

Torah Wellsprings

Collected thoughts
from
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Kibud Av v'Em



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Torah Wellsprings

Kibud Av v'Em

Reb Chaim Palagi (Nefesh Kol Chai, Kibud) writes, "His father and mother are better than a kameia to protect him." People wear kameias, good mazal amulets, for protection, but a far better protection for health, success, and longevity is practicing kibud av v'em.

The Chazon Ish zt'l would tell the yeshiva bachurim, "Just as one must study the halachos of a yom tov thirty days before the yom tov, so too must one review hilchos kibud av v'em thirty days before returning home."

And when a bachur lives at home with his parents, he certainly must constantly review the halachos of kibud av v'em. The Chazon Ish compares this to hilchos chag b'chag, the obligation to study the halachos of yom tov on yom tov itself. On Pesach, one should learn hilchos Pesach, and on Succos, one should study hilchos Succos. So, when a child lives at home, the halachos are always applicable, and thus should always review these halachos.

The Greatness of the Mitzvah

It states in the Aseres HaDibros (*Shemos* 20:12) כְּבֹד אֶת אָבִיךָ וְאֶת אִמְךָ, "Honor your

father and your mother." The Midrash (*Devarim Rabba* 6) calls this mitzvah חֲמֹרָה שֶׁבַח מִצְוֹת, the most stringent of stringent mitzvos.¹ The

1. Pele Yoetz (*Kibud Av v'Em*) writes, "Precious Jewish children, be cautious to give honor to Hashem by honoring your father and your mother. Do everything they request from you without turning to the right or the left. I have already mentioned that there are mitzvos that have mazal. How much money people spend to have the honor of *pesichah*, to open the aron kodesh, or to be a sandek, and the like, although these are neither mitzvos *d'oraysa* nor *d'Rabanan*. They are *chibuv* mitzvah, an expression of love to the mitzvos. *Ashreihem Yisrael!* However, every time they obey their father or mother, they are doing a great mitzvah *d'oraysa!* Yet, the fools transgress and are punished."

Kibud av v'em is from the greatest mitzvos, yet people don't appreciate it. I've heard parents complain that after their children got married, they don't visit anymore. They become busy with life, and they hardly see their parents. But this isn't an excuse, because we have the telephone in our generation. You can be far away, on the other side of the world, and you can speak to your parents. So why shouldn't a son or daughter set a time each day to call their parents? You can tell them what is happening to you and your family. With this simple deed, you perform a mitzvah from the Torah of *kibud av v'em*, which is from the greatest mitzvos.

Reb Shlomo Kluger *zt'l* wrote to his son, Reb Avraham Shmuel Binyamin *z'l*, "My dear son, why isn't *yiras shamayim* upon you? When you write a letter to me (with *chiddushei Torah*), send regards to your mother, and thereby you will perform the mitzvah of *kibud em*. From now on, send a greeting to your mother..."

A father called up a *rosh yeshiva* to complain that although his son

Gemara (*Kiddushin* 30b) writes, "Honoring parents is equivalent to honoring Hashem." The Gemara adds, "When one honors his father and mother, Hakadosh Baruch Hu says I consider it like I dwelled among them, and it is like they honored Me." The Yerushalmi

(beginning of *Peah*) states, "Honoring parents is a great mitzvah. Hakadosh Baruch Hu prefers it more than when He is honored." Tana d'Bei Eliyahu (27) says, "Hakadosh Baruch Hu doesn't ask for anything other than that one should honor his father and mother."²

is learning well in yeshiva and is growing in *yiras Shamayim*, at home, he doesn't honor his parents. "Perhaps you can speak to him and set things straight."

The next day, the *rosh yeshiva* asked the *bachur* to learn with him every Friday morning.

"That would be a great honor," the *bachur* replied. "What does the *rosh yeshiva* want to learn?"

"*Hilchos kibud av va'em.*"

"*Hilchos kibud av ve'em?*" the *bachur* asked. "Why? I think we should study something that is *l'maaseh*, something that is relevant to day-to-day life." He didn't realize just how *l'maaseh* and essential *hilchos kibud av v'em* is.

2. In 1948/תש"ח, a *bachur* came to Eretz Yisrael two years before his parents arrived. His parents needed help finding an apartment and appropriate *parnassah*. Their son knew the language and understood how things operated in Eretz Yisrael so that he could help his parents. The *bachur* asked his Rebbe, Reb Eizik Sher *zt'l*, whether he should help his parents settle in or whether he should continue learning in yeshiva, and his parents will somehow manage on their own.

Reb Eizik Sher said that he doesn't know the answer to this question because the Shulchan Aruch HaRav says that when

someone has the potential to succeed immensely in Torah, he shouldn't stop studying, not even to perform mitzvos that no one else can do. And this bachur had the potential to become great in Torah.

