



From the desk of
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Office of the Rabbinate of Elad, Rosh HaAyin and Herzelia

Religious Court of Elad * Batei Hora'ah * Religious Services * Marriage Licensing * Kashrut * Mikvaot * Eiruvim

TORAT

Parashat Va'etchanan

HAMELECH

Mitsvot at Marah

In this week's *parashah*, the *Aseret HaDibrot* are repeated, with slight variation. One variation is the reference to this that the mitzva of *Kibud Av V'eim* – honoring one's parents – was already given prior to Matan Torah, at a place called Marah. Why is that significant?

Sefer HaChinuch explains that the mitzvah of *Kibud Av V'eim* is primarily based upon the concept of *hakarat hatov*, acknowledgment of benevolence and an attempt to reciprocate.

That being so, someone who feels that his parents did not provide for him his basic needs as a child and youngster, may feel not so compelled to honor them. That is why, explains Rav Meir Simcha HaKohen of Dvinsk in his sefer *Meshech Chochma*, this mitzvah was given to us at Marah. What happened at Marah? We were hungry and thirsty. We were in a desert. We had no homeland. We were the epitome of "the wandering Jew". Our parents were helpless as well. Father could not provide his young with bread, nor could mothers give them water. We were all in Hashem's Hands. He alone supplied our needs, in Marah and throughout our forty year sojourn. The mothers did not do laundry either. Their clothes grew with them and the Clouds of Glory provided all laundering and ironing needs.

And there, yes there, exactly under those very conditions, we were commanded to honor our folks. To show you that, yes, under normal circumstances, the mitzvah is intertwined with *hakarat hatov*. Intertwined, yes; dependent, no.

So even if, over the course of time, there will be some youngsters or older ones who feel not so indebted to their parents, that is irrelevant. The mitzvah of *kibud horim* is just as applicable, as it was given first at Marah, when our parents barely did a thing for us.

Goodness

Another variation is the added phrase, "lema'an yitav lach" – "in order that He should be benevolent unto you". In Parashat Yitro, we were only guaranteed longevity for fulfilling this mitzvah. Here, we are guaranteed "goodness". This includes all forms of goodness: wealth, health, prosperity, dignity, etc.

Even longevity and wisdom are means of receiving deserved honor, thus it is fitting reward for those who afford respect to their parents.

A Gold Mine

Honor your parents and your children will honor you. They will see the role model.

Realize that honoring parents is simply a mitzvah, no less than eating matzah on Pesach and taking the four Species on Sukkot. Each time you service them, another mitzvah. Don't delay! If your parents are around, you are in a gold mine! You can pick up valuable treasures all the time, if you just pay attention to their needs and wants.

Stones and Cows

Dama ben Netina was a non-Jew who lived in Ashkelon, in the times of the second Beit Hamikdash. A precious stone was lost from the priestly vestments. The Sages were sent to



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procure a replacement. They were directed to Dama who was known to broker such stones. Indeed, he had the item, but he refused to wake up his sleeping father, despite the outrageous price offered. Only after his father awoke on his own did Dama pursue the Sages and sell the stone for the first price offered.

Hashem rewarded him by having his cow give birth to a red heifer, which he sold to the Sages, for the highest price that they had offered for the stone, thereby receiving his reward in this world.

The Gemara retells us this story in order to impress upon us the importance of *Kibud Av V'Eim*, including avoiding causing them any pain, discomfort or disturbance. Additionally, we gain a glimpse of the unfathomable reward for this mitzvah.

Sage Counsel

Says the Pele Yo'eitz: Too many people these days are lax in this mitzvah. Instead of honoring parents, they tend to disgrace them. They do not do as they are told. They act in a way which brings disgrace to the parents. As they act to their parents, their children will act towards them. We can never do this mitzvah properly, as hard as we may try. We still must do our best.

Yaakov Avinu missed out on 22 years of honoring his parents. He paid for that dearly, with the disappearance of his beloved Yosef. For how long? 22 years! Exactly!

Yosef Hatsaddik was meant to live until 120. Why were ten years cut off of his life? Because he allowed others to refer to his father Yaakov as his [Yosef's] servant ten times and he did not protest.

Too many children these days simply believe themselves to be so much wiser than their parents. Therefore they look down upon their parents. They should be made aware that much wisdom is acquired with age and experience. These youngsters think they know better, but... they don't.

People spend so much money on mitsvot such as *petichat haheichal* and *sandaka'ut*. They believe them to be great *segulot* for prosperity and success. Little do they realize that all the *segulot* in the world cannot compare to the Torah's guarantee, "Honor you father and your mother... so that your days will be lengthened and so that it should be good for you."

Here and Now

In conclusion, a person should realize that the *mitsvah* of *kibud av v'eim* is a tremendous opportunity. It should not be viewed as a burden, but as a great privilege. Nor should it be postponed, as in, "Ma, I'll do it later."

A person should do whatever he can to make his parents comfortable, and avoid doing that which brings them distress.

A home in which *kibud av v'eim* is a prominent theme is more likely to operate smoothly and children raised therein more often turn out emotionally healthy and become sources of pride to their parents.

Special attention must be given to new needs of aging parents. Just remember – all you do for your parents, you will get back, in this world and the next.

**Fondly, Shabbat Shalom Umevorach,
Mordechai Malka**