

# Maamarei Mordechai

הסבר לפי ממש פשוט

Parshas Vayeshev 5784

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Yoseph has his dreams and his brothers move on with family business.

**וַיֵּלְכוּ אֶחָיו לְרֹעוֹת אֶת-צֹאן אֲבֵיהֶם בְּשֶׁכֶם:**

“And the brothers went to shepherd sheep of their father in Shechem.” (Bereishis 37:12).

How could the brothers go to Shechem if they just had an episode where they wiped out the entire city? (Bereishis 34:27). Would they go back there after Yaakov was afraid of making enemies? (Ibid 34:30). Also, what is the significance of them shepherding in Shechem? Why are there dots on the word “es” (definite pronoun).

The order of the Torah is not necessarily linear. When it specifically gives hints that the chronology is asynchronous then the pesukim could be anachronistic. The order of the pesukim is that Yaakov met Eisav. (Ibid 33:4). Instead of following Eisav to Seir he headed toward Eretz Canaan. (Ibid 33:17). He made it to Shechem (ibid 33:18), purchased land to pitch his tent (ibid 33:19), and set up a mizbeach there (ibid 33:20). Having been away from his father’s house for twenty years, and having been commanded by Hashem to specifically return to his father’s house (ibid 31:3), Yaakov did not dawdle. He only purchased the land to encamp, and later, for his sheep to herd. The pasuk does not use the word וַיָּשֶׁב “and he settled” because Yaakov did not settle in Shechem. He arrived in Eretz Canaan and encamped a short and temporary period. He was about to get up to go to his father in Chevron when Hashem commanded him first to return to Beis El and fulfill his promise. (Ibid 35:1).

After his long absence and with Eisav a roaming potential threat, Yaakov would have no reason to settle in Shechem. He aimed for his father’s house but went there via Beis El as Hashem commanded him. He then made his way – albeit eventually because Rochel died and Reuven violated his honor – to Chevron, to his father. (Ibid 35:27). He then settled in the area. (Ibid 37:1). There was no time for Dina to wander and there was no time for the brothers to sack the city. Yaakov did not stay in Shechem long enough.

The brothers went to shepherd in Shechem specifically. The incident with Dina did not happen yet and Yaakov still owned purchased land there. That is why there are dots on the “es.” The אֶת-צֹאן makes the sheep important. It should have said הַצֹּאן “the sheep.” Instead, it says “sheep of their father.” Some of the sheep, not all of the sheep. It was the sheep they were responsible for and not too many that would eat from land other than the land Yaakov bought in the area. That is when Dina went out and that is when the incident of Chamor occurred.

וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בָּאוּ מִן-הַשָּׂדֶה כִּשְׂמֹעַם וַיִּתְעַצְבוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים וַיִּחַר לָהֶם מְאֹד כִּי-נִבְלָה עֲשָׂה בְיִשְׂרָאֵל: “The sons of Yaakov came from the field when they heard. The men were distressed and very mad, because a scandalous act was done to Yisroel.” (Ibid 34:7). They came from the field because they were shepherding the sheep. They called the atrocity one toward “Yisroel.”

Yaakov's name was changed to Yisroel in Beis El, after moving on from Shechem. (Ibid 35:1). In fact, when Yaakov sends Yoseph to look after his brothers the pasuk says, "Yisroel said to Yoseph." (Ibid 37:13). The incident of Dina took place when Yaakov was already called Yisroel. Even the attacker did not change Yaakov's name earlier. When the attacker gave the name to Yaakov on the Yabbuk Riverr, the pasuk says, לֹא יַעֲקֹב יִאָמֵר עוֹד, :וְהוֹכֵל: "No Yaakov, say further about your name. Because with a prince with the Lord and of mankind are you." (Ibid 32:29). The attacker does not change Yaakov's name, nor does it say Yaakov was then called Yisroel.

Further, the pasuk calls the brothers "Men." Shimon and Levi, who were no older than 12 and 11 (this is 13 to 14 years after Yaakov married Leah) and his brothers (who were even younger) would not be called "men" at that age. It had to occur when the brothers got older. Yoseph was seventeen (ibid 37:2) when he looked after them in Shechem so his brothers were already men by then. They were also then old enough and strong enough to take on an entire fortified city.

This also explains why the brothers sat down to a "bread meal" after throwing Yoseph in a pit. (Ibid 37:25). This is because they were celebrating their victory over Shechem. They also were bloodthirsty and dealt severely with Yoseph because of the blood they spilled. This also explains why Yaakov was not at all involved in the revenge taken for Dina until it was done. He was not in Shechem but in Chevron when it took place. Yaakov sent Yoseph to see how the brothers and the flock were doing and for Yoseph to bring back word. (Ibid 37:14). This is also the reason he found them in Doshan. They moved on from Shechem after attacking it. It is also why the two brothers that spoke when dealing with Yoseph were Reuven and Yehuda. Reuven was the eldest. The next in line, Shimon and Levi, were either away reporting back to their father about Shechem where the pasuk says "Yaakov said to Shimon and Levi" (ibid 34:30) or they were *persona non grata* at this point. Either way, Yehuda, the fourth eldest, spoke next.

Hashem gives Yaakov the title Yisroel after the Torah records the incident with Dina. "'Don't call your name anymore Yaakov, but Yisroel also will be your name.' And He called his name, Yisroel." (Ibid). At this name change Hashem promised him that kings would come out of his loins and he will be an assembly of nations. (Ibid 35:11). Hashem also promises to give him the Land that He promised to Avraham and Yitzchok. (Ibid 35:12). Yaakov scolds Shimon and Levi saying, "You have made a nuisance of me, to make me repulsive to the inhabitants." (Ibid 34:30). Yaakov did not want to enter into war with the inhabitants because he believed in the promises and thought he would possess the Land by way of acquisition, *possession*, not with war. This is how the promise to Avraham was given. "To possess it" is not necessarily war. Yaakov tells Shimon and Levi, "I am few in number and they will now attack me." (Ibid). He had not yet reached "I will make your seed like the stars in heavens." (Ibid 15:5, 26:4). Further, after Yoseph's dreams Yaakov "watched over the matter." (Ibid 37:11). He was waiting for the dreams to come true and fulfill the promise. War might have upset that.

The Torah does not want to add misery upon misery so it broke up the segment of Dina's violation and Yoseph being sold.