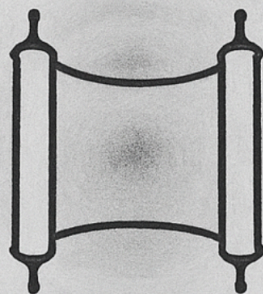


בס"ד

Reb Pinchas of Koretz

Imrie Pinchas

Parshas Bereshis



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Siman #1

The Torah begins with the letter Beis, and Divrei HaYamim begins with the letter Alef. For a person must attach himself to the Alef.

הַתּוֹרָה מֵתַחֲלָה בְּבֵית, וְדַבְּרֵי הַיָּמִים מֵתַחֲלִיל בְּאֵלֶּף. כִּי אָדָם צָרִיךְ לְהִדְבִּיק אֶת עַצְמוֹ בְּאֵלֶּף ה'

And every Torah—one finds that before he comprehends a matter, the Torah is higher than him; but after the person comprehends, he is higher than that matter.

וְכָל תּוֹרָה נִמְצָא הוּא שְׂמֵשִׁיג קוֹדֵם שְׂמֵשִׁיג אֵינָה דָּבָר, הַתּוֹרָה גְּבוּהָה מִמֶּנּוּ, וְלֵאחֶר שְׂמֵשִׁיג הָאָדָם גְּבוּהָה מֵהַדָּבָר הַזֶּה.

For since he comprehends the matter, or performs the mitzvah for its own sake, he is in the aspect of the Master of the world, and the Torah is in Beis.

כִּי כִּיּוֹן שְׂמֵשִׁיג הַדָּבָר אוֹ עוֹשֶׂה הַמִּצְוָה לְשֵׁמָּה בְּבַחֲבִינַת אֱלוּפּוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם, וְהַתּוֹרָה בְּבֵית.

But if the Torah had begun with Alef, man would not be able to comprehend.

אֲבָל אִם הִתְחִיל הַתּוֹרָה בְּאֵלֶּף ה' לֹא הָיָה יָכוֹל לְהִשָּׁיג.

Therefore, after he studies Tanach, he then attaches himself to the Alef.

לְכֹךְ אַחֶר שְׁלוּמֵד תַּנ"ךְ מְדַבֵּיק אֶת עַצְמוֹ בְּאֵלֶּף ה'

Therefore, the beginning of Divrei HaYamim is with Alef: "Adam, Sheis, Enosh," etc.

לְכֹךְ הִתְחִלַּת דַּבְּרֵי הַיָּמִים בְּאֵלֶּף ה' אָדָם שֵׁת אֱנוֹשׁ וְיֹגֵז.

And therefore, it is written concerning Avraham, "And behold, three men were standing upon him" (Bereishis 18:2), but after he gave them bread and fulfilled the mitzvah of hospitality, it is written, "And he stood upon them" (ibid., 8).

וְלְכֹךְ פָּתוּב בְּאַבְרָהָם וְהִנֵּה שְׁלֹשָׁה אַנְשִׁים נֹצְצִים עָלָיו (בְּרֵאשִׁית י"ח, ב), וְלֵאחֶר שֶׁנָּתַן לָהֶם לֶחֶם וְיָנִים הִכְנִסָת אוֹרְחִים פָּתוּב וְהוּא עוֹמֵד עֲלֵיהֶם (שָׁם, ח').

[NOTE Summary

This teaching from Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz explores the mystery of why the Torah begins with the letter **Beis** rather than **Alef**. Beis represents creation and separation — the realm of multiplicity where Torah meets human comprehension. Alef, by contrast, symbolizes the Infinite Oneness of G-d, a dimension beyond grasp. A person must first engage the Torah as it descends into Beis, the world of distinction and form, and only afterward can he ascend and cleave to the Alef — the Source of all.

The Torah begins with Beis because if it began with Alef, it would remain forever above human reach. Only through toil in Torah and mitzvos does a person rise from the duality of Beis to the unity of Alef. Thus, after one learns Tanach and purifies his perception, he reconnects with the Alef, as reflected in **Divrei HaYamim**, which begins "Adam, Sheis, Enosh" — the path of man's return to divine simplicity. The example of Avraham reinforces this: at first "three men stood upon him," for the divine light was still above him; but after he

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performed the mitzvah of hospitality, “he stood upon them,” having elevated himself through selfless deed to the level of the Alef, the Master of the world.

Practical Takeaway

Each mitzvah and word of Torah begins in Beis — effort, struggle, and separation — but the purpose is to rise from Beis to Alef, to transform understanding into unity. When one performs a mitzvah not for reward but for love of the Infinite, he moves from being beneath the Torah’s light to becoming its vessel. In daily life, this means approaching study and action not merely to gain wisdom but to unify with the One who gives it.

Chassidic Story

Once, a disciple asked Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz why he taught with such restraint, rarely elaborating on deep mysteries. The Rebbe smiled and said, “If I begin with Alef, you will never find the Beis. I must begin with Beis, and when you complete it with sincerity, the Alef will meet you halfway.” The student later wrote that only after years of toil in Torah and refinement of heart did he understand his teacher’s words — that the Alef is not taught, it is revealed through purity. **END NOTE]**

Siman #2

“In the beginning G-d created...” (Bereishis 1:1). Within the word *Bereishis* there is also contained the word *bara* (“He created”).

פְּרָאשִׁית בְּרָא וְגו' (ל', ו'). יֵשׁ בְּתִיבַת בְּרָאשִׁית
"גַּם כֵּן תִּיבַת "בְּרָא

And this is an expression of *chutz* (“outside”), for now we do not possess the Torah as it exists in the World of Atzilus.

וְהוּא לְשׁוֹן "חוּץ", שְׁעֵכָשׁוּ אֵין לָנוּ הַתּוֹרָה מֵעוֹלָם
הָאֲצִילוֹת.

(As is explained in *Likutei Torah* by the Arizal.)

(לְקוּטֵי תוֹרָה לְשִׁחְרִיז"ל).

Therefore there are difficulties and questions in Torah now, but when Moshiach will come there will be no questions at all.

וְלָכֵן יֵשׁ קְשׁוּיֹת, אֲבָל כְּשִׁבּוֹא מְשִׁיחַ לֹא יִהְיוּ שׁוֹמ
קְשׁוּיֹת.

For then we will attain understanding from the World of Atzilus.

שְׂאֵז יִהְיֶה לָנוּ הַשְּׂגָה מֵעוֹלָם הָאֲצִילוֹת.

Therefore it is called “the sealing of the Talmud,” for the Talmud too is sealed.

וְלָכֵן נִקְרָא "חֲתִימַת הַתְּלֻמוּד", שֶׁהַתְּלֻמוּד גַּם כֵּן
חֲתוּם.

[NOTE Summary

Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz interprets the word “Bereishis” as containing the word “bara” (“He created”), which also hints at “chutz” — “outside.” This means that the Torah, as we know it now, is in a state of concealment, an outer layer of divine wisdom. In our current world, we only perceive Torah as it manifests outside the realm of pure divine unity, the World of Atzilus, where G-d’s light is unfiltered. Therefore, our learning involves questions and difficulties — the struggle of intellect to bridge the distance between the “outside” and the Infinite.

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When Moshiach comes, the inner dimension of Torah — the Torah of Atzilus — will be revealed. In that era, understanding will no longer involve contradictions or confusion. Everything will be transparent, for the divine truth will shine through every word. That is why the Talmud is called “sealed”; its truths are presently hidden behind veils of reasoning, but the seal will one day be opened, and its mysteries made clear.

