

Facts

by: Rabbi Jeremy Rosen

The twelve men who were sent into Canaan to decide on a plan of invasion. Ten came back and declared it was impossible and two were in favor. They all saw the same evidence, had the same experiences and yet came to diametrically opposed conclusions. The result then was that the majority turned against the invasion.

For all the thousands of years that have passed and all the technology that we have amassed, human nature has not changed very much. Different analysts can look at the same facts, the same expert opinions, the same assessments and still come to opposing conclusions. Think of the differing opinions we have heard over the years from military experts and politicians of the wars in Vietnam, Iraq Afghanistan and now the disagreements over what to do with the barbaric Assad regime in Syria.

In the end decisions to go in are made by individuals and their judgments are as much emotional and personal as they are technological. Remember how before the Yom Kipur war the Israeli cabinet misread and underestimated the reports it received.

That's what we humans do. We get the facts and we make decisions. But it is wrong to think that we are not emotionally involved in weighing up the information whether it concerns war or business decisions.

That's why having spirit, morale and a strong sense of commitment matter so much in effective decision making. If a leader is too easily persuaded by others, the tail will wag the dog. That is as true today of say Israel surrounded by enemies as it was then facing the Canaanites. Public opinion.