

BSD

**ERETZ ISRAEL
BULLETIN 249**

**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

JEWS ALWAYS SOUGHT TO FIND REST IN THE EXILE

**WE MUST NEVER FORGET THAT ERETZ ISRAEL WAS GIVEN TO THE
JEWISH PEOPLE NOT AS A PRIVILEGE THAT THEY COULD FORGO BY
SAYING, "WE DO NOT WISH IT," BUT AS A DUTY THAT CANNOT BE
DISPENSED WITH. YET FROM TIME IMMEMORIAL, WHENEVER ISRAEL
ARRIVED TO A CONVENIENT, ALLURING EXILE, THEY LOATHED THE
LAND OF DELIGHT AND SOUGHT TO FIND REST IN THE EXILE. ONLY
WHEN THE NATIONS' HATRED APPEARED WAS THERE AN
AWAKENING TO LEAVE THE EXILE.**

We find this with Jacob, himself, for after Joseph was born, he already planned to return to Eretz Israel: "After Rachel had given birth to Joseph Jacob said to Laban: 'Let me leave. I would like to go home to my own land'" (Gen. 30:25). This was after he had worked fourteen years and was still poor. Following is S'forno (Ibid.):

He did not then possess flocks, having arrived with just his staff. Even so, he still had enough to live on with his wives and his sons, at least enough to buy food and clothing for the journey

Laban then asked him to name his price, Jacob said what he said, and a miracle occurred and he became rich. Six more years passed from the time Jacob informed Laban of his desire to return to Canaan, as Jacob told him afterward: "Twenty years now I have worked for you in your estate - fourteen years for your two daughters and six years for some of your flocks" (Gen. 31:41).

We have to wonder: Why did Jacob remain six years after he asked to leave? It would seem to me that once he began to acquire wealth, he already wished to acquire more, until he became exceedingly wealthy: "The man became tremendously wealthy. He had many sheep and goats, as well as slaves, slave-girls, camels and donkeys" (Gen. 30:43).

The evil impulse is very hard to withstand. Our sages said, "It is precisely the pile of flesh which stirs up the lion" (Berachot 32a), and, "a full stomach is a kind of evil" (Ibid.). Since he had already become wealthy, it no longer bothered him that he was living outside the Land. For that reason, G-d changed Laban's heart and the heart of his sons against Jacob, so that their hatred would make Jacob understand that he must leave: "Jacob began to hear that Laban's sons were saying, 'Jacob has taken everything belonging to our father'... When Jacob saw Laban in person, Laban did not behave to him as he did before" (Gen. 31:1-2).

Even then, Jacob did not rise to return to Eretz Israel, and G-d had to tell him, "Go back to your birthplace and the land of your fathers. I will be with you" (Gen. 31:3). Our sages comment (Bereshit Rabbah, 73:12), "G-d said to him, 'Your father-in-Law is not smiling on you, yet you remain here? Go back to the land of your fathers!'" From this we see that the blight of exilic wealth and ease makes us forget our duty to live in Eretz Israel.

Jacob's sons, likewise, wished to settle down in non-Jewish lands, touching off the assimilation and adoption of non-Jewishness which have lasted until our own times and which have unfortunately made our pristine Torah unclear to most Jews. Thus it says, "[The people of] Israel lived in Egypt, in the Goshen district. They took possession of it, and were fruitful and multiplied exceedingly" (Gen. 47:27). How precious are the words of the brilliant K'li Yakar in his comments on this verse:

This whole verse levels an accusation against the children of Israel. G-d decreed, "Your descendants will be foreigners [ger]" (Gen. 15:13) i.e., temporary sojourners], and they wished to be toshavim [permanent residents], when being sojourners had been decreed. Thus the verse blames them for this residence, in which they sought possession of a land not theirs... So completely did they settle in that they did not wish to leave Egypt, and G-d had to take them out with a strong hand. Those who still did not wish to leave, died in the three days of intense darkness.

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