

## **“This son of ours is wayward and rebellious; he does not hearken to our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard.” (21:20)**

The *ben sorer u'moreh*, rebellious son, does not listen to his parents. Clearly, this is a reason to bring him to *Bais Din*. He is also a glutton and a drunkard. While this is certainly not complimentary, is it a reason to be put to death at such a young age? *Horav Mordechai Ezrachi, Shlita*, cites *Horav Nachum Zev, z.l., m'Kelm* who commented on Rav's statement in the *Talmud Berachos* 17a. *Chazal* say, *Maryela b'pumei d'Rav*, “It was a familiar lesson in the mouth of Rav. The World to Come is not like this world. In the World to Come there is no eating, no drinking, no propagation, no business, no jealousy, no hatred and no rivalry. Rather, the righteous sit with their crowns on their heads and delight in the radiance of the Divine Presence.” A very impressive statement. *Olam Haba* is utopia, but why was it necessary for Rav to constantly reiterate this idea? Was there something to be gained by this repetition?

*Rav Nachum Zev* applied the following analogy in explaining Rav's familiarization with the difference between this world and *Olam Haba*. “I earn my livelihood in the field of commerce,” said *Rav Nachum Zev*. “My business demands that I attend the market in Leipzig and Danzig (Germany) twice a year. Since I must interact with German merchants, it is essential that I be well-versed in the German language. While it is important that I am fluent in the language, it is not necessary for me to be proficient in every nuance of its grammar. I have to be able to converse – I do not have to write a thesis. The reason for this is simple. My entire life revolves around the town of Kelm. I speak its language: I know its people. Two weeks out of the year I have to be in Germany. For that, I have to know the German language, but I do not have to be versed in its grammar.

“The same idea applies to the Jew. Our place – the place where our *neshamah*, soul, and mind belong is in the spiritual world. That is our home; that is where we belong. We must be proficient in the language of the Heavens: *tzaddikim* sitting in the radiance of the *Shechinah*. We also descend to this world for a short period of time. During this juncture, it is necessary for us to acclimate to the “language” of this world – eating and drinking and living a somewhat material lifestyle. We do not, however, have to indulge ourselves in its grammar. We do not have to eat and drink as if it were our permanent home. We are only visiting.

“This is why Rav constantly sought to remind himself of the real place that he belonged. He did not want to get too comfortable in this world. He did not want to learn its grammar.”

The same idea applies to the *ben sorer*, explains *Rav Ezrachi*. He enjoys a lifestyle that is the antithesis of what a Jew should live. He does not merely survive in this world – he thrives here! The language of this world is his lifeblood. Materialism and more materialism symbolize the motto by which he lives. *Olam Haba* is the farthest thing from him. A Jew must strive to be fluent in the language of *Olam Haba*, because it is his life.