

Reb Pinchas of Koretz

Imrie Pinchas

Parshas Behaalosecha

Siman #300

Introduction

This discourse presents a reflection from Reb Pinchas of Koretz, a prominent disciple of the Baal Shem Tov and one of the earliest Chassidic masters in Poland. He lived from 1726 to 1791 and was renowned for his deep commitment to truth, simplicity, and fear of Heaven. In this short yet profound teaching, Reb Pinchas relates the entire Torah portion of *Beha'aloscha* to the mysterious concept of the **Ohr HaGanuz**—the Hidden Light that was created at the beginning of the world and concealed for the righteous in the future. His words suggest that this Light does not merely wait for some messianic revelation, but flickers through the verses of this parsha for those who know how to look. The teaching is deeply mystical, implying that even if we do not remember or grasp the precise references, the Light still calls to us through the sacred text.

In the name of Rabbi Shmuel [Warshaviker] of blessed memory, in this style: in the entire portion of Beha'aloscha, there is aroused or illuminated or revealed the Hidden Light (Or HaGanuz).

בְּשֵׁם רַבִּי שְׁמַעְרִיל [וּוֹאֲרִישְׁוויקֶער] ז"ל בְּסִגְנוֹן זֶה:
בְּכָל פְּרִשְׁת בְּהַעֲלֹתָהּ מִתְעוֹרָר אוֹ מְאִיר אוֹ נִתְגַּלֶּה
אוֹר הַגָּנוּז.

And that Rabbi Shmuel of blessed memory showed in the Zohar, in every passage upon the portion of Beha'aloscha, that in each one is hinted the Hidden Light.

וְשֶׁהָרָאָה רַבִּי שְׁמַעְרִיל ז"ל בְּזֹהַר בְּכָל מְאָמַר שֶׁעַל
פְּרִשְׁת בְּהַעֲלֹתָהּ, שֶׁבְּכָל אֶחָד מִרִמּוֹז אוֹר הַגָּנוּז

And he, of blessed memory, said that he does not remember all of them—so it seems to me.

וְהוּא ז"ל אָמַר, שֶׁאֵינוֹ זוֹכֵר אֶת כָּלֶם, כִּי מְדוּמָה לִי.

This I already heard, but I did not remember exactly the things that he said.

זֶה שֶׁמֵּעֲתִי כְּבָר וְלֹא זָכַרְתִּי הַדְּבָרִים בְּדִיוֹק שֶׁאָמַר

[NOTE Summary]

Reb Pinchas of Koretz taught that in the Torah portion of *Beha'aloscha*, the Hidden Light (*Ohr HaGanuz*) is awakened, revealed, or shines forth. He pointed out that in every Zohar passage connected to this parsha, this concealed light is alluded to—sometimes subtly, sometimes overtly. Though he humbly admitted that he could not remember every instance, the central message was clear: this portion uniquely channels that primal Light of Creation. This light, which was hidden away after the first days of the world, is glimpsed here in *Beha'aloscha*, making the parsha a key for mystical insight and Divine illumination.

Practical Takeaway

The lesson from Reb Pinchas is not only mystical but practical: sometimes we sense something holy, radiant, or elevated in a moment, a verse, a teaching—even if we can't pinpoint exactly why or explain how. *Beha'aloscha* invites us to read with our inner eyes open. Even if we don't "remember all the details," the act

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of searching for the hidden light itself reveals something within us. It's a weekly opportunity to attune ourselves to the spiritual dimension hidden in plain sight.

Chassidic Story

It is told that Reb Pinchas of Koretz was once sitting alone during the reading of *Beha'aloscha*, deeply pensive. A student approached and asked what troubled him. Reb Pinchas answered softly, "Do you not feel it? The air is full of the Hidden Light. It is everywhere in this parsha, yet most will pass through it as if walking through sunlight without knowing they are being bathed." The student looked confused, and Reb Pinchas added, "Even I do not recall where every glimmer lies—but I know it's there. When I read the Zohar on this parsha, it trembles."

The student, still puzzled, asked, "So what should I do?"

Reb Pinchas replied: "Read the parsha not just with your mouth, but with longing. Long for the light, and it may show you a glimpse—just enough to change everything."

Source: Based on oral traditions attributed to Reb Pinchas of Koretz as preserved in *Imrei Pinchas* and other Chassidic anthologies. **END NOTE]**

Siman #301

And they said, "Who will feed us meat? We remember the fish that we ate in Egypt for free, etc." (Numbers 11:5).

וַיֹּאמְרוּ מִי יִאֲכִלֵנוּ בָּשָׂר, זָכַרְנוּ אֶת הַדָּגָה אֲשֶׁר נֹאכַל (י"א, ה').

He, of blessed memory, heard this from R. Naftali Katz who recounted it before the Rav himself with clear explanation.

שָׁמַע הוּא ז"ל מִפִּי ר"ן קֵצֶה שְׁסִיפֵר לְפָנָי הָרַב מִמֶּשׁ, בְּבֹאוֹ הֵיטֵב

It is difficult—for it begins with meat but ends with fish.

דְּקוּשָׁה, פֶּתַח בְּבָשָׂר וְסִימָן בְּדָגִים

And he answered: There in Egypt we ate fish for free, without mitzvos (see *Sifri*).

וְתִירֶץ, דָּשָׁם בְּמִצְרַיִם אֲכָלְנוּ חֵנָם בְּלֹא מִצְוֹת (סְפָרִי), (פָּס)

There was enough fish. But now, strength is needed to fulfill mitzvos—one needs meat.

הִיָּה זֵי דָגָה, אֲבָל עֲכָשׁוּ צָרִיךְ כֹּחַ לְקַיֵּם הַמִּצְוֹת, צָרִיךְ בָּשָׂר.

[NOTE Summary]

Reb Pinchas of Koretz reflects on the verse, "Who will feed us meat? We remember the fish we ate in Egypt for free..." (Numbers 11:5), and a difficulty arises: why begin with meat and end with fish? He shares a teaching heard from R. Naftali Katz that answers this elegantly. In Egypt, the people ate **fish "for free"**, meaning without mitzvot—without the responsibility of Divine service. Fish was abundant, effortless, and cost nothing spiritually. But now, in the desert, their food must nourish more than the body; it must **strengthen them to fulfill mitzvot**. For that, they need meat—a food associated with strength, discipline, and sacrificial service. Thus, the verse opens with a craving for meat (spiritual strength) but nostalgically recalls fish (ease without responsibility), revealing the inner struggle between obligation and comfort.

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Practical Takeaway

This teaching from Reb Pinchas of Koretz invites us to reflect on how we nourish our spiritual lives. Do we long for “free fish”—spiritual ease without commitment? Or do we seek the “meat”—the strength to serve, even when it requires sacrifice? Real spiritual growth demands nourishment that strengthens us to act. Don’t yearn for a past of comfort without mitzvot—seek instead the strength to live a life of purpose.

Chassidic Story

Reb Pinchas of Koretz once visited a town where the community prided itself on “simple faith.” He listened to their praises of the past—how their ancestors had served with pure emotion and “free hearts.” Later, he quietly remarked, “Yes, fish is easy—it swims without toil. But meat must be prepared with fire.”

He continued: “Your ancestors didn’t only swim—they built altars. You remember their sweetness, but do you remember their strength?”

And then he added, “You ask for comfort, but you were chosen for covenant.” **END NOTE]**

Siman #302

And Moshe heard the people weeping by their families (Numbers 11:10).

(וַיִּשְׁמַע מֹשֶׁה אֶת הָעָם בֹּכֶה לְמִשְׁפָּחָתוֹ (י"א, י

Concerning matters of their families, etc. (Rashi).

(עַל עֲנִינֵי מִשְׁפָּחָתוֹ וְכו' (רש"י

In the name of the Rav, of blessed memory:

בְּשֵׁם הָרַב ז"ל

There is no marriage contract that does not bring with it dispute. (Sanhedrin 22a)

(דְּלִיכָא כְּתוּבָה דְּלֹא רָמָא בֵּיהּ תִּיגְרָא (סנהדרין כ"ב א

If so, everything depends on the family:

אם כן, הַכֹּל לְפִי הַמִּשְׁפָּחָה

If the family is very guarded regarding forbidden relationships, then there is no quarrel in the marriage.

אם היא גְּדוּרָה מְאֹד בְּעֲרִיּוֹת, אֵין קְטָטָה בְּחֻתוּמָה

[NOTE Summary]

Reb Pinchas of Koretz offers a piercing insight into the verse “*And Moshe heard the people weeping, each family at its entrance*” (Numbers 11:10). Rashi explains that they were weeping “*about matters of their families*”—that is, about the prohibitions against incest and illicit relationships. Reb Pinchas cites the Talmudic saying, “*There is no marriage contract without strife*” (Sanhedrin 22a), and then draws a powerful conclusion: the degree of peace in marriage depends on the sanctity of the family. Where there is strong modesty and boundaries concerning forbidden relationships (*arayot*), there is harmony. Where there is laxity, discord enters even the most sacred union.

