

The Weekly Farbrengens

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EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

RESPECTING PARENTS (I)

APPRECIATING PARENTS

Explaining the *mitzva* to respect our parents, *Sefer HaChinuch* writes that a person should always appreciate what has been done for him, and not be ungrateful. He should take to heart all the effort his parents have invested in raising and nurturing him, and this will also give him an appreciation for all the good that *HaShem* has bestowed upon him.

The *mitzva* to respect one's parents is so great that it is equal to the obligation to respect *HaShem*. While a pauper is exempted from fulfilling certain *mitzvos*, for the *mitzva* of respecting his parents he is even required to collect funds if money is needed.

(יתרו כ, יב, ס' החינוך מצוה לג)

One of the claims with which the Alter Rebbe was challenged while in prison was that chassidim do not show proper *kibud av va'eim* (to their non-chassidic parents).

The Alter Rebbe replied that it is impossible that anyone who serves *HaShem* in his *davening*, and strives to attain *yiras Shamayim* (as chassidim do), should not fulfill this *mitzva* or any other *mitzva*. He added that if there is anyone among the chassidim who does not properly observe *kibud av va'eim*, then besides being unworthy of being called a chossid, he does not even qualify to be called a human being (!), and chassidim at large should not be evaluated according to the actions of such an individual.

(אג"ק אדמו"ר הדקו"ח"ב ע' נט)

In the *tzava'a* (will) addressed to his children, the Rebbe Maharash writes: "First and foremost, I hereby direct you, my sons and daughters, to be exceedingly careful about respecting your mother. Although you have already been commanded about this in the Torah, we nevertheless find that *Chazal* reiterate this command. Even when you grow older, [do not rely] on your own opinion and doubt your mother's words, and certainly do not veer from her will or go against it.

"Now, the reward for this *mitzva* is long life in this world. Yet as you know, this entire world is worthless in comparison to one moment in *Olam HaBa*. So if in *Olam Hazeh* a lack of *kavod* is so detrimental that it can make a person lose all the good of this world, how much more so with regard to *Olam HaBa*!"

(אג"ק מהר"ש ע' יב)

AT THEIR SERVICE

Chazal specify the obligations of *kibud av va'eim*: serving one's parents food and drink, dressing them, taking them wherever they wish to go and rising in their honor.

(קידושין לא ע"א, רמב"ם ממרים פ"ו ה"ז, שו"ע יו"ד ר"מ ס"ד וס"ח)

CONSIDER

Why is respecting parents a necessary trait to simply qualify as a human being?

What is the gain in personally serving one's parents? Can't a messenger do the same job?

The *tanna* Rabbi Yehoshua ben Alam was once told in a dream, "Rejoice, because you and Nanas the butcher will sit together in Gan Eden."

Rabbi Yehoshua woke up alarmed: "Woe is me! My entire life I have always been in a state of *yiras Shamayim*, I have toiled only in Torah, never walked four *amos* without *tzitzis* or *tefillin*, and have eighty *talmidim*. Yet all of my accomplishments are only equal to those of this *butcher*!?"

He promptly sent a message to his *talmidim* that he would not enter the *beis midrash* until he ascertained who this butcher was. He trudged from village to village asking about Nanas the butcher until he finally arrived in his town, but the townsmen were surprised that the *tzaddik* was interested in this ordinary individual. They set out to bring him, nevertheless, but he refused to come, not believing that the great sage was really asking to meet him. Rabbi Yehoshua had no choice but to visit the butcher himself.

When he arrived at the butcher shop, the butcher fell on his face and exclaimed, "Why is today so special that the Crown of Yisrael has come to visit his servant?"

Rabbi Yehoshua told him that he wanted to hear about his conduct.

The man replied, "My master! I work as a butcher, but I have two elderly parents who cannot walk themselves, so every day I dress them, feed them and wash them myself."

Hearing this, Rabbi Yehoshua kissed his forehead and said, "My son! Fortunate are you and fortunate is your lot! And how fortunate is my lot that I have been found worthy of being your partner in *Gan Eden*!"

