

BS`D
ERETZ ISRAEL
BULLETIN 7

*"DWELLING IN ERETZ ISRAEL IS EQUIVALENT TO
ALL THE MITZVOT OF THE TORAH" (SIFREI, PARASHAT REE)*

**THE GREAT FOOLISHNESS AND SIN OF NOT
LIVING IN ERETZ ISRAEL**

Elimelech, Machlon, and Kilion were the greatest men of their generation - leaders of the generation... Why were they punished? Because they left Eretz Israel. (Baba Basra 91)

These are the words of the Rambam in Mishne Torah. Hilchos Melachim (5, 9). "It is always forbidden to leave Eretz Israel (to go anywhere outside the Land) except in order to learn Torah, or to marry (a wife), or to be saved from the gentiles - and then to return to the Land. One may also leave for business purposes. "But to live outside the Land is forbidden, unless a famine there is so severe that a dinar's worth of wheat costs two dinars. When does this apply? When money is available, and produce expensive. However, if produce is cheap but no money can be found, one has no earnings and his pockets are empty- then he may leave for any place where he can make a profit. But, even though it is permissible to leave - it is not righteous conduct (midas chasidus). For Machlon and Kilion were the two gedolim of their generation, and left because of a terrible situation, yet they were sentenced to extinction by the Almighty."

We also find this in Midrash Tanchuma regarding Elimelech and his sons: They dwelt there [Moav] about ten years (Ruth 1:4). All of these years, the Holy One Blessed be He gave them warnings, perhaps they will repent and return to Eretz Israel. When they did not repent, He began to smite their cattle and camels. When they [still] did not realize that they must repent, they died immediately. (Tanchuma, Behar 3)

Why did Moshe Rabbenu yearn to enter Eretz Israel? Did he need to eat its fruits, or to satisfy himself from its bounty? Rather, Moshe said: The people of Israel have been given many commandments, and they cannot be fulfilled except in the Land of Israel. (Sota 14)

Please Hashem, Be good to Me according to Your will, and grant me with compassion and kindness and as a free gift, that I will soon merit to come to Eretz Israel, to the Eretz ha Keddosha, the Land our forefathers inherited, the Land which all the authentic Tzaddikim, wished with all their soul and desired to be there, and most of them came there... (Tefillah of Rebbe Nachman of Bresslov)