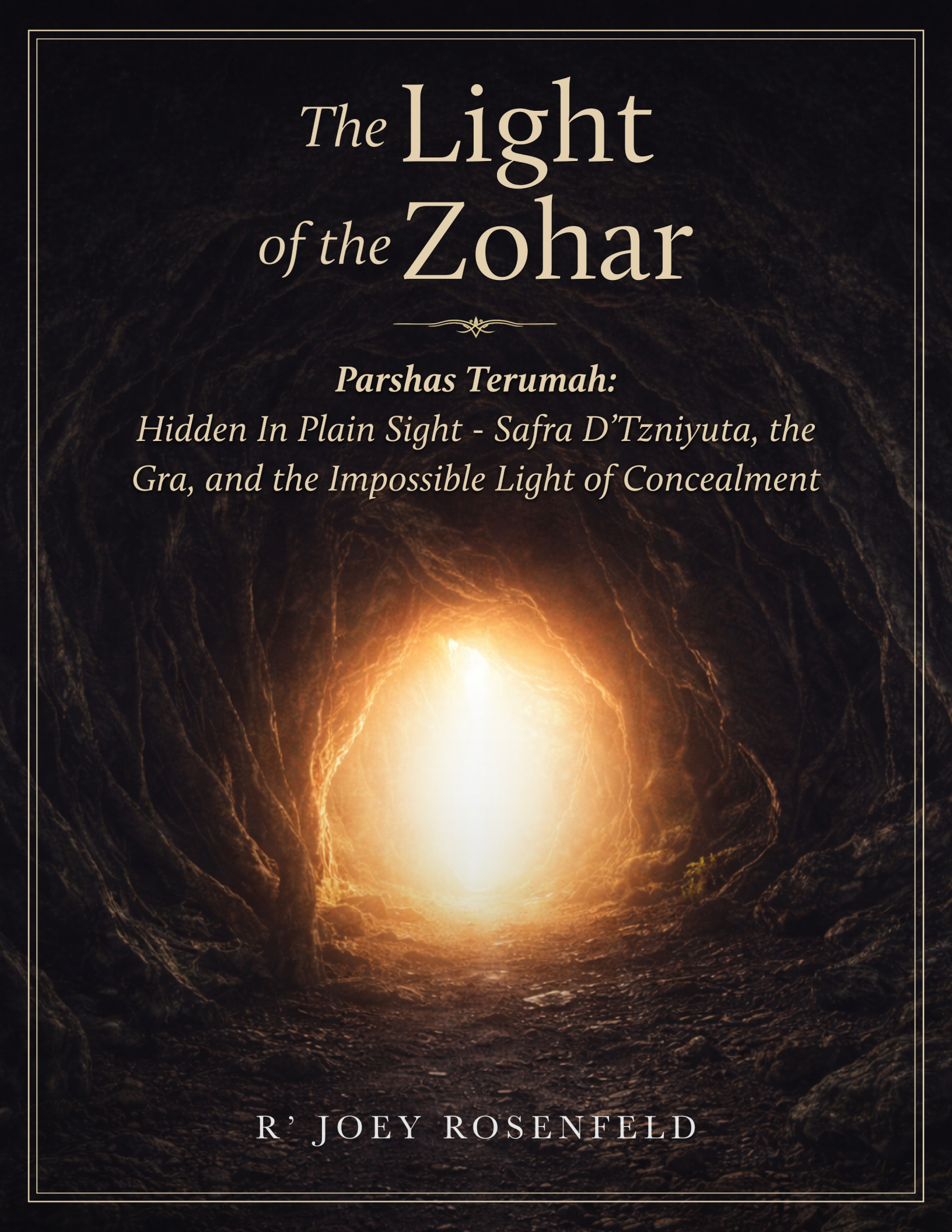


The background of the entire page is a photograph of a dark, cavernous tunnel. The walls are rugged and textured, with some small plants visible on the right side. A bright, glowing light emanates from the end of the tunnel, creating a strong contrast with the dark surroundings. The light is warm and yellowish-orange, suggesting a fire or a distant sun.

The Light *of the* Zohar

Parshas Terumah:

*Hidden In Plain Sight - Safra D'Tzniyuta, the
Gra, and the Impossible Light of Concealment*

R' JOEY ROSENFELD

— *The Light of the Zohar* —

Parshas Terumah:

**Hidden In Plain Sight - Safra D'Tzniyuta, the Gra,
and the Impossible Light of Concealment**



R' JOEY ROSENFELD

וַיִּקְחוּ לִי תְרוּמָה. רַבִּי יְהוּדָה פָּתַח, (תהילים ל"א:כ') מִה רַב טוֹבָךְ אֲשֶׁר צָפַנְתָּ לִירֹאִיךָ פְּעֻלַּת לַחֲוֹסִים בְּךָ נֶגֶד בְּנֵי אָדָם. הֵאֵי קָרָא הָא אֻקְמוּה וְאַתְמַר. אֲבָל רָזָא דָא, הָא אֻקְמוּה בּוֹצִינָא קְדִישָׁא, גּוֹ רָזִין עֲלָיִן.

דְּרָגָא עֲלָא, דְּאִיהוּ רָזָא דְּעֵלְמָא עֲלָא, אֲקָרִי מ"י. דְּרָגָא תַּתָּא, דְּאִיהוּ רָזָא דְּעֵלְמָא תַּתָּא, אֲקָרִי מ"ה. וְתַנִּינָן, אֵל תִּקְרִי מ"ה אֵלָא מָאָה, בְּגִין דְּכָל דְּרָגִין עֲלָיִן בְּאִשְׁלֻמוֹתֵהוֹן הֵכָא אִינוּן.

תּוֹ אֲמַאי אֲקָרִי מ"ה. אֵלָא אֶף עַל גַּב דְּמַשְׁכּוֹ עֲלָא אֲתַמְשָׁךְ, לֹא אֲתַגְלִיָּא עַד דְּאִשְׁתַּלִּים הֵכָא, דְּאִיהוּ אֲתֵר סוּפָא דְּכָל דְּרָגִין, סוּפָא דְּאֲמַשְׁכּוּתָא דְּכָלָא, וְקִיָּימָא בְּאֲתַגְלִיָּא. וְאֶף עַל גַּב דְּאֲתַגְלִיָּא יִתִּיר מְכָלָא, קִיָּימָא לְשָׂאֵלָא, מ"ה. מִה חֲמִית, מִה (בְּרַאשִׁית ב' ע"ב) יִדְעַת, כְּמָה דָּאֵת אֲמַר (דְּבָרִים ד':ט"ו) כִּי לֹא רְאִיתֶם כָּל תְּמוּנָה.