Reb Eizik advised the *bachur* to ask the Chazon Ish *zt'l*.

The Chazon Ish replied, "It is natural that a child should do this for his parents" (מעשה איש p.184).

Reb Yaakov Halprin *zt'l* noticed a *talmid chacham* in Eretz Yisrael in low spirits, and he asked him what was worrying him. The *talmid chacham* replied that his parents had just arrived from Lodz, and now he must support them. "Until now, I barely earned enough money to support my family. How will I have money to support my parents, too?"

Reb Yaakov Halprin replied, "I will support your parents [he was wealthy and able to do so], but on the condition that I will earn the reward for the mitzvah."

The *talmid chacham* didn't want to lose the reward for the mitzvah. "I need to think it over," he replied.

He asked the Chazon Ish *zt'l*, and the Chazon Ish told him, "What's the question? Of course, you must accept Reb Yaakov's offer, so your parents will have all their needs. And if you lose the reward for the mitzvah, so be it. One must be prepared to jump into Gehinom to honor his parents."

And then the Chazon Ish concluded, "Hakadosh Baruch Hu has enough reward to give both to you and also to Reb Yaakov. You won't lose your reward if Reb Yaakov gives money to your parents..." (מעשי איש p.181).

A bachur studying in the Belzer yeshiva in Yerushalayim wanted to be with the Belzer Rav for the *yamim nora'im*- Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. The father of this bachur had a beis medresh in Tel Aviv, and as it was a small minyan, he requested that his son daven with him in his shul in Tel Aviv. The son explained to his father that he wanted to remain in Yerushalayim with the Belzer Rav. "I can't even consider giving that up."

During Aseres Yemei Teshuvah, the father's brother came to the Belzer Rav to get a brachah for the new year. During their conversation, he mentioned that his brother has a beis medresh in Tel Aviv. The Belzer Rav asked to hear it again, "Your brother has a beis medresh in Tel Aviv?"

"Yes, he does."

The Belzer Rav immediately asked his meshamesh to call that bachur. The Belzer Rav said, "Your father has a beis medresh in Tel Aviv, and you were here for Rosh Hashanah? How could you do that? On the holy day (Yom Kippur), make sure to be with your father."

The day after Yom Kippur, the bachur came to the Belzer Rav, who asked him, "Were you with your father for Yom Kippur?"

The bachur answered affirmatively, and the Belzer Rav was very pleased. "You acted correctly. For one thing, you did *kibud av v'em*, and secondly, it is always good to give chizuk to a Yid (*Beiso Naavah Kodesh*).

I had a similar story. One year, on Erev Rosh Hashanah, I asked a bachur why he seemed sad. He explained that he wants to be with his Rebbe for Rosh Hashanah, but his father wants him to help him with his minyan in Tel Aviv. I told the bachur, "I'm seeking merits for the day of judgment because I am so poor in my deeds. I'm certain that you will have great merits on Rosh Hashanah because each minute of the day, you will be doing *kibud av v'em*. So, I request that you daven for me on Rosh Hashanah. I'm certain that your tefillos will be answered because of the great mitzvah you are performing."

The bachur understood that he should listen to his father and that this would be most precious in heaven.

Many people know that they must honor their father and mother, but they think that other mitzvos come first.

Once, Reb Shlomo Zalman saw an elderly man shlepping heavy benches on Shabbos for a kiddush while his children were standing outside, talking with their taleisim on their shoulders. Reb Shlomo

One can reach very high kibud av v'em.³ Tana d'Bei
levels through performing Eliyahu (Raba 26) explains that

Zalman asked the children why they weren't helping their aging father. They replied that they are machmir not to carry on Shabbos, as they don't rely on the eiruv. Reb Shlomo Zalman couldn't believe what he heard, and it upset him immensely. For the next few days, he said to whoever came to him, "How could it be that for a chumrah, these children allow their father to work so hard?"

Some people are very stringent with Pesach; they have hundreds of chumros but are lax with *kibud av v'em*.

It can be compared to a father that tells his children that he is thirsty and asks for a cup of water. The children say to one another, "It isn't every day that we have a mitzvah like this. We are so fortunate to do this mitzvah. We should conduct an auction to determine which brother will do it. I offer ten gold coins for the right to bring water to our father."

The second brother said, "I offer twenty gold coins," and they were auctioning off the zechus as if it were an aliyah.

A third brother said, "Why are you lenient with this great mitzvah? I offer fifty gold coins. Fifty gold coins going once, going twice, three times, sold. And now that I earned the merit, I want to offer the merit to our father, that he should pour himself a cup of water..."

This is how foolish it is when one seeks other mitzvos, instead of the ultimate mitzvah of doing *kibud av v'em*.

