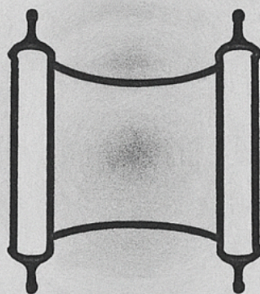


בס"ד

**Reb Pinchas of Koretz**

**Imrie Pinchas**

**Selichos**



*Dedicated To:*

אילנה דבורה בת שרה מרים

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## Reb Pinchas of Koretz

Imrie Pinchas

Selichos

### Siman #443

And “VeHu Rachum,” which comes before the Selichos of Motzaei Shabbos, it is called “VeHu Rachum HaAroch” (long), in the secret of Arich Anpin, etc.

וְהוּא רַחוּם שְׁקֵדָם הַסְּלִיחוֹת שֶׁל מוֹצְאֵי שַׁבָּת, הוּא  
'נִקְרָא "וְהוּא רַחוּם אַרְוֹךְ" בְּסוּד אַרְיֵךְ אֲנָפִין וְכוּ

#### [NOTE Summary

The passage highlights that the prayer “*VeHu Rachum*” recited before Selichos on Motzaei Shabbos is known as “*the long VeHu Rachum*”. This designation is connected to the mystical concept of *Arich Anpin* (the Divine attribute of Infinite Patience and Long-Suffering), symbolizing G-d’s endless compassion and forbearance. By invoking this prayer, the community draws down Divine mercy in preparation for Selichos, aligning earthly prayer with the higher spiritual attribute of patience and forgiveness.

#### Practical Takeaway

Before beginning Selichos, one should reflect on G-d’s infinite patience and mercy. Just as *Arich Anpin* represents forbearance beyond measure, we are called to cultivate patience and compassion in our own lives—especially when preparing for repentance and forgiveness. Entering Selichos with this awareness deepens the sincerity of our prayers and opens us to G-d’s abundant kindness. **END NOTE]**

### Siman #444

To complete the fast on the first day of Selichos, and on the eve of Rosh Hashanah (see Tur Orach Chaim, siman 581, and Magen Avraham, se’if katan 100), and he protested, etc., as is found in the writings.

לְהַשְׁלִים הַתַּעֲנִית בְּיוֹם א' דְּסְלִיחוֹת, וְעָרַב רֵאשׁ  
הַשָּׁנָה (עֵינֵי טוֹר חוֹלֵק קַי"ס סִימָן תְּקל"א וּמִגֵּן  
אֲבֵרָהם ס"ק ק), וְהִתְרַעַם וְכוּ' כְּדֵאִתָּא בְּכַתְבֵּי

#### [NOTE Summary

This passage discusses the custom of completing a fast on the first day of Selichos as well as on Erev Rosh Hashanah. Classical sources such as the Tur (Orach Chaim 581) and the Magen Avraham (se’if katan 100) mention these practices, though there was also opposition or critique noted in certain writings. The emphasis is on preparing oneself through fasting and spiritual readiness before the awe-filled days of Rosh Hashanah.

#### Practical Takeaway

Fasting before Rosh Hashanah—whether on the first day of Selichos or Erev Rosh Hashanah—serves as a way to humble the body, awaken the heart, and enter the new year with sincerity. Even if one cannot fast, the principle is to engage in serious preparation: increasing prayer, introspection, and acts of kindness to greet Rosh Hashanah in a state of spiritual clarity and purity. **END NOTE]**

### Siman #445

## Reb Pinchas of Koretz

Imrie Pinchas

Selichos

He was very stringent with immersion on the first day of Selichos at Ashmores, and on the day of Erev Rosh Hashanah at Ashmores (early dawn), and on Rosh Hashanah two times, as is customary.

Even though he was lenient regarding immersion on Shacharis of Shabbos, that he heard from the Rav, of blessed memory, what is written in the seforim (Perach Shoshan, Shaar HaPninin, Kuf-Peh Yud) that immersion on Shabbos morning is only when a person is in a state of health.

Nevertheless, the above-mentioned immersions are stricter.

הַתְּמִיר מְאֹד בְּטְבִילַת יוֹם א' דְּסְלִיחוֹת בְּאַשְׁמוֹרֶת,  
יוֹם עֶרֶב רֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה בְּאַשְׁמוֹרֶת רִס"ב, וְרֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה  
ב' פְּעָמִים, כְּפִנְהוּג.

