

All the men of his city shall pelt him with stones and he shall die. (21:21)

The *ben sorer u'moreh* receives the ultimate punishment: execution by stoning. He is put to death while he is still innocent, having not yet committed a sin which carries the penalty of capital punishment. It is better that he should die now as a rebellious glutton, rather than allowing him to be driven by his base desires to plunder and even murder in pursuit of filling his obsessive appetite. The punishment of stoning seems excessive, since, even if our fears for his future evil would be realized – and he would murder – the punishment would still be *hereg/sayif*, beheading by sword. He would not be stoned. Why then is the *ben sorer u'moreh* executed by stoning?

Horav Mordechai Pogremonsky, zl, gives an insightful explanation. Executing the *ben sorer u'moreh* is an act of *chesed*, kindness! How can killing an innocent man be viewed as an act of kindness? It is in such circumstances that we are accorded a glimpse into the Torah perspective, and how it diametrically contrasts the simple, cogent perspective of he who looks through the spectrum of humanity – not Torah.

We believe in *Olam Habba*, the World to Come. It is the real world, the eternal world. To gain entrance into *Olam Habba*, one must be worthy. One must be pure, cleansed by the vicissitudes of life. *Yissurim*, troubles, pain, are the primary “tickets” which catalyze one’s entrance into *Olam Habba*. They have an abrasive effect on the spiritual dross that clings to us as a result of our spiritual deficiencies. *Yissurim* are Hashem’s favor, His kindness, so that, after living a life of spiritual imperfection, we can still hope for *Olam Habba*.

Thus, the *ben sorer u'moreh* who is the recipient of Hashem’s kindness, which spares him from eternal infamy by decreasing his lifespan, must still endure *yissurim*. Otherwise, he will not warrant *Olam Habba*. The increased pain and anxiety associated with stoning are his extra *yissurim* which accord him a place in the World to Come.