

Do You Know Who You Are?

By Rabbi David Wolpe

When the Israelite spies enter the land of Canaan, they grow afraid. Returning to Moses, the spies report that after seeing the giant inhabitants of the land they looked to themselves as grasshoppers and so they must have looked to the inhabitants. (Num. 13:33)

Was their sin fear, lack of trust in God's power? The Kotzker rebbe suggests that the sin was not. Their sin was in caring how they appeared to the inhabitants of the land. Drawing their self-image from these giant strangers negated their own identity. Rather than see themselves as God instructed, a sacred people, they saw themselves as they imagined the Canaanites saw them.

Theologian Thomas Merton diagnoses the same malady, still alive in us, in his autobiography *The Seven Storey Mountain*:

"The logic of worldly success rests on a fallacy: the strange error that our perfection depends upon the thoughts and opinions and applause of other men! A weird life it is, indeed, to be living always in somebody else's imagination, as if that were the only place in which one could at last become real!"

Are you real because you are on Twitter? Only alive on Facebook? Is your image of yourself a feedback loop, or do you know, deep in your soul, who you are, and how you stand before God?