

"You slandered in your tents and said, "Because of Hashem's hatred of us did he take us out of the land of Egypt." (1:27)

Moshe *Rabbeinu* begins *Sefer Devarim* with words of rebuke. He attempts to alert *Bnei Yisrael* to their past errors. He is hoping that their march onward into *Eretz Yisrael* will not be tainted by a continuation of their sinful behavior. They could have had an easy, smooth journey into the land -- if only they would not have been encumbered by foolish mistakes. Each mistake was a blemish that needed correction; each sin had to be expiated prior to their entry. His words would have all been in vain, their entire stay in the desert a waste, however, if they had not learned a lesson which would catalyze change.

Bnei Yisrael were to learn a number of lessons. Probably, the most important one is the lesson of the *meraglim*, the spies who were sent to investigate the land. The sin of the spies was as destructive as the people's unpardonable reaction to the lies that the spies spoke against *Eretz Yisrael*. What was their reaction? They cried unnecessary tears. *obj ka vhfc*, the *Talmud* refers to the tears shed that night. Hashem said to them, "You have shed tears without cause; the time will come when later generations will cry with just cause." On that fateful night, Hashem decreed that the *Bais Ha'Mikdash* would be destroyed. That Hebrew date, the ninth of *Av*, would be recorded in history as the most tragic day of the Jewish calendar.

Tears are a gift from Hashem. They are a vehicle for expressing our emotions - be they joyful or grievous. Hashem does not want us to waste His gift. One who sheds unnecessary tears will one day weep with realistic cause. This is one of the most important lessons for us in *galus*. All too often, when we are confronted with transitory problems, we become emotional. We are filled with grief when our business is not doing well; we are overcome with emotion when too many demands are made on our time. We cry for such foolishness. We must be aware that every time we shed tears for trivial reasons, for things that have no lasting value, we are opening ourselves up to criticism. Let us hope that the time will come that we will no longer have reason to weep.