

**Reb Pinchas of Koretz**  
**Imrie Pinchas**  
**Parshas Acharei Mos**

**Siman #238**

He praised the week of the Torah portions Acharei Mos and Kedoshim, for the portion Acharei is the portion of Yom Kippur, and the portion Kedoshim contains the Ten Commandments—examine and you will find [this], as referenced in Vayikra Rabbah 24. And it is stated in the Zohar (see Zohar Sulam 75a, section Gimme) that every sedra (Torah portion) directs the entire week.

קילס את השבוע של פְּרֻשַׁת אַחֲרֵי מוֹת וּפְרֻשַׁת קְדוֹשִׁים. כִּי פְּרֻשַׁת אַחֲרֵי הוּא פְּרֻשַׁת שְׁל יוֹם הַכַּפּוּרִים, וּפְרֻשַׁת קְדוֹשִׁים יֵשׁ בָּהּ עֲשָׂרַת הַדְּבָרוֹת, דּוֹק וּתְשַׁכַּח (וַיִּקְרָא רַבָּה פְּרֻשַׁת כ"ד). וְאֵיתָא בְּזֵהָר (עֵינֵי זֵהָר סְלָם ע"ה, ג') לְשַׁל סְדְרָא מְנַהֲגָת אֶת כָּל הַשְּׁבוּעַ.

And he also said: From here it is proven that the death of the righteous brings atonement, for how is it relevant here to say “after the death [of the sons of Aharon]...”? It should have written this portion in Parshas Shemini, where the actual death of the sons of Aharon was discussed. Rather, it is placed adjacent to Yom Kippur, to indicate that it atones just like Yom Kippur. (See Yerushalmi Yoma, Chapter 1, Halacha 1)

וְגַם אָמַר: שְׁמַכָּאן מוֹכַח שְׁמִיתַת צְדִיקִים מְכַפֶּרֶת, כִּי אִיךָ שְׁנֵי לְכָאן "אַחֲרֵי מוֹת" וְגו', הִיָּה לּוֹ לְכַתֵּב פְּרֻשַׁת זֹאת בְּפְרֻשַׁת שְׁמִינִי אֲצֵל מִיתַת בְּנֵי אַהֲרֹן. אֲלָא נִסְמְכָה לְיוֹם הַכַּפּוּרִים, לְהוֹרוֹת שְׁמִכְפֶּרֶת כְּמוֹ יוֹם הַכַּפּוּרִים (עֵינֵי יְרוּשָׁלַיִם יוֹמָא פְּרָק א' הֶלְכָה א').

**[NOTE: Summary**

This brief yet profound teaching connects the Torah portions Acharei Mos and Kedoshim, uncovering deep thematic unity and spiritual relevance:

- Parshas Acharei centers on the Avodah (service) of Yom Kippur, describing the unique rites of atonement performed by the Kohen Gadol.
- Parshas Kedoshim is rich with ethical commandments and, as the Midrash notes (Vayikra Rabbah 24), encapsulates the Ten Commandments, reflecting its centrality to Jewish moral and spiritual life.

The Zohar (Zohar Sulam, Acharei 75a) adds that each Torah portion influences the entire week it is read. Hence, a week with these two parshiyos carries themes of atonement and sanctity, shaping the spiritual atmosphere.

The teaching continues with a drasha (homiletic insight): Why is the narrative "After the death of Aharon's sons" placed here, instead of in Shemini, where their deaths are recorded? The answer: to link it thematically to Yom Kippur, thereby showing that the death of tzaddikim (righteous individuals) atones, just as Yom Kippur does (as affirmed in Yerushalmi Yoma 1:1).

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#### Practical Takeaway

- Recognize the spiritual power of time: the weekly Torah portion is not only a reading cycle, but an energetic and thematic current that guides the week. Aligning our thoughts and actions with the message of each parshah brings us into harmony with Divine time.
- Learn from the placement of texts: the juxtaposition of Parshas Acharei with Yom Kippur, and the lesson that the death of the righteous brings atonement, invites us to reflect deeply on the legacy of tzaddikim. Visiting their teachings, emulating their ways, and honoring their memory are not merely acts of respect — they draw down merit and spiritual purification into our lives and world.

#### Chassidic Story

 About the Author: While this specific excerpt is not explicitly attributed in the text provided, the teaching style and references (Zohar, Yerushalmi, Midrash) are characteristic of early Chassidic or Lithuanian mussar figures. However, to provide a story that illustrates this idea, we will focus on a universally revered tzaddik: Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev, whose death was widely seen as a source of atonement for his generation.

“Atonement in Silence” — Story of Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev

Near the end of his life, Reb Levi Yitzchak was gravely ill. His students prayed fervently, hoping their Rebbe would be healed. One chassid pleaded: “Rebbe, surely you are needed in this world! Your prayers alone protect the generation.”

The Berditchever responded quietly:

“If Hashem has decided to take me, then perhaps my passing will be of more use than my prayers.”

He passed away just before Yom Kippur, and many in the town interpreted this as a Heavenly sign — that his soul was offered as a korban tzaddik, an offering for the atonement of the community.

His passing instilled a sense of awe, teshuvah, and elevation in his chassidim, as if a new Yom Kippur had arrived through his merit.

 Source: Shivchei HaRav Levi Yitzchak; Sippurei Chassidim, Yomim Noraim by Rabbi Zevin


**END NOTE]**

#### Siman #239

“After the death of the two sons of Aharon, when they approached before Hashem and they died” (Vayikra 16:6). It is stated in the Zohar (Midrash HaNe’elam, Zohar Chadash, Ruth 40b): “And Moshe erected the Mishkan” (Shemos 40:18) — at that

אֲחֵרֵי מוֹת שְׁנֵי בְנֵי אַהֲרֹן בְּקִרְבָּתָם לְפָנֵי יְהוָה וַיָּמָתוּ (ויקרא ט"ז, ו'). אֵיתָא בְּזוֹהַר (מדרש הנעלם, זוהר הקדוש רות מ', ב): וַיִּקָּם מֹשֶׁה אֶת הַמִּשְׁכָּן (שמות מ', י"ח) — בְּהֵאֵי שְׁעֵתָא עָרַק ס"מ כְּמָה אֶלְפֵי פְרָסֵי.

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<p>moment, the Samech Mem (Satan) fled many thousands of parasangs.</p>	
<p>It follows from this that the Mishkan was something exceedingly great, and the proof is that the Mishkan was eventually hidden away (Sotah 9a).</p>	<p>נמצא שהמשכן הוא דבר גדול מאד, והראיה שהמשכן נגנז (סוטה ט', א).</p>
<p>And the Mishkan was of the quality of greatness (gadlus) such that smallness could not exist in proportion to its magnitude — except through the death of the sons of Aharon, for there were none like them.</p>	<p>והיה המשכן בחינת גדלות עד שלא היה אפשר להיות קטנות גדול כערכו, כי אם על ידי מיתת בני אהרן שלא היה כמותם.</p>
<p>As it is written (Vayikra Rabbah 12:3): “I thought either through me or through you this house would be sanctified... now I see that they are greater than me and you.”</p>	<p>וכמו שכתוב (ויקרא רבה י"ב, ג'): סבור הייתי או בי או בה הבית הזה מתקדש... עכשו רואה אני שהם גדולים ממני וממך.</p>
<p>And this is [the meaning of] “when they approached,” for they drew near to the point of extremity, and [therefore] they died. Understand this well.</p>	<p>וזהו בקרבתם — מפני שנתקרבו עד למאד — וימתו, והבן זה היטב.</p>
<p><b>[NOTE:</b>   <b>Summary</b>                  This passage explores the profound connection between the death of Aharon’s sons, the sanctity of the Mishkan, and the spiritual dynamic of gadlus (greatness). Drawing from the Zohar (Zohar Chadash, Ruth 40b), it notes that when Moshe erected the Mishkan, even the Samech Mem (Satan) fled vast distances — highlighting the Mishkan’s overwhelming holiness.                   The Mishkan embodied a level of divine revelation so exalted that ordinary levels of spiritual receptivity (termed <i>katnus</i>, smallness) were incompatible with it. This intense holiness required an equally intense spiritual response — which, tragically, came through the death of Nadav and Avihu, Aharon’s sons. Their passing is seen as a necessary consequence of their profound closeness to God ("בקרבתם לפני ה'").                   Citing Vayikra Rabbah 12:3, the teaching emphasizes that their level surpassed even that of Moshe and Aharon — only through their sacrifice could the sanctification of the Mishkan reach completion.</p>	

