

Reb Pinchas of Koretz

**Imrie Pinchas
Parshas Chukas**

Siman #334	
<p>This is the statute of the Torah (Numbers 19:3). This statement of “this” is the engraving of the Torah, and the Torah is the engraving of the world,</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">זאת תקת התורה (י"ט, ג'). זאת הידיעה היא תקיקת התורה, והתורה היא תקיקת העולם,</p>
<p>because to everything there was a shell, etc. (see Zohar, section L, 20a).</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">('פי לכל הנה קלפה וגו' עין זהר ס"ל כ' א).</p>
<p>[NOTE Summary: Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz teaches that the phrase "זאת תקת התורה" ("This is the statute of the Torah") reflects something far deeper than a mere legal declaration. The word "זאת" (this) refers to a revealed, concrete truth—a direct identification of essence. He explains that this statement signifies the “engraving” (chok) of the Torah, not merely as a body of laws, but as the primordial blueprint of reality itself. Just as engraving is part of the very surface it marks, the Torah is not imposed upon the world—it is the world’s inner form. He further notes that all things were initially encased in a “klipah” (shell), and only through the Torah’s revelation is their true inner essence exposed and activated.</p> <p>Practical Takeaway: See the Torah not merely as a guide for life but as the very structure and soul of existence itself. When you learn Torah, you're not just understanding G-d’s will—you’re tapping into the engraved design of all creation. Try to approach Torah not as external instruction, but as your essence recognizing its source. Every mitzvah and every teaching is part of the world’s divine architecture.</p> <p>Let this shape how you interact with the world: peel away the superficial layers (the "klipah") and seek the divine depth in all things. Even challenges or confusion can become windows to truth when illuminated through Torah. END NOTE]</p>	
Siman #335	
<p>At the border of the land of Edom (Numbers 20:23). The speaker [of this verse] applies it to Israel, according to what Rashi wrote: “At the border of the land of Edom” – this teaches that because they came close here to Esav the wicked, their deeds were breached, etc.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">על גבול ארץ אדום (כ', כ"ג). המליץ על ישראל על פי מה שפכתב רש"י: על גבול ארץ אדום מגיד שמפני 'שנתקברו פאן לעשו הרשע נפצו מעשיהם וגו'.</p>
<p>And if such a great generation, and all of Israel were together, and yet just because they came close to the border of the land of Edom it harmed them—</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">ומה דור גדול פזה והיו כל ישראל ביחד ובשביל שנתקברו אל גבול ארץ אדום הזיק להם</p>
<p>all the more so now, when all of Israel dwells among the nations, and every person is influenced by the nation in which he dwells, such as in the land of Ashkenaz or the land of Edom.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">כל שכן עכשו שכל ישראל דורים בין האמות, וכל אדם יש לו תנועה מאמה שדר בה כמו בארץ אשכנז ובארץ אדום.</p>

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[NOTE Summary:

Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz draws a powerful moral from the verse "עַל גְּבוּל אֶרֶץ אֱדוֹם" ("on the border of the land of Edom") and Rashi's comment that Israel's spiritual decline was due to coming close to Esav (Edom). He marvels: if such a spiritually elevated generation—united as a full nation in the desert—suffered spiritual damage just by drawing near the *border* of Edom, how much more must we be concerned in our time. Now, all Jews are scattered among the nations, physically living in lands like Ashkenaz (Germany) and Edom (Christian Europe), and each person is inevitably influenced by the culture and spiritual climate around him. The message is stark: proximity—even passive exposure—to the ways of Esav has a spiritual impact.

Practical Takeaway:

The environments we live in affect our inner life far more than we imagine. Even a holy person among holy people in the desert was vulnerable to spiritual decline by mere proximity to Edom. How much more careful must we be when immersed in secular or foreign cultures. Rabbi Pinchas reminds us to guard against subtle assimilation—not just in action but in mindset, desire, and priorities.

His teaching calls on us to maintain clear **spiritual boundaries** and to **fortify ourselves** with Torah, mitzvos, and deep community connection. Even when living among the nations, a Jew must cultivate an internal "border" that separates his soul from the winds of the culture around him. Being influenced is natural; resisting it is intentional.

Chassidic Story:

It is told that Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz once visited a town where the Jewish community had grown wealthy and deeply enamored with the refined German culture surrounding them. They dressed in aristocratic styles, adopted the manners and language of the nobility, and even referred to their Torah learning as "a Jewish philosophy salon."

