

## Therefore, say: “Behold! I give him My covenant of peace.” (25:12)

Pinchas saw an outrageous act of moral turpitude and took decisive action, meting out the ultimate punishment to the two perpetrators. He was rewarded with the *Kehunah*, Priesthood, the covenant of peace. Upon taking a closer look at the reward, a striking contrast is evident between Pinchas' response to the sin and the reward that he received. To act zealously, risking one's life, demands a strong element of the *middah*, attribute, of *gevurah*, strength/discipline and strict judgment. The reward of a covenant of peace is reflective of the attribute of *chesed*, kindness. Why would an act of zealousness be rewarded with peace? How does *gevurah* align with *chesed*? Simply, true peace can only be achieved once evil is expunged. If unchecked, corruption spreads, causing great harm. By acting decisively, Pinchas restored harmony to *Klal Yisrael*. This explains how *gevurah* is used to achieve *chesed*. The *Nesivos Sholom* explains that actually Pinchas' zealotry was an act of *chesed* – not *gevurah*. *Vayaar Pinchas* – Pinchas saw – the degradation and utter humiliation of the Jewish people. Zimri's public violation of the moral code disgraced, not only himself, but *Klal Yisrael* as well. Our people are a holy nation, and, when we display such an act of defilement publicly, it impugns our sanctity. Pinchas could not tolerate the shame that was heaped on *Klal Yisrael*, so he risked his life to stop the blatant *chillul Hashem*, disgrace of Hashem. By doing so, he was able to revitalize *Klal Yisrael's* esteem. His sense of caring, his empathy, his pain over the nation's plummeting to an unprecedented level of shame, was an expression of a pure and loving heart. He loved *Klal Yisrael*. Thus, it hurt him to see them like this. As a result, Pinchas' act was one of *chesed*, kindness, manifested in order to save the nation from the abyss into which they had descended. Thus, the Torah underscores his lineage back to Aharon *HaKohen*, who personified *chesed* in his relationship with the nation. On the surface, Pinchas appeared to be *gevurah* – motivated. Hashem intervened and informed the nation that Pinchas' actions exemplified *chesed* at its apex.

The *Rebbe* adds that Pinchas is Eliyahu *HaNavi*, who is the symbol of *chesed*, the one who always seeks to defend and advocate merit on behalf of *Klal Yisrael*. How does one (so to speak) achieve *malach*, angel, status? Pinchas/Eliyahu lived for others, which is what *chesed* is all about. One who self-abnegates in order to help others, divests himself of self, resulting in a spiritual persona, albeit in physical form. Thus, Hashem awarded Pinchas the covenant of peace.