

Pathways from Parashas Mishpatim

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Pathways

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Crossing the Narrow Bridge with Rebbe Nachman and his students.
In and out of the world of Talmud, Torah, Chassidim, and Mysticism

KORACH'S MISTAKE: DOTS

By Chay Bergman

"The earth opened its mouth, swallowing them and their households, along with all the men who were with Korach, and their property" (Parashas 16:32).

"A serpent passes in a valley and the refuse is gone, but the tephilah is the foundation of the world" (Pirkei 1:23).

Last week we talked about some benefits of *Chochmas* (Talmud being "chochma") in a mishka. This is a great time to talk about a disadvantage, perhaps the disadvantage of being disconnected from teshuvah.

My observant (Talmud study person) recently reminded me we cannot study Torah, even (or especially) the nearby reading, superficially. We must realize there is much more than what meets the eye. We must

realizations you reach depend very much on what it is you want from life. The letters, the body of the Torah and how it is individualized, cannot be safely separated from the *nefesh*, the soul and desire to live it as it should be lived, the way the greatest talmidim live it.

That was Korach's fatal error. He thought the letters, which all Jews and every Jew has equally, were also the soul of the Torah. "I have the letters. I—anyone who sees his *nefesh*—can have the life these letters contain and how to live it. We are all holy enough. We do not need a leader!"

But it isn't so. The letters of the holy Torah receive their life, their soul, only via the *nefesh*. The *nefesh* determines the position, clarity and longevity of the talmidim, and of its military talmidim, who stand (or at least, want to stand) in line up in the Torah's ranks. We know that just as we need a Master Rebbe to give us the Torah's letters, the body we need him for the *nefesh*, the soul, to enter to have a Torah talmidim.

SIDEPATH

On the *nefesh* of Shol

Sometimes one asks Rebbe Nachman who the *nefesh* Shol "he held his daughter, Salomon (166), in each high season. The *nefesh* explained, "My great-grandfather advised his daughter so much because she was about constantly with a heart full of longing for God. She always asked herself: 'What can I do to please the One Above?'" (Seder Sippur Simcha, Vol. 2, 172).

Our Sages declare that Korach was a *breicha*. He was *hagbi*, which is inconsistent with *Makay* (AM 1, 10-9).

The Difference Between *Akava* and *Korach*