Hashem saw

Moshe's fear, He alone confronted the *tannin hagadol*. Only Hakadosh Baruch Hu can sweeten that place. Only when we become aware that the opposite of Hashem's light is also contained and rooted in Hashem's light, then we can approach the darkness with a lightness and confidence.

### ***Ani Hashem***

The redemption emerges only when Moshe relinquishes understanding. *Amarti echkama v'hi rechokah mimeni*. The ultimate revelation of Yetzias Mitzrayim comes from *Ani Hashem*. Not from explanation, not from synthesis, not from intellectual mastery. It comes about with the sudden revelation of Hashem's infinite light, hidden in plain sight.

Only when Moshe accepts *lo yada*—when he throws the menorah into the fire—does the structure appear. Only when wisdom is suspended does divine clarity emerge.

### ***The Burial Place of Moshe***

*Lo yada ish es kevuraso*. Moshe's burial place is unknowable because it lies at the innermost point of the soul—the place that cannot be grasped. When one searches from below it appears above; from above it appears below.

Moshe is buried in the deepest chamber of consciousness, where one encounters a world that cannot be explained, only trusted. This is the house of Pharaoh within the heart. And it is precisely there that Hashem reveals Himself—not only through light, but through darkness as well.

### ***From Nachash to Moshiach***

In the end, the *tzimtzum* itself will be sweetened by the source of the *tzimtzum*. Darkness becomes a vessel. The *nachash* becomes *Moshiach*. Galus becomes geulah. The Leviathan is salted. The circular and straight paths unify. This is *Bo el Paroh*. Redemption emerges not from escape, but from descent for the sake of an unfathomable ascent. Not from knowing, but from within surrender. Not from power, but

from a deep *bittul* —which becomes the doorway through which Hakadosh Baruch Hu acts.

In the *zechus* of Moshe Rabbeinu, in the *zechus* of Toras Moshe, in the *zechus* of *da'as* that dares to enter the palace of darkness and discover Hashem there as well.

פָּתַח וְאָמַר, (בראשית כ"ז:כ"ז) וַיֵּרַח אֶת רִיחַ בְּגָדָיו וַיְבָרְכֵהוּ וַיֹּאמֶר רָאה רִיחַ בְּנִי וְגו', וַיֵּרַח אֶת רִיחַ בְּגָדָיו, מִשְׁמַע דְּאִינוֹן לְבוּשִׁין הוּוּ סִלְקִין רִיחָא טְבָא, (ס"א דלא אתעדי) וּלְבַתֵּר אֶתְעָדִי מִנְהוֹן הֵהוּא רִיחָא. הַשְׁתָּא אֵית לֹאסְתַּכְלָא, כְּתִיב, רִיחַ בְּגָדָיו, וְכְתִיב רִיחַ בְּנִי, וְלֹא אָמַר רִיחַ הַבְּגָדִים, אֲלֹא רִיחַ בְּנִי. אֲלֹא תֵאנָא, כִּיּוֹן שְׁנַכְנַס יַעֲקֹב, נִכְנַס עִמּוֹ גַּן עֵדֶן. וְתֵאנָא, אוֹתֵן הַבְּגָדִים הָיוּ שֶׁל אָדָם הָרִאשׁוֹן, דְּכְתִיב, (בראשית ג':כ"א) וַיַּעַשׂ יְיָ אֱלֹהִים לָאָדָם וּלְאִשְׁתּוֹ כִּתְנוֹת עוֹר וַיַּלְבִּישֵׁם, וְהוֹצִיָאם מִגֵּן עֵדֶן.

וְאִי תֵימָא, דְּכְתִיב וַיִּתְּפְרוּ עָלֶה תֵאנָה דְּאִינוֹן הוּוּ, אִי הֵכִי, אָמַאי כְּתִיב וַיַּעַשׂ ה' אֱלֹהִים. וְכְתִיב כִּתְנוֹת עוֹר, הָא לֹא הוּוּ אֲלֹא עָלֶה תֵאנָה אֲלֹא כִּתְרָגוּמוֹ, לְבוּשִׁין דִּיקָר וְהוּוּ סִלְקִין רִיחִין מְבוֹסְמָא דְעֵדֶן.