אִף שֶׁהִקְוִי לְטְבִילַת שְׁחֵרִית שֶׁל שַׁבָּת, וְשָׁמַע מֵהֶרֶב  
ז"ל, מֵה שֶׁכְּתוּב בְּסִפְרֵים (פְּר"שׁ שְׁעַר הַפְּנִינִים קו"פ  
י"ק) לְטַבֵּל בְּשַׁבָּת בְּשְׁחֵרִית הֵינּוּ כְּשֶׁאֵדָם כְּקוֹ  
הַבְּרִיאוֹת רִס"ג.

מְכַל מְקוֹם טְבִילוֹת הַנ"ל תְּמִיר טְפִי.

### [NOTE Summary

Reb Pinchas of Koretz was known for his deep devotion to spiritual preparation before the Yamim Nora'im. He was especially strict regarding immersion in the mikveh: rising before dawn on the first day of Selichos and on Erev Rosh Hashanah to immerse, and immersing twice on Rosh Hashanah itself, in accordance with custom. While he was lenient about the practice of Shabbos morning immersion—teaching that it applied primarily to those in perfect health, as cited in earlier seforim—he emphasized that the immersions surrounding Selichos and Rosh Hashanah were of far greater spiritual weight and should not be neglected. His view highlights the unique holiness of these days, when purity of body and soul prepares a person to stand before the King in judgment.

### Practical Takeaway

As we approach Rosh Hashanah, preparation is not only about external acts but also about internal readiness. Just as Reb Pinchas stressed the importance of immersing in purity before Selichos and Rosh Hashanah, we too can take extra steps to enter the Days of Awe cleansed and renewed. This might mean physical immersion in a mikveh when possible, or it might mean immersing ourselves in tefillah, teshuvah, and acts of chesed. The essential lesson is to approach these days with extra care, sanctity, and a conscious effort to ready ourselves before standing in judgment.

### Chassidic Story

Reb Pinchas of Koretz once prepared for Rosh Hashanah with great intensity, rising before dawn to immerse. A close disciple asked him why he was so strict in this matter, while on Shabbos mornings he sometimes refrained from immersion altogether. Reb Pinchas explained: “The immersions of Selichos and Rosh Hashanah are not merely customs of purity—they are preparations to stand before the King. When one comes before a mortal king, he bathes, he dresses in clean garments. All the more so when one comes before the King of Kings on the Day of Judgment. These immersions are not optional, they are the garments of the soul.” (Source: *Amud HaAvodah*, teachings of Reb Pinchas of Koretz, cited in *Sifrei Chassidim*).

## Reb Pinchas of Koretz

Imrie Pinchas

Selichos

This story reflects Reb Pinchas' unwavering emphasis on spiritual preparation, showing that the immersions of Selichos and Rosh Hashanah are essential tools to ready the soul before entering the Days of Awe. **END**

**NOTE]**

### Siman #446

He said: In Selichos there is an opening “Yesod,” because everything requires an opening, that is to say, [like] a harp that requires an opening before the melody.

For before one comes to the palace, he must first enter the antechamber. And before the Selichos they say verses, and in those verses all the Selichos are included.

And this is a hint that the Torah prays on our behalf. And in most Selichos there is a closing with a verse from the Torah, so that there will not be accusation in our prayer.

And the Torah prays, as it is said (Selicha “:”סל"ס עסל"ס מלוס”) — that Your word is refined — to supplicate for the people of G-d.

אמר, בסליחות יש פתיחה יסוד, כי כל דבר צריך פתיחה, דהינו [כמו] פגור [ש] צריך פתיחה קדם הנגון.

כי קדם שבא להיכל צריך לפגוס לטרקליו. וקדם הסליחות אומרים פסוקים ובאותן הפסוקים נכלל כל הסליחות רס"ה.

ונה רמז כי התורה מתפללת עלינו. ובכוב הסליחות יש סוגר בפסוק מן התורה, והוא שלא יהיה קטרוג בתפלתנו.

והתורה מתפללת כמו שנאמר (סליחה "סל"ס עסל"ס מלוס"): צרופה אמרתך לחלות על עם אלהים.

