

## They awoke early in the morning and ascended toward the mountain top saying, “We are ready, and we will ascend to the place of which Hashem has spoken, for we have sinned. (14:40)”

The nation was chastened. They now realized that they had overreacted to the slanderous news conveyed by the *meraglim*, spies, and that they must do something to repair the rift created by their sins. Nonetheless, there is a time and place for everything. They had forfeited their chance to enter *Eretz Yisrael*. Without Hashem’s mandate and leadership they could never conquer the Land. Now was not the time. Some people simply do not understand the meaning of “no.” A group of Jews decided to prove that they were willing to move on, to wage war against the inhabitants of the Land. They had been wrong once. Now, they were going to make up for it.

Rarely do we find that sincere repentance is not accepted. If a problem exists, it is because its sincerity is questionable. In this case, however, the people clearly realized that they had erred egregiously. They needed to repent – and they did. They indicated this by risking life and limb to move on, ascend the mountain and take on the inhabitants of the Land. Is this not a “good thing”?

Shlomo *Hamelech* says (*Mishlei* 8:33), “Listen to my instruction and be wise; do not disregard it.” The words *al tifrau*, translated as, “do not disregard it,” is related to the word *piraon*, payment. *Eizor Eliyahu* quotes **Horav Bunim, zl, m’Peshicha** who interprets this *pasuk* as an admonition to the one who repents that he should not expect (and certainly not demand) immediate payment (from Hashem) for his good deed. *Teshuvah* is reparation for one’s transgression. It must be performed wholeheartedly and sincerely, and then allowed to “gel” and sink in. One repents to appease Hashem, to perform His will. Hashem does not owe him anything. Therefore, even after the nation conceded their guilt, confessed their sins, their *teshuvah* did not maintain the same efficacy as that of (the *teshuvah* performed for) the sins of the Golden Calf. Following the *meraglim* debacle, the nation thought that their *teshuvah* would facilitate their entry into the Promised Land. They thought that they had fulfilled what was demanded of them; they had said, “So sorry”; now let us move on.

Sadly, it does not happen that way. *Eretz Yisrael* was lost to them as a result of their sinful reaction. The *teshuvah* was to repair their relationship with Hashem. What was done – was done. They did not think so. *Teshuvah* that is contingent upon immediate forgiveness and pardon is not much of a *teshuvah*.

Children say they are “sorry” and expect immediately to go back to pre-mischief status. We do the same. We err, take a spiritual plunge, and expect immediate reinstatement following our completion of a prescribed course of *teshuvah*. Well, it does not work that way. We should repent and hope that Hashem will accept it. Will “things” return to their original state? That depends on our level of sincerity. Only Hashem knows the truth.