

TORAH WEEKLY

Denver KOLLEL

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Parshas Devarim | August 9, 2024 | Volume 25 | Issue 41

Attitude Is Everything

By: Rabbi Zev Chaim Pruzansky (Originally Published 2006)

At the end of Moshe's life, he gathered the Jewish people together and spoke to them. In particular, he talked about the major events they had experienced together.

One of the events he mentioned was the sin of the Spies, who, after being sent to explore the Land of Israel, returned with evil reports about the Land. That had, in fact, been the cause of their 40-year stay in the desert.

When Moshe recounted this episode, he recalled how when the Jews requested that he send spies, "you approached me, all of you." Rashi explains that they came to Moshe "with a commotion; the young pushing the elderly, and the elderly pushing the young."

On a simple level, it would seem that this aspect of the story was an independent sin and not related to the main sin, which was the Spies returning with their evil reports.

Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetsky (1891-1986), Rosh Yeshiva of Mesivta Torah Voda'ath, however, points out that this was very much a part of the ultimate sin. Sending scouts ahead is actually a very normal act. Hashem wants us to do hishtadlus, the required basics. Despite this, we have to realize that Hashem is controlling all events, and the outcome of the Jews entering the Land of Israel was determined by Hashem.

And while it would have been "normal" to send scouts, we must note the difference between those people who have total faith in Hashem, and realize that their actions are just actions and not any more than that, and those people who think that their actions are what is controlling the outcome of an event.

If the people would have approached Moshe respectfully and asked to send scouts, Moshe would have agreed, realizing that they just wanted to do what it is required of them. But the fact that they approached him demanding that spies be sent indicated that they were lacking in their faith in Hashem, and they thought that this act was necessary to actually determine the outcome of the Jews entering the Holy Land.

Because this episode started in this way, it led the spies to come back with evil reports, reflecting their lack of faith that Hashem, who promised to protect them, would do so.

Alumni Focus

Rabbi Zev Chaim Pruzansky



Rabbi Pruzansky, teaching in Kollel, 2005

2004-2006

Years as a Denver
Kollel Scholar



Rabbi Pruzansky, greeting his students, 2023

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