

We were like grasshoppers in our eyes, and so we were in their eyes...the people wept that night. (14:12)

The *Kotzker Rebbe, zl*, explains that this was one of their sins. It is one thing to be bothered by their own lack of self-image, but why should they care what the pagans thought of them? This criticism remains with us to this very day. We are bothered by what others think of us. Why? We have a mission to accomplish in this world - to serve Hashem and be His emissaries to the world community. This position demands that we act in a manner becoming Hashem's People. Why would we be concerned with what others think of us - unless we are so wrapped up in ourselves that we determine our success or failure by the yardstick of public opinion. The only opinion that counts is Hashem's. Those who cannot see beyond themselves have a serious problem. Evidently, the *meraglim* suffered from this myopia.

The self-centered feelings evinced by the spies ostensibly also characterized *Klal Yisrael*. Their response to the slander spewed by the spies was fear and depression - unfounded and unwarranted fear and depression. They wept that night. Oh, how they wept. It was a *bechiah shel chinam*, crying for nothing. It was foolish to cry when there is no reason to cry. *Chazal* tell us that "*shaarei demaos lo ninalu*," the gates of tears are never closed. This means that through tears one can penetrate the Heavens and implore Hashem's mercy. One may ask: if the gates are always open, why are tears necessary? A door is placed to lock something out; why is a door necessary if it is always open? *Horav Bunim, M'Peshicha, zl*, explains that these gates exist to prevent the tears of fools, tears that are for naught, from entering. When people cry for no justifiable reason, they are taking a special gift from the Almighty and abusing it. *Klal Yisrael's* over-reaction on that fateful night lives with us to this very day.