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Practical Takeaway

Shalom bayit—peace in the home—is not created solely by love or compatibility. Reb Pinchas of Koretz teaches that it flows from the **moral boundaries a family holds**. When a household guards itself against breaches in modesty and maintains sacred discipline in intimate matters, it builds a vessel that can hold lasting peace. If you want enduring joy in marriage, don't just work on kindness—also work on kedusha (holiness).

Chassidic Story

A young man once came to Reb Pinchas of Koretz before his wedding and asked for a blessing for peace. The Rebbe looked at him deeply and asked, “Do you speak freely with women not your wife?” The chassan hesitated. “Only sometimes,” he answered, “but never inappropriately.”

Reb Pinchas nodded slowly. “Even without sin, a house with open boundaries will find it hard to close its wounds. But a home built with fences will hold light like a vessel holds oil.”

The Rebbe then blessed him, “Guard your home not just with love, but with awe. Then you shall know peace that doesn't crack.”

Years later, that same man returned, his face radiant. “Rebbe,” he said, “your words saved my marriage.”

Reb Pinchas smiled and said simply, “So it is with every lamp that doesn't leak.” **END NOTE]**

Siman #303

“And he gathered seventy men from the elders of the people...” (Numbers 11:24).

(וַיִּאָסֶף שִׁבְעִים אִישׁ מִזִּקְנֵי הָעָם וְגו' (י"א, כ"ד

In the Gemara (Sanhedrin 17a): At the time when the Holy One, blessed be He, said to Moshe, “Gather for Me seventy men from the elders of Israel,” Moshe said: How shall I do this?

בְּגִמְרָא (סְנֵהֲדְרִין י"ז, א): בְּשַׁעֲרָה שְׁאָמַר לוֹ הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לַמֶּשֶׁה אָסַף לִי שִׁבְעִים אִישׁ מִזִּקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, אָמַר מֹשֶׁה: כִּיצַד אֶעֱשֶׂה

If I select six from each tribe, I'll have two extra. If I take five from each, I'll be short by ten. If I take six from one tribe and five from another, I'll stir up jealousy among the tribes.

אֲבָרַר שְׁשֶׁה מִכָּל שִׁבְט וְשִׁבְט – נִמְצְאוּ שְׁנַיִם יְתוּרִים. אֲבָרַר חֲמִשֶּׁה חֲמִשֶּׁה מִכָּל שִׁבְט – נִמְצְאוּ עֲשָׂרָה חֲסֵרִים. אֲבָרַר שְׁשֶׁה מִשִּׁבְט זֶה וְחֲמִשֶּׁה מִשִּׁבְט זֶה – הָרִינִי מִטִּיל קִנְיָאָה בֵּין הַשִּׁבְטִים

What did he do? He selected six from each [tribe], and brought seventy-two slips. On seventy he wrote “Elder,” and two he left blank.

מֶה עָשָׂה – בִּירַר שְׁשֶׁה שְׁשֶׁה, וְהֵבִיא שִׁבְעִים וּשְׁנַיִם פִּיתְקֵיוֹ: עַל שִׁבְעִים כָּתַב “זָקֵן”, וּשְׁנַיִם הֵנִיחַ חֲלָק

He mixed them and placed them in a box. He said to them: Come and draw your slips. Whoever drew “Elder” – it is from Heaven that you were sanctified.

כָּלְלוּ וְנִתְּנוּ בְּקֹלְפִי, אָמַר לָהֶם: בָּאוּ וּטְלוּ פִתְקֵיכֶם. כָּל מִי שֶׁעָלָה בְּיָדוֹ “זָקֵן” – אָמַר: כִּבְר קִדְשָׁה שְׁמַיִם

Whoever drew a blank – “The Omnipresent does not desire you.”

מִי שֶׁעָלָה בְּיָדוֹ חֲלָק – אָמַר: הַמָּקוֹם לֹא חָפֵץ בְּךָ

In the name of the Rav, of blessed memory: people ask—he should have done the opposite, written “Blank” only on the two.

בְּשֵׁם הָרַב ז"ל: מִקְשִׁין הַעוֹלָם – דְּהוּא לִיה לַעֲשׂוֹת 'בְּהִפָּקֶה, לְכָתוּב “חֲלָק” רַק עַל הַב

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And he answered: Indeed, in each tribe there were many elders—perhaps a hundred. They needed to cast lots to choose which six would be selected.	ותירץ: דודאי הנה בכל שבט ושבט הרבה זקנים – אפשר מאה
And there, among the many, six were selected—so they wrote seventy-two slips with “Elder” and the rest were left blank. Thus, seventy-two “Elder” slips resulted. Understand this well.	והוצרכו להטיל גורל אחד בכל שבט, אינה ששה זקנו – ושם היו הששה מעט. וכתבו על ע"ב פיתקין “זקנו” והשאר חלק. ולכן היו ממילא ע"ב פיתקין “זקנו”, וידעו.
Further, he asked in the name of the Rav: why not just take twelve slips and write “Elder” on ten and leave two blank?	עוד הקשה בשם הרב ז"ל: קח רק י"ב פיתקין – “ולכתוב על יו"ד “זקנו”, ועל ב' “חלק”?
And he said: this is the question of the Maharsha (Sanhedrin 17a).	(ואמר: שזאת קשיית המהרש"א (סנהדרין נ"א)
And he answered: perhaps it was Hashem’s will that one tribe have only four chosen, and others six. Understand this.	ותירץ: דאולי חפץ השי"ת שיהיה מאחד [השבטים] רק ארבעה, ומהשאר ששה, והבן.
He also asked: each person wouldn’t want to wait until the end [to choose], but would rush to pick early while more “Elder” slips remain.	עוד הקשה: שכל אחד לא ירצה להמתין עד הסוף, רק לקח מיד פנשיש הרבה פיתקין של “זקנו”, ומסתמא “יעלה בידו “זקנו”.
And he answered: in the <i>Yerushalmi</i> (Sanhedrin, end of ch. 6), it says that in truth there were seventy-two slips marked “Elder”—but a miracle occurred, and the two blank ones came up first from all of them.	ותירץ: דאימא בירושלמי (סנהדרין, סוף פרק ו') – דבאמת היו ע"ב פיתקין “זקנו”, רק שהיה מעשה נסים – ושל “חלק” עלו תחלה מכלם

[NOTE Summary]

Reb Pinchas of Koretz reflects on the seemingly technical process by which Moshe Rabbeinu selected seventy elders, as instructed by Hashem. The Gemara in *Sanhedrin* raises Moshe’s dilemma: choosing 6 from each tribe gives 72; choosing 5 gives only 60; any uneven distribution would spark jealousy. Moshe devises a lottery: 72 slips, 70 marked “Elder,” two blank. Those who drew a marked slip were publicly affirmed; those with blank slips were told, “Hashem does not desire you.”

But Reb Pinchas asks a pointed question: why not reverse it? Why not mark just two slips with “blank” and leave the rest unmarked? He explains that there were **many elders in each tribe**—perhaps 100—and the real issue was deciding which six from each tribe to select. Thus, the slips were not only for the final seventy, but part of a **larger system of divine selection** among potentially hundreds. Furthermore, even though the odds seemed stacked in favor of most, Reb Pinchas invokes the *Yerushalmi*—a miracle occurred: the two blank slips rose first. Divine Providence overrode all human calculations.

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Practical Takeaway

Life often seems driven by math, strategy, or fairness. But Reb Pinchas of Koretz reminds us: **Divine selection isn't always logical**—it's purposeful. What may appear random, even painful—like being the one to draw a blank—can be part of a heavenly plan beyond our grasp. Don't rely solely on your calculations or assume that favor is always earned by human process. Sometimes, Hashem's choice bypasses the numbers altogether—and even “blank slips” may hold meaning in a story yet to unfold.

Chassidic Story

Once, a disciple of Reb Pinchas of Koretz failed to be appointed to a communal post for which he was eminently qualified. Disheartened, he came to the Rebbe and said, “I don't understand—it was between two of us. They chose him. I feel like I pulled the blank slip.”

Reb Pinchas looked at him gently and said, “And if you did?”

The student was silent.

The Rebbe continued, “Do you know the story of the seventy elders? Even the ones who drew blanks—Hashem made their hands choose them first. Not because they were unworthy, but because their path lay elsewhere. They were chosen to teach humility to others, to be examples of quiet submission to Heaven's will.”

He paused, then added, “Sometimes your blank slip is what protects you from the burden you weren't meant to carry. Sometimes, it's Hashem's highest kindness not to be chosen.” **END NOTE]**

[FOOT NOTE

כָּל שֶׁבֶט – הָרִי שִׁבְעִים וּשְׁנַיִם. עֲשָׂרָה מִשְׁשָׁה וּשְׁנַיִם מִחֲמִשָּׁה – אֵיזָה שֶׁבֶט מִקֶּבֶל עָלָיו לְהִיּוֹת פָּגוּם? מַה עָשָׂה? נִטַּל שִׁבְעִים פִּתְקִין וְכָתַב עֲלֵיהֶן “זָקוֹן” וּשְׁנַיִם חֶלֶק וְהִטִּילָן לְמִלְפִי. אָמַר לָהֶן: בָּאוּ וּטְלוּ פִתְקֵיכֶם! כָּל שֶׁעָלָה בְּיָדוֹ “זָקוֹן” – הָיָה אוֹמֵר לוֹ: מִנוּחַ מִן הַשָּׂמַיִם! וְכָל מִי שֶׁעָלָה בְּיָדוֹ חֶלֶק, הָיָה אוֹמֵר לוֹ: וּמָה אָעָשָׂה, וּמִן הַשָּׂמַיִם הוּא!

