

"Shimon and Levi are brothers, weapons of violence are their tools... I will divide them up in Yaakov and I will scatter them in Yisroel." (49:5-7)

Rashi explains that they were destined to become wanderers amongst the Jews, serving as scribes who write and check sacred scrolls such as *Tefillin*, *Mezuzos* and *Sifrei Torah*, as teachers of children, wandering from community to community, and as *Kohanim* and *Leviim* whose sustenance comes from gifts of harvest across the countryside.

All this was in response to their actions at Shechem, when they killed the population of an entire city for being party to the violation of their sister, Dinah. This punishment, which resulted in the diffusion of their strength, was a just response to their actions. However, we must ask why they should then have served as the teachers and guardians of our heritage? Were they suitable to be trusted with the education of our children and the maintenance of our sacred scrolls? Would it not have been more appropriate to bestow these lofty positions on those brothers who were glorified with praise?

Yaakov sensed in Shimon and Levi a zealousness and enthusiasm for *Torah*, with a sense of responsibility that even exceeded the obligations demanded of us by the *Torah*. This became apparent in their response to the tragic violation of their sister. They experienced the shame and anguish that tormented Dinah. They acted zealously and passionately to avenge the terrible desecration of Hashem's Name. Their response was in contrast to that of the rest of the brothers. Yaakov perceived that the transmission of our heritage could be entrusted only to those whose concern for our people was all encompassing. The destiny of the Jewish people would be fulfilled through the leadership and guidance of such zealous individuals. However this passion and zeal, could become undisciplined and uncontrolled, if not tempered and properly guided by *Torah* study. This was Yaakov's message and blessing to his sons. Take your awesome powers and discipline them through *Torah* and you will ultimately be the great source of leadership for *Am Yisroel*