

# MAKE YOUR PARENTS AND TEACHERS PROUD

*by Shlomo Katz*

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**Kedoshim: Make Your Parents and Teachers Proud**  
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Today's Learning:

Midot 1:7-8

O.C. 23:1-3

Daf Yomi (Bavli): Avodah Zarah 51

Daf Yomi (Yerushalmi): Yoma 11

The opening verses (2-5) of our parashah state: "You shall be holy . . . A man shall fear his mother and father . . . Do not turn to idols . . . When you slaughter an offering to Hashem . . ." How do these thoughts flow one from another?

R' Chaim Menachem David Horowitz z"l hy"d (the last rabbi of Dzikov/Tarnobrzeg, Poland) explains based on the following three points:

(1) The reason that man must honor and fear his parents is that they were partners in his creation. But is it good that man was created? Only if he does G-d's will (see Eruvin 13b).

(2) Chazal say that Hashem consults with the angels before doing bad, but not before doing good. Yet the verse (Bereishit 1:26) says, "Let \_us\_ make man," implying that Hashem did consult the angels. Was man's creation "bad"?

(3) Chazal acknowledge that the plural form ("Let \_us\_") in the above verse might be used by heretics as "proof" that there are multiple gods. The reason for the plural form, however, is to teach man humility, as if to say: "Even G-d asks for advice."

In light of the above, the verses from our parashah may be read as follows: If you are holy, then your parents should be honored, for they did a good thing by participating in your creation. But if your creation was a good thing, why does the Torah say that Hashem consulted with the angels? Certainly not so that the verse may be a source of heresy, for you shall not turn to idols. Rather, it should teach humility; indeed, "The [best] offering to G-d is a humble spirit" (Tehilim 51:19). Thus, if you are humble, you will be slaughtering an offering to Hashem. (From the introduction to his grandfather's She'eilot U'teshuvot Ateret Yeshuah)

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*"Every man -- Your father and mother shall you revere and My Sabbaths shall you observe -- I am Hashem, your G-d." (19:3)*

Rashi comments: "The Torah places the commandment of observing Shabbat immediately after that of fearing one's parents in order to suggest the following: 'Although I admonish you regarding the fear due to your parents, if they bid you, "Desecrate the Sabbath," do not listen to them.' The same is the case with any of the other commandments. . . The Torah adds, 'I am Hashem, your G-d,' [to teach,] 'Both you and your parents are equally bound to honor Me!' Therefore, do not obey your parents if it results in making My words of no effect."

Commentaries ask: Why is it necessary for the Torah to teach that one should not honor his parents if they tell him to transgress a law of the Torah? Such a parent is a rasha, and we already know that one is not obligated to honor his parent if the parent is a rasha! R' Akiva Eiger z"l (1761-1837; renowned halachic authority and Talmud commentator) answers: There is a principle in Torah law, "An affirmative commandment ('asai') supersedes a negative commandment ('lo ta'asai')." This means that in a case where an affirmative mitzvah (e.g., the Kohen Gadol wearing his vestments) can be performed only at the expense of transgressing a negative commandment (e.g., shaatnez), the affirmative mitzvah takes precedence and supersedes the prohibition in question. Thus, we might have thought that this principle would apply if a parent commanded a child to transgress a Torah law - the affirmative mitzvah (honoring parents) might take precedence over whatever negative commandment the parent had asked the child to transgress. To prevent us from reaching that conclusion, the Torah specifically instructs us that honoring parents does not take precedence over observing the other laws of the Torah because parents, too, are obligated to observe the Torah.

(Quoted in Midreshei V'chiddushei R' Akiva Eiger Al Ha'Torah)

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*"You shall not be a gossip-monger among your people, you shall not stand aside while your fellow's blood is shed -- I am Hashem. You shall not hate your brother in your heart; you shall reprove your fellow and do not bear a sin because of him."* (19:16-17)

R' Yaakov Abuchatzera z"l (1790-1879; Morocco) writes: This is a warning to tzaddikim not to speak ill of other Jews. Even Moshe Rabbeinu was punished when he spoke badly about Bnei Yisrael. Do not stand idly by while the blood of other Jews is shed because of their sins. Rather, pray that they will repent. Also rebuke them as necessary in order to help them repent.

(Pituchei Chotam)

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Pirkei Avot

*"Rabbi said, 'What is the proper path that a person should choose for himself? Whatever is a credit to himself and earns him the esteem of his fellow men'."* (2:1)

R' Chaim Kreiswirth z"l (1920-2002; rabbi of the Machzikei Hadas Congregation in Antwerp, Belgium) comments that the "fellow men" whose esteem a person should aspire to earn are his rabbeim / his Torah teachers and other Torah sages. This idea is illustrated by the following story found in the Talmud (Nedarim 22b):

