

The Weekly Farbrengens



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EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

RESPECTING PARENTS (III)

THE MITZVA OF MORA

Aside from the *mitzva* to honor and serve our parents, there is another *mitzva*, called *mora*, to stand in awe of them – by not sitting in their designated places, by neither contradicting what they say nor expressing one's approval of what they say, and by not calling them by name.

How far does this obligation go? If one is wearing precious garments, is seated at the head of the table in the presence of the entire community, and his father or mother come in and tear off his clothing, slap him and spit in his face, he must not shame them. He should remain silent and fear the King of Kings, Who gave him this command. For if a king of flesh and blood decreed something that would cause him even greater distress, he would not even flinch in protest. How much more so with regard to the decree of "the One Who spoke and the world came into being in accordance with His will!"

Although, according to many opinions, the son may demand that his parents reimburse him for the loss, he may nevertheless not shame them for their actions.
(רמב"ם ממרים פ"ו ה"ז ועיין לה"מ שם)

Once, during Pesach, the elderly mother of the *tzaddik*, Sar Shalom of Belz, was sitting next to her son during the *seuda*. The *tzaddik* was eating soup while she ate her *matza*, and because she had no teeth, she kept dipping her *matza* into his soup. Despite this, Sar Shalom went on eating his soup, even though he was known to be very stringent with *gebros*.

(אוצר כאר"א ע' תקמ"ו)

SILENT REVERENCE

The Gerer Rebbe, the *Imrei Emes*, was once present at a *shuir* given by his father, the *Sfas Emes*. At some point during the *shuir*, when the *talmidim* were having difficulty grasping his deep concepts, the *Sfas Emes* turned to his son and asked, "Do you, too, not understand?" The *Imrei Emes* just shrugged his shoulders as if to say that he too was puzzled. However, as soon as his father left the room, he stood up and gave the *talmidim* a clear explanation of what had just been taught.

His father, standing outside, heard what was going on, and later inquired, "When I asked if you had understood, why didn't you say Yes?" The *Imrei Emes* replied, "Were father to ask whether I had understood, I would have answered accordingly, but when it was assumed that I did not understand, I could not contradict father's words by affirming the opposite..."

(ראש גולת ארי"א)

Reb Yissachar Dov of Belz was sitting with his family at the *Seder* table, and his four-year-old son Aharon, who was later to become a great Rebbe, curiously eyed all of his movements, some of which were strange and unusual. The Rebbe had made these movements especially to arouse his son to ask *Ma Nishtana*, but the young Aharon did not ask. Attempting to help him open up, his father prodded, "You seem very curious about all the strange things I'm doing, so why don't you ask even one question?"

"Your actions really do surprise me," his son replied, "but I didn't ask, because on father you don't ask any questions."

(חדות חיים)

CONSIDER

What is the rationale underlying the awe of parents?

Why was it permissible to eat gebros for the sake of *kibud eim*?

When Reb Avraham of Sochatchov was a child, he was taught by his father, Reb Zev Nachum of Biala. One day, the father posed a complicated question in *Gemara*, but his gifted son came up with a solution right away. Reb Zev refuted his son's reply, and smacked him lightly on the cheek, saying, "You'll have to get out of the habit of answering quickly without thinking deeply beforehand."

Years later, when his father was old and ailing, Reb Avraham went to visit him. Reb Zev brought up what had occurred decades earlier, and admitted that after researching their discussion, he had discovered that his son's explanation had in fact been correct, but he had not told him so, lest this make him conceited. Now, however, he wanted to ask forgiveness.

Reb Avraham confessed that he had known he was right, but he had not mentioned anything because of the *mitzva* of *kibbud av*.

(סיפורי חסידים זיון תורה ע' 233)

Halacha teaches that even in a situation in which a son must speak up, he should do so respectfully. For example: If he sees his parents doing something wrong he should not tell them so outright, but instead he should ask them, as if he is himself unsure about it.

They will understand the hint and not be embarrassed.
(שו"ע י"ד ר"מ ס"א)

OUTSTANDING REWARD

In *Aseres HaDibros*, *HaShem* promises long life to those who fulfill the *mitzva* of respecting their parents. Conversely, *Chazal* say that the lifespan of Yosef HaTzaddik was shortened because of a disrespectful gesture he expressed towards his father. Ten times during the dialogues between Yosef and his brothers, the *shvatim* referred to their father Yaakov as "your servant, our father" – and although Yosef heard, he remained silent. Since silence can be interpreted as agreement, his life was shortened by ten years.

