

ליקוטי ופסקי הלכות "חוקי חיים"

ותלמוד
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לעשות רצונך
בלבב שלם



שע"י "חדר הוראה" שכונת מנחת יצחק פעיה"ק ירושלים תובב"א - בראשות הרב חיים אהרן בלייער שליט"א

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Kibud Av Vo'eim |

Acharei-Kedoshim 5783

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Chiyuv to Honor and Fear Parents

Kibbud Av Vo'eim

- One must be very careful about honoring and fearing his parents (שוי"ע יו"ד סי' ר"מ ס"א). The chiyuv to honor them is derived from the posuk "כבד את אביך ואת אמך" (שמות כ, י"ב); the chiyuv to fear them, from the posuk "איש אמו ואביו תיראו" (ויקרא י"ט, ג'). The issur to degrade them is derived from the posuk "ארור מקלה אביו ואמו" (דברים כ"ז, ט"ז) (סי' רמ"א ס"ו) in Shulchon Oruch.

Reason for the Mitzvah

- The reason for the mitzvah of kibud av vo'eim is to help a person appreciate and act kindly toward his benefactors. He should contemplate that his parents are the cause of his existence and invested much effort in raising him and therefore deserve all the respect and help he can give. When one acquires this trait, he will go further and appreciate Hashem's goodness and think about how seriously he should take his avodas Hashem (לי"ג חינוך מצוה).

This Mitzvah Needs Reinforcement

- This mitzvah needs much reinforcement. In the words of the Mechaber, "One must be very careful about honoring his parents" as, unfortunately, many people are remiss due to unawareness of the importance and halochos of this holy mitzvah. The world has come to the point that parents have to honor and fear their children (יערות דבש ח"ב דרוש ב' וי"ב). Mechanchim stress that today's chinuch must be very pleasant, gentle, and understanding of our children's needs in a loving and sensitive way. Occasionally, though, this can lead to both parents and children forgetting that the mitzvah of kibud av vo'eim still exists and that children must appreciate and honor their parents and may certainly not degrade or act with chutzpah toward them.

Fear of Parents

Not Sitting in Their Place

- One may not stand or sit in a spot which is always designated for his father or mother [if she has a place], whether at home, by the table or in shul (שוי"ע סי' ר"מ ס"ב, ערוה"ש ס"ט). This is derived from moro av vo'eim and applies even in their absence (בגוש).
- If a father tells his son to sit in his place, the son may since the father has the ability to be mochel on his kovod (שם ס"י"ג). Although not sitting in his place is out of fear, not kovod (ברכי יוסף אות י"ג), most poskim hold that mechiloh works for this matter (חינוך מצוה). (רי"ב, שו"ת תשובה מאהבה סי' ש"ע ועוד).
- Place in shul.** One may not sit in his father's set place in shul if there is somewhere else to sit. If the shul is crowded and the only open seat is his father's, he can assume that his father would want him to daven seated and properly and is mochel (ערוה"ש ס"ט).
- If circumstances compel a son to be in his father's set place, e.g., he has to use his father's computer, run the cash register in his father's store, or drive his father's car, he may sit and it is not considered undermining his father's honor.
- Designated chair.** If one's father has his own chair, e.g., one with armrests or an executive chair, he may not sit in it even in a spot not designated for his father (שו"ת שבט הליי ח"ה סי' קס"ח, שו"ת חיי הליי ח"ד סי' ע"ז אות י"א).
- Deceased.** One may sit in his late father's seat both at home and in shul (שו"ת הרא"ש כלל ה' סי' ג', שו"ת הרדב"ז ח"ב סי' תרכ"ח).

Not Contradicting Their Words

- If a father says something, be it in casual conversation, hashkofos or divrei Torah, and his son thinks – or even knows – otherwise, he may not state that he thinks or knows otherwise; he should simply remain quiet (שוי"ע סי' ר"מ ס"ב). Some say he may not even voice his

opinion in his father's absence (ש"ך סק"ב); most poskim hold that it is only ossur in his presence (ערוה"ש סק"ב). Writing an opinion where one's father will not see it is considered like speaking in his absence (שדה חמד מערכת ו' דוף כלל ל"א). This all applies to one's mother as well.

