

Pathways From Parshat Lekh Lekha

written by breslov.org
October 26, 2012

Pathways

Parshat Ki Tavo 5771 • Vol. 1 10611

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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 Rosen

"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 tzeitzit is the foundation of the world" (Pirkei 13:21).

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

My observance (Tzavah study person) recently reminded me we cannot study Torah, even (or especially) the words reading, especially. 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 *baalei da'at* 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 *baal da'at*!"

But it isn't so. The letters of the body Torah receive their life, their soul, only in the *avodah*. The *avodah* determines the position, desire and longing of the *baalei da'at*, 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 *baal da'at* to give us the Torah's letters, the body we need him for the *avodah*, the soul, to enter to have a Torah *baalei da'at*.

SIDEPATH

On the *avodah* of *Shul*

Sometimes one asked Rebbe Nachman who the *baal da'at* "he" held his daughter, *Selima* (184), in such high esteem. The *baalei da'at* 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?'" (Sichle Sijje, *Avodah*, Vol. 2, 172).

Our Sages declare that Korach was a *baal da'at*. He was *baal da'at*, which is inconsistent with *Moshe* (AM 1, 10-9).

The Difference Between *Avodah* and *Korach*