

## **"If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son that will not listen (to) the voice of his father or the voice of his mother." (21:18)**

*Chazal* make a powerful statement in regard to the *ben sorer u'moreh*. This boy, who has just reached the age of maturity demonstrates unusual insubordination. He is defiant towards all authority. He simply does whatever he wants, regardless of his parent's pain regarding his life of spiritual degeneration. His parents together are obligated to bring him to *Bais Din* for punishment. They must assert their role as prosecutors by clearly stating "*this is our son,*" "*he does not listen to the voice of his father or to the voice of his mother."*

*Horav Moshe Swift z.l.* suggests that this act reflects the source of the boy's iniquity, the foundation upon which his tragic life was built. There were two voices during his upbringing; his father spoke and his mother spoke. Were both voices unified? Did they both articulate the same message? Or, was it a home that was pluralist in ideal, background and thought? If there had been only one voice, they would have raised a much different child.

Are we cognizant of this behavior on our part? Do husband and wife agree upon their child's upbringing? Or, does the mother make a decision, and the father "murmurs" his disagreement? Thus, the young boy or girl develops as a spiritual and emotional cripple. Inconsistent backgrounds tend to create confused children. Parents who do not actively demonstrate constant respect towards one another will ultimately watch this disunity adversely affect their children's growth.

*Horav Swift* makes another simple, but profound, observation. *Chazal* state that the case of *ben sorer u'moreh* requires many stipulations to be fulfilled. This precludes its ever actually transpiring. "Why then," asks *Chazal*, "was this whole incident written?" They respond "Study it and receive reward. Study as much as you can, reach down and grasp the profundities of *Torah* and you will find it most rewarding."

How striking are the words of *Chazal*. We are taught that there are really areas that we can not understand but this is no reason to reject them. Study it over and over, trust in it, and you will be compensated by becoming a better, more refined person. The simple knowledge that there are things in life that we cannot understand is one of the most rewarding lessons one can learn.

The *Torah* encompasses bodies of law which our limited minds have difficulty grasping. Is this a reason to reject them? Did we question our parents when we were growing up, or did we accept at face value what they demanded of us? The definition of trust is the ability to believe in someone, even if his demand does not coincide with our own thinking. This tendency defines the true "ma'amin," believer, in Hashem.