Practical Takeaway

When encountering difficulty in Torah study, one should not become discouraged. Every question is a sign of living within the “outside” world, where divine wisdom is hidden. Each sincere effort to understand opens a small crack in that seal, preparing the mind and heart for the time when Torah will be seen as it is — radiant, seamless truth. The present “sealing” of Torah is itself a gift, allowing us to labor and earn clarity through devotion.

Chassidic Story

Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz once sat in deep thought after a long night of study. A student asked, “Rebbe, why must Torah be so hidden, filled with questions and debate?” The Rebbe answered softly, “When a father writes to his child from a distant land, he seals the letter with love. Only when the child grows wise enough can he open it and read the heart inside. So too with Torah — it is sealed now, but the seal itself is love.” **END NOTE]**

Siman #3

An answer to the question of the *Eitz Chayim* (Shaar 6, Anaf 6): Why did the Holy One, blessed be He, not create this world first?

He told us that the Holy One, blessed be He, is still creating worlds without interruption.

And it is possible that at this very moment there exists some world where Moshe Rabbeinu is giving the Torah there to Israel.

If so, one cannot say, “Why was the world not created earlier?” — for it is being created and created continually.

And afterward he told us, “I believe with complete faith that this is true — so why do I need explanations?”

And at another time, he told us several possible explanations for this, but I do not remember them.

ג תירוץ על קשיית העץ חיים (שער ו' ענף ו')
למה לא ברא הקדוש ברוך הוא העולם הזה קודם.

אמר לנו, שהקדוש ברוך הוא עדין בורא עולמות
בלי הפסק.

ואפשר שבעת הדין יש איזה עולם שמשה רבינו
נותן התורה שם לישראל.

ואם כן ליכא למימר למה לא נברא העולם קודם, כי
נברא ונברא.

ואחר כך אמר לנו, כי אני מאמין באמונה שלימה
שזה אמת, ולמה לי תירוצים.

ובפעם אחרת אמר לנו כמה אפשר תירוצים על זה
ואני זוכר.

[NOTE Summary

Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz explains the *Eitz Chayim*'s question: why did G-d not create this world earlier? His answer reframes creation itself — that the act of creation is continuous, not a past event. Hashem is constantly

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creating worlds without pause, and at this very moment, somewhere in existence, Moshe Rabbeinu may be giving the Torah anew. Creation is not “once upon a time”; it is an ever-unfolding expression of divine will.

In another moment, Rabbi Pinchas set aside all explanations and said, “I believe with perfect faith that this is true — why do I need reasons?” For him, faith itself was higher than understanding. To truly live in awareness of G-d’s ongoing creation is to stand in the present moment with complete trust that everything happening now is part of that same divine renewal.

Practical Takeaway

See every instant as an act of fresh creation. The world is not old; it is being recreated right now by G-d’s word. When faced with uncertainty or delay, remember that creation never stopped — Hashem is still saying “Let there be light.” Faith that reality is constantly renewed allows the heart to rest in purpose, even when logic runs out. **END NOTE]**

Siman #4

Concerning the investigation mentioned in the *Eitz Chayim* (Shaar 6, Anaf 6): why the creation of this world took place at the time that it did, and not earlier, etc., see there.

And the answer mentioned there is not understood, as is clear to any who study it.

And he explained: this is the wording of the *Eitz Chayim* there — “For the Supernal Light has no grasp at all, not in thought nor in reflection; it is entirely abstracted and separate from all thoughts. How, then, can it be comprehended, understood, or questioned? For it is a matter that no thought can possibly grasp. Understand this well.”

And this is what is stated in *Bereishis Rabbah*, parashas Bereishis (3:6): “At its proper time the world was created; the world could not have been created before. The Holy One, blessed be He, built worlds and destroyed them, saying: ‘This one pleases Me, this one does not please Me.’”

For the essence of the creation of the world was that His divinity be apprehended. Thus, those worlds that cannot be grasped in thought at all are considered to be in the category of “destroyed,” for that was not the principal intent of creation. Understand this.

בְּעֵינֵינוּ הַתְּקִירָה הַנִּזְכָּרָת בְּעֵץ חַיִּים (פֶּרֶק ו' עֲנָף ו')
לְמַה בְּרִיאַת הָעוֹלָם הַזֶּה הִיְתָה בְּזִמְנָן שֶׁהִיְתָה, לֹא
קוֹדֵם וְכוּ', עֵינֵינוּ שֵׁם

וְהַתִּירוּץ הַנִּזְכָּר שֶׁם אֵינּוּ מוּכָן, כְּמוֹ שֶׁמְבוֹאֵר לְכָל
מַעֲיִין.

וּבְאֵר הוּא, כִּי הִנֵּה זֶה לְשׁוֹן הָעֵץ חַיִּים שֵׁם: כִּי הָאֵוֶר
הָעֲלִיּוֹן אֵין בּוֹ שׁוֹם תְּפִיסָה, לֹא בְּמַחְשָׁבָה וְלֹא
בְּהִרְהוּר כְּלָל וְעַקֵּר, וְהוּא מְפָשֵׁט וּמוֹבְדֵל מִכָּל
הַמַּחְשָׁבוֹת, וְאֵיךְ אֶפְשֶׁר לְהַשְׁיֵג וּלְהִבִּין וּלְהַקְשׁוֹת שֵׁם
קִשְׁיָא, כִּי הוּא דָּבָר שֶׁאֵינּוּ מוֹשֵׁג וְנִתְפָּס בְּשׁוֹם
מַחְשָׁבָה, וְהִבֵּן הֵיטֵב

וְזֶה שֶׁאָמְרוּ בְּמִדְרָשׁ רַבָּה פְּרִשְׁתַּת בְּרִאשִׁית (פֶּרֶשָׁה ג'),
ו' עֵינֵינוּ שֵׁם): בְּזִמְנָנוּ נִבְרָא הָעוֹלָם, לֹא הִיְתָה הָעוֹלָם יְכוֹל
לְהִבְרוֹת קוֹדֵם, הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא בּוֹנֵה עוֹלָמוֹת
וּמַתְרִיבֵן, וְאָמַר: דִּין נִהְיֵי לִי וְדִין לֹא נִהְיֵי לִי

כִּי כִיוֹן שֶׁהַעֲקָר בְּרִיאַת הָעוֹלָם הִיְתָה לְהַשְׁיֵג אֱלוּהוּתוֹ,
נִמְצָא הָעוֹלָמוֹת שֶׁהֵם אֵינָם מוֹשְׁגִים בְּמַחְשָׁבָה כְּלָל,
הֵם בְּבַחֲבִינַת סוּד וּמַתְרִיבֵן, שֶׁאֵין זֶה עַקֵּר פְּנוּת
הַבְּרִיאָה, וְהִבֵּן

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And once I heard in his name: that the Holy One, blessed be He, for example, created the Sefirah of Chesed, and it extended until the level of “for He desires kindness,” as is known (see *Eitz Chayim*, Shaar HaSefiros, ch. 6).

And this was in the category of “and He destroyed them.” Until came the World of Tikkun — which is the realm of choice.

Understand this.

And afterward he said, that it is a mitzvah to bring light into the souls.