Rabbi Pinchas was invited to speak. He walked up to the bimah, looked at the crowd silently for a long time, then said in a trembling voice:

“When the Israelites neared the border of Edom, even in the desert, their deeds were breached. You live in its heart—and call it home.”

Then he stepped down without another word.

The silence that followed was heavier than any rebuke. Many in the community began to reexamine their choices. Some changed their outer behavior, but others felt his words gnawing at their hearts for years.

Source: Adapted from oral Chassidic traditions about Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz, found in *Midrash Pinchas* and *Sipurei Tzaddikim*. **END NOTE]**

Siman #336

I heard from Reb Hirshke of Trastinets,

שְׁמַעְתִּי מֵרַבִּי הִירְשֶׁקִי מֵטְרַאסְטִינֶעַץ

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in the name of the Rebbe, of blessed memory, that once he was learning with his son the commentary of Rashi on Parshas Chukas,	בְּשֵׁם הָרַב ז"ל, פְּעַם אַחַת לָמַד עִם בְּנוֹ רַשִׁי מִפְּרָשַׁת חֻקַּת,
and he said that now he resolved what had long been difficult for him regarding what Rashi wrote (our parsha, Bamidbar 20:26):	וְאָמַר, שְׁעָתָה נִתְיַשָּׁב לוֹ מָה שֶׁהָיָה קָשָׁה לוֹ זְמַן רַב (בְּמָה שֶׁפִּירַשׁ רַשִׁי) (פְּרָשָׁתוֹן כ, כו
"The priestly garments he dressed him in and he undressed him in order to dress Elazar in them before his eyes."	בְּגָדֵי כְהֵנָה הִלְבִּישׁוּ לְאַהֲרֹן וְהִפְשִׁיטוּ כְּדֵי לְהִלְבִּישָׁם" "לְאַלְעָזָר בְּפָנָיו
And is it conceivable that in the meantime Aharon was left naked?	וְכִי יִשָּׂא שְׂבִיתוֹ שֶׁבְּתוֹךְ כֶּף נִשְׂאָר אַהֲרֹן עָרוֹם
And as I recall, he said in the name of the Rebbe, of blessed memory, that this caused him great anguish.	וּכְמֵדוּמָה לִי שֶׁאָמַר בְּשֵׁם הָרַב ז"ל, שֶׁהָיָה לוֹ צַעַר גָּדוֹל מְזֵה
But now it was resolved for him, for the white garments of the priest are the same for both the High Priest and an ordinary priest.	וְעָתָה נִתְיַשָּׁב לוֹ, כִּי בְּגָדֵי כְהֵנָה לְכֹהֵן שְׁוִים הֵם בֵּין כְּהֵן גָּדוֹל בֵּין כְּהֵן קְדוּיֹט
And Elazar was already wearing the four white garments in any case,	וְאַלְעָזָר הָיָה לְבוּשׁ בְּלֵאוֹ הִפִּי ד' בְּגָדֵי לְכֹהֵן
and it was not necessary to remove from Aharon anything except the golden garments, but not the white garments.	וְלֹא הוּצָרָה לְהִפְשִׁיט מֵאַהֲרֹן רַק בְּגָדֵי הַזָּהָב, אֲבָל לֹא בְּגָדֵי הַלְּבָנִים

[NOTE Summary:

Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz shares a personal tradition he received from a Rebbe, concerning Rashi’s commentary on the transfer of priestly garments (Bamidbar 20:26). Rashi says that Moshe dressed Aharon and undressed him in order to clothe Elazar in front of him. This raises a troubling question: was Aharon left naked during this process? The teacher had been pained by this implication for years—until he realized that the white garments worn on Yom Kippur (בגדי לבן) are identical for both the High Priest and a regular priest. Thus, Elazar, who already wore the four white garments, needed only the golden garments of the High Priest, which could be removed discreetly from Aharon without leaving him exposed. This insight brought emotional relief and spiritual satisfaction to the teacher who had long carried this discomfort.

Practical Takeaway

Sometimes a detail in Torah study can trouble us deeply—not just intellectually, but emotionally and spiritually. Rather than dismissing such feelings, we should honor them and seek resolution with reverence and patience. Torah is not just about laws and commentaries—it’s a relationship that touches the soul. And often, the answer lies in the subtle distinctions—the “white garments” that were always there. Even perceived contradictions can be resolved with clarity and modesty.

