

Rabbi Ahron Lopiansky **The Very, Very Good Land**

It is no small coincidence that as we *lein Parshas Shlach* this week, *Eretz Yisroel* is enmeshed in such a difficult struggle. Between the terrible trepidation, and the incredible hope for an extraordinary victory, we need to better understand one of the central features of *Eretz Yisroel*.

Let us paraphrase a question posed in *Sefer Akeidas Yitzchak*: if *Eretz Yisroel* is such a wonderful country, and Yisroel should have grabbed it, then they are simply being stupid for rejecting it, rather than sinful. Even if they were scared of battle, and perhaps illogically doubted that Hashem could help them vanquish the *K'na'anim*, why is it considered that they “rejected *Eretz Yisroel*”?

Let us turn to an incredible point about *Eretz Yisroel* that the Netziv makes. He asks: when Kalev and Yehoshua described *Eretz Yisroel* as being a wonderful place they used the phrase “for the land is **very, very** good”. Great people, and certainly the Torah, do not use empty flowery language! What is this repetition of “very” all about?

The Netziv answers that any gift which is continuously bestowed upon a person is lacking in two aspects: first, it tends to plateau, with the original excitement waning; and worse still, people become smug and cocky and suffer a sense of entitlement.

Eretz Yisroel, however, is very different. The immanence of Hashem's *hashgacha* means that there is a very high standard to uphold and corresponding consequences. This means that no sense of “entitlement” takes hold, and that the occasionally very difficult periods constantly highlight the good that happens. This is what's meant by “very, very good” - an extraordinary good, yet one devoid of the deficiencies typically associated with unusual abundance.

The *Akeidas Yitzchak* makes a similar point. He says that Israel did not reject the land because it was deficient per se; rather because it meant that our lives would be determined by a higher spiritual standard of behavior instead of the ebb and flow of nature. They were in effect rejecting a way of life of “walking with Hashem”.

It is hard not to think of these incredible words at this time. If there is anything we crave, it is a non-eventful existence. From the day that we have repopulated *Eretz Yisroel* we have yearned for just a quiet tranquil uneventful existence. For many the code word for living in *Eretz Yisroel* was ‘normalcy’. A normal natural uneventful life, after all that we have suffered. This has eluded us greatly. Both the incredible miracles and devastating *tzoros* are anything but ‘normal’ or ‘natural’.

This is not in spite of *Eretz Yisroel* being the promised land but rather because of it. Sinking into the lethargy of natural existence and overflowing abundance would rob us of our essence: being a nation bound to Hashem and whose very fortune echoes that bond.

May the impact of the terrible travails that we've gone through during the past two years become the guardrail which will allow for pure *tov* to be bestowed upon us in the future without having any of the challenges associated with pure *tov*.

More *divrei Torah* from Rabbi Lopiansky

More *divrei Torah* on *Parshas Shlach*

© 2025 by TorahWeb Foundation. All Rights Reserved