וּפְעַם אַחַת שְׁמַעְתִּי בְשֵׁמוֹ: כִּי הִקְדִּישׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא בְּרָא לְמַשְׁלַל סְפִירַת הַחֶסֶד, וְהִנֵּה מִתְפַּשֵּׁט עַד בְּחִינַת כִּי [הַפֶּיַץ] חֶסֶד הוּא כְּפִדּוּעַ (עֵינֵי עֵץ חַיִּים שֶׁעַר הַסְּפִירוֹת ('סוּף פָּרָק ו

וְהוּא בְּבְחִינַת וּמְחִרָבָן. עַד שֶׁבָּא עוֹלָם הַתִּקּוּן שֶׁהוּא הַבְּחִירָה, וְהִבֵּן.

וְאַחַר כֵּן אָמַר, שֶׁהוּא מִצְוָה לְהַכְנִיֵס אוֹר בְּנִשְׁמוֹת

[NOTE Summary

Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz revisits the question raised in the *Eitz Chayim*: why was this world created precisely when it was and not earlier? The Arizal explains that the Infinite Light (Ohr Elyon) cannot be grasped in thought or comprehension; it is utterly beyond definition. Rabbi Pinchas clarifies that questioning such matters misses the point — for before creation, divine light filled all reality, and “earlier” or “later” had no meaning.

The Midrash states that G-d built worlds and destroyed them, saying “This one pleases Me; this one does not please Me.” Rabbi Pinchas explains that these “destroyed worlds” are states of being too lofty to be grasped by thought or consciousness. The purpose of creation is that G-d’s divinity be known and experienced — therefore, any world where His light cannot be apprehended is not the true goal of creation. The final and enduring world — our world — is the World of Tikkun, the realm of balance and choice, where finite beings can perceive the Infinite.

He added that even within the divine attributes themselves, such as Chesed (Kindness), G-d extended the light until it became too expansive — “for He desires kindness.” Yet even this abundance was “destroyed,” meaning withdrawn, until a harmonious structure was formed — the world of rectification. At that point, the purpose of creation was fulfilled: to bring light into the souls and enable them to know G-d through their own consciousness.

Practical Takeaway

The worlds that preceded ours were too sublime to contain purpose, for there was no awareness or choice. The human task is to reveal divine light within limitation — to transform concealment into connection. Every time a person chooses truth over illusion, compassion over ego, he participates in the great act of *tikkun*, completing the creation that began “in the beginning.” Our mission is to bring light into souls — beginning with our own.

Chassidic Story

A student once asked Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz, “Rebbe, why did G-d need to create imperfect worlds before ours?” The Rebbe pointed to the flickering flame of a candle and said, “Do you see how it rises and falls, searching for its balance? Only when the wick, the oil, and the flame join in harmony can it shine without

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consuming itself. So too, G-d allowed worlds to rise and fall until one could burn steadily — the world of human choice.” **END NOTE]**

Siman #5

The Holy One, blessed be He, was building worlds and destroying them.

הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא הָיָה בּוֹנֵה עוֹלָמוֹת וּמַחְרִיבָן.

This refers to the breaking of the vessels (*Sheviras HaKelim*).

(כְּלוֹמַר הָיְתָה שְׁבִירַת הַכֵּלִים).

And because of this, the light went forth to the lower worlds.

וּמִחֲמַת זֶה יָצָא הָאוֹר אֶל הָעוֹלָמוֹת הַתַּחְתּוֹנִים.

For if it had not been so, they would have remained in darkness and would have had no existence.

וְאִלוּ לֹא הָיָה כֵּן, הָיוּ נִשְׁאָרִים בְּחֹשֶׁךְ וְלֹא הָיָה לָהֶם קִיּוּם.

So too, there is a breaking of the vessels within man — for example, with a tzaddik to whom the time is pressing, and he must depend upon others for help.

וְכֵן יֵשׁ שְׁבִירַת הַכֵּלִים בְּאָדָם, [כַּגּוֹן] אֲצֵל הַצַּדִּיק וְדַחֲקָא לֵיהּ שְׁעֵתָא וְנִצְרָךְ לְבְרִיּוֹת.

Because he must turn to them, the light that was within him goes out to others.

וּמִחֲמַת זֶה שְׁצָרִיךְ לָהֶם, וְיוֹצֵא הָאוֹר מִמֶּנּוּ לְשָׂאֵר בְּנֵי אָדָם.

He speaks to them words of Torah, and light goes out from him — for otherwise it would have remained hidden within him and unspoken, and they would remain in darkness; but through this, light shines upon them.

וְאוֹמֵר לָהֶם תּוֹרָה וְיוֹצֵא מִמֶּנּוּ אוֹר, שְׁזוּלַת זֶה הָיָה גָּנוּז אֲצֵלוֹ וְלֹא הָיָה דוֹבֵר לְשׁוּם אָדָם, וְהֵם נִשְׁאָרִים בְּחֹשֶׁךְ, וְעַל־יְדֵי־זֶה מְאִיר לָהֶם.

[NOTE Summary

Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz explains the Midrash that G-d “built worlds and destroyed them” as referring to the breaking of the vessels (*Sheviras HaKelim*). When divine light was too intense for its vessels, the vessels shattered, and through that breaking, the light spread to lower realms. Without this process, the lower worlds would have remained dark and lifeless.

He applies this same principle to the human soul. Within a person, especially a tzaddik, there can also be a “breaking of the vessels.” When a righteous person faces constriction — when circumstances press upon him, and he must rely on others — that very pressure releases his hidden light. The inner wisdom that would have remained locked within bursts forth in words of Torah, shining upon others who would otherwise remain in darkness. What appears as human vulnerability is, in truth, the means through which divine light is shared.

Practical Takeaway

Moments of breaking are not signs of failure but channels for illumination. When life constricts us, when we are forced to reach outward, our inner light flows beyond the self and brings warmth to others. Just as the

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vessels broke to let the divine light reach the lower worlds, so too a person's challenges and humility allow his soul's light to illuminate the world around him. **END NOTE]**

Siman #6

“And G-d said: Let there be light; and there was light”
(Bereishis 1:3).

And in the Midrash: “The light that the Holy One, blessed be He, created — with it Adam the first man could see from one end of the world to the other” (*Shemos Rabbah* 35:1).

From then until now the entire world has been filled with that light.

Only because the world speaks idle words and vanities has there come to be a veil of separation, like clouds.

And the nature of clouds is that they extend for many parasangs, yet in another place there is light; and even through the clouds the sun still shines.

And during prayer, because the words of prayer are called “ruach” (spirit), as it is written, “The spirit of Hashem spoke in me” (*Shmuel II* 23:2), through this, those clouds are dispersed.

And from this comes also the movement and swaying in prayer, unlike any other nation or tongue, as stated in the *Zohar* (III 15a).

And after prayer, the clouds return — meaning that because of idle words, the clouds come to exist again.

And this is what the *Zohar* (III 56b) calls “the great Rome and the small Rome — these are the clouds that cover over the eye.”

And this is the meaning of what is stated in *Bereishis Rabbah*, parashas Vayeitzei (70:8): “And behold, a well in the field” (*Bereishis* 29:2) — this is the synagogue.

“And behold, there were three flocks of sheep lying by it” — these are the three readers.

“For out of that well they watered the flocks” — for from there they would hear the Torah.

“And the stone upon the mouth of the well was great” — this is the evil inclination.