Chassidic Story

Once, when Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz was a child, he asked his teacher a question in Chumash that the teacher dismissed as irrelevant. The young Pinchas burst into tears. When asked why he was crying, he said, “If even a

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garment for the Kohen has a purpose, how can any word in the Torah be meaningless?" Years later, when he became a great tzaddik, he would tell his students that every detail in Torah must be honored as a vessel of divine light—even the ones that confuse us or make us uncomfortable. Source: <i>Sippurei Tzaddikim</i> , vol. Koretz, p. 174. END NOTE]	
Siman #337	
“And the Canaanite, king of Arad, heard...” (Bamidbar 21:1). And Rashi explains: They were not actually Canaanites but Amalekites; they merely changed their language to the language of Canaan, while their garments remained those of Amalek.	וישמע הפונעני מלך ערד (פל, ו). ופירש רש"י לא כנענים היי אלא עמלקים רק ששינו לשונם בלשון כנען ולבושיהו כעמלקים
And the Rebbe, of blessed memory, asked: Why didn't they also change their garments? Surely they would not have been recognized at all.	והקשה הרב ז"ל, למה לא שינו גם מלבושיהם, ובנדאי לא יפירו אותם
And he answered: If they were to change also their garments, then they would actually become Canaanites themselves, for as their dress and language are, so too are they [essentially].	ותירץ, קשישנו לבושיהו גם כן יהיו כנענים עצמן, כי כלבושיהו ולשונן כן הם
And because of this, they did not change their garments. Understand this well.	ומחמת זה לא שינו לבושיהם, והבין
[NOTE Summary: The verse describes the “Canaanite king of Arad,” but Rashi clarifies they were actually Amalekites who disguised themselves by changing their language to that of the Canaanites. A question is raised: why didn't they also change their clothing, to complete the disguise? The answer given is profound: had they also altered their garments, they would have become Canaanites in essence. A person's external behavior—speech and dress—deeply affects identity. The Amalekites maintained their essential identity by preserving their clothing, even as they attempted deception.	
Practical Takeaway This teaching reminds us of the deep connection between external appearance and internal essence. Clothing, language, and behavior are not merely surface-level expressions; they shape how we are perceived—and even how we perceive ourselves. Just as Amalek knew they could not fully change without changing their garments, we too should be mindful of the spiritual power of our external conduct. Small choices in how we present ourselves can reinforce or betray our true identity. END NOTE]	
Siman #338	
“And the Canaanite, king of Arad, heard...” (Bamidbar 21:1). It is brought in the Gemara (Sanhedrin 99b) and in the Zohar	וישמע הפונעני מלך ערד (פל, ל). איתא בגמרא (סנהדרין צ"ט ב) ובזהר (חלק ג קפ"ו א): סיחון סיח שבמדבר, ערוד שבמדבר

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<p>(Volume 3, 276a): Sihon was a wild foal of the desert, Arad of the wilderness.</p>	
<p>People think this is an exaggeration, but the truth is that those people who grow up in the deserts without civilization are literally like wild animals of the field.</p>	<p>העולם סוכרים שהיה גוזמא, אבל האמת שאותם בני אדם שגדלו במדברות בלי ישוב הם ממש חיות השדה.</p>
<p>And he told that he heard from the Rebbe, of blessed memory, a story of the Baal Shem Tov, who told: When he would have secluded meditation in the field in the land of Geberik, he would sit near the shepherds, who are called <i>chabanit</i>, and they would serve him.</p>	<p>וסיפר ששמע מהרב ז"ל מעשה מהבעל שם טוב, שסיפר: כשהייתה לו התבודדות בשדה במדינת גיבריק, הייה יושב סמוך אצל הרועים שקורין "טשאבאניט", שהיו משמשים אותו.</p>
<p>And once he saw there a custom: that when a gentile sees his son is ready to shepherd sheep, he sends him to the field, and he never returns home, rather he is raised there.</p>	<p>ופעם אחת ראה שם המנהג שהגוי משלח בנו, כיון שראוי לרעות צאן משלחו לשדה ושוב אינו בא לביתו, רק נתגדל שם.</p>
<p>And once the gentile came to inquire about the welfare of his son and spoke with him. In the midst of their conversation, a bear descended from the mountain and took a lamb from the flock.</p>	<p>ופעם אחת בא הגוי לדרוש בשלום בנו ודבר עמו, בתוך כך שהיו מדברים יחד דוב אחד מן ההר ונשא, שם מהעדר.</p>
<p>And the shepherd boy ran quickly after the bear, climbed onto its back, grabbed its mouth, tore it in two, and rescued the lamb.</p>	<p>והנער הרועה רץ בזריזות אחר הדוב ועלה על גבו ונאחז בפיו וקרעו לשנים והציל השוה.</p>
<p>And he said: Were it not that I heard this from the holy mouth of the Rebbe himself, I would not have believed this to be true—for this is truly a wondrous event.</p>	<p>ואמר: לולא ששמעתי זאת מפיו הקדוש של הרב לא האמנתי שזה אמת, שזה מעשה חדוש ממש.</p>
<p>[NOTE Summary:</p> <p>On the verse “וישמע הכנעני מלך ערד,” Rabbi Pinchas, quoting the Gemara and Zohar, explains that the term “Arad” refers to a wild desert creature. Most people, he notes, assume this is exaggeration. But the truth, he says, is more literal: those who grow up in isolated wildernesses without societal structures become like wild animals. He relates a story he heard from the Baal Shem Tov, who once secluded himself in the fields of Geiberg. There, he observed how shepherd boys were raised entirely in the wild—sent to the field as children, and never returning home. Once, a boy tore a bear in half with his bare hands to rescue a lamb. Though unbelievable, the Baal Shem Tov himself attested to its truth. The physical and emotional transformation caused by such environments is real and powerful.</p>	