- However, if his father asked his opinion, it is as if he was mochel and the son may express his opinion respectfully (ערוה"ש סק"ג).
- In learning.** A son learning with his father may engage in assertions, discussions, and deliberations, even suggesting differently than his father since that is the way of Torah learning (פתח"ת סי' ר"מ סק"א בשם). (עצמות יוסף). He must take care to do so respectfully and not argue simply to oppose his father.
- If one's parents instruct him to do something for them, there is no greater contradiction than to refuse with chutzpah or ignore them.
- Not to make difficult requests.** One may not cause his son to violate kibud av vo'eim by excessively burdening him or being demanding in his honor; instead, he should be mochel and overlook things (שוי"ע סי' ר"מ ס"ט). Therefore, a parent should not ask his son to do something he knows the son will have a very difficult time with, as the parent may violate "lifnei iveir" by causing the son's transgression (שו"ת יד מלאכי סי' שס"ז). This requires much discretion and prudence.

Not Confirming Their Words

- If one's father has a disagreement with someone else, he may not say in front of his father that he thinks his father is right (שוי"ע שם) since it appears that he thinks his opinion will confirm and uphold his father's. When his father is not present, however, it is an honor to his father for him to tell others that he was right.

Not Calling Them by Name

- It is disrespectful for one to call his parents by name and one may not even do so in their absence or after their passing (שוי"ע שם ס"ב). When one quotes his father's divrei Torah, he should refer to him as 'ovi mori'; for general matters, he may simply say 'ovi' (ערוה"ש ס"ו).
- Title.** One may use his Rov's first name if he adds a title, i.e., 'Rabbi Ploni' (רמ"א סי' רמ"ב ס"ו). Some say this only applies to a Rov, in order to clarify which Rov he is referring to (שו"ת עמק שאהל י"ד סי'). (פתח"ת סי' ר"מ סק"ב) many poskim apply this to a father as well (ס"ז).
- When one is asked whose son he is or for his name for an aliyyah, he may reply that he is the son of 'Rebbi Ploni' (פתח"ת סי' ר"מ סק"ב).

Someone with the Same Name as One's Parent

- Uncommon name.** If one's father has an uncommon name, e.g., Shmaryahu, and his friend, Shmaryahu, is in his father's vicinity, all agree that he may not call his friend by name since his father or those nearby will think he is calling his father by name which is disrespectful (שוי"ע שם).
- In his father's presence.** Even if his father has a common name, e.g., Shimon, some poskim say he may not call his friend, Shimon, by name in front of his father (רמ"א, ט"ז סק"ה); others say he may, and this issur only applies to an uncommon name in his father's presence (דרישה סק"ד, ש"ך סק"ג).
- In his father's absence,** some say he may not call his friend who shares an uncommon name with his father by name (רמ"א וט"ז); others say he may (דרישה וש"ך שם).
- Street that shares uncommon name with his father.** My rebbi, Rabbi Shamai Kehos Hakohen Gross has a son who lives on Shamai Street in Ashdod. He asked his father if he may say he lives on Shamai Street, as Shamai is an uncommon name. He answered that if he says he lives on Shamai Street or 2 Shamai, it is clear he is referring to the street name, not his father, and he may do so even in his presence (מ"ר בעל שבט הקהתי).

Kibud Av Vo'eim

Standing for One's Father and Mother

23. One must stand up for his father (שו"ע סי ר"מ ס"ז) and mother (ח"א (כלל ס"ז ס"ז ועוד) to his full height. Rising slightly does not suffice (ח"א שם, ערוה"ש סכ"ד).
24. For some reason, many are not careful about this. Perhaps since people do not do so, it is assumed that parents are mochel on their kovod in this matter (הגרי"ח קנייבסקי). Still, one should take care not to disregard this halochah; he should make a show of respect by shifting as if he wants to stand. This needs much reinforcement; one should not be afraid to change his conduct to follow clearcut halochos.
25. **Chinuch.** One should train his children to keep this halochah, either by standing for his own parents in front of his children or by the father urging his children to stand for their mother and vice versa.
26. **Multiple times a day.** Strictly speaking, one must stand every time his father or mother enters the house (רמב"ם סקל"ז, ברכ"י שם) (ספק"א בדעת השו"ע [not when they go from room to room within the house (ערוה"ש סכ"ד)]. Some are meikel and hold that in the house, one must only stand for each parent once in the morning and once in the evening (רמב"ם הל' תלית פ"ו ה"ח). In front of onlookers, however, one must always stand for a parent since they do not know that he already stood for them (רמ"א סי רמ"ב ס"ז).