וּבְגִין כֶּךָ, מִה, רַב טוֹבָךְ, דָּא אִיהוּ יְסוּדָא דְּעֵלְמָא, דְּאֲקָרִי רַב טוֹב. כְּמָה דָּאֵת אֲמַר (ישעיהו ס"ג:ז') וְרַב טוֹב לְבֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּגִין דְּהֵאֵי אִיהוּ רַב טוֹב. אִזְרָא קְדָמָאָה, אֲקָרִי טוֹב סְתָם, וְהֵכָא כְּלִילִין דְּכָר וְנוֹקְבָא כְּחֻדָּא. אֲשֶׁר צָפַנְתָּ, דְּהֵאֵי אֲתַגְנִיז, כְּגֻוּנָא דְּאִזְרָא קְדָמָאָה, דְּאֲתַגְנִיז וְאַתְטַמַּר. פְּעֻלַּת: דְּהֵכָא אִיהוּ אֻמְנוּתָא דְּכָלָא, אֻמְנוּתָא דְּכָל עֲלָמָא, אֻמְנוּתָא דְּנִשְׁמַתִּין וְרוּחִין.

בְּרָזָא דָא עֲבִיד קוּדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא אֻמְנוּתָא דְּכָל עֲלָמָא, וְרָזָא דָא (בְּרַאשִׁית א':א') בְּרַאשִׁית בְּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ. בְּרָזָא דָא אֲתַעֲבִיד מִשְׁכָּנָא וְאַתְבְּנִי, דְּאִיהוּ בְּדִיוֹקְנָא דְּעֵלְמָא דְּלַעִילָא, וּבְדִיוֹקְנָא דְּעֵלְמָא תַּתָּא, הָדָא הוּא דְּכִתִּיב וַיִּקְחוּ לִי תְרוּמָה. לִי. תְרוּמָה. תְּרִין דְּרָגִין, דְּאִינוּן חַד, דְּמִתְחַבְּרָן כְּחֻדָּא.

“And they shall take for Me an offering.”

Rebbe Yehudah opened and said:

“What is the greatness of Your goodness that You have hidden for those who fear You; that You have enacted for those who take refuge in You, before the children of man.”

This verse has already been established and explained.

But this secret, this has been revealed by the Holy Lamp within the supernal mysteries.

There is a higher rung, which is the secret of the upper world, and it is called *Mi*.
There is a lower rung, which is the secret of the lower world, and it is called *Mah*.

And we have learned: do not read *Mah* (what), but *Me'ah* (one hundred), because all of the supernal levels, in their wholeness, are present here.

Why then is it still called *Mah*?

Because even though the supernal flow has been drawn downward,
it is not revealed until it is completed here—
for this is the place that stands as the end of all levels,
the end of the entire drawing-down,
and it stands in revelation.

And yet, even though it is more revealed than anything else,
it still stands as a question: *Mah* — what?
What have you seen? What have you known?
As it is written: “For you did not see any form.”

And because of this:

“*Mah* — how great is Your goodness.”

This is the foundation of the world, which is called *rav tov* — great goodness,
as it says, “and the great goodness to the house of Israel,”
because this is truly the great goodness.

The primordial light is called simply *good*,
but here male and female are included together as one.

**“That You have hidden”
for this has been concealed,
like the primordial light that was hidden and stored away.**

**“You have enacted”
for here is the craftsmanship of everything:
the craftsmanship of all worlds,
the craftsmanship of souls and spirits.**

**Within this secret, the Holy One, blessed be He, formed the craftsmanship of all
worlds
and this is the secret of:
“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”**

**Within this same secret the Mishkan was made and built,
for it is in the likeness of the upper world
and in the likeness of the lower world.**

**This is what is written:
“And they shall take for Me an offering.”**

**For Me. Offering.
Two levels that are one,
joined together as one.**

**תאנא. ספרא דצניעותא, ספרא, דשקיל במתקלא. דעד דלא הוה מתקלא, לא הוו משגיחין אפין
באפין, ומלכין קדמאין מיתו, וזיוניהון לא אשתכחו, וארעא אתבטלת.**

It was taught:

**The *Safra de'Izriyusa*- the Book of Concealment
the book that is weighed in the balance.**

It was taught:

**before there was balance,
the faces did not gaze face-to-face.**

**And the primordial kings died,
and their rectifications were not found,
and the earth was nullified.**

Moshe and Rashbi: The Place Where the Tórah of Tzaddikim Emerges

Okay, so be'ezras Hashem, we are continuing with our weekly series of shiurim on the Zohar HaKadosh, where we draw the light of Moshe Rabbeinu into the vessels of Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai. Our purpose is to unify the *Chochmah* of Moshe and the *Binah* of Rebbe Shimon, and open ourselves up to living with the *makkifim* of those two tzaddikim. Rebbe Nachman of Breslov opens up Likutei Moharan with a love song about Moshe Rabbeinu (*Shir Na'im*) and a powerful vision about Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai (*Lechu Chazu*), not simply because those were two nice teachings, but because rootedness in the Torah of Moshe and in the Torah of Rashbi- the revealed Torah and the concealed Torah- is the only way that the true tzaddikim can draw down their Torah. There is no Torah that is true that is not drawn through the vessels of Moshe and Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai, in the secret of *eimasai ka'asi mar*, that *ma"r*- the light of Moshiach, the sweetening of the bitter- is *roshei teivos* Moshe and Rashbi, because it's the *niglah* and the *nistar*, the revealed and the concealed.

Sinai Is Not Enough — Bringing Chochmah Into Binah

Like the Ramchal teachers, there is a fundamental need to draw the Torah down not only from *Har Sinai* which is the light of Binah, but also from Chochma. Sinai is similar to Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai, about whom we sing "*Sinai Sinai*", connected to the *yesod de'imma*, which is the space of Binah—but it's not enough. We have to draw down the light of Chochmah, which is the light of Moshe Rabbeinu, into Sinai itself. This brings about the unity of Moshe and Rashbi which is the secret of *Halcha L'Moshe M'Sinai*.

The Generation of Rashbi Like the Generation of Moshe

The Zohar HaKadosh, especially in this week's parsha, Parshas Terumah, is very self-aware, so to speak, of the unity between the generation of Moshe Rabbeinu and the generation of Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai: that just like in the generation of Moshe Rabbeinu and the *dor de'ah*, there was a revelation of secrets flowing from top to bottom for everybody to partake of, so too in the generation of Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai, the waters of *pnimiyus ha-Tórah* were flowing downwards and each and every person had the ability to grab hold of it, irrespective of their standing.

Parshas Terumah and the Kodesh HaKodashim of the Zohar

In this week's parsha, Parshas Terumah, we encounter a singularly unique space of the Zohar HaKadosh, the space that holds the *Kodesh HaKodashim*, the Aron HaKadosh which is *einenu min ha-midah*, the *Safra D'Tzneyusa*. The Vilna Gaon points out, as recorded by his student Rav Chaim Volozhiner in the introduction to Biur HaGra of *Safra D'Tzneyusa* explains that his Rebbe told him that if the entirety of the Zohar HaKadosh would be considered the Gemara, then the *Safra D'Tzneyusa* would be considered the Mishnah. Meaning to say, it is the origin point, the germ cell, so to speak, of the ideas that are going to emanate and reveal themselves in the two revelations of the *Idra Rabba* and the *Idra Zuta*, and then ultimately express themselves in the *Saba de'Mishpatim* and through the Zohar and the Tikkunei Zohar themselves. So what we are encountering in Parshas Terumah is not simply another section of Zohar, but the Kodesh HaKodashim of the Zohar, the inner chamber that contains the seed of the entire unfolding.

A Sefirotic Map of the Zohar

One can say- and this is just a general theory at this point, a thought emerging in the moment- that if the *Safra D'Tzneyusa* is, so to speak, the Keter of the Zohar HaKadosh, the place that holds all of it in undifferentiated potential, then the *Idra Rabba* would be *Chochma*, the expansive flash and unfolding expression of those ideas; the *Idra Zuta* would be Binah, the internalization and structuring of that expression; the *Saba de'Mishpatim* would be the aspect of Da'as that draws the Torah down into the world of Tiferes, the lived, embodied Torah, which is the *guf* of the Zohar HaKadosh, the Zohar on the parsha; and the Malchus would be the *Tikkunei Zohar* themselves, the articulation and crystallization of that light into vessels of expression. In that sense, Parshas Terumah becomes the encounter with the Keter of the Zohar. the *Safra D'Tzneyusa*, the place that precedes differentiation yet contains all differentiation within it.

Safra D'Tzneyusa: Wisdom That Remains Hidden Even After Revelation

Safra D'Tzneyusa is referred to as "*safra de'shaqal bi-metqela*", a text whose words are measured upon the scale. It is this innerpoint that orients the entirety of the Zohar HaKadosh, teaching us that any wisdom that emerges throughout is ultimately a

wisdom of concealment. A *Safra D'Tzneyusa*, a book of modesty, not hidden because it is afraid of what it has to express, but hidden because it remains hidden even after its revelation. It is the *ulamta shapirta de'leis bah ayin*, Malchus that appears without eyes, so openly revealed, because revelation itself is clothed in concealment. Ultimately, the deepest secret is that there is a *tzneyusa*, a concealment, a hidden glow of mystery that surrounds the inner kernel of all revelation. It is the inner point of Malchus, the *nekuda ha'pnimis* of Malchus, which is the Keter of Malchus, to the *bechina* of *ayin*, the nothingness at the heart of the desire to connect to nothing but the infinite light of HaKadosh Baruch Hu hidden within every experience of Malchus, within *ani* itself.

Safra D'Tzneyusa The Kodesh HaKodashim of the Zohar Itself

At the heart of the Zohar HaKadosh on Terumah, we encounter what one might identify as the *Kodesh HaKodashim* of the Zohar itself which is *Safra D'Tzneyusa*. *Safra D'Tzneyusa*, the book of concealment, or *Tzneyusa de'safra*, the concealment of the book, brings us face to face with this reality: the highest revelation of what one can know is the secret of *tzneyus*, modesty and concealment.

If we view not-knowing as consolation because we could not win the prize of knowledge, then concealment becomes shame. But if we invert it, then concealment becomes presence. *Tzneyus* is not hiding what could be revealed; it is revealing what can only be revealed through concealment itself. It is a secret that remains secret even after revelation.

Either “secret” is incidental, hidden only until revealed, or “sod” is essential: revealed and still concealed, because it cannot be revealed; the world is too limited. It can only be grasped through concealment.

The Vilna Gaon- A Metzius of Tzneyus That Reveals

Safra D'Tzneyusa is ancient and it belongs to Klal Yisrael; it belongs to all the tzaddikim. But one tzaddik who took *Safra D'Tzneyusa* and brought it out of hiding by revealing that its hiddenness is fundamental was the Vilna Gaon.

The Vilna Gaon's entire essence was *tzneyus*. Like the soul of Moshiach ben Yosef, it hides itself within concealment; from a historical perspective it can appear distorted,

yet it is perpetually engaged in refinement from below, in the deepest refinement—the secret of *shechitas ha'nachash*, the future feast of the Levyason, the elevated secrets of redemption in Eretz Yisrael, the *Malach Mattat*. The Gra and his students, the brothers from Shklov, Rav Chaim Volozhiner, Rav Yitzchak Isaac Chaver, Rav Yitzchak Kahana, the Leshem ; the Talmidei HaGra are somewhat understood and yet still not fundamentally revealed. The Gra is a sugya of *tznius*: hiddenness that reveals. That's why we have *Safra D'Tzneyusa* opened through the Gra, it is a hidden book even after it is revealed. .

Our Generation- The Opening of Safra D'Tzneyusa

There were gradations of revelation throughout history. But over the last fifteen years, there has been a proliferation of commentaries on the Gra's commentary to *Safra D'Tzneyusa*, at least twenty or thirty volumes, so it is clearly in the process of opening. Yet even as it opens, a person realizes: the entire book teaches me what I cannot know. It brings me into contact with *Keter*, and *Keter*, the *kutzo shel yud* reaches up to *Reisha D'Lo I'tyada*, which at its core can only be grasped by coming in contact with that which cannot be grasped.

We live in a generation of *Safra D'Tzneyusa* opening, and *Safra D'Tzneyusa* teaches the central kernel of what it means to draw together *shamayim* and *aretz*, what it means to build the Mishkan, what it means to connect above and below, what it means to draw down the light of above into the vessels of below, and to elevate the vessels of below back above.

Chochma, Malchus, and the Hidden Princess

It is the source of modesty, a concealed thing. *Et tzenu'im Chochma*. Chochma, which is the root of Malchus in the secret of “*abba yasad barta*”, expresses itself precisely as Malchus, the princess that remains hidden in plain sight. This hiddenness is not because there is something we are afraid to reveal, and not because revelation is some political posture or withholding, but rather because everything that is revealed will ultimately only be grasped through the recognition that there is a concealment that cannot be fully expressed. This is the *he'elam ha-atzmi*, the essential concealment, the point of emunah, the place where Malchus is raised back up to the *reisha de-lo i-yada*,

the unknowable head. The revelation itself teaches concealment, and the concealment itself is the deepest revelation.

The Revelation of Keter Within Da'as — Knowing That We Do Not Know

This place of *tznius*, as the Vilna Gaon points out, is the revelation of the light of Keter specifically within Daas: the awareness that we can attempt to know everything that there is to know, but ultimately arrive at the ultimate truth of knowing, which is that we do not know. And it is specifically in that not-knowing that we connect our minds, hearts, experiences, and imagination to that place beyond knowledge, *lemala mi'taam va'da'as*. That is the light of *tznius*, the concealment, the hiddenness, the modesty of Malchus that will always remain modest for She holds the secret of endlessness. This is the secret of Purim: *Esther tzniusa haysa*, the secret of Esther which is hiddenness, which remains even after *geulah*, because there is always an inner point of *tznius*, always a *nekuda* of Malchus that remains concealed, reminding us that we cannot grasp anything in the end. In the end, everything we thought we knew is rooted in a place so unfathomably great that we cannot know anything.

The Ohr HaGanuz Revealed in Its Concealment

When we encounter concealment, modesty, the limits of mind, the apparent hiddenness of HaKadosh Baruch Hu in the world, the abundance of vessels and the darkness of mind and inability to grasp, this is not necessarily the opposite of spiritual growth. Often this is precisely where we must find the depth of HaKadosh Baruch Hu's revelation: specifically in the *tznius*, specifically in what is concealed.

The *Ohr HaGanuz* is concealed, but revealed within its concealment. Hidden, yet revealed every moment, propelling the world forward ever so slightly. Not something I can claim as mine, not something I can label as "I know what this is," but something I access by coming to terms with its concealment. That is *lo yada*. That is the *tznius* and modesty of *pnimiyus ha'Torah*.

The First Line- The Book Measured on the Scales

We are going to look at the first line of the *Safra D'Tzniyusa* and with a little bit of the Gra's *peirush*, we can get a small taste. The Zohar says: ***Teina***—it was taught, an

ancient teaching, like a collection of Mishnayos from a time before time, around which the Zohar builds itself. The *Safra D'Tzneyusa* is like the Keter of the Zohar; the Idra Rabba and Idra Zuta are like the Chochma and Binah; the Da'as is like the Ra'aya Mehemna; all gradations. But Safra D'Tzneyusa is the birthplace, like Keter giving birth to Chochma and Binah.

In Keter everything is *pashut*; the language is terse, cryptic; interpretive freedom becomes endless, which is perhaps one reason the Gra expresses himself so clearly here. ***Teina: Safra D'Tzneyusa, safra d'shakil b'matkala.*** The book of modesty, the book of concealment, is a book measured upon the scales.

He'elam HaAtzmi- The Revelation of Essential Concealment

What we are going to see is how revelation is always secondary to essence: what is essential remains in concealment, not accidental concealment but essential concealment, reminding us that what I cannot grasp is not merely human limitation but the deep bond of faith that can only be grasped above knowledge. Concealment beckons me to the realization that all I can grasp is what I cannot grasp, and I enter into the *He'elam HaAtzmi*, essential concealment, where concealment itself brings me to a new sense of *kedushasi lemala mikedushaschem*. Existence is the revelation of concealment. *Tzneyus* can be revealed, but revealed in concealment: not a revelation that ends *tzneyus*, but a revelation that something remains concealed, and in that kernel of perpetual concealment we access what cannot be grasped by knowing we cannot grasp it.

This concealment is the place of *Reisha d'lo ityada*, the unknowable head of Keter, the loftiest place where Rav Chaim Vital encountered *sfeikos* and forgetfulness, not incidental, but indicative of the nature of *Reisha d'lo ityada*: not meant to be known. What one grasps there is: *achen ata Kel mistater*. You are hidden not because You don't want to be revealed, but because You cannot be revealed, and my job is to reveal You by grasping that I cannot reveal You, in the secret of emunah. That is the revelation of concealment, like Adar and Purim. ***Ta'ana Safra D'Tzneyusa, safra d'shakil b'matkala.***

The Gra: Five Words Holding the Whole Cosmos

The Gra explains: *Tà'ana Safra D'Tzneyusa, safra d'shakil b'matkala*. It is like an introduction, like all beginnings, like *Mishlei Shlomo* up to *yiras Hashem*. This first statement is the *hakdamah* to the sefer. And like all introductions, it contains the entire book in it, if you want the *tamtzis*, look here.

These are five words: ***ad mitkala***, corresponding to the five perakim of *Safra D'Tzneyusa*. They also correspond to the five chumashim: Bereishis, Shemos, Vayikra, Bamidbar, Devarim; to the five partzufim; to the five olamos- AK, Atzilus, Beriah, Yetzirah, Asiyah; and to the five osiyos, *kutzo shel yud* and the four letters of *Havayah*. The Gra just gave us an encyclopedia: these five words are not happenstance; each word corresponds to a perek, and each perek contains worlds, partzufim, and the total structure of reality.

Sifra- Text as Giluy HaMachshavah

Now the Gra tells us what “sefer” is. ***Sefer hu giluy ha-machshavah***. A book is a revelation of thought. Thought is concealed within the individual and is revealed only through speech or writing. And similarly, *Ein Sof* revealed Himself and created the world for revelation, ***leishtamoda leh***, as the Zohar and Tikunim say; and as Sefer Yetzirah says: HaKadosh Baruch Hu created His world ***be'sefer, be;sefer, ube'sippur***.

The Gra explains: just as a human being expresses thought through writing and speech, so too HaKadosh Baruch Hu expresses concealed divinity in the world through writing and speech. But why “sefer sefer” and only one “sippur”? Here the Gra introduces the difference between speech and writing: speech is one immediate disclosure from mind to listener; writing has an extra stage, mind to writing, then writing to reader.

Sefer, Sefer, Sippur- Chabad as the Structure of Revelation

In speech, the thought is revealed in one act; in writing, it is revealed twice: first when it is written, yet the sefer remains closed; and second when it is read. Speech includes both in one act. And these are *Chabad*. *Chochmah* is the first stage of the sefer, written but still closed. *Binah* is the second stage, opened through the reader's understanding. *Daas* is the sippur, the spoken narration directly drawing down speech itself.

The Gra links it to the pasuk: *Hashem bechochmah yasad aretz; konen shamayim bitzumah; uve'da'ato tehomot nivka'u*. This is the architecture of revelation: the world was created through *Chochmah, Binah, and Daas*, through the two stages of the book and the immediacy of speech.

