

# Pathways From Parshat Acharei Mot – Kedoshim

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## Pathways

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Crossing the Narrow Bridge with  
Rebbe Nachman and his students.

In and out of the way of Talmud, Torah, Chumot and Minhagim

### KORACH'S MISTAKE: DOTS

By Chayyim Shtetman

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

"A serpent passes in a valley and the refuse is gone, but the tsebitz is the foundation of the world" (Pirkei 13:21).

Last week we talked about some benefits of Ahavasmitos (Tzavah) being "neutral" in a neutral. This is a good week to talk about a disadvantage, perhaps the disadvantage of being disconnected from tsebitz.

My observance (Tzavah study partner) recently reminded me we cannot study Torah, even (or especially) the weekly reading, superficially. We must realize there is much more than what meets the eye. We must

realize that you must depend every minute 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 outside, the soul and desire to live it as it should be lived, the way the greatest tzadikim 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 neck—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 outside. The outside circumstances are the positive desire and longing of the tzadikim, and of an ordinary Yehude, who want (or at least, want to want) to live up to the Torah's ideals. We know that just as we need a Master Hashem to give us the Torah's letters, the body we need Him for the outside, the soul, to enter to have a Torah life.

### SIDEPATH

On the outside of life

Someone once asked Rebbe Nachman who the real Shem-Tov had his daughter, Shulamit (184), in such high esteem. The Rebbe 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?'" (Sichot Seder, Vol. 2, 172).

Our Sages declare that Korach was a heretic. He was haughty, which is inconsistent with Midat Seder (AM 1, 10-9).

The Difference Between Ahava and Korach