

Pathways Vayishlach

From

Parshat

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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 Chay Shraga

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

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

My observant (Talmud study person) recently reminded me we cannot study Torah, even (or especially) the merely 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 *avodah*, the soul and desire to live it as it should be lived, the way the greatest *halakhist* 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 *halakhist*!"

But it isn't so. The letters of the holy Torah receive their life, their soul, only via the *avodah*. The *avodah*, the emotion and the positive desire and longing of the *halakhist*, and of an ordinary *Yid* who wants (or at least, wants to want) to live up to the Torah's ideals. We know that just as we need a *Melach* *Rabbanan* to give us the Torah's letters, the body we need him for the *avodah*, the soul, to enter to have a Torah *halakha*.

SIDEPATH

On the *avodah* of *Shul*

Sometimes one asked Rebbe Nachman who the *Shul* Shem "he held his daughter, Salomon (184), in each high season. The *halakha* explained, "My great-grandfather advised his daughter so much because she was about constantly with a heart full of longing for *Shul*. She always asked herself, 'What can we do to please the One Above?'" (Shtetl Sippur *Avodah*, Vol. 2, 172).

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

The Difference Between *Avodah* and *Korach*