

# TORAS AVIGDOR

AUTHENTIC TORAH THOUGHT FOR LIFE

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PARSHAS PINCHAS

WITH

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BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

## THE ZEALOT

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## Part I. Pinchas's Zealotry

### The Message of Peace

It's not an everyday occurrence that a person should get a personal message from Hakadosh Baruch Hu, a *yasher koach* from the Creator of the universe, and so when it happens our ears should perk up. That's what happened to Pinchas in the beginning of this week's *sedrah*: לָכֵן אָמַר – *Therefore say, הִנְנִי נֹתֵן לוֹ אֶת בְּרִיתִי שְׁלֹמֶם – I am giving him My covenant of peace forever and ever* (Bamidbar 25:12). Wouldn't we like to hear that tomorrow morning when we come to shul; the *rav* calls you over after Shacharis, "Chaim, come here a minute. There's a letter for you from Hakadosh Baruch Hu. He is giving you a covenant of peace." That's quite an achievement.

And why did Pinchas get it? תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר קָנָא לְאַלְקֵינוּ – *Because he took up for his Hashem* (ibid. 13). Everyone knows the story of how Pinchas saw that Zimri, a prince of his tribe, a dignified person, was taking one of the gentile daughters into his tent. And the *zekeinim* were sitting there stunned. Zimri should do such a thing?! To make a public demonstration against the will of Hashem?!

But they didn't act. They were wringing their hands in grief. "What's happening here?!" Maybe they were thinking how to react. Some maybe had respect for Zimri's authority and they were hesitant what to do. Whatever it was, they were sitting and meanwhile the will of Hashem was being trampled.

### When People Criticize...

But Pinchas's indignation was boiling against this man who was perpetrating a public iniquity and so he didn't remain sitting. וַיֵּרָא פִּינְחָס – *When he saw what was going on, וַיָּקָם מִתּוֹךְ הָעֵדָה – he got up, וַיִּקַּח רֶמֶחַ – and he grabbed a spear from his tent* (ibid. 7). He put it under his coat and he came running in. "What's doing here?!" And he executed Zimri and the woman on the spot! He pierced through both of them with his spear.

Now, don't think it was easy; Pinchas was endangering his life by taking action because Zimri was an important personality. Very many people were enraged at Pinchas. They derided him. "Who are you?! A young fellow like you takes action in the presence of Moshe Rabbeinu and Aharon Hakohen and all the *Sanhedrin* and the *Ziknei Yisroel*?"

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### ... And Hashem Doesn't

"And to do such an extreme thing? Couldn't you have called Zimri out? Maybe you could remonstrate with him. But to shed blood and do it so hurriedly, so violently?" Pinchas was criticized, yes.

But Hakadosh Baruch Hu didn't criticize, no! Hakadosh Baruch Hu said, "Forget that! Ignore them!" הִנְנִי נֹתֵן לוֹ אֶת בְּרִיתִי שְׁלֹמֶם – *I'm making a covenant forever with him ...*, תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר קָנָא לְאַלְקִיוֹ, – *because he acted zealously in the honor of his Hashem*. Hakadosh Baruch Hu causes him to be recognized forever.

### The Foundation of Fanaticism

Now, the story of Pinchas is not meant just for itself. It serves as an illustration that all those who choose the unpopular method of speaking up or taking action when others are reluctant to do or say anything, these people will especially be privileged by Hashem. Hashem loves you. And even though you're not popular — people don't like those who make a fuss — Hakadosh Baruch Hu does like you.

But there's an important point that has to be explained. What exactly is this model that we're supposed to be studying here? What's a *kanai*? Someone who likes to make fights; to punch people in the nose?

No. For being wild, enjoying to punch your enemy, for that you don't get *brisi shalom*. There's something much more than that, something that without it is not *kana'us*, and so pay attention now.

### The First Branch of Love

In *perek yud-tes* when the Mesillas Yesarim speaks about the attitude of *ahavas Hashem*, the mitzvah and also the state of loving Hashem, he declares that עֲנִפְיָהּ הֵם שְׁלֹשָׁה, *it has three branches*.