רַבִּי יְהוֹנָדָה וְרַבִּי נַחֲמִיָּה מְתִיב תְּנִיָּא לְחֲבֵרֵיָּא: אֵלּוּ כְתֻבְתָּנִי “זָקוֹן” – סְלִקְתָּ! [כְּלוּמַר, אֵלּוּ לֹא הִשְׁאַרְתָּ פִתְקָא זֶה חֶלֶק – הָיִיתִי עוֹלָה “זָקוֹן”].

אֵלּא כֹּךְ עָשָׂה – נִטַּל שִׁבְעִים וּשְׁנַיִם פִּתְקִין וְכָתַב עֲלֵיהֶן “זָקוֹן” וּשְׁנַיִם חֶלֶק, וְהִטִּילָן לְמִלְפִי. אָמַר לָהֶן: בָּאוּ וּטְלוּ פִתְקֵיכֶם! מִי שֶׁעָלָה בְּיָדוֹ “זָקוֹן” – אָמַר לוֹ: כְּבָר מִנוּחַ מִן הַשָּׂמַיִם, וּמִי שֶׁעָלָה בְּיָדוֹ חֶלֶק – הָיָה אוֹמֵר לוֹ: וּמָה אָעָשָׂה – וּמִן הַשָּׂמַיִם הוּא!

מְתִיב תְּנִיָּא לְחֲבֵרֵיָּא: הִגֵּד עֲצָמָךְ שֶׁעָלָיו כָּלָם “זָקוֹן” – [כְּלוּמַר, מַה הָיָה אִם הַשִּׁבְעִים וּשְׁנַיִם הָיוּ כָּלָם עוֹלִים “זָקוֹן”]? אָמַר לֵיהֶן: מַעֲשֵׂה נִסִּים הָיָה – וּמִסְרָגִין עָלוּ.

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In the *Yerushalmi* (there): *"And Hashem said to Moshe, 'Gather for Me seventy men from the elders of Israel.'"*
Moshe said: If I take six from each tribe—that makes seventy-two.

Ten tribes with six and two tribes with five—which tribe will accept being seen as diminished?

What did he do? He took seventy slips and wrote on them "Elder," and two blank, and cast them into a box.

He said to them: "Come and take your slips!"

Whoever drew one that said "Elder," he would say to him: *"You were appointed from Heaven!"*

And whoever drew a blank, he would say: *"What can I do—it is from Heaven!"*

Rabbi Yehudah and Rabbi Nechemiah objected to their colleagues:

"If you had written me 'Elder'—I would have been appointed! [In other words: Had you not left that slip blank, I would have been selected.]"

Rather, this is what he did:

He took seventy-two slips and wrote "Elder" on them, and two left blank, and cast them into the box.

He said to them: "Come and take your slips!"

Whoever drew "Elder," he said to him: *"Already you have been appointed from Heaven!"*

And whoever drew a blank, he said to him: *"What can I do—it is from Heaven!"*

They objected again:

"Imagine if all of them had drawn 'Elder'—then what?"

He answered: *"It was a miracle—and the blank ones came up in order."*

END FOOT NOTE]

Siman #304

And two men remained in the camp, etc., and the spirit rested upon them, and they prophesied in the camp.	וַיִּשְׁאָרוּ שְׁנֵי אַנְשִׁים בַּמַּחֲנֶה וְגו', וַתָּנוּחַ עֲלֵיהֶם הָרוּחַ, וַיִּתְּנָבְאוּ בַּמַּחֲנֶה.
And they were among the listed ones, and the lad ran and told Moshe, and said: My master Moshe, imprison them! (see Numbers 11:26–28).	וְהָמָּה בְּפִתּוּבִים, וַיֵּרֶץ הַנַּעַר וַיִּגֵּד לְמֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר: אֲדֹנָי (מֹשֶׁה קָלָאָם!) (כְּמִדּוּכָר י"א, כ"ו–כ"ח
And it is stated in the Gemara (Sanhedrin 17a) that Yehoshua said this because they ruled halachah before their teacher.	וְאֶמְרִינוּ בְּגִמְרָא (סְנֵהֲדִרִין י"ז, א') דְּלִכּוֹן אָמַר לוֹ יְהוֹשֻׁעַ שִׁיעֲנִישִׁם – שֶׁהָיוּ הִלְכָּה לְפָנָי רַבָּן
And he asked on this: were there not other elders who prophesied, as the verse says, "and they prophesied and did not cease"?	וְהִקְשָׁה עַל זֶה – הֲלֹא הָיוּ עוֹד מִן הַזִּקְנִים שֶׁנִּתְּנָבְאוּ, וַיִּקְמוּ שֶׁאִמְרַת הַפְּתוּבִים: וַיִּתְּנָבְאוּ וְלֹא יָסְפוּ?
And he said: for the other prophetic elders, it is written (Numbers 11:25), "And He drew from the spirit that was upon him and placed it upon the seventy elders," and this was from Moshe himself.	וַאֲמַר: דְּבִשְׁאָר הַזִּקְנִים הַפְּתוּבִים (י"א, כ"ח): וַיִּצְאֵל מִן הָרוּחַ אֲשֶׁר עָלָיו, וַיִּתֵּן עַל שִׁבְעִים אִישׁ הַזִּקְנִים – וְהָיָה זֶה מִמֹּשֶׁה עֲצָמוֹ

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But here it is written: "And they were among the written ones," and it is known (see Pri Etz Chaim, Gate of Study) that the written ones are with <i>ruach hakodesh</i> , and they are from a different level.	וכאן כתוב: והמה בכתובים, וידוע (עין פרי עץ חיים, שער סדר הלימוד) – כי כתובים הם ברוח הקדוש, והמה מדרגה אחרת.
Therefore, it is considered ruling halachah, etc.	ולכן – הוא מורה הלכה וגו'
And Moshe responded: "Would that all of Hashem's people were prophets, that Hashem would place His spirit upon them"— His spirit , precisely.	ומשה השיב: מי יתן כל עם ה' נביאים כי יתן ה' את רוחו עליהם – רוחו דייקא.

[NOTE Summary]

Reb Pinchas of Koretz explores the episode of Eldad and Meidad, two men who prophesied within the camp without being part of the formally designated seventy elders. Yehoshua objects to their behavior, urging Moshe to imprison them because they "ruled halachah before their teacher." But Reb Pinchas raises a critical question: why were **these two** singled out for criticism when **all** the elders were prophesying?

He answers: the seventy elders received prophecy **through Moshe's own spirit**—it was a transfer, an extension, a delegation. But Eldad and Meidad were "*among the written ones*", a phrase associated with **ruach hakodesh** and an entirely separate spiritual source. Their prophecy was not derivative but independent. In that context, their speaking out was not merely prophecy—it resembled *ruling* independently, like issuing halachic rulings in the presence of a teacher.

Moshe, however, responded with absolute humility: "*Would that all of Hashem's people were prophets...*"—not just receiving *my* spirit, but **His** spirit—directly from the Source.

Practical Takeaway

True spiritual leadership isn't threatened by those who rise with authentic Divine inspiration. Reb Pinchas of Koretz teaches us to distinguish between **borrowed light** and **original fire**. The elders spoke with Moshe's light; Eldad and Meidad ignited from within.

This moment reminds us: we must ask not only "*who gave the message?*" but "*from where did it originate?*" And more importantly—*do we make room for others to shine, even when they don't shine through us?* Moshe's model was humility: a leader rejoicing when others ascend.

Chassidic Story

One day, a simple villager came to Reb Pinchas of Koretz and shared a profound insight from a verse in Psalms. A sharp scholar who overheard scoffed: "Who taught you to interpret like that?"

The man blushed, "No one—it came to me while I was chopping wood."

The scholar turned to Reb Pinchas: "Is it right for an unlearned man to interpret Scripture?"

Reb Pinchas turned to the scholar and replied, "When prophecy comes from *my* spirit, it requires ordination. But when Hashem places *His* spirit directly—it needs no permission."

He then turned back to the villager and said softly, "Your axe was not the only thing cutting through today."

