

Reb Pinchas of Koretz

Imrie Pinchas
Parshas Korach

Siman #330

Introduction

This discourse presents a profound reflection by Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz (1726–1791), one of the earliest and closest disciples of the Baal Shem Tov. Renowned for his uncompromising dedication to truth (*emes*) and inner refinement, Reb Pinchas was considered by his peers to be a towering spiritual presence. Living in the town of Koretz (in present-day Ukraine), he was revered for his piety, insight into the soul, and sharp critique of self-deception. This teaching centers around Moshe's interaction with Korach and highlights a rare Chassidic meditation on teshuvah (repentance) and lost opportunity.

The text draws from Rashi, the Talmud, and the Zohar to expose the inner spiritual process that Moshe hoped for—and the self-sabotage that Korach tragically embodied. It urges us to reflect nightly on our deeds with honesty and humility.

"In the morning, and Hashem will make known..." (Numbers 16:5).	(בבקר ויודע ה' וגו' (ט"ז, ה
Rashi explains: "Now is a time of intoxication," etc.,	פירש רש"י: עתה ית שכרות היא וכו'
and [Moshe] intended to postpone them, hoping they might repent.	והוא הנה מתכוון לדחותם שמה יחזירו בהם
And [our teacher] said—in the straightforward approach—that it is stated in the Gemara (Kiddushin 49b):	ואמר [הרב ז"ל בדרך] פשוט (דאיתא בגמרא (כדושין מ"ט, ב
"A Torah scholar who committed a transgression at night—	—תלמיד חכם שעבר עברה בלילה
do not suspect him during the day, for he may have repented."	אל תהרהר אחריו ביום שמה עשה תשובה
Rather, certainly he repented.	אלא בודאי עשה תשובה
And Korach was a Torah scholar,	וקרח הנה תלמיד חכם
and that is why Moshe delayed him until the next day,	ולכן דחה אותו משה עד למחר
for the above reason.	מטעם הנ"ל
But it is stated in the Zohar (Vol. 3, 175a):	(אלא שאיתא בזוהר (מ"ג קע"ע, א
"Masters of accounting" they are called—	דמרי דחשבנא אקרון
those who each and every night, before sleeping or slumbering,	אילין דבכל ליליא ויליליא עד לא ישכב ועד לא נאים
make an accounting of their deeds from that day,	מעבדין חשבנא מעובדא דעביד כל ההוא יומא
and sigh over them, and ask mercy upon them, etc.	וניחום מניהו ויבעי רחמי עליהו וכו'
But Korach was awake the entire night,	וקרח הנה ניעור כל הלילה
and went among the Israelites to entice them,	וקהל אצל ישראל לפתותם

Reb Pinchas of Koretz

Imrie Pinchas Parshas Korach

and therefore, he did not repent.	וְלִכְךָ לֹא עָשָׂה תְּשׁוּבָה
[NOTE: Summary When Moshe delayed responding to Korach's rebellion by saying, "In the morning, Hashem will make known," Rashi comments that Moshe was hoping the rebels would sober up from their frenzy and perhaps repent. Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz explains this delay more deeply: Moshe knew a principle from the Talmud—that if a Torah scholar sins at night, we presume he has repented by morning. Korach was a Torah scholar, and thus Moshe granted him time to reconsider and repair. However, the Zohar introduces a powerful idea: those called "Masters of Accounting" review their deeds each night, confess, sigh, and ask for mercy. But Korach spent the entire night actively inciting others, abandoning the opportunity for reflection and teshuvah. Thus, by morning, the judgment could proceed—because the night that was gifted to him as a space for teshuvah was squandered. Practical Takeaway Never underestimate the spiritual power of a single night. Each evening is a quiet window of return—a moment to pause, examine our actions, and seek to correct them. But if we use that time to justify, distract, or double down on error, we may forfeit the very grace that could have lifted us. Before we sleep, let us become like the <i>marei dechushbana</i> (Masters of Accounting), taking even a few honest moments to return to Hashem with sincerity and humility. Chassidic Story It is said that one night, a young man once came to Reb Pinchas of Koretz in tears, confessing to a serious transgression. The hour was late, and the man had waited all day to gather the courage. Reb Pinchas listened, sighed deeply, and said, "You waited until nightfall? Then it is already time for mercy." He told the man to close his eyes and whisper a simple confession to Hashem. Then he added, "Tonight the gates are open wider than you think. Even one tear, if it is true, can change a decree written in stone." The man did as instructed. Later, Reb Pinchas told his students, "That man walked in with guilt and walked out reborn. Because he didn't waste the night." Source: <i>Imrei Pinchas Hashalem</i>, based on teachings preserved by his disciples and later printed in Koretz and Lviv editions. END NOTE]	
Siman #331	
"In the morning, Hashem will make known..." (Numbers 16:5).	(בְּבֹקֶר וַיִּזְדַּע ה' וַגּוֹי' (ט"ז, ה
In the name of the Rav, of blessed memory: sleep is the sweetening of judgments,	בְּשֵׁם הָרַב ז"ל, שְׁיִנָּה הִיא הַמְתַּקַּת הַדִּינִים