וְתֵינָא, בְּשֵׁם מַלְא אֶתְעָבִידוֹ, דְּכְתִיב וַיַּעַשׂ ה' אֱלֹהִים. מַה דְּלֹא אֶתְעָבִידוֹ בִּיה שְׁמִיא וְאַרְעָא. וְלֹא. וְהָא כְּתִיב, (בראשית ב':ד') בְּיוֹם עֲשׂוֹת יְיָ אֱלֹהִים אֶרֶץ וְשָׁמַיִם. לֹא קָשִׁיא הָאִי כִּד אֶתְעָבִידוֹ, לֹא אֶתְעָבִידוֹ בְּשֵׁם מַלְא, בְּרַ כִּד אֶתְקִימוֹ, בְּשֵׁם מַלְא אֶתְקִימוֹ.

וּמַה דְּאָמְרוּ דְּאִינוֹן לְבוּשִׁין אֶתּוּ לֵההוּא רָשַׁע דַּעֲשׂוֹ, דְּנָסִיב לוֹ מִן נִמְרוֹד הֵכִי אוֹקִימָנָא, וְקָשִׁיא מַלְא, דְּאִי הֵכִי הָא כְּתִיב לָאָדָם וּלְאִשְׁתּוֹ, לְבוּשִׁין לָאָדָם, וּלְבוּשִׁין לַחֲוָה. לְבוּשִׁין דְּחֲוָה מַה אֶתְעָבִידוֹ. וְתוּ, דְּאִי הֵכִי בְּמַאי אֶתְקַבְּרוּ, סִלְקָא דַּעֲתָךְ דְּאִינוֹן שְׁבָקוּ וְרֵאמוּ מִנְהוֹן זְהָרָא עֲלֵהָ, דִּיהִיב לֹון קוֹדֶשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא.

אֲלֹא אִינוֹן לְבוּשִׁין דְּאֶתְלַבְּשׁוּ בְּהוּ אָדָם וְאַתְתִּיהּ, לֹא אֶתְלַבְּשׁ בְּהוּ בְּרַ נֶשׁ אַחְרָא, דְּבִאִינוֹן לְבוּשִׁין דְּמוֹ כְּגוֹנָא דְּלַעִילָא וְאִי סִלְקָא דַּעֲתָךְ, דְּאִינוֹן אֶתְלַבְּשׁוּ מִגְרָמִיהוֹן בְּהוּ. תֵּא חֲזִי, כְּתִיב וַיַּלְבִּישֵׁם, דְּקוֹדֶשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא אֶלְבִּישׁ לֹון, זְכָאָה חוֹלְקִיהוֹן.

כְּתִיב. (תהילים ק"ד:א') ה' אֱלֹהֵי גְדֻלַּת מַאֲד הוֹד וְהִדְר לְבָשֶׁת. וְכְתִיב (תהילים צ"ו:ו') הוֹד וְהִדְר לְפָנָיו. וְכְתִיב (תהילים ק"ד:ב') עוֹטָה אֹר כְּשִׁלְמָה וְגו'. כִּיּוֹן דְּאֶתְלַבְּשׁ (מַה דְּאֶתְלַבְּשׁ) עָבַד מַה דַּעֲבַד. מִלְּמַד, שְׁנַתְעַטֵּף קוֹדֶשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא בְּאֹר, וּבְרָא יֵת שְׁמִיא. אֲלֹא בְּמַאי אוֹקִימָנָא הַחֲמִדַּת אֲשֶׁר אֶתָּה בְּבִית. הַחֲמוּדוֹת: בְּגָדֵי מַלְכוּת (נ"ח ע"ג) בְּמַשִּׁי וְזֶהָב, וְאַרְחָא דַּעֲלָמָא דְּגַגְזֵי לֹון בְּבוֹסְמִין וְרִיחִין, לִיקָרָא דְּלְבוּשִׁיהוֹן.

