

STANDING UP FOR HASHEM'S HONOR "Pinchas son of Elazar son of Aaron the Kohen, turned back My wrath... when he zealously avenged My vengeance among them." The *neshamah* within us received certain *middos* from Hashem, and therefore our *neshamah* is able to acquire the ability to exercise *kanaus*, zealotry, to avenge and defend Hashem's honor, to stand up for His Torah.

We need to understand, however, that although this trait of *kanaus* (zealotry) is rooted in our *neshamah*, and it was created to defend the honor of Hashem, if we don't work on refining our *middos*, it can still be tainted with a mixture of other motivations that are self-serving. For example, one's personal agendas, his *negios*, may be mixed into the holy cause he is fighting for, tainting his *kanaus*. It will seem to the person as if he is emulating Pinchas, while in reality, the person is also acting upon self-serving interests that he isn't consciously aware of. The root of the person's act is in *kedushah*, but it is the way in which it is being manifest – its *levush* (garment), where it can become evil, mixed with other motivations that are not about Hashem.

One must therefore be very cautious when it comes to being zealous in avenging Hashem's honor, and be extra wary of any unholy intentions that may mix in with his holy cause. His *kanaus* must be coming purely from *d'veykus* in Hashem and with no other intentions mixed in.

Kanaus must be coming from the depths of the *neshamah*, which contains a great love for *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, as in the verse, עזה כמות אהבה וקשה כשאוּל, קנאה ורשפיה רפשי אש "For love is as tough as death, and zealotry is hard like a

reed, and her sparks are sparks of fire, a flame of G-d." When one has revealed his *neshamah*, he is zealous for Hashem due to this lofty source. The more that a person loves Hashem – and not simply in the sense of a pleasant kind of love, but a fiery and passionate kind of love, the more this fire burns like the fire which would burn constantly on the *Mizbeiach*, this will produce a holy trait of *kanaus* that comes from the *neshamah*.

But there is also a purer kind of *kanaus*: When it comes from a deep quest for *emes*, truth. This is another inherent trait of our *neshamah*, and every *neshamah* contains this desire for truth.

When a person feels a fiery, burning love for Hashem, it is still possible that other impurities can be mixed into the act. A person who is zealous out of love for Hashem might become so excited that he may overlook certain details, which will cause him to be mistaken. Even when though his love for Hashem is like a burning fire, the nature of fire is that it bursts out impulsively. So when a person is zealous for Hashem out of a fiery love for Him, his *kanaus* might become impulsive, and he explodes in anger at people who do the wrong thing – and his impulsive explosion shows that he is not acting *truthful*. He is not acting with *emes*.

In contrast, when a person's *kanaus* is coming from a search for truth, it will then be pure. This is what is meant by דובר אמת בלבבו, one who "speaks truth from his heart". It is an inner sense of *yashrus*: To do what's right. This quality of truthfulness in our *nefesh* demands that zealous action be taken in order to defend Hashem's Torah. The clearer the truth is to a person, the more truthful

his zealotry will be. This does not mean that one's *kanaus* will always be completely holy and pure, but it will certainly be much closer to the *emes*, it will be much more truthful. All *kanaus* must have these two parts: a fiery love for Hashem, and a quest for truth, which stems from an inner sense of what's right, both in the mind and in the heart, which demands the truth.

When meeting those two conditions, a person's *kanaus/zealotry* is complete. Pinchas possessed both of these qualities – he had a great love for Hashem, as well as a demand for truth. When a person has these two qualities together, he is taking the right path. However, even then, he will still need to purify his character and inner motivations, so that other factors don't become mixed in with his holy cause.

Practically speaking, only individuals reach the true *kanaus*. Therefore, *kanaus* is mainly an *avodah* for individuals, and not for the general *tzibur*. Most of the *kanaus* (zealotry) that we can feel needs to remain deep in our heart, and we cannot act upon it. It remains as a burning pain in our heart. Deep inside ourselves, we can mourn the *Shechinah* over the situation of *Klal Yisrael* today. We generally should not act upon any *kanaus* (zealotry) that we feel because in any case, there are no actions that we can practically do that will change the generation today. Only through revealing *mesirus nefesh* (self-sacrifice), which comes from Above, can everything change.

May Hashem make us worthy of the *Beis HaMikdash* and *Klal Yisrael* becoming rebuilt again in their full glory, when the world will be filled with the *daas* of Hashem. (based on *Bilvavi On The Parsha*)

Q&A – DOING OUR BEST

QUESTION I feel that I'm not reaching my *shleimus* (self-completion), that I'm not completing my *tafkid* (G-d given task on this world). I know that I am unique, and I know that I have capabilities – it's just that I don't know what to do with myself and how to reach my personal *tafkid*.

