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40 DAY INITIATIVE STRENGTHENING
KIBUD AV VA'EIM
HALACHOS & STORIES

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40 DAY INITIATIVE STRENGTHENING
KIBUD AV VA'EIM
HALACHOS & STORIES

BY R' CHAIM MORGENSTERN



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DAY 1 – HALACHA

Bruchos Hab'aos – welcome to the LVN program on kibud av v'aim. This is Rabbi Chaim Morgenstern, and b'ezras Hashem, I'll be giving a 40-part series of approximately five-minute shiurim, which I term "capsules", on the ikar halachos of kibud u'moreh av v'aim, honoring and revering parents.

As part of this program, I'll also be available for questions via email or by phone. I live in Eretz Yisroel so if you call, I'm seven hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time. Address your questions to: kibudavvaim@gmail.com. Reb. Fink has my phone no. and e-mail address.

The objective of these capsules is to keep in mind that they are not just for information – meaning, to put in your mind or in your notebook and think about them, & then eventually the information will probably be forgotten; rather it's for a two-fold *transformation*: 1. to change your present way of fulfilling this mitzvah and 2. to change *how* we fulfill this mitzvah.

Keep a note of each day's lesson in your purse, look at it from time to time, and fulfill it at least twice that day. Add to this list daily so that you don't forget the previous day's halacha. So, after 40 days you'll have accumulated a sizable list of halachos with different concepts of the mitzvos of kibud u'moreh av v'aim.

As an introduction to the series on halacha, I have to mention three important concepts that will change how we fulfill of these mitzvos.

Rav Avigdor Miller relates that when he was in Slabodka Yeshiva as a bachur, he heard from a talmid about someone who asked the Alter from Slabodka the following: "Rebbi, why is it that all of your shmuesen are not l'maaseh, there's nothing in practice. You only talk about thoughts and ideas." The Alter answered, "I don't understand your question. It's all for practice. Everything I say is l'maaseh." The person who related the story to Rav Miller explained "Who says l'maaseh - practice is only with your body, there's also practice with your mind." In other words, what the Alter is telling us is that your thoughts, meaning, *how you do mitzvos*, are also l'maaseh.

We will now explain two of the principle concepts of the mitzvos of kibud u'moreh av v'aim

1. The ta'am of this mitzvah. The Chinuch on the mitzvah of kibud av v'aim writes that this mitzvah is an expression of our hakaras hatov – gratitude - toward our parents for bringing us into the world and for all they've done for us in the course of our lives. The Chayei Adam adds to this that this mitzvah is like repaying a debt that we owe our parents for all the good that they've done for us during our lifetime.
2. The Chovos Halevavos writes that tefilla without kavanah is like a guf - a body - without a neshama. This is true for all mitzvos, for example, shofar. The guf of this mitzvah is the actual blowing. But the neshama of the mitzvah is to think that it's the Yom Hadin, the day of judgment, and we have to do teshuva. An additional kavanah is that we're coronating Hakadosh Baruch Hu over the world. There are

other kavanos in this mitzvah which are brought down in most machzorim from Rav Saadya Gaon. Another example is the mitzvah of sukkah. The guf of the mitzvah is sitting in the sukkah, but the neshama is to look at the schach and to think about the ananei hakavod, the cloud of glory of Hakadosh Baruch Hu that protected Klal Yisroel during their travels of almost 40 years in Midbar Sinai. The same holds true for the mitzvos of kibud u'moreh av v'aim. The guf of the mitzvah is the act of doing, for example, serving them, or not sitting in their place. But the neshama of this mitzvah is doing it because of the following two reasons:

One: It's a mitzvah d'oraysa that's in the Aseres Hadibros, "*Kabeid es avicha v'es imecha,*" and mora-revering parents in Parshas Kedoshim, "*Isb imo v'aviv tira'u.*"

Two: The feeling of hakaras hatov, which we mentioned previously from the Chinuch and the Chayei Adam.

Therefore, when we fulfill this mitzvah, we should have these two concepts in mind. Like some people say before they bench: הנני מוכן ומזומן לקיים מצות עשה של ברכת המזון. So here also, before we do the mitzvah of honoring our parents, such as, serving them food or drink, making a phone call, taking out the garbage, going shopping for them, etc., have in mind these two kavanos: that you're doing a mitzvah d'oraysa, and the feeling of hakaras hatov for what you owe to them.

