



RABBI AARON

GOLDSCHIEDER

Editor, Torah Tidbits

Remedying An Enduring Flaw

*The underpinning of the exile and the dif-
fidence that exists in the world, is a result of
insufficiently recognizing [the value of] the
Land of Israel, her worth and her wisdom,
and we fail to remedy the sin of the spies
who spoke negatively about the Land with a
“teshuvat hamishkal” (repentance commensurate
with the sin): to declare and and share
the message to the entire world of its beauty
and grandeur, its holiness and nobility. Even
when we engage in extolling the Land - if only
we would merit to depict one-thousandth of
the splendor of the cherished Land, and of
the glory of it’s Torah, and the elevation of its
wisdom, and the ruach hakodesh (holy spirit)
that flutters within it. (Eretz Chefetz 4:1)*

Teshuvat Hamishkal is a practice prescribing a more aggressive form of repentance to make amends for a particular sin. This form of teshuva is meant to offset the transgression in cases where the causal methods of repentance seem unable to fully remedy the damage done.

Rav Kook recommends this form of *teshuva* in our ongoing efforts to make good the sin of the spies sent by Moshe. The spies slandered the Land of Israel, demoralizing the people

and causing forty years of wandering. Our task is to remedy the sin by accentuating the Land’s superiority. We must relay a message to the masses who have been discouraged - declaring the Land’s “magnificence and beauty, its holiness and grandeur.”

The Talmud (*Taanit* 29a) states that the events of the spies’ return from Canaan and their delivering the evil report occurred on the ninth of Av: “The day of the spies’ return was the day prior to the ninth of Av. The Holy One, blessed be He, said to them: “You wept a weeping without cause, therefore I shall establish for you weeping for generations on this day.”

The above statement should be understood not as a punishment but merely as a consequence of the nation’s lackluster attempt to enter their homeland. Their lack of desire trickles down through the generations; our longing for the Land has not yet achieved the appropriate passion and excitement that it deserves.

Rav Kook also references the sin of the spies in a well known letter he writes to his Jewish brethren across the world inviting them to come back home. Although Rav Kook was legendary for his warmth and compassion to everyone, here he speaks



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sharply concerning those who denigrate the eternal bond the Jew has with the Holy Land. "We must fight with all of our might against the hatred toward the Holy Land which has begun to infect certain individuals among us. We must destroy with spiritual might and the eternal sanctity of the pleasant Land, the poison of the traitorous spies who, precisely at this time of grace, have begun to emerge. This espionage is a struggle with its last ounce of strength, but we can say with certainty, with the pride of the name of God, Who chose the pleasant Land, that it resembles the final struggle of a flame which climbs briefly before burning out. The overwhelming love for the Holy Land, for Zion and Jerusalem, will run its course, and like the sun at high noon, it will enlighten all the dwellings of Jacob" (Translation, 'Celebration of the Soul,' p. 190). ■

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Ringing of the Ears

טינטון



Robert Levine, MD

Otoneurologist

Founder of Harvard Medical School
Tinnitus Clinic
Director for 25 years

Founder of Israel Center for
Advancement of Tinnitus Therapeutics
Director for 11 years

ProfLevineAppointment@protonmail.com

📞 058-400-1948

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