#### [NOTE Summary

This teaching explains the structure of Selichos. Just as a harp requires a prelude before playing, or as one must pass through the antechamber before entering the palace, so too Selichos begin with verses that serve as an introduction. These verses encompass the entire essence of the Selichos that follow. The message is that the Torah itself prays on our behalf: many of the Selichos close with a verse from the Torah, ensuring that no accusations obstruct our prayers. By anchoring the prayers in Torah, our supplications ascend without hindrance.

#### Practical Takeaway

Before beginning heartfelt prayer, one should prepare an “opening” — whether through reciting verses, contemplating words of Torah, or entering a state of humility. Just as Selichos start with a prelude that includes the essence of all the prayers, we too should frame our tefillah with preparation, allowing the Torah and its holiness to intercede for us. In this way, our prayers rise undefiled and shielded from accusation. **END NOTE]**

### Siman #447

## Reb Pinchas of Koretz

Imrie Pinchas

Selichos

Concerning the Selichos: At the beginning they say verses of praise, for it is stated in the Gemara (Berachos 32a): “A person should always arrange the praise of the Omnipresent and afterwards pray.”

And this is the matter of the unification of Havayah and Adnai, for prayer is Malchus of Atzilus. Therefore, they say first the praise of the Omnipresent and afterwards pray the Selichos.

And the unification needs to be through self-sacrifice. Therefore, they fall upon their faces after Selichos, as is stated in the Kavanot on Shemoneh Esrei (Perach Shoshan, Shaar Nefilas Apayim, ch. 3).

And afterwards they begin from below to above, therefore they say in the Aramaic language “Machai u-Massi” etc., for the falling upon the face is self-sacrifice unto death.

And “Targum” in gematria is “Tardemah” (sleep), which is one of the sixty parts of death (Berachos 57b).

And afterwards [comes] the world of the angels: they say in the Holy Tongue “Machnisei Rachamim,” for the ministering angels do not attend to the Aramaic tongue.

And afterwards they return and say in the Aramaic language “Maran Di’V’Shmaya.” (And see well in the Kavanot of Nefilas Apayim.)

### [NOTE Summary

Reb Pinchas of Koretz taught that the structure of Selichos follows the spiritual order of prayer established in the Gemara: first one praises G-d, and only afterward does one make requests. This sequence reflects the unification of the Divine Names Havayah and Adnai, where prayer connects to Malchus. The opening praises of Selichos gather within them the essence of all the prayers, ensuring their purity. After Selichos comes *nefilas apayim* (falling on one’s face), symbolizing self-sacrifice and readiness to give up one’s life for G-d. The use of Aramaic phrases like “*Machai u-Masi*” signifies this surrender, since Aramaic equals *tardemah* (sleep) in gematria, which is considered one-sixtieth of death. From there, the prayers ascend: first the realm of self-sacrifice, then the world of angels, expressed in Hebrew as “*Machnisei Rachamim*”, for angels attend only to Lashon Hakodesh. Finally, the prayers return again in Aramaic, “*Maran Di’V’Shmaya*,” showing the cycle of ascent from below to above, protected and carried by Torah and angels alike.

בְּעֵינֵי הַסְּלִיחוֹת. שְׁמַתְחִלָּה אוֹמְרִים פְּסוּקִים שֶׁל שִׁבְחָה, כִּי אֵיתָא בְּגִמְרָא (בְּרִכּוֹת ל"ב, ל): לְעוֹלָם יִסְדֵּר אָדָם שִׁבְחוֹ שֶׁל מְקוֹם וְאַחַר כֵּן יִתְפַּלֵּל.

וְהוּא עֵנֵן יְחוּד הוּי"ה וְאַדְנ"י, כִּי תְּפִלָּה הִיא מַלְכוּת דְּאֶצְיָלוֹת, וְלִכְךָ אוֹמְרִים תְּחִלָּה שִׁבְחוֹ שֶׁל מְקוֹם וְאַחַר-כֵּן מִתְפַּלְלִין סְלִיחוֹת.

וְהַיְחוד צָרִיךְ לִהְיוֹת עַל-יְדֵי מְסִירוֹת נַפְשׁ, וְלִכְךָ נּוֹפְלִין עַל פְּנֵיהֶם אַחַר הַסְּלִיחוֹת כְּמוֹ שֶׁכְּתוּב בְּכַוָּנוֹת (שֶׁבִתְפִּילַת י"ח (פָּר"שׁ שֶׁעַר גְּפִילַת אַפִּים פָּרָק 3).