Moreover, the *Arizal* writes that *tzaddikim* in *Gan Eden* are judged even for things they may have done as young children, as young as seven or eight years old.

(יתרו כ. יב. פקדי דר"א פ"ט, מדבר קדמות להחיד"א)

R. Yehuda Hachossid writes: When the Torah tells us how Eisav returned exhausted from hunting, it adds the description, 'He felt as if he were about to die.' With these words, the Torah is letting us know that the descendants of Eisav have merited their power because he endangered his life to hunt for his father. From this we must take a lesson as to how much exertion must be invested to sustain our parents.

(ספר חסידים ס' שמו"א)

The *Rambam* states: If a person does not respect his parents, his children will not respect *him*.

(מורה נבוכים ח"ג, מ. תקיז)

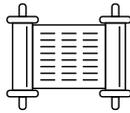
Rebbi Meir taught: "The Torah commands us to honor our father and mother, and a king's command applies more rigorously inside his palace than outside it. So if *HaShem* has commanded people who are outside his palace to honor their father and mother, how much more so does this command apply *inside* His palace – *Gan Eden*. However, if someone's sons are sitting among the *tzaddikim* in *Gan Eden* and their father is among *resha'im*, this is surely no way to fulfill the *mitzva* of respect."

After quoting this teaching, *Reishis Chochma* concludes: "Therefore, in the *zechus* of the son's good deeds, the father is saved and he, too, is ushered into *Gan Eden*."

To this the Rebbe Rashab adds that the main *mitzva* through which a son saves his father is the *mitzva* of *kibud av va'eim*. That is why Rebbi Meir learned the above concept, of how the *zechus* of a son saves his father, specifically from this *mitzva*.

(ר"ח פ' גידול בניו, קו"ל חנוך לניער ע' 31)

In merit of this publication's founder
ר' אהרן בן חנה
May the *zechus* of the thousands
of readers bring him a total and
immediate recovery



LIGHTS OUT

May I hint to a non-Jew on Shabbos that we can't turn off the light in our bedroom which is disturbing our sleep?

The rabbinic prohibition of *amirah l'akum* on Shabbos comprises three components: (1) A Jew may not **instruct** a gentile to do an act that is Shabbos-prohibited; (b) If a gentile did a *melacha* for a Jew, **even on his own volition**, the Jew may not derive direct **benefit** from the act; (c) There is often an obligation to **protest** when there is concern that others might suspect that the *melacha* is being done on the behest of the Jew.

While the prohibition of **instructing** can be circumvented in certain cases if one only hints to the non-Jew by describing the situation without any indication of an instruction,¹ one may still not derive direct benefit from a *melacha* done for the benefit of a Jew.² Thus, if he turned on a light for a Jew, even on his own accord, one may not use or derive any benefit from the light (and it is pious to turn his head away to display this, though one needn't leave his home on this account).³

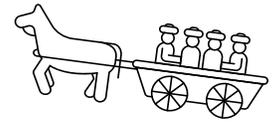
A distinction must be made, however, between direct/positive benefit from the *melacha* (e.g. from light that the gentile turned on) and indirect benefit. If a gentile turned off a light, the benefit of having darkness in the room is not considered a positive benefit, and one needn't avoid deriving this type of benefit.

Consequently, in cases of need (e.g. one isn't able to fall asleep with the light on and it is distressful), it would be permissible to hint to a non-Jew in a storyline that one isn't allowed to shut the light, and one wouldn't be required to stop the non-Jew from shutting the light. This permissibility is further increased if the lightbulbs are LED which are only prohibited rabbinically.