One is called *deveikus*. *Deveikus* means that his mind is occupied with thoughts of Hashem. It's like a man who has money and he loves it. Wherever he goes, he's thinking about his property, how many apartment houses he has. It's on his mind always. Or the woman who has children; she's always thinking about them. They're in the *cheder* or the Beis Yaakov but she's still thinking about them. Whatever a

person's love is, that's what his mind is attached to. And so if a person loves Hashem, he's always thinking about Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

By the way, now you know an easy way to test yourself, to see if you're an *ohev Hashem*: How frequently are you thinking about Hakadosh Baruch Hu? I don't mean in shul or while you're *bentching*. Let's say you're walking on the street on a regular Tuesday afternoon; if you're thinking about Hashem, that's a sign. If you think about Him a little bit, it means you love Him a little bit. If you do it more, so you love Him more.

### The Second Branch

The second branch of *ahavas Hashem*, the Mesillas Yesarim explains, is *simcha*; it means the joy of being worthy to serve Hashem, the happiness that he has in the pursuit of *kirvas Hashem*. He's always rejoicing in the opportunities to learn Torah, to do *mitzvos*, to speak to Hashem in *tefillah*. His life is transformed into one long joyful experience because He loves Hashem!

That's why if you see a *tzaddik* and he looks sad always, you can suspect him of not loving Hashem. Maybe he's a *tzaddik* in other ways, that I can't tell you, but he doesn't love Hashem. A person who has *ahavas Hashem* is a person who has joy in his life because יִשְׂמַח לֵב מִבְּקִשֵּׁי ה' – *the heart of those who seek Hashem should always rejoice*. Even if it's only to a small degree, but he certainly has a feeling of joy in him.

### The Third Branch

However, right now we're going to concentrate on the third of the three qualities, and that's *kinah*, *zealousness*. הֶעֱנִף הַשְּׁלִישִׁי שִׂיחָהּ הָאֶדָם מִקְנָא לְשֵׁם קִדְשׁוֹ – *Kinah* means to be excited in the cause of the honor of Hashem; to take up for Hashem, to defend the words of Hashem. And it's one of the most prominent signs of an *ohev Hashem* because those who love Hashem — not those who say they love Him; the ones who actually love Him — cannot tolerate anybody who's an enemy of Hashem. Not only he doesn't

tolerate the atheists, he doesn't tolerate any infraction of the words of Hashem.

And that's the true secret of *kana'im*. He hates the enemies of Hashem! None of this "loving everybody" business! Like Dovid Hamelech said, הָלוֹא מִשְׂנְאִיךָ ה' אֶשְׂנֵא – "Hashem, do I not hate those who hate You? וּבִתְקוּמָיִךָ אֶתְקוּטָט – And I quarrel with those who rise up against you." Now listen to the following, תִּכְבֵּלִית שְׂנֵאָה שְׂנֵאָתִים – "I hate them with the utmost hatred." Not "I'm disappointed in them". That's not it yet: תִּכְבֵּלִית שְׂנֵאָה שְׂנֵאָתִים – "I hate them with the most extreme hatred."

### Good Hatred

Now, I understand that in the modern world this type of attitude is decried. However we are different from the world — we follow the Torah, and the Torah says אוֹהְבֵי ה' שְׂנֵאוּ רָע – *people who love Hashem hate evil* (Tehillim 97:10); "hate evil" means hate evil itself and those who preach evil. Those who teach immoral education in the schools, those who say that such and such wickedness is not so bad, those who fight for gay rights, we hate them. I know you people are decent and tolerant and maybe it rubs on your nerves that I should say such things, but the truth is you can't deal with wickedness with silk gloves. You have to take off the silk gloves and use your fingernails, too, and attack the *rishus*. You can't be a weakling.

Reform rabbis, we hate! The Reform Jews, of course, are just ignorant *beheimos*; they don't know anything. But Reform rabbis are enemies of Hashem. I saw a clipping, a shul in Baltimore was welcoming the new rabbi and his partner! Disgusting! And the Reform now came out with the statement that if a Jew marries a gentile woman, the children are automatically Jews. Such a *sheker*, against the Torah, it means we have to know they are enemies and we hate them.

### Big Mouths and Letter Writers

And the one who loves Hashem just cannot remain quiet! When he sees something is being done against Hashem's will he attempts with all his efforts

to cause them to lose any prestige; he tries to belittle the enemies of Hashem. The Mesillas Yesharim there says, וּמִשְׁתַּדֵּל לְהַכְנִיעֵם בְּמָה שְׂיוּכָל – *he should try to humble them, weaken them in any way possible*.

It means we have to speak up against Hashem's enemies. A *kanai* speaks up when everybody else is silent. A *kanai* has a big mouth. People who don't love Hashem — they're *frum* Jews and we're satisfied with them, but they see *avlos*, they see wrong things, all forms of wickedness, and they don't do anything.

