

If the daughter of a Kohen desecrates herself through adultery. (21:9)

Ki seichal liznos can also be translated as, “when she will begin to stray immorally.” One must realize, and it should be emphasized, that once one has begun to fall – even slightly – the descent to the depths of evil is quick. Indeed, it is a rapid deterioration, with limited space to stop in the middle. Once the plunge has started, one can do little to prevent the sad ending.

Horav Shabsai Yudelevitz, zl, relates that he once met a policeman. The two men struck up a conversation concerning the sad plight of Israeli youth. The policeman bemoaned the lack of discipline and structure, which was obviously one of the primary issues concerning Israeli youth. While it is true that once the state decided to become secular some people were acutely aware of the spiritual toll it would take on the future generations, no one ever dreamt that the situation would reach such a deplorable nadir, in which teenagers would be guilty of drunk-driving on the highways and other senseless acts of negligence. “Who would have thought it would become so bad?” asked the policeman.

The *Maggid* gave him a powerful reply, “I was once on the thirty-second story of an office building. On the balcony stood a man with one leg over the ledge. Suddenly, as he began to ease his second foot over the ledge, I screamed out to him, ‘What are you doing?’ He replied, ‘I am going to jump.’ I looked at him and asked, ‘Have you lost your mind? You will be killed! You will hit the ground with such velocity that your remains will have to be scraped off the pavement.’”

“My words did not seem to deter the man from doing the deed. He told me, ‘Rabbi, you are mistaken. I am not going all of the way down. I will only jump two floors – and stop!’”

Rav Shabsai looked at the police officer and said, “No, my friend, once the plunge has commenced, one cannot stop the fall. It is impossible. When one starts out on a spiritual descent, it is almost impossible to break the fall.”

This is what is happening to our youth. A young person begins with a slight parting of the ways, which is indicative of placing the second leg over the ledge. Once the fall commences, it does not end until he has hit the ground of spiritual oblivion. While many claim to have ideological differences which are irreconcilable with Torah dictate, this is nothing more than words which these individuals use to ease their conscience. Very few ideologues are out there – just apathetic, depressed individuals, who are not willing to overcome the imaginable challenges presented to them by their *yetzer hora*, evil-inclination. Some seriously think that they can stop falling after two floors. They are in for a fall!