By doing this, we increase the value of the mitzvah of kibud av v'aim and bring it to a new and higher level by transforming it from a dry maaseh, a dry action, into a mitzvah with a neshama, like kavanah gives a neshama to the mitzvah of davening.

So, the first halacha, which although it doesn't seem l'maaseh, but according to the Alter from Slabodka it is l'maaseh, is to practice this at least twice daily when doing something for your parents. And in this way, it will become part of you. Every time you do a mitzvah, you'll think about these two concepts and it will bring your mitzvah of kibud av v'aim to a higher level of fulfilling it.

DAY 1 – STORY: Grab the Opportunity

In Mishlei, Shlomo HaMelech tells us that a wise person will seek opportunities for mitzvos. Moshe Rabbeinu, for example, was busy with taking the remains of Yosef out of Mitzrayim while the rest of Klal Yisroel was busy with the treasures of Mitzrayim.

When it comes to kibud av v'aim, a child should not wait for her parents to ask for her help. Rather, she should seek opportunities to do whatever she can for them.

The tzaddik Rav Avrohom Genochovsky excelled in his kibud av v'aim. He knew that his father enjoyed a hot glass of tea at the end of his meal. Once, when he knew that his father would be attending a yabrtzeit seudab in a certain shul, Rav Avraham arranged for someone to serve his father a glass of tea at the end of the seudab.

For many years, Rebbetzin Aliza Zilberstein, daughter of Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, was a beloved morah in a Bnei Brak Bais Yaakov school. During their lunch break, the moros would come to the teachers' room to eat their lunch. Rebbetzin Zilberstein was the only morah who had bread with her lunch — every single day. Most moros never brought bread; most had salad and fruit, while a few brought some crackers as well.

When the rebbetzin was asked why she always ate bread, she answered:

My parents, Rav and Rebbetzin Elyashiv, live in Yerushalayim and I do not visit them as often as I would like. So every day, I do something for them here in Bnei Brak by eating bread. If I eat bread, then of course, I have to say Bircas HaMazon at the end of my meal. And this gives me the opportunity to say “Harachaman Hu yevareich es avi mori v’es imi morasi ...

If I can’t honor my parents in person, at least I can say a bracha for them from far away.

When “Peninah” became a kallah, her mother was telling people how special she had been even as a child. “Peninah was seven years old,” said her mother, “when her younger sister was born. The day that I came home from the hospital with the baby, I was tired and pretty weak. But there was no adult at home to help me; my husband was at work and could not leave early. I came downstairs to prepare supper for the children — and was I surprised! Peninah had set the table and had done a very good job. She saved me some koach and the mere fact that she had done this for me gave me strength.”

At the supper table, if your father or mother asks you to pass the water pitcher, grab the opportunity and pour the drink for them. A small act, but a great mitzvah.

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DAY 2 – HALACHA

When I speak about kibud u'moreh av v'aim, I preface with the Chofetz Chaim's introduction to the Mishna Brura on Hilchos Shabbos.

He writes that one cannot properly observe Shabbos without knowing the Halachos of Shabbos. Similarly, unless one knows the halachos of honoring and revering parents, kibud and moreh av v'aim, she will not be aware of her respective obligations, and obviously, she won't be able to properly honor her parents.

In fact, the Yesod V'shoresh Ha'avodah writes that we must set aside a regular time to study the laws of honoring our parents since each person is obligated to know these laws and to keep them constantly in his mind. These halachos need to be studied no less than the halachos of Shabbos and Pesach. Furthermore, Chazal say that this mitzvah is categorized as תמורה שבחמורות, among the severe of the severest category of mitzvos.

Indeed, Rav Chatzkel Levenstein, the mashgiach in Ponovezh yeshiva, told the bachurim that before they go home for bein hazmanim, they should learn the halachos of kibud av v'aim because it will be nogaya p'maaseh yom yom – relevant daily, 24/7.

In explaining the halachos of kibud av v'aim, I'll follow the format of the Chayei Adam who divides this mitzvah into 3 parts: 1. Maaseh – acts of doing, 2. Dibur – speech, meaning, how we speak to our parents, and 3. Machshava – honoring them in our thoughts.

We're going to begin with maaseh, and we'll start with the obligation to stand up for one's parents, because it's a vital key to all of the other obligations of kibud u'moreh av v'aim. When a child stands up for her parents, it automatically causes her to honor and respect them, because she doesn't stand up for a repair man or a friend who enter her home.

We're going to start by mentioning 3 halachos of arising for a parent.