וְאַחַר-כֵּן מִתְחִילִין מִתְּתָא לְעֵילָא, לְכֵן אוֹמְרִים בְּלִשׁוֹן תַּרְגוּם "מַחֵי וּמְסִי" וְכוּ', כִּי גְפִילַת אַפִּים הוּא מְסִירוֹת נַפְשׁ לְמִיתָה.

וְ"תַרְגוּם" בְּגִימְטְרִיא "תַּרְדֵּמָה" (פָּרִי עֵץ מִים שֶׁעַר סוּד הַלִּימוּד), שֶׁהוּא אֶחָד מִשְׁשִׁים לְמִיתָה (בְּרִכּוֹת נז, ב).

וְאַחַר-כֵּן עוֹלָם הַמַּלְאָכִים, אוֹמְרִים בְּלִשׁוֹן הַקֹּדֶשׁ "מַכְנִיִּסֵי רַחֲמִים", כִּי מַלְאָכֵי הַשָּׁרַת אֵינָם נֹזְקִין לְלִשׁוֹן אֲרָמִי.

וְאַחַר-כֵּן חוֹזְרִים וְאוֹמְרִים בְּלִשׁוֹן תַּרְגוּם "מָרוֹן דִּי (בְּשִׁמְיָא". (וְעֵינֵן בְּכַוָּנוֹת גְּפִילַת אַפִּים הֵיטֵב

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Imrie Pinchas

Selichos

### Practical Takeaway

Prayer is not only about words but about preparation and surrender. Reb Pinchas reminds us that before presenting requests, we must first magnify the praise of G-d. True prayer involves the willingness to give of oneself completely, like *nefilas apayim*, which embodies self-sacrifice. Even if one cannot physically express this level of surrender, one can inwardly dedicate heart and soul to G-d, making prayer not just recitation but a full act of union and devotion.

### Chassidic Story

Reb Pinchas of Koretz would approach Selichos with immense seriousness. His disciples noticed that before reciting the first words, he would pause in silence for several minutes, his face pale and still. When asked why, he explained: "One does not storm into the King's chamber without first bowing in awe. The praises before Selichos are the palace gates. Without them, the plea cannot be heard." Once, on the first night of Selichos, a young man began rushing through the opening verses. Reb Pinchas stopped him gently and said, "If you would walk into the palace of a mortal king without knocking, you would be thrown out. Shall you come before the King of Kings without preparing your soul?" (Source: *Amud HaAvodah*, teachings of Reb Pinchas of Koretz, cited in *Sifrei Chassidim*). **END NOTE]**

### Siman #448

And one time he said, concerning Selichos: That it is found in Pardes, Shaar Archei HaKinuyim (entry "Selichos" and entry "Tefillah"), that *Selichah* is in Tiferes, and *Tefillah* is in Malchus.

And this is known, that the unification of Tiferes and Malchus is through Yesod, which is called Tzaddik. And it is stated in Tikkunei Zohar, Tikkun 13 (29a): "The ninth with *rinah*," etc. For *rinah* is in the Tzaddik. See there.

Therefore, at first they say "Selichah," which is Tiferes, and afterwards "Pizmon," which is Rinah, and afterwards "El Rachum," which is Tefillah — to unify all together.

He also showed us that the verses before the Selichos include all the Selichos that follow them, and also many of the Selichos that conclude with verses of Torah include within them all that was said before in detail.

ופעם אחת אמר בענין הסליחות: דאיתא בפרדס בשער ערכי הפניניים (ערך "סליחות" וערך "תפלה") כי סליחה הוא בתפארת, ותפלה הוא במלכות.

וזה ידוע, כי יחוד תפארת ומלכות הוא על-ידי יסוד שנקרא צדיק, ואיתא בתיקונים תיקון י"ג (כט, א): תשיעאה ברנה וכו', כי רנה הוא בצדיק, עי"ש.

על-כן תחלה אומרים "סליחה" שהיא תפארת, ואחר-כך "פזמון" שהוא רנה, ואחר-כך "אל רחום" שהוא תפלה — ליחד הכל.

עוד הראה לנו, שהפסוקים שקדם הסליחות הם פוללים כל הסליחות שאחריהם, גם הרבה סליחות הסויות בפסוקי תורה הוא כולל גם בן הנאמר לפניו בפרטות.

