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**ERETZ ISRAEL
BULLETIN 203**

**WORLD ALLIANCE FOR THE CORRECTION
OF THE SIN OF THE SPIES
“LIVING IN ERETZ ISRAEL IS THE EQUIVALENT OF ALL THE
MITZVOT OF THE TORAH” (SIFRE, PARASHAT REE)**

LEARN THE LESSON AND DO NOT FOLLOW ON THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE SPIES

**AVRAHAM AVINU, WHO SYMBOLIZES KINDNESS AND
ONENESS WITH HASHEM, IS THE SAME AVRAHAM WHO
LEADS A SMALL GROUP OF STUDENTS TO WAR AGAINST
THE FOUR MOST POWERFUL KINGS OF HIS TIME.**

The same Yaakov who learned for 14 years without sleep in the Academy of Shem lifts a boulder which takes many strong shepherds to raise, and overcomes an angel in a hand-to-hand battle. Moshe Rabbenu, the humblest of men, and the most erudite in Torah, leads Israel to war against the Amorites and personally slays Og, King of Bashan, a mighty giant. Joshua, who never left off studying Torah in the tent of Moshe's yeshiva, leads the armies of Israel against Amalek, and against the seven nations in the conquest of Canaan. Samson, a Nazir from birth, and a prophet, decimates the Philistine enemy with the jawbone of an ass, The prophet Samuel, the spiritual giant who held the nation together in the troublesome days of Israel's first Kingdom, equal in stature to both Moshe and Aharon together, is also no stranger to valor. When King Saul fails to annihilate the nation of Amalek completely, Samuel takes a sword and rends Agag, the Amalek leader, asunder. And King David, the sweet singer of Israel, author of Psalms and rhapsodies to Hashem, slices off the foreskins of two-hundred Philistines to win the King's daughter.

How can it be that these heroes of holiness are outstanding warriors, whose actions seem often barbaric? In drawing our attention to this seeming contradiction, Rabbi Kook is not only forcing us to reflect on our forefathers, he is forcing us to reflect on ourselves. Abraham and Moshe and David attained a paragon of Kedusha which every Jew longs to emulate. Our Sages tell us that all of the enemies that King David killed were considered holy Korbanot by Hashem, like sacrifices brought to the altar. If so, the contradiction we face when we remember their achievements in war is a misunderstanding on our part alone. And indeed, during nearly two-thousand years of Galut, our understanding of ourselves and our conception of Kedusha became severely distorted. Instead of being strong and proud lions of Judah, we became victims. Without our own land, we became scattered and oppressed. Without our own nationhood, we were stripped of our backbone and valor. Like in the past, the Torah student studied all day in the Beit Midrash, but in the Exile, when Jewish lives were threatened, he no longer had the recourse of arming himself for battle. Jews could be rabbis, doctors, lawyers, bankers, merchants, or artists, but soldiering and rifles were the domain of the goyim. Without our own land to fight for, and our own borders to defend, the Torah lost its earthly, national foundation. Judaism was reduced to being a spiritual message, restricted to study, individual mitzvot, and prayer. FROM WAR AND PEACE, THE TEACHINGS OF RAV AVRAHAM YTZCHAK HAKOHEN KOOK ZTKL

**PLEASE HASHEM SAVE US FROM THE SIN OF THE SPIES WHO SPOKE LASHON
HARA AGAINST ERETZ ISRAEL. LET US CORRECT THE SIN OF “THEY DESPISED
THE DESIRABLE LAND” (TEHILLIM 106) FOR IN THIS WAY WE BRING CLOSER
THE COMPLETE GEULA WHEN YOUR NAME WILL BE SANCTIFIED IN THE
WORLD AND YOUR NATION ISRAEL SHALL BE EXALTED AND YOUR BEIT HA
MIKDASH REBUILT MAY THIS BE SOON IN OUR DAYS, AMEN YEHI RATZON**