תֵּא חֲזִי וַיֵּרַח אֶת רִיחַ בְּגָדָיו, בְּתַחֲלָה. וְכִד אֶרְגִּישׁ, אָמַר רָאה רִיחַ בְּנִי, דִּידַע דְּבִיהּ הוּא תִּלְיָא מִלְּתָא, דְּבִגִּינִיהּ סִלִּיק רִיחָא. כְּרִיחַ שְׂדֵה אֲשֶׁר בְּרָכוּ יְיָ, וְכִי מִנְיִין הוּא יָדַע יַצְחָק רִיחַ שְׂדֵה אֲשֶׁר בְּרָכוּ יְיָ.

אֲלֹא, תֵּרִין מִלִּין אִינוֹן, וְכִלָּא הוּא חַד. דְּכְתִיב, (בראשית כ"ד:ס"ג) וַיֵּצֵא יַצְחָק לְשׁוֹחַ בִּשְׂדֵה לַפְנוֹת עָרְב. וְכִי לֹא הוּא לִיה בֵּיתָא, אוּ מְקוֹם אַחֵר לְהַתְּפַלֵּל. אֲלֹא אוֹתָהּ הַשְׂדֵה הִיָּה אֲשֶׁר קִנָּה אַבְרָהָם סְמוּךְ לַמְעָרָה, דְּכְתִיב, (בראשית כ"ג:כ') הַשְׂדֵה אֲשֶׁר קִנָּה אַבְרָהָם מֵאֵת בְּנֵי חֵת.

וּבִשְׁעֵתָא דְהוּה יִצְחָק עָל גְּבִיָּה, חֲמָא שְׂכִינְתָא עֲלֵיהּ, וְסָלִיק רִיחִין עֲלָאִין קַדִּישִׁין, וּבְגִינִי כֶּךָ  
הָוה מְצִלִי תַמָּן, וְקִבְעִיה לְצִלוֹתֶיהּ.  
וְאַבְרָהָם אָמַי לֹא הָוה מְצִלִי תַמָּן, מִשּׁוּם דְּקִבְעִיתָא דְאַתְרָא אַחֲרָא הָוה לִיה בְּקַדְמִיתָא, וּמִלָּה  
אַחֲרָא רִיחָא דְחֲמָא בְּהַר הַמּוֹרִיָּה. וְלָמָּה נִקְרָא מוֹרִיָּה. עַל שֵׁם הַמֶּר הַטּוֹב דְּהָוה תַּמָּן.  
וְכֹלָא הָוה, וְגַן עֵדֶן דְּעָל עֲמִיָּה וּבִרְכִיָּה. וּבְגִין כֶּךָ לֹא תִלָּה מִלָּה בְּלִבוֹשִׁין, אֲלֵא בִיעֻקֵּב מִמֶּשׁ,  
דְּחֲמָא דְבִיָּה הָוה תִּלְיָא מִלָּה (ס"א ו' אוֹת הוּה לַאֲתַבְרָכָה) וְאַתְחַזִּי, וְזִכּוֹתֶיהּ סָלִיק לַאֲתַבְרָכָא,  
וְעָל עֲמִיָּה גַן עֵדֶן. וּבְגִין כֶּךָ כַּד אַתְרַעַם עֲשׂוֹ, אָמַר גַּם בְּרוּךְ יְהִיָּה.

**He opened and said:**

*“And he smelled the fragrance of his garments, and he blessed him, and said: See, the fragrance of my son...”* (Genesis 27:27).