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Selichos

And he said the reason: For in the Selichah that begins with the Thirteen Attributes it is written, “צרופה אמרתך לחלות על עם אלה” — that is, the Torah itself prays for us and for all Israel. Therefore, all the requests are included in the verses that precede them. And understand this.

ואמר הטעם: כי בסליחה המתחילה "שלוש עשרה מדות" כתוב "צרופה אמרתך לחלות על עם אלה", דהיגו התורה עצמה מתפללת עלינו ועל כל ישראל. על-כן נכללו כל הבקשות בפסוקים שלפניהם, והבן.

### Siman #449

The order of the Selichos is like the order of the Tefillah (see Levush Orach Chaim siman 581).

סדר הסליחות כסדר התפילה (עין לבוש או"ח סימן תקפ"א).

At the beginning [are] songs of praise, and afterwards the prayers.

בתחלה רננות, ואחר-כך התפלות.

After that, *nefilas apayim*, and [then] the world of the angels, [and the world of Asiyah], in the secret of “eved.”

אחר-כך נפילת אפים, ועולם המלאכים, [ועולם "העש"ה] רס"ז בסוד "עבד".

Therefore they say, “Like a servant who pleads,” etc.

לכן אומרים "כעבדא דמתחנן" וכו'.

### Siman #450

He said: Why do we fall on our faces in Selichos, and afterwards say “Machai u-Masi” in the Aramaic language, and afterwards “Machnisei Rachamim” in the Holy Tongue, and afterwards [again] Aramaic.

אמר: למה נופלין על פניהם בסליחות, ואחר-כך אומרים "מחי ומסי" בלשון תרגום, ואחר-כך "מכניסי רחמים" בלשון הקדש, ואחר-כך תרגום רס"ח.

For there are several matters that require *mayin nukvin* (arousal from below). And when a person awakens from sleep, he is unable to speak, and this is what the Gemara says (Chagigah 12b): “Dozing but not dozing, awake but not awake, he is called and he answers, yet does not know to return reasoning.”

פי יש פמה דברים שצריך מין נוקבין, וכשאדם ננער מן השינה אינו יכול לדבר, וזה דקאמרי בגמרא (פסחים קכ, ב): גים ולא גים תיר ולא תיר, דקרי ליה ועני ולא ידע להדורי סברא.

And Aramaic is the aspect of *tardemah* (slumber) (Pri Etz Chaim, Shaar Hanhagas HaLimud). And this is the explanation: the ministering angels do not attend to the Aramaic tongue (Shabbos 12b), “מען ראסט קאן זיי ניט נייטן,” because Lashon Hakodesh is entirely combinations and unifications, and in a single letter are all the upper and lower worlds and the Holy One, blessed be He, Himself.

ותרגום הוא אחינת תרדמה (פרי עץ חיים שער הנהגת הלימוד). וזה הפרוש: מלאכי השרת אין נזקקין ללשון ארמית (שבת יב, ב) "מען ראסט קאן זיי ניט נייטן", כי לשון הקדש הוא בלו צרופים ויחודים ובאות אחת יש כל העולמות העליונים והתחתונים והקדוש-ברוך-הוא בעצמו.

And this is the explanation of the verse (Devarim 10:21): “He is your praise and He is your G-d,” for the prayer and the Holy One, blessed be He, are one. For when he says “Baruch,” the twenty-two letters are Kesser (see Pri Etz Chaim, Shaar HaAmidah, ch. 30).

ונה פרוש הפסוק (דברים י, כא): הוא תהלתך והוא אלהיך, כי התפלה והקדוש-ברוך-הוא אחד. דכי אומר "ברוך" הם כ"ב אותיות הם כתר (עין פרי"ש (שער העמידה פרק ל

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Selichos

“Hashem, open my lips” — they are 320 dinim, and through this utterance they are sweetened. And the general rule: the Holy One, blessed be He, Himself is the One who sweetens all the judgments.

And this is [the meaning of] when Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa would pray for the sick, he knew: “This one will live,” etc. For if my prayer is fluent in my mouth, I know that it is accepted (Berachos 34b).

“Shegurah” is from the expression “Vayagar sham” (Bereishis 26:17): If the Holy One, blessed be He, Himself dwells there, I know that it is accepted. For the prayer is the Shechinah.

Therefore, to Lashon Hakodesh the angels attend, because the Holy One, blessed be He, is there Himself, and they desire to cleave there. But in Aramaic there are no unifications, and therefore they cannot attend it.

