

Parasha Meditation Pinchas

Bamidbar 25:10-29:39

By Rebbetzin Chana Bracha Siegelbaum

How can Killing a Fellow Jew Restore Peace???

Introduction

Severing Unhealthy Relationship for the sake of Restoring Peace

Parashat Pinchas teaches us about rectifying jealousy and anger – קִנְיָה/kinah, by unifying judgment – דִּין/din with its source in Hashem’s infinite kindness – חֶסֶד/chesed. Pinchas succeeded in restoring Shalom (peace) to the world, by separating the undesirable elements of the tribe of Shimon from the Jewish people, and thus severing the tribe of Levi from its unhealthy relationship with Shimon. Pinchas’ act of rectified zealousness enabled the Levites to serve as a conduit for peace and brotherhood for the entire people, through their subsequent Temple service. Pinchas also succeeded in rectifying his tribe’s previous expressions of anger, after Levi and Shimon took vengeance on the people of Shechem for raping their sister, Dinah.¹ When the tribes of Shimon and Levi are joined together, their tendency for anger and vengeance can go overboard. Therefore, on his deathbed, Ya’acov reproached them saying: “Shimon and Levi are brothers; weapons of violence is their kinship.”² Pinchas did not act out of personal spite, but only for the sake of allowing Hashem’s kindness to shine, by means of removing the blocks standing in the way. By expressing rectified kinah – (jealousy/vengeance), completely devoid of any ego, he unified judgment with mercy, and was consequently rewarded with Hashem’s “covenant of Shalom.”³ Shalom with its letter *shin* standing for שָׁ/esh – fire and its letter *mem* standing for מַיִם/mayim – water denotes the unification of opposite elements.

Overcoming Anger through Invoking Hashem’s Perpetual Presence

The word קִנְיָה/kinah usually translated as jealousy is also linked to judgment and anger. The root of this word mentioned three times in the opening verse of *Parashat Pinchas* alludes to three aspects of anger/jealousy/vengeance: “בְּקִנְיָאוֹ /By avenging,” “מִקִּנְיָתִי /My jealousy,” and וְלֹא יָרָאֵתִי בְּקִנְיָתִי /“I did not destroy the children of Israel in My judgment.”⁴ The numerical value of the root קנא/kina 151⁵ equals the Name of G*d – E-k-yeh/ ה-י-ק-א when each of its letters are spelled out a certain way.⁶ This Name of G*d (ה-י-ק-א) meaning: “I will be,” which was first revealed to Moshe at the burning bush, gives us the reassurance that Hashem

¹ Bereishit 34:25.

² Ibid. 49:5.

³ Bamidbar 25:12.

⁴ Bamidbar 25:11.

⁵ kuf = 100, nun = 50, alef = 1.

⁶ The Name of G*d ה-י-ק-א spelled out as follows: alef spelled out alef, peh, lamed = 111 + heh spelled out heh, heh = 10 + yud spelled out yud, vav, dalet = 20 + heh spelled out heh, heh = 10. Together (111+10+ 20+10) – adds up to 151 the exact gematria of the word קִנְיָה/kinah.



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will always be with us.⁷ Meditating on this Name enables us to overcome anger.⁸ Arizal recommends, when one gets angry, to meditate during the Morning Prayer on the Name **ה-י-ק-א**/*E-k-yeh* spelled out as mentioned above. He reveals that the numerical value of this Name **קנא**/*kuf nun alef* – 151 also equals that of the Hebrew word for “anger” **כַּעַס**/*ka’as* with the *kollel*.⁹

Cracking the Nut of Jealousy and Anger, Removing the Peel of Judgment

The three aspects of vengeance are alluded to in the verse: “I descended to the garden of nuts.”¹⁰ The numerical value of the word for “garden of” – “*ginat*,”/*gimel-nun-tav* is 453, which is 3 times 151. The nut actually has three *klipot* (husks) the outer soft husk that disintegrates when the nut is ripe, the hard outer shell, and the soft inner peel that adheres to the nut itself. In order to reveal the inner goodness of the soul, we must discard each of the shells of **קנאה**/*kinah*. Learning not to judge others is the most difficult aspect of **קנאה**/*kinah* to overcome. It is characterized by the inner peel which we usually eat together with the nut. Although I didn’t find in the Arizal’s writing explicit differentiation between each of the three aspects of **קנאה**/*kinah*, it seems to me that the outer aspect is anger, going deeper into the anger one arrives at jealousy, underneath which the negative emotion of being overly judgmental is situated.

Taking the Law in His own Hand

If **קנאה**/*kinah* alludes to these three negative character traits what was so good about Pinchas applying them in his violent act towards the head of the tribe of Shimon? How could it be right for a Jew to take the law in his own hand and kill his fellow Jew? I believe the answer lies in Pinchas’ motivation. His **קנאה**/*kinah* was not his own, but Hashem’s as the verse testifies: “... **בְּקִנְיָאֵי** /by avenging **קִנְיָתִי**/My vengeance.” His motivation was solely for Hashem and for the sake of saving the lives of the Israelites who were dying by the numbers in the plague. By having reached a place in himself completely beyond the ego, Pinchas’ vision was not tainted by petty self-interest and therefore he was able to perceive the root cause of the plague and clearly fathom the only way to stop it. The level of his consciousness bridged between that of a prophet and a Torah scholar. Therefore, Pinchas’ action was able to sweeten the judgment in its root through his deepest care and mercy for the children of Israel, who were dying in the plague. By acting with this motivation, he channeled judgment to serve as a means of separating between ultimately good and evil – life and death. Thus Pinchas succeeded in alleviating Hashem’s anger, stop the plague,¹¹ and atone for the children of Israel.¹²

⁷ See Rashi on *Shemot* 3:14, “אֶהְיֶה אִשְׁרָ אֲהִיָּה” – “Just as I am with you in the current exile so will I be with you in all future exiles.”

