



## It's Not About You

WE FIND TWO INSTANCES IN TANACH (Scripture) in which spies were sent to scout out what would be the land of Israel. The first time is in this week's Torah portion; it ended in disaster and Hashem's decree that that generation would not enter the land. The second instance is at the beginning of Yehoshua (Joshua). That episode resulted in the exact opposite outcome—it boosted the people's morale, and they went on to enter and conquer the land of C'na'an.

What was inherently different between the two events?

Yehoshua sent, from Shittim, two men as spies of *cheresh*—secrets—telling them, "Go, see the land and Yericho..." (Yehoshua 2:1)

The Midrash questions the use of Hebrew word *cheresh*. Obviously, they went in secret—if they hadn't, they wouldn't be very effective spies!

Instead, the Midrash suggests pronouncing (and interpreting) *cheresh* differently: *cheress*, which means "pottery." Yehoshua was telling the spies to make themselves like pottery.

What does that mean?

*Chiddushei haRim* explains that most vessels become ritually impure if they are touched on either their insides or their

outsides by something impure. Pottery is the exception of this rule—it can only become impure if touched on the inside. The reason for this is that objects can only become impure if they have value to begin with. All metals are somewhat precious, even when they are not fashioned into useful items. Therefore, even their outsides can contract impurity. Pottery, however, only has value when it is formed into a vessel. Therefore, only the inside, which can hold items, is considered significant.

This was the key to the success of the second set of spies. They saw themselves as pottery—their only function was as a tool, utilized solely for the benefit of the Jewish People and the Holy One, blessed be He. With such a mindset, is it any wonder that they accomplished only good things for Israel?

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**Send forth men,  
if you want,  
and they'll spy out  
the land [of C'na'an].**

(13:2)

BASED ON OHR GEDALYAHU

## Guilty by Association

Why does the Torah juxtapose the incident of the Spies with that of Miriam [when she spoke about Moshe]? Because [Miriam] was punished for slander, which she spoke about her brother; these wicked men saw that, but they didn't learn the moral lesson. (Rashi)

EVIDENTLY, THE SPIES HAD A TREMENDOUS test ahead of them—so much so, that Hashem thought it prudent to time the incident of Miriam before the episode

of the Spies, so as to serve as an extra warning to them (similar to a Sotah in all of her disgrace, witnessed by a Nazir).

Further, Ramban (Nachmanides) posits,

...[Hashem arranged] all of this... so that the spying would be done at His command, and it would be with the participation of all of the Tribes and their greatest men, so that they should be spared [from going astray]..."

In other words, Hashem instructed each Tribe to send its Prince—its most righteous person—so he would withstand the test. We see that this was, clearly, a spiritually dangerous mission.

[Hashem said,] I told you that [the land] is good... [but you didn't trust Me. I swear] that I will give you room to err (i.e., a test), the report of the Spies, so that you won't inherit [the land]. (Rashi, commentary to 13:1)

Part of this danger was a test of the Spies themselves: Would they act as Israel's messengers ("... You approached me,

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**Aliza Wucher**

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# At the Kollel

**KEY:** 🖐️ Beginners 🖐️🖐️ Intermediate 🖐️🖐️🖐️ Advanced 🚺🚻 for men and women

**Looking for a chavrusa?** See Coordinator Rabbi Chaim Heinemann!  
Chavrusos are available noon–1 PM on weekdays, and 8–9:45 PM Sun.–Thurs.