No! וַיִּקָּם מִתוֹךְ הָעֵדָה! If you love Hashem, you'll pick yourself up from the weaklings, the hand-wringers, and you'll do something. It doesn't mean you'll grab a spear — but at least a pen you can pick up. You have to write letters. Fiery letters! You don't have to sign your name. You can put a false name on the letters. Write letters protesting against what this Reform rabbi said or this Modern Orthodox rabbi said. Whatever it is, if you see wrongdoers, you must take some action.

### Lotion Commotion

I want to tell you a little incident. Everybody here knows about the ads on the buses for the suntan lotion Tanya. Remember it, those pictures? Better you shouldn't remember. So I wrote letters to the mayor and to the transit authorities to protest. They said it's none of their business; it belongs to the advertising company.

So I started writing letters to the advertising company. One letter, another letter. Mind you, I'm a busy man, but someone had to do it. Finally, the president of the advertising company himself answered me. He said he read my letter. "It was interesting," he says, "but there's nothing wrong because you see the same thing on the beaches."

So I wrote back to him, "What's on the beaches can't be on the public buses." And I said that it must be removed — or else.

This time he didn't answer.

### Taking It Up a Level

Well, next summer came around, and again the ads showed up. This time we took action. We

mimeographed a lot of letters and we sent them out to people, and also to the advertising people, saying, “We urge you to reproduce this letter and send it in the thousands to every congregation in the country urging everyone to patronize Coppertone” – that’s the other suntan lotion company – “because of their decent advertising.”

A couple of weeks later, the Tanya advertisements were off the bus in the middle of the summer. Maybe there were other reasons, but it was off the bus in the middle of the summer.

Now, somebody will say, “Is that your business, Rabbi Miller? You have to stick your nose in advertising?”

The answer is: it’s our community! It’s our eyes! It’s our minds! It’s our children! And if Hakadosh Baruch Hu is not happy with it, we have to take a stand! We have to go to battle for Him. At least to go through the motions, to practice being an *oheiv Hashem*. If nobody is going to do it, someone must! Even a little man like me.

### The Best Friend

But Pinchas was a very big man and he loved Hashem! And that’s why when he carried out his *kana’us* for the honor of Hashem, Hakadosh Baruch Hu said, “I’m going to hand it to you. **הִנְנִי נֹתֵן לּוֹ אֶת בְּרִיתִי שְׁלֹום** – *I’m making a special covenant with you.*” He conferred upon him an accolade: My covenant of friendship.

A *bris shalom* between Hakadosh Baruch Hu and an individual? It’s unheard of such a thing! Where do you find it? A *bris shalom* means we are friends. Hashem and Pinchas in a pact of friendship?

The answer is because it was Pinchas’s love of Hashem that made him so great! It was his *ahavas Hashem* that ignited the fire of angry zealousness in him! And for that Hakadosh Baruch Hu bestowed upon this man His friendship, His love. And he became not only great in his time. He’s great in the World to Come. He’s elevated forever and ever!

## Part II. Eliyahu’s Zealotry

### Eliyahu’s Bris

Now, throughout our history it’s the *kana’im* like Pinchas who received special recognition from Hakadosh Baruch Hu. From the people, not always, but Hakadosh Baruch Hu loves those who love Him. And so our greatest men in history were always those who set aside the natural desire to not suffer troubles and opprobrium, and because of their love for Hashem they took action.

And so we come now to Eliyahu Hanavi. He’s the second example, after Pinchas, that the Mesillas Yesharim brings when he’s describing the *middah* of *kana’us*. Everyone knows Eliyahu. Everybody knows when there’s a *bris* there’s *kisei shel Eliyahu*, the *malach habris*. Pesach at the *seder* we have an extra cup, the *kos shel Eliyahu*. Eliyahu is famous by us; he’s revered by the Am Yisroel. And that’s because Eliyahu Hanavi became very great in his lifetime.

### The Kanai Never Dies

He became such a great personality that Hakadosh Baruch Hu changed for him one of the most fundamental processes of nature: Eliyahu did not die! A remarkable story: **וַיַּעַל אֱלִיָּהוּ בַּסְּעָרָה הַשָּׁמַיִם** – *Eliyahu went up in the storm wind upwards to the sky* (Melachim II, 2:11). We don’t know exactly what happened, but he didn’t expire like all other humans pass away. Avraham Avinu died. Yitzchak died. Moshe Rabbeinu died. But Eliyahu Hanavi didn’t die. He wasn’t buried.

