

BSD

**ERETZ ISRAEL
BULLETIN 254**

**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
SO EFFUSIVELY DID OUR SAGES SPEAK OF LIVING IN ERETZ
ISRAEL THAT THE TALMUD STATES (KETUVOT 110B),
"WHOEVER LEAVES ERETZ ISRAEL AND DWELLS OUTSIDE
OF IT SHOULD BE VIEWED AS AN IDOLATER, AS IT SAYS,
'THEY HAVE DRIVEN ME OUT THIS DAY THAT I SHOULD NOT
CLEAVE UNTO THE L-RD'S INHERITANCE, SAYING, "GO
SERVE OTHER GODS" , (I SAM. 26:19)."**

This, and other such expressions in this regard, find their source in our having been commanded to occupy the land and to dwell in it. It is, thus, a positive precept for all time, and every single Jew is obligated in this, even during the exile, as the Talmud is known to state in many places.

**LIVING IN THE LAND IS NOT MERELY A RIGHT, BUT A DUTY THAT
CANNOT BE FORGONE. IT IS A MITZVAH, A DIVINE DECREE**

It is, thus, clear that G-d not only gave the Jewish People a special land, but also decreed that they must live in it. Living in the Land is not merely a right, but a duty that cannot be forgone. It is a mitzvah, a Divine decree, that we must live in Eretz Israel under G-d's dominion, sanctifying His name, in order to create a holy state and society which clings to mitzvot completely and properly, uninfluenced by the alien, false culture of the nations.

**AT THE SAME TIME, IT IS AN UNFORGIVABLE, LOATHSOME
SIN TO REFUSE TO LIVE IN ERETZ ISRAEL, AND TO PREFER
THE DEPRAVITY OF THE EXILE AND FOREIGN RULE. IT IS A
CHILUL HASHEM, AND ISRAEL ARE, THUS, EXPOSED TO THE
INFLUENCE OF THE NATIONS AND THEIR ABOMINATIONS.**

G-d, therefore, was angry at our ancestors in the desert when they refused to go up to Eretz Israel and called out, "Let us appoint a new leader and go back to Egypt" (Num. 14:4). Surely the spies Moshe sent out were prominent and righteous, as our sages said (Tanchuma, Shelach, 4): "Send out men" (Num. 13:2): This is in line with, "He that sends a message by the hand of a fool, severs his own feet and

imbibes damage" (Prov. 26:6). Were the spies fools? Surely the Torah said, "Send out men [anashim]," and anashim always refers to righteous persons... Rather, they were called fools only because they slandered the Land... All the same, they were great men who made themselves into fools.

Likewise, Num. 13:3, "All the men were leaders of the children of Israel" was rendered by Targum Yonatan as, "All were wise men who had been appointed heads of the children of Israel." Thus they were great and righteous men, yet they sinned in turning their backs on Eretz Israel and wishing to settle down in the exile, in Egypt. As King David said, "They scorned the Desirable Land, they believed not His word" (Ps. 106:24).

Here we see that even the great luminaries of the generation made themselves fools in that they wished to return to Egypt and they treated the Desirable Land with contempt. This happened only because they feared the might of the nations there and did not trust in G-d, as it says, "They believed not His word."

Ostensibly, they had a good argument, pikuach nefesh, i.e., they wished to prevent loss of life. The spies said of the Canaanites, "We were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so were we in their sight" (Num. 13:33). They were certain that the war against the Canaanites would be severe, and it would be hard to defeat the giants. Moreover, even if they defeated them, a few Israelites would fall. After all, we do not rely on miracles.

For that reason, these great and righteous men rendered a halachic ruling that pikuach nefesh overrides all areas of Eretz Israel; it overrides Eretz Israel in its entirety. They certainly did not intend to abandon G-d's Torah, but rather to return to Egypt and keep it there. This, however, was their sin because G-d had decreed that it was forbidden for them to dwell outside the Land, and that only in Eretz Israel could they sanctify His name and live in the isolation of Torah. For that reason, no danger to the nation overrode Eretz Israel, the only place the Jewish People could keep the Torah completely and properly.

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