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**Practical Takeaway**

- Closeness to God demands readiness: The death of Aharon’s sons teaches that deep spiritual encounters come with great responsibility. One must approach sanctity with humility, preparation, and boundaries.
- True greatness often emerges through sacrifice: Their passing was not a punishment but a profound elevation — a reminder that spiritual "gadlus" may require inner surrender and even self-transcendence.
- Reverence for the sacred: Whether in a shul, a moment of tefillah, or Torah learning — we are to recognize the depth of what we are engaging with, and approach it not casually, but with awe and kavod. **END NOTE:]**

**Siman #240**

<p>“<b>After the death of the two sons of Aharon</b>” (Vayikra 16:30). It is stated in V’Kaneh Lecha Chaver (Likutei 6:6): for there is a secret of unions (zivugim) through the mouth.</p>	<p>אֲחֵרֵי מוֹת שְׁנֵי בְנֵי אַהֲרֹן (ויקרא ט"ז, ל'). אֵימָא וְקָנְהָ לָךְ חֵבֵר (לקוטים ו', ו') וְהוּא כִּי יֵשׁ סוּד זְוִיגִים בְּפִהּ.</p>
<p>The idea is that sometimes a person learns but does not understand at all, and when he speaks with a good friend (and repeats the matters), he enters into the secret of cleaving (<i>hisdabrus</i>), and then it becomes the secret of birth, and all the difficulties are resolved.</p>	<p>וְהַעֲנֶנּוּ, כִּי פְעָמִים שְׂאָדָם לֹמֵד וְאִינוּ מֵבִין כָּלֵל, וְכִשְׁהוּא מְדַבֵּר עִם חֵבֵר טוֹב (וְכוֹפֵל הַדְּבָרִים) הוּא בְּסוּד הַתְּדַבְּקוֹת וְגו', אִזְּ הוּא בְּסוּד הַלֵּידָה, וְנִתְרַצוּ כָּל הַקְּשׁוּיֹת.</p>
<p>There are also unions through thought — when a great person contemplates in his thoughts, he also gives birth through the secret of birth, and through this the difficulties are resolved, etc.</p>	<p>וְיֵשׁ זְוִיגִים בְּמַחְשְׁבָהּ, דְּהִנּוּ כְּשֶׂאָדָם גְּדוֹל מַעֲיָן בְּמַחְשְׁבָתוֹ הוּא מוֹלִיד גַּם-כֵּן בְּסוּד בְּחִינַת הַלֵּידָה, וְעַל-יְדֵי זֶה נִתְרַצָּ וְגו'</p>
<p>“From my students [I have learned] more than from all of them” (Taanis 7a) — for this is the secret of raising feminine waters (mayin nukvin) from world to world, until it draws down the aspect of intellectual faculties (mochin).</p>	<p>וּמִתְלַמְּדֵי יוֹתֵר מִכָּלֵם (תַּעֲנִית ז', א') כִּי הוּא בְּסוּד בְּחִינַת הַעֲלָאת מִן נוֹקְבִין מַעוֹלָם לְעוֹלָם עַד שְׁמוֹרִיד בְּחִינַת הַמוֹחִין</p>
<p>And this is [the meaning of] “After the death of the two sons of Aharon, when they drew close... and they died” — that they drew so close to Hashem in the level of raising mayin nukvin, until they died.</p>	<p>וְזֶהוּ "אֲחֵרֵי מוֹת שְׁנֵי בְנֵי אַהֲרֹן בְּקִרְבָּתָם... וַיָּמָתוּ", שְׁנִתְקָרְבוּ כָּל-כָּף לַה' בְּבְחִינַת הַעֲלָאת מ"נ, עַד שְׁמָתוֹ.</p>
<p>And this was a cause for the drawing down of the mochin (intellectual/spiritual faculties). And that is why it says, “And Hashem spoke to Moshe” — for their elevation of <i>mayin nukvin</i> caused that divine speech and filled the whole world with Ruach HaKodesh.</p>	<p>וְהִנֵּה זֶה סִיבָה לְהוֹרֵדַת הַמוֹחִין. וְעַל-כֵּן נֶאֱמַר "וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה" — שֶׁהַעֲלָאת הַמ"נ שְׁלָהֶם גָּרְמָה לְדַבּוֹר הַנִּזְכָּר לְעֵיל, וְנִתְמַלֵּא כָּל הָעוֹלָם כְּלוּ רוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ.</p>

