

## And it shall be for him and his offspring after him a covenant of eternal Priesthood, because he took vengeance for his G-d, and he atoned for Bnei Yisrael. (25:13)

Pinchas was inducted into the *Kehunah*, Priesthood, following his zealous act of killing Zimri, the *Nasi*, Prince, of the Tribe of Shimon. *Rashi* explains that, until this point in time, the only *Kohanim* were Aharon *HaKohen*, his sons and future offspring. Since Pinchas was not a son (neither were his future offspring), he was not included in the *Kehunah*. In one of the teachings of the *Zohar*, the position is taken that by killing Zimri, Pinchas became forever disqualified from the *Kehunah*. Thus, the *Kehunah*, which he received as a reward, was a totally new *Kehunah*, not connected with that of Aharon *HaKohen*. How are we to understand this?

The **Shem Mi'Shmu'el** quotes the *Arizal* who observes that Pinchas found his spiritual roots in Kayin, son of Adam and Chavah. Kayin committed the world's first fratricide by killing his own brother, Hevel. As such, imbedded deep within the psyche of Pinchas was a gravitational pull towards murder. This disqualified him from the Priesthood, until somehow this tendency could be expunged. This was accomplished when he killed Zimri, utilizing his proclivity for a positive means. He could now become a *Kohen*.

Obviously, the words of the *Arizal* must be expounded upon. In order to understand the spiritual relationship between Pinchas and Kayin, we first must consider the personality of Kayin. The name of a person indicates his true nature. The root of the name Kayin was expressed by Chavah when she gave birth to him: *Kanisi ish es Hashem*, "I have acquired a man from G-d" (*Bereishis* 4:1). Hence, the root of Kayin is *kinyan*, acquisition. In this light, we see Kayin as a man who views himself as significant – an entity of substance, a person who himself was an "acquisition," maintains a pretentious viewpoint of himself. Seeing oneself as important can make one headstrong. The person who feels that he may lord over others will soon try to lord over G-d. Kayin did not only kill his brother, but he also had other plans. *Chazal* teach (*Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer* 21) that Hevel had a twin sister who was quite striking. Kayin had designs on her, saying, "I will kill Hevel and take his twin from him." All this is rooted in Kayin's delusion of greatness.

Sources in *Chazal* state that Kayin's obsession with himself led to idolatry and denial of Hashem's guidance of the world. In other words, Kayin's arrogance and self-worship led him to commit the three cardinal sins of murder, idolatry and immorality.

As we have often mentioned, there is a flipside; the same deficient character trait has a counterpart which is positive and productive. The very same motivation which led Kayin to evil can also lead one to appreciate the value of a human being. Yehoshafat *Ha'melech* was a person whose "heart was lifted up in the ways of G-d" (*Divrei HaYamim* II 17:6). *Chazal* explain (*Sanhedrin* 38a) that while Yehoshafat did see himself as a significant, valuable person, he directed this feeling towards serving Hashem. Indeed, *Chazal* derive from him that "every individual should say, *Bishvili nivra*

*ha'olam*, 'Because of me, the world was created.'"

*Chazal* present to us a deeper understanding of what a person should do with his feeling of self-worth. By considering himself significant and worthy of contributing to Hashem's world, he manifests the good side of Kayin's character trait. Clearly, this was Chavah's intention when she gave her son the name Kayin. She hoped that he would be a man of self-worth, who would understand his own value and who would apply this knowledge to serving Hashem in the proper manner. Sadly, Kayin took what he knew about himself and perverted this knowledge from its true purpose. The misapplication of his character trait transformed a man of substance into an egocentric sinner.

Let us now consider the action taken by Pinchas against Zimri. As mentioned, Pinchas possessed the same character trait as Kayin. It was his function to utilize this trait of self-worth for the greater good – not for personal aggrandizement. As a result of the effects of this trait, Pinchas was "zealous for G-d," personally killing Zimri because he was acutely aware that not all Jews could be considered to be *kanaim l'shem Shomayim*, zealous for Hashem. As a man of great spiritual sensitivity, Pinchas could not bear to see Zimri's flagrant desecration of the Torah. By acting out his self-worth in a positive way, Pinchas transcended his "Kayin" proclivity, redirecting it toward the common good.

Pinchas' intolerance of Zimri's blatant act of immorality was the result of a level of indignation found only in a person of such great spiritual sensitivity that he felt personally affronted by this act. As Yehoshafat "lifted his heart in the ways of G-d," so, too, did Pinchas take the initiative and act in accordance with his heartfelt motivation. Thus, he was able to conquer Kayin's arrogance.

The *Shem MiShmuel* takes it one step further. When the people saw Zimri's act of blasphemy, they were unsure how to react. The sinners committed adultery and idol worship. By allowing themselves to do this, they showed that they had very low self-esteem. This is true of all sinners. When they sin, they diminish their human status, acting akin to murder. When Pinchas repaired Kayin's residual defect which lay dormant within him, he corrected the damage caused by the three cardinal sins. He would now receive the gift of *Kehunah*, which had heretofore been denied him. His killing of Zimri was not murder; it was spiritual rectification – his own, as well as that of the sinners.