

## **And the sons of Korach did not die. (26:11)**

The sons of Korach were (originally) in the thick of the dispute against Moshe *Rabbeinu*. *Rashi* explains that, at the very last moment, they repented. Regardless of how far one has drifted from Jewish observance, how distant he has strayed from traditional life and Torah values, he can return and be reinstated. People think that once they have rejected the Torah way it is impossible to come back. This is categorically incorrect. The *Ponevezer Rav, zl*, was about to leave on a journey to the United States. His revered *Rebbe*, the *Chafetz Chaim, zl*, was still alive. The *Rav* went to the *Chafetz Chaim* to bid him farewell and to solicit his blessing for a successful journey. While they spoke, the *Rav* asked the *Chafetz Chaim* for a message to convey to American Jewry. The *Chafetz Chaim* instructed him to convey that it is quite simple to repent. All one has to do is to regret the past and take upon oneself to alter his lifestyle for the future, or – in today's vernacular – “Move on!” Ruminating over the past only engenders depression. It is time to make up one's mind and move on.

A parent never gives up on a child – regardless of the pain and the hurt the child has caused him. Hashem is our Heavenly Father, Who waits “up” for all of His children to return home. When they do return, it matters not how far away they have been or the pain and hurt they have caused, as long as they are home, safe and sound. That is all that matters. The following incident, which took place about thirty-five years ago in a *frum*, observant *yishuv*, underscores this idea.

The day began like any other, with the man of the house leaving early for *Kollel* where he would spend the entire day. The mother sent off her five older children to school, while she remained home with Motke, their youngest.

It was a beautiful morning, so the mother let Motke play on the balcony – six floors above the street. Every few moments, she would take a quick look to make sure Motke was doing well and not getting into any mischief. Suddenly, she turned around and did not see Motke. She immediately ran to the balcony, where she saw two little hands holding on to the bottom railing of the protective fence surrounding the balcony. The mother immediately ran over and placed her hands between the lattice and held on to Motke for dear life.

This is how she remained – bent over, arms outstretched, holding on to her young son. Half an hour passed – then an hour – two hours and she kept on holding. No one on the street looked up, despite her screams for help. She asked Motke to try to kick off his shoes in the hope that they would fall and alert a passerby to look up. Motke listened; the shoes fell, and a passerby kicked them to the side, as he continued on his designated course. No one bothered to look up.

Three hours – four – five – five and a half hours passed, until one of the storekeepers looked up to close the security gates over his store. He saw a frightening scene: a young boy hanging on to his mother, his legs dangling in the air, six stories above the street. He immediately contacted the fire department, which was able to reach the boy and bring him in. The mother had held on for five and

a half hours, an almost superhuman feat. "How did you do it?" a reporter asked. "What is your question? He is my son!"

A powerful lesson is to be derived from this story. Hashem loves us all, because we are His children. Regardless how long and how far – He will always be waiting there for us. He is our Father. We are His children. It is only natural.

*Horav Nissim Yagen, zl*, offers an inspiring analogy which illuminates the importance of reaching out to those who are lost and alienated in order to help them find their way home. A powerful king who possessed treasuries filled with enormous wealth had one son, who was obviously very special to him. One day, while on a jungle safari, the crown prince lost his way, and no one could locate him. Search parties were sent out, every form of tracking device was employed, all to no avail. The prince was lost. The king became more depressed with each passing day, as he began to despair of ever seeing his son alive again.

In an attempt to raise the king's spirits, one of his distinguished ministers brought the king a beautiful gold watch. "Who cares about a gold watch when my son is lost?" the king declared. Another minister conveyed to the king the wonderful news that he had captured ten provinces and annexed them to the country. "For my part, take all of my money and all of my provinces and give me back my son!" the king yelled. "I want nothing but my son. Without my son, nothing has any value to me!"

When a Jew sins, it gives Hashem great pain. Every sin has great significance and, undoubtedly, when we are able to convince someone to refrain from performing a specific sin, it is wonderful. If, however, we are able to turn a person around to bring him/her back to Hashem and say, "Hashem, we have found Your prince/princess," the Almighty derives much satisfaction.

Imagine a soldier who was taken captive by terrorists: if his parents were to discover that they had the winning lottery ticket, would it make an impact? Certainly they would be happy, but as long as their son suffers under the hands of terrorists, no amount of money will excite them. They want their son. So, too, Hashem wants and waits for all of His lost children.