3. The first Rashi in *Chumash* states, "Reb Yitzchak asked: The Torah didn't have to begin with *Bereishis*, rather with החדש הזה לכם...."

The Taz (*Divrei David*) writes that he saw in a very old sefer that this question that Rashi writes in the name of Reb Yitzchak isn't found in any Midrash or any other Chazal. Rather, Rashi wanted to begin his commentary by honoring his father, Reb Yitzchak. His

father wasn't a scholar, so he asked his father to ask him a question and his father asked "Why does the Torah begin with *Bereishis*?" and Rashi put the question at the beginning of his commentary.

The Taz maintains that Rashi's father was a scholar because Rashi writes towards the end of *Avodah Zarah*, a commentary that he heard from his father.

Nevertheless, we see from this story that the introduction to Torah is honoring parents.

A difficult question regarding an *agunah* came to the Divrei Chaim of Sanz, zt'l, and being that his son, the Divrei Yechezkel of Shinov zt'l was then in Sanz, the Divrei Chaim asked his son to join him in the difficult task, and great responsibility, to try to find a *heter* for the *agunah*. The Divrei Yechezkel said to his gabbai, "Bring me a *Shulchan Aruch*."

The gabbai brought him a *Shulchan Aruch, Even HaEzer*, where the halachos of *agunah* are discussed.

The Shinover Rav said, "I didn't want an *Even HaEzer*. I wanted *Yorah Deiah*, where the halachos of *kibud av v' em* are discussed. My father wants to discuss the halachos of *agunah* with me, and we might disagree on a point here and there, and I have to discuss these matters according to halachah, and I don't want to transgress *kibud av v'em*."

The Damesek Eliezer of Viznitz zt'l was being *maavir sidra*. He was almost finished when his father, the Ahavas Yisrael of Viznitz, asked him a question. The Damesek Eliezer answered the question and then went back to the beginning of the parashah to be *maavir sedra* again because his custom was that he didn't speak while being *maavir sedra*.

The chasidim asked him, "You could have shown your father that you have just a couple of *pesukim* to finish."

The Damasek replied, "The mitzvah of *kibud av v'em* is from the Torah, and it is from the most stringent mitzvos. Therefore, I preferred to be *maavir sedra* again than to have my father wait."

My father zt'l was very devoted to the mitzvah of *kibud av v'em*.

One year, he was taking care of his father, Rebbe Moshe Mordechai, the entire erev Yom Kippur, and he didn't even have time to go to the mikvah (which all Yidden do on erev Yom Kippur, see *Shulchan Aruch*, 606). When it was time for Kol Nidrei, Rebbe Moshe told him, "I was *tovel* for you."

On the day of my brother's chasunah, Rebbe Moshe Mordechai told my father to get a brachah from the Beis Yisrael of Ger zt'l. My father went, but the Rebbe was sleeping. My father waited a very long time. His son's chasunah was scheduled to begin very soon. The mechutan, the Toldos Aharon Rebbe zt'l, was already in the hall, and people told my father it was time to go. He replied, "My father told me to be here, and I won't leave until he tells me to."

Soon afterwards, the Gerrer Rebbe's gabbai (Reb Bunim Kornik) came in and said, "The Rebbe (the Beis Yisrael) asked me to see whether someone is waiting to speak with him."

Reb Shlomo Zalman zt'l was one of the rabbanim of Pressburg. For years, his dream and hope was to travel to Eretz Yisrael, even for a short visit, but he couldn't afford the long trip. One year, on Purim, a wealthy person gave him a ticket to travel to Eretz Yisrael. His dream had come true. He immediately began preparations, and when the day of his departure came closer, he traveled to his parents (who lived in another city) to say goodbye.

His mother told him, "In two and a half months, when you reach Eretz Yisrael, send me a telegram so I will know that you arrived safe and sound, and then I can sleep calmly and peacefully."

Reb Shlomo Zalman understood that his mother was worried about the trip and that she won't sleep well, so he immediately changed his mind.

"I'm not going to Eretz Yisrael," he told them. "I will stay here."

His mother tried to convince him that he should go. "Just contact me when you arrive," but he had made his decision. He wouldn't go to Eretz Yisrael if this caused his mother distress until he arrived.

Reb Chaim Kanievsky zt'l taught his children that they should

the mitzvah of *kibud av v'em* is written in the Aseres HaDibros next to the mitzvah of honoring Shabbos "to tell us that when one honors his parents, he won't ever be mechalel Shabbos or sin in any other way. And if he sins, he will be forgiven.

When Yaakov came to Mitzrayim, it states (*Bereishis* 46:29), ויעל לקראת ישראל אביו

"[Yosef] went up to greet his father, Yisrael." Tosfos says that the word ויעל teaches us that he had an elevation; he reached a higher level because he was going to honor his father.