[END NOTE]

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Siman #305	
And Miriam and Aharon spoke against Moshe concerning the Cushite woman whom he had taken, for he had taken a Cushite woman (Numbers 12:1).	וַתִּדְבֹּר מִרְיָם וְאַהֲרֹן בְּמִשְׁכָּה עַל אֲדֹת הָאִשָּׁה הַכַּשִּׁיטִית (אֲשֶׁר לָקַח, כִּי אִשָּׁה כַּשִּׁיטִית לָקַח (י"ב, א
He asked: was she not a Midianite?	?הֲקַשָּׁה: הֲלֹא מִדְיָנִית הָיְתָה
And he answered with a hint, based on what is written in the Zohar, Mishpatim, page 114b: Lilith is “dark”—a klipah that does not produce offspring.	וְתִירֵץ בְּרָמָז עַל פִּי מָה לְשָׁכְתוֹב בְּזֹהַר מִשְׁפָּטִים דָּף קי"ד ע"ב: לִילִית אוֹקְמָא הִיא – קְלִפָּה דְלֹא עֲבָדִי פִירִי
And based on a certain story, etc.	ל'עַל פִּי מַעֲשֶׂה וְכוּ
[NOTE Summary: Reb Pinchas of Koretz confronts a textual difficulty: the Torah says that Miriam and Aharon spoke about Moshe “<i>regarding the Cushite woman he had taken.</i>” But Moshe's wife, Tzipporah, was a Midianite, not a Cushite. In a mystical explanation, Reb Pinchas draws on the <i>Zohar</i> in <i>Mishpatim</i>, which describes Lilith as “dark” (Cushite) and identifies her as a klipah—a spiritually obstructive force that does not bear fruit (i.e., is sterile). Thus, the term <i>Cushite</i> in this context is not about ethnicity, but spiritual symbolism. Moshe’s separation from his wife (after receiving prophecy continuously) was perceived by Miriam as turning her into a “Cushite”—a woman without union or offspring, paralleling the Lilith-archetype. Yet this perception was flawed. Reb Pinchas’s teaching subtly suggests that such mystical categories must be handled with caution—and that Miriam’s misunderstanding was not merely social but cosmic. Practical Takeaway Reb Pinchas of Koretz reminds us that not every label is literal, and not every judgment sees the soul’s truth. What may appear externally as “dark” or barren might conceal deep inner light. Moreover, he warns that even spiritual people—like Miriam and Aharon—can misunderstand actions taken from a higher place. Before evaluating others’ spiritual paths, we must ask: <i>Do I understand the level they’re on—or am I judging from my own limits?</i> Chassidic Story A student once mocked a fellow for praying in solitude instead of in the communal minyan. “You make yourself special?” he sneered. Reb Pinchas of Koretz overheard and called the student over. He asked, “Tell me—when a torch is lit in the wilderness, and no one sees it, is it not still fire?” The student hesitated. Reb Pinchas continued, “Sometimes a soul is so close to Heaven, it must leave the crowd to breathe.” Then, lowering his voice, he added, “Be careful whom you call ‘dark.’ The one you mock may be clothed in night, not because they are distant—but because their light burns too deep to be seen in the day.” END NOTE]	

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Siman #306	
And the man Moshe was very humble (Numbers 12:3).	(וְהָאִישׁ מֹשֶׁה עָנָו מְאֹד (י"ב, ג
The difficulty is the relevance and proximity to the preceding verses.	דְּקוּשָׁה הַשְׂיִיכוּת וְהַסְמִיכוּת לַפְסוּקִים הַקּוֹדְמִין
However, it is possible—there is a teaching in the Gemara (Moed Katan 17a): If a man sees that his inclination is overpowering him, let him go to a place where they do not know him, and wear black, etc.	אָבֵל יִתְכֵּן – דְּאִיתָא בְּגִמְרָא (מוֹעֵד קָטָן י"ז, א): אִם רוּאָה אָדָם שְׂנִיאוֹ מִתְגַּבֵּר עָלָיו – יֵלֶךְ לְמָקוֹם שְׂאִין מִפְּרִין אוֹתוֹ, וְיִלְבַּשׁ שְׁחָרִים וְכוּ
And what kind of advice is this—to nullify the thought?	וְיִמָּה זֶה עֲצָה לְבַטֵּל הַמַּחְשְׁבָה
Rather, a person who has arrogance also has thoughts of immorality.	אֵלָּא – אָדָם שֶׁיֵּשׁ בּוֹ גָּאוֹה – יֵשׁ בּוֹ מַחְשְׁבוֹת נִיאוּף
Therefore, this is a good piece of advice: that if he goes to a place where he is not known and wears black, etc., his heart will be subdued, and the thoughts will automatically be nullified.	וְלִכְּנֹן זֶה עֲצָה טוֹבָה – שְׂאִם יֵלֶךְ לְמָקוֹם שְׂאִין מִפְּרִין אוֹתוֹ, וְיִלְבַּשׁ שְׁחָרִים וְכוּ – יִהְיֶה לְבוֹ נִכְנָע, וּמִמִּילָא יִבְטְלוּ הַמַּחְשְׁבוֹת
And he explained the reason for this: that the Name A–d–n–a–i is called “the magnetic stone” (see Shaarei Choleh, Gate 3, ninth section).	וְאָמַר הַטַּעַם לָזֶה – דְּשֵׁם אֲדֹנֵי נִקְרָא “אֶבֶן הַשּׂוֹאֵב” (עֵין שַׁעְרֵי חוּלָה, שַׁעַר ג', סְפִירָה תְּשִׁיעִית
Because just as the nature of the magnetic stone is to draw to itself all iron, so too that Name draws to itself all the souls of the righteous—except when there is something blocking, such as thoughts of food.	כִּי כְמוֹ שֶׁטֹּבֵעַ “אֶבֶן הַשּׂוֹאֵב” לְשׂוֹאֵב אֵלָיו כָּל בְּרִזָּל – כֵּן שֵׁם הַנִּי “ל שׂוֹאֵב אֵלָיו כָּל נְשָׁמוֹת הַצְּדִיקִים, רַק כְּשֵׁי שׂ דָּבָר הַמַּפְסִיק – אֵינוֹ שׂוֹאֵב, כְּגוֹן מַחְשְׁבוֹת אֲכִילָה
And the righteous, who are stripped of all [foreign] thoughts, they cleave to it.	וְצְדִיקִים שֶׁהֵם מוֹפְשָׁטִים מִכָּל הַמַּחְשְׁבוֹת – הֵם נִדְבָּקִים אֵלָיו
And it is taught (Ta'anit 4a): Every Torah scholar who is not hard like iron is not a true Torah scholar, for it is written (Deuteronomy 8:9): “A land whose stones are iron.” Do not read <i>avaneha</i> (its stones) but <i>boneha</i> (its builders)—to hint to what was mentioned above.	וְאִיתָא (תַּעֲנִית ד', א): כָּל תַּלְמִיד חֹכֵם שְׂאִינוֹ קוֹשֶׁה כְּבָרְזֵל – אֵינוֹ תַּלְמִיד חֹכֵם. דְּכָתִיב (דְּבָרִים ח', ט): “אֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲבָנֶיהָ בְּרִזָּל” – אֵל תִּקְרִי “אֲבָנֶיהָ” אֵלָּא “בֹנֶיהָ” – לְרַמֵּז עַל הַנּוֹכַח לַעֲיִל
So too, the letters are called “stones” (Sefer Yetzirah, chapter 4, mishnah 10).	(כִּד הָאוֹתִיּוֹת נִקְרָאוֹת “אֲבָנִים” (סֵפֶר יִצְרָה, פ"ד מ"י
Therefore, the Name A–d–n–a–i is called the “magnetic stone,” and the Torah scholars are called iron, and it draws their souls to it.	וְעַל כֵּן נִקְרָא שֵׁם אֲדֹנֵי “אֶבֶן הַשּׂוֹאֵב”, וְהַתַּלְמִידֵי חֹכְמִים יִקְרָאוּ “בְּרִזָּל”, וְשׂוֹאֵב אֵלָיו נְשָׁמוֹתֵיהֶם
And the man Moshe was very humble—therefore all thoughts were nullified for him.	וְהָאִישׁ מֹשֶׁה עָנָו מְאֹד – מִמִּילָא יִבְטֵל כָּל הַמַּחְשְׁבוֹת

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For thoughts of immorality and other thoughts come from <i>ayin</i> to <i>yesh</i> (nothingness to ego), while humility is from <i>yesh</i> to <i>ayin</i> (ego to nothingness).	פי מחשבות ניאוף ושאר מחשבות – הם מאין לגש, ונענה היא מיש לאין.
Therefore, when he is humble, he has no foreign or evil thoughts.	לכן – כשהוא ענו, אין לו מחשבות זרות ורעות.
Therefore, here—when they spoke about him separating from the woman—the Torah says, “And the man Moshe was very humble,” and certainly he had no evil thoughts, and they did not speak well.	הלכו – כאן שדיברו עליו שפרש מן האשה – אמרה התורה: והאיש משה ענו מאד, ובדאי לא היה לו שום מחשבות רעות – ולא יפה דיברו.

[NOTE Summary]

Reb Pinchas of Koretz offers a profound explanation of the verse “*And the man Moshe was very humble*” (Numbers 12:3), puzzling over its placement amid the story of Miriam and Aharon speaking about Moshe’s separation from his wife. He connects this to a teaching in the Gemara (*Moed Katan* 17a): if one’s evil inclination overpowers him, he should go to a place where he is unknown and wear black, etc. On the surface, this appears to be advice for avoiding sin. But Reb Pinchas uncovers the deeper root—**arrogance breeds sinful thoughts**, especially those of immorality. Therefore, the real advice is: humble yourself, and the thoughts will dissolve.

