

## RESPECTING PARENTS (2)

### The Extent of Kibud Av Va'eim

To what extent are we obligated to respect our parents? This, too, *Chazal* specify: "Even if one's parents take his pouch filled with golden coins and throw it into the sea, in front of his eyes, he should not shame them, nor shout nor show anger in their presence. Rather, he should accept the decree of *HaShem* (Honor your father and mother) in silence."

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

From whom should we learn the extent of respect for one's parents? From Dama ben Nesina, a *goy* from Ashkelon! The *Chachomim* relate that once, while he was sitting in the company of Roman noblemen, his mentally disturbed mother approached him, tore off the gold-embroidered silk cloak he was wearing, hit him on the head, spat in his face, and took a shoe and hit him. Despite all this, he continued to sit in silence. Moreover, when the shoe fell from her hand, he lifted it up and handed it to her so that she not be upset.

On another occasion, the *Chachomim* wanted to purchase precious stones from him for the *Choshen*, and were willing to pay a huge sum of money for them. Nevertheless, he turned down their offer, because the key to the box which held the precious stones was under the pillow of his sleeping father and the box was under his legs. *HaShem* rewarded him with a *Para Aduma* in his herd, and from his he gained the rich earnings he had lost from the missed opportunity.

(קידושין לא ע"א ובתוס', ירושלמי פאה פ"א ה"א)

Rebbi Tarfon treated his mother with such great respect that whenever she wanted to go to sleep, he would bend down, enabling her to clamber onto his back and climb into bed. Likewise, whenever she got out of bed, she would step down onto him and then onto the floor. Rebbi Tarfon once came to the *beis midrash* and began to speak highly of his degree of *kibud eim*. However, his fellow *Chachomim* told him, "You have not yet reached even half of the honor that one is required to show his parents. Has your mother ever thrown your wallet into the sea in your presence and you did not shame her?"

One *Shabbos*, while Rebbi Tarfon's mother was walking, her shoes tore. Rebbi Tarfon then placed his hands on the ground so that his mother could

walk upon them, step by step, until she reached her bed.

And whenever Rav Yosef heard the footsteps of his mother, he would say, "I shall stand before the approaching footsteps of the *Shechina*."

(קידושין לא ע"ב ועיין מהרש"א, ירושלמי פאה פ"א ה"א)

*Chazal* teach that even if one's parents are utter *resha'im*, one may not disrespect them. Indeed, even if as a result of their grave *aveiros* they had been sentenced to death by the *beis din* and were on their way to be punished, the son is forbidden to strike them or curse them.

(רמב"ם ממורים פ"ה ה"ב)

Someone once asked Reb Chaim Brisker, "Is it true that when the respect due to parents involves some monetary expense, it is the parents' responsibility and not the son's?"

"Yes," replied Reb Chaim, "that indeed is the *halacha*."

The man continued, "Then here is my question: My father lives in a distant town and I have just been notified that he is ill and bedridden. Trust me: I want to fulfill the holy *mitzva* of *kibud av* by traveling to help him. But alas, what can I do? The way is a long one, the train ride is very costly, and my father does not have the money to pay for the ticket. Doesn't that mean that I am exempt from making the trip?"

"True!" answered Reb Chaim, "You are not obligated to take the train. Go instead by foot...!"

(אוצר כאו"א ע' תקמא)

### The Way to Respect

*Chazal* warn us that even more important than any service we do for our parents, is the way we do it. To demonstrate this they relate the following stories:

There was a son who took care of all his father's needs, serving him the finest delicacies. Once the father asked his son, "My son, from where do you have all this?"

"Quiet, old man!" the son retorted. "Just eat in silence, like the dogs."

Another man earned a meager living by grinding in a mill. One day, the king's officers came to conscript his father for the dreaded rigors of their master's service. Seeing this, the son told his father, "Father! You can take my place in the

mill, and I will do the king's service in your place, accepting any embarrassment it will entail."

The first son served his father gourmet dishes, yet earned *Gehennom*; the second made his father drag heavy millstones – and earned *Gan Eden*.

(ירושלמי פאה פ"א ה"א)

The *gaon*, Reb Avrohom David of Butchatch, would review the *halachos* of *kibud av va'eim* thirty days before visiting his parents, in preparation for fulfilling this precious *mitzva*.

