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A VORT FROM THE ROSH YESHIVA מורינו הרה"ג ר' אברהם גורביץ שליט"א

פרשת וישלח

וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב אֶל שְׁמֵעוֹן וְאֶל לֵוִי עֲכַרְתֶּם אֹתִי לְהַבְאִישׁנִי בְיָשֵׁב הָאָרֶץ בְּפָנַעֲנִי וּבְפָרְזִי, וְאֲנִי מְתִי מִסֶּפֶר, וְנֶאֱסָפוּ עָלַי וְהִכּוּנִי וְנִשְׁמַדְתִּי אֲנִי וּבֵיתִי. וַיֹּאמְרוּ הַכְּזוֹנָה יַעֲשֶׂה אֶת אַחֲוָתְנוּ. (בראשית לד, ל-לא)
And Yakov said to Shimon and Levi, "You have discomposd me, making me odious among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanite and among the Perizzite; I am few in number and should they band together and attack me, I will be annihilated – I and my household." And they said, "Should he treat our sister like a harlot?" (Bereishis 34:30-31)

In this week's *Sidrah* we learn about the abduction of Dinah by Chamor, and how her brothers deceived the people of Shechem in order to rescue their sister. When the people of Shechem were vulnerable and weak, Shimon and Levi took matters into their own hands and executed a death sentence on all the males in the city. When Yakov learned about the decimation of Shechem, he admonished Shimon and Levi for their rash actions that not only brought embarrassment and disgrace but also placed the entire family in grave danger, as they were few in number compared to the surrounding nations. In response, Shimon and Levi insisted that there was a larger issue at stake that could not be ignored, no matter what the consequences: "Should he treat our sister like a harlot?"

The Torah does not provide a response from Yakov, leaving the question open with valid points on both sides. How could the *shevatim* have ignored such a terrible assault on their sister? Yet, how could they have committed such a massacre, placing the entire family in grave danger? This predicament reflects a challenge that Klal Yisroel faces throughout the generations: Should one protest or take action against acts of immorality and injustice, or should one fear the serious repercussions of retaliation? What response is the most beneficial and effective?

The Rosh Yeshiva *shlita* resolves this critical dilemma by referencing the Malbim later in the *Sidrah*. The Torah narrates that after the incident involving Dinah, Hashem instructed Yakov to return to Beis-El and build a *mizbeach*. Yakov then instructed his family and household to remove all the idols they had taken from the spoils of Shechem, cleanse themselves, and change their clothes. They were to prepare to go to Beis-El to construct the *mizbeach* and serve Hashem. The *shevatim* followed this directive by removing all the idols and burying them. The *posuk* states, *וַיִּסְעוּ וַיְהִי חַתַּת אֱלֹקִים עַל הָעָרִים וְאֲשֶׁר סְבִיבוֹתֵיהֶם וְלֹא רָדְפוּ אַחֲרָי בְּנֵי יַעֲקֹב*, *They set out, and a G-dly terror fell upon the cities surrounding them, so they did not pursue the sons of Yakov.*

The Malbim explains that there is a direct connection between the preparations made by the *shevatim* and the fear that gripped the surrounding cities, which ultimately saved them. The fear of Hashem displayed by the *shevatim* extended to these nearby areas, creating a divine fear that discouraged harming them. Through their efforts to purify and improve themselves, and by showing reverence for Hashem, the nations around the *shevatim* also came to revere them.