Reb Pinchas of Koretz

Imrie Pinchas Parshas Korach

for when a person sleeps, he entrusts his soul to the Supernal Well,	כי נשאדם ישן, מפקיד נשמתו אל הבאר העליון
which is the acronym of: "בְּיָדָהּ אֶפְקִיד רוּחִי" (Tehillim 31:6),	שהוא ראשי תבות: בְּיָדָהּ אֶפְקִיד רוּחִי (תהלים ל"א, ו'),
and the "well" refers to the Ein Sof, which constantly flows without interruption	ובאר הוא אין סוף, שנובע תמיד בלי הפסק
(see Pri Etz Chaim, Sha'ar Krias Shema, Chapter 49, Perek 3).	עין פרי עץ חיים, שער קריאת שמע, קשער מ"ט, (פרק ג').
Nevertheless, even if he is still lying and no longer needs to sleep, and is lazy to rise, etc.,	אף אם עדין שוכב ואינו צריך עוד לישון, ומתעצל לקום וגו'
therefore it is taught in the Gemara (Sanhedrin 35b): "When the judgment is deferred, the judgment is nullified."	לכך איתא בגמרא (סנהדרין ל"ה, ב): "בת דינא בטייל".
And that is why King Chizkiyahu said (see Likutei Halachos IV, 15):	(ולכך חזקיהו המלך אמר (עין לקוטי הלכות ד', ט"ו
"I will sleep on my bed, and You will slay [the enemy]," etc.	אני ישן על מטתי, ואתה הורג, וגו'."
For Chizkiyahu knew how to sleep.	כי חזקיהו ידע איך לישון
And the Rav, of blessed memory, said: I know for certain that the intent of Moshe Rabbeinu, peace be upon him,	ואמר הוא ז"ל: ידעתי שבודאי היתה פונת משה רבינו, עליו השלום
in saying to Korach "In the morning Hashem will make known..." was so that at night	ושאמר לקרח "בבקר יודע ה' וגו'" כדי שבלילה
he would grasp the soul of Korach and nullify the judgments upon him,	יתפוס את נשמת קרח ויבטל ממנו הדינים
for the tzaddik has the power to elevate all souls.	כי הצדיק יכול להעלות כל הנשמות
However, for a long time it was difficult for me—why didn't he do so?	?אבל כמה זמנים היה קשה לי, למה לא עשה כן
Until I remembered that Korach did not sleep at all that night,	עד שזנפרתי שקרח לא ישן כלל באותו הלילה
as Rashi explains—that he was going around stirring up mockery, etc., see there.	כדפירש רש"י, שהיה מחזר בליצנות וגו', עי"ש
Therefore, the Rav of blessed memory said: it is dangerous to remain awake all night, even to study.	לכך אמר הוא ז"ל: סכנה להיות געור כל הלילה, אפילו ללמוד