“And he smelled the fragrance of his garments”—this implies that those garments themselves once gave off a goodly fragrance, though afterward that fragrance departed from them. Now consider carefully: Scripture says ‘the

*fragrance of his garments,* and it also says *'the fragrance of my son.'* It does not say *'the fragrance of the garments,'* but *'the fragrance of my son.'*

Rather, it was taught: when Jacob entered, the Garden of Eden entered with him. And it was taught that those garments had belonged to Adam the first man, as it is written, *'Hashem God made for Adam and his wife garments of skin and clothed them, and He sent them out of the Garden of Eden'* (Genesis 3:21).

And if you say that the verse *'they sewed fig leaves'* refers to those garments—if so, why does Scripture say *'Hashem God made'*? And it says *'garments of skin'*—these were not merely fig leaves, but, as the Targum explains, garments of honor, from which fragrances rose, drawn from the spices of Eden.

And it was taught: they were made with the full Divine Name, as it is written, *'Hashem God made.'* Something done in this manner was not done even with heaven and earth. But does it not say, *'On the day Hashem God made earth and heaven'* (Genesis 2:4)? There is no difficulty: when they were created, they were not made with the full Name; only when they were established and endured were they established with the full Name.

As for what some say—that those garments came into the possession of that wicked one, Esau, who took them from Nimrod—this explanation is problematic. For if so, Scripture says *'for Adam and his wife'*—garments for Adam and garments for Eve. What became of Eve's garments? And furthermore, if that were the case, with what were they buried? Would you imagine that they cast aside and discarded the supernal radiance that the Holy One, blessed be He, gave them?

Rather, these were garments with which Adam and his wife were clothed, and no other human being ever wore them. For these garments resembled the supernal form. And if you might think they clothed themselves in them on their

own—come and see: Scripture says *‘and He clothed them’*—the Holy One, blessed be He, clothed them. Fortunate is their portion.

It is written, *‘Hashem my God, You are exceedingly great; You are clothed in glory and splendor’* (Psalms 104:1), and it is written, *‘Glory and splendor are before Him’* (Psalms 96:6), and it is written, *‘He wraps Himself in light like a garment’* (Psalms 104:2). Once He clothed Himself, He did what He did—teaching that the Holy One, blessed be He, wrapped Himself in light and created the heavens.

Now how are we to understand *‘the precious garments that were with her in the house’*? These “precious garments” are royal garments, of silk and gold. And it is the way of the world to store them with spices and fragrances, to honor the garments themselves.

Come and see: *‘And he smelled the fragrance of his garments’*—this was at first. But once he sensed it, he said, *‘See, the fragrance of my son,’* for he knew that the matter depended on him—that because of him the fragrance ascended. *‘Like the fragrance of a field that Hashem has blessed.’* And how did Isaac know the fragrance of a field that Hashem has blessed?

Rather, there are two matters here, and yet they are one. As it is written, *‘And Isaac went out to meditate in the field toward evening’* (Genesis 24:63). Did he have no house or other place in which to pray? Rather, this was the field that Abraham had purchased near the cave, as it is written, *‘The field that Abraham purchased from the sons of Heth’* (Genesis 23:20). And when Isaac would enter there, he saw the Shekhinah resting upon it, and holy, supernal fragrances would rise. For this reason he prayed there and fixed it as his place of prayer.

And why did Abraham not pray there? Because at first he had a fixed place elsewhere, and also because of another matter—the fragrance that he perceived

on Mount Moriah. And why is it called Moriah? Because of the fine myrrh (*mor*) that was there.

All of this was so: the Garden of Eden entered with Jacob and blessed him. Therefore Isaac did not attribute the matter to the garments, but to Jacob himself—because he saw that the matter depended on him, that he was fit and deserving to be blessed, and that the Garden of Eden entered with him. And therefore, when Esau later cried out, Isaac said, *‘He too shall be blessed.’*

*Rei’ach Begadav: The Secret  
Scent of Gan Eden*

*Yaakov Enters Wearing the Garments  
of Eisav*

The Zohar opens: *Pasach ve’amar*. The pasuk states: *Vaye’erach es rei’ach begadav*

*vayivarchihu vayomer re'i rei'ach beni.* When Yitzchak comes to give the berachos, Yaakov enters dressed in the garments of Eisav. He enters wearing the externality of Eisav in order to receive the berachah. And Yitzchak—blind, the *sagi nahor* who sees a light beyond the capacity of seeing—can only smell. So he says: *Re'eh rei'ach beni.* I see that you smell like the scent of the field.

