

The youth did not delay doing the thing, for he wanted Yaakov's daughter. (34:19)

One who reads the story of Shechem's obsession with Dinah *bas* Yaakov must be taken aback. As prince of the country, Shechem could have had anything/anyone that he wanted. Yet, due to his compelling desire for Dinah, he risked his life and the lives of all his countrymen. Is this rational? To be driven by such desire is ludicrous, bordering on insanity. Yet, it happened. One powerful lesson may be derived: Nothing stands in the way of one's will. It is a two-way street. One can either ride his *ratzon*, will, to extraordinary success, or plummet down to the nadir of infamy, as did Shechem.

In *Nitzotzos*, *Horav Yitzchak Hershkowitz*, relates the story of a young *chasid* who lived in Tzfas and wanted badly to recite *selichos* with his *Rebbe* in Yerushalayim. On *Motzoei Shabbos*, he got into his car, which was a five-seater, and left for Yerushalayim. He stopped at a rest area to fill up with gas, and he met a number of young *chassidim* who were also going to Yerushalayim. They had no manner of conveyance. They figured that they would wait at the rest area and hitchhike with anyone going to Yerushalayim. The young *chassid* said to them that his car was only so big. He was unable to choose who would be his passengers, so he declared, "Whoever fits in my car can come with me." Imagine his shock and disbelief to discover that fifteen young men had squeezed into the car. He took his chances, knowing full well that if he were to be stopped, he would not only receive a hefty fine, but he would probably lose his license. This is exactly what happened. He was pulled over, and the officer asked everyone to step out of the car. He was bowled over to see fifteen passengers emerging from the car. The officer immediately gave the driver a summons to appear before the judge, who would surely impose a hefty fine and relieve him of his license.

The young man was beside himself. He could not afford the fine and certainly could not be without a license. His car was his means of earning a living. He had no recourse but to plead with the *Rebbe* for a blessing that would exempt him from any punishment. When he related his predicament to the *Rebbe*, he received a well-deserved rebuke for endangering the lives of his passengers and for causing a *chillul Hashem*. Why should a policeman think that an observant Jew would cavalierly bend the law? The fellow pleaded, said he would never do it again. The *Rebbe* finally told him, "I give you a blessing based upon your promise. When the judge asks for your defense, you should do the following," and the *Rebbe* instructed him what to do.

The prosecutor called the policeman to testify that fifteen men had piled into the car. The judge asked the driver, "What do you have to say?" He replied, "I beg the indulgence of the court to please follow me down to my car." The judge thought that despite the peculiar nature of the request he would allow it. Everyone went down to the parking lot. The driver asked the judge, "Please ask the various passersby to climb into the car to see how many people fit in." The judge agreed, and they canvassed the street and asked people to pile in. After much pushing and shoving and performing a number of acrobatic moves, they were able to fit nine people in the car (very uncomfortably. Tzfas to Yerushalayim is almost a three hour drive). Seeing this, the judge felt

that the policeman had gotten carried away in counting the number of passengers. It was clearly impossible for fifteen men to fit in the car. The driver was exonerated.

Following the verdict, the policeman met with the driver. "How did you do it? You know that fifteen men piled out of a car that at best might hold nine people. It will not alter the verdict, but I must know how you achieved it." The driver cited the story with Shechem and Dinah, and how Shechem was prepared to put his life and the lives of his community in mortal danger, just because of his desire for Dinah. *Ki chafetz b'bas Yaakov*, "For he wanted Yaakov's daughter." *Ein davar ha'omeid bifnei haratzon*; "Nothing stands in the way of one's will. These men wanted to say *selichos* with the *Rebbe*. Nothing was going to stand in their way."

This is a powerful lesson for us. When one's desire to grow in Torah is passionate and uncompromising, nothing will stand in the way of his achieving success. Unfortunately, there is a flip side. One who wants to reject can follow the negative side of *ruchniyus*, spirituality; one who wants to sin can also use his will to achieve negativity.

I recently read that *Horav Shlomo Freifeld, zl*, was wont to say that the same letters that comprise the word *ratzon* (*reish, tzaddik, vov, nun*) also make up the word *tzinor*, pipe. He explained that when a person has a true, definite plan to achieve a goal, Hashem will give him the strength as if through a pipe. It will flow to him from Above.

The entrance exam for *Yeshivas Shaar Yashuv* (*Rav Freifeld's yeshiva*) consisted of one question: Do you want to learn? An affirmative response received the *Rosh Yeshiva's* acceptance – regardless of the student's past history or lack of erudition. As long as he demonstrated a positive desire to "make it," he was in. *Ein davar ha'omeid bifnei ha'ratzon*.