

At that time, Moshe designated three cities. (4:41)

In *Sefer Mishlei* 24:30-33, Shlomo *HaMelech* teaches us the inevitable consequence of indolence. *Al sadeh ish atzeil avarti*, “By the field of a lazy person I passed and behold, it was entirely covered with thorns, its face covered with weeds, and its wall of stones was in ruins. I saw, and I took a lesson: a little sleep, a little dreaming, a little folding of the hands to rest; your poverty will come racing after you.” The wisest of all men tells us that it does not take much. A little slacking off, and one gets into the habit. Habit becomes natural and, before one knows it, he is struck with poverty. As **Horav Yisrael Belsky, Shlita**, explains, we are not talking about a person who has completely neglected his field. No! He has merely “folded his hands to rest.” He is neither asleep nor awake. He is lazy, laid back, wants to take it easy. Such a person will not achieve. In fact, even his accomplishments will eventually collapse. This is the fruit of laziness.

The *Rosh Hayeshivah* points out another lesson to be derived from Shlomo *HaMelech*’s words. “I saw, and I took a lesson.” The king who was so powerful, whose brilliance and wisdom was without peer, took a lesson from the “layman.” Under normal circumstances, the most astute are those who dole out the lessons – rather than learn from others. Indeed, if they would have chanced by the lazy man’s field, they would have reprimanded him, all the while ignoring the personal message which could have been addressed to them with equal validity.

For someone to give *mussar*, rebuke, to others, he must first qualify himself. Before his words of rebuke are directed at others, they should first be self-directed. Unless he personally lives by his words of rebuke, they will not be accepted – or even heard by those who need them most.

In *Parashas Va’eschanan*, Moshe *Rabbeinu* describes the future spiritual dysfunction and deterioration of *Klal Yisrael*. The ultimate sin would be idol worship, an abominable practice from which a Jew has grown to become revolted. Yet, this would be the ultimate downfall of the Jewish People. They would one day return with complete dedication to Torah and *mitzvos*. Moshe wanted to strengthen the nation’s commitment to Hashem. In order for this to occur, he himself had to take his own words to heart and commit himself more deeply to Torah and *mitzvos*. This is why, immediately upon concluding his homily to the People, Moshe ran to perform a *mitzvah*. Designating the *Arei Miklat*, Cities of Refuge, was Moshe’s way of manifesting his intense love for *mitzvos*. This is very much akin to the president of a synagogue making an appeal and immediately declaring that he himself would be donating a large amount of money toward the cause. This is in stark contrast to those instances and people who are more than happy to volunteer others to deal with problems concerning which they should themselves set the example.