

"All of you approached and said, "Let us send men ahead and let them spy out the land." (1:22)

Chazal find a hidden message in the word *ofkf*, "all of you." They contend that the manner in which they approached Moshe, the young showing disrespect towards their elders by pushing ahead, was the precursor of the disastrous outcome of their mission. We must endeavor to understand this statement. Is Moshe rebuking the people for their lack of *derech erez*? Was not their sin a lack of faith in Hashem's ability to bring them into the land? The mere fact that they requested spies in itself represented insurrection. How does their lack of proper manners correlate with their transgression?

Horav Eliyahu Meir Bloch, zl, infers a profound insight from this *pasuk*. The actual request for spies was not inherently evil. After all, did not Yehoshua send spies? On a superficial level, there is nothing wrong with making use of conventional methods for conquering the land as long as it is clear that it is not these methods which catalyze success; it is Hashem. Once we recognize and accept Hashem's sole role in the triumph, we may apply conventional methods, because we are not relying on a miracle. If, however, Hashem's role in our success is not acknowledged, then the medium upon which we foolishly rely is an indication of our lack of faith.

When *Bnei Yisrael* came to Moshe in a state of confusion, pushing and shoving one another with young people disregarding their elders, Moshe understood that their request did not reflect pure intent. When there is no *derech erez*, the medium is an indication of mutiny and faithlessness. These people were placing their entire faith in the spies! Their request did not originate in a *Torah* orientation; rather it emanated from a secular sense of direction. Moshe immediately recognized the signs of disaster. Thus, he sought every way to delay granting their request.

The manner in which people approach an issue or an undertaking reflects their true inner intentions. Regardless of their endeavor, even if it is a *dvar mitzvah* such as the creation of a communal organization to serve the spiritual or educational needs of the community, everything is based upon the manner in which they go about their work. If it is all for the sake of *Torah*, they will approach their work in an organized, dignified and noble manner. They are working *l'shem shomayim*, and the *kedushah* will be clearly reflected in everything that they do.

If they go about their endeavor by first slandering and disparaging those who stand in their way; if they are unscrupulous in raising support for their ideas; if -- when things just do not go as planned -- they vilify their antagonists, then we may be secure in saying that this is the work of the Satan. This is truly a wolf in sheep's clothing. The end does not justify the means. The manner in which we approach the goal will ultimately determine the outcome of the endeavor.