ויאמר אלהים יהי אור ויהי אור
(א, ג).

ובמדרש: אור שברא הקדוש ברוך הוא, הנה אדם הראשון מביט בו מסוף העולם ועד סופו (שמות רבה (ל"ה, א).

דמאז ועד עתה נתמלא העולם פלו אור.

רק מחמת שהעולם מדברים בדברי שטות והבלי עולם, מחמת זה הוא מסך המבדיל כמו עננים.

וטבע העננים שהם על כמה פרסאות, ובמקום אחר הוא אור, וגם דרך העננים זורח גם כן השמש.

ובשעת התפלה מחמת דברי התפלה שהם נקראים רוח, כמו שנאמר רוח [אלקים] ה' דבר בי (שמואל ב. כ"ג, ב), מחמת זה מתפזרים העננים הנ"ל.

ומכח זה באים גם כן הנענועים בתפלה, משאין כן (בכל אומה ולשון, כמו שכתוב בזהר (ח"ג ט"ו, א).

ואחר התפלה חוזרים העננים, ר"ל מחמת דברי שטות חוזרים להתהוות עננים.

וזה נקרא בזהר (שם נוג, ב) רומי רבתא ורומי זעירתא, דאינון עננין דמכסין על פת עינא.

וזה פונת המדרש רבה פרשת ויצא (ע', ח): והנה באר בשדה (בראשית כ"ט, ב) — זה בית הכנסת.

והנה שם שלשה עזרי צאן — אלו ג' קוראים.

פי מן הבאר ההיא ישקו העדרים — שמשם היו שומעים את התורה.

והאבן גדולה על פי הבאר — זה יצר הרע.

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“And all the flocks were gathered there” — this is the congregation.

וְנֶאֱסָפוּ שָׁמָּה כָּל הַעֲדָרִים — זֶה הַצְּבוּר

“And they rolled the stone from the mouth of the well” — they remove the evil inclination, etc.

וְגָלוּ אֶת הָאֶבֶן — מֵעֲבִירִים הַיָּצָר הָרַע וְכוּ

“And they returned the stone” — meaning that as soon as they leave, the evil inclination returns to its place.

וְהָשִׁיבוּ אֶת הָאֶבֶן — שְׁכִינַת שְׂוִיזָאִים, יָצָר הָרַע חוּזֵר לְמִקוֹמוֹ.

[NOTE Summary

Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz interprets “Let there be light” as describing not only the first moment of creation but an ongoing spiritual truth. The original light that G-d created — the light by which Adam could see from one end of the world to the other — still fills all existence. However, humanity’s empty words and worldly distractions form clouds that conceal this radiance. The divine light remains constant; it is our own speech and thought that create veils.

Yet, during prayer, these clouds disperse. The words of prayer are called *ruach* (spirit), as the verse says, “The spirit of Hashem spoke in me.” Through heartfelt speech in tefillah, a person releases spiritual wind that pushes away the clouds, allowing the hidden light to shine. This explains why Jews naturally sway in prayer: the soul trembles as the light breaks through its concealment. But after prayer, when one returns to idle conversation, the clouds gather once more, darkening awareness.

Rabbi Pinchas connects this to the Midrash of the well in the field — the synagogue. The “three flocks” represent the three Torah readers; the “great stone” upon the well is the evil inclination, blocking access to the living waters of Torah. When the community gathers and prays with sincerity, they roll away the stone, revealing the light beneath. Yet once they depart, if they return to spiritual laziness or idle words, the stone returns to cover the well. The pattern of concealment and revelation repeats until the heart is fully refined.

Practical Takeaway

The divine light is always shining; darkness is only the fog of our own distraction. Every prayer, word of Torah, or pure thought clears the clouds a little more, letting the sun of G-d’s presence beam into our life. Guarding one’s speech and engaging in prayer with vitality keeps the skies clear — for the tongue that prays sincerely becomes the wind that parts the clouds.

Chassidic Story

Once, Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz saw a man praying without movement, motionless as a stone. The Rebbe said gently, “When clouds block the sun, the wind must move to clear them. So too with prayer — if your heart stirs, if your lips move, the light will return.” The man began to sway as he prayed, and tears filled his eyes. “Now,” said the Rebbe, “the clouds have begun to scatter.” **END NOTE]**

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Siman #7

The Holy One, blessed be He, said: “Bring for Me an atonement, for I diminished the moon” (Chullin 60b).

For “not as I am written am I read — I am written as Yud and Hei, but I am read as Alef and Dalet” (*Pesachim* 50a).

And there is a parable for this, with infinite distinction, from the kingdom of flesh and blood:

The king has the title “Adon” in the land of Lithuania, and “Melech” here, in another language.

For there they are unwilling to accept him by the name “King,” for with a single gesture they rebel against the monarchy.

Therefore, he is called only “Adon,” and he has not as much authority to judge there as he does here.

And so it is: if we had only the good inclination and had never sinned, then there would be revealed only the four-letter Name (Yud-Hei-Vav-Hei).

But it was necessary that the attributes (*middos*) be revealed — that He is merciful and gracious. For if we had not sinned, there would be no need for these attributes.

Therefore, He is called by the Name *Adonai*, for we have a Master — because we cannot bear the awe of His infinite greatness.

Therefore He is called to us by the Name *Adonai*, etc. And this is the meaning of “Bring for Me an atonement, for I diminished the moon.” Understand this.

[NOTE Summary

Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz explains the teaching, “Bring for Me an atonement, for I diminished the moon,” as a revelation of divine compassion concealed within limitation. The moon’s diminishment symbolizes how G-d chose to hide His infinite light so the world could exist and experience relationship with Him. This concealment parallels His Name: though He is written as the transcendent Y-H-V-H, He is read as A-don-ai — the Master, for we cannot bear the full radiance of His essence.

Rabbi Pinchas compares this to a king who is called “Adon” (lord) in one land where the people cannot yet accept him as “Melech” (king). They recognize authority but not sovereignty. Similarly, humanity in its current state can only relate to G-d through the lens of rule and judgment, not pure infinity. Were we pure, ruled only

ז אָמַר הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא: הֵבִיאוּ עָלַי כִּפּוּרָה (שְׁמַעְטֵתִי אֶת הַלְבָנָה (חִוּלִין ס', ב

כִּי לֹא כְשֵׁאֲנִי נִכְתָּב אֲנִי נִקְרָא, נִכְתָּב אֲנִי בִיּוֹד ה"א (וְנִקְרָא אֲנִי בְּאֵלֶּיךָ דָּל"ת (פְּסָחִים נ', א

וּמִשָּׁל עַל זֶה, בְּאֵלֶיךָ אֵלֶּיךָ הַבְּדִלוֹת, מִמַּלְכוּתָא דְאַרְעָא

הַמֶּלֶךְ יֵשׁ לוֹ שֵׁם "אָדוֹן" בְּמַדְיַנַת לִיטְוּא, וְ"מֶלֶךְ" כְּאֵן בְּלִשׁוֹן לְעֵז

כִּי שֵׁם אֵינֶם רוֹצִים לְקַבְּלוֹ לְהִיטֵב בְּשֵׁם מֶלֶךְ, כִּי בְּתַנּוּעָה אַחַת מוֹרֵד בְּמַלְכוּת, רַק אֵינּוּ שֵׁם רַק אָדוֹן, וְאֵין לוֹ יְכוּלֵת לְדוֹן כָּל כֶּף כְּמוֹ כְּאֵן