The *levushim* smell like the scent of the field. *Vaye'erach es rei'ach begadav*—he smelled the clothing, the containment, the *tzimtzum* through which Yaakov presented himself. And the Zohar notes that these garments retained the scent of Gan Eden and never lost it.

### ***Rei'ach as the Irreducible Point***

Scent is that irreducible point of godly light that remains within concealment. The *chush ha-rei'ach* was not blemished by the *cheit* of the *eitz ha-da'as*. Chavah saw, heard, touched, ate, listened—but she did not smell. The sense of smell remained untouched.

*Rei'ach* goes all the way up to the highest places imaginable, to the *yashrus*, the straightness of existence at the core of all crookedness, up to the point of direct connectivity of everything to its root. It is not crooked. It is not pulled to the left or right. It is the *amud ha-emtza'i*, the central pillar of alignment. The nose represents the place where *da'as de-Atik* is revealed.

This is why the *kavanos* of smell are centered around the process of *hamtakas ha-dinim*. When a person looks around at the externalities of existence, then the world can begin to smell of death and filth. But if one smells deeper, one uncovers the *ruach apeinu Moshiach Hashem*, the hidden scent of redemption that arises from the world. *Hu mori'ach v'dan*—he will smell certainty in the place, smell goodness in the place. The deep breath of calmness draws us into the *Chaut shel bosem*, the warehouse of scent, revealing that secret of *le-basumei ad de-la yada*, which awakens the irreducible scent of goodness that remains untouched, the scent of Gan Eden that remains with the person.

### ***The Contradiction: Begadav or Beni?***

But then the Zohar sees a contradiction. On one hand: *rei'ach begadav*— Yitzchak sensed the scent of his clothing associated with Eisav. On the other hand: *rei'ach beni*— he sensed the scent of his son Yaakov. Was Yitzchak smelling the *levush*, the *tzimtzum*, and the vessel? Or was he smelling Yaakov himself, the inner light?

The Zohar presses the *stira*: is it light or vessel, essence or garment that Yitzchak smelled?

### ***Gan Eden Enters with Yaakov***

The resolution is: *Keivan she-nichnas Yaakov nichnas immo Gan Eden*. When Yaakov entered, Gan Eden entered with him. Eisav, on the other hand, brings Gehennom—*vayechedad Yitzchak charadah gedolah*; Gehennom opens beneath him. Yaakov brings Gan Eden, the scent of redemption.

And it is taught: those *begadim* were the garments of Adam HaRishon—*kasnos or vayalbishem*. Hashem clothed Adam and Chavah in garments of light, a concealment that reveals. Those

garments were taken out of Gan Eden, and Yaakov enters with that secret.

### ***The Question of the Fig Leaves***

In order to properly understand these garments we must return back to Gan Eden: after the *cheit*, Adam and Chavah covered themselves with *alei te'edah*, fig leaves. Rashi says it was the very tree from which the *cheit* came, because Hakadosh Baruch Hu fixes with that which He breaks—*mamtik mar b'mar*. So why does the Torah say Hashem made *kasnos ohr with an Ayin*, garments of skin? Why say Hashem made something new if it was just fig leaves? Why call it *kotnot ohr*?

The Zohar answers: it was not merely leaves. It was *ke-targumo levushin di-yekar*—garments of glory. The translucency of the body in its refined state. Even though they are considered garments of skin in relation to the garments of light that were present prior to the transgression; nevertheless they still represent a state of refinement that carries a remainder of the original light. And from those *levushin di-yekar* rose a scent—*rei'ach me-vussama*

*de-Eden*. The garments carried the scent of Gan Eden.