He explains that the Divine Name *A-d-n-a-i* is mystically called “**the magnetic stone**”—it draws in the souls of the righteous, just as iron is drawn to a lodestone. But thoughts like hunger, pride, or lust act as barriers. Only those who empty themselves—who become *ayin* (nothing)—can be drawn upward into G-d’s presence. Since Moshe was “*very humble*,” no foreign thought had any foothold in him. Thus, when his siblings misinterpreted his actions, the Torah testifies that **his soul was entirely transparent**, and their judgment was unfounded.

Practical Takeaway

Reb Pinchas of Koretz teaches us that **humility isn’t just a trait—it’s a spiritual technology**. Pride inflates the self, making us magnetic to distraction, temptation, and spiritual fog. But humility collapses the ego back into nothingness (*ayin*), clearing a direct channel to the Divine.

If you find yourself battling persistent thoughts or spiritual confusion, the solution may not be willpower—but humility. Ask yourself not “How do I fix this?” but “What must I release?” In softening the self, you allow your soul to be drawn—like iron—into holiness.

Chassidic Story

A young man once came to Reb Pinchas of Koretz and asked for help: “Rebbe, I am tormented by thoughts. I try to daven, to learn—but my mind wanders to forbidden places. What should I do?”

Reb Pinchas said nothing at first, only looked at him deeply. Then he took the student to the back of his house where a small iron tool hung near a magnet. The iron clung tightly.

“This,” said the Rebbe, “is your soul. And that,” he said, pointing to the magnet, “is the Name of G-d. The soul is pulled when nothing is in between.”

He then placed a thick cloth between them. The iron no longer moved.

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“Pride,” he whispered. “Desire. Self-importance. These are your cloth. Remove them—and your soul will fly without a fight.”

Years later, the student would say: “That day, the Rebbe taught me to clean—not to conquer.”

END NOTE]

Siman #307

And Miriam and Aharon spoke against Moshe concerning the Cushite woman whom he had taken, etc. And the man Moshe was very humble, more than any man (Numbers 12:1–3).

וַתְּדַבֵּר מִרְיָם וְאַהֲרֹן בְּמִשְׁחָה עַל אֲדֹת הָאִשָּׁה הַכֻּשִּׁית
אֲשֶׁר לָקַח וְגו', וְהָאִישׁ מֹשֶׁה עָנָו מְאֹד מִכָּל הָאָדָם
(י"ב, א-ג).

In the name of the Rav, of blessed memory: the difficulty is—what is the connection between this and the fact that Moshe was humble?

בְּשֵׁם הָרַב ז"ל: דְּקֻשָּׁה, מֵה עֲנָנָן זֶה לָזֶה – נִשְׁהִיָּה מִשְׁחָה
עָנָו?

And he answered: it is taught (Sotah 5a), every person who has arrogance will eventually stumble with another man's wife, as it is said (Proverbs 6:26): *And the wife of a man—his precious soul she traps.*

וְתִירֵץ: דְּאִיתָא (סוֹטָה ה', א'): כָּל אָדָם שֶׁיֵּשׁ בּוֹ גִּסּוּת
הָרוּחַ – לְסוֹף נִכְשֵׁל בְּאִשְׁתּוֹ אִישׁ, שְׁנֶאֱמַר (מִשְׁלִי ו',
כ"ו): וְאִשְׁתּוֹ אִישׁ נִכְשֵׁת יִקְרֶה תְּצוּד

That is, someone who is precious in his own eyes—this is great arrogance.

דְּהִינּוּ, מִי שֶׁהוּא יִקְרֶה אֶצְל עֲצָמוֹ – זֶהוּ גַם רוּחַ גָּדוֹל

And someone who is only slightly arrogant—at least will come to thoughts of immorality.

וּמִי שֶׁהוּא גַם רוּחַ מְעֵט – עֵכָ"פּ בָּא לְהַרְהוּרֵי נִיאוּף

Because each person, according to his arrogance—according to how much pride he has—so come to him the thoughts.

כִּי כָל אֶחָד לְפִי גֵאוּתוֹ – לְפִי מֵה שֶׁיֵּשׁ לוֹ גֵּאוּת – כֵּךְ
בָּאִים לוֹ הַהַרְהוּרִים

And he, of blessed memory, said: in this matter, a person cannot deceive himself concerning arrogance, to imagine in his heart that he has already left arrogance.

וְאָמַר הוּא ז"ל: בְּזֶה – אֵין יָכוֹל הָאָדָם לְהַטְעוֹת אֶת
עֲצָמוֹ בְּעֵנֵן הַגֵּאוּת, וּלְהַעֲלוֹת אֶל לְבוֹ שֶׁכְּבָר יָצָא
מִגֵּאוּתוֹ

For behold, the test is in front of him—if he is clean from thoughts of immorality.

וְהִנֵּה הַבְּחִינָה לִפְנֵיו: אִם הוּא נָקִי מִהַרְהוּרֵי זִנוּת

And behold, Miriam and Aharon spoke about Moshe that he had separated from his wife—and how was he protected from [impure] thoughts?

וְהִנֵּה, מִרְיָם וְאַהֲרֹן דִּבְּרוּ בְּמִשְׁחָה שֶׁפָּרַשׁ מֵאִשְׁתּוֹ – וְאֵיךְ
נִיִּצּוֹל מִהַרְהוּרִים?

Therefore the verse says: *And the man Moshe was very humble*—and certainly no thoughts came to him at all.

לָזֶה אָמַר הַכָּתוּב: וְהָאִישׁ מֹשֶׁה עָנָו מְאֹד – וּבִדְאִי לֹא
בָּאוּ לוֹ הַהַרְהוּרִים כָּלֵל

Reb Pinchas of Koretz

Imrie Pinchas

Parshas Behaalosecha

[NOTE Summary]

Reb Pinchas of Koretz offers a striking explanation of why the Torah inserts the verse “*And the man Moshe was very humble...*” immediately after Miriam and Aharon question Moshe’s separation from his wife. On the surface, it seems unrelated. But Reb Pinchas explains: the Sages teach that arrogance leads to sinful thoughts—ultimately even to thoughts of adultery. As it says in Proverbs, “*A married woman traps a precious soul*”—that is, one who sees himself as “precious” is vulnerable to such spiritual traps.

Even small amounts of pride draw inappropriate thoughts. And here lies the litmus test: if a person is still tormented by immoral thoughts, he has not fully conquered arrogance.

So how, then, could Moshe have separated from his wife and still remain pure? The answer: “*And the man Moshe was very humble.*” His humility was so absolute that he had no internal space for such thoughts. Miriam and Aharon misjudged him based on their own level, not realizing that Moshe’s *complete humility* freed him entirely from the very struggle they assumed he must still face.

Practical Takeaway

Reb Pinchas of Koretz gives us a powerful tool for self-assessment: **humility is the firewall against impurity**. If unwanted thoughts persist, don’t only fight the thoughts—check the pride.

True humility empties the ego and dissolves the spiritual static that attracts impure imagery and cravings. If you wish to cleanse the mind, don’t only filter the content—purify the identity. Are you making space for Hashem, or are you still too full of *self*? The fewer walls of ego, the fewer doors for darkness to enter.

Chassidic Story

A chassid once came to Reb Pinchas of Koretz in tears. “Rebbe, I’m plagued with shameful thoughts during prayer. I fast, I cry, I immerse, I study—but they still come!”

Reb Pinchas asked, “And what do you think of yourself when you fight them?”

The man answered, “I say to myself: ‘At least I’m not like others. I struggle—I’m still pure.’”

The Rebbe sighed. “Then you’ve already lost. That pride *is* the root. You’re not fighting sin—you’re feeding your self-image. Until you see yourself as nothing, the thoughts will keep coming.”

Then he leaned closer and said, “Moshe didn’t conquer his thoughts. He became nothing—and there was nothing for them to cling to.”

Siman #308

And the man Moshe was very humble, more than any man (Numbers 12:3).

.)'והאיש משה ענו מאד מכל האדם (י"ב, ג

He said: What is the greatness [in saying] “more than any man”? Are there not many lowly and humble people?

אמר: מאי רבותא מכל האדם – הלא יש כמה בני אדם שפלים וענוים קצתם

But it is taught in the Gemara (Sotah 5a): A Torah scholar is permitted a measure of pride—one eighth of an eighth.