1. A child must arise when a parent enters the area that she's in, such as, the same room however large, such as, a chasunah hall; or on a bus and your parent gets on the bus after you sat down; if you're davening in the ezras nashim and your mother walks in, you must arise when she comes in; & even after you started davening, you should pause, and stand up.

You must arise as soon as you see them, as opposed to a zakain, an elderly person who's over 70, (the mitzvah of מפני שיבה תקום) or a rav or a talmid chocham, where the obligation to arise is only when he comes within your four amos, between 6-8 feet.

2. You must remain standing until your parent leaves the room, sits down, or they arrive at their destination. For example, if a mother goes into the ezras nashim and she wants to stand while she's saying brachos, once she goes to her place and starts saying brachos, even though she's still standing, you can sit down because that's called "arriving at her destination." If a parent tells you that can sit down already, then of course you can sit down.

3. One must stand up completely, מלוא קומתו, for a parent, as opposed to a zakain or a rav where the obligation is only what's called a hidur, to just arise slightly when they come into your 4 amos.

These are the halachos of the day. We must practice them at least twice daily, once in the morning and once in the evening; and don't forget the two kavanos mentioned yesterday: 1. When you fulfill the mitzvah of standing for a parent, you are fulfilling a mitzvah d'oraysa, and 2. Feel hakaras hatov, gratitude, for what they have done for you, and therefore you're honoring them.

Iy"H tomorrow we'll continue on this topic.

DAY 2 – STORY: Always on His Mind

As Menabel of Yeshivah Torah Vodaath, Rabbi Dovid Bender was a very busy man. But he was never too busy to give pleasure to his parents. After his mother passed away, Rav Dovid, an only child, never stopped thinking about his father, who lived alone across the Atlantic in Bnei Brak.

If they would be alive today when overseas phone calls are not expensive, Rav Dovid would surely call his father at least once a day. But in those days (the 1950s and 1960s) such phone calls were very expensive and had to be arranged in advance by calling the phone company.

So Rav Dovid wrote letters — a few times a week. Every six weeks, he would gather his children and tell them, “Today the photographer is coming so that we can take pictures to send to Zeidy.”

Every time a child brought home a test with a good mark, a good report card, or a good note from the rebbi or morah, Rav Dovid would say, “Wonderful! We're going to mail it to Zeidy.” And he promptly did just that.

There was great excitement in the Bender home when Zeidy was scheduled to arrive from Eretz Yisroel for a visit. The house was scrubbed clean until it was gleaming from every corner. On the day before Zeidy's arrival, Rav Dovid told his children, “Tomorrow we will wear Shabbos clothing in honor of Zeidy's arrival. And we will head for the airport a couple of hours before the plane is scheduled to land to make sure that we get there on time.”

In those days, there was no security at airports. Visitors could take an elevator to an outdoor observation deck and watch the plane land. The Bender family was there well before the plane landed. When it did, Rav Dovid stood on the observation deck craning his neck so that he could catch a glimpse of his father as soon as he emerged from the plane.

And suddenly — there he was! Rav Dovid could not restrain himself. “Papa! Papa!” he shouted. Heads turned to look at the grown man who was shouting with the excitement of a young child.

Rav Dovid ignored the stares. He was focused on one thing — bringing pleasure to his father whom he loved so much.

Rabbi Avrohom Bender heard the shouts and looked up. When he caught sight of his son surrounded by his

children, Rav Avrohom broke into a wide, beautiful smile. And that was the greatest reward that his son could possibly receive.

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DAY 3 – HALACHA

B'ezras Hashem, today we'll continue with the obligation of standing for one's parents.

We previously mentioned that you must stand מלוא קומתו, to a full height, as soon as your parent enters your domain. The obligation to arise is only if you and the parent are in the same domain. Therefore, there's no obligation to stand if you see them outside in the street from your window. Or, if you're sitting in the kitchen eating breakfast or drinking coffee and you see your parent entering the living room, or the parent walks by in the hall, in all of these instances, you don't have to stand up until they enter the kitchen.

Another halacha is that if you're standing before your parent enters the room, let's say you're washing dishes and your parent enters the room, if you know they're coming, you should sit before they enter, so you can get a mitzvah. What you're doing here is chapping the mitzvah of kibud av v'aim, because if you're already standing, there's nothing else you can do.

This brings us to a story about Rav Chaim Scheinberg who was once walking with a relative of his in the street and he saw an elderly man coming towards him. He quickly sat down on a nearby bench so when the man would walk by, he would stand up for him and get of the mitzvah d'oraysa of מפני שיבה תקום. That's called chapping a mitzvah, as it says in Mishlei – לב יקה חכם מצות – the wise man looks for opportunities to fulfill mitzvos.