Now, what exactly happened to him is beyond our comprehension. I think that his body disappeared and was changed into *ruchniyus*; I don’t think the body could continue to exist. However, I’m just guessing; I have no information, but it’s my *sevara* that when he went up to *Shamayim*, Hakadosh Baruch Hu bestowed upon him a new kind of existence, and he continued to exist spiritually.

We know that Eliyahu reappeared constantly; he came to the Sages of the Talmud countless times. Many instances are recorded in the Gemara. In one

case, Rav Anan became a *talmid* of Eliyahu Hanavi and learned from him the whole *sefer Eliyahu Rabbah* and *Eliyahu Zuta* (Kesubos 106a). We still have it today, on the shelf right here: *Sefer Eliyahu Rabbah* and *Eliyahu Zuta*.

### Pinchas's Gilgul

Now, what was the cause of this most unusual transformation of a man? Like Pinchas's reward, it's unheard of even among the biggest *tzaddikim*. There is no equal to Eliyahu in this respect. And so it pays to understand, what did Eliyahu do that he became so great in the eyes of Hashem?

So we're told by the *Chachmei HaShas* that he had the same *middah* as Pinchas. אָמַר רִישׁ לְקִישׁ הוּא - פִּינְחָס הוּא אֱלִיָּהוּ - *Pinchas and Eliyahu were one and the same* (Medrash Aggadah 25:13). And why is that? What was the common denominator between these great personalities?

And the answer is what Eliyahu said, what he testified about himself: קָנָא קִנְיָתִי לָהּ אֶלְקֵי צְבָקוֹת - *I was zealous for Hashem* (Kings I, 19:10).

### The Baal Spreads

Now, let's remember what the story was. Eliyahu Hanavi lived in a very difficult period, a time when Achav and Izevel were trying their best to introduce *avodas ha'Baal* into the nation. Achav was the king of the ten tribes, a powerful king, and he had a wife, Izevel. She was a *giyoreess*, but she brought in her gentile attitudes. She was a daughter of the king of Sidon, a neighboring country, and you have to remember that her father's name was Esbaal – it means “with the *Baal*.” That was their god. It was in her blood, and so when she came in she prodded her husband Achav to encourage the worship of the *Baal*. In those days, it did not mean to forsake Judaism; they still kept the Torah in every respect, but they dabbled in idolatry. And so she didn't want to destroy the Jewish G-d, but she wanted to introduce hers too.

Now, in the old days when a king did something, nobody opened their mouth. It's not like today when you can be insolent to a president; in the ancient

times, you had to watch even how your eyes moved. If your eyes didn't move properly in the presence of a king, your head was off! And so the *avodas ha'Baal* was spreading. People were afraid to say anything; not a peep.

### No Kings!

But there was one man, Eliyahu Hatishbi from Eretz Hagilad, and when he saw that the king who was supposed to uphold the Torah – that's the only job of a Jewish king – was trying to introduce the *Baal*, it set him on fire. His *ahavas Hashem* ignited a flame of *kana'us* and Eliyahu fanned it until it burst forth into a great fire.

And now he put himself in the greatest danger. He went out in the street and began preaching against the *Baal*. Not only did he open his mouth; he opened it *big*. He spoke publicly against Achav and Izevel and denounced the *Baal*.

### Ridiculing the Ridiculous

And not only denouncing – he was ridiculing. Now, to Izevel that was an arrow in her heart because the *Baal* was the darling god of the queen. And she was boiling with anger at Eliyahu. “What's this *meshugene* making a fuss about? I'm not preventing Jews from worshipping Hashem. I respect your religion, so why don't you respect mine? What kind of impoliteness! What kind of *chutzpah* is this!”

But Eliyahu kept at it. He was following the authentic Jewish tradition that even though כָּל לִיצְנוּתָא אָסִירָא - *every kind of leitzanus and jesting is forbidden*; a Jew has to be serious, a Jew has to be matter-of-fact, not a joker, but there's one exception: בַּר מְלִיצְנוּתָא דְעִבּוּדָה זָרָה - *Except when it comes to making fun of idolatry* (Megillah 25b). When it comes to all the *shekarim* that want to downplay Hashem, to minimize Him, we don't say, “I have respect for other religions.”

### Zealous for Your Mind

If you have respect for other religions, it means you're destroying your mind. That's an important point, by the way. *Kana'us* is for your own mind too,

not just to fight the enemies. And so we have to be zealots to ourselves, at least!