וְלִכְּךָ אִם הֵינּוּ בִּיצָר טוֹב לְבַד וְלֹא הֵינּוּ חוֹטְאִים, 'הִנֵּה שֵׁם רַק שֵׁם בְּן ד'

אֲבָל הוֹצֵרָה לְהַתְגַּלוֹת הַמַּדּוֹת, שְׁיֵשׁ רַחוּם וְחַנּוּן, וְאִם לֹא הֵינּוּ חוֹטְאִים לֹא הִנֵּה נִצְרָה לְמַדּוֹת

לְכָךְ נִקְרָא בְּאֵדְנִי, שְׁיֵשׁ לְנֹו אָדוֹן, שְׁאֵין אֲנִי יְכוּלִים לְקַבּוֹל מוֹרָא שְׁלוֹ, כִּי נִשְׁעָרָה מְאֹד

לְכָךְ נִקְרָא לְנֹו שֵׁם אָדְנִי וְכוּ', וְזֶהוּ הֵבִיאוּ עָלַי כִּפּוּרָה עַל שְׁמַעְטֵתִי אֶת הַלְבָנָה, וְהִבּוֹן

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by the good inclination and untouched by sin, the divine light of Y-H-V-H alone would suffice. But since we fall and need mercy, G-d revealed His middos — compassion, forgiveness, patience — so that we could survive and draw near despite imperfection. Thus, “Bring for Me an atonement” means that G-d Himself humbles His light so that creation can endure and approach Him in love.

Practical Takeaway

Every concealment is an act of divine mercy. When life feels dim or distant from holiness, remember that G-d’s hiddenness is not absence — it is tenderness, measured light so that we may receive it without being consumed. The task of the soul is to respond to this divine humility with awe and gratitude, turning even darkness into a vessel for revelation. **END NOTE]**

Siman #8

“Bring for Me an atonement, for I diminished the moon”
(*Chullin 60b*).

הביאו עלי כפרה שמעטתי את הלבנה (חולין ס', ב).

For the Holy One, blessed be He, created the world in order that He be called “Merciful and Gracious,” as it is written in the *Eitz Chayim* (Shaar 6, Anaf 30).

פי הקדוש ברוך הוא ברא העולם בכדי שיקרא רחום ('ותנון, כמה נשכתוב בעץ חיים (פרק ו' ענף ל

And because of this, He created the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil — so that it would be possible to sin, in order that the Holy One, blessed be He, might then have mercy upon man, and thereby His attribute of compassion be revealed, and so forth.

ומחמת זה ברא עץ הדעת טוב ורע, בכדי שיהיה אפשר לתטוא, בכדי שירחם הקדוש ברוך הוא עליו, ומתגלה מדת רחמנות וכדומה

And this is the meaning of the diminishment of the moon (see *Eitz Chayim*, Shaar Lamed Vav, ch. 3).

וזהו מיעוט הלבנה (כמו שנאמר בעץ חיים שער ל"ו (פרק ג

And this is a great argument before the Holy One, blessed be He, as a plea in defense of the world. Understand this.

והוא טענה גדולה לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא להמליץ על העולם, והבן

[NOTE Summary

Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz deepens the teaching, “Bring for Me an atonement, for I diminished the moon.” The “diminishment” symbolizes G-d’s decision to create a world where imperfection exists, so that His mercy could be revealed. As the *Eitz Chayim* teaches, the purpose of creation was that G-d should be called “Merciful and Gracious.” For this reason, He created the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil — introducing the possibility of sin, so that compassion could emerge. Without struggle, failure, and return, the divine attribute of mercy would remain hidden.

Thus, the moon’s diminishing — the concealment of light — is not a tragedy but a divine act of love, allowing for forgiveness, growth, and teshuvah. Through darkness, the Infinite reveals new shades of compassion. Rabbi

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Pinchas calls this very idea a “*great argument before G-d*,” meaning it stands as a defense for humanity itself: our flaws are part of G-d’s plan to awaken His boundless mercy.

Practical Takeaway

When you fall or feel distant, remember that the possibility of sin was built into creation so that G-d’s mercy could reach you. Every act of sincere return fulfills the purpose for which the world was made — to reveal divine compassion within imperfection. Even our mistakes become part of the light when they lead us back to the Source. **END NOTE]**

Siman #9

“I will make for him a help opposite him” (Bereishis 2:18).

(אֲעֲשֶׂה לוֹ עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ (בְּרֵאשִׁית ב', י"ח

In the name of the holy Rebbe, explained with humor: at times a person is compelled to give charity against his will, because of embarrassment.

בְּשֵׁם הָרַב זְכוּרֵנוּ לְבָרְכָהּ, בְּדַרְךְ צְחוּת, שְׁלִפְעָמִים
אָדָם מְכַרְחַח לַעֲשׂוֹת צְדָקָה הַפֶּד רְצוּנוֹ מִפְּנֵי הַבוּשָׁה

But now he has an excuse — that he cannot, because of his wife, who stands against him; and this itself becomes his help. Reflect well.

וְעַכְשָׁיו יֵשׁ לוֹ תִירוֹץ שְׂאִינוֹ יְכוּל מִפְּנֵי אִשְׁתּוֹ שֶׁהִיא
כְּנֶגְדּוֹ, וְזֶה לוֹ לְעֵזֶר, וְדו"ק

[NOTE Summary

Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz offers a gentle, humorous insight into the verse “I will make for him a help opposite him.” On the surface, the verse describes the creation of woman as man’s partner. But in his subtle style, Rabbi Pinchas reads it also as a spiritual parable about inner growth. Sometimes a person gives tzedakah (charity) unwillingly — not from the heart but from social pressure or embarrassment. Then, when his wife stands “against him,” objecting to the gift, he gains an unexpected advantage: he can now give with joy and sincerity, free from pretense. Her resistance becomes his *help*, purifying his intention.

This playful teaching reveals a deeper principle: the things that oppose us often serve as our greatest helpers. Resistance exposes our true motives and refines our actions, transforming external struggle into internal sincerity.

Practical Takeaway

Don’t resent opposition; it may be divine assistance in disguise. Whether it comes from people, circumstance, or even your own inner resistance, it can awaken purity of intention. True giving — and true service of G-d — begins when you act not for approval or image, but from genuine love and truth. **END NOTE]**

Siman #10

“And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name” (Bereishis 2:19).

וְכָל אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָא לוֹ הָאָדָם נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה הוּא שְׁמוֹ
(בְּרֵאשִׁית ב', י"ט

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The Rebbe, of blessed memory, asked: What is meant by the phrase “that was its name”? Why does the verse not simply say “its name was ‘living soul’”?

וְהַקְשָׁה הָרַב זְכוּרוֹנוֹ לְבָרְכָהּ, מֵהוּ "הוּא שְׁמוֹ", וְלָמַד "לֹא כְּתוּב "נִפְשׁ חַיָּה שְׁמוֹ".

He explained: the letters of a being’s name are its very life-force.

וְאָמַר: כִּי הָאוֹתִיּוֹת שֶׁל שְׁמוֹ הֵם חַיּוֹת שְׁלוֹ.

In animals and birds, there are only two or three letters — such as the chirping sounds birds make with their mouths.