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**[NOTE: Summary**

This teaching explores the mystical and spiritual dynamics of connection, speech, thought, and divine closeness, all through the lens of the verse “*After the death of the two sons of Aharon*”.

Drawing from *V’Kaneh Lecha Chaver* and Kabbalistic sources, it teaches:

- Zivugim (spiritual unions) can occur through speech: when one speaks Torah with a friend, especially when repeating and clarifying ideas, this dialogue itself becomes a creative act—a “birth” of new understanding.
- Similarly, zivugim through thought occur when a great person delves deeply into contemplation; this too gives rise to clarity, like a spiritual birth.
- The highest form of elevation is through students: their questions and engagement raise “mayin nukvin” (feminine waters), causing divine intellectual flow (mochin) to descend from higher worlds.

This framework is then applied to the deaths of Nadav and Avihu: their extreme spiritual closeness to Hashem, interpreted as an ultimate act of mayin nukvin, was so profound that it led to their deaths—but also caused a revelation of divine wisdom and speech. Hence, the next verse, “*And Hashem spoke to Moshe*”, reflects the outcome of their elevation: the world was filled with Ruach HaKodesh (Divine inspiration).

**Practical Takeaway**

- Speak out your learning: When you articulate Torah to others — especially in the context of deep friendship and shared learning — new insights are born. This isn't just a learning aid; it's a spiritual act of zivug and revelation.
- Value your students and partners: Whether you're a teacher or a chavrusa, never underestimate how much light comes from questions, challenges, and dialogue. These moments literally draw down divine illumination.
- Draw close with reverence: Nadav and Avihu’s closeness teaches the sublimity and danger of approaching holiness without boundaries. We must seek closeness with Hashem, but through proper vessels: humility, preparation, and guided growth. END NOTE]

**Siman #241**

**“When they drew close before Hashem, and they died... and Hashem said to Moshe... and he shall not come at all times into the Holy” (Vayikra 16:33).**

בְּקִרְבָּתָם לִפְנֵי ה' וַיָּמָתוּ וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה וְגו' (ויקרא ט"ז, ל"ג).

Until there is no balance (mitkala), they did not observe face to face (Zohar, section on Humility, Zohar Chadash 176a, vol. 2 p. 176).

עַד לֹא הָיָה מִתְקַלָּא לֹא הָיוּ מִשְׁגָּחִין אִפְּיָן בְּאִפְּיָן (זוהר).  
 (תְּדִישׁ לְכַנְיַעוּתָא זַק"כ קע"ו, ב)

