

Good Shabbos Everyone. The Mishna teaches us: "Jealously, desires and honor-seeking remove a man from this world." (Avos 4:28) The Torah this week tells us about Korach, an individual whose honor seeking removed him from the world. Rashi explains that Korach was upset that Moshe appointed Korach's younger cousin Elitzafan ben Uziel as the leader of the family of Kehas, instead of Korach. The commentary Orchos Tzaddikim explains that Korach wanted for himself honor and greatness which had not been conferred upon him by Hashem. (P.33, The Gate of Pride, Edit., Reb G. Zaloshinsky, Transl., Reb S. Silverstein)

When Korach failed to receive the honor he felt he deserved, Korach attempted to stage a revolt against Moshe. We see how Korach's search for honor eventually caused his own death and the death of others who supported him. The following story shows us how far we must go to distance ourselves from honor seeking.

Rebbe Reb Zisha of Anipoli's rebbe was the Maggid of Mezritch (1704-1772). One day, Reb Zisha visited his Rebbe the Maggid. As Reb Zisha was about to leave, the Mezritcher Maggid said to him, "Zisha, don't you have a daughter to marry off? Here are three hundred rubles," said the Maggid, "and may you have hatzlochah (success)." "Thank you, thank you!" said Reb Zisha, as he left for home.

On the way home, Reb Zisha passed an inn and saw that it was full of people. Curious, he went inside to investigate. There was a wedding in progress, but although the people on the outskirts of the crowd were celebrating, the people in the main hall were in a different mood. There was no joy, only unhappiness, frustration, and confusion.

Reb Zisha learned that the mother of the bride had promised the groom three hundred rubles as dowry and somehow had lost the money. She was frantically trying to figure out where the money could have gone. In the meanwhile, while everyone was giving her advice on where to look for the money, the family of the groom was becoming very impatient. Reb Zisha stepped into the middle of the banquet hall and asked for quiet. "I understand," he began, "that there is a problem of some lost money. It just so happens that I found some money today." He was interrupted by bursts of joyful clapping as everyone cheered the news.

"Wait!" said Reb Zisha, "I need the mother of the bride to tell me exactly how much money there was and in what denominations." The woman came forward and gave, to the best of her recollection, the number of tens, twenties and fifties that she had had in the packet. Reb Zisha announced that he would have to go back to his room and check whether the money he had found fit her description. Some people began dancing as joy returned to the scene, while others stood around waiting with apprehension for him to return. Reb Zisha went to a moneychanger, changed the Maggid's three hundred rubles into the denominations that the woman had described, and came back triumphantly to the inn. He walked in with a broad smile, went straight to the middle of the hall and announced, "Yes, the money that I have is exactly the way the woman described it!"

The guests cheered in relief and happiness, but once again Reb Zisha called for quiet. He held up his hand and said, "It is true that the money goes to the mother of the bride, but I feel that I deserve some reward for my efforts." Stunned, the people stood numbly, not knowing how to react. They couldn't believe the audacity of the man. It was obviously the woman's money, and now, on the night of her daughter's wedding, how could he be so cruel? The guests started shoving and pushing as they made their way to have a word or two with this disrespectful stranger. A family member called for quiet and said to Reb Zisha, for all to hear, "Nu, nu, tell us already how much you want for your efforts?" The people waited as Reb Zisha thought for a moment. Then he answered, "Twenty-five rubles!"

"Twenty-five rubles!" the crowd shouted in unison. "It's unfair, it's absurd!" They pushed forward and started to beat him, dragging him out of the hall. Pandemonium reigned, with everyone screaming at once, as Reb Zisha held tightly onto the money. Every few moments he reeled from another shove or punch. He held up his hands and shouted, "There is a rav in this town, let's go to him and get his ruling." The crowd muttered its consent and Reb Zisha was led out with the strong grip of several of the guests on his arms, preventing his escape. A crowd followed as they made their way to the rav's house. The rav listened carefully to both sides, first to the hysterical mother and then to the chassid who claimed that he was a chassid of the Mezritcher Maggid. As the story began to unfold, the rav became infuriated at the lack of sensitivity of this Zisha, and ordered that he give the entire sum to the woman. Reb Zisha did so and left the city as people showered him with ridicule and abuse.

A few months later, the Mezritcher Maggid happened to be passing through this town. He stopped to visit with the local rav, unaware that his disciple Reb Zisha had had a confrontation with him. As the two spoke, the rav related the incident, and expressed his surprise that a disciple of the Maggid's should have acted in a way so unbecoming of any Jew, especially a chassid. The Maggid smiled and assured the rav that he would look into the matter. He knew that if anyone was concerned for others it was Reb Zisha. There had to be an explanation.

When the Maggid returned home he sent for Reb Zisha. When Reb Zisha stood before him, the Maggid said, "I can understand why you wanted to give away the money in the first place. But when you returned to the inn a second time, why did you make such a ridiculous demand?" Reb Zisha, somewhat embarrassed that his ploy had been discovered, smiled sheepishly and explained his feelings. "When I went to the moneychanger, my yetzer hara - evil impulse said to me, 'Zisha, you are a tzaddik! No one but you would do such a thing! This mitzvah is the best thing you have ever done.' He was trying to trap me to succumb to pride. I realized that if I fell into his snare and began to feel conceited, the mitzvah would be tarnished and incomplete. Thus I decided on a plan which would earn me abuse and insult and would assure me that I couldn't possibly feel important, even to myself. As a result, I hope the mitzvah was a true one, undiminished by any unworthy thoughts on my part." (From "The Maggid Speaks," R. Paysach Krohn, p.96)

Hashem loves the humble of heart, as Hashem tells us through the Navi-prophet "High and holy do I dwell, and with the oppressed and the humble of spirit." (The Gate of Humility, p.71, citing Yeshayahu 57:15) We see that Hashem loves the humble by the fact that Hashem chose the geographically low Mt. Sinai on which to rest his Holy presence. For the Holy One, Blessed be He forsook all the high mountains and hills and rested his Holy presence instead on the lower Mt. Sinai. Thus, if we humble ourselves like the lowly Mt. Sinai, we invite Hashem into our lives. **Good Shabbos Everyone.**

A Refuah Shleimah to Shusha Malka bas Golda "Anyone who brings merit to the masses, no wrongdoing will come into his hands."