

"In that he was jealous for My sake." (25:11)

Through his zealous action, Pinchas was in fact carrying out the *halachah* of *uc ihgdup ihtbe ,hnrt kgucvw* "One who is intimate with a gentile is to be struck down by zealous people." This injunction refers to those who are so sensitive about the sanctity of Hashem's Name that any incursion against it is intolerable. Why, then, is Pinchas lauded and praised? Indeed, he was doing only what was expected of him.

Horav M. Gifter, Shlita, explains that this *halachah* is unique in that its fulfillment is to be performed only by one who is a "*kana'ie*," a zealot. He explains that the concept of *kana'us*, is mistakenly associated with extremism. A "*kana'ie*" is one who is *uhek tk tbew* so zealous for Hashem that he is willing to give up everything he possesses for Hashem, even his own life. The source of this zealousness is the recognition that the fulfillment of Hashem's will is ultimately the foundation of life. Every activity in life is a reflection of this awareness.

Zealousness is the perfection of one's spiritual essence. It is the culmination of an educational process which stimulates man to progress from his natural inclination towards laziness to the sublime height of spiritual peace. In this state, he is prepared to dedicate his life to the service of Hashem. How distant is the *Torah's* perspective of zealousness from extremism!