

We were like grasshoppers in our eyes, and so were we in their eyes. (13:33)

The *meraglim* felt a sense of low esteem when they heard the Canaanites refer to them as grasshoppers. These people were giants and, to them, the Jewish spies appeared quite puny. Why is it necessary to inform us how they felt about themselves? All that is necessary for the reader to know is that the Canaanite giants perceived the Jews as tiny insects. Perhaps the lesson is that, as long as one maintains his own self-esteem, others will also respect him. Once the *meraglim* felt like grasshoppers, they were, in turn, viewed as grasshoppers. One cannot be put down unless he has already lost his self-esteem. It begins with you and ends with you. As long as one maintains his self esteem and carries himself with dignity, no one can affect him. It is when he loses his dignity that others complete the damage.

On the other hand, once the *meraglim* said, “We were like grasshoppers in our (own) eyes,” why is it necessary to write that they were bothered by the Canaanites’ opinion of them? As long as they felt inadequate, it should have been sufficient reason for them to be miserable. The first *Bobover Rebbe*, **Horav Shlomo Halberstam, zl**, distinguishes between one who has false humility and one who is truly humble. Some people present themselves as humble, but Heaven help those who do not give them the respect and honor, which they feel they deserve. For all intents and purposes they act with humility, deferring to others what they really want for themselves. If someone else (other than themselves) were to pass them over, they would be insulted and outraged. In some not so subtle manner, they would inform the person that they deserve better. This is false humility. It is all show for the purpose of attention. Indeed, no greater arrogance exists than false humility.

The *meraglim* were distinguished men of noble pedigree and social standing. The mere fact that they were chosen to represent their individual tribes is, in and of itself, a powerful indicator of their stature in the nation. In public, however, they portrayed themselves as humble Jews, paragons of modesty, meek and submissive – until someone else put them down, until they heard the Canaanites referring to them as grasshoppers. Then the truth about their false humility came out. They were bothered by this negative inference to their stature. They were not so humble after all.