If you must leave the room after you stood up for a parent, don't leave immediately. For example, let's say you're drinking your coffee and as you're ready to leave, your parent walks in. You stand up when your parent walks in, but now you want to leave for whatever reason. Since it's not obvious that you're standing up for the parent because you're leaving right away, therefore, before you leave, sit down first and then leave, to emphasize that you have risen out of respect for them.

We mentioned previously, if you're sitting on a bus and your parent gets onto the bus, you must arise. So, it's obvious that if there are no seats left on the bus, you must give your seat to your parent, because otherwise, it's not derech erez that you'll be sitting and the parent will be standing. If the parent says to sit down, insist on giving her the seat.

There's no obligation to stand if one is sick. Thus, if a child is bedridden and her parent walks in, she doesn't have to get out of the bed, or if a child is sitting on a lounge chair, and her parent walks in, but it's difficult to get up because she is weak with the flu or a bad cold, she doesn't have to stand up for them.

The last halacha of the day is if you're in a barber shop getting a haircut, and your parent enters, you don't have to stand up and stop the haircut to arise. Once your parent sits down, there's no obligation to stand once you're finished with the haircut. If your parent gets up again and you've finished your haircut and are sitting down, you should arise for them to get the mitzvah.

The halacha of today is to continue to keep practicing arising for your parent at least twice a day, once in the morning and once in the evening. And, as we mentioned, each time, have in mind that you're fulfilling the mitzvah d'oraysa, and the feeling of hakaras hatov towards your parent.

Iy"H tomorrow, we'll explain how many times a day a person must arise for a parent, and dealing with the issues if a parent is moichel, or they object if you stand up for them.

DAY 3 – STORY: A Double Surprise

Ezzy, a talmid at Yeshivah Darchei Torah, had been looking forward to his bar mitzvah. On the night when he would turn 13, a gala celebration was to be held in a local catering hall, complete with a one-man band and photographer. Then would come the bar mitzvah Shabbos, when he would lein the parshah and be called to the Torah for his aliyah.*

A few weeks before his bar mitzvah, Ezzy's mother underwent major emergency surgery. The surgery was successful, but it was certain that she would not be able to attend the seudas mitzvah and she also would not be in shul on Shabbos. Ezzy's parents felt that the seudah should be held as scheduled despite his mother's situation. Ezzy, mature beyond his years, said to his father, "I really appreciate that you and Ima want me to have a bar mitzvah just like my friends. But without Ima there, it will not be the same. I would prefer to have just a small, private seudah in our home." And that is what they did.

Six months later, as the school year was drawing to a close, Ezzy's classmates approached their Rosh Yeshivah, Rabbi Yaakov Bender. They mentioned that Ezzy had never had the kind of bar mitzvah celebration that all of them had, a fact of which Rabbi Bender was well aware. So they asked, "Before the school year ends, could we make Ezzy a surprise 'bar mitzvah breakfast' and we'll invite his parents to come and surprise him as well?"

Rabbi Bender loved the idea. He arranged for the yeshivah's kitchen to prepare a beautiful breakfast, hired a musician, and had someone on hand to take pictures. And then something amazing happened.

On the morning of the seudah, which was held in the yeshivah's gym (where there was plenty of room for dancing), a bris milah was also being celebrated on the campus of Yeshivah Darchei Torah. The sandak was none other than the beloved Rosh Yeshivah of Mesivta Torah Vodaath, Rabbi Avraham Yaakov Pam. After the bris, Rabbi Bender told Rav Pam about the special bar mitzvah breakfast that was already in progress. Rav Pam was very moved and said that he wanted to participate.

Ezzy, along with his father and mother, were speechless when the doors of the gym opened and in walked Rav Pam, accompanied by Rabbi Bender. Rav Pam wished Ezzy and his parents "Mazel tov" and wished Ezzy's mother "a refuah sheleimah."

Ezzy had missed out on a large bar mitzvah celebration because of his feelings for his mother. Hashem rewarded him with a beautiful celebration in which the gadol hador participated and gave him and his mother a heartfelt bracha.

