

"Do not listen to the words of that prophet or to the dreamer of that dream." (13:4)

In a novel exposition of this *pasuk*, the *Sforno* interprets the admonition in the following manner: We should not pay attention to the words of the false prophet, lest we give credence to even a small part of his statement. The *Torah's* concern is not that we will believe in the whole dream. It is that small portion of his words, however insignificant, which raises concern. **All** of the false prophet's words are invalid, and everything that he says is but a figment of his imagination.

Sefer Ha'Chinuch concurs with the *Sforno* when he states that we are not permitted to enter into any form of dialogue whatsoever with the false prophet, for every statement that he issues is total fabrication. Why is this? Should we not make every attempt to unmask this charlatan? Should his "miracles" not be exposed for the shams that they really are? Let everyone see that this prophet is truly false.

Horav Chaim Elazary, z.l., cites the *Vilna Gaon*, who in the end of *Divrei Eliyahu* addresses the necessary response to the "wicked son, 'sk tuv jxp jcz o,rntu " *And you should say it is a Korban Pesach to Hashem.*" He notes that the *Torah* does not state to whom this explanation is directed. It does not say *uhkt o,rntu, "And you should say unto him,"* in reference to the *ben rasha*. It would seem implicit that we are responding to someone else, but to whom? The *Gaon* asserts that this response is directed to none other than to oneself! Indeed, one is not to respond to the *rasha*, for his only interest is to lure the individual into a dialogue which will raise numerous questions to be answered. The response is to yourself. Reaffirm the rationale behind the *mitzvah*, so that the *rasha's* questions will not affect your belief.

From this statement, *Horav Elazary* derives that one must not permit himself to enter into a dialogue with the *rasha*. He will not change his views, but ours may become ever so slightly ambivalent. The actual dialogue raises issues which linger, issues that are easily explained if one is not defensively attempting to explain the reason for his conviction. By entering into a dialogue with a *rasha*, we have already performed a foolish error. We have given credibility to his words. We have acknowledged that what he says needs to be disputed. By ignoring him, we relegate him to his proper place. A lack of response is by no means a "cop out", while dialogue regrettably represents credibility and validation.