## Sunday *Free brunch!*

🖐️🖐️ **America Runs on Torah**  
(Jewish Law & Parasha)  
Rabbis Dani Schon  
and Yisroel Kaufman.....10 AM  
*Grand Deluxe breakfast served*

## Tuesday

🚺🚻🖐️ **Partners in Torah  
at the Mayerson JCC**  
Rabbi Binyamin Teitelbaum.....8 PM

## Wednesday

🚺🚻🖐️ **Torah Treasures for  
Seniors at the Mayerson JCC**  
Rabbi Yitzchok Preis..... 10:30–11:15 AM

🚺🚻🖐️ **Downtown Lunch-n-Learn  
at Strauss & Troy**  
Rabbi Yitzchok Preis..... 12–1 PM

## Thursday

🖐️🖐️ **Halacha** (based on the parasha)  
Rabbi Chaim Heinemann.....9:10–10 PM  
*Homemade refreshments served.*

## Minyanim Daylight Time

**Shacharis**  
Sunday .....8:15 AM  
Monday–Friday .....7:20 AM  
Shabbos .....N/A

**Mincha**  
Sunday .....7:45 PM  
Monday–Thursday .....5:45 PM  
Shabbos .....6:30 PM

**Ma'ariv**  
In the Beis Midrash:  
Sunday–Wednesday .....9:45 PM  
Thursday .....10 PM  
Shabbos .....N/A

## Every Day

🖐️ **“Dirshu” Gemara Shiur**  
(Maseches B'choros)  
Rabbi Yitzchok Preis.....  
Sunday 7:15–8:15 AM  
Monday–Friday 5:50–6:45 AM

🖐️🖐️ **Kollel Yisgaber K'ari**  
(amud-a-day of Mishnah B'rurah)  
Rabbi Chaim Heinemann.....  
Monday–Friday 6:55–7:20 AM

🖐️🖐️ **Kitzur Shuchan Aruch**  
Live video conference!  
Rabbi Dani Schon.....  
Monday–Friday 12:05–12:20 PM

🖐️ **Daf Yomi**  
Rabbi Meir Minster.....  
Sunday–Thursday 8–8:45 PM  
Shabbos (at CZE) 1:00 pre-mincha

🖐️🖐️ **Nightly Halacha Chabura**  
Rabbis Dani Schon  
& Binyamin Teitelbaum .....  
Monday–Thursday 9–9:45 PM

**Chavrusa Learning**  
(private & small groups).....times vary

## It's Not About You CONTINUED

The first set of spies, on the other hand, had their own interests in mind. As the Zohar explains, they were worried that, upon the nation's arrival in C'na'an, they would no longer be the leaders of the people. When one goes into a mis-

sion with his own self interest foremost in his mind, there is no way that he will be a successful agent on behalf of those who sent him.

May this serve as a lesson, in everything we do, that we are merely tools to

bring the greatest honor of Heaven to the world; we shouldn't focus on what we can personally gain from any given situation. When we approach life with that in mind, we will surely merit to be blessed in everything we do. 🙏

## Guilty by Association CONTINUED

saying, 'Let us send men... and they will bring back word for us'...”—D'varim 1:23) or like Moshe's messengers? Would they view themselves as Moshe's agents (good) or as Israel's emissaries (wicked)?

“Moshe sent them forth... They were all... distinguished men.” At that time, *they were all upright people.* (Rashi, commentary to 13:3)

“They went, and they came to Moshe and Aharon...” Why [does the Torah add that] “they went?” To compare their departure to

their return. Just as their arrival was with evil intent, *their departure was with evil intent.* (Rashi, commentary to 13:26)

Maharal, in *Gur Aryeh*, resolves this apparent contradiction.

After the Children of Israel left Sinai, they started to spiritually decline, and they no longer exclusively followed Moshe's directives. (It was at this very point in time that Eldad and Midad prophesied that Moshe would not lead the Jewish people into the land of Israel.)

It is true that the Spies were, in their cores, just and distinguished; when Moshe appointed them, they were still upright. However, as soon as they accepted the mission, they literally became proxies for whoever was sending them (*sh'lucho shel adam k'moso*)—and, in the minds of the Spies, they were now the messengers of Israel, not Moshe. Since the people who had requested the mission had evil intent (see Nachmanides' commentary), the messengers themselves adopted that evil intent! 🙏