

"Command the Bnei Yisrael that they send out of the camp every leper, and every zav, and whosoever is unclean by a (dead) person." (5:2)

Horav Zalmen Sorotzkin z.l. offers a homiletic exposition of this *pasuk*. Many observant Jews ignore their co-religionists whom they notice acting in an offensive manner. When they see members of their community transgressing the *Torah* by desecrating *Shabbos*, eating non-kosher food, and acting reprehensibly, they delegate to the Rabbi the responsibility to chastise the offenders. These individuals refuse to get involved, claiming various lame excuses to justify their apathy to the public travesty against Hashem. They feel that by sharing the details of their friends' miscreancy with the Rabbi, they have fulfilled their requirements as Jews. Thus, they consider themselves to be absolved of further responsibility.

According to *Horav Sorotzkin*, this is not a *Torah* approach to solving such a communal problem. When a member of the community transgresses, he is causing an incursion into the spiritual fibre of the entire community. His actions publicly denigrate Hashem and His *Torah*. The community's lack of chastisement of the person is, by default, an act of compliance. Deferring all responsibility to the Rabbi or community leadership is a sanctimonious form of relieving oneself of responsibility.

This is the *Torah's* message: Command *Bnei Yisrael* that they should send out the unclean members of the community. The enjoinder is to the common member of the community. The *Torah* does not say, "*Bnei Yisrael*, go to Moshe and have him send out the unclean person." Rather, it states, "You personally must send him out." It is the leader's obligation to purge the community of those miscreants who denigrate Judaism, but the members of the community must initiate and wholeheartedly support the process. Indeed, only after Moshe had the support of the *Bnei Levi* was he effectively able to expunge *Klal Yisrael* of the worshippers of the *eigel ha'zahav*, the Golden Calf.