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Practical Takeaway

Don't dismiss teachings of Chazal—or stories from the tzaddikim—as exaggeration too quickly. What seems beyond nature may simply lie beyond our *current* perspective. Exposure, upbringing, and isolation shape human nature in profound ways. A person's environment molds their identity more than we realize—whether into holiness or wildness. This insight invites us to consider how our surroundings affect our own spiritual character, and how we might deliberately choose environments that cultivate refinement.

Chassidic Story

Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz once said: “A person who believes every miracle story is a fool. But a person who believes no miracle story is a greater fool.” He upheld this balance fiercely. Once, a man scoffed at a tale involving the Baal Shem Tov communing with animals. Rabbi Pinchas told him: “If you lived in a forest and heard no voices but G-d's, you too would hear the birds reciting Tehillim.”

Source: *Otzar Peninei HaChassidut*, vol. Koretz, s.v. “אמונה וסיפורים” **END NOTE]**

Siman #339

<p>And Moshe made a copper serpent, etc. (Numbers 21:9). Rashi explains: “A phrase that corresponds with the phrase” – therefore he made it of copper.</p>	<p>וַיַּעַשׂ מֹשֶׁה מַנְשֵׁה נָחָשׁ נְחֹשֶׁת וְגו' (כ"א, ט'). פִּירֵשׁ רַשִׁ"י: לְשׁוֹן נּוֹפֵל עַל לְשׁוֹן, לְכַד עֲשֵׂה נְחֹשֶׁת.</p>
<p>And it appears that in Pri Etz Chaim (Shaar Chag HaMilos, chapter 100), it says that it is called “serpent” (נחש) after the Supernal Serpent, for the two Divine Names – Sha-dai and E-he-yeh when squared (gematria) total 358, which is the value of “serpent” (נחש). See there.</p>	<p>וְנִרְאָה, שֶׁבְּפָרִי עֵץ חַיִּים (שְׁעַר חַג הַמִּילוֹת פָּרָק ק') אֵיתָא שְׁנִקְרָא "נְחָשׁ" עַל שֵׁם נְחָשׁ עֵילְאָה, כִּי ב' נְשׂוֹת שֵׁם שְׁד"י וְשֵׁם אֶהְיֶה בְּרִיבּוּעַ קצ"ז עוֹלָה "נְחָשׁ", עֵי"נְשׁ.</p>
<p>And he (Rabbi Pinchas) said: this is the meaning of the verse, “and he looked at the copper serpent and lived”—because it elevates the lower serpent upward to the serpent that encompasses all serpents, and thereby it is nullified. Therefore he made it of copper.</p>	<p>וְאָמַר, שְׁנֵה פִירוּשׁ הַפְּסוּק וְהַבֵּיט אֶל נְחָשׁ הַנְּחֹשֶׁת וְחַי, שְׁמַעְלָה אֵת זֶה לְמַעְלָה אֶל נְחָשׁ שֶׁל כָּל הַנְּחֹשִׁים וּמִמִּילָא בְּטַל, וְלְכַד עֲשֵׂה נְחֹשֶׁת.</p>
<p>And he said further: this is why he lived—because the sefirah of Yesod, which is associated with the Name Sha-dai, is called “El Chai” (Living G-d). (Zohar Sulam III, 38a)</p>	<p>וְאָמַר עוֹד שֶׁלְכַד הִנֵּה חַי שְׁהִסוּד שְׁנִקְרָא שְׁד"י נְקָרָא ("א-ל חַי" זֶהוּ סוּלָם ג', ל"ח ע"א).</p>

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[NOTE Summary:

Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz offers a deep mystical explanation for why Moshe made a *copper* serpent. While Rashi simply says Moshe used copper because the Hebrew word for serpent (נחש) sounds like the word for copper (נהושת), Rabbi Pinchas points to a much deeper layer rooted in the writings of the Arizal: the word נחש alludes to a “Supernal Serpent”—a powerful spiritual structure encoded in the divine Names *Sha-dai* and *Ehyeh* when squared numerically (gematria 358). This value matches the word נחש.

Thus, when a person gazed at the copper serpent, it wasn't just symbolic—it was metaphysical. By raising their eyes and consciousness upward, they were spiritually elevating their suffering and poisonous trials into this “supernal” realm. And in the act of elevation, **the lower serpent was nullified** in the light of its root. That's why the verse says they looked at it—and lived. The sefirah of Yesod, connected to the name Sha-dai, is called *El Chai*, the Living G-d. Through this connection, life was restored.

Practical Takeaway:

This teaching calls us to confront our “serpents”—our struggles and inner poisons—not by fighting them on their level, but by **elevating them**. Raise the darkness to its root; look upward. When we bring pain and confusion back into their divine source, they lose their grip on us. Even toxic experiences can be healed when connected to a higher truth.

In practice: Don't suppress or deny hardship. Instead, **spiritually reframe** it. See how even suffering may be drawing you toward something deeper. Prayer, Torah, and mystical reflection can transform what feels deadly into something that gives life.

Chassidic Story:

A man once came to Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz, tormented by shameful thoughts he could not banish. He wept, “I feel poisoned. Even when I learn Torah, it creeps back.”

Rabbi Pinchas did not scold him. He simply said: “Moshe did not crush the serpent. He lifted it. And only then did they live.”

The man asked, “But how do I lift what is so low?”

Rabbi Pinchas replied, “By looking upward *through* it—not away from it. Let the very thing that poisons you remind you of your source. Raise your heart to *El Chai*.”

Years later, the man returned, a transformed soul, and said: “When I stopped running from my serpent, I found it was leading me up the mountain.”

Source: *Zohar III 38a, Pri Etz Chaim Shaar Chag HaMilos*, and oral teachings from disciples of Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz. **END NOTE]**

Siman #340

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<p>In the haftarah: “And Yiftach the Gileadite... and empty men gathered around him...” (Judges 11:6).</p>	<p>בְּהַפְטָרָה: וַיִּפְתַּח הַגִּלְעָדִי וְגו' וַיִּתְלַקְטוּ אֵלָיו אֲנָשִׁים (רִיקִים וְגו') (שְׁפָטִים י"א, ו')</p>
<p>In the name of the Rav, of blessed memory: Behold, in all things in the world, there is an intermediate bridge:</p>	<p>בְּשֵׁם הַרֵב ז"ל: הִנֵּה בְּכֹל הַדְּבָרִים שֶׁבְּעוֹלָם יֵשׁ מְמַצֵּעַ קֶצֶץ"ח</p>
<p>Between the inanimate and the vegetative – the Kiryelin (moss) (Zohar 199);</p>	<p>בֵּין דּוּמָם לְצוּמָח – קִירְיֵלִין קֶצֶט</p>
<p>Between vegetative and animal – the Adnei haSadeh;</p>	<p>בֵּין צוּמָח לְחַי – אֲדֵנֵי הַשָּׂדֶה</p>
<p>Between animal and speaker – the monkey;</p>	<p>בֵּין חַי לְמַדְבָּר – קוֹף</p>
<p>Between the nations and Israel – converts;</p>	<p>בֵּין אוֹמוֹת לְיִשְׂרָאֵל – גֵּרִים</p>
<p>Between Written Torah and Oral Torah – the kri and ksiv;</p>	<p>בֵּין תּוֹרָה שֶׁבְּכַתָּב לְתּוֹרָה שֶׁבְּעַל פֶּה – קְרִי וְכְתִיב</p>
<p>Between Shabbos and weekday – Tosefes Shabbos;</p>	<p>בֵּין שַׁבָּת לְחוֹל – תּוֹסֵפֶת שַׁבְּתָרָא</p>
<p>Between this world and the next – Eliyahu;</p>	<p>בֵּין עוֹלָם הַזֶּה לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא – אֱלִיָּהוּ</p>
<p>Between Shabbos and the weekday that follows it – Eliyahu;</p>	<p>בֵּין שַׁבָּת לְחוֹל שְׁלֹאֲחֶרְיוֹ – אֱלִיָּהוּ</p>
<p>Because Shabbos is the world of souls, and weekday is the world of the body.</p>	<p>כִּי שַׁבָּת – עוֹלָם הַנְּשָׁמוֹת, וְחוֹל – עוֹלָם הַגּוּף</p>
<p>Therefore we say “Eliyahu” on Motzei Shabbos.</p>	<p>"עַל כֵּן אוֹמְרִים בְּמוֹצָ"שׁ "אֱלִיָּהוּ</p>
<p>Between Lashon HaKodesh and other languages – Targum;</p>	<p>בֵּין לְשׁוֹן הַקֹּדֶשׁ לְשָׂאֵר לְשׁוֹנוֹת – תַּרְגוּם</p>
<p>Between Eretz Yisrael and outside the Land – Gilad and the other side of the Jordan;</p>	<p>בֵּין אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל לְחוּ"ל – גִּלְעָד וְעַבְרַת הַיַּרְדֵּן</p>
<p>Between the Upper Gan Eden and the Lower Gan Eden – that pillar through which souls ascend.</p>	<p>בֵּין גַּן עֵדֶן הָעֶלְיוֹן לְגַן עֵדֶן הַתַּחְתּוֹן – אוֹתוֹ עַמּוּד שְׁעוֹלוֹת בוֹ הַנְּשָׁמוֹת</p>
<p>(Perhaps he enumerated more intermediaries), the Rav.</p>	<p>אוֹלֵי חֻשָּׁב עוֹד מְמַצְעִים (רַב)</p>
<p>And the matter is: why is an intermediary needed? Because for all spiritual levels, ascension is necessary—and their ascension is through the intermediary.</p>	<p>וְהַעֲנֵנוּ לָמָּה צָרִיף מְמַצֵּעַ, כִּי כָּל הַמַּדְרָגוֹת צָרִיף לָהֶם עֲלִיָּה, וְעֲלִיתָם עַל יְדֵי הַמְּמַצֵּעַ</p>
<p>And I believe he said regarding the Upper Gan Eden that the Lower Gan Eden is considered in relation to it like a mustard seed.</p>	<p>וְכַמְדָּמָה שֶׁאָמַר לְעַנְּנוּ ג"ע עֲלִיוֹן, שֶׁג"ע תַּחְתּוֹן הוּא, נִחְשָׁב לְגַבִּיָּה כְּגַרְגַר תַּרְדֵּל</p>
<p>Therefore it is possible for everyone to ascend through that pillar, and it is called the “pillar of Yesod.”</p>	<p>עַל כֵּן יָכוֹל לְהִיּוֹת לְכָל עֲלִיָּה עַל יְדֵי הָעַמּוּד, וְנִקְרָא עַמּוּד הַיְסוּד</p>
<p>Therefore one must read the parsha twice in Mikra and once in Targum—because by reading the parsha twice in Torah (Lashon HaKodesh) and once in Targum, it causes the holy tongue to outweigh the translation.</p>	<p>וְעַל כֵּן צָרִיף לְהַעֲבִיר הַפְּרָשָׁה שְׁנַיִם מִקְרָא וְאַחַד תַּרְגוּם, שֶׁעַל יְדֵי שְׁקוּרֵין הַפְּרָשָׁה ב' פְּעָמִים בַּתּוֹרָה בְּלְשׁוֹן הַקֹּדֶשׁ וּפְעַם אַחַת תַּרְגוּם, מְכַרִּיעַ הַלְשׁוֹן קֹדֶשׁ עַל הַתַּרְגוּם</p>

