



דרכים בפרשה

שלח



שלח לך אנשים ויתרו את ארץ כנען אשר אני נתן לבני ישראל איש אחד איש אחד למטה אבתיו תשלחו כל נשיא בהם

Send agents to scout the land of Canaan, which I am giving to Bnei Yisroel; send one participant from each of their shevatim, each one a prince among them.

In this week's parsha we learn about the story of the מרגלים. Moshe Rabbeinu sent twelve spies to scout out Eretz Yisroel and bring back a report of what Bnei Yisroel would encounter when crossing into the land in order to inhabit it. We read of the great tragedy of their slanderous report, thus failing on their mission. As a result, this caused the people to lose heart and no longer desire to enter into the Land. Their punishment would be to remain forty more years in the desert before entering.

The Chidushei HaRim gives us an insight into this story based on our *haftora*, which features another episode of spies being sent, this time by Yehoshua. In contrast to our מרגלים, these spies succeeded on their mission without failing at all.

The possuk (Yehoshua 2:1) tells us: וישלח יהושע בן נון מן השטים שנים אנשים מרגלים חרש -לאמר לכו ראו את הארץ - *Yehoshua bin Nun secretly sent two spies from Shittim, saying, "Go, see the land"*. חרש- they went quietly like a חרש- a mute; incognito, hidden away in a manner that no one would know that they were going. The Midrash states that the word חרש can be read with the letter *sin* as if to say חרש, which means an earthenware utensil, pottery. עשו עצמן כקדרין והיו צווחין ואומרין -הרי קדירה - *they passed themselves off like*

pottery (so as not to be noticed), calling out their wares, "pottery here, pottery here."

The Chidushei HaRim finds a much deeper significance behind this choice of a disguise, and why they chose earthenware as opposed to a metal bowl or other items. We find a basic difference in *halacha* between different types of כלים. We know that when an impure person touches a bowl, he transfers *tumah* from himself to that bowl. If the bowl is metal, merely touching the outside renders the bowl impure. However, by earthenware, touching the outside is not enough. The *tumah* does not transfer until the inside of the bowl is touched. The Chidushei HaRim explains (philosophically) the difference. A metal bowl carries its very own intrinsic value, whereas an earthenware bowl is literally worthless and *batel* to that which is contained within (think paper plate vs. metal plate). Its entire value is dependent on what is inside. Therefore, a כלי חרש only becomes *tamei* when the inside is touched.

Zogt the Chidushei HaRim- the spies made themselves like *cheres*, i.e. merchants of earthenware. They recalled what happened to the spies of Moshe Rabbeinu, and were bent on not allowing

the same thing to happen to themselves by falling into the same traps. So what did they do to succeed? They removed themselves and all of their personal thoughts and ideas completely from the equation, becoming completely *batel* (insignificant) to the mission itself. Similar to the *kli cheres*, their only value was that which they contained within, and that was their mission. However the *meraglim* of Moshe were different. They used their own thoughts putting themselves into the mission as well. Suddenly the mission became about them and not about the Land. They decided on their own what they felt was good for the Bnei Yisroel, using their own intuitions and not being *mevatel* to the mission. (The Rishonim even comment that they were worried about losing their high statuses once he Land would be entered, thus a further proof that this was all about themselves.) The end result was a damaging slanderous report that would cause national crying amongst Bnei Yisroel until this very day.

But how could it be that such great tzaddikim can err so terribly? The Chidushei HasRim further explained that the existence of the Jews in the desert was on a level of pure spirituality. The food they ate was manna from heaven; their clothing was dry cleaned by the *ananei hakavod* and the Torah that they learned was directly from Moshe Rabbeinu. They were living through Olam Haba in the desert. However, in Eretz Yisroel, things would change significantly. No longer would they be given food but now they

would need to actually work for it. They would need to perform the “לִיט מְלֵאכֹת” if they wanted to eat. Their entire lives and livelihood would now become an existence of *olam hazeh*. It would now become so much more difficult to maintain closeness to HaShem. Therefore, they argued that it would in fact be better to remain behind in the desert and *not* enter the Land.

Even though their intentions seemed to be *l'sheim shomayim*, it was still contrary to what HaShem wanted. If they would have removed themselves from the equation like the spies of Yehoshua, they would not have considered their own opinions. It is not a person's business to do what he thinks makes the most sense, but rather, what HaShem wants.

When we are faced with decisions to make, the only question that we must ask is, what HaShem wants from me at this moment. ***And if we are not one hundred percent sure, we should ask our rabbeim what is the ratzon of Hashem!***

מרדכי אפפעל, Good Shabbos,



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