Keter as Machshavah Stima- The Ayin Behind All Revealtion

Prior to the three minds of *Chabad* is the beginning of the revelation of *hamachshavah stima*, the concealed thought, which is Keter Elyon, not revealed at all, even its *metzius*, and therefore it is called *ayin*. *Chochmah* is the *sefer ha'chasum*, revealed in existence but not essence; therefore called *yesh*. *Binah* is the second sefer, already opening. *Daas* is the sippur that descends.

Because *Chochmah* is the first revealed point, all *sefirot* are called by its name: *kulam b'chochmah asisa*; Kabbalah itself is called *Chochmah*; the entire Atzilus is called *yud*, which is *Chochmah*; the *yud* contains all ten sefirot. *Chochmah* is the first point of revelation of what cannot be revealed, because it contains within it the light of Keter. It is the knowable expression of the unknowable.

Safra D'Tzniyusa- Revealing the Unknowability of Reisha d'Lo Ityada

So why do we call this *Safra D'Tzniyusa*? Because it is *Chochmah* that reveals *tzniuta*, meaning: it reveals that which remains concealed. It is not removing concealment; it is revealing concealment as concealment. *Reisha d'lo ityada* is called *tzniuta*, a concealment concealed within concealment, *d'lo isyada, velo isyada*, and the Gra brings the Zohar's language that Rashbi reaches the end of all connection and unity and completion precisely by concealing himself in that *tzniuta*.

Therefore: ***ein megalin zos ha'chochmah ela le-tznu'in***. Not because it must be hidden, but because its very content is hidden content. It is revealed only through *tznius*, through the capacity to live with what cannot be said: ***kevashim liltvushcha; devash ve'chalav tachas leshonecha***. Honey and milk are under the tongue, not on the tongue. The essence of this *chochmah* is *lehatznia*, the goal is to teach modesty: the concealed origin and the revealed beginning.

The Scales– Tikun as the Balancing of Opposites

In the continuation, the Gra opens how the first *safra* is Chochmah revealing the *tzniuta* of Keter; the second *safra* is Binah; and ***d'shakil b'matkala*** draws it into the revealed worlds of graspability, into the world of measurement, balance, and tikkun. *Matkala* is Malchus, the balancing act of *O*

lam HaTikun, the rectification of *Olam HaTohu*, the capacity for opposites to coexist without shattering. And this is the secret of what we are drawing down into our lives through *pnimiyus ha'Torah* and the Zohar HaKadosh: *tzniusa*, fundamental modesty that cannot be revealed. Even after everything is revealed, Megillas Esther remains concealed. There is always an irreducible secret, grasped only by emunah. That is *kedushascha lemala mikedushaseichem*, that is *binyan ha'Mishkan*, *binyan Beis HaMikdash*, and that is the secret of *bilvavi Mishkan evneh*.

The Calm That Emerges From Relinquishing Control

Instead of this producing fear, anxiety, or destabilization, what emerges is a pleasantness and a calmness that comes with relinquishing the effort to gain control intellectually, psychologically, emotionally, spiritually, over every element of our lives and surroundings. Tzniyus is a willingness to live with more ease: to do what can be done in the moment, but also to open the hands from their clenched position, the openness that allows a person to live in the pleasantness of *tzniusa*. The recognition of not-knowing becomes not collapse but rest, the restful faith that emerges when control is surrendered into emunah.

Why Safra D'Tzniyusa Appears in Parshas Terumah

We are not going to be speaking directly about Safra D'Tziyusa yet, but it illuminates the entire parsha of Terumah. And perhaps one of the reasons that we find it specifically in Parshas Terumah is because after Matan Torah, the ultimate secret of faith must be drawn down into the innermost point of the heart, into the mind of each and every individual within their own experience. The particular letter that was given to each person at Matan Torah on the level of ayin must be drawn down into the level of ani — into lived subjectivity itself.

Betzalel, the Letters of Creation, and Building the Inner Mishkan

This is the Mishkan, the emergence of those letters that Betzalel understood, rooted in *Ma'aseh Bereishis* itself: the unity of the *asarah ma'amaros* of creation from the *Yichud Ila'ah* perspective and the *asarah dibros* of existence and human experience from the *Yichud Tata'ah* perspective. There was a unity between the letters that gave shape to creation and the unity of the letters that Betzalel understood were needed to build the heart of each person, to enable *bilvavi Mishkan evneh*, the ability for each person to build a Mishkan within their heart. In order to do that, one must understand the secret of *tznius*, the secret of *ani* and *ayin* simultaneously, the secret of the *sfeikos* of *reisha d'lo ityada* and *Malchus ha'gnuza* in *Reisha D'lo Ityada*: that everything we think we know ultimately returns us to a place of not-knowing. Not a not-knowing born of ignorance, but a not-knowing born of the impossibility of grasping the greatness of the Subject, because HaKadosh Baruch Hu is so vast, so infinite, so present in all matters of presence, that the mind essentially limited in the face of that infinitude.

From Not-Knowing to Emunah

In that place of *lemala mi'ta'am va'da'as*, in that space of holy folly, of *mili d'shtusa*, of not knowing anything, it is precisely there that a person affirms the *emunah* of above reason or understanding. That is the building of the Mishkan: the innermost point of *tznius*. Each person has their own *tzniusa*, the place where the light of HaKadosh Baruch Hu is drawn down into their life in a way that is privately hidden away, even to themselves.

The Zohar of Terumah and the Entry Into the Sugya

The Zohar HaKadosh in this week's parsha is illuminated with teachings that are so fundamental, each and every vessel of the Mishkan, every order of the Mishkan, the secrets of Leah and Rachel, the secret of finding the Mishkan within one's own mind and inner structure. But the point that we are going to begin with is a small teaching on Daf ע"ז ע"א, ***Vayikchu li terumah*** — take for Me a terumah, take for Me the donation

necessary for building the Mishkan itself. This opening phrase becomes the gateway into the sugya of Malchus, concealment, revelation, and the drawing down of transcendence into immanence.

Rebbe Yehuda — Malchus Opens the Sugya

Rebbe Yehuda pasach: Mah rav tuvcha asher tzafanta lireiecha, pa'alta lachosim bach neged bnei adam. Rebbe Yehuda opens — Rebbe Yehuda who is always Malchus, the *rosh hamedabrim b'chol makom*, the voice that opens articulation in the world, the secret of Malchus Beis David which creates the openings for redemption. *Rebbe Yehuda pasach*, Malchus itself opens the sugya. The entire teaching, as we are going to see, revolves around Malchus and Terumah: Terumah which is *trei me'ah*, the measure of ninety-eight out of a hundred, missing two — the two crowns of the wholeness of Malchus that are presently lacking and must be restored in order to raise Malchus back to its place. That *trei me'ah* — the ninety-eight — corresponds to the forty-nine gates of purity plus forty-nine gates of impurity as the Gra points out, in the secret of Terumah, Malchus, and the ascent of Malchus. Rebbe Yehuda, Malchus, opens with the verse: ***Mah rav tuvcha asher tzafanta lireiecha***, how great is the goodness that is concealed for those who fear You — ***pa'alta lachosim bach neged bnei adam***, that You have prepared for those who take refuge in You from the presence of humanity.

