

We Must Control our Anger

⁵ Simeon and Levi are brothers; instruments of violence are their knives. ⁶ In their secret counsel may my soul not enter. In their contingent may my honor never be united. For in their anger, they slew men, and in their self-will, they maimed oxen. ⁷ Cursed be their anger for it was strong and their rage for it was cruel – I will disperse them in Jacob, I will scatter them in Israel” (Genesis 49:5-7)

Jacob is on his deathbed in Genesis chapter 49. The substance of Jacob’s “*blessings and curses*” which he did pronounce at the conclusion of Genesis is, at first glance, out of character. Why would the *Torah* include the curses along with the blessings? When where “*Simeon and Levi brothers related by weapons of violence?*” (KJV) We have to go back to the actions of Levi and Simeon in *Parashat Vayishlach*, for us to find out. Here we will learn why Levi, in particular, was not granted a geographical inheritance among the tribes of Israel. Jacob prophesied this, specifically. This is 400+ years *before* the *Torah* was given in Sinai in Exodus 19-24. He also specified the same discipline for the descendants of Simeon. These two tribes were granted *unspecified* land within the allotment to Judah – it is left up to Judah. Isn’t that the way it is with us as sinners? If it weren’t for the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, where would our inheritance be?

According to Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, curious comes from the Greek *periergos*, meaning “*busy about trifles.*” In the KJV it is translated as busybody – it is used of referring to magic arts in Acts 19:19 (lit., “*things that are around work,*” and thus superfluous), i. e., the arts of those who pry into forbidden things, with the aid of evil spirits. See also 1 Tim. 5:13, where the meaning is *inquisitive*, “*prying into other people’s affairs.*”

¹³ Besides that, they learn to be idle, going around from house to house; and not only idle, but gossips and busybodies (curious), saying things they shouldn’t. (1 Tim 5:13, JNT)

The Almighty placed no restriction on curiosity except in the area of learning about evil. For example: “*For everyone has heard about your obedience; therefore, I rejoice over you. However, I want you to be wise concerning good, but innocent concerning evil*” (Romans 16:19). After creating Adam, *Adonai* gave him freedom to eat of the fruit of every tree except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Thus, Scripture tells us that: “*You are not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, because on the day that you eat from it, it will become certain that you will die*” (See Gen. 2:17). How are we to tell what is right and what is wrong? Obviously, He intended for us to not know evil by experience, but rather by discernment, which is a function of His Holy Spirit within us. Again, Scripture states: “*Dear friends, don’t trust every spirit. On the contrary, test (try) the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world*” (See 1 John 4:1). And also “*Now the natural man does not receive the things from the Spirit of God—to him they are nonsense! Moreover, he is unable to grasp them, because they are evaluated (discerned) through the Spirit*” (1 Cor. 2:14.) Discernment is one of the Manifestation Works of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:10). This is why “*...the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart*” (Heb. 4:12) and “*But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil*” (Heb. 5:14).

What happens when we allow curiosity into areas of knowing about evil? According to *Jacob* (James 1:14) “*we are drawn away by our own lust and enticed.*” The JNT states it: “*Rather, each person is being tempted whenever he is being dragged off and enticed by the bait of his own desire.*” Lust is then the “*bait of our own desire.*” Our own conscience bears witness, and our thoughts accuse us that we are pursuing that which is not right. For example: “*For whenever Gentiles, who have no Torah, do naturally what the Torah requires, then these, even though they don’t have Torah, for themselves are Torah!*” ¹⁵ *For their lives show that the conduct the Torah dictates is written in their hearts. Their consciences also bear witness to this, for their conflicting thoughts sometimes accuse them and sometimes defend them*” (Romans 2:14-15) “*Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God*” (1 John 3:21).

Ultimately, a sensual focus develops, and we now think about doing things which previously were not even considered. Thus, we see Eve *“⁶ When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it had a pleasing appearance and that the tree was desirable for making one wise, she took some of its fruit and ate...”* (See Gen. 3:6) Eve ate the forbidden tree and became wise not only in good but also in evil and then she acted upon that sensual focus and did willfully sin against Adonai. We are the children of Eve, we have her DNA, we also can develop a sensual focus and ignore the Lord’s Words, His *mitzvot* and *Torah* and we can bring unto ourselves death.

♪ And now Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee. But to fear the Lord, thy God, and to walk in all His ways. And to love Him and to serve Him, with all thy heart and soul ♪ (Deut. 10:12).

It is significant that James tells us that we are only tempted by the Accuser and Deceiver *after* we are first drawn away by our own lusts: *“¹³ Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: ¹⁴ But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.”* How does one’s temptation begin? Same way as with Eve: *“Hath God said?”* (see Gen. 3:1) Thus, Eve questioned God’s Word, implying that *Adonai* was withholding the best from her: *“Elohim knows that...you will be as gods, knowing good and evil.”* If we look at the Hebrew text, we get the insight that ultimately Satan was promising that she(we) will be *Ke-Elohim*, meaning “like” or “as” Elohim. **NO WAY JOSÉ, WE CANNOT BE LIKE GOD.** This is impossible! He is the Eternal One, but we were created. He is infinite, but we are finite. He can do impossible things, but we can’t even do what we ought to. Do you see the deception?

As the sensual focus continues, lust conceives and brings forth a violation of *Adonai’s Word*. This violation may vary greatly from one person to the next, but the result in every person is the same – a keen awakening of the guilt and yes, there are consequences – Simeon and Levi lost their inheritance. It is definitely time to put away all anger! What drove Dinah to go to Shechem in the first place? A young person’s curiosity? *Shabbat Shalom!*