(אוצר כאו"א ע' תקנא)

Every day, the *tzaddik* Reb Yaakov Yitzchak, who is better known as the *Yid HaKadosh* of Pshis'cha, would conduct a *Gemara shiur* for some of his chassidim. During one such *shiur*, he came across a difficulty in the text, and sat still, deep in thought, trying to understand it. One of the chassidim, a youth who had been orphaned of his father, knew that the Rebbe could sit in such a trance for quite a while, and figured he'd have time to hurry home for something to eat. When he finished eating, and was about to rush back to his Rebbe's house, his mother asked him to bring her something from the attic. His immediate instinct was to continue on his way, in case the Rebbe had resumed the *shiur*, but then he stopped himself: "Isn't doing a *mitzva* the ultimate goal of all my learning? So how can I not fulfill the *mitzva* of *kibbud eim*?" He hastened to do his mother's bidding, and then returned to the Rebbe's house.

Immediately upon his entry, the *Yid HaKadosh* awoke from his trance and asked him what *mitzva* he had just fulfilled. The youth reported what had happened, and then the *tzaddik* explained, "When you entered, I saw the *amora* Abbaye accompanying you, and my question was clarified. Abbaye was an orphan, and because he was unable to honor his parents, he accompanies anyone who fulfills the *mitzva* of *kibbud av va'eim*, because he wants a share in the *mitzva*. And when he came here, together with you, he explained everything to me."

(תפארת יהודי אות קמ"א)

### CONSIDER THIS!

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# A WAY OF LIFE

Rabbi Moshe Gourarie

## Questionable Collectors

Every day during *davening* I am approached by unfamiliar people asking for *tzedaka*. Am I obligated to give them?

- Halacha states<sup>1</sup> that one may never turn away someone who is in need of *tzedaka*. Even one who cannot give a substantial amount must give at least a *pruta*<sup>2</sup>. Transgressing this *lav* is comparable to *avoda zara*. One who has mercy on others, Hashem will have mercy on him, and giving *tzedaka* will not make one poor<sup>3</sup>.
- If the person asking is known to have the funds to provide for himself and is simply a fraud, one is, in fact, forbidden to give this person *tzedaka* money<sup>4</sup>. Some Poskim<sup>5</sup> add that one may not even give such a person non-*tzedaka* money as a gift, since he thereby assists and encourages the collector to deceive others.
- With an unknown collector, Halacha states<sup>6</sup> that upon request, we must provide food or the means to purchase food, clothing to cover his body or to keep himself warm.<sup>7</sup> These requests must be filled without investigation. However, if the collector asks for additional clothing to appear decent, we may first investigate.
- The difference between basic food and clothing needs and additional attire is<sup>8</sup>: A hungry or unclothed man will suffer while the investigation is carried out whereas the one lacking decent dress will not suffer as much and can afford to wait. Furthermore<sup>9</sup>, even if the hungry man actually had money to buy food, he was nevertheless suffering at the moment, and a *mitzva* was fulfilled by helping him. However the one lacking decent clothing is suffering from self-imposed embarrassment which does not count as suffering at all.
- Regarding one collecting funds that are not needed on the spot (such as tuition or wedding expenses), we may first investigate the legitimacy of the collector.
- There is a discussion<sup>10</sup> about the appropriate investigation. Simply, it would seem that each of the requests must be verified. However some suggest that as long as he is known to be in need we need not check into each of his specific requests. Others state further that as long as he is known to be an honest man we may trust him regardless of his previous wealth. Common practice is that Rabbonim or a Vaad will give the individual a letter attesting to the person's need, and no further investigation is needed.

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

1. שו"ע יו"ד רמז ס"א. וראה מה שליקט בענין זה בס' צדקה ומשפט לר"י בלוי פ"א הע' ג.
2. ראה רמ"א סי' רמט ס"ד.
3. ראה שו"ע סי' רמז סעיף ב-ג.
4. ראה ערוך השולחן סי' רנא ס"ב.
5. ספר צדקה ומשפט פ"ב הערה נז בשם הגרש"ז אוירבאך ז"ל.
6. שו"ע סי' רנא ס"י.
7. ראה בשו"ת הלכות קטנות ח"ב סכ"ה, וספר דרך אמונה על הרמב"ם מתנות עניים פ"ז ה"ו.
8. כפשט לישנא דגמ' ב"ב ט ע"א, וכ"כ בערה"ש שם ועוד.
9. ראה אור שמח ריש פט"ו מהל' סנהדרין.
10. ראה מאירי לב"ב שם, מהר"י קורקוס על הרמב"ם שם.

