

Send forth men and let them spy out the land of Canaan. (13:2)

Moshe *Rabbeinu* relayed to Hashem the nation's request for spies to reconnoiter *Eretz Yisrael*. Hashem told Moshe to send them. If the nation insisted on sending spies, it was best that Moshe be involved in the decision concerning whom to send. For if the nation were to act on its own, without direction from its spiritual leadership, it would be tantamount to rebellion. Furthermore, a nation without leadership is more like 600,000 leaders, each with his own opinion, acting independently of the other. Obviously, they were deficient in their *emunah*, faith, in Hashem. He had promised to lead them into the Land, after making good on his previous commitments to them. The redemption that they had experienced was buttressed by many miracles, including the Splitting of the Sea and the *mannah* from Heaven. The experience of these events should have been sufficient proof to believe in Hashem. The people thought otherwise. They were using mortal minds to determine a war that was to be fought with supernatural capabilities. Why did they act this way? They could not "see" success. One cannot perceive success using his limited human vision. This is the definition of faith. Their suggestion was founded in faithlessness. The fruit that it bore was rebellion against Hashem.

Horav Yisrael Lau, Shlita, relates the story of the daughter of a *rav* who had assimilated and given birth to a child that was the product of her liaison with a non-Jew. She gave the child up to a Catholic Monastery. She added to her act of apostasy by cutting herself off from Judaism. A young rabbi who knew her from childhood, when he would spend hours studying with her father, attempted to dissuade her. He visited her to find out what had happened to her father. When she saw who he was, she proceeded to slam the door in his face. He was relentless, and she finally deferred to him and opened the door. After pleading with her to tell him what had happened to her father, she finally broke down and told him.

Apparently, the Nazi murderers had entered his house, pushed her aside, and entered the study where her father was sitting ensconced in *Tallis* and *Tefillin*, bent over a *Gemorah*, learning. He looked up at them and innocently asked, "What do you want from me?" The Nazi took his rifle that was slung over his shoulder and pounded in the *Rav's* head with its butt. The butt of the rifle drove the *Tefillin Shel Rosh* into his skull, killing him. The blood poured out of the wound, soaking his beautiful white beard and the *Gemorah* upon which his head fell.

"Do you now understand why I am bitter, why I have no faith? That is how they took my father from me. How can I continue believing?" The young rabbi broke down, and, together with his *rebbe's* daughter, he wept bitterly for their loss.

"I, too, have questions which no mortal can answer. No human being can answer such questions. Our function is to believe. This is what Jews have done throughout the millennia. This is what your father, my saintly mentor, taught – by lecture and by example. Your child's grandfather has only

one grandchild. If he continues on the present trajectory which you have chosen for him, you will be handing your father's murderers their victory. This is what they wanted – to extinguish the fire of faith in the Almighty. If your child follows in his grandfather's -- your father's -- path, then your father has won. What will it be: the Nazis or your father?"

With these closing words, the rabbi walked to the door and down the steps of the house. The young woman came running after him and got into his car: "We are going to pick up my son. You can have him on the condition that you will raise him." He agreed only if she would assist in the process. Otherwise, it would be too traumatic for the boy. "You draw him near to you, and, through you, I will draw near to him," he proposed.

Today this child is a *Rosh Yeshivah* in Yerushalayim, the only living descendant of the old man in Warsaw.

I conclude with the words of a distinguished *Chassidische Rav* (quoted by *Horav Aharon Lopiansky, Shlita*), "People turn to me with all manner of questions, to many of which I do not have a readily available answer. Answers are not the solution; learning how to live with an unanswered question is the solution. As one sees the *emes*, truth, of the big picture, all it takes is patience and study, and understanding will someday follow."