That's the Torah way. You know the word for idol in *lashon kodesh* is *gilulim*. Do you know what *gilulim* means? I'll let you guess. *Gilulim* means something round. It's the droppings, the manure of sheep and goats. They're round. Yes, that's the word for idols in the Scriptures. *Avodah zarah* is called *gilulim*! So you see the Torah doesn't pull any punches; it doesn't speak with respect of foreign religions.

### Kosher Mockery

The Neviim spoke that way too. You have to know, the Neviim spoke *lashon nekiyah*; they were very careful in their language. But when it comes to *avodah zarah*, Yeshaya Hanavi says, כָּרַע בֶּל – “Beil is kneeling” (46:1). It means he's kneeling to perform his needs. He's making a joke of the idol, that it has to move his bowels. קָרַם נֵבּוֹ – “Nevo is down on his knees, לֹא יִכְלֹ מִלֵּט מִשָּׂא – and he cannot get rid of the load” (*ibid.* 2). He's constipated. Yeshaya is talking that language when it comes to wickedness.

I know among a certain group of Jews, whenever they talk about *oso ha'ish*, they call him, “The *mamzer*.” That's how they call him. I appreciate that. Maybe you don't, but I appreciate it.

Because we have to know אִשָּׁהּ מְשִׁתַּחֲוִים לְהַבֵּל וְרִיק! Once upon a time all *frum* Jews used to spit when they said that. When I was in Europe, I once was in a very fine house, and when the *baal habos* mentioned *oso ha'ish*, he spat on the floor.

Now, I'm not telling you what to do, because it's not sanitary to spit on the floor today. We stopped it because we are polite. But the old Jews were careful about that. They spat. They wanted to make a demonstration.

### Protesting in Private

Now if the gentiles heard about that, they would be very much infuriated, so you have to be very careful. In the presence of gentiles, don't say anything against their religion. What will you accomplish? Nothing at all. That's not *kana'us*; it's just plain foolishness. But among yourselves? Among ourselves,

every Jew has to be convinced that the religions of the nations are all *sheker vekazav*. There's nothing to it. It's one huge conglomeration of lies, distortions, things that never happened. It's ridiculous.

A Christian can't help himself. He's brought up on Santa Claus, Christmas carols, a Christmas tree. *Nebach*, he can't help himself. He's enslaved to lies, but every Jew looks at it with an honest face and laughs. Maybe he laughs in his sleeve but he laughs.

Among yourselves you should know that they are liars. Don't be afraid or pull punches. They have no pity upon us. They're not sparing any words on our account, believe me. So let's not spare words on them.

### The Death Sentence

And Eliyahu didn't spare one word. He was ridiculing her god. “That piece of wood is a nothing god. It's *gilulim*. Maybe that's why he's so big. He can't defecate and so he's full of *tzoah*.” He spoke up again and again, more and more ridicule, and finally he received a message that Izevel was going to kill him the next day. A *chatzuf* stands in the street making a scene, ridiculing the *Baal*? She said publicly, “I'm going to take his head off of him.”

And now he fled for his life. He ran away into the wilderness and was hiding. But they didn't let him go that easy. Achav and Izevel were seething with anger and they were trying their best to find him. They sent out messengers to track him down in the wilderness and kill him.

Now Eliyahu, remember, was a respected man. He was a *rosh yeshiva*; he had his own yeshiva of *bnei haNeviim*. But now he was like a beast in the jungle. You know it's not comfortable to live in caves and forests. You have to find what to eat, you have to sleep, and he was constantly in danger. Whenever he heard leaves rustling in the wind, he was afraid somebody was coming for his life. For years and years, Eliyahu was on the run, hiding and trying to save his life.

He was hunted like a wild animal and yet, whenever he had a chance he came out and preached

openly and continued to incite the people against the *Baal* and against Achav and Izevel. He fought openly with the *neviei ha'Baal*.

### The Life Sentence

What happened? So the entire story you'll have to read in *Melachim Alef* (18-19). But at that time Hakadosh Baruch Hu said, "That's My man! A man who risks his life, not once but again and again! A man who goes out in the street and preaches against the *Baal* at a time when it was the greatest peril for him, that man will never die! You are all for Me, you don't care about yourself, your wife and your children, only for Me, then I am only for you, you are Mine. They're trying to take his life? I'll see to it that his life is preserved forever."

That's why Eliyahu Hanavi gained a place in history that is unequalled; that's why he became a man who did not die. They wanted to kill him, but Hashem demonstrated that nobody will kill him; he won't die!