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# OUR HEROES

## Reb Avraham Ber Yirmiya's of Babroisk

Reb Avraham Ber Yirmiya's was a chossid of the Tzemach Tzedek, the Rebbe Maharash and primarily the Rebbe Rashab. The Friediker Rebbe spent much time with him and writes very highly of him. He was a great *maskil* in *Chassidus*, a *baki be'Shas*, and fluent in *Kabbala* and *Chakira*. He was also a great *ba'al midos tovos*. Reb Avraham Ber earned his livelihood from bookkeeping.



From a young age, Reb Avraham Ber was very inquisitive and would frequently ask his father questions about Hashem's existence. His father was worried that his inquisitive mind might bring him to doubts in *emuna r"*, so he took him to the Rebbe. He wanted the Rebbe to *bentch* him in this regard.

When they came into *yechidus*, the Tzemach Tzedek took out his handkerchief and wrapped it over his hand, and moved his hand back and forth. He asked the boy, "What do you see?" "I see a handkerchief moving from side to side," the boy answered. "And who is moving the handkerchief?" the Rebbe continued. "The Rebbe's Hand," the boy answered. "But you do not see the hand?" the Rebbe asked and continued, "Which means, that things that cannot be seen with the human eye are also true and correct..."

From then on, the questions of Avraham Ber disappeared. He grew up a great *maskil* and a chossid.

Here is an excerpt of the fascinating and moving recount of Reb Avraham Ber's impressions of his visit to Lubavitch as a child:

"...Remember well,' my father tells me, 'the *bracha* that the Rebbe gave you. *Im Yirtzeh Hashem*, when we come home you will tell your mother everything in detail.' I did not get a chance to prove to my father and show him that I remembered the Rebbe's words, for at that moment Reb Zalman Yaakov Esther-Dish'e came to my father and took him to the table to partake in the *maskhe* and cookies that were brought.

"My father handed me a cookie as well. I loudly made a *bracha* '*borei minei mezonos*', and my father and those who stood nearby answered '*amen*'. Reb Aba Dovid the Chazan and Reb Boruch Shimon the Bookbinder praised my father for bringing me to Lubavitch. "You are very wise," Abba Dovid the Chazan said to my father, "for taking your Avraham Berel to Lubavitch. In this day and age, one has to train the children in *Chassidus* from the day they stand on their feet." "In my opinion," added Reb Boruch Shimon, "the wisdom is more with *her* than with *him* (referring to my mother). She is truly wise. She brings in guests and she is a *Chassidishe* women."

(התמים)

לע"נ מרת פייגא בת ר' נפתלי ראדאל ע"ה - ד' טבת

# A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

## All *Yungerleit* are *Choshuv*...

On Monday, the 6<sup>th</sup> of Adar, 5749, the present Gerrer Rebbe *shlit" a*, then known as Reb Ya'akov the son of the Lev Simcha of Gur, visited the Rebbe.

The Rebbe accorded him unique honor. When he entered the room, the Rebbe personally pulled out a chair for him, and when he stood to leave, the Rebbe accompanied him until the door of 770, waiting there until his car was out of sight.

During his visit, Reb Ya'akov introduced Mr. Mordechai Deitch, a benefactor of the Gerrer *mosdos* in *Eretz Yisroel*. Mr. Deitch told the Rebbe about the Gerrer Kollel in Arad.

The Rebbe responded that the Lubavitcher Rov of Arad, Reb Bentzion Lipsker, had written him regarding the Kollel.

Mr. Deitch continued, "In the Kollel we have more than a hundred *choshuve* (respected) *yungerleit*."

The Rebbe immediately corrected him, "All *yungerleit* are *choshuv*; these are more *choshuv*..."

ליכות השליח שלום דובער בן לובה