

Keep Them Separated: Fiveku #2 Five Short Sections Only

Yaakov mentions that his sons Shimon and Levi have used their abilities for destruction, and says that they should live scattered around Israel [1]. How will this solve their inclination to destroy what they see as major problems in their environment?

The *middah* (concept/quality) of *gevurah* can be understood to mean the urge to attack or the ability to hold oneself back from attacking. [2] "Attacking" means to confront or rail against something that is incorrect, within in ones surroundings.

When too much *gevurah* is concentrated in one place, there will be too much attacking; also, the elimination of incorrect entities in a given environment will be done in an incorrect way (for example, when Shimon and Levi wipe out the city of Shechem or lead the charge against Yosef). When the *middah* is utilized properly, it can stop true injustice and major breakdowns in society (as when Levi refuses to worship the Golden Calf or when Pinchas eliminates Zimri).

People who embrace the Chassidic faith can be understood to be utilizing *gevurah* to enhance their lives; they are taking extra caution to eliminate what they see as potential hazards in their environment. As a general concept this is commendable (see "**Strict or Lenient?**" at the bottom of [this](#) page). However, just as it is possible for people who are non-Chassidic (or Chassidic) to have a harmful *lack of gevurah* in their lives, so do Chassidim run the risk of overly concentrating *gevurah* and misusing it. It would appear that a minority of people who are embracing *gevurah* have recently separated themselves from proper Chassidic faith by misusing this powerful *middah*.



Though there are disagreements among the different components of the Orthodox community, there should be no disagreement that the events that occurred and are occurring in Beit Shemesh are totally unacceptable and deplorable. We hope to see even more Orthodox leaders speaking out against the atrocities that have happened and the inappropriate ongoing use of intimidation and the threat of violence to achieve certain goals.

May we all balance our *middot* to become properly balanced people.

--IB

Links for Further Reading:

For an outstanding treatment of the Beit Shemesh issue and the issue of “religious garb” and “religiousness”, see Rabbi Pruzansky’s blog here <http://rabbipruzansky.com/2012/01/04/the-costume/>.

[1] Gen. 49:5-7.

[2] Yuma 69b