

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

At the beginning of the *parshah*, *Rashi* focuses on the juxtaposition of the incident of the *meraglim* upon Miriam speaking inappropriately about Moshe *Rabbeinu*, and the punishment she received. On the surface, the two incidents do not seem to have a common thread. *Rashi* explains that Miriam's comment was considered *lashon hora*. Concerning the *meraglim*, he says: *Reshaim hallalu ra'u v'lo lakchu mussar*, "Those wicked ones saw what happened to Miriam and did not take a lesson." In other words, they too spoke negatively. Indeed, Miriam spoke against Moshe; they spoke against the Land. Apparently, a parallel exists between the two? Does *Rashi's* opening statement labeling the *meraglim* as *reshaim* – because they saw what happened to Miriam and did not take a lesson – deem them *reshaim*? *Lo lakchu mussar* might be a character flaw, but does it render one a *rasha*?

Horav Shneur Kotler, zl (quoted by *Horav Dan Shaavit, Rav* in *Achuzas Brachfeld*), explains that the *meraglim* were guilty of a lack of perspective. Some people view an incident from a positive perspective, and others view it from a negative vantage point. Miriam *HaNeviyah* was acutely aware that her brother, Moshe, was unlike any other person who has ever walked the face of the earth. He was on a spiritual plateau far beyond anything that which mortal man can begin to imagine. Hashem considered him to be His most trusted servant – the consummate adherent to his Master's every imperative. Surely, Moshe carefully weighed every decision that he made, and he took every ramification into consideration. Therefore, if he decided to separate from his wife, he had made a well-thought-out decision that concurred with Heaven.

Rather than take all of this into mind, Miriam had a negative outlook concerning Moshe's action. This was the Heavenly claim for which she was punished. One does not take a jaundiced view – especially when she has every reason to characterize what occurred in a positive manner. It was this error – negativity – that was considered insubordinate. The *meraglim* should have derived a lesson from Miriam. They should have introspected and seen the benefits and positive attributes of *Eretz Yisrael*. Instead, they took the good and made it appear deficient. The flaw was in their outlook – not in the Land. *Lo lakchu mussar*, they ignored the lesson to be derived from Miriam. As a result, they became the paradigm of change – how a *tzaddik* can change into a *rasha*. It is all in the eyes. One sees what one wants to see.