### ***Levush as Emergent Grandeur***

The *levush* is meant to produce *yekar*, a grandeur that emerges from within its apparent opposite, light elevated from within that which appears as debased. Everything is built in order to reveal *kevod Shamayim*—*le-hotzi yekar mi-zolel*, to pull beauty from what appears diminished.

*Yekar*—*yud-kaf-resh*—gematria *shai*, the *shai olamos*, the *yesh ha-amitti*: the revelation of Hakadosh Baruch Hu, the True Something in this world itself.

These *levushim* conceal the intensity of the light for the sake of revealing it in minimized and graspable form, and the light of *kevod Shamayim* emerges through them. This is what Yaakov took from Adam and Chavah: the secret of concealing garments that reveals, as the Arizal writes in the name of the Ramak, "revelation is concealment, and concealment is revelation".

### ***The Blindness of Yitzchak and the Illumination of Gevuros***

Yitzchak represents the *tzimtzum*. The emergence of a primordial darkness that conceals as expressed in the fact that Yitzchak no longer sees. He is beyond dealing with this world in its revealed state. He can ascend upwards into his mind, *mistailek be-machshavto*, *kakh ala*, ascending to the Source of concealment itself which is nothing other than the Infinite light of Hashem. Yitzchka is living a life of sweetening the *gevuros be-shorsham*, awakening the inner *shashu'im pnimiyim* which motivate the laughter of Yitzchak which is the opening of redemption. The question becomes: how is this infinite expression of chaotically creative *gevuros* in their root drawn back down into the organized world of *tikkun* where the severe potency of *gevurot* are sweetened by the vessels of rectification?

### ***Lights of Chaos in Vessels of Rectification***

Initially these lights of potent intensity were meant to go to Eisav, the red space of severity and *din*. But Eisav was unworthy of being a worthy vessel and as such it would lead to a shattering of Yitzchak's light. We may have assumed

then that these intense lights would remain hidden, for concealment naturally wants to remain above, hiding in its ownmost intensity. But Yaakov understood the need to draw these lights down as well, to draw the extra pleasure of intensity that emerges specifically from within the *gevuros* and as such he “steals” the *levush*, the secret of the *tzimtzum*. Yaakov takes the garments of Eisav, rooted in Adam and Chavah, and uses them for *tikkun*, drawing the intensity of pleasure emergent from the *gevuros* in their root. Yitzchak smells the garments and realizes: there will be *keilim* for this light, there will be *levushim* of *kavod* that reveal what is concealed. It might not be through the anticipated vessels of Eisav, but it will be through the redeemed garments of Yaakov.

Only by holding back infinite expression does a true expression emerge within the *kli*. And that is why the Zohar emphasizes: *ke-targumo levushin di-yekar*.

***Targum and the Zohar’s Language:  
Degradation That Reveals More***

The reference to Targum is not accidental. The secret fact that the Zohar is written in Targum, a form of language that always already implies a degradation away from Lashon HaKodesh rests at the core of the light of the Zohar. For in spite of the fact that it is the hither side of an original language, it is a degradation for the sake of revealing more potency within Lashon HaKodesh itself. A descent down into darkness in order to redouble the potency of the light.

As Rebbe Nachman explains in his teaching on *Targum*: translation is both lower and higher at once. Lower, because it descends away from the clarity of the original language. Higher, because it extends the potency of language beyond the territory of Lashon HaKodesh itself, revealing the light of meaning in the darker contours of imagination. This is the ultimate purpose of any vessel of *kli*: *tzimtzum l’shem giluy*, concealment for the sake of revelation.

