

## "And he who curses his father and mother shall be put to death." (21:17)

The *Ramban* notes that the punishment for one who curses his parents is more severe than the punishment for one who strikes and wounds them. The one who curses is put to death by stoning while the one who wounds is executed by choking. The *Ramban* attributes this discrepancy to the relative frequency of the transgression. The fool curses whenever he gets upset. He berates his Creator, his parents and everyone who, in his small mind, is responsible for his life situation. In order to discourage these wanton acts of disparagement, the *Torah* has assessed a severe punishment for this offense.

*Horav Moshe Shternbuch, Shlita*, infers from the *Ramban's* thesis a rejoinder to those liberal sinners who claim, "It's too late; we have gone too far." They attempt to mitigate their sins by claiming that the frequency of their misbehavior should reduce the travesty of the sin. The *Ramban* teaches us that this is totally incorrect. On the contrary, an *aveirah* which has become acceptable in one's lifestyle due to the frequency of the infraction, is punished more severely. Perhaps, if people would acknowledge this idea, they might realize that the material possessions without which they think they cannot live may actually be the cause of their ultimate downfall.