And so it's all summed up in the words 'קנא קנאתי לה' – I took up for the honor of Hashem. And he was able to achieve that only because he loved Hashem with all his heart! Of course, he served Hashem with all the other branches of *ahavas Hashem* too. He was *davuk* to Hashem, always thinking about Him. He was *b'simcha* in his *avodas Hashem*. But he loved Hashem so much that it was expressed also in קנא קנאתי – a very zealous zealotness. But not just zealotness; it was אלקי צבקות קנא קנאתי לה'. It was because of his *ahavas Hashem*.

## Part III. Kana'us of Kindness

### A Different Pshat in Kana'us

Now, we're going to talk about a very important point. What's *pshat* in *kana'us*? So we said that it's *ahavas Hashem*. That's what the Mesillas Yesharim taught us. *Kana'us* means that you love Hashem and so you want to win battles for Him; you want His Name, His Glory, to be upheld in the world. כרי שתהיה עבודתו יתברך נעשית וכבודו מתרבה – You want His word, His will, to reign supreme (Mesillas Yesharim, *ibid.*).

And so if *pshat* in *kana'us* is to win the battle for Hashem, who says it has to *davka* be with a spear? I'm going to tell you a little secret. I say that Aharon Hakohen was a bigger *kanai* than Pinchas – Pinchas learned the "trade" from his grandfather, but Aharon never killed anybody. We don't know of any such story. Aharon was *doresh shalom*. He spoke peace to everybody; he was אוהב את הבריות ומקרבן לתורה – He took people in and he was *mekarvan laTorah* (Avos 1:12). He found ways and means of speaking up for Hashem that raised the *kevod Hashem* among people.

And so Aharon was a real *kanai* and he was greater than Pinchas. Pinchas was a very great man, no question about it, but Aharon Hakohen accomplished more than Pinchas because the function of being a *kanai* is not merely to be angry and to tread down upon your enemies to destroy them. The function is that the *dvar Hashem* should conquer the world. That's what the *ohev Hashem* wants! And if you can cause the word of Hashem to be victorious by other means, more sweeter means, then that's the true sign of the *kanai*.

### First-Tier Kana'us

Now I know some *kana'im* don't like that idea. They think it's only *milchamah*, only a punch in the face. No, no. Believe me, if Pinchas could have, he would have walked out to Zimri and said, "Zimri, my boy, what are you doing?" He'd caress his cheek. "Zimri, the *dvar Hashem* is what matters, so please put the *shikshah* away and forget about it." If he could have spoken to him with a caress instead of a spear, it would have been the very best thing. I'm sure he would have done it.

Only that Pinchas knew he wouldn't listen. Zimri was already *farkocht* with the *shikseh*, so the only way to deal with him was to jab with a spear in his belly. And so even though the way of Aharon, that's real *kana'us*, Hakadosh Baruch Hu brought Pinchas into the picture to serve as a model for what you have to do sometimes even when it's very unpopular. A Jew has to know that sometimes the *mitzvah* of *ahavas Hashem* requires this type of *kana'us* too, and when you have to be a *kanai* in that way, you can't be

a milquetoast and sit back. You have to be a Pinchas too sometimes, absolutely! But the best model of *kana'us* that Hakadosh Baruch Hu desires is Aharon Hakohen. Because it's not the *vildkeit*, the fighting, that matters. It's the *ahavas Hashem*! It's loving Hashem so much that you want to raise up His will in the world.

If you can raise up the glamour of Torah and *mitzvos*, you couldn't do a greater thing in the world. If you can portray learning Torah, doing *mitzvos*, being a very *frum* Jew, in colors that will make it appealing to the world, then you are a man whom Hakadosh Baruch Hu loves, because you have done His mission in this world; you're speaking up for Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

### **Ambassadors for Hashem**

And that is our job of *kana'us* in this world, to beautify what's good. To portray in the most appealing terms all the things connected with Judaism. But not in a wishy-washy way. We have to battle! We have to become emissaries for Hakadosh Baruch Hu, ambassadors for Torah. Like Rabbeinu Yonah says in Sha'arei Teshuvah in the third *sha'ar* (148). He says that there's something that's very easy for a person to do but the *zechus* is so great that it goes up to Heaven. And it's that whenever you have an opportunity, you should open your mouth to speak up for and praise the service of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Praise Torah and praise *mitzvos* and praise those who keep them; wherever you go, drop in a good word for *Yiddishkeit*.