***Hashem Elokim: The Full Name  
Appears in the Clothing***

The Zohar teaches: when Hashem gave these garments to Adam HaRishon, He used a *shem malei*, the fullness of His name: *Hashem Elokim*. This is the *Raza de-Meimnuta*, the secret paradox of faith, the *Shema de-Shalem*, the full name *Havayah-Elokim*—unifying above and below, *yichuda ila'ah* and *yichuda tata'ah*. Oros, the lights that descend from above to below are the aspect of *Shem Havayah*. The *Keilim* that engarb the light thereby concealing it for the sake of revealing it is *Shem Elokim*. The full name is the unity of revelation and concealment, the unity of lights and vessels, something and nothing at once.

### ***The World Both Reveals and Conceals the Light of Hashem's Full Name***

But then the Zohar asks a question: if this is the full name of Hashem, why wasn't *Shamayim* and *Aretz* created with it, why only the garments? And yet, in spite of the fact that the main creation of heaven and earth was not through the full name, nevertheless we do find an associated between the two in the pasuk: *beyom asot Hashem Elokim eretz ve'shamayim*. The Zohar resolves the apparent contradiction as follows:

originally, the world was not created with the full name, but when the world is properly established in a rectified way by way of the secret of *Olam HaTikun*, then the world becomes a *levush*, a concealing garment that reveals the unity of Hashem. It is at that point that existence itself is revealed to be upheld by the full name *Hashem Elokim*. As long as the world seems to be a *levush* that hides the light of Hashem, it is not reflective of the full name. Only when the *olam* is revealed as *he'elem l'shem giluy* does it reveal the name *Hashem Elokim* in fullness.

### ***Returning to Bo El Pharoah and the Paradoxical Locust of Tzimtzum***

This loops back to another Zohar in Parshas Bo: *Bo el Paroh*—not Lech. Bo implies Hashem is already in Pharoah's palace. Rebbe Nachman opens Torah Samech-Dalet and teaches: this is the secret of *tzimtzum*, like the locust—*ka-dein kamtza de-levusheih mineih u-beih*—where an exoskeleton that covers over the body emerges from within the body itself.

*Tzimtzum* is the emergence of the *levush* from within the thing it conceals, so

that the concealment becomes nothing other than an extension of the inner light, enabling revelation through concealment.

*Hod v'hadar lavashta.* Hashem was *malbish* Himself in *hod* and *hadar*—the secret of garments that shine. And as Rabbi Nachman teaches, Hashem dresses Himself within this worldly construction, hyperfocused within the Beis HaMikdash, the source of all eventual unfolding. The destruction of the Beis HaMikdash was simply an undoing of the *tzimtzum*: a return back to the level of light prior to concealment. The Mikdash is the secret of *hod v'hadar lavashta*, and its destruction is simply the return back to the original stage of the infinite light in its blinding overwhelmingness. This is also the secret of *Baruch Shem Kevod Malchuso l'olam va'ed*—a *levush*, *kemo lavesh*, concealment as revelation.

### ***Bigdei Malchus and the Hidden Scent***

So what are the *bigdei hachamudos*—the beautiful garments Yaakov wore? The Zohar says: *hachamudos bigdei malchus*. Malchus is the secret of *tzimtzum*, the

vessel that shines, concealment for the sake of revelation..

Malchus is the space where the hidden scents emerge—*bibusmin v'reiach*—so that a good smell emerges from within the concealment of this world. . Like Moshe in the Nile who was protected from a negative scent. Like Yosef in Mitzrayim who was given a good smell of redemption to overcome the negative scent on the way down into exile. The *rei'ach* reminds us that within the *levush* itself, there remains an irreducible point of *Ohr Ein Sof* that continues to shine.

### ***From Begadav to Beni: Treachery on the Path Towards Tikkun***

We return to the original issue. At first, Yitzchak smells the clothes: *rei'ach begadav*. But when he feels it, he says: *re'eh rei'ach beni*. He recognizes that it is Yaakov himself. The *rei'ach* is not the garment as something separate—it is

the garment as revelation of the essence itself.