I heard from Reb Shmuel Wosner zt'l that Shlomo HaMelech became king because he honored his father immensely (see *Malachim* 1, ch.2).⁴

never say שבע. Even when they were referring to seven o'clock, or as a number, they shouldn't say שבע because the name of their righteous mother was בת שבע. (He didn't say this as a halachah, rather as an added caution in *hilchos kibud av v'em*.)

An interesting *shaalah* came to Reb Chaim Kanievsky zt'l: There was a father who led a cheder, and it was a very good cheder. With complete agreement and encouragement from the father, his son also opened a cheder, and it was far more successful than the father's. Several parents took their children out of the father's cheder and enrolled them in the son's cheder, which was causing distress to the father. Reb Chaim ruled that the son must refuse to accept the children, and if he can't stand up to the pressures that the parents place on him, he should close the cheder and go back to learn in Kollel.

4. The Beis Aharon zt'l said that he reached all his levels in the merit of *kibud av v'em*.

The Chazon Ish zt'l said, "Know that every madreigah that I attained, and any good middah that is in me, it is all in the merit of *kibud av v'em*" (*Maaseh Ish* vol.4 p.198).

The Meshech Chachmah writes that the Beis HaMikdosh was built on Binyamin's portion because Binyamin was the only brother that didn't partake in the selling of Yosef, so he was the only brother that didn't cause his father distress. Therefore, he merited that the Beis HaMikdash was built on his portion.

He adds a hint to this from the Yerushalmi (*Peah* 1:5) that says that the יִשְׁפָּה stone was once missing from the *choshen* (this stone represents the tribe of Binyamin) and they bought the stone from Dama ben Nesina, a non-Jew who excelled in the mitzvah of *kibud av v'em*. This teaches us that only someone who is cautious with *kibud av v'em* can complete the Beis

Reb Moshe Turk davened every morning with the Chazon Ish *zt'l*, and considered it a *zechus* to receive the Chazon Ish's daily "good morning." After *shacharis*, Reb Moshe Turk would go off to a cheder in Tel Aviv, where he taught. Once, he brought his class to Bnei Brak, so they could also daven *shacharis* with the Chazon Ish. After *shacharis*, one of the students wanted to ask a question from his rebbe, Reb Moshe Turk, but Reb Moshe stopped him. He said, "In the presence of the Chazon Ish, it is *derech erez* to remain silent."

The class filed by the Chazon Ish and received his *brachos*. When the child who had a question passed the Chazon Ish, the Chazon Ish asked him to tell him what he wanted to ask. The child looked up at Reb Moshe Turk, wondering whether it was *derech erez* to speak, and Reb Moshe Turk replied, "If the Chazon Ish asks, you may reply."

The student asked a question that only a child could ask. He said, "How did the Chazon Ish become the Chazon Ish?"

The Chazon Ish replied, "It was because I never wasted a moment of my time, and I was always cautious with the mitzvah of *kibud av ve'em*" (*Maaseh Ish* vol.4, p.198).

HaMikdash, where the Shechinah resides.

(Succah 45:) Reb Shimon bar Yochai said that he could exonerate the entire world from judgment through his merits. If he included his son, Reb Eliezer's merits, he could redeem the world from judgment and punishment from the day the world was created until that day. And if he added the merits of the king יותם בן עוזיהו, he could redeem the world from judgment and punishment from the day the world was created until the end of time.

What was unique about יותם בן עוזיהו? Rashi writes, "He was a tzaddik and humbler than the other kings and excelled in honoring his parents. About him, it states (*Malachi* 1:6), בן יכבד אב, a son that honors his father.

Because for as long as his father had *tzaraas*, and Yosem took his place, he didn't place the royal crown on his head and ruled all judgments in his father's name."

Longevity

The pasuk states that as a reward for honoring parents, one will live a long life (למען). The Gemara (*Kiddushin* 39:) says that this refers to Olam HaBa and that he will live long in Olam HaBa. Nevertheless, he will surely benefit from many rewards in this world, as well, because honoring parents is from the mitzvos that אדם אוכל פירותיהן בעולם הזה והקרן הקיימת לו לעולם הבא, whose primary reward is in Olam HaBa, but the fruits of the mitzvah are already enjoyed in this world (Mishna, beginning of *Pei'ah*).⁵

5. The Seder HaDoros (10) says that heaven revealed to Reb Yehoshua ben Elam in a dream, "Be happy, rejoice, because you will be in Gan Eden together with the butcher Nanas (ננס הקצב). Your portion and his portion are the same."

Reb Yehoshua ben Elam said, "Woe that this will be my portion! I feared Hashem since my youth. My only occupation is toil in Torah. I never walked four *amos* without wearing *tzitzis* and *tefillin*. I have eighty students. And after all of the above, all my good deeds and all my Torah equals up to the butcher Nanas?"

