



### Shlomo Rayman Beit Shemesh Chapter Director The Rebellious Teen

As someone who has been working with teenagers for the past couple of years, I find the fate of the **בן סורר ומורה**, the wayward and rebellious child, quite troubling. Why is a teenager who is acting rebellious, or in other words like a teenager, sentenced to death?! How can we understand this unfair and extreme response?

There is an opinion in the Gemara, that this death sentence was never actually carried out, due to the many near impossible requirements to be a **בן סורר ומורה**. What then, is the purpose of this law? Rav Shlomo Sason has a fascinating approach. The punishment of the **בן סורר ומורה** was never supposed to be carried out, the purpose was to save the child from an abusive home! In many ancient cultures parents were allowed to kill their rebellious children. This law in the Torah caused these parents to instead bring them to the courts, where they would be exonerated on a technicality. Once the issue was made public, the authorities were able to properly help

the abused and rebellious child. This fits the theme of the rest of Parshat Ki Teitzei, of helping the helpless and protecting the unprotected.

Unfortunately, abuse is not something unique to ancient cultures. We need to be vigilant about preventing abuse in our communities, calling it out, creating more transparency, and doing all we can to help the helpless and protect the unprotected.



### Leora Kashnow 11th Grade, Beit Shemesh

#### Why Should I Even Try?

Chazal say there are three scenarios where one is obligated to give up his life. Aside from the 'big three', we are commanded **"וחי בהם"** - to live. Not just to live a regular life, but **בחרת** - בחיים - we should choose to live a positive, active and fulfilling life.

Why do we need to keep our lives going? Not just 'going', but to make sure our life is fulfilling as well. Why can't we just give up when things get hard?

The Pasuk in this parsha says: **"זכרת כי עבד"** היית במצריים ויפוך ה' אלוקיך משם על כן אנוכי מצוך לעשות את הדבר הזה

Hashem tells us that yes, I do make things

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hard for you, I do challenge you, and I did send you to slavery. However, I also redeem you and give you the tools and the strength to get through the challenges I set for you. This in turn gives us true pleasure.

Hashem brings people into this world with a purpose. He sends us challenges in order to make us feel accomplished, which brings us true pleasure.

Many people falsely think that the opposite of pleasure is pain. But that is untrue. Pleasure comes from hard work and accomplishment and being able to enjoy the fruits of your labor.

The opposite of pleasure is complacency; to sit back and just watch life happen, let opportunities go by without acting, and to not analyze the tools and talents a person has to meet their potential.

Letting life fly by you without moving a finger is the most depressing and saddest thing for a person. But, when we realize that Hashem is waiting for us and putting us in the driver's seat, it's empowering, invigorating, and exciting. Even when things don't work out exactly the way we want, just the knowledge that Hashem is letting us sit in the cockpit of this plane, gives us the drive and the energy to push hard and to work hard. חזק ואמץ! ■

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