

When he zealously avenged Me among them. (25:11)

The zealot acts on behalf of Hashem. After being completely certain that he has expunged every vestige of personal interest and emotion, to the point that he truly feels that he is acting only for Hashem, then he can move forward by acting zealously. The commentators question the meaning of *b'socham*, among them, and its placement at the end of the *pasuk*. It is almost as if the Torah is conveying to us the criterion for *kanaus*, jealousy: it must be *b'socham*, among them. Simply, this implies that the *kanai* should view himself as being “among them,” a member of the community, a brother who is acting out of love and obligation – not anger and animus. The following vignette underscores this idea:

My nephew recently undertook a *shlichus*, mission, from the *Gerrer Rebbe, Shlita*, to establish a *Gerrer* community in Dimona, *Eretz Yisrael* (southern part of the country, near Arad, *Yam Hamelech* and Be'er Sheva). He arrived with a *Kollel* of young men with him in the role of *Rosh*, leader and guide. The community grew quickly, and, in a short while, the building which they were renting to serve as *bais hamedrash* and *shul* was no longer practical. While they had not yet located a suitable alternative, *Shabbos* services were held in a nearby *mamlachti* high school building. The *mamlachti* government schools are not *chareidi*, Orthodox, and the majority of their student body have minimal understanding of the Torah (both letter and spirit). As a result, members of the student bodies have very little commitment to Jewish law and its traditions. Many of these students are either afraid of *chareidim* or, due to a lack of familiarity with us and our way of life, have developed an open bitterness, cultivated by years of hostile indoctrination by their leadership.

On a given Friday night following *Kabollas Shabbos* services, my nephew left *shul* late and noticed a group of teenagers playing basketball. To them, Friday night was just another night of the week. He walked over, dressed in his *chassidic* garb, sporting a *spodek* (Polish *Shtrimele*), and asked them if they would like to have some *kugel*. They could not believe that this *chareidi* Jew was addressing them as human beings. Sure, they would like some *kugel*. Perhaps, they would like to recite a *berachah*, he asked, to which most agreed. This encounter continued for a number of weeks until one of them asked to join the services. Slowly, others either joined or came afterwards for *kiddush* and *kugel*. Did they become *frum*? Will they become *frum*? We are not there yet. Their animus, however, was tempered because someone decided to employ passive *kanaus*, *b'socham*, among them – not against them.