What is Considered Kovod?

27. Kovod includes giving food and drink, clothing and covering, escorting in and out, and giving pleasantly (שו"ע סי ר"מ ס"ד). These are just examples; kovod includes all sorts of things that a parent needs, and requests or hints to his son to do (פסקים ותשובות סי ר"מ אות י"ג).
28. **Food and drink.** This includes preparing food when they need it, buying food for them when they ask or if they are unable to buy it themselves (ר"ן נדרים ל"ח ע"ב), and literally feeding them if they are unable to eat independently, lo oleinu.
29. **Clothing and covering.** I.e., if one's parents cannot dress themselves, he must assist them in a dignified manner.
30. **Escorting in and out.** I.e., if they need assistance leaving or entering their house, there is a mitzvah to help them, e.g., taking one's father to shul and back home.

Something Harmful

31. If one's father requests of his son to give him something that a doctor said will certainly harm his health, even if it is not life-threatening, he may not listen since not giving it to him is to his benefit (לקט יוסר ח"ב עמ' ל"ז, ערוה"ש סמ"א). However, when requested to bring something a doctor did not explicitly prohibit, the son must do so, even if it is something that is generally harmful to one's health, e.g., a cigarette (הגר"ש"א, מבקשי תורה כ' עמ' קנ"א).

Kibud Av Vo'eim in Thought

32. Some say that kibud av vo'eim includes honoring one's parents in his thoughts, i.e., considering them good, respectable people (חידושי חרדים) (מ"ע פ"א אות ל"ה, ח"א כלל ס"ו ס"ג). Therefore, one should strive to find specific traits and areas in which his parents excel, and look up to them, leading him to respect them in his thoughts (הגר"ח שמואלביץ) (שיחות מוסר תשל"ב מאמר כ"ט).
33. **Loshon horo.** One may certainly not speak ill of his parents, chas veshalom. If children have a complaint about their parents and they discuss it amongst themselves, they must be extremely careful not to violate the halochos of loshon horo or speak derogatorily, which would be classified as mekaleil oviv ve'im (ח"ח בפתחה עשין אות י).

Kibud Av Expenses

34. In a case where kibud av vo'eim requires spending money and the father is financially independent, the father covers the expenses (שו"ע סי ר"מ ס"ה). Nevertheless, if the father has money, yet the son spends his own money for kibud av despite not being chayov, he fulfills the mitzvah behidur (שו"ת רע"א קמא סי ט"ח).
35. If the father cannot support himself and does not have assets or a pension, the son must support his father if he has the money to do so (שו"ע שם) in accordance with the halochos of tzedokoh (רמ"א שם).

Father's Request Which Pertains to His Son

36. Many poskim discuss situations in which a father requests something of his son for the son's benefit, not his own. Must the son obey his father? We will give several examples examined by the poskim, but one should always ask a shailoh, as there are many factors and not all cases can be compared to others.
37. **Life altering Unpleasant request.** If a parent instructs his son about his way of life and obeying will cause the son anguish, e.g., to forgo a shidduch that the son wanted (מר"ר בשו"ת קנה בשם) (רמ"א סי ר"מ סכ"ה),

to buy a certain house, to take a certain job or position, or to live in a certain area – which will be felt in the son's everyday life – the poskim's consensus is that the son is not chayov to obey since it relates to him, not his father. Also, these are considered financial losses to the son and we pasken (above, 34) that kibud av does not come at the son's monetary expense (מהר"ק שורש קס"ז), (חזו"א סי קמ"ט סק"ח, תשוה"נ ח"ג סי ער"ה).

