



PARSHAS VAYISHLACH – MR GERSHON HEPNER

Following the abduction of Dinah, the prince of the town of Shechem proposed a policy of twinning his city together with the family of Yaakov. His suggestion promoted intermarriage between the two sides, with the icing on the cake being excellent commercial prospects and property rights in the town.

The brothers of Dinah were horrified by the very idea, and responded emphatically.

ויאמרו אליהם לא נוכל לעשות הדבר הזה לתת את אחתינו
לאיש אשר לו ערלה כי חרפה הוא לנו (לד: יד)

They (the brothers) said to them, “We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to an uncircumcised man, for it is disgusting to us.”

Dinah’s brothers proceeded to present what appeared to be a reasonable and harmless request. They agreed politely to the suggestion of unification with the inhabitants of the town, on condition that all the males would first perform Bris Milah upon themselves. Failing to see through the ruse, the people of Shechem agreed readily, and circumcised themselves. In their subsequent state of physical weakness, they could not withstand the military machine of Shimon and Levi, who decimated the town and rescued their sister.

What gave Shimon and Levi the Halachic right to slaughter the population of Shechem?

The **Rambam** (Hilchos Melochim 9:14) explains that one of the seven Noachide Laws is the requirement to establish a judicial system. The people of the town had failed to bring any action against Shechem, the man who had abducted Dinah. This sin of omission was a transgression of one of their seven Mitzvos, each of which carries the death penalty. As a community they were *chayovim misoh*, and were therefore executed by Shimon and Levi.

The **Ramban** disagrees with the Rambam, and is of the opinion that a *ben Noach* can only be *chayav misoh* for a sin of commission. The Ramban proceeds to explain that the brothers of Dinah were very aware of other multiple sins of the people of Shechem - notably idol worship and immorality – and it was these sins that caused them to forfeit their lives.

The **Chidushei HoRim** cites the Halocho that a Gentile who keeps Shabbos is *chayav misoh*. Shabbos is depicted as

ביני ובין בני ישראל אות הוא לעלם שמות (לא: יז)

‘a sign between Me and the children of Israel’. This is interpreted by the Mechilto to imply that the Bnei Yisroel, and only the Bnei Yisroel may keep Shabbos. The Gentile who keeps Shabbos has trespassed on the ‘sign’ that is the shared domain of Bnei Yisroel and Hashem, and he thus forfeits his life.

The Bris Miloh is described in similar tones: (יז: יא) בראשית **והיה לאות ברית ביני וביניכם**

‘it shall be a sign between Me and you’. The Chidushei HoRim suggests that the same may be true of the Bris Miloh. The Gentile who circumcises himself for his own ulterior motives and with no desire to become a Ger, has encroached upon an area where only Bnei Yisroel and Hashem belong, and he thus forfeits his life.

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On a personal note – I remember as a teenager, sitting in my bedroom and preparing the Kerias HaTorah for Parshas Vayishlach. With no effort whatsoever, a Gematria suddenly seemed to hop off the page of my Tikun, and catch my eye. I have recently checked the Otzar HaChochmoh database to see if this Gematria is brought in any seforim, and it seems that it is not. Consequently I feel it is my Mitzva to bring this Gematria to light.

The ערלה is described by the possuk as **חרפה הוא**. The Gematria of ערלה equals that of **חרפה הוא** – 305.

לעילוי נשמת זקנתי מרת שפרינץ בת החבר ר' אלכסנדר - נפטרה י"ב כסלו תש"ם