

Pathways From Parshat Vayeilekh

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Crossing the Narrow Bridge with Rebbe Nachman and his students.

In and Honor of Rabbi Tzvi Hershman and his students

Pathways

KORACH'S MISTAKE: DOTS

By Chay Hershman

"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 wilderness and the victim is gone, but the trail is in the imagination of the world" (Pirkei 11:21).

Last week we talked about some benefits of Chassidut (Chassid, being "happy") in a hassid. This is a great week to talk about a disadvantage, perhaps the disadvantage, of being disconnected from hassidim.

My chavrusa (Tzvi 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

conclusions you reach depend very much on what it is you start from. 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 hassidim 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 soul—can have the life these letters contain and how to live it. We are all holy enough. We do not need a hassidim."

But it isn't so. The letters of the holy Torah receive their life, their soul, only via the outside. The outside circumstances are the positive desire and longing of the hassidim, and of an ordinary Chassid, 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 Rebbe 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 service of God

Sometimes one asked Rebbe Nachman who the Real God? He told his daughter, Rebekah (1841), in such high terms. The Rebbe explained, "My great-grandfather advised his daughter to reach 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?' (Shem Sayy, Shomer, Vol. 2, 172).

Our Sages declare that Korach was a heretic. He was haughty, which is inconsistent with Hassidut (SA 1, 10-1).

The Difference Between Above and Below