אבל איתא בגמרא (סוטה ה', א): תלמיד חכם מתיר בגאוה – שמינית שבשמינית

Reb Pinchas of Koretz

Imrie Pinchas

Parshas Behaalosecha

And every person, according to his wisdom—if he is more of a Torah scholar, then his eighth of an eighth is also greater.	וְכָל אָדָם לְפִי חֲכָמָתוֹ – אִם הוּא יוֹתֵר תַּלְמִיד חֶכֶם – שְׁמִינִית שְׁבַעֲשִׁמִינִית שְׁלֹשׁ עָדָלָה יוֹתֵר
And Moshe was a great Torah scholar, and his eighth of an eighth was greater than all people.	וּמֹשֶׁה הָיָה תַלְמִיד חֶכֶם גָּדוֹל, וְשְׁמִינִית שְׁבַעֲשִׁמִינִית שְׁלֹשׁ הָיְתָה גָדוֹלָה מִכָּל אָדָם
And in him there was not even an eighth of an eighth at all. Therefore, he was more humble than any man.	וְבוֹ לֹא הָיָה אֶפְלוּ שְׁמִינִית שְׁבַעֲשִׁמִינִית – עַל כֵּן הָיָה עָנֹו מִכָּל אָדָם

[NOTE Summary]

Reb Pinchas of Koretz illuminates the verse “*And the man Moshe was very humble, more than any man*” by asking: what’s the novelty here? Aren’t there many naturally lowly and humble people in the world? He brings a teaching from the Gemara (*Sotah* 5a) that a Torah scholar is permitted to retain a trace of pride—an *eighth of an eighth*—to preserve dignity and authority in Torah. The deeper the scholar, the more refined this permissible pride becomes. In fact, the greater the wisdom, the greater the danger of inner pride, however subtle.

But Moshe, the greatest Torah scholar of all, not only had a higher capacity for legitimate pride—he **had none at all**. Not even an eighth of an eighth. His humility was not born from smallness but from greatness fully emptied of self.

Practical Takeaway

Reb Pinchas of Koretz shows us that **true humility is not the absence of greatness—it is the absence of self-importance in the face of greatness.**

The more spiritual wisdom you carry, the more carefully you must inspect yourself for traces of ego hiding in holy garments. The test is not whether you’re proud because of accomplishments. The test is: *how much room does Hashem still have inside you?*

Moshe’s humility teaches us that the holiest people are those who have the most reason to feel elevated—and yet feel none at all.

Chassidic Story

A brilliant young scholar once visited Reb Pinchas of Koretz and began to impress those present with deep and dazzling insights.

Afterward, the Rebbe quietly asked him, “Tell me—what do you feel when others praise your words?”

The young man smiled, “I feel grateful that Hashem chose me to reveal such truths.”

Reb Pinchas responded, “That is the eighth.”

“And what,” the Rebbe continued, “do you feel when they forget you?”

The young man frowned, “Then I feel broken.”

Reb Pinchas nodded, “That is the eighth of the eighth.”

He then said gently, “Only when praise and silence are equal in your heart, will you begin to walk the path of Moshe Rabbeinu.” **END NOTE]**

Siman #309

Reb Pinchas of Koretz

Imrie Pinchas

Parshas Behaalosecha

And the man Moshe was very humble, more than any man who is upon the face of the earth (Numbers 12:3).	וְהָאִישׁ מֹשֶׁה עָנָו מֵאֵד מְכַל הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר עַל פְּנֵי (הָאָדָמָה (י"ב, ג
A matter concerning the attribute of humility of Moshe Rabbeinu, peace be upon him—more than any man who is upon the face of the earth, etc.	דְּבַר מַעֲנֵנוּ מִדַּת עֲנָוָה שֶׁל מֹשֶׁה רַבֵּינוּ עָלֵינוּ הַשְּׁלוֹם – 'מְכַל הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר עַל פְּנֵי הָאָדָמָה וְגו'
For he is the “da’as” (consciousness) of all Israel (see <i>Likkutei Torah</i> , parshas Tetzaveh, s.v. “Ve’atah tetzaveh”).	כִּי הוּא הַדַּעַת שֶׁל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל (לְקוּטֵי תוֹרָה לְסִלְעָר"י (“פְּרִשְׁתַּת תְּצַוֶּה עַל פִּי” וְאַתָּה תְּצַוֶּה
And he attributed all the good qualities within him and all the holinesses within Israel to this:	וְתִלָּה כָּל הַמְּדוּת הַטּוֹבוֹת שֶׁבּוֹ וְכָל הַקְּדוּשׁוֹת שֶׁבִּישְׂרָאֵל – לְפִי שֶׁ
“Because I am connected to this Jewish person, I have this holiness; and with that person, I have that holiness.”	מִפְּנֵי שֶׁאֲנִי מְקוּרָב עִם בֶּן־יִשְׂרָאֵל זֶה – יֵשׁ לִי אוֹתָהּ הַקְּדוּשָׁה, וְעִם אָדָם זֶה – יֵשׁ לִי אוֹתָהּ הַקְּדוּשָׁה
For within every Jew is holiness and something precious—something not found in another.	כִּי בְּכָל אֶחָד מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל – יֵשׁ קְדוּשָׁה וְדְבַר יָקָר – מֵה שֶׁאֵינּוּ בֶּן בָּאֲחֵר זוּלָתוֹ
But as for me myself—I am nothing.	אֲבָל אֲנִי בְּעֵצָמִי – אֵינִי כְּלוֹם
And through this path, each person will draw himself [to humility].	וְלִדְרוֹק זֶה – יִמְשֹׁךְ כָּל אֶחָד אֶת עַצְמוֹ

[NOTE Summary]

Reb Pinchas of Koretz offers a breathtaking view of Moshe Rabbeinu’s humility, not as a negation of greatness but as a radical *redistribution* of it. Moshe, who embodied the “da’as” (inner consciousness) of all Israel, did not see his gifts as his own. Rather, he believed that any holiness or virtue he possessed came from his **connection to other Jews**.

“From this one, I gained that quality. From that one, I received another.” Every Jew, in his eyes, held a spark he lacked. And in this way, Moshe saw himself as a **composite reflection** of the nation—not superior to anyone, but upheld by all.

This is how Moshe became “*more humble than any man on the face of the earth*”—not by lowering himself artificially, but by recognizing **he was nothing without others**, and others were precious in ways he could never replicate alone

Practical Takeaway

Reb Pinchas of Koretz reveals that **true humility is not thinking less of yourself—it’s knowing your light comes from others**.

If you look at someone and feel superior, remember: they likely carry a spark you don’t. Maybe it’s buried deep, but Moshe’s secret was this: *every Jew enriches me*.

Adopt this mindset and arrogance dissolves. Instead of measuring your own light, become a vessel for the collective light—and you’ll never be alone or proud.

Reb Pinchas of Koretz

Imrie Pinchas

Parshas Behaalosecha

Chassidic Story

A scholar once boasted to Reb Pinchas of Koretz, "I've mastered so many tractates—I think I finally understand humility."

Reb Pinchas replied, "How strange. I only began to understand humility when I realized I'd never master another Jew."

The scholar asked, "What do you mean?"

Reb Pinchas said, "That drunk in the alley? He has a purity of heart I may never reach. That silent water-carrier? He never spoke ill of anyone. When I pray, I carry pieces of them. Without them—I am nothing but noise."

Then he added, "If you ever feel humble because of what *you've* done, it's not humility yet. When you're humbled by what *others carry*, then you're learning Moshe's path." **END NOTE]**

Siman #310

And the man Moshe was very humble, etc., and Hashem said suddenly, etc. (Numbers 12:3–4).

וְהָאִישׁ מֹשֶׁה עָנָו מְאֹד וְגו', וַיֹּאמֶר ה' פֶּתְאֹם וְגו' (י"ב, ג).

It was told from Rabbi Nachum of Chernobyl, of blessed memory, that there was a man who had done him great harm.

סִפֵּר מְרַבֵּי נְחוּם מְטַשְׁרֵנְבִיל ז"ל – שְׁאָדָם אֶחָד הָרַע לוֹ מְאֹד.

Afterwards, that man began to decline in his fortunes, and was forced to appease Rabbi Nachum.

וְאַחֲרַי כִּד הִתְחִיל לִירֹד מִנְכָסָיו, וְנִצְטָרַף לְפָנֵים אֶת רַבִּי נְחוּם ז"ל.

Many times he came to appease him, and Rabbi Nachum would respond: "Just as you appease me, so I forgive you."

וְכַמָּה פְּעָמִים הֵיךְ מְפִיסוֹ, וְהֵיךְ מְשִׁיב לוֹ: "כְּמוֹ שְׁאַתָּה מְפִיסֵנִי – כִּד אֲנִי מוֹחֵל לָךְ.

Until once, he forgave him with a full heart and began to pray for him.

עַד שֶׁפַּעַם אַחַת – מָחַל לוֹ בְּלֵב שָׁלֵם, וְהִתְחִיל לְהַתְפַּלֵּל בְּעַדוֹ.

And the more he prayed for him, the more that man suffered—he lacked even bread, and endured afflictions and poverty, G-d have mercy, etc.

וְכָל מָה שֶׁהֵיךְ מִתְפַּלֵּל בְּעַדוֹ יוֹתֵר – הֵיךְ הָאִישׁ הִנָּחַל 'מְחוּסָר לֶחֶם יוֹתֵר, בְּיִסּוּרֵי וְדִלּוֹת רַחֲמָנָא לְצֵלָן וְכו'.

And he, of blessed memory, said: "I was not guilty in this matter at all, for I prayed for him with a full heart."

וְאָמַר הוּא ז"ל: "אֲנִי לֹא הֵייתִי חַיִּיב בְּדִבְרֵי הַזֶּה כָּלֵל, שֶׁהִתְפַּלַּלְתִּי בְּעַדוֹ בְּלֵב שָׁלֵם.

