

Pathways from Parashas Mishpatim

written by Yossi Katz
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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 Torah, Chassidim and Mishtetim

KORACH'S MISTAKE: DOTS

By Chayim 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 wallow and the refuse is gone, but the tunic is the foundation of the world" (Pirkei 11:21).

Last week we talked about some benefits of *Chochmas* (Tosafos), being "new" in a world. This is a good time to talk about a disadvantage, perhaps the disadvantage, of being disconnected from tradition.

My observant (Torah study person) recently reminded me we cannot study Torah, even (or especially) the newly made, separately. 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 *avodah*, the soul and desire to live it as it should be lived, the way the greatest *hasidim* 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 *avodah*—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 in the *avodah*. The *avodah*—the emotion and the positive desire and longing of the *hasidim*, and of an ordinary *Yehidim*, who want (or at least, want to want) to live up to the Torah's ideals. We know that just as we need a *Melach* *Yehidim* to give us the Torah's letters, the body we need him for the *avodah*, the soul, to enter to have a Torah *hasidim*.

SIDEPATH

On the *avodah* of *Shul*

Sometimes one asks Rebbe Nachman who the *Real Shul* "he held his daughter, *Selima* (184), in each high season. The *Hasidim* 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?'" (Sich Sayyef *Sefer*, Vol. 2, 172).

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

The Difference Between *Avodah* and *Korach*