

“If a person will sin and commit a treachery against Hashem.” (5:21)

How does one relate to his non-observant brethren? While there are certainly various approaches and responses to this question, *Horav Meir Shapiro, z.l.*, the famous Lubliner *Rav* and founder of the *Daf HaYomi*, study of one *blatt*, page, of *Talmud* daily, gave the following response. A businessman once lent a large sum of money to his friend, who later went bankrupt. There was no way he could pay back the loan. In such a situation, the lender is willing to take anything that he can, regardless of its value or significance. Whatever he is able to put his hands on is saved. On the other hand, in a circumstance when one lends money and there is a guarantor who guarantees payment on behalf of the borrower, the lender is not concerned; he simply goes to the guarantor and collects his debt, transferring to the guarantor the headache of collecting his debt.

A Jew who does not observe the *mitzvos* has an enormous debt to pay back to Hashem. He is spiritually bankrupt and has no ability to repay the loan. At such a time, it is incumbent upon the Torah camp, those who have had the perseverance, tenacity and dedication to cling to the faith of their ancestors, to reach out to their alienated brethren and bring them back – one mitzvah at a time. Every little part of the loan that we can collect is important. Simultaneously, it is important that we act as guarantors, because *Kol Yisrael areivim zeh lo'zeh*, “All Jews are considered responsible/guarantors one for another.” We have a filial responsibility to increase our own *mitzvah* observance as a way of seeking merit and providing inspiration for those that have left the Torah fold.

Rav Meir Shapiro would instruct his students that upon coming in contact with a non-observant Jew, they should not come down “hard” on him, but rather coax him along gently as he returns to Hashem. We must realize that *mitzvah goreres mitzvah*, the performance of one *mitzvah* engenders the performance of another *mitzvah*. Be patient – they will come along in due time.

Horav Simcha Wasserman, z.l., was one of the vanguards of *kiruv*, the Jewish outreach movement. He succeeded with his personality. In his quiet, self-effacing, warm and sensitive manner, he exposed thousands to the Torah way. He taught many lessons in regard to outreach, some of which I will take the liberty to cite. *Rav Simcha* felt first and foremost that learning Torah with someone was the most powerful *kiruv* tool. Arguing about *Yiddishkeit* is the first step towards alienating a prospective “client” and only leads to disaster. Each one feels he is right and that only he has the correct approach. Arguments never increase understanding, since neither side is willing to budge. *Rav Simcha* would say, “Learn with them – and their eyes will open up as they see what you see. Then you will no longer have to explain it to them.” The Torah is Hashem’s antidote for the evil of the *yetzer hara*, evil inclination. Until one studies the Torah, he is still captivated by the poison. He must have the antidote. One who studies Torah and still has not straightened out his character is apparently not studying Torah in the correct manner with the proper attitude.

We begin with a little bit of *Chumash*, a taste of Ethics. As we begin to understand the Torah, it slowly permeates our psyche, penetrating it, refining it, purifying it. One who has fasted for a long time cannot suddenly be given a lot of food. It must be introduced to him in small amounts. The same idea applies to one who has been spiritually starved. He must be spoon-fed small pieces that are “chewable.” Perhaps we can encourage the student to make a *berachah* or recite a blessing prior to studying Torah, so that he realizes that he is really learning *Torah*, not just hearing some nice stories or instruction in ethical behavior.

This was *Rav Simcha*’s way. He taught *Shabbos*, and people began observing *Shabbos* – on their own. When asked why even though he did not tell his students to observe, they did so anyway on their own, he explained that it was the Torah that accomplished this feat, the Torah that made them observe *Shabbos*. He just was astute enough to teach the right areas of Torah that he felt would inspire them to observance.

A young man once came to *Rav Simcha* and said, “Rabbi, I am soon about to become a father. I would like some advice.”

Rav Simcha told him, “The first thing is to see to it that your child has a father.”

“Do you mean that I should close my store on *Shabbos*?” the man queried.

Rav Simcha said simply, “Start learning Torah.” Today, that home

is spiritually beautiful, with the father himself giving a *shiur* every *Shabbos* in *shul*, and his sons outstanding students in *yeshivah*. This all occurred because *Rav Simcha* did not force the man to keep *Shabbos*. He encouraged him to learn, and the Torah did the rest.

Horav Shimon Shkop, z.l., once commented that *Avraham Avinu* had no father or *rebbe* to teach him Torah. He achieved everything on his own. In the period prior to the advent of *Moshiach*, there will be a period when people will gravitate to Torah on their own. They will have neither a father to teach them nor a *rebbe* to motivate them. No one will bring them to the *yeshivah* – no one but themselves. We are living during that period. Let us do something about it – and reach out to those who turn to us. Perhaps *Moshiach* will come sooner.