וּבְבְהֵמָוֹת וּבְעוֹפוֹת אֵין בָּהֶם אֱלֵא שְׁתֵּים אוֹ שְׁלוֹשׁ אוֹתִיּוֹת, כְּגוֹן צְפָצוּף שְׁעוֹשִׁין כֵּן הָעוֹפוֹת בְּפֶה.

And this is what the Gemara says (*Yoma* 20b): “The rooster called,” for they make the sound “kari kari”; and dogs bark “hav hav.” These letters are their life-force.

וְזֶה מֵה שֶׁאָמְרוּ בְּגִמְרָא (יוֹמָא כ', ב): קָרָא הַתְּרַנְגוּל, שְׁעוֹשִׁים כְּדֹ "קָרִי קָרִי", וְכֵן כְּלָבִים נוֹבְחִים "הַב הַב", וְאֵלוֹ הָאוֹתִיּוֹת הֵם חַיּוֹת שְׁלֵהֶם.

But in man, there are all twenty-two letters, and therefore he rules over all creatures and can articulate, with his mouth, every form of expression in the world.

וּבְאָדָם יֵשׁ כָּל כ"ב אוֹתִיּוֹת, וְלָכֵף הוּא מוֹשֵׁל עַל הַכֹּל וְיָכוֹל לַעֲשׂוֹת בְּפֶה כָּל דְּבַר שֶׁבְּעוֹלָם.

And from the sound that each creature made, Adam understood that this was its name — the very life-force it possessed from the beginning.

וּמִקוֹל שְׁלֵהֶם הִנֵּה מִבֵּין שְׁזָה שְׁמוֹ

And this is the meaning of the verse: “Whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name” — meaning that this was its name from before, for this is its vitality.

וְזֶה "כָּל אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָא לוֹ הָאָדָם נִפְשׁ חַיָּה הוּא שְׁמוֹ", שְׁזָה שְׁמוֹ שְׁהִיָּה מִקוֹדֵם, שְׁזָהוּ חַיּוֹת שְׁלֵהֶם.

[NOTE Summary

Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz explains that when the Torah says, “*Whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name,*” it reveals a profound secret about speech and creation. The letters of a creature’s name are its life-force — the spiritual vibrations that sustain its existence. Every sound uttered by Adam was not a label but a revelation of each being’s essence.

Animals and birds possess only limited vocal sounds — two or three “letters” expressed through chirping or barking — and these few sounds correspond to their narrow spiritual vitality. The rooster’s “kari-kari” and the dog’s “hav-hav” are not mere noises but the articulation of the life-energy animating them. Man, however, contains all twenty-two letters of the holy tongue. With these, he mirrors the Creator’s power of speech, able to form and describe all reality. Adam’s naming of the creatures was thus an act of divine insight — recognizing in their voices the inner spark of life that already defined them.

Practical Takeaway

Our words carry spiritual energy. Just as the letters of a name sustain existence, our speech can either animate or darken the world. Speaking truth, kindness, and holiness strengthens the life-force within creation, while

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careless or harmful words conceal it. The human gift of language is a sacred trust — a reflection of the Creator's own speech. To speak with awareness is to partner with G-d in sustaining the world.

Chassidic Story

A chassid once asked Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz why he was so careful with every word he spoke. The Rebbe replied, "Each letter you utter is a breath of creation. When you speak with truth, you give life to the world; when you speak in vanity, you steal its breath." From that day, the chassid would pause before every word, whispering, "Is this a word of life or of waste?" **END NOTE]**

Siman #11

A proof that Chavah reasoned that even touching the Tree was forbidden.

הוכחה שהוכיחה חוה שנגיעה אסורה.

He said: It was difficult for her to understand the words of Hashem, "For on the day you eat of it, you shall surely die" (Bereishis 2:17).

אמר, פי הנה קנשה לה על דברי השי"ת: כי ביום (אכלה ממנו מות תמות) (בראשית ב', י"ז).

For she could have reasoned: he could first eat from the Tree of Life!

הא יכול לאכול תחלה מעץ החיים!

But it can be explained according to the Targum on the verse (Bereishis 2:9): "And the Tree of Life was in the midst of the garden" — translated as *b'metzi'us ginasa* ("in the center of the garden").

אבל יש לומר על פי התרגום על הפסוק (בראשית ב', ט): ועץ החיים בתוך הגן — במציעות גנתא.

That is, that the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil surrounded the Tree of Life.

הינו שסביב לעץ החיים הנה עץ הדעת טוב ורע.

Therefore, it was impossible to reach the Tree of Life without first touching the Tree of Knowledge.

ואינו באפשר לבוא אליו אם לא שתגע בעץ הדעת תחלה.

From this she deduced that even touching the Tree was forbidden.

ומכאן הוכיחה דנגיעה אסור.

[NOTE Summary

Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz explains that Chavah's conclusion — that touching the Tree of Knowledge was forbidden — was not simply a misunderstanding but a **logical deduction** rooted in her sincere desire to obey G-d. She was troubled by the divine command, "On the day you eat of it, you shall surely die," reasoning: if Adam could simply eat first from the Tree of Life and gain eternal existence, how could eating from the Tree of Knowledge bring death?

The *Targum* resolves this: it describes the Tree of Life as standing "in the center of the garden," surrounded by the Tree of Knowledge. One could not reach the Tree of Life without first coming into contact with the Tree of

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Knowledge. From this, Chavah inferred that even **touching** the Tree of Knowledge must be forbidden — for to approach the Tree of Life would require such contact. Her error was not rebellion but **excessive piety**, adding a safeguard out of devotion. Yet, that very addition became the opening for deception.

Practical Takeaway

Good intentions must be guided by truth. While extra caution in spiritual matters can be noble, it must never distort G-d's words. Chavah's mistake teaches that holiness lies not in adding new boundaries out of fear, but in **hearing the Divine precisely**. Serve G-d with awe, but also with clarity — for even small exaggerations in the name of piety can lead to confusion and harm. **END NOTE]**

Siman #12

Before the sin, Adam was clothed in garments of light (or), and afterward they became garments of skin ('or) — this being the “serpent’s hide” (Tikunei Zohar 10a).

Therefore, on Yom Kippur, when there is no power of the Satan, we go without leather shoes.

For this reason, a person should minimize, as much as possible, wearing large or thick shoes, and thereby be able to pray with greater concentration.

קודם התשא הנה לאדם כתנות אור, ואחר-כך נעשה עור, והוא משכא דחויא (תיקוני זהר י', א).

לכך ביום הכפורים נשאז אין שטן, אנו הולכים בלא מנעלי עור.

לכך יש לאדם למעט בכל מה שיוכל ללכת בלא מנעלים גדולים, וגם שיוכל להתפלל טובה יותר.

[NOTE Summary

Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz teaches that before Adam's sin, humanity was clothed in garments of light (כתנות אור) — radiant spiritual coverings reflecting divine purity. After the sin, those garments became garments of skin (כתנות עור) — material coverings symbolizing concealment and distance from G-d. This transformation, says the *Zohar*, is the “serpent's hide,” the layer of spiritual dullness that entered human existence after the fall.

On Yom Kippur, when the power of the Satan is nullified, we remove leather shoes — a reminder of those first garments of skin. Walking barefoot or with minimal coverings symbolizes returning to the state of light that preceded sin. Rabbi Pinchas adds that one should minimize the use of thick or heavy footwear, for the more one separates from material density, the more easily the soul can rise in prayer. Spiritual sensitivity increases when we shed the layers of coarseness that separate us from our essence.