⁸ Based on Arizal, *Sha’ar HaPesukim, parashat Pinchas*.

⁹ Including counting the word itself as one. Arizal, *Sha’ar Ruach HaKodesh*, Remedy #13.

¹⁰ *Song of Songs* 6:11.

¹¹ *Bamidbar* 25:8.

¹² *Ibid* 13.

Meditation:

Make yourself comfortable in your place, and take some deep healing breaths.

1. Keep breathing as you tune into remembering the last time you felt jealous, or any particular time that you especially remember being jealous at someone. Jealousy is a combination of fear and anger. Fear of losing something, and anger at someone who seems to be taking away what you feel belongs only to you.
2. Recognize and accept your emotions. Tell yourself, as you breathe deeply, even if I am jealous I still truly love and appreciate myself. Get in touch with and dissect your feelings.
3. Ask yourself whether your jealousy consists of more anger or fear, and why. Where in your body exactly does your jealousy reside? A gripping sensation in your stomach is a sign of fear, burning tightness in your shoulders and jaw is most likely anger.
4. Breathe deeply and relax your jaw, shoulders and stomach. Do not allow your face to express jealousy or anger.
5. Identify what your jealousy is teaching you about yourself and the things that are important to you. If someone talking to a friend of yours makes you jealous, personal relationships may be important to you. If you're jealous about money, you may have an underlying need for financial security.
6. Ask yourself, "Why am I jealous over this? What is making me jealous? What am I trying to keep? Why do I feel threatened?" When you begin to understand what makes you jealous, you can begin to take positive steps to remove the cloud of negative emotion that accompanies jealousy.
7. Search for underlying false beliefs that make your jealousy flare up. Everyone walk around with negative "stories" such as, "I don't deserve to get married." "People only befriend me when they can get something out of me." You can change your feelings by changing your "stories." Choose nurturing and supportive beliefs and gradually your anger and jealousy will disappear.
8. Now visualize the Name of Hashem ה-י-ק-א/*E-k-yeh*. The letter א/*alef* then ה/*heh*, then י/*yud* and again ה/*heh*. Inhale א/*alef*, exhale ה/*heh*, inhale י/*yud*, exhale ה/*heh*. Repeat four times. If you are able to, visualize the Name ה-י-ק-א/*E-k-yeh* spelled out, ה-ה – י-ו-י – ה-ה – א-ל-ל with appropriate breathing.
9. Inhale and feel how Hashem is always with you. Exhale feel how He provides you with exactly what you need in order to fulfill your mission in life.



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10. Look for your own good qualities and make a mental list of all the blessings in your life for which you are grateful. Keep breathing slowly and deeply as you thank Hashem for each of His gifts to you.

11. When you emerge from this meditation into real life, put on a non-jealous facade, while you work on overcoming jealousy. Eventually, working your way through your feelings, the facade will become real. In the meantime you will protect yourself from appearing jealous to others.

Notes:

An additional way to overcome jealousy and anger is through immersing in a mikvah. The numerical value of the word מקוה / *mikveh* (*mem-kuf-vav-heh*), is also 151, the same as that of the word for jealousy קנאה / *kinah*, or anger כַּעַס / *ka'as*, plus the *kolel*.¹³ After working on your jealousy and anger and after trying the above meditation, going to the mikvah will work wonders, why not try it?!

¹³ Arizal, *Sha'ar Ruach HaKodesh*, Remedy #15.

About Us



Rebbetzin Chana Bracha Siegelbaum

Rebbetzin Chana Bracha Siegelbaum, a native of Denmark, is Founder and Director of Midreshet B'erot Bat Ayin. She holds a Bachelor of Education in Bible and Jewish Philosophy from Michlala Jerusalem College for Women, and a Masters of Art in Jewish History from Touro College. Chana Bracha also began her practice as a spiritual healer through Emuna, tefila and energy work. For more than two decades Chana Bracha has taught Bible studies with special emphasis on women's issues in Israel and the United States. She creates curricula emphasizing women's

spiritual empowerment through traditional Torah values. Midreshet B'erot Bat Ayin located in the Judean Hills of Israel offers a unique program to women of all ages and backgrounds to learn in a holistic Torah study environment that nurtures the mind, body and soul. Intensive textual study of Tanach, Halacha and Chassidut are woven together with creative spiritual expression, and connection with the land of Israel through organic gardening, herbology, Jewish sources of healing and sustainable living. Classes in Jewish mysticism, Chassidism and Jewish meditation are directed at the spiritual thirst so prominent in our times.

*In 2010 Rebbetzin Chana Bracha published her first book, *Women at the Crossroads: A Woman's Perspective on the Weekly Torah Portion*.*

Chana Bracha has a married son and several granddaughters. She lives with her husband and younger son on the land of the Judean hills, Israel.

If you are interested in:

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or visit her blog: <http://rebbetzinchanabracha.blogspot.com/2010/11/emunah-healing-for-women.html>

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