(סדר הדורות סדר תנאים ואמוראים ערך רבי יהושע בן אלם)

The *tzaddik* Reb Yitzchok of Vorki was meticulous in his fulfillment of the *mitzva* of *kibud eim*, and would travel home every year to visit his mother. Once, during the *Shabbos seuda*, which was attended by many chassidim, the *tzaddik's* mother asked him for a glass of water. Right away, one of the chassidim jumped up and brought her the requested drink. Not touching the glass, she asked that specifically her son bring the drink. Reb Yitzchok got up and brought his mother a cup of water, and then she said to him, "I don't really need to drink, but I wanted to give you the opportunity of meriting long life, for that is what is awarded to those who fulfill the *mitzva* of honoring one's parents."

(סיפורי חסידים זוין מועדים ע' 425)

On *Motzaei Yom Kippur*, the Rebbe Rashab would visit his mother *Rebbetzin Rivkah* and break the fast in her home. The chossid Reb Zalman Duchman, who was once present there, related: "The Rebbe Rashab stood up from his place at the head of the table, at which everyone else did likewise, and approached the *samovar* located near the front entrance. He then prepared a glass of tea and brought it to his mother.

"Beginning the new year with a *mitzva*, *Rebbetzin Rivkah* exclaimed.

(לשמע און ע' 83)

The Rebbe was extremely scrupulous in his observance of this *mitzva*. For many years, he would take precious time to visit his mother every day and converse with her.

When, in תשי"ב (1952), the Rebbe's brother passed away, the Rebbe made a special effort to hide this fact from her, not wanting to cause her unnecessary pain. The Rebbe instructed many people not to reveal the news to her, and went so far as to screen her mail.

(אג"ק ח"ו ע' קפג וע' רלו, מפי השמועה)

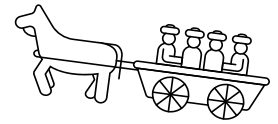
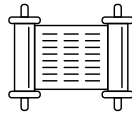


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VERBALIZING A PARENT'S NAME

May I tell someone my parent's name when I am asked?

There is a biblical prohibition to call one's father or mother by their name, even if they are not present, for doing so displays a lack of respect.¹

Whether prefacing the parent's name with a title of respect such as "Reb" or "Father" would make it permissible when they aren't present (as it is regarding one's teacher's name²) is a question in halacha. Some poskim permit it,³ (though some limit it to when one is speaking to an individual, but not in a public speech⁴). Others distinguish between the two and explain that by a teacher since one may have multiple teachers, saying "my teacher" wouldn't suffice. By parents, however, one could just say "my father" or "my mother," thus there is no allowance to use their name with a title.⁵ In practice, one should be stringent.⁶

If one is asked for his father's or mother's name (i.e. by an aliya or mi shebeirach), one may verbalize their name, since it would obviously not help to answer "my father."⁷ Preferably one should preface a title, especially if it is announced publicly.⁸ Yet, whenever their actual name isn't necessary, for example when a person calls up his own father for a kibud, he should say "my father my teacher" and not mention their name.⁹

What if a person has a friend with the same name as his parent? Is he allowed to call them by name in front of his parent?

Some say that it may never be mentioned in the parent's presence, and it may be only be mentioned in the parent's absence if it's a common name. With an uncommon name, one should use a slight variation when referring to the friend, or mention their family name as well. In cases that is clearly evident that he is not referring to his parent (e.g. in a story or dvar Torah), it is permitted.¹⁰

Others hold that the prohibition only applies when it is both a unique name and it is in the parent's presence.¹¹ The prevalent custom follows this opinion, particularly since today hearers won't suspect that he is referring to his parent.¹²