Practical Takeaway

Physical comfort and spiritual clarity often stand in tension. Yom Kippur invites us to step lightly — to let go of material weight and approach prayer with simplicity and transparency. When we remove even small barriers, such as unnecessary luxury or distraction, we come closer to regaining our garments of light — purity of heart, humility, and direct connection with G-d.

END NOTE]

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Siman #13

“The flaming sword that turns every way, to guard the path to the Tree of Life” (Bereishis 3:24).

In the name of the Rebbe, of blessed memory: these are the obstacles and hindrances that confront a person who seeks to draw near to the Holy One, blessed be He — Who is the Tree of Life — and they do not allow him to approach.

And once I heard from him that at the first stage this is in the secret of *ibur* (gestation). Understand this.

להט החרב המתהפכת לשמור את דרך עץ החיים (בראשית ג', כ"ד).

בשם הרב זכרוננו לברכה: הם המניעות והעפובים שיש לאדם שפא להתקרב אל השי"ת, שהוא עץ החיים, ואינם מניחים אותו לקרב.

ופעם אחת שמעתי ממנו, כי בפעם הראשונה הוא בסוד העיבור, והבן.

[NOTE Summary

Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz interprets the verse “*the flaming sword that turns every way to guard the path to the Tree of Life*” as a description of the spiritual barriers that stand before one who seeks closeness to G-d. The “Tree of Life” represents divine intimacy — living awareness of Hashem — while the “flaming sword” symbolizes the fiery resistance that meets a soul when it strives to ascend. These obstacles and distractions, both internal and external, seem to repel a person just when they long to draw near.

Yet, Rabbi Pinchas reveals that these very blockages are not punishments but necessary stages of birth. When a person first begins to approach holiness, he enters the state of *ibur* — spiritual gestation. Like an unborn child, he is enclosed, surrounded, and shielded until he becomes ready to emerge into higher consciousness. The delays and frustrations that seem to hinder progress are actually the protective contractions of divine growth, shaping the soul into readiness for greater light.

Practical Takeaway

When the path to holiness feels filled with resistance, do not despair — that resistance is the *flaming sword* guarding the gates of the Tree of Life. The very struggle to overcome distractions is part of your spiritual formation. Every obstacle faced with patience becomes a spark of divine fire refining you from within. Growth often begins not with arrival, but with enduring the process of *ibur* — the hidden preparation before revelation.

END NOTE]

Siman #14

“My sin is too great to bear” (Bereishis 4:13).

In the name of the Maggid of Mezritch, of blessed memory: the meaning is — can it be that my sin is greater than what You can bear (i.e., forgive)?

(גדול עוונתי מנשוא (בראשית ד', י"ג)

בשם המגיד ממעזריטש זכרוננו לברכה: פירוש, וכי אפשר שעוונתי יהיה גדול ממה שאתה נושא עון?

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For all of man's traits and deeds have an end, but Your attributes, blessed be You, are infinite — for the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy come from Arich Anpin (the Infinite Long Countenance). Thus I have now heard.

וְהֵלֵא כָּל מִדּוֹת הָאָדָם וּמַעֲשָׂיו יֵשׁ לָהֶם סוּף, מִה שְׂאִין
כֵּן מִדּוֹתֶיךָ יִתְבָּרַךְ שְׂהֵם אֵין סוּף, כִּי הֵי"ג מִדּוֹת הֵם
מֵאַרְיֵךְ אֲנִפִּין. כֵּן שְׁמַעְתִּי כַּעַת

And in the name of our master, Rabbi Zusia of Anipoli, of blessed memory: he said, once I had to connect the world to my teacher, the Maggid of Mezritch.

בְּשֵׁם מוֹהַר"ר זוּסְיָא [מֵאַנְיִפּוֹלִי] זְכוּרֵנוּ לְבִרְכָה,
שְׂאָמַר: פַּעַם אַחַת הוּצַרְכְּתִי לְקַשֵּׁר אֶת הָעוֹלָם לְמוֹרֵי
הַמַּגִּיד מִמְעֻזְרִיטֵשׁ

And he explained that there was a time of distress in the world, and it was necessary to elevate the world. So I came before him and said: “Rebbe, you are a perfect tzaddik!”

וּבְאֵר הוּא זְכוּרֵנוּ לְבִרְכָה, שֶׁהָיָה יַעַת צָרָה בְּעוֹלָם
וְהָיָה צָרִיךְ לְהַעֲלוֹת אֶת הָעוֹלָם. וּבֵאתִי לְפָנָיו
!וְאָמַרְתִּי: רַבִּי, אַתָּם צַדִּיק גָּמוּר

Immediately the Maggid stood up on his feet and said: “It is taught in the Gemara (*Kiddushin* 49b): if a man betroths a woman on condition that he is a completely righteous man, even if he is utterly wicked, she is betrothed — for perhaps he had a thought of repentance. Master of the Universe! *My sin is too great to bear!*”

מִיָּד קָם הַמַּגִּיד עַל רַגְלָיו וְאָמַר: אֵיתָא בְּגִמְרָא
(קִדּוּשִׁין מ"ט, ב): הַמְקַדֵּשׁ אֶת הָאִשָּׁה עַל מְנַת שְׂאִנֵּי
צַדִּיק גָּמוּר, וְנִמְצָא רָשָׁע גָּמוּר — מְקוּדָשֶׁת, שְׂמָא
!הִרְהַר תְּשׁוּבָה. רַבּוֹנוּ שֶׁל עוֹלָם, גָּדוֹל עֲוֹנֵי מַנְשׂוּא

And he (Rabbi Zusia) explained the matter of “My sin is too great to bear” in the name of the Maggid, as stated above.

וּבְאֵר הוּא זְכוּרֵנוּ לְבִרְכָה עֲנִין גָּדוֹל עֲוֹנֵי מַנְשׂוּא בְּשֵׁם
[הַמַּגִּיד זְכוּרֵנוּ לְבִרְכָה וְכו'] כַּנֶּ"ל

[NOTE Summary

Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz transmits a luminous teaching from his masters, the **Maggid of Mezritch** and **Rabbi Zusia of Anipoli**, on the verse “*Gadol avoni minso — My sin is too great to bear.*” The Maggid interprets these words not as despair but as astonishment and awe: Can it truly be that my sin is greater than what You, G-d, can bear and forgive? All human measures — of sin, of virtue, of emotion — are finite. But the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy emanate from the Divine Infinite (*Arich Anpin*), which knows no limit. How could the finite overpower the Infinite?

Rabbi Zusia expands the teaching with a living example. Once, during a time of suffering in the world, he sought to “connect the world” to his teacher, the Maggid. When he addressed him as a “perfect tzaddik,” the Maggid leapt to his feet and exclaimed the Talmudic teaching: “*If a man betroths a woman on condition that he is completely righteous — even if he is wicked — she is betrothed, for perhaps he thought of teshuvah.*” In that moment, the Maggid cried out: “*Master of the Universe! My sin is too great to bear!*”—not in despair, but in trembling recognition that G-d’s mercy, being infinite, always surpasses sin.

Practical Takeaway

No darkness, failure, or sin is beyond G-d’s capacity to forgive. The soul must never despair, for repentance touches infinity. The cry “My sin is too great” becomes, in truth, a declaration of faith in boundless compassion

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— that even our lowest state can be transformed by a single turn of the heart. Whenever you feel broken beyond repair, remember: G-d's mercy began before creation and has no end.

