

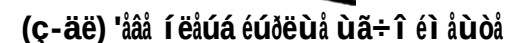
Needless to say, such an incident could not be ignored. After *Shabbos*, the infuriated *gabbaim* went to the rabbi's home to decide upon a proper response.

The rabbi finally spoke up. "It certainly sounds like a terrific idea. Yet, I cannot accept it." They didn't understand. The rabbi explained, "As you of course realize, it is a tragedy when people come to *shul* looking just for honor. But it would be even worse if people would stop coming to *shul* looking for honor. Then, they'd stop coming altogether!"



R' Yonah Gewirtz Shlit" a explains that *Hashem* is teaching a fundamental insight into our human psyche. After generations of indescribable poverty and deprivation, *Bnei Yisroel* are liberated and laden with worldly goods. They are no longer slaves or impoverished. Unfortunately, as frequently occurs to those who acquire wealth rapidly, material gain becomes an obsession. To part with material pleasure becomes unthinkable. And so, at the precise moment that they are free from oppression, *Hashem* says to them: "Your proclamation of *U'nei Yisroel* is not enough. True, you are observing My *mitzvos* and have become religiously subservient. But now that you are rich with possessions you never had before, I am asking you to show me your loyalty by surrendering some of your newly-acquired wealth. Make a sacrifice. Deprive yourselves for My sake, and then I will know and be certain of your loving loyalty."

Today, many Jews have money and they do give much charity. They donate many great gifts, but not always at a great sacrifice. Thus, it is at this precise moment that we must remember that our gifts must be "*a gift of the heart.*"

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Once, a certain ignorant, ill-mannered man became among the wealthier members of the community. He was proud of his fortune and proceeded to flaunt his wealth. He purchased a respectable seat by the eastern wall of the *shul* for a huge sum of money, and one day, he turned to the *gabbai* and said, "This *Shabbos* I am celebrating a birthday. I want to receive an *aliyah*."

"It would be an honor," responded the *gabbai*, "but just know that someone else has *Yahrzeit* and will receive *maftir*."

"No problem," assured the arrogant aristocrat. "The sixth *aliyah* is good enough for me." "But this *Shabbos* is the turn of the old *Dayan* - Judge," noted the *gabbai*. "I will call you for the fifth *aliyah*, like usual."

"Don't you dare!" warned the wealthy man, his furious eyes flashing. "You will give me the sixth *aliyah*, and no other *aliyah*!" Well, threats could never frighten the old *gabbai*, and so, when the fifth *aliyah* came around, he called the name of the wealthy man. The latter stood up from his seat and approached the *bimah*. Only, instead of stopping by the *Torah*, he continued on to the *gabbai* and punched him right in the face! One can only imagine the turmoil which