

“They stood/arose before Moshe.” (16:2)

Targum Yonasan adds, *V'kamu b'chutzpah*, “They arose with insolence.” How does the *pasuk* imply that they acted with *chutzpah*, impudence, towards Moshe *Rabbeinu*? On the contrary, the *pasuk* clearly states that they arose for him. *Maharitz* gives a pragmatic explanation, one that teaches us a profound lesson of the definition of *chutzpah*. He explains that knowing that Moshe was coming, they arose before he came, so that they would not have to get up for him. They refused to demonstrate any *derech eretz*, respect, for Moshe, so they were already standing when Moshe came. This is considered standing up with *chutzpah*.

In an alternative explanation, they looked directly at Moshe’s face, indicating that they were neither in awe of him, nor of the *Karnei Hod*, Rays of Glory, that shone from Moshe. This is the meaning of *Va'yakumu lifnei Moshe*, the word *lifnei* being derived from *panim*, face. They did not fear facing Moshe.

It was this *chutzpah* that defined their dispute. It “happens” that people do not see eye to eye on an issue. There is a way, however, to discuss the area of controversy. When the dialogue becomes a forum for insolence and disparaging remarks, it is indicative of a *machlokes*, dispute, *shelo l'shem Shomayim*, not for the sake of Heaven.