Reb Yehoshua ben Elam immediately traveled with his students. He wanted to find out who this Nanas was, and what are his deeds. They had to ask many people for directions and information until they finally arrived at the town where Nanas the butcher lived. Reb Yehoshua asked the people of the town to direct him to Nanas's home, but the people of the town said, "It isn't proper for a *talmid chacham* and respected person like yourself to go to Nanas."

Reb Yehoshua said, "Tell him that I want to meet with him."

The townspeople repeated this to Nanas. He responded, "Who am I that Reb Yehoshua should ask about me?"

They replied, "This is the reality. He wants to speak with you. You should go to him immediately."

Nanas replied, "You are just making fun of me. I won't go."

The townspeople told Reb Yehoshua what happened. Reb Yehoshua told them, "So I will go to him because I won't leave this town before I meet Nanas."

When Reb Yehoshua arrived at Nanas's home, Nanas fell before Reb Yehoshua's feet and said, "What is special today that the crown of Yisrael has come to the home of his servant?"

Reb Yehoshua said, "There is something I have to speak with you about."

"Speak," Nanas said.

Reb Yehoshua said, "Tell me your deeds. What do you do?"

Nanas replied, "My master, I'm a butcher. My mother and father are old, and they can't stand. So every morning I dress them, feed them, and wash them with my hands."

Reb Yehoshua stood up and kissed him on his head. Then, he

said, "My son, מה טוב ומה נעים, אשריך ואשרי גורלך, you are fortunate and fortunate is your lot... And I am fortunate that I will merit being your neighbor in Gan Eden."

We see that for honoring parents, one can earn a reward equal to the reward of a holy *tana*. The reward is enormous.

Reb Yochanan Dovid Solomon studied with Reb Yisrael Singer the halachos of *kibud av v'em*, and they went to the Chazon Ish to discuss the halachos. During the conversation, the surprising words of Reb Yochanan came up (*Kiddushin* 31:) "Fortunate is the person who [was adopted], and never saw his parents."

Rashi explains, "This is because it is impossible [to keep this mitzvah properly and] to honor one's parents as one should."

The Chazon Ish replied, "Fortunate are those who did see their parents." Apparently, he meant that even if he won't be able to honor his parents as much as he should, the merit of *kibud av v'em* is so great that it is worthwhile for whatever *kibud av v'em* he does perform.

Once, the Chofetz Chaim zt'l came to Vilna, and many people came to see him and to receive his brachos. Reb Eliyahu Klor z'l, who learned in Reb Shlomo Heiman's zt'l yeshiva in Vilna, wanted to go with his friends from yeshiva to greet the Chofetz Chaim, but his father told him not to go. The father explained, "You're weak, and many people will be there. Perhaps there will be some pushing and shoving, and I'm afraid you will get hurt."

Eighty bachurim from the yeshiva went to the Chofetz Chaim, and they returned so happy because they received a brachah for long life.

Reb Eliyahu Dov was upset that he lost out on this opportunity. At that time, he wrote down the names of all the bachurim of the yeshiva who went to the Chofetz Chaim.

When Reb Eliyahu Dov was ninety-five years old, he said to his grandson, "Today, the last person from my yeshiva who went to the Chofetz Chaim to receive a brachah for long life was niftar. Only I remained, and I'm still healthy. I walk without a walker,

The Torah states that the reward for *kibud av v'em* is *יאריכון*, that his life will be extended. The Or HaChaim notes that it doesn't state *אאריך*, "I will make your life long." The Or HaChaim explains, "Perhaps the pasuk is saying that the segulah of this mitzvah is a long life, in addition to the reward that Hashem will give. Some mitzvos have wonderful segulos, in addition to the reward that Hashem established, and Hashem never revealed the reward that He will give."

Rabbeinu b'Chayei (*Kad HaKemech*) writes in the name of Reb Sadya Gaon, "Sometimes parents live for a long time, and taking care of them becomes a burden on their children. Therefore, the Torah rewards *kibud av v'em* with longevity. This means, 'Honor your parents....and don't be upset that they are living so long, because then you are being upset about your own life.'" (The longer the parents live, the more *kibud av v'em* you will perform, and the longer you will live.)⁶

and I don't need eyeglasses. This is the reward I received from the Torah, that blesses those who honor their parents with a long life."

6. The Torah obligates us to honor a kohen. For example, for birkas hamazon, it is a mitzvah to honor the kohen to lead the benching. Someone asked Reb Chaim Kanievsky zt'l, if both a kohen and his father are present at the meal, who should be honored with birkas hamazon?

Reb Chaim replied that the son should honor his father.