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<p>For there is a stream of the Ten Sefiros of Igulim (Circles) and the Ten Sefiros of Yosher (Lines/Order). The aspect of Igulim is in the secret of face-to-back, and the Ten Sefiros of Yosher are the secret of face-to-face, and these are called the world of Mitkala (Balance).</p>	<p>פי קל"ח יש עשר ספירות דעגולין ועשר ספירות דיושר. ובחינת דעגולין הוא בסוד פנים באחור, וי' ספירות דיושר הוא סוד פנים בפנים, והם נקראים עולם המתקלא.</p>
<p>And therefore all the animals were created before man, and they were created through the Ten Sefiros of Igulim, and therefore their unions are face-to-back; whereas the union of man is face-to-face.</p>	<p>ולכן נבראו כל הבהמות קודם שנברא האדם, והם נבראו על-ידי עשר ספירות דעגולין, ולכן זויגיהן פנים באחור, משאין פן זויג האדם הוא פנים בפנים.</p>
<p>Thus, the Ten Sefiros of Igulim were also needed — understand this well.</p>	<p>נמצא שנצרכו י' ספירות דעגולין גם-כן, והבן זה מאד.</p>
<p>The level of Mitkala is the level of Chesed and Gevurah, and similarly all the Sefiros; and when all these aspects are balanced, it is called Mitkala (the scale of balance).</p>	<p>ובחינת מתקלא הוא בחינת חסד וגבורה וכיוצא בהן בכל הספירות, וכשהוא שונה כל הבחינות הנזכרות לעיל — הוא בסוד מתקלא.</p>
<p>And if not, then they did not observe face-to-face, and the primordial kings (Melachim Kadmain) died, and their unions were not found — understand this well.</p>	<p>ואם לאו — לא הוו משגחין אפין באפין, ומלכין קדמאין מתו, וזויגיהון לא אשתכחי, והבן זה מאד.</p>
<p>And this is the secret of “When they drew near before Hashem, and they died” — that is, because they came too close to Hashem, therefore they died.</p>	<p>וזהו סוד "בקרבתם לפני ה' וימתו", דהינו מפני שנתקרבו לפני השם יתברך יותר מדי, ולכן וימתו.</p>
<p>And this is like the Melachim Kadmain [who perished], which is the secret of the shattering of the vessels (Sheviras HaKeilim) due to the abundance of light.</p>	<p>ומלכין קדמאין וגו' — שהוא בסוד שבירת הכלים מפני ריבוי האור.</p>
<p>“And Hashem said to Moshe... and he shall not come at all times into the Holy” — understand this.</p>	<p>ויאמר ה' אל משה... ואל יבוא בכל עת אל הקדש" — והבן זה.</p>

[NOTE: See further the following discourses: T"S, T"SA, and *Sha'ar Avodas Hashem*, discourse 46. The matter is explained in *Likutei Torah* by the Alter Rebbe z"l (Parshas Mattos, p. 87a):

In the *Sifra d'Tzniusa* it states: “Before there was balance (Mitkala), they did not gaze face to face.” They (the Sefiros) were in a state of back-to-back, which is the condition of Tohu (Chaos) — one below the other.

(This is the language of the explanation from a student of the Arizal there: Meaning, in the World of Tohu, the six emotional Sefiros were arranged vertically, one atop the other. Therefore, Kesser could not gaze face-to-face with Tiferes, for Chesed and Gevurah stood in between. Even Chesed and Gevurah themselves were not face-to-face, etc. But this is not the case in the World of Tikkun. End quote. The meaning is: In Tikkun, Chesed and Gevurah are aligned face-to-face,

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and so too Kesser and Tiferes — i.e., Atik (the supernal will) with Ze'ir Anpin (Z" A) — are aligned face-to-face, as explained in the teachings of the Arizal.)

The explanation is that in Tohu, Chesed had no relation to Gevurah — the Chesed was pure Chesed of Chesed, and the Gevurah was pure Gevurah of Gevurah. Since one was pure kindness and the other pure severity, they were total opposites, like water and fire, and thus could not connect or unite. This is the meaning of “they did not look face-to-face.”

The Tikkun (repair) is through integration, which comes via Mah (45) — the aspect of humility. For the shattering (Shevirah) was due to the level of Ben (52) — the world of Nekudim (points). And the integration comes through drawing down mochin (intellect) into the middos (emotions) — i.e., from the aspect of Chochmah — “the power of what [mah].”

For behold, as it says “From my flesh I perceive,” in a person’s soul, when the middos are not under the guidance of the intellect, then each trait stands alone without connection to the others. For example, when he is angry, he feels no kindness or compassion at all at that moment toward the one he is angry with — and the reverse is also true. Thus, Chesed and Gevurah are separate, and this can lead to extreme and harsh manifestations of judgment.