Mi and Mah — The Two Worlds of Consciousness

The Zohar explains that this verse had already been interpreted elsewhere, in Parshas Shlach, where the hidden goodness within the concealment of *tzniusa*, within the *gevuros* that surge forth from within the northern dimension of reality, within those mountain nights traversed by the *chavraya kadisha*, was discussed. Yet, as the Zohar often does, although the teaching was true in its original context, it is now revealed again in a deeper register. ***Butzina Kadisha***, the holy lamp, Rashbi, taught that within all ascending secrets there is a higher level, ***darga ila'ah***, the secret of the upper world called ***mi***, the world of Binah, the “who.” This is the consciousness of origin, the questioning of where something comes from, the recognition that ultimately I do not know where this thing emerged from. No matter how far I trace something back, I reach a point where I can only ask “*mi?*” — who? From where? This is the secret of Binah, the fifty gates, the endless questions and answers, the *shakla v'tarya*, the *kashya*

and *terutz*, until one reaches the fiftieth gate, the level of *teiku*, where knowing evolves into a new form of not-knowing, and that not-knowing itself becomes the highest rectification.

Opposite this is the lower level, *darga tata'ah*, Malchus, the world called *mah*, what. This is the world of content, of experiential presence, of asking: what is this thing? What is its measure, its function, its form? *Mi* asks origin; *mah* asks essence. *Mi* returns consciousness upward toward mystery; *mah* situates consciousness within manifest reality.

Transmission, Memory, and the Faith of Generations

The question of *mi* draws the mind back toward a place from which transmission flows, a hidden source that cannot be remembered directly but is received through lineage. A thought passed down generation to generation, unbroken, each generation infinitely connected to the one before it. This is why the connection *bein dor l'dor* depends on *emunah*, because the origin itself cannot be grasped empirically. Amalek attacks precisely there, in the doubt that severs transmission. Eliyahu HaNavi stands precisely there as well, in that void between generations, restoring the bond, turning the hearts of children to parents and parents to children, revealing that the chain of origin never broke even when memory faltered. *Mi* is the consciousness that something comes from beyond, even when the beyond cannot be seen.

The Higher Reveals Itself Only in the Lower

And yet, despite the distinction between *mi* and *mah*, the Zohar says something astonishing: although the higher is higher and the lower is lower, the higher does not reveal itself except in the lower. The transcendent orientation of *mi*, faith in the unknowable origin, the *Atik* of all *Atikin*, the *Stimu* of all *Stimin*, the *Reisha* of all *Reishin*, finds its actual manifestation only in Malchus, the lowest vessel, *sofa de-chol dargin*, the endpoint of all descent. It is specifically in the thickness of lived reality, walking, eating, speaking, sleeping, praying, feeling, perceiving, that the light of wonder is encountered. Not in abstraction from the world, but in immersion within it.

From Knowledge to Not-Knowing Within Malchus

And even though Malchus is the most revealed level, the place where things appear concrete, measurable, and known, nevertheless it continues to abide in the mode of *mah*. And from within *mah* itself arises the question: *mah chamita, mah yadata*, what have I really seen, what have I really known? It is specifically from within the certainty of the ego, the sense that I know what this is, who I am, how things are, that the secret emerges: *yesh v'ayin she-yithapech hakol*, the inversion of being and nothingness. The *ad de'lo yada*, the *reisha de'lo yada*, the realization that I do not know anything at all. *Ki lo re'item kol temunah*, even while seeing, nothing is grasped. Even while encountering reality, its essence escapes comprehension. And so everything ultimately rests on *emunah*, the deep and unbreakable covenant between Knesset Yisrael and HaKadosh Baruch Hu.

The Hidden Goodness Within the Depths of Reality

Therefore, *mah rav tuvcha*, how great is the goodness that is hidden away. This is the hidden foundation within existence itself, the concealed *Chochma* shining within Malchus, the *yesod de'abba* illuminating interiority precisely where exteriority appears opaque. The primordial light, *ohr kadma*, concealed at creation, now revealed in the lowest places. Here masculine and feminine, giver and receiver, unite as one. The goodness concealed in creation is revealed not by leaving the world but by penetrating its surface, discovering the light hidden within the apparent solidity of reality.

The Mishkan- Union of Above and Below

This is the secret of *Bereishis bara Elokim es hashamayim v'es ha'aretz* and the secret of the Mishkan: the union of above and below. Above is not-knowing; below is knowing. And it is specifically within knowing, within structured, lived human functioning, living day after day as if we know, that the light of above is encountered. One acts, decides, speaks, builds, plans, yet at the core remains the truth: *ani lo yodea klum*. I do not know anything at all. Knowing becomes the vessel through which not-knowing shines.

Li Terumah- The Union of Binah and Malchus

This is the meaning of *vayikchu li terumah*. Terumah is Malchus; *li* is Binah. Two levels, *mi* and *mah*, united. The light of concealment and the light of revelation interwoven as one. Because revelation itself is nothing other than concealment shining through *tznius*, through emunah, through receiving everything *lemala mi'ta'am va'da'as besimcha*.

Asher Tzafanta — The Concealed Primordial Light

The great goodness is hidden away, *Asher tzafanta* — that which You have concealed. The Zohar explains that this concealed goodness is hidden in the same manner as the primordial light, *ohr kadma*, which was revealed at creation and then concealed. That original light did not disappear; it was hidden and reserved, and now it shines again specifically in the lowest place. The concealment itself is not absence but preservation, not loss but depth. The hiddenness of that light is precisely what allows it to be rediscovered within Malchus, within lived existence. The primordial concealment becomes the ongoing structure of reality, that the deepest light is always present yet never grasped directly.

Pa'alta- The Work of Faith in the Lower World

The hidden light is reserved for the righteous, *Pa'alta*, You have prepared, You have wrought. The Zohar explains that specifically here, in this lowest revealed world, rests the entire *ummutza*, the craft, the art, the faith-work of all worlds and all souls and all spirits. It is here, in the place where reality appears solid and self-evident, that the hidden light is encountered through emunah. This is the divine artistry itself, that HaKadosh Baruch Hu created a world that appears understandable, measurable, and graspable, yet in its depths constantly returns the perceiver to the recognition that it is not graspable at all. The world itself becomes the training ground of emunah, not because it lacks clarity, but because its clarity dissolves into mystery upon deeper contemplation.

