

Pinchas ben Elazar ben Aharon HaKohen, turned back My wrath from upon Bnei Yisrael, when he zealously avenged My vengeance among them. (25:11)

It is not always about who one is or from whom one descends. It is about: how much one cares; how concerned he is; if he is willing to take responsibility – or remain indifferent – like everyone else around him. *Ichpasius* – concern, a feeling of responsibility – this is what Pinchas demonstrated, explains **Horav Shimshon Pincus, zl.** *Klal Yisrael* was there watching, most of them probably stunned beyond belief. How could this be happening to us? How could such an outrage occur in the holy camp? While they stood there questioning, Pinchas took action. Why? Because he cared. *Ichpasius* – he was concerned for the moral fiber, the continued sacredness of our People. This is why he is Eliyahu *HaNavi*, and why he will be the harbinger of our ultimate Redemption, because he cared – and continues to care.

Rav Pincus observes that shedding tears during the Three Weeks, Nine Days, and *Tishah B'Av*, is not a mandated *halachah* in the *Shulchan Aruch*. It is, however, an expression of *ichpasius*, concern, empathy, solidarity, with – and for – the Jewish People. One who cares, weeps. One who does not care, does not weep. Hashem waits for those tears, because they are tears of someone who cares. Hashem waits for those people who show their concern for *Am Yisrael*, who care about the long *galus*, exile, which we are in.

Some people are not up to crying. Nonetheless, they feel that during the *Bein Hametzarim*, Three Weeks, a sense of mourning, sadness, should prevail. Music, weddings, joyful celebrations are just not in vogue. During the Nine days, our sense of mourning becomes more intense, more impressive, because we feel the pain. We care.