But when the Chochmah (wisdom) clothes itself within the middos, the middos are guided by the requirements of intellect — and then he subdues his anger and allows it to be mingled with kindness and compassion, etc.

And this is the meaning of the teaching of our Sages (Taanis 20a): “A person should always be soft like a reed and not hard like a cedar” — that is, through the mind ruling over the heart.

The rectification (Tikkun) consists of two principles:

1. That Chesed be integrated with Gevurah, and Gevurah with Chesed — meaning, Chesed should not be only a singular aspect, i.e., pure kindness (Chesed of Chesed), and Gevurah should not be only one mode — pure severity (Gevurah of Gevurah).
2. This is the meaning of the World of Nekudim: every sefirah existed only as a single point, expressing only its essential trait (only Chesed or only Gevurah). But in Tikkun, Chesed itself includes all six middos — Chesed, Gevurah, Tiferes, Netzach, Hod, Yesod — and likewise for Gevurah.

Thus, when traits contain elements of each other, they can align face-to-face, and since Chesed within Gevurah and Gevurah within Chesed are more similar, they can join together and unite.

End of quote.

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#### ■ Summary

This teaching, primarily based on the *Likutei Torah* of the Alter Rebbe (Parshas Mattos, p. 87a), explains the mystical mechanics behind the concept of Tikkun (Rectification) versus Tohu (Chaos) using the language of the Sefiros and Zoharic metaphors.

- In the World of Tohu, each emotional trait (Sefirah) stood alone in isolation: Chesed was only Chesed, and Gevurah only Gevurah, like water and fire with no capacity to blend. This was a state of “back-to-back” (אחור באחור) — a lack of harmony, which resulted in Sheviras HaKeilim (Shattering of the Vessels) due to the incompatibility and intensity of unblended traits.
- The World of Tikkun, by contrast, is defined by balance (Mitkala) and integration: Chesed contains elements of Gevurah, and vice versa. This allows for “face-to-face” relationships (פנים בפנים) between Sefiros, enabling unity, connection, and sustainable Divine flow.
- The integration happens through the drawing down of Chochmah (Wisdom) — the intellectual aspect symbolized by “Mah” (45), which subdues raw emotional extremes and teaches the traits how to operate in balance.
- On a human level, this corresponds to the principle that when a person is ruled by intellect, they are able to blend emotions and express balanced character. But if emotions are left unchecked, they become polarized and destructive.

#### ■ Practical Takeaway

- Embrace emotional integration: When experiencing strong feelings, don't allow yourself to be entirely consumed by one trait. Even in anger, seek compassion; even in joy, retain humility. This is how a human being lives in a world of Tikkun — with harmony.
- Let your mind guide your heart: The Torah's call to “Let the mind rule the heart” is not just mussar — it's metaphysical repair. You are mirroring the repair of the cosmos when you act from reflective thought rather than reactive impulse.
- Soft like a reed, not hard like a cedar: Flexibility and integration are signs of spiritual health. Stubborn one-dimensionality is a hallmark of chaos. Cultivate subtlety in your middos.



## Reb Pinchas of Koretz

Imrie Pinchas

Parshas Acharei Mos

■ **Chassidic Story** — The Alter Rebbe and the Integration of Emotions

“The Visitor in Anger”

One day, a man came to the Alter Rebbe with a question but was emotionally agitated. He spoke with fury about a personal offense and demanded to know what punishment Torah law would mete out for such an act. The Alter Rebbe listened quietly, then said:

“You speak of judgment, but where is your kindness? The Torah was not given for you to become G-d’s executioner. It was given so that the Divine attributes would become your own — not only *din* (judgment), but *rachamim* (compassion) as well.”

The man was stunned. The Rebbe’s calm, balanced words diffused his anger. He later said: “I had come as a spark from Tohu. The Rebbe drew me into Tikkun.”

■ \*Source: Shivchei HaRav, oral tradition among Chabad Chassidim; also referenced by the Rebbe Rayatz in *Sefer HaSichos 5704*. **END NOTE]**