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DAY 4 – HALACHA

B'ezras Hashem, today we're going to continue with the last segment of the obligation to stand up for one's parents. We'll explain how many times per day one must arise for parents, and address the issues of parents who are moichel their children to arise for them, or who object to it

Firstly: How many times must you rise for parents during the day? There's a machlokes between the Rama and the Shulchan Aruch (often referred to as the mechaber), which is basically the difference between the Ashkenazim, who follow the Rama's psak and the Sefardim who follow the Shulchan Aruch. The Rama paskins twice daily, once in the morning and once in the evening. I mentioned this halacha in the two previous capsules, that this is what we should do. On the other hand, the Shulchan Aruch paskins that there is no limit. Some Sefardim are makpid on this and they will stand up many times during the day for their parents. Other poskim say that the parent is probably moichel after two minimum times, so after two times, they don't stand up anymore. However, it's preferable that the parent should verbally be moichel the child from arising more than twice daily. Additionally, some poskim hold that the halacha of arising for a parent more than once, applies only if the parent leaves the home for a duration of time, such as for shopping, going to shul or to work, otherwise twice daily suffices.

If there are Sefardi students in this group, they should ask their rav what to do regarding this halacha.

Secondly: Regarding parents who are moichel or object to arising for them, or object to accor them any other honor. The parents have to realize that by being moichel on their honor, they are depriving their child of:

1. The mitzvah d'oraysa, and 2. The tremendous reward of a good and long life, as the Torah states in the Aseres Hadibros in Parshas Yisro, לָמַעַן יֵאָרִיכוּ יָמֶיךָ; and in Parshas Va'eschanan in Sefer Devarim, the Torah adds לָךְ וּלְמַעַן יֵיטֵב לָךְ - and you'll have a good life. In today's day and age, people are constantly looking for ways to increase their lifespan and to combat old age with special diets, herbs, vitamins and exercises, but our Holy Torah provides us with its own prescription for a long and happy life – kibud av v'aim. Therefore, depending on the relationship between the parent and the child, a child should try and explain this to her parents, or perhaps even ask them to listen to this shiur I'm giving now.

By the way, the Chazon Ish writes that parents should not make a habit to be moichel their children in this mitzvah. The reason is simple, because they are depriving their child of the many benefits that this mitzvah has to offer, some of which we'll speak about at a later time when we discuss other areas of the mitzvah of kibud av v'aim.

And thirdly: The issue when parents object to their child arising for them. I told a student who asked me this to stand up when her parents are not looking because standing is not for them – it's for you, and you'll get the mitzvah d'oraysa and the feeling of hakaras hatov even when they're not looking. And this also applies to mechillah. If the parents are moichel, Rav Moshe Feinstein holds that you still get a

mitzvah for standing up, and even if you already stood up twice, you'll still get the mitzvah each time you get up, whether they are or aren't looking. In fact, when some of my children visit me, they stand up for me whenever I walk into the room.

The halacha of the day is the same as yesterday, to continue practicing arising for a parent twice daily, once in the morning and once in the evening, and for the Sefardim, ask your rav if you have to stand up each time they enter your domain; and don't forget to have in mind the two kavanos that we previously mentioned: the mitzvah d'oraysa and the feeling of hakaras hatov. And, if parents object, stand up when they're not looking.

I just want to end this segment with a story about Rav Y.Y. Herman, in *All for the Boss*. Once his wife came home and his children were sitting at the table and they didn't arise for her. Obviously, they thought it wasn't so important to rise for a mother. So, he told his wife to temporarily leave the house, and told his children this is not the way we honor our mommy. We have to stand up for her. And then he told his wife to leave and enter again, and when she re-entered, the children arose.

After I heard this story, I did the same with my children, and baruch Hashem it worked. Once, when I came home from kollel at the end of the day, my children were preoccupied with different things and didn't stand up for me. I told them "Didn't you forget something?" When they replied "What?" I answered "Think," and then walked out the door. They quickly realized that they forgot to stand up for me, and when I re-entered, they stood up.

This ends the segments of arising for parents, and b'eZRas Hashem, in the following capsules, we'll go onto other areas of kibud av v'aim.

DAY 4 – STORY: Grabbing the Opportunity

"Sidney, what a surprise! We just saw you this morning at the bris!"

"I know Dad, but I didn't want to wish you 'Happy Birthday' there. I wanted to come special, just for the purpose of wishing you a Happy Birthday. Many more happy and healthy ones, together with Mom."

That morning, the family had gathered for the bris of a grandson of Dr. and Mrs. Sidney Glenner. Dr. Glenner's father also celebrated his 93rd birthday on that day. The bris of his great-grandson was probably the greatest "birthday present" anyone could hope for.

