

דברי מנחם

Diarei Menachem

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Once again we look at the Parsha and ask ourselves what was the episode of the "Spies" meant to represent? Rav J.B. Soloveitchik, in his inimitable way, throws an interesting light on the subject by asking why, in the first place, Moshe acquiesced to the people's demand to scout out the land - especially since Hashem had already described the Land as a good land, flowing with milk and honey.

The Rav compares the connection between the people and the Land to that of a Chatan to his Kallah. From a halachic stance, a potential groom cannot marry his future bride until he has seen her. Just as Yitzchak brought Rivka into his mother's tent (B'reishit 24:67) - whereupon Rivka took on the role of Sarah Imeinu (Rashi) - so Bnei Yisra'el needed to 'see' the land, to betroth themselves to the land, and to "understand the land's majesty and spiritual grandeur".

So from where did the scouts' short-sightedness emerge? The Rav reminds us that Yaakov had sent Yosef on a similar scouting mission to check on his brothers by sending him "from the valley of Hevron". Now, although Hevron is actually on top of a mountain (see Rashi), for the Rav the term 'valley' is metaphorical: The one in the valley does not see far because of the surrounding mountains.

The spies, too, ascending from the south were also destined to climb that mountain. But only, "He arrived in Hevron" (B'midbar 13:22), meaning that only Kalev had the vision to visit Hebron to take Hashem's promise to Avraham forward, to see what the Rav defines as the "Segula" quality of the Land. That Segula, to be recognized by us, the Jewish nation - and by all the nations - is that Hashem's Presence rests in Eretz Yisrael and that our attachment to Eretz Yisrael far transcends what is labeled 'citizenship' in any other country.