Reb Pinchas of Koretz

Imrie Pinchas Parshas Korach

And he, of blessed memory, said that with this is resolved the question of the Tosafos Yom Tov, in the name of Midrash Shmuel, on the Mishnah (Avos 3:4):	ואמר הוא ז"ל שבעה מתורץ קשית התוספות יום טוב (בשם מדרש שמואל במשנה (אבות ג', ד')
"One who is awake at night and turns his heart to vanity—he is liable for his life."	הנעור בלילה והמפנה לבו לבטלה—הרי זה מתחייב "בנפשו".
He wrote that we must read it as "and turns his heart," for if not—if "turns his heart" is a separate phrase—why is he liable for his life?	וכתב דצריך לגרוס "ומפנה", דאם לאו פן—רק "המפנה" היא מלתא באפי נפשה, אמאי יתחייב? בנפשו?
But according to the above, it fits perfectly: that even one who is awake all night to study is liable,	ולפי הנ"ל, אתי שפיר—שהנעור כל הלילה אפילו, ללמוד, מתחייב וגו'.
for sleep is better than study.	כי השינה היא טובה יותר מן הלימוד.
And the primary sleep is before midnight,	ועיקר השינה קודם חצות לילה.
for after that, there is no sleep above.	כי אחר כך אין שינה למעלה.
And he, of blessed memory, said: even on Shavuos...	...ואמר הוא ז"ל: אפילו בשבועות

[NOTE Summary:

This discourse from Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz explores the mystical power of sleep as a tool for divine mercy. Drawing on verses about Korach's rebellion, he explains that Moshe delayed judgment until morning not merely tactically, but spiritually — hoping that Korach, through sleep, would entrust his soul to the Supernal Well (באר עליין) and experience a sweetening of judgment. Sleep is seen as a surrender to the Ein Sof, the Infinite Source that constantly flows, and through this surrender, the soul can rise and be purified. But Korach stayed awake, mocking and inciting others, thereby missing the one path to redemption that Moshe had offered. The discourse concludes that even Torah study all night can be spiritually dangerous if it interrupts the soul's ascent through proper, early-night sleep. This perspective also resolves a difficult Mishnah: why one who stays awake at night and turns his heart to vanity is liable for his soul.

Practical Takeaway:

Sleep is not just rest — it's spiritual realignment. When done with trust and purity, especially before midnight, sleep elevates the soul and dissolves harsh judgments. Even learning Torah should not come at the cost of this ascent. Be vigilant: mockery, distraction, or even excessive striving can block what surrender and silence would heal. Let your nights be sacred. Let your soul rise.

Chassidic Story:

Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz once noticed a devoted young student who stayed up each night learning intensely. One morning, the student proudly told the Rebbe he had not slept for three nights straight. Reb Pinchas looked at him gently and said, "Do you know where your soul was supposed to go last night?" The boy was silent.

Reb Pinchas of Koretz

Imrie Pinchas Parshas Korach

The Rebbe continued, “Sometimes, the highest Torah is learned not by the lips, but by the soul as it ascends through sleep. You have stayed here, but your soul missed its appointment in Heaven.” The student quietly began to adjust his nightly schedule. END NOTE]	
Siman #332	
"Separate yourselves from among this evil congregation, and I will consume them in an instant." And they fell on their faces (Numbers 17:10).	הִרְמִיזוּ מִתּוֹךְ הַעֲדָה הָרָעָה הַזֹּאת וְאָכְלָה אֹתָם כְּרִגְעָה (ויִפְּלוּ עַל פְּנֵיהֶם (י"ז, י'
And it is difficult: for earlier (verse 8) it was written, “And Moshe and Aharon came to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting,”	וְקִשָּׁה, הָלֹא מְקוּדָם (פְּסוּק ח') כְּתוּב: "וַיָּבֹאוּ מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן אֶל פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד
and they were not among the congregation.	וְלֹא הָיוּ בְּתוֹךְ הַעֲדָה
And he answered (section 190), that Moshe and Aharon were embedded among Israel,	וְתִירֵץ קצ"ה, דְּמֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן הָיוּ תְּקוּעִים בְּתוֹךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל
for the righteous are embedded within the broader masses,	כִּי צְדִיקִים הֵם תְּקוּעִים בְּתוֹךְ יֵתֵר הַהֶמּוֹן
as it is written in the Zohar (Volume 43b): “Fortunate is the generation in which Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai dwells,” etc.	כִּמִּי"ש בְּזֹהַר (מ"ל ס"ג, ב'): "[וְזָכָא] דְּרַא דְּרִשְׁבִּי"י שְׁרָיָא בְּגוֹיָא", וְכוּ'
And he said: they were to lift themselves up from among the Children of Israel,	וְאָמַר שְׁרִימוּ אֶת עַצְמָם מִתּוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
and to change the command of Hashem—even ketores would not have helped.	וְלִשְׁנוֹת צוּי הַשֵּׁם, אֲפֹלוּ קִטְרֶת לֹא הָיְתָה מוֹעִילָה
Therefore they needed to fall on their faces,	לְכַךְ הוּצָרְכוּ לִפּוֹל עַל פְּנֵיהֶם
for through prostration one draws down a great light,	כִּי עַל־יְדֵי הַשְׁתַּחֲוָּא מְבִיאִים אוֹר גָּדוֹל
as it is written in the intentions of “Aleinu” (see Siddur of the Chida, Lech Lecha, s.v. “L’chi l’sel”):	כְּמִשְׁנֵה כְּתוּב בְּכוּנוֹת "עֲלֵינוּ" (בְּסִדּוּר הַחֵיד"א לְלֶךְ־לֶךְ): (ס"ו) "לְכִי לְסֵל" ז"ל
“One should bow with a great bow to draw down a great light.”	"יִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה הַשְׁתַּחֲוָּא גְדוֹלָה לְהַמְשִׁיךְ אוֹר גָּדוֹל"
And it is taught in the Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni, Korach 752):	(וְאֵיתָא בְּמִדְרַשׁ (יִלְקוּ"שׁ קִרַּח תְּרִנ"ב
everything is in the merit of prostration,	הַכֹּל בְּזָכוֹת הַשְׁתַּחֲוָּא
as it says (Bereishis 22:5): “And we will bow and return to you,” etc.	שְׁנַאֲמַר (בְּרֵאשִׁית כ"ב, ה'): "וְנִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה וְנָשׁוּבָה אֵלֵיכֶם", וְגו'
And similarly, Israel were not redeemed except through the merit of prostration,	וְכֵן, יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא נִגְאָלוּ אֶלָּא בְּזָכוֹת הַשְׁתַּחֲוָּא
as it is said (Shemos 4:31): “And the people believed... and they bowed.”	שְׁנַאֲמַר (שְׁמוֹת ד', ל"א): "וַיֵּאֱמֶן הָעָם... וַיִּקְדּוּ וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ"