38. **Difficult request.** Some requests affect the son and are very difficult for him, e.g., his parents requested him to stop smoking [viewed strictly from a kibud av vo'eim perspective without getting into the issur of "ונשמרתם מאד"], not to eat pizza and chips as part of a diet, not to drink coffee (שו"ת שבט הלוי ח"י סי קנ"ז), not to go into the cold without a coat and scarf, or the like. When he is in front of his parents, or they will find out, he must listen to them (שו"ת חו"י סי שו"ת יד אליהו); some say this is due to kibud (רי"ד, חזו"א סי קמ"ט סק"ח); others say due to moro (ח"א סי מ' שו"ת מנחת אלעזר ח"ב סי ט"ג).
39. **In their absence.** If he is not in front of his parents and they will not find out he disobeyed them, as well as after their passing, many poskim hold that he must still fulfill their wishes (שו"ת מהרש"ם ח"ב סי שו"ת מנחת אלעזר שם ועוד); some, however, hold that since the request pertains to the son and not the parents, if it is difficult for him, he may be meikel (יושר הורי סי ח').
40. In these areas, the halochah that parents should not request of their children things that will be difficult to obey so as not to cause their violation (above, 14) certainly applies.

Speaking in the Second Person

41. Although it is considered respectful to speak to someone esteemed in the third person ["How is the Rov feeling?"] or in Loshon Hakodesh, in the plural form ["איך אתם מרגישים?"], it is the manner of people to speak to their parents in the second person ["How are you feeling?"]; one need not say "How is Abba feeling?" or the like, since speaking in the second person shows the loving, close connection between a father and son. We similarly speak to our Father during Shmoneh Esrei: "Atoch kodosh", "Atoch chonein". Thus, this is how one should speak and it does not show disrespect (חת"ס פ' תולדות עה"פ י"קום נא אב"י, ערוה"ש סי רמ"ב סל"ח).

Father on the Right Side

42. When a son walks with his father, he should walk to the left of his father so that his father is on the right (יומא ל"ז). When two brothers are walking with their father, the older brother should be on the right, the younger brother on the left, and the father in the middle (כמבואר לגבי רבו, שו"ע סי רמ"ב ס"ז).

Parents-in-Law

Kibud

43. One must honor his father-in-law (שו"ע סי ר"מ סכ"ד) and mother-in-law (ט"ז סקכ"ב) in the same way he honors elders and esteemed people (שו"ת סקכ"ב). Even if one does not have the greatest relationship with them, he must still honor them (ערוה"ש סמ"ד); all the more so if he derives benefit from them.
44. **Sandek.** Still, kibud av precedes honoring a father-in-law. Thus, due to kibud av, one should honor his father to be a sandek before his father-in-law (שבט הקהתי ח"ד סי רל"ד).

Married Woman's Chiyuv Toward Her Parents

45. A married woman must also honor her parents. However, she is bound to her husband and therefore potur from kibud av vo'eim while married (שו"ע סי ר"מ ס"ז). However, if her husband is not opposed, she has the same chiyuv as a man (שו"ת סק"יט). Unless her husband tells her he is opposed, we assume that he is not and she should attend to her father (ח"א כלל ס"ז ס"ז, קצשו"ע סי קמ"ג ס"ג).
46. A husband's dissent is only valid if he needs or wants his wife to be with him or do something for him. If his dissent stems from anger at her parents, not because he needs her at that moment, it does not affect her chiyuv to her parents (יושר הורי סי כ"א אות ה').
47. **In her parents' house.** If a woman is in her parents' house and her husband is not around, she is fully chayov in their honor since her chiyuvim toward her husband do not clash then (תשו"רמ"ע) (מפאנו סי פ"ט).
48. If a woman's father eats at her house, she is chayov to serve her husband before her father. However, it is proper for her husband to be mochel and let her serve her father first.

גליון זה נתרם לע"פ א"מ
שלמה ב"ר
אריה ליב ע"ה
נפטר י' אייר תשנ"א
תנצב"ה

גליון זה נתרם לז"מ הא"י צדיק
ופועל ישועות
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