

As for me, I have given you, Shechem, one portion more than your brothers, which I took from the Emori with my sword and with my bow. (48:22)

Yaakov *Avinu* awarded Yosef an extra portion of land: Shechem. This was bequeathed to him for taking the initiative to inter Yaakov *Avinu's* remains in *Eretz Yisrael*. To protect *Shimon* and *Levi*, who had gone to Shechem to retrieve their sister, Dinah, and to avenge the family's honor, the Patriarch took up arms, preparing to battle the *Emori*. Hashem provided the Patriarch with a miracle, so that he would emerge triumphant. Sword and bow are figurative terms for the spiritual weaponry that our Patriarch employed. This teaches us that true strength is not physical in nature, but rather, spiritual strength that calls upon one's utmost spiritual commitment and merit to the level that Yaakov achieved. Considering that Yaakov rebuked his sons, *Shimon* and *Levi*, for killing the residents of the city of *Shechem*, attributing the success of the *Shechem* campaign to his spiritual endowment seems odd. Why was he blaming them when he was the one who "saved the day"? The *Beis Ish Chai* explains this with an analogy: A man went into the forest and chanced upon a man-eating lion. The beast was slowly moving towards him, preparing for the kill. The man was unaware that a hunter with his bow and arrow had the lion in his sights, just waiting for the moment when he would release the arrow and put an end to the lion's life. When the man saw that the lion was crouching to lunge at him, he waited for the first chance and threw his walking stick at the lion. Precisely at that moment, the hunter released his bow and made a quick end to the lion's plans. The lion fell dead at the feet of the man, who foolishly gazed at the blood on the ground and his walking stick next to him. He thought to himself, "I am such a mighty warrior. I stood up to the lion with my stick! I ended his mighty reign of terror!"

Obviously, the man is devoid of his senses to think that his puny stick had killed the lion. If not for the hunter, the man and his stick would have been the lion's dinner. *Shimon* and *Levi* thought that they had avenged their sister. What were the boys thinking? They went up against a city and killed with reckless abandon. The campaign succeeded only due to Yaakov's prayers. He rebuked them for undertaking such a foolhardy mission in an un-Jewish manner. We do not kill; we only defend ourselves. They forced our Patriarch's hand to come save them with his "bow and arrow." We can derive a powerful lesson from here. We initiate many activities that are often beyond our ability to achieve success. Yet, we somehow emerge successful, thinking it was all our doing. It was not. Hashem always intervenes, whether it is in the merit of our prayers or those of our parents. We must learn to recognize and acknowledge this reality and be prudent with our choices.