

**"And they (the meraglim) spread an evil report of the land which they had spied out... the land through which we have passed to spy it out is a land that eats up its inhabitants."  
(13:32)**

*Rashi* explains the meaning of "a land which eats up its inhabitants." Wherever the *meraglim* went, they found the inhabitants burying their dead. They did not realize, however, that this was part of Hashem's plan to protect them. If the people were occupied with their mourning, they could pay no attention to the strangers. If so, did the *meraglim* really lie? They did not fabricate any reports which they did not actually witness. Indeed, they related to Moshe and *Klal Yisrael* only what they personally saw. Why, then, were they punished?

The *Kotzker Rebbe z.l.* explains that "true" and "false" have a much deeper meaning than we tend to realize. The fact that a statement is not false does not necessarily make it true. A person who does not lie is not necessarily an "*ish emes*," a man of truth. What we see before our eyes is not always the truth. The essence of the truth originates from the innermost recesses of the heart, from the source of *emunah*, faith. *Emes* and *emunah*, truth and faith, work cooperatively. One cannot acquire the attribute of *emes* simply through a superficial examination. He must delve into what he sees and search for its deeper meaning. Looking at *Eretz Yisrael* with a perfunctory glance would not have been sufficient, because there is much more to observe than the eye perceives.

The *meraglim* witnessed various occurrences which outwardly gave the impression that *Eretz Yisrael* was not a nurturing place in which to live. Moshe, however, told them to report that the land was good, even if in their eyes it seemed lean. Indeed, people were burying the dead, but why was this strange phenomenon happening now? Had they applied their faith in Hashem to approach truth? Had they used *emunah* to focus on *emes*, they would have realized that Hashem was actually helping them. The *meraglim's* sin lay in their lack of courage to look beyond the superficial in order to contemplate the inner essence of the object of their search. It is not enough to say what seems to be the truth, one must endeavor to seek and discover the actual truth.