



תשפ"ו RAV BRAZIL PARSHAS SHELACH

## THE INNER LIFE OF A CERAMIC JEW

In the Torah there are two episodes of sending spies, one by Moshe and the other by Yehoshuah. The one by Moshe left Yisrael with a horrific tragedy and a deep lasting scar. Not only did all of that generation die in the desert, but also every *Tisha B'av* we still suffer and feel the ripple effect of that rebellious day against Hashem as we sit on the floor in mourning. Why was the second sending of Yehoshua successful in contrast to the *Meraglim* sent by *Moshe Rabbeinu*?

The Medrash says that Yehoshua's two *Meraglim* נתנו נפשם they sacrificed their lives and this is the reason of their success. What manner of form does this powerful words take? If we look at the *Haftorah* of this *parsha* which talks about the sending of Yehoshua's *Meraglim*, one word tells the whole story of their success, חרש. The Medrash says that this word of חרש can be interchanged with the word חרס which means pottery or a clay vessel. The simple interpretation means that as spies they dressed incognito by looking like potters amongst the inhabitants. However, if we delve deeper into the word חרש we will discover that Yehoshua's instructions to the two spies possessed many levels of *avodah* that they were expected to attain in order to make their *shelichus* a success.

A deeper understanding to this is to first know how a vessel made from materials such as metals differs from those made of clay. As far as becoming *tamei*, a dead *sheretz*- creeping things that comes in contact with even the outer surface of the vessel makes it *tamei*. In contrast is חרס that becomes *tamei* only if it contacts the inside of the vessel or its airspace. The difference is that a metallic vessel has significance both in its insides and outsides. A clay vessel on the other hand only acquires its significance to possess the status of a vessel because of its inside as it serves to be a container. The outside which is earthenware alone does not give it importance. Therefore it cannot become *tamei* from its outside surface. That is why the letters of חרש which means pottery also spells חסר which means lack of. The outside of this vessel lacks value because it's made from earth.

חרס also means the sun as expressed in the *passuk* Yehoshua 24,30. On Yehoshuah's *matzaiva* there is was picture of a חרס sun because while making war with the *Pelishtim* he stopped the sun from setting (Rashi). It represented his relationship with Hashem which is compared to the sun שמש ומגן. ה' אלקים

When Yehoshuah sent his two *Meraglim* in the capacity of חרש he sent them with a deeper message of *shelichos* and frame of mind. He was instructing them they should not look at the exterior of *Eretz Yisrael* but rather only to its *penimiyus*. They themselves should be like *cheres* that the only thing that gives חרש worthiness is its inner contents as a vessel that can hold something inside of it. Their mission can only be fulfilled if their sole desire is to be an inner vessel of Hashem with only Hashem and His wishes as their exclusive contents. Any other alien thought even לא לשמה would foil their



fulfillment of their *shelichos* to Hashem. This is alluded to in the *gematriah* of **מרגל** spy which adds up to **החרס**. Only then will this mission of spying on the land work and bear fruit.

They should not emulate the heart set of Moshe's *Meraglim* of whom the *Chazal* tell us possessed self-interests and *negius* with a strong motivation to remain in the desert and not enter *Eretz Yisrael*. Because of their subjectivity they only saw what they wanted to see through the lenses of a metal vessel and thereby interpreted only the outside without seeing the "Sun".

Yehoshua instructed them to view themselves as **סרה** with the letters of **סרה** the daughter of Asher son of *Yaakov Avinu*. Serach was the only person who knew the burial place of Yosef in the Nile River. She directed Moshe to the exact spot where his coffin was laid to rest and Moshe miraculously raised the coffin from under the water. She was also the one who knew the secret code that was transmitted to special individuals which would prove that Moshe *Rabbeinu* who would say these words is the authentic redeemer. She was also the person who revealed to Yaakov the unknown news that Yosef is still alive. Why did she merit these three *shelichos* which revealed what was by everyone else covered over and hidden?