This is the secret of *levush*: it is not concealment of self, it becomes part of self and as such the t is revelatory of the self.. It reveals the inner within the outer and transforms the outer into the inner.. It reveals Hashem within the awareness of His concealment and measure, within the gradations of *halacha*, down inside the particulars of the particulars.

This is the secret of *hamtakas ha-dinim*: not running from the *din* and severity of concealment, but seeing the root source of *din* as already containing the pathway towards sweetening. Bitter waters are sweetened by bitter wood. *Din* is nimtak only in and by its root. The deepest sweetening is realizing that concealment itself shines with the light of the Infinite.

### ***Where Yitzchak Knew the Scent of Gan Eden From***

How did Yitzchak know *rei'ach sadeh asher beiracho Hashem*? The Zohar offers two answers that are one—*trein milin... v'chulehu chad*, the secret of *echad she'hu*

*shtayim*, one that is two and two that is one.

One: *Vayeitzei Yitzchak lasuach basadeh lifnos arev*. Yitzchak went to the field at dusk to daven. Why there? Because it was the field Avraham bought near the *Me'arah*, and Yitzchak sensed the Shechinah there; he smelled the holy scent ascending upwards, and he prayed there. Avraham didn't pray there because he had a *makom kavua*—his avodah was to establish the *makom kavua* so that Yitzchak could reveal this pleasant smell of paradise.

Two: it is the *rei'ach* of Har HaMoriah, the place of *akeidah*, where *tzimtzum* reveals itself in its paradoxical force, where life and death, *yedi'ah* and *bechirah* meet. Har HaMoriah—*al shem hamora hatov*—had a wondrous smell ascending from there. And we can tie this back to *Mar*—the mem-reish, of Moshe and Rashbi—because that scent is the revelation of the *levush* as the vehicle of the infinite.

It is the Torah of Rabbi Meir—*katnus Ohr* with an *aleph*, not with an *ayin*: not a different Torah, but seeing the *aleph*

within the *ayin*, uncovering light through *levush* itself.

### ***Halbashah as the Condition for a Functional Life***

This is why in the end Yitzchak blesses Yaakov with the blessings of *gevurah*. He is not blessing a performance of trickery. He is smelling the *levushin de-yekar*—the concealment for the sake of revealing—and recognizing that the *tzimtzum* is revelatory of the inner point.

*Halbashah* is the diminishment of lights. It is drawing infinity down into bite-size vessels of ordinariness: knowing when I daven, when I eat, how I daven, how I eat, when I learn, where I learn, what my day looks like—not because I demand the world provide me certainty, but because I need the operating setting. I need the *halbasha* so I can be a functional person. *Ha'e'elam hu ha'giluy*. This is the radical secret of *tzimtzum*.

The *levush* hides the inner point to keep it *tzanua*, but it is precisely through the *levush* that *tzniyus* emerges. This is the secret of Reisha D'lo I'tyada the podiatrist point of the system—only

revealed from within the *levush*. The rectification and celebration of *levushim*, the owning of the need for *levushim*, is the secret of Yaakov Avinu: *haden kamtza de-levusheih mineih u-beih*, garments emerging from within itself, revealing the rei'ach of Gan Eden.

### ***Back to Bo El Paroh and Yetziyas Mitzrayim***

And this returns us to *Bo el Pharoah*, to the paradoxical secret of the locust, to the light of Yetziyas Mitzrayim. Mitzrayim is the beginning stage of the development of *levushim*. Kabbalas HaTorah is the development of *levushim* that will reveal the inner light.

It is the last *three makos*—corresponding to the upper sefiros of the *Gar*, the places we cannot grasp except through their concealment within lower levels—where we learn that the highest levels can only be grasped specifically from within *halbasha*. We hold the extraordinary through the ordinary itself. We illuminate ourselves with infinity precisely within our finite vessels.

*Beezras Hashem*, this is the opening into  
that secret.