

Send forth men, if you please, and let them spy out the Land of Canaan. (13:2)

The *parsha* begins with the acquiescence of Moshe *Rabbeinu* to the Jewish People's request to send a reconnaissance mission comprised of twelve representatives – one from each tribe -- to gather information concerning the land. We all know that this mission ended in disaster -- for which we still pay to this very day. The spies returned, and all but two slandered the land and incited the people to severe hopelessness, culminating in unwarranted weeping. That night was *Tishah B'Av*, which, as a result of their weeping, became our day of national mourning, a day of warranted weeping over the destruction of our *Batei Mikdash*.

Theirs was not the only spy mission in our history. Prior to entering *Eretz Yisrael*, Yehoshua, Moshe *Rabbenu's* successor, sent Kalev ben Yefuneh and Pinchas ben Elazar *HaKohen* to spy out the land. In contrast to Moshe's ill-fated mission, Yehoshua's mission ended successfully. The commentators grapple with the divergent outcomes and search for reasons to support these aftermaths.

The *Malbim* distinguishes between a *tayar*, tourist (*v'yasuru*), and a *merageil*, spy. A *tayar* looks for areas of the land that are aesthetically appealing, impressive sights that reflect positive opportunities for cultural and economic growth. He inspects the agricultural potential of the land and searches for the best place to establish housing. The *merageil* searches for negatives. He is interested in the land's weaknesses – where it is easiest to breach; where an attack will support the greatest chance for victory. Yehoshua sent *meraglim*, spies, to determine where it was best to penetrate the country's defenses. Thus, he instructed them to inspect Yericho, which was a fortified city, thoroughly. Moshe, however, sent his men to inspect the land, to discern its goodness. He knew that military success is not contingent upon physical prowess, but upon one's trust in Hashem.

The *Maharsha* (*Sotah* 34) contrasts Moshe's unsuccessful spy mission with Yehoshua's mission. It was not so much the spies, but those who sent them, that engendered the opposite outcomes. The spiritual plateau achieved by the nation under Moshe's leadership was, at best, tenuous. [True, they had witnessed the splitting of the Red Sea, been privy to the greatest Revelation ever witnessed by man, but so much, so quickly, did not allow them to digest and absorb what they had experienced.] When the nation approached Moshe with their request for spies, he assumed that they wanted to know what was the easiest, most direct way to breach the country. Otherwise, he was certain that they fully believed that *Eretz Yisrael* was a land flowing with milk and honey, a good land, a land that was propitious for physical settlement and spiritual growth. The people, however, were not on the same page as their leader. They doubted whether *Eretz Yisrael* was all that it was touted to be. Therefore, each tribe was looking out for itself, choosing its own representative spy whom they trusted to look out for its individual interests. They had no trust. When one's faith is deficient, he sees demons around every corner, beneath every cover.

Yehoshua's nation was different from the one which Moshe had led. Forty years had passed. These were the children – now adults – who had been inculcated with the spiritual lessons and demeanor of Moshe *Rabbeinu* and Aharon *HaKohen*. They saw them as their mentors, their life's example of Torah leadership at its apex. This generation was on a more elevated spiritual plane than that achieved by their predecessors – their parents. They relied on Yehoshua because they trusted him. They saw Yehoshua for what he was – successor to Moshe *Rabbeinu*, handpicked by Hashem to lead the nation. Those whom Yehoshua selected as spies were good enough for them. They had no doubts. When one has faith in Hashem and trust in His chosen leaders, the mission achieves spiritual status. When one has no trust, the mission is doomed to fail from its very onset.