

## And how is the land in which it dwells – is it good or is it bad? (13:19)

Prior to their departure for their ill-fated trip to reconnoiter *Eretz Yisrael*, Moshe *Rabbeinu* gave the spies a “shopping list” of things they should investigate. One of these questions for which Moshe sought an answer was: Is it a good land or not? It is almost impossible to pass over this *pasuk* without wondering how our quintessential leader could ask such a question. If Hashem had promised that He was taking us into *eretz tovah u'rechavah*, “A land that was good and spacious” (*Shemos* 3:8), then what need is there for investigation? Did anyone doubt Hashem’s word? The mere fact that Hashem declared that it was good, makes it good. No proof is necessary. Even if to the human eye it does not appear as “good,” it is good – because Hashem said so! The **Rikanti** asks this question and adds that he has no answer other than *b'derech sod*, by applying *Kabbalistic* knowledge which opens up the secrets of Torah.

**Horav Shimshon Pincus, zl**, turns to Yaakov *Avinu*’s fear that, *shema yigrom ha'cheit*, “perhaps he had not reached his spiritual potential or his not being home to honor his parents,” would serve as a censure against him. True, Hashem had promised to protect him, but that was before his transgressions. Maybe his indiscretions had negated Hashem’s protection.

Similarly, Moshe feared the effects of the *chet ha'eigel*, sin of the Golden Calf. *Eretz Yisrael* is sustained by a special *shefa*, spiritual flow, that emanates from Hashem. The Almighty provides this gift out of His deep love for His People. What if they egregiously sin against Him, however, in such a manner that provokes Him to remove that *shefa*? This worried Moshe, prompting him to ask the spies to investigate the land.

To better explain this fear, we suggest the following: Yaakov felt unworthy of Hashem’s protection because, by being away from home, he had not honored his parents properly. Clearly, this is an issue relative to the Patriarch’s lofty spiritual level. Parents protect their children – even if their children are unworthy of this sense of security. Parents are always there. Yaakov felt that, since he did not hold up his part of the “bargain,” Hashem might be “exempted” from protecting him.

Likewise, the spiritual flow which protects *Eretz Yisrael* is special and a unique gift from the Creator. What if we reject Him; what if the nation revels around a man-made molten calf and declares, “There are your gods, O’ *Yisrael!*”? Are we then still deserving of this Divine gift, or has our mutinous behavior gone too far? This troubled Moshe.

We seek *segulos*, good omens, and perform various good deeds and behaviors in order to receive Hashem’s favor in our time of need. We forget, however, that it is the “simple” and “ordinary” behaviors, like *davening*, studying Torah, giving *tzedakah*, charity that we must maintain. All the extras are great, but if one is missing the basics, he is missing the essential.