However, this is worse—for when the tzaddik forgives his insult with his whole heart, then Hashem takes up his insult [to punish the offender].

אֲבָל זֶה גְּרוּעַ יוֹתֵר – כִּשֶׁהֲצַדִּיק מוֹחֵל עַל עֲלִיבָתוֹ בְּכָל לֵבּוֹ – אִזּוֹ הַשִּׁי"ת תּוֹבֵעַ עֲלִיבָתוֹ.

Therefore it is written (Numbers 12:3): "And the man Moshe was very humble," and he did not feel his insult—and therefore, Hashem demanded his vindication.

וְלָכֵן כָּתוּב (פָּמְדוּכָר י"ב, ג'): וְהָאִישׁ מֹשֶׁה עָנָו מְאֹד – וְלֹא הִרְגִּישׁ בְּזִיוְנוֹ – וְלָכֵן תִּבֶּעַ הַשִּׁי"ת נִקְמָתוֹ.

Reb Pinchas of Koretz

Imrie Pinchas

Parshas Behaalosecha

[NOTE Summary]

Reb Pinchas of Koretz, reflecting on the teaching of Rabbi Nachum of Chernobyl, uncovers a paradox: when a **tzaddik fully forgives** someone who wronged him, **Hashem Himself takes up the insult**. The Torah emphasizes that Moshe was “*very humble*”—he did not sense his own humiliation when Miriam and Aharon spoke against him. He didn’t react. But *Hashem did*.

This story teaches that sometimes, the most dangerous moment for an offender is not when the victim holds a grudge—but when the victim sincerely lets go. At that point, the offense rises to Heaven, and Hashem, so to speak, says: *If he won’t defend his own honor, I will*.

Moshe’s humility was so deep, he erased even the instinct to be wounded. But that very erasure caused his honor to be vindicated on a higher level.

Practical Takeaway

Reb Pinchas of Koretz reminds us: **forgiveness is not always final—it can be a trigger for Divine justice**.

If someone truly wrongs a person of spirit and the victim genuinely releases all offense, this does not erase the wrongdoing—it may elevate it.

For the one who has been hurt, this offers comfort: you don’t need to carry revenge in your heart. Let it go. If justice is meant to come, it will.

For the one who caused hurt: don’t be relieved by forgiveness alone. Seek to correct the cause—not just the consequence.

Chassidic Story

A man once mocked Reb Pinchas of Koretz publicly. Days later, the man’s business collapsed. He came weeping to the Rebbe: “I know I was wrong. Please forgive me!”

Reb Pinchas said, “I already did. That very day.”

“But why then did this happen to me?” the man asked.

The Rebbe looked at him with compassion and said, “When you shamed me, I swallowed it. But the shame rose where I could not go—and there, it found an Advocate.”

He added softly, “Next time, don’t fear my anger. Fear my silence.” **END NOTE]**

Siman #311

If there shall be a prophet among you, Hashem—in a vision I make Myself known to him; in a dream I speak with him (Numbers 12:6).

אם יהיה נביאכם ה' – במראה אליו אתודע, בחלום (א'דברי' ב' ו' י"ב).

In the name of the Rav, of blessed memory: a dream is the waste matter of the brain (see Berachot 55a).

בשם הרב ז"ל: חלום הוא פסלת המוח (ברכות נ"ה, א').

And the “waste” of dreams—these are the nations of the world.

ופסלת חלום – הם אומות העולם.

Therefore, when a Jew interprets a dream positively, at that moment some kind of atonement happens to a gentile.

לכך – כשיהודי מטיב חלום, באותה שעה נעשית כפרה לאיזה גוי.

Reb Pinchas of Koretz

Imrie Pinchas

Parshas Behaalosecha

As it is said (Kohelet Rabbah 12:7), Torah is the “droppings” of supernal wisdom.	פְּדֹאִיתָא (קֹהֶלֶת רַבָּה י', ז'): תּוֹרָה הִיא נוֹבְלוֹת תְּכֵמָה וְשֵׁל מַעְלָה.
For there it is only in the aspect of droppings; and here, it is a complete Torah.	וְשֵׁשׁ הִיא רַק בְּבַחֲיִנַת נוֹבְלוֹת, וְכֵאן הִיא תּוֹרָה שְׁלֵמָה.
And so too in the matter above—that in this person it is a dream, while in the other it is a complete brain.	וְכֵן בִּהַג"ל – שְׂבָאָדָם זֶה הוּא חֵלֹם, וְאֶצֶל אָדָם אֲחֵר – הוּא מַחֲיִן שְׁלֵמִים וְטוֹבִים.
That a great tzaddik and sage, the waste of his brain becomes by another person whole and good intellect.	שְׂצָדִיק גָּדוֹל וְחָכָם – פִּסְלַת הַמוֹחַ שְׁלוֹ הֵם אֶצֶל אָדָם אֲחֵר מַחֲיִן שְׁלֵמִים וְטוֹבִים.
And this is: <i>If there shall be a prophet among you—in a vision I make Myself known to him...</i>	...וְזֶהוּ: אִם יִהְיֶה נְבִיאָכֶם בַּמְּרֹאֶה אֵלָיו אֶתְוֹדַע
Meaning, that which by you is prophecy and vision—	— פִּירוּשׁ, מַה שְּׂאֲצַלְכֶם הוּא בְּחִינַת נְבוּאָה וּמְרֹאֶה
when I make Myself known to him in that same level, in a dream I speak to him—because for him, it is a dream-level.	כְּאֲשֶׁר אֵלָיו אֶתְוֹדַע – בְּאוֹתָהּ בְּחִינַת בְּחֵלֹם אֲדִבְרֶבּוּ, וְאֶצֶּל הוּא בְּחִינַת חֵלֹם.
And this is (Joel 3:1): “Your elders will dream dreams; your young men will see visions.”	וְזֶהוּ (יֹאֵל ג', א'): זְקֵנֵיכֶם חֲלוֹמוֹת יַחֲלֹמוּ, בַּחוּרֵיכֶם חֲזוֹנוֹת יֵרְאוּ.
The question is: Are the young men greater than the elders?	?דִּקְשָׁיָא: וְכִי הַבַּחוּרִים עֲדִיפִי מִהַזְקֵנִים
Rather, the explanation is: that which for your elders is a dream-level, will be for your young men a full vision.	אֲלֹא – הֵכִי פִירוּשׁוֹ: מַה שֶּׁהוּא אֶצֶּל זְקֵנֵיכֶם בְּחִינַת חֵלֹם – יִהְיֶה אֶצֶּל בַּחוּרֵיכֶם חֲזוֹן שְׁלֵם.
Alternate Version	
<i>If there shall be a prophet among you, Hashem... (Numbers 12:6).</i>	(אם יִהְיֶה נְבִיאָכֶם ה' ... (י"ב, ו)
For in a dream, the matter is clothed in hints, like a parable from which the essence of the matter is understood.	כִּי בְחֵלֹם מִתְלַבֵּשׁ אוֹתוֹ דִּבְרַת בְּרָמִז, וְהוּא כְּמוֹ מִשְׁלַל שֶׁהַתּוֹכֵן מוֹכֵן מִמֶּנּוּ.
Without the parable, one would not understand the essence—because it is too elevated.	וּבְלִעְדֵי הַמִּשְׁלַל – לֹא הָיוּ מְבִינִים תּוֹכֵן הַדִּבְרַת, כִּי הוּא גָבוּהַ.
And with this it is understood: what is for you prophecy, “ <i>In a dream I speak with him</i> ”—for him, it is just a dream, and from it he understands the lofty truth.	וּבִזְנֵה יוֹבֵן: מַה שְּׂאֲצַלְכֶם הוּא נְבוּאָה – בְּחֵלֹם אֲדִבְרֶבּוּ – הוּא אֶצֶּל הוּא רַק חֵלֹם, וּמִמֶּנּוּ מְבִינֵי אֱמִיתַת הַדִּבְרַת הַגָּבוּהַ מְאֹד מְאֹד.
Your prophecy, for him, is only a garment from which he understands even more, etc.	הַנְּבוּאָה שְׁלָכֶם – אֶצֶּל הוּא רַק לְבוּשׁ, שֶׁמִּמֶּנּוּ הוּא מְבִינֵי יוֹתֵר וְכו'.
How much more so—ininitely more—regarding what we can grasp of ruach hakodesh.	חַל וְחֹמֶר בְּאֵלֶּף הַבְּדֻלוֹת – [לְגַבִּי מַה] שְׂאֲנַחֲנוּ יְכוּלִים לְהַשִּׁיג רוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ.

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[NOTE Summary:

Reb Pinchas of Koretz unpacks the verse *"If there be a prophet among you, I, Hashem, make Myself known in a vision; in a dream I speak with him"* (Numbers 12:6), revealing the layered nature of Divine communication. Drawing on Zohar and Midrash, he explains that a **dream is the "waste product" of the brain**, a secondary form of spiritual processing. So too, prophecy through dreams or visions represents **a diminished clarity**, filtered and clothed to reach the human soul.

However, a great tzaddik's spiritual "overflow"—what is mere residue or secondary for him—may be **complete light** for someone else. Just as Torah is called the "droppings" of supernal wisdom, the prophetic level called "dream" in the tzaddik may be a full-fledged "vision" to others.

Thus, when Hashem says He speaks to prophets "in a dream," it implies that even this level is a **veil** compared to the Divine clarity experienced by someone like Moshe. For Moshe, what others call prophecy was a mere **garment**—a tool to reach even higher truth. And by contrast, what we experience as "ruach hakodesh" is but a faint echo of what those souls truly accessed.

Practical Takeaway

Reb Pinchas of Koretz invites us to embrace humility in our spiritual perception. Just because something feels "clear" or "real" doesn't mean we've seen the essence. What might be a dazzling prophecy for us may be only a symbolic hint for a soul more refined.

He also teaches that wisdom **flows downward**: what overflows from one person's insight may become another person's core understanding. So rather than seeking originality, **seek alignment**—place yourself beneath those whose overflow can water your soul. That's where true growth begins.

Chassidic Story

A student once came to Reb Pinchas of Koretz full of excitement. "Rebbe," he said, "I had a dream of a shining ladder stretching to the heavens. I think Hashem is sending me prophecy!"

Reb Pinchas smiled gently. "In truth," he said, "you dreamed the crumbs of someone else's clarity. That ladder may have dropped from the table of a tzaddik who called it his 'dream of bread.'"

The student was quiet.

The Rebbe continued, "But don't be discouraged. When the body is strong, it can digest even crumbs. Take what you're given and climb. One day, your crumbs will become someone else's bread."

And then he added, "The highest light enters through humility. If it's only a dream, let it dream you into service." **END NOTE]**

Siman #312

In a dream I speak with him (Numbers 12:6).

('בְּחֵלֹם אֶדְבָּרֵיבוֹ (י"ב, ו

That which I speak with him in a dream—by you, it is [already] considered prophecy.

מֵהָ שְׂאֵנִי מְדַבֵּר אִתּוֹ בְּחֵלֹם – אֶצְלָכֶם הוּא נְבוּאָה.

And a dream is the waste of the brain (see Berachot 55a).

('חֵלֹם הוּא פְסֻלַּת הַמוֹחַ (בְּרָכוֹת נ"ה, א

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According to the quality of the brain, so is its waste—if the brain is refined, the dream is also refined.	לפי המוח – כך היא הפסלת; אם המוח מְזַכָּךְ – החלום גם כן מְזַכָּךְ.
As it is written (Genesis 31:10): <i>And I saw in a dream.</i>	כְּדָרַךְ שְׁפָתוֹב (בְּרֹאשִׁית ל"א, י'): וְאַרְאָה בְּחִלּוֹם.
And the refinement happens through sleep.	וְהַזְכוּת הוּא עַל-יְדֵי הַשְׁנָה.
And the heart does not sleep—as it is said (Shir HaShirim 5:2): <i>I sleep, but my heart is awake.</i>	וְהַלֵּב אֵינוֹ יָשׁוּן, עַל-דָּרַךְ: אֲנִי יֹשְׁנָה, וְלִבִּי עֹר (שִׁיר ה') (הַשִּׁירִים ה', ב).
And it is always beating—this is called <i>the point within the dream</i> .	וְדוֹפֵק תָּמִיד – זֶהוּ הַנִּקְרָא נִקְדָּה שְׁבִחֵחִלּוֹם.
And the more important the thing, the more subtle its waste—the eye is more refined than the ear or the nose.	וְכָל הַחֲשׁוֹב יוֹתֵר – הַפְּסֻלֶּת דְּקָה יוֹתֵר. הָעֵיִן – יוֹתֵר נָךְ מִן הָאָזְנוֹ וּמִן הַחֹטֶמֶת.
And a dream is the “droppings” of prophecy (Kohelet Rabbah 12:7).	וְחִלּוֹם – נוֹבְלוֹת הַנְּבוּאָה (קֹהֵלֶת רַבָּה י', ז).

[NOTE Summary:

Reb Pinchas of Koretz offers a subtle and mystical teaching on the verse “*In a dream I speak with him*” (Numbers 12:6). He explains that a **dream is the “waste” or overflow of the brain**—a byproduct of consciousness that still carries meaning. But the quality of the dream depends on the **refinement of the mind**. When the mind is pure and elevated, even its byproducts—the dreams—are clear, luminous, and spiritually significant.

In this context, Hashem says: *That which I speak in a dream to the prophet—is already, for you, prophecy.*

Meaning: what is mere overflow for the prophet is the highest clarity others can attain.

Reb Pinchas draws a parallel to the organs of perception: the eye is more refined than the ear, and the ear more than the nose—so too, spiritual perception has levels. The more elevated the soul, the finer its filters, the purer its dreams. And within even the dream lies a “point”—a pulse of inner truth that never sleeps, the beating heart of the soul.

Practical Takeaway

Reb Pinchas of Koretz teaches that **dreams are shaped by the refinement of the mind and soul**. If our inner world is cluttered, even our spiritual messages will come distorted, scattered. But when we purify our thoughts, calm our desires, and live with deeper awareness, even our dreams—our unconscious overflow—can become vessels of truth.

This applies not only to dreams during sleep, but to all indirect perceptions: vague feelings, passing insights, quiet intuition. **The more we refine ourselves, the more we can trust even subtle impressions.**

And the deepest part—the “point in the dream”—is the awake heart. Even when our minds drift, that inner heartbeat stays connected to the Divine. Guard that point. Let your refinement grow from it. **END NOTE]**

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Siman #313	
<i>If there be a prophet among you, I, Hashem, in a vision I make Myself known to him... Not so is My servant Moshe; in all My house he is faithful</i> (Numbers 12:6–7).	אם יהיה נביאכם ה' – במראה אליו אתודע וגו'. לא (כן עבדי משה – בכל ביתי נאמן הוא (י"ב, ו-ז).
Also this, perhaps in the name of the Rav, of blessed memory:	גם זה – אולי בשם הרב ז"ל
A parable: when a person looks in a mirror, which they call a “shpiegel” (mirror), he sees everything that is in the room, but he cannot touch anything.	משל: כשאדם מסתכל במראה – שקורין “שפיגל” – רואה כל מה שבבית, ואינו יכול לגע בשום דבר.
Not so when one sees the actual object lying before him—he can take it.	מה שאין כן כשרואה ממש הדבר מנח לפניו – יכול לקחת אותו.
So too: you [the prophets] see everything in a manner of parable, like that Hashem revives the dead—but you cannot take that thing [the power] itself, and so on.	כך אתם רואים הכל – על דרך משל – שהקב"ה מחיה מתים, ואינכם יכולים לקחת הדבר ההוא, וכיוצא בו.
Not so Moshe—in <i>all My house he is faithful</i> —he sees everything truly in His house, and he can take it if he wishes.	משאין כן משה – בכל ביתי נאמן הוא – שרואה ממש הכל בביתו, ויכול לקחת אם ירצה.
However, he does not take anything for himself—for he is faithful.	אבל אינו לוקח כלום לעצמו – שנאמן הוא.
As it is stated in the Midrash (see Yalkut Shimoni, Parshat Behaalotcha): Moshe could have created worlds and made himself into a god—and why didn't he? Because he was faithful.	בדאיתא במדרש (עין ילקוט) ט כמדובר פרשת בהעלתך): יכול היה משה לברוא עולמות ולעשות עצמו אלוה – ולמה לא עשה? – שהוא נאמן.

[NOTE Summary:

Reb Pinchas of Koretz offers a profound analogy to explain the difference between ordinary prophets and Moshe Rabbeinu. Most prophets, he says, are like a person looking into a mirror—they see everything reflected, but **cannot touch or interact with what they see**. Their visions are true, but indirect, symbolic, and beyond reach. Even when they see Divine realities, such as the resurrection of the dead, they see only an image—not something they can affect or access.

But Moshe is not like that. “*In all My house he is faithful*,” says Hashem. Moshe doesn't see through a mirror; he sees **directly inside the King's palace**. Everything is in front of him, tangible and real. And even more: if he wanted, he could take from it. He has full access to spiritual power—including the potential to “create worlds,” as the Midrash says. Yet he refrains. He does not take anything for himself, **because he is utterly faithful**. This is not just a technical privilege—it's a reflection of Moshe's total selflessness. His access is unlimited, but his ego is nonexistent. That is true faithfulness.

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Practical Takeaway

Spiritual greatness is not only about how much we can see, but how much we can **be trusted** with what we see. Moshe's level wasn't defined just by the clarity of his vision—but by his **restraint**, his **humility**, and his **refusal to take** for himself what others might have craved.

We too encounter moments of insight, opportunity, even power. The question is: **Can we be trusted not to use it for ourselves?** Can we walk through Hashem's palace, as it were, and not grab? Can we access knowledge, privilege, or influence, and remain loyal to a higher cause rather than personal gain?

This is the model Moshe gives us—and Reb Pinchas reminds us: **true spiritual maturity is measured not just by how much we know, but by how little we take. END NOTE]**