The person asked that since both the son and the father are obligated to honor the kohen, the kohen should have precedence (discussed in *Yevamos* 6.).

Reb Chaim replied that honoring a parent is a matter of *pikuach nefesh* because the Torah says that for this mitzvah, one will live long.

The Chasam Sofer zt'l (Drashos, vol.2 p.362:) writes that, at times, children think they shouldn't honor their parents because it takes away from their time to study Torah, which is the greatest mitzvah. Therefore,

the Torah promises, למען יאריכון ימך, that you will live long. If you honor your parents now, Hashem will grant you a long life, and you will have even more time to study Torah, daven, etc.⁷

The Tur Ha'aruch writes on the words יאריכון ימך, that the way it is written indicates that your parents will *cause* you to live long. This is because if you honor your parents, they will daven that you live long, so you can continue to honor them and to help them, and their tefillos will cause you to live long.

7. The Lev Simchah (Gur) zt'l said that each person comes to the world with a quota of time that he will live, and the time that one spends with *kibud av v'em* isn't part of the *cheshbon*. Whatever time he spends honoring his parents will be returned to him.

Reb Mordechai Moskowitz shlita from Ashdod tells that when he was sitting shivah for his wife, who was niftarah after four years of battling the infamous disease, the doctor called to wish him condolence. The doctor said, "Generally, I don't call to do *nichum aveilim*. I'm busy with my many patients. But your wife taught me a lesson in *emunah*, so I felt that this time I should call." The doctor said that when she first came to him, he told her she had six weeks to live. She replied, "I will live longer. I'm not worried. I have insurance."

"What type of insurance do you have?" the doctor asked.

"I take care of my elderly mother in my home, and the Torah promises for this mitzvah long life."

For the next four years, she continued caring for her mother, even as she was struggling with her own debilitating disease. There was a month that the nurse who took care of her mother was out

The Gemara relates that Reb Chalafta would help his father, even before his father asked for something. He was rewarded (*Yeshayah* 65:24) וְהָיָה טָרֵם יִקְרָא וְאֲנִי אֶעֱנֶה, that Hashem gave him what he wanted, even before he asked for it.

It states (*Tehillim* 45:17), תַּחַת אֲבוֹתֶיךָ יִהְיוּ בָנֶיךָ תִּשְׁתַּמּוּ שְׂרָרִים בְּכָל הָאָרֶץ, "In place of your forefathers will be your sons; you shall appoint them princes throughout the land." The Midrash (*Mishnas Reb Eliezer*) writes that תַּחַת אֲבוֹתֶיךָ means in the merit of *kibud av v'em*, יִהְיוּ בָנֶיךָ, you will merit children. Lest you think they will be ordinary children, therefore the pasuk adds, תִּשְׁתַּמּוּ שְׂרָרִים בְּכָל הָאָרֶץ, that the parents will merit exceptional children.

The Pele Yoetz writes that in the merit of his toil [to perform *kibud av v'em*], he will merit good children, and if it were only for that reward, it would be worth striving with all his strength to perform this mitzvah.

It states (*Bereishis* 27:31), וַיָּבֵא, לְאֲבִי, and these words can be read forward and backwards, which hints that when one does *kibud av v'em*, it will come back to him because his children will honor him as well.

Tana d'Bei Eliyahu (*Raba* ch.26) states, "Whoever desires longevity, wealth, or honor in this world and the next world should do the will of his father in heaven and the will of his father and mother."

of town, so Mrs. Moskowitz cared for her mother that month, the entire day, all by herself. There were times she didn't see her children, and she didn't see herself; she was devoted to her mother's care. This kept her alive for four years, although throughout this time, the only medication she took was a simple pill.

Rabbeinu b'Chayei (*Kad HaKemech*) writes, "It is clear that people are rewarded in this world for doing *kibud av v'em*, or that they experience

tranquility and success with everything they do."⁸

The sefer *Meah She'arim* (Shar 16) writes, "Whoever

8. There was a person who had three sons (ages 23 to 27) who didn't find their bashert, and the family was very worried about them.

Every night, the father travels a long distance to visit his parents (taking two buses). He is a busy person (he works in kiruv and teaches Torah) but puts everything on hold and visits his parents.

A half year ago, his father needed constant help. The family hired a nurse, but the nurse didn't do what was required. It seemed that only this son knew how to care for his father. So, he spent more time with his elderly father. A month later, his oldest son became a chasan; two days after that, his second son became a chasan, and during the sheva brachos of the second son, the third son became a chasan. This is his blessing, as the Torah says, למען יטב לך.

A few years ago (Adar 5778), a bachur from Modi'in Illit needed a complicated operation on his leg. He went to the Ziv hospital in Tzfas, where a doctor specializes in such types of procedures. The date for the surgery was set for Friday, erev Shabbos, and the bachur made all his Shabbos preparations before the operation. He was also fasting, as was required on the day of the surgery.