We find the name **סרה** when Torah describes the layers of fabric which covered the Mishkan **סרה העודף** (Shmos 26,12) the surplus and extra. She had tremendous humility and looked at herself as surplus not accomplishing much even though she was a *tzadekes*. She didn't view the world in a superficial manner but penetrated behind the veil of nature and saw that Hashem was hiding Himself behind it. This insight of **עוד מלבדו** led her to negating her own significance and achievements compared to the amount of dedicated *avodah* that should be done in the service of the King of the Universe. There is no way that one can be grateful enough for every breath that one inhales, never mind all the eternal *chesed* Hashem does for us constantly. Therefore she merited to uncover what was also hidden concerning the *geulah*, the retrieving of Yosef in the Nile River, the code of *geulah*, and Yaakov's hearing of Yosef being alive.

Yehoshuah sent his *Meraglim* on their *shelichos* to make themselves the embodiment of **חרס** driving them to search for the hidden and concealed *Eretz Yisrael* beyond the surface. There you will see the **איר** (air) and the light of the Torah in the land. By contacting the Torah that lies in the land you will be able to draw from it the wisdom of Hashem **קנייך הארץ קנייך** עשית מלאה.

The letters of **סרה** possess yet another meaning that of *Gan Eden*. The Torah records that Avraham *Avinu* purchased the *Meoras Hamachpailah* at the price of 400 silver shekels in standard currency **עבר לסרה**. However the *sefarim* write that the word **לסרה** hints to *Gan Eden* for it is *gematriah* **אורח לגן**. This Cave is the *pathway to Gan Eden*. Being that **סרה** and **חרס** share the identical letters it comes to teach that an individual who lives a **חרס** life focusing only on inner spiritual *values* and not merely the *value* of physical objects, on *tikkun hamidos* and not merely measuring the dimensions of his new



built house, will be the one who will bask in the radiance of the **גן עדן** Gan Eden. In contrast if one is driven by "pedal to the *metal*" syndrome forming himself into a lifeless bronze or silver statue he can easily go astray and miss the meaning of life entirely. But then it is already too late as hinted in the spelling of the **metal - late**.

Shabbos helps a Yid attain the embodiment of a vessel made from **חרס**. When we receive a *neshama yesairah* our body becomes negated to the *neshamah* and our inner core takes over. This is hinted in the *gematriah* of the inner letters of **חַרְס־רֶשֶׁת סִמְךָ** which adds up to **ביום שבת**. On Shabbos we can experience **ליסוחר**, even more so **עולם הבא**.

At the end of the *Shlach* we find the *parsha* of **צִיצִית**. The blue string of *Techailles* is to remind one of the color of the ocean which reminds one of the color of the sky which reminds one of the *Kisay Hakavod*. With one's perspective and lens through which he sees the world, he must look for Hashem's presence even though it is not explicitly visible to the naked eye. He must peel away layer by layer until he understands that what he sees on each level is a greater opportunity to reveal Hashem's Kingdom in the world by bringing out Hashem from His hiding place.

**צִיצִית** means to see and look at. In the Torah this word is spelled with one letter *yud*. Yet *Chazal* say that **צִיצִית** equals 613 corresponding to the number of mitzvos in the Torah. However if one adds up the letters of **צִיצִית** is only 590? They explain that if you insert an extra letter *yud*, plus add eight corresponding to the eight strings of the *tzitzis* and five knots we arrive at 613. This teaches us how to look at the world. We must look to find Hashem's attachment (**strings**) to His creation and His special relationship that **knots** *Yisrael* and Hashem together. By searching to find Hashem's *ratzon* in everything, Hashem will let you find Him. This is hinted in the extra *yud* in the word *tzitzis* which represents Hashem.

Every Yid has the *shelichus* to spy out the earth and to seek out and find Hashem in every atom of existence. The only successful *derech* to do so is to be a **Ceramic Yid** with both body and soul.

Gut Shabbos  
Rav Brazil