Chassidic Story

Rabbi Zusia of Anipoli once told his students that if they ever fell so low they felt unworthy to pray, they should do as he saw his master, the Maggid, do: rise to one's feet and declare, "Ribono Shel Olam! You are Infinite! Even if I have fallen, I cannot fall outside of You!" He said that at that moment, the gates of heaven open — not because the person has changed, but because they finally recognize that **G-d's love was never withheld.** END NOTE]

Siman #15

"This is the book of the generations of Adam; on the day that G-d created man..." (Bereishis 5:1).

זֶה סֵפֶר תּוֹלְדוֹת אָדָם בַּיּוֹם בְּרָא אֱלֹהִים אָדָם וְגו' (בְּרֵאשִׁית ה', א).

The meaning: when a person performs a good deed before many people, it can happen that ulterior motives arise.

פִּירוּשׁ, אִם אָדָם עוֹשֶׂה דְבָר טוֹב בְּפָנֵי רַבִּים, אֵז יִזְדַּמֵּן שִׁיְהִי לוֹ פְּנִיּוֹת.

But if he acts modestly and privately, then he will certainly be guarded from such self-interest.

וְאִם בְּהַצְנֵעַ לְכַת, אֵז יִהְיֶה נִזְקָה בְּוֹדָאֵי מְפִנְיּוֹת.

Therefore, a person should see himself as if he were alone in the world — like our forefather Avraham, peace be upon him, who, though his entire generation worshipped idols, served only his Creator.

וְלִכְךָ יִרְאֶה אָדָם כְּאִלוֹ הוּא לְבַדּוֹ בְּעוֹלָם, דּוּגְמַת אַבְרָהָם אַבִּינוּ עָלֵינוּ הַשְּׁלוֹם, שֶׁכֵּל כְּנִי דוֹרוֹ הָיוּ עוֹבְדֵי עֲבוֹדָה זָרָה וְהוּא הָיָה לְבַדּוֹ עוֹבֵד לְבוֹרְאוֹ.

Through this, he will be saved from ulterior motives. And this is the meaning of "on the day that G-d created man — alone upon the earth."

וּבְנֵה הָיָה נִצּוֹל מְפִנְיּוֹת. וְזֶה "בַּיּוֹם בְּרָא אֱלֹהִים אָדָם" לְבַדּוֹ עַל הָאָרֶץ.

[NOTE Summary

Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz explains that the verse "*This is the book of the generations of Adam, on the day G-d created man*" teaches a lesson in purity of intention. When a person does something good in front of others, he is easily touched by **p'nyos** — hidden motives of pride, approval, or self-image. True holiness, however, flourishes in **privacy and simplicity**. When deeds are done quietly, for the sake of Heaven alone, they are guarded from corruption.

A person should therefore live as if **he alone were in the world**, like Avraham Avinu. Though the entire generation around him worshipped idols, Avraham served only his Creator, unaffected by public opinion. His isolation was not loneliness but strength — a clear vision of purpose that made him immune to distraction and self-consciousness. In this sense, "on the day G-d created man" refers to man's creation as a single being, alone in his service, pure and untainted by the gaze of others.

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Practical Takeaway

Spiritual authenticity thrives in hiddenness. When you do good, seek no audience and no echo. Imagine that only G-d sees your action — because truly, that is all that matters. By cultivating inner solitude in a noisy world, you regain the simplicity of the first man, standing alone before his Maker with a whole heart. **END**

NOTE]

Siman #16

In the Zohar (I:37a) it is asked: Why did the early generations live so many years?

בזוהר (תלק א', ל"ז, ג) הקשו, למה היו הדורות הראשונים חיים הרבה שנים?

He explained: In the beginning there was the **breaking of the vessels**, because they could not contain the abundance of divine light.

ואמר, כי בתחלה היתה שבירת הכלים לסבה שלא היו יכולים לקבל את רב האור.

It is like a man who receives unexpectedly joyous news and bursts into tears — because he has no vessel strong enough to hold such light.

משל לאדם שבא לו בשורה טובה פתאם והוא בוכה, כי אין לו כלי לקבל האור.

So it was with the breaking of the vessels: the light was too great, and the vessels could not contain it.

כן היתה שבירת הכלים, כי הנה אור גדול ולא יכול הכלי לסבלו.

Therefore, in *Parshas Bereishis* it is written repeatedly (Bereishis 5:3ff), “And so-and-so lived... and he died,” with each generation, for this alludes to the breaking of the vessels.

ולכך בפרשת בראשית כתוב (ה', ג וְהָלְאָה) "וַיְחִי פְלוֹנִי וַיָּמָת" וגו' בְּכָל אֶחָד, כִּי הָיָה שְׁבִירַת הַכֵּלִים

(See *Likkutei Torah, Naso*, s.v. “Ken kan nashar.”)

עַיִן בְּלִקוּטֵי תוֹרָה לְפָרֶשֶׁת נֹשֵׂא עַל הַפְּסוּק "כֵּן כָּן" (ל' וַיָּנָשׂר).

But in *Parshas Noach* (Bereishis 11:11ff) it says, “And so-and-so lived and begot sons,” without the phrase “and he died,” for this was already after the rectification.

וּבְפָרֶשֶׁת נֹחַ (י"א, י"א וְהָלְאָה) כְּתוּב "וַיְחִי וַיּוֹלֵד בְּנָיִם" וְלֹא כְּתוּב "וַיָּמָת", כִּי הָיָה לְאַחַר הַתִּיקוּן

[NOTE Summary

Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz, drawing from the *Zohar* (I:37a), asks: why did the early generations live such extraordinarily long lives? He explains that this mystery reflects the process of Sheviras HaKelim — the breaking of the vessels. At the dawn of creation, divine light flowed in overwhelming abundance, but the spiritual vessels meant to contain it were too limited. The result was shattering — not of destruction, but of overflow, where holiness exceeded its boundaries.

He likens this to a person who receives sudden, overwhelming good news and bursts into tears. The joy is too great for the heart to hold; the vessel cannot contain the light. Similarly, the early generations were suffused with immense divine vitality that their world could not fully integrate. This excess of light caused spiritual

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collapse, reflected in the repeated verse, “*And he lived...and he died.*” Their deaths were not mere mortality but the echo of divine intensity too vast to be sustained.

By contrast, the generations after the Flood, in *Parshas Noach*, lived within a reality already tempered through tikkun — rectification. The vessels were stronger, the light more measured, and therefore Scripture omits the phrase “*and he died,*” symbolizing a new equilibrium where holiness could dwell within form.

Practical Takeaway

Sometimes our hearts “break” not from darkness but from too much light — inspiration, love, or truth that we cannot yet hold. Rather than despair at these moments of overwhelm, we should see them as part of divine growth. G-d’s light descends only so that we may strengthen our vessels to receive more. Each spiritual fall or emotional shattering prepares us for greater clarity, balance, and endurance. The goal is not to avoid breaking — it is to transform breaking into rebuilding.

Chassidic Story

Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz once wept during a joyous *melaveh malkah*. When his students asked why he cried in such holiness, he replied, “Because joy too has a breaking point. When the heart feels more light than it can bear, tears become the vessel that holds it.” The students later said they learned from that night that **even tears can be vessels for divine joy.**

END NOTE]