ANSWER Think about the good abilities which Hashem has implanted within you, and then think about what your most special ability is, which is hidden within you. Then after discovering it, try to access your best ability more often, so that you keep actualizing its potential.

QUESTION I need *chizuk*, physically and emotionally. I am always so tired and drained from taking care of my little kids all day, and I keep feeling like I just want to go to sleep...

ANSWER 1) Connect to the most positive aspect of your character! 2) Talk simply with Hashem throughout the day, in a good and exalted frame of mind, and don't only talk Him about problems or only when you need something! 3) Have regular fixed times every day to study certain areas in Torah topics of specific interest to you, which you find enjoyable to learn about.

QUESTION I love to help others and I think about others all the time. I can't be calm and serene as I am learning and getting closer to Hashem that there are Jews out there who are so far from Hashem and who haven't tasted truth. Even though I have helped many people, I am far from reaching my goals and there are still many people I haven't yet helped, and this makes me so sad and I feel like giving up. How can I deal with my strong emotions? Also, as far as my learning is concerning, I wish I could know all of Shas and Shulchan Aruch, and to know it all perfectly. But I get frustrated as I learn because I need to know every Gemara and every halachah that has to do with the *sugya*. This takes up time and then I lose my focus, and then I lose my *cheishek* for the *sugya*. I feel like I haven't learned properly even one *sugya*, and all of my notes are choppy and incomplete. There is no end to how much I want to know whenever I learn a *sugya*, but it never happens. I can't see myself learning in any other way, though. How can I reach my goals properly?

ANSWER [Regarding your need to help people:] This is a subtle matter. (1) There is a Creator Who can do anything, and there is the human being, who is limited. There is also "a spark of the Creator" within the created being, and therefore there is a "spark" in a person which makes a person feel like he wants to "do everything", because he has a spark of the Creator in him. This is also known as our desire to go higher, *ratzu* (which means "advancing"). But we also have our 'default' mode, called *shov*, which means "returning" to our normal level. A person has to recognize that he is a created being, which is limited by very definition. This is the depth of the power of humility: Recognizing that we are limited and finite. (2) After you have thought about this well and your mind is at peace with this, you then need to deeply clarify that **you, as a human being, are not responsible for bringing the world to its purpose. You are not responsible for results - you only have the responsibility of doing what you can, according to what Hashem wants from you.** The results

are not your responsibility. This perspective which help you do what Hashem wants you to do, as opposed to looking for perfect results in everything you do. (3) Even more so, though, one has to know his capabilities, how much he can do and the quality of what he can or can't do, and then he should determine how much he needs to do, and what kind of work he can do, and how he can progress according to his unique capabilities and to do what he is meant to do (besides for clarifying what the halachah entails of him).

[Regarding your aspirations in learning Torah]. When it comes to learning, one should try to understand what he is learning according to his capabilities, but with the understanding that the Torah is longer than the land and wider than all of the seas, and it is impossible to get to the end of the Torah, whether in quantity or in quality, for the Torah is so vastly deep that no one can get to all of its depth. One should clarify each thing he learns about according to his level, to know what he is clear about and what he is not clear about. The very recognition that we are learning an endless wisdom is already a way to gain humility, and it changes one's perspective about learning, It is about learning one's personal share in the Torah: ותן חלקנו בתורתך, "And give us our portion in Your Torah."

QUESTION How can a person know what his personal *cheilek* (portion) in Torah is and which area of Torah he is meant to focus more on (especially since he doesn't know his *shoresh haneshamah*)?

ANSWER The very *pnimiyus* of our *neshamah* is at first hidden, due to one's personal *retzonos* (his various wishes) which are blinding him from the truth. When one nullifies these extra *retzonos* [by wanting to do only what Hashem wants and by gradually getting rid of all other *retzonos*, one by one, until all he wants to do is *ratzon Hashem* and nothing else], he reaches the point called *hishtavus* (equilibrium), and then he can know what his personal area of Torah learning is which he should be mainly be exerting himself in.

QUESTION How can we open up another person's heart to the *emes* (to see the truth)?

ANSWER Look for a small way in which you can introduce a slightly more spiritual (*ruchniyus*) perspective about something, to the other. Do this gradually, introducing the other to a greater level of awareness, beginning with very small steps, slowly increasing the other's awareness to truths.

QUESTION My wife has a smartphone that's not filtered. How do I get her to give it up?

ANSWER Cry to Hashem about her situation, from the deepest place in yourself. But don't only cry for your wife. Cry for the many other people in the world who are also in her situation, *Hashem Yeracheim* (may G-d have compassion on all of them). It is not suggested that you pressure her. It won't help. She needs to come to a point in which she feels how this is actually endangering you. Don't pressure her though about this. Tell it to her when you become clear about this, and do it with a pure motivation. And tell it to her from the most truthful, and innermost place, inside yourself. (from the *Bilvavi Q & A archive*).