

BSD

**ERETZ ISRAEL  
BULLETIN 259**

**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**

**THE GREAT SIN OF THOSE WHO REFUSE  
TO GO UP TO ERETZ ISRAEL**

Our sages also said (Sifri, Ha'azinu, 333), "R. Meir would say, 'Whoever lives in Eretz Israel, and recites the Shema morning and evening [which constitutes accepting G-d as King] and speaks the holy tongue [Hebrew] is assured a place in the World-to-Come. ,,,

Israel's refusal to cling, with faith and trust, to the mitzvah of living in Eretz Israel, a mitzvah of equal weight to all others combined, is what has brought about, and, G-d forbid, will bring about, national calamities. Our sages said (Yoma 9b):

Resh Lakish was bathing in the Jordan, and Rabbah bar bar Channah [who had come up from Babylonia to study Torah] came and offered him a hand. Resh Lakish said to him, "I swear that I hate you! [i.e., the Jews of Babylonia. Rashi comments, "By not going up to Eretz Israel in Ezra's day, they prevented the Divine Presence from returning and resting on the Second Temple"]. It says, 'If she be a wall, we will build upon her a silver turret, and if she be a door, we will enclose her with cedar boards' (Song of Songs 8:9). Had you come up to Eretz Israel like a wall [en masse] in Ezra's day, you would have been compared to silver, which cannot rot. Now that you have come up to Eretz Yisrael like doors, you are like cedar, which can rot."

**THE SIN OF BABYLONIAN JEWRY IS  
REPEATING ITSELF TODAY**

This shortsighted refusal to go up out of the exile is the primal sin which blocked the path to final redemption already during the Second Temple period. And the sin of Babylonian Jewry is repeating itself today, as exile Jewry sit tranquilly in a foreign land - Heaven help us - in blind lack of faith and vision.

It was this that the spiritual giant R. Yehudah HaLevi intended in his great philosophical work Kuzari (II:24, in which the Jewish philosopher responds to the non-Jewish king of Kuzar as follows):

You have shamed me, O King. This sin [the Jews' refusal to make the effort to return to Eretz Israel] is what has prevented us from completing what G-d ordained as the mission of the Second Temple. As it says (Zechariah 2:14), "Sing and rejoice, O

daughter of Zion; [for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in your midst, says the L-rd]." The Divine plan was all set to unfold as in the First Temple, had all agreed to return willingly. Instead, some returned and the majority, including their great leaders, remained in Babylonia, preferring exile and servitude - just so they not be separated from their homes and business interests.

Our sages also said (Shir HaShirim Rabbah, 8:[9]3):

"What shall we do for our sister?" (Song of Songs 8:8): What shall we do on the day on which was decreed [by Cyrus]: "Let whoever has crossed the Euphrates cross it. Let whoever has not crossed it not cross it"? "If she be a wall [chomah]" ([bid., v. 9): Had the Jews gone up from Babylonia en masse [he'elu chomah], the Temple would not have been destroyed a second time.

Cyrus, king of Persia, had said (II Chron. 36:23), "All the kingdoms of the earth has the L-rd, G-d of heaven, given me; and He has charged me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whosoever there is among you of all His people - the L-rd his G-d be with him -let him go up."

Had the whole nation gone up en masse when Cyrus gave permission (as set in motion by G-d), G-d would not have destroyed the Temple. Rather, the Divine Presence would have rested there forever, and G-d would have brought the Messiah, by virtue of their faith. Yet Israel, who were in Babylonia, settled down there and did not wish to return, and only a minority returned to Eretz Israel, as it says (Ezra 2:64): "The whole congregation together was 42,360." This is the pitiful sum that returned to Eretz Israel, when the vast majority of Israel chose to settle down in the depravity of exile and to scorn the Desirable Land (even among those who returned, some were Netinim, slaves or mamzerim, while a large portion of the nation's elite remained in the fleshpots).

**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