

Peace Plan

written by Yossi Katz
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Pinchas certainly risked his life and did a most honorable thing. Zimri, a tremendous Torah scholar and great prince from the tribe of Shimon, had taken Kozbi, a Midianite princess, into his tent in front of Moses and the entire Jewish people. This act was a total disgrace. Pinchas could not bear to see this and, solely for God's sake, killed both Zimri and Kozbi. While Pinchas did what was necessary, nevertheless, he had murdered two people. Why was he worthy of being blessed with the "covenant of peace" (Numbers 25:12) and being given "the priestly covenant forever" (ibid. 25:13)?

When God desired to create our world, He emanated an awesome light of lovingkindness into the vacuum of the universe. As He carried out the process of Creation, He included a built-in flaw. As the light reached the emanation of Yesod (Foundation), it overpowered the vessel created to absorb it. The vessel shattered and its shards fell to the lower worlds. The light was now trapped; without its vessel, it could not descend into our world.

Consequently, we are born into a world in which God's lovingkindness is "stuck" above us. While our soul seeks this love, by default it can't unify with it. Furthermore, the shards that were once united with God's lovingkindness remain – only now they are broken and far from their source. They still emanate a sense of love, but it is illusory, cloaking itself in the vanities of this world (see *Likutey Moharan I*, 34). For this reason, we seek to infatuate ourselves with materialism or elicit temptation; our souls are clamoring for God, but don't know how to access Him.

Yesod represents the mechanism God created to shower Heavenly bounty upon earth. Metaphysically, Yesod parallels the reproductive organ, which similarly gives life. The tzaddik has mastered his physicality and uses this organ and its associated drive solely for fulfilling God's will. He is the master of Yesod, and can influence God's lovingkindness to draw down Heavenly bounty. Because of Yesod's paramount importance, man's central challenge lies here, in the most difficult area to conquer. The *brit*-covenant is made in this place. When man sanctifies himself, demonstrating His love and allegiance to God, God in return showers His blessing upon mankind.

When we stray and pursue illusory lusts and loves, we break this bond. We become ashamed of ourselves and God's love becomes hidden from us. But the tzaddik, master of Yesod, offers us hope. His words, infused with God's lovingkindness, inspire and reinvigorate us. When we hear or study these words, discuss them with our friends, and seclude ourselves in private conversation with God, we can restore our relationship with God. Our bond is renewed and lovingkindness flows to us once again.

None of this interested Balaam. He was evil, lewd and immoral. Our Rabbis teach that his power was with his mouth (*Bamidbar Rabbah* 20). Balaam chose to use speech and communication, which have such a great potential to uplift, to speak

immorally and poke fun at the tzaddikim. He understood that our relationship with God is dependent on our sanctity, so he devised a plan to attack us from this angle. He successfully penetrated the Jewish camp and Zimri became a terrible threat to the mark of our special bond with God. So vile was the danger that Moshe forgot the law regarding Zimri. Our entire relationship with God was on very shaky ground.

Thankfully, Pinchas arose and tore into the evil. He restored our sanctity so that God's love would once again shower upon us. The service of the Kohanim serves to evoke God's compassion and forgiveness. Pinchas was therefore worthy of joining their ranks, for he had restored God's lovingkindness. As God's love became revealed once again, the Jewish people felt the inner peace of connection with their true Source rather than the confusion of self-infatuation. Pinchas had brought peace.

Based on Likutey Halakhot, Birkat Kohanim 5