The sage Rava used to praise Rav Sechorah in the presence of Rav Nachman until the latter said, "When he comes to town, bring him to me." It so happened that when Rav Sechorah next came to town, he wanted to annul a vow that he had taken. [To annul a vow, a bet din must ask the vow-taker, "Would you have taken your vow if you had realized that the following unpleasant consequences would occur?" If the vow-taker says that he would not have taken the vow under those circumstances, the bet din may annul the vow.] Rav Sechorah came before Rav Nachman, who asked him, "Did you take your vow with such-and-such consequences in mind?" Rav Sechorah responded in the affirmative. "What about these-or-those consequences?" Rav Nachman asked. Again, Rav Sechorah responded in the affirmative. No matter what opening Rav Nachman offered, Rav Sechorah answered that he had intended his vow to be effective even under those conditions. Finally, Rav Nachman became angry and ordered Rav Sechorah to leave. Rav Sechorah said, "Now I have an opening to annul my vow, for the Mishnah says, 'What is the proper path that a person should choose for himself? Whatever is a credit to himself and earns him the esteem of his fellow men.' I never would have taken this vow if I had known that Rav Nachman would become angry at me."

R' Kreiswirth adds: The Gemara (Shabbat 152b) records: Rabbi Eliezer asked the sage Rav, "Who is destined for Olam Haba?" Rav answered him, "Anyone whose rabbeim are pleased with him." We might have expected Rav to answer that one is destined for Olam Haba if he is so meticulous in his performance of mitzvot that he even puts on Rabbeinu Tam's tefilin, but this is not what Rav said.

Rather, if one follows in his teachers' ways and they are proud of him, then he is destined for Olam Haba.

(Quoted in Avot Mi'shulchan Rabboteinu p.146)

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*"He [Rabban Gamliel, the son of Rabbi Yehuda Hanassi] used to say, 'Treat His will as if it were your own will, so that He will treat your will as if it were His will'." (2:4)*

What does it mean that "He will treat your will as if it were His will"? R' Yitzchak Karo z"l (1458-1535) explains: Hashem will not make His will like your will, giving you anything that you desire. Rather, he will make you desire only those things that are good for you - i.e., those things that are His will for you.

(Quoted in Avot Mi'shulchan Rabboteinu p.186)

A related thought: We read in the Ashrei prayer (Tehilim 145:19), "The will of those who fear Him He will do, and their cry He will hear and save them." What is the relationship of the two halves of this verse to each other? R' Zvi Pesach Frank z"l (1873-1960; Chief Rabbi of Yerushalayim) explains that sometimes a G-d-fearing person desires something that Hashem knows is not good for the person. Hashem may fulfill that person's desire. Then, when the person realizes that he made a mistake, Hashem will hear his cry and save him.

(She'eilot U'teshuvot Har Zvi, O.C. No. 1)

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R' Aryeh Leib Zunz z"l

R' Aryeh Leib Zunz was born in 1768 and was a grand-nephew of R' Yehonasan Eyebchutz. R' Aryeh Leib lived initially in Prague, where he interacted with the town's many scholars, foremost among them R' Yechezkel Landau, the Noda B'Yehuda. From there, R' Aryeh Leib moved to Pressburg, where he became recognized as a leading posek / halachic authority and where he began receiving halachic inquiries from many countries. Later, he was accepted as rabbi of Plock, Poland.

After Plock, R' Aryeh Leib was elected rabbi of several other towns, but he preferred to live quietly in Warsaw composing his Torah works and teaching his many students. R' Aryeh Leib was a prolific author, writing in nearly every area of Torah scholarship. His works include two Torah commentaries (Melo Ha'omer and Kometz Ha'minchah); commentaries on the five megillot (also called Melo Ha'omer); several volumes of halachic responsa (Meshivat Nafesh and She'eilot U'teshuvot Maharal); works on specialized areas of halachah including Pesach, marriage, divorce and wine of non-Jews; and commentaries on a number of Talmudic tractates. Before his death, R' Aryeh Leib promised that he would intercede in heaven for anyone who reprinted one of his works. He also asked that this promise be engraved on his tombstone. As a result, his works have been reprinted many times and

they are often sold at reduced prices.

R' Aryeh Leib also had a number of prominent students of whom the best known were R' Yitzchak Meir Alter (the first Gerrer Rebbe), R' Avraham Landa (the Chechinower Rebbe), and R' Yaakov Gesundheit. Among R' Aryeh Leib's sons-in-law was R' Avraham Abisch, rabbi of Frankfurt. It is reported that as R' Aryeh Leib lay on his death bed, he used his last strength to ask his student, the future Gerrer Rebbe, to examine appropriate halachic works to determine whether a person who is in his last moments of life is nevertheless obligated to daven. R' Alter then brought a Rambam and read to his teacher until the very moment of his passing on the 3rd day of Iyar 5593 / 1833. (Source: Melizei Esh)

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The editors hope these brief 'snippets' will engender further study and discussion of Torah topics ("lehagdil Torah u'leha'adirah"), and your letters are appreciated. Web archives at [Project Genesis](#) start with 5758 (1997) and may be retrieved from the [Hamaayan](#) page. Text archives from 1990 through the present may be retrieved from <http://www.acoast.com/~sehc/hamaayan/>. Donations to HaMaayan are tax-deductible.

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