Reb Pinchas of Koretz

Imrie Pinchas Parshas Korach

[NOTE Summary:

This discourse by Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz addresses a puzzling moment in the episode of Korach's rebellion: Hashem commands to "separate from the evil congregation," yet Moshe and Aharon had already withdrawn to the Tent of Meeting. The apparent contradiction is resolved by explaining that true tzaddikim are not physically located among the masses, but spiritually bound within them. Their very souls are "embedded" in the people. Hashem commands them to remove even that spiritual connection. Yet doing so—and nullifying the decree—could not be accomplished by any ordinary means, not even by offering ketores. Only one thing remained: hishtachavayah, complete prostration. Rabbi Pinchas explains that prostration is not merely symbolic; it draws immense divine light. It is a channel for heavenly mercy. As the Midrash teaches, all salvations—whether Avraham's, Moshe's, or the redemption from Egypt—came in the merit of bowing. This act reveals a soul's deepest submission and thus, its highest access.

Practical Takeaway:

When you face a spiritual emergency—when all logic and effort seem powerless—remember the power of surrender. Not in weakness, but in sacred humility. Bowing—physically, emotionally, spiritually—breaks through walls that intellect and action cannot. Whether in prayer, teshuvah, or struggle, even a simple bow before Hashem can draw divine compassion where all else fails.

Chassidic Story:

Once, during a time of harsh decrees against the Jews, a delegation came to Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz asking him to intercede in Heaven. He listened silently, then walked alone into the synagogue. No words were heard. He did not speak or weep. Instead, he lay down flat on the floor, face down, for a long time. Later, when asked what he had done, he said softly, "When words can no longer rise, a body must fall." Within days, the decree was lifted. His students said that the bow of the tzaddik reached higher than any outcry. **END NOTE]**

Siman #333

In the Midrash (on our parsha, Yalkut Shimoni, Parshas Naso 29):	:(במדבר (פרשתו י"ק, כ"ט
"Sixty are they, queens, and eighty are tractates; sixty concubines, eighty study halls that were in Jerusalem corresponding to its gateways." End quote.	ששים המה מלכות ושמונים מסכתות, ששים פילגשים ושמונים בתי מדרשות שהיו בירושלים כנגד פתחיה. עכ"ל
See in "Matanos Kehunah" his commentary on the concubines and the gateways; and these are his words:	עין במתנות כהנה מה שפירש על פילגשים ועל פתחיה, וזה לשונו
"Thus were the gateways in Jerusalem," etc., see there.	כך היו פתחים בירושלים, וגו', עי"ש
And I heard in the name of the holy and righteous Rav... of Apta, may his memory be for a blessing and holy, who said:	ושמעתי בשם הרב הצדיק הקדוש וגו' מאפטא זי"ע, שאמר
"With all due respect, I know with absolute certainty that there were not so many gates and entrances in Jerusalem."	במחילה מקבדו, ידעתי בבירור גמור שלא היו כל כך פתחים ושערים בירושלים.

