

RESPECTING PARENTS

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*. So, too, a pauper is exempted from fulfilling certain *mitzvos*, but 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 הזקן 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 Haze* 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 מנזרים פ"ו ה"ז, שו"ע יו"ד ר"מ ס"ד וס"ח)

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."

Rebbi 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. Rebbi 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?"

Rebbi 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, Rebbi 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 *kibbud 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 אהזן 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 תש"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)

CONSIDER THIS!

- 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?

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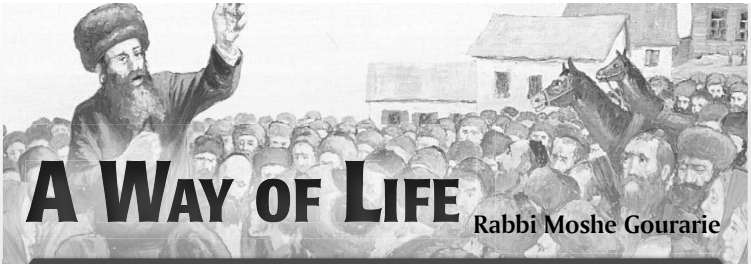


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A WAY OF LIFE

Rabbi Moshe Gourarie

OUR HEROES

Beis HaLevi

Reb Yosef Dov HaLevi Soloveitchik of Brisk, the "Beis HaLevi", was a famous *Rov* and Torah leader of his time. After serving as Rosh Yeshiva in Volozhin and *Rov* in Slutsk, he took the position of *Rov* in Brisk. His wisdom and wit served him well, as he led his people and became known far and wide. He passed away 4 Iyar, תרנ"ב (1892). His son was the famous Reb Chaim of Brisk.

The son of the Beis HaLevi, Reb Chaim Brisker, was very close to both the Rebbe Rashab and the Frierdiker Rebbe. They worked together on many community matters. Once, Reb Chaim told the Frierdiker Rebbe the following story:

My father used to deliver a deep *pilpul* in learning twice a week to the great 'Lomdim' of Brisk. Included in the audience were "Berel the Hunch" and "Kalman the *Klotz*". (Great Torah scholars, lovingly given nicknames by the townspeople. Reb Berel learned so much that he had a hunched back, and Reb Kalman sat of a bench (a '*klotz*') of wood learning so much that he made a dent in it...)

Once, there a Jew being pursued by the government, and his life was in danger. My father was working with a Jewish lawyer to help save this man. They made up a certain day when they would go together to visit certain places in order to save him. The lawyer came to our home, but my father was in the *beis medrash* giving the *shiur*. So he went to the *shul* and sure enough, my father was in the midst of a heated discussion with Berel and Kalman in a *sugya* of *Tumah* and *Taharah*. The lawyer did not want to disturb so he sat at the side and waited. After about an hour, my father noticed him. He excused himself from the discussion, saying that this was a matter of life and death and he had to go.

On the way, the lawyer asked the *Rov*, "Rabbi, why are you tiring yourself over this *shiur*? Firstly, do the laws of *Tumah* and *Taharah* have that much relevance? Secondly, for whom are you delivering this *shiur*? For "Berel the Hunch" and "Kalman the *Klotz*"? They are *geonim* in their own right!

My father replied, "You must understand. When I give the *shiur* to them, people in the other *shul* they learn a *blat Gemara* and in the second *shul*, a *perek Mishnayos*. The people who are not doing that will at least go to *daven* three times a day. There are some people who will only go to *daven* in the morning, and those who will only go Shabbos. There are yet others who will attend only on *Yom Tov*. There is even the son of the pharmacist (the more secular individual in town who attended university) who will only go to *shul* on *Rosh Hashana* and *Yom Kippur*.

"But if I will not give the *shiur*, the people in the other *shul* will get slack with the *Gemara* and then the rest will follow suite, until the son of the pharmacist will never attend *shul*."

When the Frierdiker Rebbe shared this story with the Rebbe Rashab and how the Beis HaLevi lifted up the town with his own intense learning, the Rebbe Rashab agreed and said "Yes, this is a valid '*Seder* in *Avodah*'".

לזכות ר' שלום מרדכי הלוי שי' בן רבקה

Collecting a Debt

Reuven owes Shimon a large sum of money, but he is unable to pay back the loan. Can Shimon pressure Reuven to pay his debt?

- The Torah (Shemos 22:24) tells us '*losihyelo kenoshe*'- don't be to him like a lender. From here we learn¹ that if one knows that the borrower cannot pay back his loan, one may not pressure him, as this will only cause embarrassment to the borrower.
- This prohibition includes just passing by the borrower, as the borrower will be embarrassed just from seeing the lender's face.²
- If one is unsure of the borrower's means, Poskim³ write that one may assume that he has the means and there is no prohibition. While doubt regarding an *issur de'oyrayso* usually maintains the stricter ruling, in this case, since the borrower is forbidden to put himself in a situation where he cannot pay back the lender, we assume that the borrower did not perform an *issur* and has the funds to pay back.
- As mentioned, the *issur* is to pressure a borrower of insufficient means, however, it is permissible to pressure a borrower of sufficient means, as doing so does not cause embarrassment. Even if the borrower does not have actual cash, if he possesses of value, including basic necessities, the lender may pressure him to pay⁴. Therefore many contemporary Rabbonim suggest that if one owns a home, it is unlikely that one can be *over* this prohibition for regular loans which do not add up to the value of the house. Needless to say, it is nonetheless appropriate not to pressure a borrower who is doing his best to pay back to pay the loan.
- If the loan is greater than the worth of ones possessions, there are differing opinions about pressuring the borrower to pay back what he does own. Some opinions say that being that for at least a part of the loan the borrower can pay back, it is permitted to pressure him to pay back that part, while other opinions argue that being that even if he would pay that part that he could he would still not have paid the whole sum, it is therefore still considered to be embarrassing the borrower by urging him to pay the loan.
- Poskim point out⁵ the *issur* is only concerning one who borrowed money, not one who owes money for a sale or business deal. Nevertheless, it is appropriate to be sensitive to the debtor in this case as well.

Please note that the above may not be applicable for your situation. Consult your *Rov* for a final psak.

1. ב"מ דף עה ע"ב. שו"ע אדה"ז הלכות
2. שם ס"ג.
3. כסף הקדשים לשו"ע חו"מ ס' צז ס"ב.
4. ראה שו"ע שם ס"ב וסעיף יג.
5. ראה כסף הקדשים שם.

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

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

Solely to the Yoke of Learning

In the early 5730s, when the *kovtzei ho'oros* (Torah journals) written by bochorim and Anash first began appearing, the Rebbe expressed a keen interest in their contents and derived much nachas from them.

The Rebbe would regularly walk in to *shul* on Friday night carrying a new *kovetz*, and would read it in his place. Often at a *farbrengen*, the Rebbe would address something a *bochur* had written in that week's *kovetz*.

However, the Rebbe also insisted that the financial side of the publications should not become the responsibility of the *bochorim*. In 5743, the *ho'oros* editorial of a certain yeshiva, wrote to the Rebbe that they are considering stopping the publication due to lack of funds.

The Rebbe encouraged their withdrawal (Liku" S vol. 39, page 241):

"It is obvious that the financial burden is not theirs, for the *bochorim*'s shoulders should be bearing solely the yoke of learning *Nigleh* and *Chassidus*. They should therefore not take upon themselves any other responsibility which should belong to others, for this will be at the expense of their own duty..."

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נדבת הורי' הרה"ת ישראל ליב ורעייתו פרומא רחל שיחיו רעזניק

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