Aside from the prohibition to benefit from the non-Jew's *melacha*, a person is required to protest whenever a non-Jew preforms a biblical *melacha* for the Jew with one's property.⁴ Yet, this requirement is specifically when the Jew will derive positive benefit from the *melacha*.⁵ If, however, the gentile is going to **turn off** the light, and the benefit is solely from the absence of the light, one may allow the non-Jew to turn off the light.⁶

1. ראה שו"ע"ר סי' ש"ז ס"ו.
2. שו"ע"ר סי' רע"ו ס"א וראה סי' שכ"ה ס"ט.
3. שו"ע"ר סי' רע"ו ס"ב.
4. ראה שו"ע"ר סי' רנ"ב ס"י, וליתר הרחבה בד"ן זה כשהגוי עשה לעצמו, ראה קו"א.
5. ראה שו"ע"ר בקו"א סי' ש"ה ס"א.
6. ראה שולחן שלמה סי' ש"ז סקל"ד אות ב'.

לע"נ מרת ציפא אסתר בת ר' שלום דובער ע"ה



REB ZUSHA OF ANIPOLI

Reb Meshulem Zusha of Anipoli was one of the great talmidim of the Mezritcher Maggid and a brother of Reb Elimelech of Lizensk. After exiling himself for many years, he finally settled in Anipoli, where he began teaching the ways of Chassidus. Throughout his life, he lived in poverty, but served Hashem with tremendous fervor and awe and aroused thousands to do *teshuva*. Reb Meshulam Zusha was the epitome of simplicity, humility, piety, and purity of heart. He was very close with the Alter Rebbe, who took a *haskama* from him on the Tanya. He passed away on the 2nd of Shevat, תק"ט (1800).

The Mezritcher Maggid once called in Reb Mendel Horodoker, Reb Pinchas Baal Hahafla'ah, and the Alter Rebbe, to ask them a question in *nigleh*. They left the Rebbe's room and discussed the matter among themselves. Reb Zusha came over to them, asking what they were about, but Reb Mendel Horodoker told him that this was not his domain. Shortly after, when Reb Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev came in, the chassidim told him the question, and Reb Zusha listened in.

Reb Zusha went to a side and began crying, "Ribono Shel Olam! Zusha does

not have a part in the Torah; it does not belong to him..." Later, Reb Zusha approached the Alter Rebbe, for he was ashamed to speak up in front of the entire group, and elucidated a possible explanation. Amazed, the Alter Rebbe declared that this was Torah from *shamayim*. The Alter Rebbe told over the explanation to the Maggid, in the name of Reb Zusha, and the Maggid accepted it.

(משיחת כ"ה חשוון תרצ"ה)

Reb Shmelke of Nikolsburg asked the Maggid of Mezritch, "How is it possible to fulfill the words of our chachomim, 'A person is obligated to *bentch* Hashem for the bad the same way he *bentches* him for good?'" The Maggid told him to go to the *bais medrash* where he would find his talmid Reb Zusha, who would be able to explain the meaning of the Mishna.

Reb Shmelke went to Reb Zusha and told him that the Rebbe had sent him here to hear an explanation on the Mishna. Reb Zusha could not fathom why the Rebbe had sent the chossid to him. "Such a question you should ask to someone who had some bad experience, *chas v'shalom*. I, however, have had no such experience, for nothing bad has ever befallen me! How then would I be able to explain this concept?"

(סיפורי חסידים זו"ן ע' 203)

A Moment with The Rebbe



AFTER A FIRE ONE PROSPERS

On the eve of 8 Tammuz 5729 (1969), the Rebbe suddenly released the *sichos* of the most recent Achron Shel Pesach for immediate publication in a single booklet.

Chassidim's mystification grew when the Rebbe added an entire paragraph in his holy handwriting discussing the rule that after a fire one prospers, and directed the publishers to include letters from the *Rabbeim* on the subject. This had no apparent connection to the topic of the *sicha*.

That night, nine *bochurim* were involved in a severe car accident with a passing truck on the way back from their friend's *chasuna* in Boston, MA.

Their gas tank burst into flames, the doorknobs melted and *three bochurim* were trapped inside. At the last moment, a *bochur* ran into the raging flames and released them.

That afternoon, the Rebbe inquired from *Harav Chodakov* as to their wellbeing, and the Rebbe commented, "Apparently, this is why an appendix regarding fire was added to the *sicha*..."

The Rebbe instructed that booklets be given to the passengers, and wrote a note wishing them to be chassidim, *yerei shomayim* and *lamdonim* - in a manner of prosperity.

(As heard from Reb Shlomo Zarchi)