

# JUST DON'T REBEL...

by Rabbi Dovid Green

*"And they returned from spying out the land at the end of 40 days. And they came to Moshe and Aharon...and they showed them its fruit...and they told them...We have come to the land you have sent us to, and it is indeed flowing with milk and honey. Only, the people in it are strong, and the cities are great and extremely fortified, and we even saw the children of the Anak (giants) there." (As the people began to stir) "And Calev hushed the people to Moshe, and he said we will go up and inherit it because we can win." "And the (other) people who went with him said we can't go up, because he (the nation living in the land) is stronger than us."*

After the ten plagues in Egypt, the splitting of the Sea of Reeds, the revelation at Sinai, the miraculous food which fell from heaven each morning, and the well of water which followed the Jews through the wilderness, how could such a discussion take place? It's almost impossible to fathom how anyone could have claimed that the Caananite nations were stronger than they were. If we would have been there, we certainly would not have made such a silly mistake!

Rabbi Yisroel Meir Kagan (d. 1933) explains what happened. It is based on the following discussion. G-d promised the land to the Jews. On the highest level of trust in G-d, a person would have said, "we can win simply because G-d said He would give us the land." On a lower level of trust a person might add "G-d can bring us in if He wants to, but do we deserve it?" This is the crux of the discussion which took place between the 12 spies who went to survey The Land of Israel before conquering it. 10 said that the Jews had lost their merits after having done the Sin of the Golden Calf, and other various sins. The description they gave of the land is one that only supports great people, but not people of "our" stature. This was their intention in showing the extraordinarily large fruit. The point was "we are not capable of living in a land which on the one hand flows with milk and honey, but on the other hand demands such a high standard from its inhabitants." "A king's servant may be able to get away with a lower standard of behavior in some far flung province, but such behavior is inexcusable in the king's palace (Israel)."

The 2 spies Calev and Yehoshua, argued that the premise of the 10 spies is wrong. G-d does not take the approach that He won't help us unless we are righteous. Rather, the approach is as long as we are not rebelling against Him He will help us. These are the words of Calev and Yehoshua, "just don't

rebel against G-d." The Chofetz Chaim writes, "as long as a person doesn't rebel against G-d, by intentionally not fulfilling His commandments, that person can hope for all forms of good."

The message to us is that we should always remind ourselves that as long as we are trying to improve, even if we fail miserably time and time again, we will receive help. G-d does not give up on us. We should not give up on ourselves. We don't have to be perfect, we just have to be striving on our level. G-d will never ask us "why weren't you completely righteous?" He will ask us why we didn't try to be as good as we were able. This is the message from Parshas Shelach, "just don't rebel against G-d."

Good Shabbos!

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