For some reason, the operation was being pushed off one hour and then another hour until Shabbos set in, and they hadn't done the operation yet.

The mother said to her son, "You are certainly hungry. You fasted all day long. Make Kiddush, eat something, and I will make Kiddush myself when I finish davening."

The bachur replied, "I want to honor you and eat together with you. So I will wait until you finish davening."

keeps this mitzvah, nothing bad will happen to him. The One Who rewards is trusted that He will send malachim before him to protect him."⁹

While the mother was davening, a doctor came into the room and said, "If you didn't eat anything yet, we can do the operation now."

The operation was a matter of pikuach nefesh, so it was permitted on Shabbos. In the merit of honoring his mother, he was able to have the surgery done then.

After the operation, the doctor said that had they waited and pushed off the operation again, he would have lost his leg, רגלי. Hashem protected him and saved him in the merit of his *kibud av v'em* by insisting on eating together with his mother.

9. Someone from Yerushalayim had a severe disease for which the doctors couldn't find a cure. So he decided to go to Bnei Brak to receive a brachah for refuah sheleimah from the Chazon Ish zt'l. The trip was long in those days (several buses) and costly. He was poor, so he had to work for a few days until he saved up enough money for the trip.

The Chazon Ish asked him, "How much did the trip here cost?"

When he heard the amount, he asked, "Did you ever give a fifth of that amount to your parents? The Torah says that honoring parents is mesugal for longevity. It is better to honor your parents and be guaranteed to be cured than to spend a lot of money to come to me. Who says that my tefillos will help?" (*Maaseh Ish* vol.7 p.98).

It is a special merit to receive a brachah from one's parents. The Seporno (*Bereishis* 32:1) writes, "The Torah tells us that Lavan blessed his daughters, so that we should know that the brachos of a father to his children, which is certainly with a whole heart, will definitely take effect..." Therefore, instead of asking others for a brachah, go to your father and mother and ask them to bless you. If the brachos

Caution with Kibud Av v'Em

The *Targum Yonoson* writes that when Yaakov met Yosef in Egypt for the first time, he thought Yosef was Pharaoh, so he bowed to Yosef. Yosef didn't have a chance to correct his father and tell him not to bow

down. But because Yaakov bowed to Yosef, Yosef lost years of his life. Yosef was supposed to live until 120, but he was niftar at 110 because of this episode. The miforshim explain that just as honoring parents adds years to one's life, a pgam (flaw) in kibud av v'em can cause the opposite, chalilah.¹⁰

of Lavan HaArami took effect because he blessed with a whole heart, certainly the brachos of *ehrllicher* parents will be very effective.

10. Reb Trager zt'l once told his father-in-law, Reb Shlomo Zalman Aurbach zt'l, that a father and son asked him to rule on a dispute between them. The father and son were business partners until they got into an argument, and now they wanted to split the business and part ways.

Reb Shlomo Zalman replied, "My dear son-in-law, listen to me. Get out of this din Torah. A dispute between father and son is a severe matter – חמורה שבחמורות, and you are better off not getting involved."

The Imrei Emes zt'l was once on a wagon with his mother a'h. He sat in one corner of the wagon, together with the men of the family, and she sat in another corner, with the women. At one point during the trip, the Imrei Emes washed and ate lunch. Then, after he benched, his mother (who didn't know that he had eaten) told him, "You should eat something."

Without saying a word, he took out some more food from his suitcase, washed his hands, and ate again to do kibud av v'em. He wouldn't consider telling his mother he had already eaten (Rosh Golas Ariel).

The daughter of Steipler zt'l once told her father that "Chaim has a backache." The Steipler thought she was referring to Reb Chaim, his son, so the Steipler went home, told Reb Chaim to lie in bed, and brought him what he would need for the day. The Steipler told him to remain there until the morning.

Eventually, someone explained to the Steipler that his daughter was referring to his grandson Chaim and not to Reb Chaim, his son.

The Steipler smiled and commented that Reb Chaim would remain in bed the entire night rather than question or disagree with his father.

The Imrei Emes zt'l said that it is written in sefarim that every person should have at least one mitzvas aseï and one mitzvas lo saaseh that he should be especially careful to always keep, under all circumstances, and never transgress it. The Imrei Emes said, "I accepted on myself the mitzvas aseï of kibud av v'em and the lo saaseh of דבר שקר תרחק, to never tell a lie."

Someone asked, "Why did you choose specifically these two mitzvos?"

He replied, "It is because these are the hardest to keep" (Rosh Golas Ariel).

