

A painting of a forest path in autumn. The path is a light, sandy color, winding through a dense forest. The trees are tall and thin, with their leaves in various shades of orange, red, and yellow. The ground is covered in fallen leaves, creating a textured, colorful carpet. The overall atmosphere is warm and serene.

“WHAT CAN I DO?”

An overview of the role that every religious Jew can play in the Kiruv process.



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“What Can I Do?”

We live in very unusual times. So many of our people have drifted from Yiddishkeit, due to the lack of proper Jewish education. Yet so many are coming back to Judaism, that the terminology "*Tshuva* Movement" is appropriate.

This phenomenon is promised to us in the Torah (*D'vorim* 4, 25-31) and in truth it almost defies any explanation other than, "It says so in the Torah, so therefore it is."

The need is great; so many of our people are the victims of assimilation, intermarriage, missionaries, and cults. The extent of the "*Tshuva* Movement" proves that so much can be done. Rav Moshe Feinstein *Zt"l*, shortly before his passing, wrote that since today we see such an amazing return to Torah, we are therefore obligated to do everything possible to influence our not-yet-committed brethren. Since it is definitely within our power to do so, the law of *arvus* therefore applies to obligate us to return our lost brothers and sisters to Yiddishkeit.

Establishing the *halacha* that we all have an obligation to reach out and attempt to bring closer our unaffiliated brothers and sisters inevitably evokes the question, "What Can I Do? I am not a professional in the field of outreach, I am not trained, I don't know what to say and I am afraid that I won't know how to answer all of the questions that I will be asked by those uninitiated to Judaism."

The following is a brief attempt to deal with this concern:

As a layman interested in assisting the *kiruv* process, your goal should be to bring this person in contact with a mentor in an ongoing program of Torah study or to eventually see to it that he or she attends a long-weekend Kiruv Seminar which can inspire an amazing desire to embrace Judaism anew. These seminars, developed by Arachim in Israel and presented in the U.S., have brought tens of thousands of Jews world-over back to a life of Torah observance.

There are three steps along the way:

- Establish a relationship and a friendship.
- Attempt to help your friend to feel comfortable with religious people and practices.
- Help your friend to develop an appreciation for the importance of Torah (depth, relevance, truth, wisdom, etc.)

When these goals are achieved to some extent, the next step is to put the individual in contact with an ongoing Torah study situation. At that point your responsibility is to maintain your friendship. The following points should be kept in mind, while you are involved in the above - described *kiruv* process.

1. Just be yourself, warm, friendly and genuinely concerned for the other person's welfare, not just his religious affiliation.
2. When some type of relationship develops, invite the

person for a Shabbos.

3. Just make him or her feel comfortable.
4. Don't push for observance.
5. Don't rush the process. It takes time.
6. Don't sermonize, preach, or try to convince him or her of anything.
7. Show him respect for his views and try not to argue.
8. Offer brief explanations of what you are doing.
9. You are not expected to know all the answers to his or her questions.
10. Don't be embarrassed to say "I don't know, but we can ask someone or look it up."
11. You can explain that since you have full confidence in the truth of Torah, questions are not debilitating, but you too would enjoy more insights.
12. Remember again and again your goal is not to make him instantly religious, rather to be a friend, make him comfortable and eventually to appreciate the importance of Torah enough to want to learn further.
13. After a friendship is established over a period of time and some degree of comfort develops, brief attempts to inspire him with the importance of Torah are appropriate.
14. A *D'var Torah* which shows the beauty or sensitivity of

Torah to man's relationship with his fellow-man, should be helpful.

15. Showing insights from Torah, which show the great wisdom or relevance of its teachings in light of modern society, can also be useful.
16. The more the use of these insights is directed at other people present, rather than your not-yet- religious friend, the more effective they can be.
17. When you have the opportunity to share Torah insights and you see some sign of respect or interest, you can gently suggest that you are willing to study with him on a regular basis if you feel properly equipped.
18. If you do not feel properly equipped, you can recommend a convenient class, chavrusa program or outreach program with a sensitive mentor.
19. You should make available appropriate literature, audio, video, etc. to expand his Jewish knowledge. (See list)
20. Even if you are not successful in getting your friend to learn you must remain friends. You can never tell when the right moment will arrive and at that time your friendship may be the crucial link between him and Yiddishkeit.
21. Don't wait for someone to assign a person to you - go out and begin the process yourself. You will be amazed at how receptive not-yet-religious people are

to a Shabbos invitation or the like.

The above is a basic outline of goals and approaches which have worked in many instances. There are countless variations, but the basic principles are the same.

There are some additional ideas which can be used either to stimulate interest or to respond to an expression of interest on the part of your unaffiliated acquaintances.

- An evening of study and discussion in your home, with a specially trained dynamic teacher. (See note)
- A Torah class in your place of business with a specially trained dynamic teacher (See note).
- A gift of a book, video tape or the like (See list).
- Providing his phone number to an organization equipped to call him and follow up.
- Providing an address and phone number where he can get further information.

The last two methods are sometimes appropriate when you meet someone only for a short time and it is impractical to develop an extended relationship.

Priority-1 is committed to providing materials, guidance and advice to any interested person on either end of the *kiruv* process. If we truly wish to accomplish in this area, Hashem will undoubtedly crown our efforts with great success.

PLEASE NOTE: Since the long weekend seminar has the most powerful track record of influencing its participants to become observant, sending people to this type of Seminar should be a primary goal. A home study group, where you invite some not-yet-religious friends, to meet with a dynamic, specially trained mentor, is probably the best way to spark interest in the Seminar. Priority-1 is ready to provide such speakers or to train qualified people to become home-study mentors.

The following are appropriate resources for a not-yet-religious (non-observant) person:

<u>Title</u>	<u>Author/Publisher</u>
The Secret of True Happiness	Priority-1
Reflections of the Heart	Priority-1
My Friends We Were Robbed (Ch. 11-12)	Zohar, Feldheim
A Tzaddik in Our Time	Raz, Feldheim
Prophecy & Providence	Sokolovsky, Feldheim
The Divine Fingerprints - Video Series	Priority-1

The following can be helpful for us to better reach our not-yet-religious (non-observant) friends:

<u>Title</u>	<u>Author/Publisher</u>
The Secret of True Happiness	Priority-1
Reflections of the Heart	Priority-1
To Instill a Lasting Emunah in a Changing Generation	Priority-1
Torah Min Hashamayim	Priority-1
The Quick Case for Torah Mi Sinai (audio)	Priority-1
My Friends We Were Robbed (Ch. 11-12)	Zohar, Feldheim
Permission to Receive	Keleman, Feldheim
Prophecy & Providence	Sokolovsky, Feldheim
The Divine Fingerprints – Video Series	Priority-1

Additional resources are available on the Priority-1 website, priority-1.org, and the Priority-1 app. For further information, advice, schedule of seminars and other resources, please contact,

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