When you're in the company of your family — whether you're a father, a mother, a sister, a brother — you must always seek opportunities to put in a good word for the local *rav*. Put in a good word for the shul. Put in a good word for Shabbos. Say, "Isn't the Shabbos *seudah* beautiful? Aren't we having a good time Friday night? Isn't it nice to make *kiddush*? Isn't a *mezuzah* a beautiful thing? Look at *tzitzis*. Isn't it a noble thing to wear *tzitzis*? Only Jews can wear *tzitzis*. It's a sign of our royalty."

Everything connected with Torah and *mitzvos* should be glorified. Learning Torah! "Torah is a great

career!" Speak about that! "It's wonderful to learn Torah. The *kollel* families are the most fortunate ones!" That's the attitude we have to preach. That's *kana'us*! Other people are sitting back, wringing their hands, "What should we do about it? Jews are going lost. Society is immoral." But you want to be a Pinchas, so you stand up and you lift up your spear — no, not your spear, your tongue!

### **A Career of Kana'us**

And therefore, we have a big job to do in the world today. People have to write books. You have to write articles. Write letters! Every person should make his tongue the implement to speak up for Torah, for *mitzvos*, for *emunah*. Come to Shabbos. A *frum* Shabbos is beautiful! Come to Jewish married life. *Frum* marriages are beautiful! *Taharas hamishpacha* is beautiful! *Kashrus* is beautiful.

Our yeshivas and Beis Yaakovs are the best institutions of education in the world! We have the best children, the best students! Our families and institutions don't produce criminals. In the public schools and even in the gentile private schools, a twelve-year-old boy comes in with a gun to kill his teacher. We don't produce murderers. And so we have to speak up and convince people to support the yeshivas; poor boys and girls should be able to go to the yeshivas for free. That's called zealotry for Hashem.

### **Praising and Knocking**

Of course, we can't ignore that at the same time — it goes together — it's important to belittle and to knock down all the opponents of Hashem. You have to knock evolution whenever you can! Evolution is *mamash sheker vekazav*. You should hate it, and hate all those people who are spreading it.

Unfortunately, there are some *frum* Jews who have been taken in by this. It's terrible what they're doing. There was a little newspaper in this neighborhood for *baalei teshuvos*, and they wrote something about the world being very old. I wrote a letter to them; I said you are not fit to be editors to

give public opinion for people. Somebody else should be an editor. To destroy thousands of minds?!

And therefore, we should hate *sheker*. We should be shooting barrages at our enemies, at the opponents of the truth — the evolutionists, the colleges, the Reform Jews, the Bagatz in Eretz Yisroel, the liberals — all the time.

### Defending the Defensible

But even more importantly, while we're shooting a barrage at the enemies of righteousness, let's speak up, always, without stop, to defend what's good and to glorify it. Defend righteousness! Praise Lakewood. Praise Chaim Berlin. Praise Mirrer Yeshiva. Praise all the places of Torah. Make it your job to do it. Say, "I walked into that yeshiva building. It's a beautiful building, and you walk into the *beis medrash* and see so many boys learning! Ah! Those are the best places in the world!"

Every time you're speaking to anybody! That's what Rabbeinu Yonah says; whenever you open your mouth! Make it your business to say something good about a *frum* Jew. Say something good about the Lubavitcher Rebbe. Praise the Satmarer Rav. Praise the Bobover Rav. Praise the *tzaddikim*, the yeshiva people, the *roshei yeshiva*, the *ramim*, the *frum* Jews, *frum* mothers! Ooh! Our heroes! Everyone else, it's nothing.

### Bashing the Indefensible

Golda Meir passed away. So the Jewish Press puts a picture of her. Who cares about Golda Meir? Golda Meir was a nothing! An atheist! A Marxist! She didn't eat kosher. She didn't fast on Yom Kippur. It's silly to say one good word about her. You want to say something good? So put a picture of Sarah Schenirer in the newspapers! Let's talk about that virtuous woman who started the Beis Yaakov movement. That's a glorious personality who was a *kanai* for the Jewish people. That's what we have to talk about.

Ben Gurion?! We should spit when his foul name is mentioned! An atheist! A *chazir fresser*! Say it! Speak up! If we don't speak up for Hashem, you know what happens? There was an Orthodox organization

that printed a newsletter, and a few years ago the leading article was by *kevodo* Harav Hagaon Ben Gurion. The leading article! And he writes a whole article about how only six hundred Jews left Egypt. That's all. Not six hundred thousand. An Orthodox organization printed it, without a word of comment!

I called up the president and I said, "What's this?!"