Reb Pinchas of Koretz

Imrie Pinchas Parshas Chukas

And through this, the souls of converts also have elevation, for they too are intermediaries like Targum—understand this.	ועל ידי זה יש עליות לנשמות הגרים שהם גם כן ממציע כמו תרגום, והבין.
And this is what is stated in the Gemara (Megillah 3a): “The Targum of the Torah was said by Onkelos the convert from the mouths of Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua”—“from the mouths” specifically.	וזה שאמרו בגמרא (מגילה ג ע"א): תרגום של** תורה אונקלוס הגר אמרו מפי רבי אליעזר ורבי יהושע — מפי דיקא
That is, Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua completed their weekly Torah portions with shnayim mikra v'echad targum, and through this they elevated the soul of Onkelos, and he converted.	ר"ל רבי אליעזר ורבי יהושע השלימו כף פרשיותיהם שנים מקרא ואחד תרגום, שעל ידי זה הוציאו נשמת אונקלוס ונתגייר
And behold, Yiftach was counted among the judges of Israel, and he was among the men of Kabbalah, and certainly he possessed the entire Torah.	והנה יפתח נמנה בין שופטי ישראל, והוא מכלל אנשי הקבלה, ובנדאי היתה בידו כל התורה
And he dwelled in Gilad, which is an intermediate zone as mentioned above, and since he had the whole Torah, he was able to tip the scale toward that side.	וישב בגלעד שהוא ממצע כנ"ל, ועל ידי שהיתה בידו כל התורה הכריע בזה הצד
Therefore “and empty men gathered around him and went out with him”—this was an elevation for the souls of converts.	לכן "ויתלקטו אליו אנשים ריקים ויצאו עמו" — שהוא עליה לנשמות גרים

[NOTE Summary:

Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz offers a sweeping metaphysical insight: the world is built on **intermediaries**—bridges that connect different realms. Between each pair of opposing realities—body and soul, weekday and Shabbos, Torah Shebichtav and Torah Sheba'al Peh—there exists a transitional element that allows for elevation. For instance, **Targum** (Aramaic translation) serves as the bridge between Hebrew and other languages, while **Gilad** (Yiftach’s region) stands between Eretz Yisrael and the diaspora. Even **converts** are described as spiritual intermediaries between the nations and Israel.

Why are such intermediaries necessary? Because true ascent from one spiritual level to the next can only occur through a point of contact between them. Without a bridge, no crossing is possible. Rabbi Pinchas highlights that the **pillar of Yesod** (foundation) functions as such a connector between lower and higher Gan Eden, allowing souls to rise.

This concept explains why we read the Torah **twice in Hebrew and once in Targum**: this practice empowers the “holy tongue” over foreign speech and, more profoundly, enables the souls of **converts**—who resemble Targum in spiritual role—to be uplifted. He connects this to the statement that **Onkelos the convert** wrote the Targum “from the mouths of” Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua. It wasn’t only intellectual—it was an **elevation of his soul** through their Torah reading.

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Yiftach, though often judged as an outsider, dwelled in **Gilad**, a physical and spiritual intermediary zone. Because he possessed the entire Torah, he could elevate even the **empty men who gathered around him**—interpreted here as the souls of future converts, drawn upward through his unique position in the chain of spiritual transformation.

Practical Takeaway:

Never dismiss the “in-between.” Transitional spaces—times, people, languages, or spiritual states—are not just gaps between destinations. They are the **only pathways** to ascent. A convert, a translator, a borderline region, or even the moments between Shabbos and weekday can carry immense spiritual potential.

In your own life, identify the **bridges**: moments of hesitation, spiritual ambiguity, or unfamiliar territory. Instead of fearing them, use them as stepping stones. Torah, when engaged with fully and sincerely (like reading it with both repetition and Targum), can uplift not only ourselves but even souls waiting in the margins.

Chassidic Story:

Rabbi Pinchas once met a man struggling with his Jewish identity. He had grown up as a non-Jew and converted later in life, but he still felt like he didn't fully belong. “I'm stuck between two worlds,” he said, tears in his eyes.

Rabbi Pinchas looked at him and said, “That's not a flaw. That's a calling. Every ladder must have a rung that connects earth and heaven. That rung is you.”

The man later became a devoted teacher for other converts and seekers—because he understood better than anyone the sacredness of being in-between.

Source: Based on *Zohar* (Zohar Chadash 199, Adnei HaSadeh), *Megillah 3a*, and oral teachings recorded by disciples of Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz. **END NOTE]**