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וַיִּשְׁלַח יַעֲקֹב מַלְאָכִים לְפָנָיו אֶל-עֵשָׂו אָחִיו
(בראשית ל"ב:ד')

Would any of us send gifts to someone who's been out to get us? Would we try to show care to someone we're genuinely afraid of?

The parasha opens with Yaakov facing exactly that situation. Esav is coming toward him with a group of men, and it looks like a confrontation is on the way. This isn't sudden. The Torah already told us:

וַיֹּאמֶר עֵשָׂו... וְאַהֲרָגָה אֶת-יַעֲקֹב אָחִי (בראשית כ"ז:מ"א)

Esav has carried this anger for years (וַיִּשְׁטֹם עֵשָׂו) and Yaakov is fully aware of it. Yet instead of hiding or preparing for a fight, he sends messengers right to him. Why?

Rav Tzvi Yehuda HaKohen Kook זצ"ל points us back to the nevuah given before the twins were even born:

"שְׁנֵי גִי'ם בְּבִטְנָה... וְשְׁנֵי לְאָמִים..." (בראשית כ"ה:כ"ג)

Their lives were always going to diverge. They were destined to become two nations with different paths. But right now, what we're seeing is a painful, complicated family conflict and resentment that's been sitting in Esav's heart for a long time. In that light, Yaakov's move (וַיִּשְׁלַח יַעֲקֹב מַלְאָכִים) isn't surrender. Rav Tzvi Yehuda sees it as a deliberate, thoughtful political step.

A step that says: I'm willing to engage, even when you're not.

And that theme feels incredibly relevant today. Our political world, especially in Medinat Yisrael, is complicated and emotional. But beneath the arguments and the noise, many people, even those who disagree fiercely, are trying to build something good for Am Yisrael.

It may look like chaos from the outside. But maybe, like Yaakov and Esav, there's room for connection even where there's tension. Not because we agree, but because we're family.

Sometimes the strongest move isn't to push back harder...but to reach out first, to believe that even complicated relationships can move toward healing, and to trust that unity built with courage can shape a better future.

שבת שלום ומבורך!



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SHIMON AND LEVI – COURAGE AND RESPONSIBILITY

Parashat Vayishlach presents a difficult and complex narrative involving Dinah and the city of Shechem. After Shechem harmed Dinah, her brothers, Shimon and Levi, sought to defend her. They proposed that the men of Shechem could marry Dinah only if they underwent circumcision. When the men

were weakened from the procedure, Shimon and Levi attacked and killed all the males in the city (Genesis 34:25–26: “On the third day, when they were in pain, two of Jacob’s sons, Shimon and Levi, Dinah’s brothers, took their swords and came against the city while it was unguarded, and killed all the males. They also killed Hamor and Shechem, his son, with the sword, and took Dinah out of Shechem’s house and left.”).

Yaakov rebuked his sons, expressing concern about the broader consequences of their actions and the impact on the family (Genesis 34:30: “Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, ‘You have brought trouble on me by making me odious to the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites and the Perizzites. My numbers are few, and they will gather against me and attack me, and I will be destroyed, I and my household.’”). Later, he critiques Shimon and Levi again (Genesis 49:5–7), highlighting a broader concern regarding their approach to conflict.

Commentators differ in their evaluation of Shimon and Levi’s actions. Ramban explains that their intent was to defend Dinah and uphold family honor, yet he emphasizes that their method—slaughtering all the men—was excessive and morally problematic. Rambam,

in Hilchot De’ot (6:1), teaches that a person must act with moderation and wisdom, avoiding extremes even when motivated by anger or a sense of justice.

This narrative offers an enduring ethical lesson: the pursuit of justice requires both courage and prudence. Even when one is certain of the righteousness of their cause, one must carefully consider the consequences of one’s actions. Pirkei Avot (2:1) further instructs that all deeds, whether seemingly minor or significant, must be performed with thoughtfulness and care. Shimon and Levi demonstrate the importance of standing up for what is right; yet, true justice demands balancing courage with responsibility and foresight, ensuring that one’s actions protect and defend without inflicting unnecessary harm. ■




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