Therefore, after *nefilas apayim* — immediately he is in the state of “dozing but not dozing, awake but not awake,” etc., and is unable to speak in Lashon Hakodesh. They say “Machai u-Masi” in Aramaic.

And afterwards we need to request from the angels, and we must say it in Lashon Hakodesh, for they do not attend [to Aramaic].

And afterwards we return again to the Aramaic language.

ה' שְׁפָתַי תִּפְתַּח" הֵם ש"ך דִּינִים, וְעַל-יְדֵי אֲמִירָה זוֹ נִמְתָּקִים. וְהַפְּלֵל, כִּי הַקְּדוֹשׁ-בְּרוּךְ-הוּא בְּעֶצְמוֹ הוּא הַמְתִּיק כָּל הַדִּינִים.

וְזֶה כְּשֶׁהִיא רַבִּי חֲנִינָא בֶן דּוּסָא מִתְפַּלֵּל עַל הַחוֹלִים הִיא יוֹדֵעַ: זֶה חַי וְכוּ', אִם שְׁגוּרָה תִּפְלְתִי בְּפִי יוֹדֵעַ. (אֲנִי שְׁהִיא מְקַבֵּלַת (בְּרַכּוֹת לַד, ב

שְׁגוּרָה" מִלְשׁוֹן "וַיָּגַר שָׁם" (בְּרֵאשִׁית כו, יז): אִם הַקְּדוֹשׁ-בְּרוּךְ-הוּא בְּעֶצְמוֹ גַּר כָּאֵן יוֹדֵעַ אֲנִי שְׁהִיא מְקַבֵּלַת. כִּי הַתְּפִלָּה הִיא הַשְּׂכִינָה

וְלָכֵן לְלִשׁוֹן הַקְּדוֹשׁ נִזְקָקִים הַמְלַאֲכִים, כִּי הַקְּדוֹשׁ-בְּרוּךְ-הוּא הוּא שָׁם בְּעֶצְמוֹ, וְהַפְּצִים לְדַבֵּק שָׁם. וּבְתַרְגוּם אֵין יַחֲדוּדִים, וְלָכֵן אֵין יְכוּלִים לְזַקֵּק אוֹתָם.

וְלָכֵן אַחַר נְפִילַת אַפִּים — מִיָּד הוּא בְּבַחֲנֵינָת נִים וְלֹא נִים תִּיר וְלֹא תִיר וְכוּ', וְלֹא יְכוּל לְדַבֵּר בְּלִשׁוֹן הַקְּדוֹשׁ. אוֹמְרִים "מַחֵי וּמְסִי" בְּלִשׁוֹן תַּרְגוּם

וְאַחֲרֵיכֵן אֲנִי צְרִיכִים לְבַקֵּשׁ מִן הַמְלַאֲכִים וְצְרִיךְ לֹמַר בְּלִשׁוֹן הַקְּדוֹשׁ, כִּי אֵין נִזְקָקִין וְכוּ'. וְאַחֲרֵיכֵן חוֹזְרִים לְלִשׁוֹן תַּרְגוּם.

### [NOTE Summary

Reb Pinchas of Koretz offered a profound explanation for the shifting languages and stages of Selichos. He noted that we first fall on our faces (*nefilas apayim*), then recite “*Machai u-Masi*” in Aramaic, afterwards “*Machnisei Rachamim*” in Lashon Hakodesh, and then return again to Aramaic. This order reflects the spiritual states of the soul in prayer. When a person rises from sleep, he is in a liminal state — “*dozing but not dozing, awake but not awake*” (Pesachim 120b) — unable to speak with clarity. Similarly, after *nefilas apayim*, a person cannot immediately speak in Lashon Hakodesh, so he begins with Aramaic, which corresponds to *tardemah* (slumber). Lashon Hakodesh, however, contains divine unifications in every letter, uniting the upper and lower worlds with the Holy One Himself, which is why angels attend only to Lashon Hakodesh and not to Aramaic. This explains why *Machnisei Rachamim* is recited in Hebrew. Reb Pinchas further connected this to Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa, who would know if his prayer was accepted when it was “*shgurah* (fluent) in his mouth,” meaning that G-d Himself was present in the words. Thus, the alternation of languages in Selichos



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reflects the progression from human limitation and brokenness to divine clarity and unity, and then back again to humility.