Reb Chaim Kanievsky zt'l related that once, he was ill, and his father, the Steipler zt'l, came to visit him. In the conversation, the Steipler mentioned that he was going to the printer that day to bring some corrections and amendments on a sefer that he was printing.

Reb Chaim told his father, "My sefer, Orchos Chaim, is also by the printer, and I also have edits and changes to give in, but I am ill now and can't go to the printer."

The Steipler said, "Give me the changes, and I will hand it over to the printer."

Reb Chaim gave him the pages, and the Steipler gave them to the printer. But the sefer wasn't printed until a few years later, which was very unusual. Reb Chaim mentioned the delay to the Steipler

Rashi (Shmos 20:12) writes, "[The Torah writes] if you honor your parents, you will live long. In contrast, [we understand that] if you don't honor your parents, your life will be shortened. Because this is how the Torah is studied: From the positive [commandment], we understand the negative."

The Zohar (vol.1 164) states, "When Rachel stole the idols from Lavan, she had good intentions [to save him from

worshipping avodah zara]. Nevertheless, because she caused her father distress, she was punished that she couldn't raise Binyamin, and they weren't in the world together, even for a moment."

Lavan was a rasha. Nevertheless, Rachel was punished because she caused her father distress!

The Gemara (Nedarim 9:) relates a story of a person who had beautiful hair and became a nazir. When

and asked why it happened. The Steipler replied, "It is because you allowed me to bring the corrections to the printer."

"But you offered to do so!" Reb Chaim said.

"That's true," the Steipler replied, "nevertheless, it wasn't proper that I should be your messenger, and the punishment was that it took several years before it was printed" (Derech Sichah).

Reb Michel Zlotchever zt'l was only once by the Baal Shem Tov zt'l. He said that if he had been one more time with the Baal Shem Tov, Moshiach would have come. But he didn't go again because his father told him not to.

Someone asked him, "Wouldn't it be worth it not to listen to your father one time so that we could go out of galus?"

Reb Michel replied, "If I hadn't listened to my father, I wouldn't be Michel, and then, even if I went to the Baal Shem Tov, I wouldn't be able to bring Moshiach.

Shimon Hatzaddik asked him why he became a nazir, he replied that he works as a shepherd for his father. Once, he saw his beautiful reflection in the water of a well, his yetzer hara became very strong and tried to cause him to lose this world. "Therefore, I became a nazir, so I would be obligated to cut off my beautiful hair [at the end of the nazirus]."

Shimon HaTzaddik praised this nazir immensely and said that from all nezirim, he only ate from this nazir's korban asham.

The Maharsha explains that this nazir was a talmid chacham and belonged in a beis medresh studying Torah, but his father asked him to shepherd his sheep. This was beneath his dignity, but he did so anyway, to perform kibud av v'em. Once he saw how beautiful he appeared, he understood even more how inappropriate it is that he is a shepherd. " That is how the yetzer hara tried to make

me lose this world because honoring parents grants longevity, and the yetzer hara was trying to convince me to stop honoring my father. Therefore, I became a nazir, so I would cut off my hair, humble myself, and continue being a shepherd, as is my father's will.

Don't Disgrace your Parents

When a person commits an aveirah, he is disgracing his parents. Chazal (Kiddushin 30.) "There are three partners in man: Hakadosh Baruch Hu, the father, and the mother." The Rema m'Pano explains that in every person, there is a part of them that is their father and mother. So, when one does an aveirah, he does the aveirah together with his parents. Therefore, in tachanun, we say, *הטאנו עם אבותינו*, we sinned together with our parents.

Furthermore, there is punishment and disgrace for the parents in the next

world for the aveiros that their children commit. So, when one commits an aveirah, he must know that he is also affecting his parents.¹¹

The Zohar (vol.3 p.115:) states, "A child honors his father with food, drink, and so on. This is in their lifetime. After their demise, the obligation is even greater because if the son goes in bad ways, this will cause disgrace to his parents in

heaven. And if the son goes in the correct path and improves his ways, this brings honor to his parents in Gan Eden."

May it be His will that we perform the mitzvah of kibud av v'em in the best way, and we should merit all the brachos that come from it, as the Torah writes (Devarim 5:16) למען יאריך ימך, ולמען יטב לך, "So that your days be lengthened, and that it may go well with you."

11. Similarly, when one does mitzvos, he is doing the mitzvah together with the parents, that are a part of his essence. This is the greatest honor one can accord his parents. If for giving food and drink, one receives such wonderful rewards, all the more so, he will be rewarded for granting his parents the merit of Torah and mitzvos.

The Chida (Nachal Kedumim, Yisro) says that Shabbos is written next to the mitzvah of honoring parents in the Aseres HaDibros to teach us that one should create chidushei Torah on Shabbos because this makes a crown for the parents in Gan Eden.