Creation and Mishkan– The Same Pattern of Union

This is the secret of *Bereishis bara Elokim es hashamayim v'es ha'aretz*, the creation of heaven and earth, and this is the same secret expressed in the building of the Mishkan. The Mishkan is constructed ***b'dyukna d'alma d'le'eila u'dyukna d'alma d'tata***, in the form of the upper world and the lower world unified. Above is the realm of not-knowing; below is the realm of knowing. And the Mishkan, like creation itself, unites them. It reveals that the light of above is encountered only within below. That transcendence is not found outside immanence, but shining from within it.

Living As If We Know, Rooted in Not-Knowing

This becomes the orientation of human existence itself. A person must live, function, decide, and act as if they know. One walks through life with apparent certainty: planning, speaking, choosing, building. And yet at the core of that functioning lies the recognition: *ani lo yodea klum, ani lo yodea klum, lo yodea klum*. I do not know anything at all. The knowing is necessary for life; the not-knowing is the truth at the core of life. And the Mishkan represents precisely that paradox, structured form housing infinite unknowability. The vessel of certainty containing the light of mystery.

Dyukna d'Le'eila u'Ltata — Form Above and Below

This is the meaning of ***dyukna d'le'eila u'ltata***, the image of above and below. The Mishkan mirrors both: the structured world of form and the concealed world of origin. And therefore the Torah concludes this sugya with the verse: ***vayikchu li terumah***. Bring for Me a Terumah. Terumah is Malchus, the elevation of the lower. *Li* is the upper, the orientation to Binah, to *mi*. The command itself unites the two: the lower offering raised to the higher, the higher revealed within the lower.

Two Levels Becoming One

Trein dargin d'inun chad d'mitchabran k'chada, two levels that become one. Binah and Malchus, *mi* and *mah*, concealment and revelation, knowing and not-knowing. Because the light of revelation is nothing other than concealment shining through *tznius*. The revealed world becomes the place where the hidden origin is encountered. And therefore the spiritual task becomes receiving everything *lemala mi-ta'am*

va-da'as besimcha, accepting reality, action, experience, existence itself with a faith that precedes understanding, with a joy that emerges not from control but from surrender into the hidden light that permeates all things.

A World Saturated With the Hidden Light of the Tzaddik

Everything, even the mountains, inanimate objects, the *chavraya* say—were animated with the lights of *pnimiyus haTorah* in the generation of Rebbe Shimon. The light of that generation was rooted in the revelation of Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai, the *neshama* of Moshe Rabbeinu, the illumination of the Tzaddik Yesod Olam. The *ohr zarua la-tzaddik*, that hidden light of infinitude that descends down through the tzaddikim *ha'amitiyim*, saturates the world so the world becomes a place of the revelation of Torah. And that is the universe of Moshe Rabbeinu, and that is the universe of the Zohar HaKadosh.

The Core Question of Terumah—How Do We Hold Infinity in a Vessel?

And in Parshas Terumah, we're really coming in contact with this question: how does one create receptacles down here in this world, in the world of Rebbe Shimon, in the world of particularization, in the world of Binah? How does one create a space, a receptacle, a vessel that can hold the presence of HaKadosh Baruch Hu's light in the aspect of Chochmah itself? How can we create a space within somethingness that can hold the light of nothingness? The first instantiation of an answer to this after Matan Torah, is the Mishkan. The secret of the Mishkan is the attempt to create a space that on the one hand is limited and defined in its boundaries, yet on the other hand becomes the receptacle that can hold something far beyond any limitation: the light of the infinite, so to speak, the Shechinah ha'Kedoshah that is *metzamtzem* itself *bein baddei ha-aron*.

Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh—Tzimtzum as the Heart's Capacity

Ultimately the secret of *tzimtzum* takes place within the heart, *bilvavi Mishkan evneh*: the heart of each and every person is like the Shechinah, and as such it is the place of *tzimtzum*. It is the desire to create a space of limitation that can hold the light of the infinite in a way that allows that light to become settled. We're not looking for a Har

Sinai experience. We're not looking for the light of the infinite to reveal itself and destroy and kill the vessels down here; Bnei Yisrael couldn't handle that. The essential thing is a *dirah betachtonim*. The *ikkar* is the binyan ha'Mishkan. The main thing is drawing down the light of HaKadosh Baruch Hu's infinity into our own vessels.

Ayin and Yesh- The Aron That Denies Space

The question is: how do we possibly do that? How can one possibly draw the light of Moshe Rabbeinu into the vessels of Rebbe Shimon? How can one, kavyachol, draw the light of the infinite into finite nature? How can one unify ayin and yesh together? How can one draw the light of the Shechinah ha'Kedoshah- the Chochmah that is the source of the Shechinah- into the Mishkan itself, which is Binah? It all comes back to the same question: how do the whole and the part interact, where we're not destroying the part and we're not negating the whole, but we're allowing the light of HaKadosh Baruch Hu's infinite expression to remain infinite, while at the very same moment discovering the radical secret of the vessels of the Mishkan- keilim that are by definition limited and dimensional, yet at the very same point they are dimensionless dimensions. They hold what nothing can hold, until the innermost point of the Mishkan brings us to the Aron HaKodesh, the *Kodesh HaKodashim*, where *makom ha'aron eino min ha-middah*: a place of space that denies the spatial reality of space itself.

Ke'gavna — Above and Below as One Structure

The Zohar HaKadosh in Parshas Terumah is trying to answer the question: how do we unify these polarities? And we see in Parshas Terumah a fundamental discussion about Krias Shema, about the *Yichud Ila'ah* and the *Yichud Tata'ah*, what it means to recognize HaKadosh Baruch Hu above and what it means to recognize HaKadosh Baruch Hu below. We find an immense equality between what takes place below and what takes place above. *Ke'gavna* is in Parshas Terumah. The building of the Mishkan reflects the building of the cosmos; we see such an equality between expression from above and expression from below, revealing that the whole purpose of the Torah is to allow us to unify above and below, to allow the light of HaKadosh Baruch Hu to find its expression in the Mishkan itself.