### Practical Takeaway

Selichos are a spiritual journey. At first, we approach from a place of weakness, even confusion, like one just awoken from sleep — unable to find perfect words. This is why the prayers begin in Aramaic. But then we ascend to Lashon Hakodesh, where every letter connects us with the Divine and unifies the worlds. Through this we taste clarity, sweetness, and the assurance that our prayers reach Heaven. Finally, we return to Aramaic, symbolizing humility: acknowledging our human frailty and dependence on G-d's mercy. The lesson is that true prayer does not demand perfection — it begins in brokenness, rises to clarity, and returns to humility.

### Chassidic Story

It is told that one year before Selichos, a disciple of Reb Pinchas asked why the community lingered so long on *Machnisei Rachamim*. Reb Pinchas answered by pointing to Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa: “When his prayer flowed from his lips, he knew it was accepted. Why? Because the Shechinah was speaking through him. So too with us — when we reach Lashon Hakodesh in Selichos, we are no longer speaking alone. The Torah, the angels, and the Holy One Himself are speaking through us.” (Source: *Amud HaAvodah*, teachings of Reb Pinchas of Koretz, cited in *Sifrei Chassidim*). **END NOTE]**

### Siman #451

He showed [us] that several Selichos, after the conclusion of the Aleph-Beis acrostic, [end with] the sign “Zevadyah.”

הָרָאָה בְּמָה סְלִיחוֹת שְׂאֵחָרֵי סִיּוּם הָאֵל"ף-בֵּית סִימָן  
וְזִבְדִּיָּהּ.

And many of them are [recited] on Erev Rosh Hashanah and during the Ten Days of Repentance, for he is the angel appointed over life, as mentioned in the Kavanah of Rosh Chodesh (Siddur HaArizal, for Selichos).

וּמֵהֶם הַרְבֵּה בְּעֶרְבֵי רֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה וְעִשְׂרֵת יָמֵי תְּשׁוּבָה  
רַס"א, כִּי הוּא מַלְאָךְ הַמְּמַנֶּה עַל הַחַיִּים כְּנִזְכָּר בְּכִנּוּת  
(רֹאשׁ חֹדֶשׁ) (סִדּוּר הָאֲרִיז"ל לְסְלִיחוֹת).

And we pray then for life, and he said that it is a very wondrous matter.

וְאָנְחָנוּ מִתְּפִלָּלִים אֲזוּ עַל הַחַיִּים, וְאָמַר כִּי הוּא דְבָר  
פְּלֵא מְאֹד.

### [NOTE Summary

This teaching reveals that many of the Selichos—particularly those said on Erev Rosh Hashanah and during the Ten Days of Teshuvah—conclude with the acrostic sign “Zevadyah.” In Kabbalistic writings, Zevadyah is described as the angel appointed over life. At precisely this time of year, when we pray for life, these Selichos are directed through the angel whose role is to oversee and channel life-force. Reb Pinchas emphasized that this connection between the structure of Selichos, the timing of the prayers, and the angel of life is a wondrous matter.

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### Practical Takeaway

When praying during Selichos—especially in the days surrounding Rosh Hashanah—we should have in mind that we are asking for life itself, both physical and spiritual. Recognizing that our words connect to higher realities and are bound up with divine channels of life can inspire greater sincerity, focus, and awe. The prayers are not just words but living conduits of blessing. **END NOTE]**

### Siman #452

He said to Rabbi Yaakel, on Erev [Rosh Hashanah] in the year 5572 (1812), which was the Shemittah year, that he should not forget to have intention in the Selichos of Erev Rosh Hashanah, in what we say (Selichah “Lechol Alilos”),

“And that which is yours with your brother, your hand shall release,” [Devarim 15:3] — that the Holy One, blessed be He, should release our sins, since the year releases at its end.

אמר לרבי יאקל ערב שנת תקע"ב שהיתה שנת השמיטה, שלא ישפח לכנון בסליחות ערב ראש השנה (במה שאומרים (סליחה "לקל עלילות

ואשר יהיה לה את אחיד תשמט ג'ד" (דברים טו, ג) שישמט הש"ת עונותינו, כיון שהשנה משמטת בסופה.

### Siman #453

The Rav spoke much about the matter of the Nun and Samech: when they join together, it is support for those who fall, and it becomes the aspect of *nes* (miracle).

And he, of blessed memory, showed a wondrous matter in the *pizmon* of the first day of Selichos, which begins “Bimotzaei Menuchah,” which is founded on the Aleph-Beis.

Each letter of the Aleph-Beis is a rhyme on its own, except for the letters Nun and Samech, which are together — “Na Segebem,” etc.

For in that *pizmon* the subject of miracles and wonders is mentioned several times: in the letter Tes, “Veyodu Felecha”; in the letter Tzadi, “Mafla Pele’os”; and in the letter Tav, “Tir’em Nisecha.” Therefore, the Nun and the Samech were joined.

הרב דבר הרבה בענין נון וסמ"ה כד מתחברין הוא סמיכה לנופלין ונעשה בחינת נס

והראיה הוא ז"ל דבר חדוש בפזמון של יום א' דסליחות המתחיל "במוצאי מנוחה" שהוא מיוסד על פי א"ב

וקל אות מהא"ב חרוז בפני עצמו, רק אות הנו"ן וסמ"ה שניהם ביחד "נא סגבם" וכו'

פי באותו פזמון נזכר כמה פעמים ענין נסים ונפלאות: באות ט' "ויודו פלאיך", ובאות צדי "מפליא פלאות", ובאות תי"ו "תראם נסיה". לכן נסמך הנו"ן והסמ"ה

### [NOTE Summary

Reb Pinchas of Koretz explained the mystical significance of the letters Nun (נ) and Samech (ס). When joined, they form the word “*somech*” — support for those who fall — and together they also allude to *nes* (miracle). He pointed out a remarkable feature in the *pizmon* of the first night of Selichos, “*Bimotzaei Menuchah*.” This piyut is structured alphabetically, each letter forming its own verse, except for Nun and Samech, which appear together in the phrase “*Na Segebem*.” Reb Pinchas revealed that this is deliberate, because that *pizmon* mentions miracles and wonders multiple times: in the letter Tes (“Veyodu Felecha”), in the letter Tzadi (“Mafla

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Pele'os”), and in the letter Tav (“Tir'em Nisecha”). Therefore, Nun and Samech are bound together, signifying both support for the fallen and the channel for miracles.

### Practical Takeaway

The union of Nun and Samech in Selichos teaches that miracles come when we admit our falling and lean on divine support. In moments of weakness, when we feel like we are “falling,” G-d provides Samech — the support that lifts us up — transforming failure into miracles. Entering Selichos, one should feel this truth: that by acknowledging our vulnerability before G-d, we create the opening for His miraculous support to manifest.

### Chassidic Story

It is told that once, during a time of great hardship for the community, Reb Pinchas pointed to the letters Nun and Samech in the Selichos and said, “See, the fallen are never abandoned. The support is already prepared.” That year, despite fears of famine, the harvest proved abundant and the community saw it as a miracle of *nes-somech* — falling yet supported. Reb Pinchas reminded them: “The miracle is not only in the grain but in the knowledge that Heaven never lets the fallen remain on the ground.” (Source: *Amud HaAvodah*, teachings of Reb Pinchas of Koretz, cited in *Sifrei Chassidim*). **END NOTE]**

### Siman #454

Annulment of vows, on the day before Erev Rosh Hashanah  
[from the notes of the grandson of our teacher Rabbi Raphael, of  
blessed memory, who heard from his holy mouth].

הַתְּרַת נְדָרִים, בְּיוֹם שְׁלֹפְנֵי עֶרֶב רֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה  
[מִרְשִׁימַת נֶכֶד מוֹהַר"ר רַפְאֵל ז"ל, שֶׁשָּׁמַע מִפִּי  
קַדְשׁוֹ].

### [NOTE Summary

This teaching records that *hataras nedarim* (annulment of vows) is performed on the day before Erev Rosh Hashanah. The note comes from the testimony of Rabbi Raphael's grandson, who heard it directly from Reb Pinchas of Koretz. The emphasis is that before entering Rosh Hashanah, one must be free of vows and self-imposed obligations that could weigh on the soul and stand as accusations in judgment.

### Practical Takeaway

Preparing for Rosh Hashanah means clearing away spiritual baggage. By performing *hataras nedarim*, one releases the bonds of unfulfilled commitments, thereby approaching the Day of Judgment with greater purity. Even if one has not formally taken vows, the practice reminds us to reflect on our words and commitments, and to seek forgiveness and release from what we could not fulfill. **END NOTE]**