

"And they travelled from the mountain of Hashem." (10:33)

In *Shabbos (116a)* the *Talmud* interprets this *pasuk* to mean, "They ceased to follow after Hashem and veered away." *Tosfos* explains that they left *Har Sinai* "like a child who races from the classroom at the end of the day." This seems enigmatic! Were they not to follow the *Aron Ha'Kodesh* when it travelled? What was their sin? Indeed, the *Ramban* states that had this not happened, they would have merited immediate entrance into *Eretz Yisrael*. Certainly, the mere fact of departing from *Har Sinai* was not considered inappropriate. On the contrary, they were travelling towards their goal, entrance into *Eretz Yisrael*.

Horav M. Gifter, Shlita, offers a profound insight into the concept of one's total immersion in *Torah* study. This explanation sheds light upon *Bnei Yisrael's* sin in leaving *Har Sinai* with the wrong attitude. *Bnei Yisrael* were camped before *Har Sinai* as one would be firmly ensconced in a *Bais Ha'Midrash*. When they were commanded to leave their encampment, they should have risen up and left reflecting the same spiritual intensity with which they sat studying *Torah* in Hashem's "classroom." In contrast with their sublime level of exposure to Hashem, however, their attitude in leaving *Har Sinai* was indicative of a "child running from the classroom." A child is excited as he waits to leave the disciplined framework of the classroom. He eagerly awaits the moment when he is dismissed to go outside to play. When he returns, it is a new beginning. The learning is not the same as before the interruption.

This is the *Torah's* message. A *Ben Torah* must take the *Bais Ha'Midrash* with him wherever he goes. There is no "recess" from *Torah* study. Even a momentary relaxing of the strict discipline of *Torah* immersion can lead to a spiritual downfall, as noted from the subsequent sins committed by *Bnei Yisrael*. Had they not been guilty of this "lighthearted" attitude when turning away from Hashem, they would have been worthy of entering *Eretz Yisrael* immediately. We should be careful to make the fiery passion which burns within us in the *Bais Ha'Midrash*, the discipline and self-control which governs us in the *shul*, an integral part of our lives wherever we go.