

## But if you disdain My decrees. (26:15)

There are forty-nine *kelalos*, curses, in the *Tochechah*, Admonition, of *Sefer Vayikra*. In the *Talmud Megillah* 31b, *Chazal* teach that the entire Admonition must be read in one *Aliyah*. The reading should not be interrupted for an *Aliyah* break to call another person up to the Torah. The sages derive this from a *pasuk* in *Mishlei* 3:11, *Mussar Hashem beni al timaas*, "Hashem's reproach, my son, do not disdain." In order for one to derive the full benefit of the lesson which is being taught, it is necessary that the lesson not be interrupted. Then the listener can grasp the message in its entirety. To interrupt *mussar*, reproach, in the middle is to risk losing part of the lesson.

**Horav Yisrael Belsky, Shlita**, quotes this *Chazal* and applies it to an episode which took place concerning the **Chiddushei HaRim**, the first *Rebbe* of *Gur*. He was an incredible *talmid chacham*, Torah scholar, whose focus was primarily on Torah study, a way of life which he preached to his *chassidim*. His *shiurim*, lectures, were outstanding, bordering on brilliant. One day, he gave a *shiur* during which he entered into very deep *pilpul*, dialectic. One by one, he lost his students, until finally no one was left who was following the *Rebbe's* thoughts.

Sitting among his students was the *Rebbe's* own son. At the conclusion of the *shiur*, the *Rebbe* approached his son and began to chastise him for not having better prepared the lesson. In order to achieve success in the study of *Talmud*, one must expend effort, which he felt his son had not done. The *Rebbe* left disappointed, and it showed.

That evening, the *Chiddushei HaRim* walked by the *bais ha'medrash* and was shocked to hear his son brilliantly reviewing his father's *shiur*. Every nuance, every piece of logic, was clearly explained. There was no doubt that his son had lucidly captured every aspect of the *shiur* in its entirety. Furthermore, he was able to flawlessly explain it. He presented every detail expertly. There was no question that his son had grasped the *shiur*. Why had he not said so before his father chastised him?

This question bothered the *Chiddushei HaRim*. Had his son said something, it would have spared his father disappointment, and the son would have avoided embarrassment. The entire incident was unnecessary. The young man who was to become his father's successor replied that he acted upon a precedent set by the *Bnei Gad* and *Bnei Reuven*, in their dialogue with Moshe *Rabbeinu* regarding their desire to remain in the Trans Jordan.

Displeased with their request, Moshe criticized them, using strong terminology: "Behold! You have arisen in place of your fathers, a collection of sinful men, to add more to the angry fury of Hashem towards *Yisrael!*" (*Bamidbar* 32:14). Once Moshe concluded his admonition, they spoke up, saying that they had never intended to weaken the nation's resolve to take the land. On the contrary, they had planned to return to TransJordan after the war to liberate *Eretz Yisrael* from the pagans.

Why did they wait the duration of Moshe's rebuke to speak up? They could easily have interrupted

and said, “Stop! Let us go back to the beginning. We are united with the people. We will support them in all their battles. We just want to live here.” Essentially, Moshe’s reproach was unnecessary. The lesson to be derived herein is that rebuke is precious. Every word of rebuke should be cherished when it emanates from the sincere mouth of a *tzaddik*, such as Moshe. It is an indication of pure love. Why would anyone want to cut short a sincere expression of love?

*Rav Belsky* elaborates upon this theme. A *mussar shmuess*, discourse, has a specific standard. It is not some haphazard collection of a *Rosh Yeshivah*’s grief concerning his students. It has a beginning, a middle, and an end, with a distinct thread running through the whole talk – connecting it all together. The *shmuess* is comprised of various facets of expression – some include words of encouragement, and also words of rebuke – in a perfect balance. While, at times, the speaker conveys his message with an angry tone, it is all part of the structure, which become balanced words of love, hope and empowerment. At the end, a complete idea has emerged, and the student receives the full benefit of a complete lesson.

The *Rosh Yeshivah* applies this explanation to elucidate *Chazal* in the *Talmud Megillah*. It is a mistake to stop in the midst of a rebuke, because this interruption might render the rebuke intolerable. This is how we should understand the *pasuk* in *Mishlei*, which exhorts us not to disdain Hashem’s rebuke. If we do not understand the Heavenly message; if it comes across as incomplete, or bitter-sounding, we ultimately reject the lesson it is there to teach us. We must concentrate on every word, listen to the entire message in its totality, then – and only then – will the significance impact us. Those who listen absorb the message and change their lives. Those who refuse to listen are just not with the program!