

Shimon and Levi are brothers... into their council let my soul not come." (49:5-6)

Despite the fact that Yaakov rebuked Shimon and Levi equally, we find that historically these two brothers went disparate ways. The tribe of Levi was chosen to carry the mantle of the priesthood, while the tribe of Shimon seemingly did not attain such a lofty position. We may suggest that this was because Shimon was the instigator whose aggressive actions led to the execution of the men of Shechem. In contrast, Levi was merely a follower who came under the influence of his brother. This characterization of Levi lies in his name, which is derived from the *pasuk* "*Now this time my husband will be joined unto me* (Ber. 29-34) In this *pasuk*, Leah states that as a result of Levi's birth, Yaakov will become closer and more attached to her. Thus, Levi's spiritual success or failure hinged upon his relationship with his peers. If he were to be under the influence of virtuous individuals, he would follow their example. Although Shimon possessed strong feelings of brotherly love together with an amazing degree of zealotry for Hashem's Name, he received the blessing only on the condition that he would consult others before going forth in action. For this reason, Shimon's tribe was located near that of Yehudah, so that he would benefit from their royal and decisive counsel. This is alluded to in Yaakov's blessing to Shimon - *kt osxc hapb tc,/* The word "osux" is derived from "sux" which means "secret." This implies "into their secretive and solitary actions which reflect deeds performed without direction from those greater than them, do not bring my soul." Their aggressive actions, when unleashed without guidance, transform zealotry into bloodthirsty revenge. Under the proper direction, however, they can attain the highest level of service to Hashem.