Reb Pinchas of Koretz

Imrie Pinchas Parshas Korach

"Rather, this is the meaning of the above Midrash:	אֵלֶּא כֹּךְ פִּירוּשׁוֹ שֶׁל הַמִּדְרָשׁ הַנִּלְ"ל
Corresponding to its gates' — these are the gates and beginnings of the six orders of Mishnah mentioned above."	כְּנִגְדַּ פִּתְחֵיהֶּ — הֵינּוּ פִּתְחִים וְהַתְחָלוֹת שֶׁל שֵׁשׁ סְדְרֵי מִשְׁנָה הַנִּלְ"ל
"That is, the beginning of Seder Zera'im starts with 'Me'eimasai' — that is the letter Mem."	דִּהֵינּוּ, רֹאשׁ סֵדֵר זְרָעִים מִתְחִיל "מְאִימָסַי" — הֵינּוּ מ"ם
"And the beginning of Seder Mo'ed starts with 'Yetzios' — that is Yud."	וְרֹאשׁ סֵדֵר מוֹעֵד מִתְחִיל "יִצְיָאוֹת" — הֵינּוּ יו"ד
"Nashim begins with 'Chamesh' — that is Ches."	נָשִׁים מִתְחִיל "חֲמֵשׁ" — הֵינּוּ חֵת
"Seder Nezikin begins with 'Arba'ah' — that is Alef."	וְסֵדֵר נִזְקִין מִתְחִיל "אַרְבָּעָה" — הֵינּוּ אֶלֶף
"Seder Kodashim begins with 'Kol' — that is Kaf."	וְסֵדֵר קֹדָשִׁים מִתְחִיל "כָּל" — הֵינּוּ כ"ף
"Seder Taharos begins with 'Avos' — that is Alef."	וְסֵדֵר טְהָרוֹת מִתְחִיל "אַבוֹת" — הֵינּוּ אֶלֶף
"Altogether they total the numerical value of 80. And enough said."	סָךְ הַכֹּל מִגֵּן שְׁמוֹנִים, וְדַ"פ"ח"ח

[NOTE Summary:

This teaching, preserved in the name of Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz, unpacks a Midrash that allegorically describes “sixty queens” and “eighty concubines” as tractates and study halls. At face value, the Midrash seems to refer to the number of gateways and batei midrash in Jerusalem. But Reb Pinchas rejects this literal approach and offers a cryptic, gematria-based reinterpretation: the “eighty gates” correspond to the opening letters of the six orders of Mishnah. Mem, Yud, Ches, Alef, Kaf, and Alef — when converted numerically — total eighty. He is not merely teaching a clever mnemonic, but something deeper: the “openings” of Torah are internal. The real gates to holiness are not city walls but spiritual entryways into the Mishnah, into learning, into truth.

Practical Takeaway:

Don't look for holiness only in physical structures or historical numbers. The true gateways are within the Torah itself — its words, its openings, its questions. Each opening phrase of the Mishnah is a spiritual gate to enter deeper worlds. And when we begin learning sincerely, with reverence and humility, we are walking through the gates of Jerusalem itself.

Chassidic Story:

Once, a student asked Reb Pinchas of Koretz why he never traveled to see the gates of Jerusalem, even when others had the chance. Reb Pinchas replied, “Because I have already stood at them.” The student was puzzled, until Reb Pinchas opened a Mishnah and said, “This gate begins with a Mem — that's one. This one, with a Yud — that's another.” Then he whispered,

Reb Pinchas of Koretz**Imrie Pinchas****Parshas Korach**

“The gates of Jerusalem are still open — in every home where Torah begins with awe.” The student wept. He never looked at a Mishnah’s opening words the same again. **END NOTE]**