

## The Two Secrets to Fulfill Your Life's Mission Why Were Joshua's Spies Successful?

By Rabbi YY Jacobson

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Dedicated in the merit of a young boy, **Eliezer** ben **Sara Miriam**, for a complete and speedy recovery,  
by his loving grandparents

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### 1. Class Description:

There is a sequel to the story of the spies, recorded in the second chapter of the book of Joshua, and it is read in the haftorah of Shelach. 39 years after the first episode with the spies, Joshua—the successor of Moses, and one of the original 12 spies sent by Moses—sent his own two spies to scout the land of Canaan. This time, though, the mission ended in success. They returned to the people with an optimistic message, encouraging and empowering the people to reach their destination.

What was the difference? Moses was the greatest prophet and leader of Israel. Yet his spies failed miserably. Joshua was a disciple of Moses, and not on the same level of his master. Yet his spies were successful. Why?

It is all captured by one strange word employed in this narrative: Cheresch.

What does it take to be sent on a mission, a risky mission, and remain focused, optimistic, confident and faithful? It takes—Joshua intimated—two qualities: 1. You must be an earthenware vessel. 2. You need to be deaf.

What do you do when you go to a family event and always come home in a bad mood? What do you do when you have a life's dream and people call you insane? What do you do when you are plagued by fear or other debilitating emotions? What do you do when criticism kills you?

**2. Sources:**

**מקורות:**

**יהושע ב, א:** וַיִּשְׁלַח יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בְּנֵי-נוּן מִן-הַשְּׁטִימִים שְׁנַיִם-אָנָשִׁים מְרַגְלִים, חָרַשׁ לְאֹמֵר, לָכוּ רְאוּ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ, וְאֶת-יְרִיחוֹ; וַיָּלְכוּ וַיָּבֹאוּ בֵּית-אִשָּׁה זֹנָה, וַיִּשְׁמְרוּ רֶחֶב--וַיִּשְׁכְּבוּ-לְשָׁמָּה.

**רות רבה ב, א:** ר' נחמיה אומר כלי קדרות היה בידם – קדרין חרש לאמר. תני ר' שמעון בן יוחאי: חרש כמשמעו, אמר להם: עשו עצמכם חרשים, ואתם עומדים על רזיהם.

**קדושת לוי**

כי כשהצדיק בא במקום אז מעורר אותו הרשימה אשר כבר היה במקום ההוא וכאן שהיה בארץ ישראל הרשימה מן המרגלים הראשונים רצה יהושע שלא לעורר הרשימה מהם. וזהו חרש, שיעשו עצמם חרשים שלא לשמוע הרשימה מן המרגלים ראשונים: