



פרשת שלח / Parshas Shelach

“אך בד' אל תמרדו ואתם אל תיראו את עם הארץ כי לחמנו הם סר צלם מעליהם וד' אתנו אל תיראם”
במדבר יד:ט

“Only do not rebel against Hashem and do not fear the nation of the land for they are our bread, their protection has left them and Hashem is with us, do not fear them!”
Bamidbar 14:9

As Calev and Yehoshua attempt to assuage the national hysteria caused by the מרגלים and their frightening report of the inhabitants of ארץ ישראל, they plead with בני ישראל to refrain from beginning a fruitless mutiny against Hashem and to continue to believe that Hashem will bring them safely into ארץ לישראל as He had so promised.

The *Sfas Emes* expounds on the לשון of “סר צלם מעליהם”. He writes that all of the evil that exists in the world has no intrinsic foundation upon which to support its continuity. The only reason it was created was to give humanity the power of choice and the opportunity to battle temptation. This is evidenced by the reality of the situation when one overcomes his inner evil and controls it. It becomes immediately apparent that his temptation was but a smokescreen, a colloquial castle in the air.

The *Sfas Emes* allegorically explains that when one walks alone at night he may be petrified by what appear to be large ominous creatures that are lurking just out of his range of vision. But if he strengthens his resolve and forges onward he will discover that these monsters were just shadows cast by the night, incapable of harming him and that there was never anything to fear. So too יהושע and כלב were trying to disillusion בני ישראל. The מרגלים gave over the impression that ארץ ישראל was full of giants and fortified cities that reached until the heavens. כלב and יהושע were urging בני ישראל and the מרגלים to rely on their belief in Hashem and encourage them to carry on towards ארץ ישראל where they would find that their fears were unfounded and that their seemingly undefeatable enemies were but a mirage. If בני ישראל would only believe that “ד' אתנו אל תיראום” then “סר צלם מעליהם” - the “shadow” of their enemies’ strength would be removed.

We may get caught up in our fears or projections of failure and inability to succeed. If we strengthen our belief in Hashem during these times and push ourselves to carry on in our quest to connect with Hashem and overcome our “nature”, our perception will become clear and we will emerge triumphant. The key is not to get stuck in the heat of the moment allowing the opposition to fortify its illusion, rather to keep moving forward by living in the moment, tackling each circumstance as it arises.