

BSD

**ERETZ ISRAEL
BULLETIN 252**

**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
OUR SAGES SAID FURTHER (TOSEFTA, AVODAH ZARAH,
5:2): A PERSON SHOULD LIVE IN ERETZ ISRAEL, EVEN IN A
CITY WHOSE MAJORITY IS IDOLATERS, AND NOT OUTSIDE
THE LAND, EVEN IN A CITY THAT IS ENTIRELY JEWISH. THIS
TEACHES THAT LIVING IN ERETZ ISRAEL IS OF EQUAL
WEIGHT TO ALL THE MITZVOT OF THE TORAH COMBINED.
IF SOMEONE IS BURIED IN ERETZ ISRAEL, IT IS AS THOUGH
HE IS BURIED UNDER THE ALTAR.**

One should not leave Eretz Israel unless the cost of wheat rises to two se'ah for a sela. R. Shimon said, "This refers to where one lacks the wherewithal to buy it, but if he has the wherewithal, then even if it is one se'ah for a sela, he should not leave."

Likewise, R. Shimon used to say, "Elimelech was one of the great luminaries of the generation and leaders of the community, and because he left Eretz Israel, both he and his sons died of hunger, while all of Israel survived on their land, as it says, 'All the city was astir concerning them' (Ruth 1:19). This teaches that the whole city survived, while he and his sons died of hunger.

"Now then, when it says, 'I shall return safely to my father's house' (Gen. 28:21), why should it have to add, 'Then the L-rd will be for me a G-d' ([bid.]? Yet the Torah says, 'To give you the Land of Canaan, to be a G-d to you' (Lev. 25:38). As long as you are in Canaan, I shall be for you a G-d. If you are not in Canaan, I am not for you a G-d...

"Likewise, David said, 'For they have driven me out this day, that I should not cling to the inheritance of the L-rd [saying, 'Go serve other gods' (I Sam. 26:19). Would it occur to you that King David was an idolater? Rather, he expounded as follows: 'Whoever abandons Eretz Israel in peacetime and leaves it, it is as though he is worshipping idols, as it says, "I will plant them in this land in truth [with all My heart and with all My soul" (Jer. 32:41). If they are not on this land, they are not truly 'planted before Me,' not with all My heart and not with all My soul."

The Talmud likewise said (Ketuvot 110b):

The Rabbis learned: One should always live in Eretz Israel, even in a city whose majority is idolaters, and he should not live outside Eretz Israel, even in a city with a Jewish majority. Whoever lives in Eretz Israel is like someone who has a G-d, and whoever lives outside of Eretz Israel is like someone who has no G-d, as it says, "To give you the Land of Canaan, to be a G-d to you" (Lev. 25:38).

And does anyone who does not live in the Land not have a G-d? Rather, the point is that if someone lives outside the Land, it is as though he worships idols. King David said, "For they have driven me out this day that I should not cling to the inheritance of the L-rd, saying, 'Go serve other gods'" (I Sam. 26:19). Did anyone tell King David to serve other gods? Rather, this teaches that whoever lives outside the Land, it is as though he worships idolatry.

Our sages also established that a husband can force his wife to go up to Eretz Israel because of the mitzvah of living in Eretz Israel, and a woman can force her husband, and even a slave can force his master. We, likewise, learn in the Mishnah (Ketuvot 110b): "Everyone can compel moving to Eretz Israel, but they cannot compel others to leave it." The Talmud comments, "'Everyone can compel...': Including slaves." And Rashi comments, "If someone has a Jewish slave, the slave must follow him against his will" (see Ran, *!bid.*, who brought in Ra'avad's name that even a Canaanite slave can force his master to bring him up to Eretz Israel, since even he has mitzvah obligations like a woman. See there). The Talmud continues:

The Rabbis learned: If the husband says to go up to Eretz Israel and the wife says not to, we compel her to go up. Otherwise, she may be divorced without receiving a ketuvah. If she says to go up and he says not to, we compel him to go up. Otherwise, he must divorce her and give her a ketuvah. If she says to leave Eretz Israel and he says not to, we compel her not to leave. Otherwise, she may be divorced without receiving a ketuvah. If he says to leave and she says not to, we compel him not to leave, or to divorce her and give her a ketuvah.

MOST OF THE GREAT POSKIM AGREE THAT IT IS A MITZVAH DE ORAITA

This Mishnah was codified as the law for all times by the following poskim [legal authorities]: Rambam (Ishut, 13:19-20); Rif (Ketuvot 110b); Rosh (*ibid.*, Ch. 13, siman 18); S'mag (Negative Precepts, 81); Piskei HaRid (Ketuvot, *ibid.*); Ritva, Ran and Nemukei Yosef (*ibid.*), and many, many more. This is because the mitzvah of living in Eretz Israel is a mitzvah for all times.

R. Yosef Karo ruled the same way (Shu"chan Aruch, Even HaEzer 75:3-4, see there). Following is Pit'chei Teshuvah (*ad loc.*, se'if katan 6):

Ramban counted this mitzvah among the [613] mitzvot in accordance with, "Inherit it and dwell there" (Deut. 11:31), and it has equal weight to all the other mitzvot combined (Sifri, Re'ei, 80). Also, Terumat HaDeshen in his rulings (siman 88)

emphasized the importance of this mitzvah. An exception is Tosafot on Ketuvot in the name of R. Chaim Cohen... indeed Maharit in his responsa, siman 28, and in his chidushim [original thoughts] on Ketuvot, proved that some errant student had written this idea in the name of Tosafot, and that the quotation was entirely non-authoritative. Maharit is correct, and Netivot Mishpat made the same point. It follows that all times are equal as far as fulfillment of this mitzvah, and such is clear from all the medieval and later sages who ruled that we compel the wife to go up to Eretz Israel with her husband, as in the simple text of the Mishnah...

....Our sages said (Sifri, Re'ei, 80): "You shall expel them": R. Yehudah ben Beterah and R. Matia ben Cheresh and R. Chanina ben Achi and R. Yehoshua and R. Yonatan were leaving the Land, and they arrived at Paltum and they remembered Eretz Israel. Their eyes brimmed over and their tears poured forth, and they tore their garments and they recited this verse: "You shall inherit it [the Land] and 'dwell therein, and you shall carefully keep all the laws" (Deut. 11:31-32). They returned to their place and they said, "Living in Eretz Israel equals the combined weight of all the mitzvot in the Torah."

R. Elazar ben Shamua and R. Yochanan HaSandler were walking to Netzivim to the home of R. Yehudah ben Beterah to study Torah from him, and they reached Sidon and recalled Eretz Israel. Their eyes brimmed over and their tears poured forth and they tore their garments and recited this verse: "You shall inherit it and dwell therein, and you shall carefully keep all the laws." They returned to their place, and they said, "Living in Eretz Israel equals the combined weight of all the mitzvot in the Torah."

Here our sages state explicitly that living in Eretz Israel is not just a mitzvah but such a great mitzvah that it equals all the others in their combined weight. Likewise, it emerges clearly from here that the mitzvah of living in Eretz Israel does not depend on the existence of the Temple. After all, the two anecdotes above occurred after the Destruction. All the same, the scholars of the Mishnah established that living in Eretz Israel is a mitzvah from the Torah and so is the prohibition against leaving Eretz Israel.

**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