

If you will behave casually with Me and refuse to heed Me, then I shall lay a further blow upon you. (26:21)

Rashi explains *keri*, casually, as applying to one who is observant, yet his performance of *mitzvos* is, at best, erratic and haphazard. His attitude toward *mitzvos* is not one of obligation, but rather, of convenience and choice, sort of being in the “mood” of performing a *mitzvah*. *Horav Moshe Shternbuch, Shlita*, writes that when his *Rebbe, Horav Moshe Schneider, zl*, would read this *pasuk*, he would weep. He remarked that this *pasuk* refers to the Jew who fulfills *mitzvos*, who studies Torah, but it is not an obligation for him. He learns when he wants, attends a *shiur* at will. He could even be a *yeshivah* student who keeps his *sidrei limud*, studying during the *yeshivah*’s designated times, but will not feel the need to learn during *bein hazmanim*, intercession, vacation times. One who is not fully devoted to Torah study falls under the rubric of *teilchu imi keru*, “behave casually with Me.”

The *Rosh Yeshivah* underscored the notion that the *kelalos*, imprecations, of the *Tochachah*, Rebuke, are not earmarked for someone who is a *rasha*, wicked sinner, but rather, for one who takes his religious observance at will, whenever it fits his fancy. Toiling in Torah is not an added characteristic to learning, it defines one’s Torah study. Without toil, it is not *limud haTorah*.

The *Rosh Yeshivah* would go as far as to distinguish between a *yeshivah bachur* who devotes himself wholly to Torah and a *yeshivah* “student” who takes a course of study and might even excel in it. One must never forget that Torah is from Hashem, its Divine Author, and as such, demands a different attitude than one would have towards secular pure academia.

Horav Isser Zalmen Meltzer, zl, related that the *Netziv, zl*, was once asked by someone about the *sidrei ha’yeshivah* (the designated times for Torah learning in the *Volozhin Yeshivah*). The *Netziv* replied that in Volozhin, times were designated for eating (breakfast, lunch and dinner) and sleeping. No times were “designated” for learning. On the contrary, one should learn all the time – unless he is either eating or sleeping.