

TALMUD TORAH 5:12

by Rabbi Yitzchak Etshalom

12. Just as the students are obligated in the honor of their teacher, similarly the teacher must honor his students and bring them close. This is what the sages said: Your student's honor should be as precious to you as your own (Avot 4:12). A person should be careful with his students and love them, for they are the children who bring pleasure in this world and in *Olam HaBa* (the World to Come).

Q1: Why does Rambam "equate" these two honors ("similarly...")?

HH: Since one learns from one's students, the students are, in a certain sense, one's teachers. So, the teacher-student relationship is partially symmetric.

Q2: "Bring them close" - to what/whom?

HH: The teacher brings the students close to him/herself, and thereby, to Torah.

Q3: Why does Rambam _seemingly_ repeat the idea in the last clause?

YE: In the first clause, Rambam is addressing the teacher - and in terms which are a mirror of the student->teacher relationship (honor). In the second, he speaks to the person (note that in the first clause he said: "the teacher must honor..." and in the second clause: "A person should be careful with his students...") - and points to the fatherly relationship as regards students.

Q4: If students are _the_ children - what about his own flesh-and-blood children?

HH: The teacher, like anybody else, is supposed to teach Torah to his flesh-and-blood children. So, his flesh-and-blood children are students of him, and, thereby, his children! {flesh-and-blood children} are a subset of {children under Rambam's definition} (if you like mathematical notation).

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