

**ERETZ ISRAEL  
BULLETIN 258**

**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  
WOE TO US FROM THOSE WHO DISTORT THE TORAH AND FROM  
THOSE WHOSE THOUGHTS THE EXILE HAS DISTORTED!**

Such persons quote Pesachim 87b, "G-d performed a charitable act for Israel for He dispersed them among the nations," and they derive from it that G-d's casting us into the exile was a kind, charitable gift! Could there be a more terrible perversion than that? Every child knows that the Torah constantly sets the exile before us as solely a frightful punishment for our frightful sins. In the second paragraph of the Shema, which we read twice a day, it says, "You will rapidly be lost from the good land that the L-rd is giving you" (Deut. 11:17). It was in response to this that our sages said what I quoted above. We likewise find in the terrible Tochachah of Leviticus (26:33,36), "I will scatter you among the nations and keep the sword drawn against you I will bring insecurity upon those of you who survive in your enemies' land"; and in that of Deuteronomy (28:64-65): The L-rd will scatter you among the nations, from one end of the earth to the other Among those nations you will feel insecure, and there will be no place for your foot to rest There the L-rd will make you cowardly, destroying your outlook and making life hopeless

Truthfully, the exposition above is making a simple point: It is not that the exile is something positive - surely it is the worst punishment there can be - but that it contains "charity." If G-d has already condemned us to exile, He at least dispersed us. As Rashi explains (Ibid., ), "So that the nations could not destroy them all at once."

This is only partial consolation, for even in this there is a drawback. As our sages said (Torat Kohanim, Bechukotai, Ch. 6): "I will scatter you among the nations" (Lev. 26:33): This is a hard blow for Israel, for whenever all of a country's citizens are exiled to one place, they see one another and find comfort. With you it is not so, however, for in the future I shall scatter you among the nations"

Thus, exile is an intrinsically calamitous and shocking punishment, yet there is partial consolation in our not having been exiled to one place, where it would be easy for the nations to annihilate almost all of Israel- and a drawback as well. Clearly, however, those who quote the above exposition to prove the positive side of exile are either ignoramuses or the exile has warped them.

**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**