

They journeyed from the wilderness of Sinai and they camped in Kivroth HaTaavah. (33:16)

Kivros HaTaavah, "the graves of craving," alludes to a place where many Jews died as a result of their craving for meat. **Horav Tzvi Pesach Frank, zl**, suggests that this *pasuk* relates more than *Klal Yisrael's* geographical journey. The *pasuk* implies that one who distances himself from *Torah* will ultimately end up in the clutches of *taavah*, lust. The only safeguard to keep an individual from being swallowed up by his physical desires is his immersion in the sea of *Torah*. Without *Torah*, one is subject to the whims and fancies of his *yetzer hora*.

Horav Frank bases his thesis upon the *Talmud* in *Bava Metzia* 85b where *Chazal* question, "Why was the land destroyed?" This is a reference to the destruction of the first *Bais Hamikdash* and *Klal Yisrael's* ensuing exile. The response comes from Hashem, Who replies, "Because they abandoned My *Torah*." Why does the *Talmud* seek a reason for the *churban*? Do not *Chazal* in the *Talmud Yoma* clearly state that it was the three sins of robbery, murder and adultery that catalyzed the destruction of the *Bais Hamikdash*? Why seek additional reasons? This question leads us to believe that *Chazal* mean something else when they ask this question. They wonder what it was that caused *Klal Yisrael* to fall to such a nadir of sin. What instigated their moral and spiritual breakdown to the point that they resorted to robbery, murder, and adultery? The answer, says Hashem, is their abandonment of the *Torah*. This is the primary source of sin. Once the protective shield of *Torah* is removed, one is exposed to the harsh elements. *Torah* is much more than a source of knowledge; it is our lifeblood through which lives are sustained.