The Deepest Answer — Knowing What We Cannot Know

But the question is: how are we going to do that? How is it possible? Here Parshas Terumah brings us face to face with the deepest question and the deepest answer. When it comes to trying to understand the Infinite's presence in this world, the only way we can possibly come to understand it is by way of knowing what we cannot know. It is by reaching to that place that is *lemala mi'ta'am va'da'as*, above rational understanding, above the demand for understandable reasoning, and leaping into unfathomability, a leap of faith beyond what can be known, proven, or articulated, allowing the lack of articulation to represent and reflect the deep faith that abides there. There is a faith that exceeds all words. There is a faith that precedes all words. That is simple faith that doesn't yet know its capacity to speak, and it accepts in simplicity: even though I don't know how to speak, I have everything.

From Simple Faith, Through Language, Back to the Apex of Faith

Being in the world, the original level of faith gets shattered and a person enters into the space of language, complications, definitions, the attempt to grasp, to claim reason and understanding. All of those gradations of wisdom lead us to another form of emunah, no longer at the bottom of the ladder, but at the tippy-top, an emunah that exceeds the ladder. That is the secret of emunah that comes about after all is said and done, after all reasoning has been reasoned and after all intellectual speculation has been speculated. At the end of the day: *Derech emunah bacharti*. I go with all the complications of trying to know, and I come to the apex of wisdom which is: I do not know anything whatsoever. That is the secret of *tachlit ha'yedi'ah shelo neda*.

The Impossible Union— Without Diminishing Infinity or Denying Reality

When I come to that learned ignorance, I realize that it is impossible to explain, by way of reason, how the infinite light of HaKadosh Baruch Hu expresses itself within the finite vessels of worldly existence, as particularized as the individual mind and the contemplations of ego and self-gratification expressed in each of us. We can say it's derivative light; we can say, *chas v'shalom*, that it's separate; we can offer a thousand answers for how this union takes place, but every answer will either cut away from the absolute infinity of HaKadosh Baruch Hu on the upper side, or deny the reality of worldliness on the lower side. But to say both at once, in the secret of *echad shehu*

shenayim, that HaKadosh Baruch Hu is very real, and He created a real world wherein His presence is found in a real way, that path of *raz d'mehemenusa* cannot be expressed except by silent faith and the utilization of imagination to leap beyond.

The Mishkan Builds Because Hashem Builds It

That's the secret of coming to terms with how the Mishkan is built. There is no rhyme or reason to it. We do everything we can: we contribute, contribute, contribute; we donate every imaginable aspect of our minds, hearts, and bodies. But in the end of the day, the Mishkan is built because HaKadosh Baruch Hu builds it, and HaKadosh Baruch Hu enables all the *pratim* to come together even though we cannot understand how they come together. Only HaKadosh Baruch Hu can finish the job of human experience. And the only vessel that brings us to that completion is acknowledging the fundamental reality: I don't know anything.

Not Knowing as Relationship- Mind Filled With the Light of Emptiness

This acknowledgment is often mistakenly perceived as low-level ignorance, as a denial of the attempt to know. But what *Yiddishkeit* provides, and especially the Zohar HaKadosh, is the recognition that not knowing is a way of relating to something. It is not saying, "I don't know anything, therefore my mind is empty," but rather: my mind is filled with the recognition that my mind can't grasp. It is not retreat into nothingness because I failed to grasp; it is the realization that I have grasped what I want to grasp, except the only way to grasp it is by knowing that I cannot grasp it. And in that not knowing, in that ungraspability, there is a real experience of connection. That is *tachlit ha'yedi'ah shelo neda*.

Hasagah b'Derech Shelilah- Knowing Through the Negative

That *lo neda* is not merely not knowing; it is a way of knowing that comes by way of not knowing. It is deeper than any knowing, because any positive assertion about the infinite is already a limitation. But by coming to terms with what I cannot know, grasping HaKadosh Baruch Hu by way of the negative, *hasagah b'derech shelilah*, I realize how great God actually is, to the degree that I cannot lay claim to knowledge of any aspect of God other than what I do not know. And in knowing that I do not know, I come to a greater grasp of HaKadosh Baruch Hu.

Concealment as the Relationship Itself

And so concealment is not “something is hidden and I must find it or I have no relationship.” Concealment is the radical secret of emunah: I have a relationship by dint of the very fact that I don’t feel I have a relationship. It is the light of *lo musag*, the light of that which cannot be grasped; the light of *lo tafas*, what cannot be held; the light of *lo mati*, what does not settle in the mind. It is known by way of the fact that I don’t know it.

And this is the secret of desire: a desire that provides more satisfaction than satisfaction can provide, because satisfaction always fails in trying to conquer endless desire. The only thing that can satiate endless desire for the infinite is recognizing it as endless desire, not as lack but as endlessness itself. Not living in thirst, but transforming thirst so that thirst itself becomes quenching: *l’hasbia betzachzachot nafshacha, kedushasi lemala mikedushaseichem*.

Tainug With Emunah — The Pleasure That Has No Horizon

The Zohar HaKadosh and pnimiyus haTorah cultivate a consciousness of concealment. They teach us to see what cannot be actualized in revealed reality not as failure, but as a sign pointing to a deeper level of experience. The *lo musag*, what can’t be grasped; what can’t be seen; what isn’t expressed in the text, this beckons the mind to jump into the endless unknown, forcing me again and again to find *taanug* with emunah, to find the pleasure of emunah when the mind settles back into: in the end of the day, I have emunah.

Emunah is endless. Wisdom stops; wisdom fails; wisdom breaks down. But emunah is as endless as the mind’s ability to extend itself. Wherever the mind goes, it finds that emunah preceded it there, because emunah is the edge of the mind, the shape of the mind that gives form to contemplation. And when I exceed the limitations of rational understanding and the rigid boundaries of wisdom and open into the endless vistas of emunah, I enter into the world of *ein sofut*. There is no point at which the mind cannot meet more emunah.

Aliyot Ein Ketz- The Playfulness of Faith

This is the secret of overcoming the desire to know, not denying knowledge, but transforming knowledge into its opposite: grasping that I cannot grasp, and realizing that my inability to grasp is not human failure but the very fabric through which HaKadosh Baruch Hu is revealed to my soul. The soul yearns for what it cannot actualize, and in recognizing the impossibility of actualizing it, it tastes a taste of that actualization. Then that taste reveals that what seemed graspable is ungraspable, and all I can do is move to the next level of imagined graspability. That is the secret of perpetual *aliyot ein ketz*. That is what emunah gives: the endless playfulness of faith that extends beyond all territories, allowing concealment itself to become part of religious experience.

Knowledge and *daas* works with positives, realities, revealed things, quickly becoming metaphysical and turning into proper nouns, even idols: good, evil, light, darkness. Faith shatters idols. Faith shatters graspability, shatters the known, and returns to the endless unknown: *Toras Hashem temimah*.