

**If your brother will entice you... secretly saying, “Let us go and worship the gods of others...” You shall not accede to him and not hearken to him; you shall not take pity on him; you shall not be compassionate to him nor conceal him.
(13:7,9)**

The punishment meted out to the *meisis*, enticer, is very serious and finds no match in the Torah. The fact that the *meisis* is treated so badly is a clear indication of the egregious nature of his sin. Five negative commandments concerning how we should act with the *meisis* are derived from the Torah's unusual directives concerning our relationship with this evil man: we may neither accede to him, nor hearken to him; we may neither have pity on him; nor show any compassion towards him; we may not conceal him. He has committed a grave sin by attempting to subvert and mislead a person from serving Hashem. He did not just say, “Go worship idols!” He said, “Let us (together) serve idols.”

Throughout the Torah, we are instructed to love our fellow as we love our-self. Yet, concerning the *meisis*, there is no room for compassion. Do we have any idea what is in store for those who actively mislead their fellow Jews on a constant basis? As in all things, there is a flip side, one that is quite encouraging. **Horav Aharon Kotler, zl**, quotes *Chazal* who teach that Hashem's desire to bestow reward is five hundred times greater than His desire to punish. Consequently, if a *meisis* is considered to be the worst of the worst and, thus, is dealt with in the harshest manner – can we begin to imagine what will be the *s'char*, reward, for one who brings a Jew closer to *Yiddishkeit*? If the mere fact that one who makes even a feeble, unsuccessful attempt at misleading a Jew from Hashem incurs the most serious punishment, the mere attempt to bring a person back – even if he is not successful – must earn incredible reward!

Horav Noach Weinberg, zl, addresses those individuals who devote their lives to helping others return, but who mistakenly believe that the result is either all or nothing. The idea that the subject either becomes an observant Jew or the *kiruv* worker is a failure – is wrong! If a person is considered a *meisis* just by virtue of his failed attempt to draw a person away from *Yiddishkeit* – then a person who attempts to bring someone back is considered successful just for undertaking to do it. Taking the initiative to try to help a lost Jew reconnect with his roots is considered by Hashem to be one of the greatest and worthiest deeds. Our actual impact on the Jew is a fringe benefit. It is the attempt that counts.

One who is attempting to lead a Jew away from Hashem is guilty of moving the world further away from Hashem. Hurting one Jew creates a distance, since he is decreasing the awareness of Hashem in the world. Likewise, one who attempts to reach out to a Jewish brother is raising the awareness of Hashem in the world. Hashem “owes” him, and He pays His debts.

Rav Weinberg quotes the well-known *Chovas Halevavos* (*Shaar HaBitachon* 4), "A person's good deeds alone do not make him suitable for the reward in the World to Come. G-d considers him suitable only because of two factors in addition to his good deeds. First, he teaches others about the service to Hashem and guides them to do good. Second, is G-d's kindness and beneficence." In other words, *Olam Habba* does not just happen. One can lead a virtuous and pious life, be fully observant, ethical and moral, and, yet, *Olam Habba* is not a given until he earns it by teaching others, by attempting to bring other Jews into the fold. Why is this? Why should *kiruv*, reaching out, be a prerequisite for *Olam Habba*? Why is not "old fashioned" being good sufficient reason for gaining entrance?

One who is not actively trying to bring Jews back to Hashem does not really love the Almighty and His children. When someone believes in something, he wants to share this belief with others. Avraham *Avinu* called out in the Name of Hashem because he wanted the entire world to know and love Him as much as he did. Thus, to the extent that we love Hashem, we will reach out to others to share this love. The *meisis* is trying to lead people from Hashem. Therefore, he is destroying the world. On the other hand, one who reaches out to bring people closer to Hashem is actually building the world.