1. שו"ע יו"ד סי' רמ סעיף ב ובט"ז זש" סק"ד. וראה שדי חמד מערכת כל כולל ק"ד שגראה שהוא אסור מה"ת.
2. רמ"א סי' רמב סט"ו.
3. ביאה"ג סי' רמ"ב סקל"ו, וראה ערוה"ש סי' ר"מ סט"ו.
4. שו"ת אג"מ יו"ד סי' קל"ג, ע"ש שהביא דבגמ' קידושין ל"א: מצינו דמור בר רב אשי כי הוה דריש בפיקא איהו אמר אבא מרי, משמע דלא היה יכול לומר רק אבי רב אשי וכיו"ב.
5. ישי"ש קידושין פ"א סי' סה.
6. שו"ת אג"מ שם.
7. פתחי תשובה סי' רמ"ב ס"ב.
8. ראה שו"ת יבי"א ח"ב יו"ד סי' ט"ו שאין חיוב בדבר.
9. שו"ת ארץ צבי ח"א סי' צ"ז.
10. פסקים ותשובות יו"ד סי' ר"מ סקי"ב.
11. ראה דרישה סי' ר"מ סקי"ד, וש"ך ס"ק ג. והחיי"א כלל סי' סעיף ח כתב הדמנהג להקל.
12. שו"ת אג"מ שם.

REB HENDEL

Reb Chanoch Hendel Kugel lived in Lubavitch and was a "ben bayis" by the Rebbe Rashab for forty years. The Friediker Rebbe describes him as follows, "Reb Chanoch Hendel came to Lubavitch, to the Tzemach Tzedek, for the first time in the year תר"ג. He had prepared himself for ten years before coming to the Rebbe. His heart burned with a fire of ahavas yisrael and he had unparalleled midos tovos. His ahavas yisrael and midos tovos were a product of much work and toil, and not so much from thinking and meditation. It is impossible to describe the love he had for another Yid; he would literally go on mesirus nefesh for every individual." When the yeshiva Tomchei Temimim opened, he was appointed by Rebbe Rashab as the leading mashpia. He passed away on the 19th of Teves, תר"ס (1900).

Before he became a chossid, Reb Hendel went to the chossid Reb Zishke of Kurenitz to watch the way he conducts himself. He saw that throughout the entire day, Reb Zishke was occupied with his Rabbonus, and had no time to learn himself. Once, at a late hour of the night, when Reb Hendel was preparing to go to sleep, he saw Reb Zishke get up for Tikun Chatzos and then watched as he sat and learned for a few hours. The Rov then went to the mikva and started preparing for davening. Seeing this, Reb Hendel was impressed, but he began doubting his desire to become a chossid, perhaps it would be too difficult.

Later, he saw a woman come to Reb Zishke, telling him about a very seriously ill person, and as she was speaking, he saw tears streaming down Reb Zishka's face. Sometime afterward, he witnessed the Rov going out of his way to request a favor for another yid.

When the news came to Lubavitch that the chossid Reb Chonye Marozov was released from his draft service, Reb Hendel began dancing in the yard of the Rebbe, chanting "Chonye has gone out!" He went into the Rebbe Rashab's room, told him the news and started dancing in the room. The Rebbe Rashab got up, put his hand on Reb hendel's shoulder and went around with him three times. Afterwards, he said, "For this, I will say Chassidus for you."

Finally, Reb Hendel decided to become a chossid, and he went to Reb Zishka to tell him his decision. "Good," said Reb Zishke. Reb Hendel asked, "But how do I do this? Please don't make it too hard!" "It's very simple," said the Rov. "The very first thing in Chassidus is ahavas yisrael." He explained the idea of true ahavas yisrael, and then said, "You are also a Yid and you must love yourself, but first you must banish the "goy" that is within you..."

(לקוטי דיבורים ח"א ליקוט ב' אות י"ח)

(ספר השיחות תרצ"ז ע' 16)

A Moment with The Rebbe



A RULE FOR SHADCHONIM

The acclaimed shadchante, Mrs. Nechama Baumgarten of Crown Heights, related:

searching for a suitable match for my brother Moshe. I replied that I was actually considering a certain girl.

I never saw myself as an official shadchante (matchmaker), until one kos shel bracha, when the Rebbe distributed mashke to shadchanim, and gave my husband a bottle "far di balaboste."

The Rebbe asked if I have met her, and I replied that I hadn't.

I received one simple directive from the Rebbe in my field. The Rebbe asked me once in yechidus why I am not actively

The Rebbe chastised me, "How could you suggest a shidduch without having seen her?!"