

BSD

**ERETZ ISRAEL
BULLETIN 243**

**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

FROM THE WRITINGS OF RABBI MEIR DAVID KAHANE ZTKL

SELF-SACRIFICE IS THE ULTIMATE PROOF OF TRUST IN G-D, IT IS BITACHON IN ITS FULLEST FORM. LET A JEW NOT EVADE HIS DUTY, CLAIMING THAT TODAY THERE IS NO DIVINE REVELATION, NO HEAVENLY VOICE OR PROPHECY OF ANY OTHER SORT BY WHICH G-D COULD DECREE THE NEED FOR AN ACT OF SELF-SACRIFICE.

Surely, the whole Torah, all the deeds of our ancestors and of the judges and prophets, and the words of our sages, were meant to be a lamp unto our feet and to show us the path we must follow. These deeds and G-d's ways were set down in our sages' homiletics as eternal guidelines, presenting our duty regarding how we must act when there is no Divine Revelation.

Why did previous generations merit miracles while we do not? If it is a matter of learning, in R. Yehudah's day only Nezikin was learned, while we learn all six orders of the Mishnah. When R. Yehudah confronted the case of the woman who pickled vegetables in a pot (Taharot 2:1) – or some say the case of olives pickled in their leaves (Oktzin 2:1) - he said, "This is as hard for me to explain as the most difficult cases of my teachers Rav and Shmuel were for them." We, by contrast, have established thirteen yeshivot for the study of Oktzin [the last tractate of the order of Taharot]. All the same, R. Yehudah would no sooner remove his shoes [to pray for rain] and rain would fall, while we cry out and no one listens." Abaye responded, "Our predecessors sacrificed their lives for Kiddush Hashem, but we do not."

Here then, to our great chagrin, is the cause of the tragedy and trouble that beset the Jewish People, despite the proliferation of Torah study and yeshivot: G-d demands complete bitachon - bitachon that expresses itself not just in lectures on moral refinement, but in deeds of self-sacrifice to sanctify G-d's name, so as to prove our faith and trust in Him. Woe to our orphan generation, in which even Torah scholars have learned how to evade sacrificing their lives for Kiddush Hashem, with

the miserable claim of "pikuach nefesh," that they are avoiding "danger to life." With this, they have already set firmly in our hearts the fear of the non-Jew and the fear of danger, in effect nullifying the need and duty to endanger ourselves and sacrifice our lives for G-d's name. There is no greater proof of the weakness of bitachon and the smallness of faith which reigns in this generation, a generation in which, "we are become orphans and fatherless" (Lam. 5:3).

To our sorrow, the mitzvot have become ritual. Their performance is cut off from the Divine ideas and attributes which are their theme. The practical mitzvot, both major and minor, which must certainly be kept fastidiously in fear and awe of G-d, actually serve only to symbolize G-d's ideas and attributes and to crystallize them. Without these, the mitzvot become empty vessels, providing no spiritual elevation. Of this Isaiah said (29:13-14):

The L-rd said, "Forasmuch as this people draw near, and with their mouth and lips do honor Me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear of Me is a commandment of men learned by rote [melumadah], therefore, will I again work a wondrous deed among this people. The wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the prudence of their prudent men shall be hid."

I believe the correct interpretation here is that G-d is complaining about Torah study and observance becoming mere habit, in which we go do mitzvot automatically without thinking, without pondering the Divine attributes and ideas behind them. As a result, fundamental Jewish concepts are forgotten. The word melumadah connotes "habit," as in, "Ephraim is a heifer well broken" (Hosea 10:11), referring to a heifer that has gotten used to following a certain path and no other. The same applies in, "They have accustomed [limdu] their tongue to speak lies" Uer. 9:4). In our day as well, Torah study has become complacent habit, devoid of the living spirit of self-sacrifice which expresses true trust in G-d.

**REMOVING THE EXILE FROM ISRAEL IS TEN TIMES
HARDER THAN REMOVING ISRAEL FROM THE EXILE,
TO OUR SORROW, THIS DISEASE HAS EVEN
SMITTEN TORAH SCHOLARS.**

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