

He was jealous for My sake among them. (25:11)

Pinchas' act of zealousness was pure, motivated by his desire to avenge the desecration of Hashem's Name. He executed his deed, unaware of the identity of his victims or who witnessed his zealous act. He focused only on one thing - to put an end to the public humiliation of Hashem and His leadership. What gave Pinchas the courage to act in this manner? While his intentions were certainly noble, only a uniquely inspired person can achieve what Pinchas did. What is the source of that inspiration?

In a departure from the usual interpretation of the word, "*b'socham*," "among them," the **Chasam Sofer** says that this word refers to the sinners. In fact, the sinners, manifesting their enthusiasm and devotion to evil, are the ones who inspired Pinchas. He cites the *Chovas Halevovos* who relates an incident concerning an individual who was *chozer b'teshuvah*, repented and returned to faithful observance of *mitzvos*. Reflecting upon the extreme devotion, passion and excitement that the sinner invests in his iniquity, he said, "Imagine if one would give so much of himself in the pursuit of *mitzvos*." Pinchas asked himself the same question. Zimri's transgression evoked within Pinchas that same urging to express his jealousy for Hashem. He acted for Hashem with an enthusiasm parallel to that which he saw "*b'socham*," among the sinners.

We all have within us a reservoir of potential which we call upon when it serves us best. How often does the one who has "difficulty" studying *Torah* graduate summa cum laude? Another example is the one who finds it impossible to come to *minyán* in the morning, but can manage to be present bright and early for a business meeting. One establishes his priorities. We have to remember, however, that Hashem also has set His priorities. We want to strive to be one of them.