

The Weekly *Farbrenge*



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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"ו ועיי' 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 אריא)

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"יא)

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. פרקי 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 ט' שם"א)

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

(מורה נבוכים ח"ג, מ. תקיז)

Reb 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 Reb Meir learned the above concept, of how the *zechus* of a son saves his father, specifically from this *mitzva*.

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



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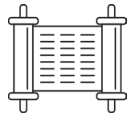
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IS HE JEWISH?

If someone walks into shul and tells me he is Jewish, may I count him for the minyan?

The Gemara states that all families have a chazaka of kosher lineage, and if someone claims that he's Jewish and fit to marry into the Jewish nation (i.e., not a mamzer or the like), he is trusted. Shulchan Aruch records this as halacha.

Rishonim explain that this chazaka is twofold: a known Jew is believed that his lineage is unblemished, and a stranger is believed that he's Jewish, though we have no prior knowledge of his background. However, someone who we know not to be Jewish is not believed to say that he converted without bringing sufficient proof.

Three reasons serve as grounds to believe one who says he is Jewish:

- 1. Most of those appearing before us and claiming to be Jewish are in fact Jewish.
2. One who appears and acts as a Jew is assumed to be Jewish.
3. A person doesn't lie about something that will become apparent later.

Although one could argue that the chazaka was only during the time of the Beis Hamikdash when the majority of the population in Eretz Yisroel was Jewish, most Rishonim understand it to apply even in times and locations where most are not Jewish. While the Rambam says that proof is necessary nowadays, the Bach suggests that this is specifically when the person admits that he was born gentile but converted.

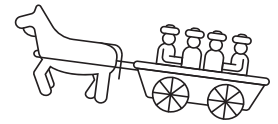
In contemporary times, we cannot assume that the majority of those claiming to be Jewish are indeed Jews since there are many benefits to being Jewish, such as marriage and Israeli citizenship. Additionally, the person may believe so because their father is Jewish, or they underwent non-kosher conversion. Therefore a proper verification must be done before marrying them.

Conversely, to be counted as part of a minyan and receive an aliya, walking into shul and stating that he is Jewish is sufficient, unless there is reason to suspect that he is lying. Yet, when possible, one should ask some questions to ascertain that he is not mistaken.

- 1. ראה שו"ע אבה"ע סי' ב' ס"ב.
2. ראה ריטב"א פסחים דף ג' ע"ב, תנו"ך.
3. שו"ת הרשב"א ח"ב סי' ט"ו (אפילו אמר נתגיירתי נאמן במיגוי).
4. נמוק"י שם.
5. ראה רשב"א כתובות כ"ד ע"א.

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

Our Heroes



REB YEHOSHUA LEIN

Reb Yehoshua Lein was born in Nevel around the year 5641 (1881). At bar mitzvah age he was sent by his father Reb Chaim Dovid to learn under his great-uncle, the Radatz, in Tchernigov. After some years he continued his learning in Lubavitch and was among the yosheim (full-time learners in Lubavitch before the opening of Tomchei Temimim). He received guidance from the elder chassidim there - Reb Yerachmiel Binyominson, Reb Shlomo Zalman Havlin, and also from the Rebbe Rashab himself. In 5666 (1906), he headed the yeshiva in Dokshitz. After a few years, as per the Rebbe Rashab's directive, he accepted the position of rov first in Ovstravna, near Vitebsk, and later in Beshenkovich. After the revolution he was forced to flee and settled in Rudnia near Lubavitch, where he served as a shochet. On Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan 5702 (1941) he was killed by the Nazis al kidush Hashem.

After his marriage, Reb Yehoshua came to Lubavitch and requested a daily seder

from the Rebbe Rashab. The Rebbe Rashab instructed him to get up in the morning no later than seven o'clock and to begin davening around nine-ten o'clock. He also gave him specific shiurim to learn every day. Reb Yehoshua asked if he must finish all the shiurim immediately after davening. The Rebbe Rashab explained that quite the contrary is more desirable, since then the whole day he would carry in his mind the "ol" (burden) of finishing the shiurim.

(תשורה אבני חן ע' 27)

Reb Yochanan Gordon related:

When I came to Lubavitch for Rosh Hashana 5669 (1909), Reb Yehousha was also there, and during Aseres Yemei Teshuvah he farbrenge. I remember that he was saying that it's a chutzpah for one to prepare himself and go lie down in bed deliberately, saying "Now I can relax." To fall asleep is one thing, but to prepare oneself is a chutzpah.

(תשורה גאלדמאן י' אלול תשנ"ח ע' 47)

A Moment with The Rebbe



YOU AND I TOGETHER

As a bochur in 770 in the yeshiva's early years, Reb Elya Gross merited to receive unique care and words of encouragement from the Rebbe. This relationship continued for the years that followed.

After serving as an administrator of a mosad for some time, Reb Elya undertook the role of fundraiser for one of the Rebbe's endeavors.

Finding the change challenging, Reb Elya went in to the Rebbe and shared his frustrations.

"Imagine," the Rebbe responded, "that you are on Eastern Parkway. Now, you are not outside on the parkway, but inside 770. And within 770 itself you are on the second floor.

"Now imagine," the Rebbe continued, "that you are in the [Friediker] Rebbe's room. You and I together; I am with you and you are with me. And together we are fulfilling the Rebbe's wishes..."

(Kfar Chabad Issue 547)

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