He congratulated me. "I congratulate your *kana'us*," he said. I need his congratulations like I need a hole in my shoe.

So I spoke to one of the vice presidents. He said, "Well, we're not responsible for Ben Gurion's theology."

Can you imagine? We're not responsible for Ben Gurion's theology! You're not responsible — but do you have to print it?

They never printed a word that they're sorry.

We have to hate such a thing! They'll print "*torah*" from such a *rasha*?! So they say we should think of the positive, of the good things. *Meshugenos*! We have to say a good word for Ben Gurion, *yimach shemo*? A good word for someone who hated the Torah?!

### Raising the Spear Tongue

What about a good word for plain *frum chassidishe* Jews? The Williamsburg Jew? He and his wife are raising a big family. They are sacrificing to bring up Jewish boys and girls with purity, with *tznius*, with piety, with *derech eretz*, with *yiras Shamayim*. Being a *kanai* means you stand up not with a spear — you stand up with your tongue and you say a good word for our *gedolim* and our *tzaddikim*, *talmidei chachomim*.

Do we have enough words to praise these *chassidishe* Jews in Williamsburg or the Lubavitcher in Crown Heights? Do we have enough words to praise the *kollel* man or the *kollel* wife who is sacrificing so that her husband should learn Torah?

Do we have enough words to speak of the glory of the Jewish boy who walks the straight path? He walks through the street among *goyim* as they attack

him. They attack him! But he doesn't swerve from the path of virtue and he continues on to the yeshiva and he puts his soul into the words of the Torah.

Do we have enough words to praise the *frum* Jews, the *frum* fathers working long hours in the factory to pay *sechar limud*? Do we have enough words to praise the mothers raising *frum* boys and girls?

And therefore, when it's required, of course we'll show our love for Hashem with the *kana'us* of Pinchas, but we don't have to wait around for Zimris and Izevels. We can always fulfill the great principle of zealotry for Hashem, of upholding the will of Hashem in the world, by speaking up in favor of all the Torah ideals and all of those who live according to these ideals. That's a big part of *ahavas Hashem*.

### Have a Wonderful Shabbos

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## Let's Get Practical

### Stand Up for Hashem

In this week's *parsha*, Pinchas receives a very special reward for his zealous display of *ahavas Hashem* — the *bris shalom*, a pact of eternal friendship with Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

This week, *bli neder*, at least twice a day, I will make a point of including a positive remark about *frum* Jews or Torah institutions in my interactions with others, thereby using my tongue as a spear to increase the *kevod Hashem* in the world.

This week's booklet is based on tapes:

**206** – Speaking Up | **247** – Beautifying the Beautiful | **612** – Those That Love Me | **624** – Chanukah IV Speaking Up | **E-5** – The Zealot  
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Q&A

WITH  
RAV AVIGDOR  
MILLER ZT"L

שאלות ותשובות עם ראב"ד אביגדור מילר ז"ל



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### QUESTION

#### How do you explain the statement that *kohanim* anger easily?

### ANSWER

Now, I'm going to be partial because I'm a *kohen*, but I would say that it's not necessarily anger. *Kohanim* have a quality of enthusiasm in them, an excitability, which is intended to be utilized for the sake of upholding the Torah. Of course, sometimes it means they have to utilize the quality of anger. I think that everyone understands that when Pinchas arose and he smote Zimri, he was serving Hakadosh Baruch Hu with his wrath. If he hadn't had wrath then he wouldn't have had the boldness to do that. He was motivated by anger, absolutely.

Sometimes a person can utilize anger to do great deeds. Only that you have to be very careful. It's like dynamite. If you have to dynamite a big rock, a mountain, that's in the way of those who are building a road, yes, you use it. But you wouldn't use dynamite if you lost your key and can't get into the door at night.

And that's the purpose of anger in *kohanim*. We need *kohanim* to be energetic for Hashem. When a *kohen* is in the Beis Hamikdash and somebody is irreverent, the *kohen* becomes angry. We need that! And that's how a rabbi should be, too. If a rabbi is standing in the synagogue and he sees people talking, he should become angry. "Shaa! It's not permitted!" But if the rabbi is kind-hearted, so the plague spreads, and after a while you have irreverence and disrespect. Don't you see what happens in the synagogues today? People are busy talking in the synagogue. It's a disgrace for the honor of Hakadosh Baruch Hu. If you had rabbis who were angry, it wouldn't happen. But go find angry rabbis. You can't, because everyone will run to the shul on the next block. May 1980