

**ERETZ ISRAEL**

**BULLETIN 257**

**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  
LACK OF TRUST IN G-D'S ABILITY TO SUPPORT OR DEFEND US  
WAS FROM TIME IMMEMORIAL THE PLAGUE THAT SEVERED  
US FROM THE GREAT MITZVAH OF LIVING IN THE LAND,  
CAUSING US TO DISTORT THE MITZVAH AND CONTRIVE ALL  
SORTS OF WARPED EXCUSES TO EXEMPT OURSELVES FROM IT.**

In the days of the judges, Micah set up an idol in his house and found one person who agreed to officiate as its priest. According to our sages, this was the grandson of Moses, the son of his son Gershom. When they asked him how he had agreed to this, he answered (Bava Batra 110a): Such is the tradition I received from my grandfather's house: "Better to hire oneself out to idolatry [avodah zarah] than to depend on charity." He thought "avodah zarah" means actual worship of idols, whereas it really refers to "strange work," work [avodah] that one finds alien [zarah].

Here is a lesson for every Jew who explains his scornful treatment of the Desirable Land in terms of inability to find satisfactory employment there. Such a person, instead of going up to Eretz Israel with trust in G-d, taking any work he can find, even if alien to him, the main thing being his fulfilling the mitzvah of living in the Land, prefers to worship idols in the exile, for it says (Ketuvot 110b), "If someone lives outside the Land, it is as though he worships idols."

So terribly has the cursed exile warped our nation, that they not only see no personal duty to leave the exile but they do not at all consider it a punishment! What a perversion this is! Indeed, the Jewish People have become fools, for they do not wish to see the truth, as our sages said regarding the spies. How can they explain to themselves the words of the Men of the Great Assembly, who ordained in the festival Mussaf prayer, "Because of our sins we were banished from our land," while they expect to serve out their punishment in wealth and ease? Foolish nation!... Our sages' words on this matter spur us on (Sifri, Ekev, 43):

"The Land will not give forth its crops" (Deut. 11:17): Shall one, therefore, leave the Land and enjoy bounty? It thus says (Deut. 28:23), "The skies above you will be like brass, and the earth below you like iron" [i.e., even in the exile. After all the suffering I bring upon you, I shall exile you. Exile is severe, for it equals all other punishments combined.

**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**