When Dr. Glenner surprised his parents with his special afternoon visit to their home, his mother said, "Well, now that you're here, it would be a shame for you to leave so quickly. Have a seat, Sidney, while I prepare lunch for the three of us."

And so Dr. Glenner's surprise visit turned into a birthday party of sorts. Both he and his parents were very happy to be enjoying each other's company.

Dr. Glenner's father always went to sleep at a very late hour. Dr. Glenner had an idea that he thought would bring his father some more pleasure.

He called his father close to midnight. "Dad," he said with a chuckle, "I just wanted to be the last one to wish you 'Happy Birthday.'"

His father was quiet for a moment. Then he said, "Sidney, you have always been a good son. I love you." Those words brought Dr. Glenner to tears. "Dad," he said with emotion, "I love you too."

In the middle of that night, Dr. Glenner's phone rang. It was his mother. "Sidney!" she cried, "come quick. Dad is having trouble breathing."

Dr. Glenner got to his parents' house as fast as he could. But by the time he arrived, his father had passed away.

While Dr. Glenner mourned his father's passing, he was so grateful that he had made that afternoon visit, and that late night phone call.

Chazal tell us, "When a mitzvah comes your way, don't let it become 'chametz,' meaning, perform it without delay. Dr. Glenner did even more. He went out of his way to visit his father and also call him, though he had seen his father that morning at a bris. Little did he know that he was bringing tremendous pleasure to his father shortly before he was to depart this world.

*This story has been adapted with permission from *In the Splendor of the Maggid* by Rabbi Paysach Krohn; and *Honor Them Revere Them* by Rabbi Shimon Finkelman and ybl"ch Rabbi Zechariah Wallerstein. Both books are published by ArtScroll/Mesorah.*

DAY 5 – HALACHA

B'ezras Hashem, today we will explain other areas of kibud av v'aim, and we'll start with six main categories mentioned in the Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deiah.

The first two areas mentioned are מאכילו ומשקהו – providing them with food and drink. This mitzvah includes grocery shopping, preparing food and serving parents food or drink.

Each act is another mitzvah. For example, if a family runs out of coffee and your parent would like a cup of coffee. So, you go to the store to buy a jar of coffee, bring it home, boil water, pour the water into a cup with the coffee, mix it, and add sugar and milk. Thus, in preparing one cup of coffee you have six mitzvos: buying, cooking, pouring, adding and mixing coffee, sugar, and milk. It's amazing! This is just one example of the many mitzvos a child can get by serving a parent. And during a meal, you can accumulate dozens of these mitzvos, especially on Shabbos.

This concept may be a chidush to you, but listen to the eye-opening story of the Brisker Rav. Rav Schach, before he became the Rosh Yeshiva of the Ponovezh Yeshiva, lived in Yerushalayim and frequently visited the Brisker Rav to speak with him in learning. He related the following story to Rav Shlomo Lorencz:

He was once sitting with the Brisker Rav in his home and the Rav told his daughter to bring in two cups of tea with a plate of sugar. After she brought them in, the Rav was silent, so she left. He called her back and told her to put sugar into the tea, which she did, and then she left. Afterwards, he again called her back to mix it. At that point Rav Schach couldn't hold himself back from asking "Rebbi, לימדנו רבנו, please teach us, why bother your daughter so much? Say simply to bring a cup of tea with sugar." The Brisker Rav answered as follows, and I'll quote it first in Yiddish. "*Kibud av is gornit? Ich vill ir mezakeh zeyn.*" Translated: "Is kibud av v'aim a small matter? I want to merit her (with more mitzvos)."

This is similar to the Akeida, when Avraham Avinu was commanded to shecht Yitzchok. Rashi explains that Hashem did not reveal all of his intentions at once in order to give him schar on each command.

Now, I'm not implying that parents should follow this and ask for a cup of tea in the same manner like the Brisker Rav as it may sound a little comical. I'm merely bringing out the point how each act is another mitzvah.

Another insight which I want to mention is from Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky, who said that that one has to be one step ahead of the game. If a parent comes home and needs a hot or a cold drink, whether it's the summer or the winter, be there for them if you're available, and ask them immediately if and what they'd like to drink.

Similarly, if parents come home from shopping with a carload of groceries, go out and assist them before they ask you. Also, assist them in putting the food away.

Today's halacha is as follows: grab all the opportunities of serving and preparing food and drink that you can, and try to preempt them if you see that they're hungry or thirsty by asking, "What can I serve you?" Realize that each act which you do for

parents is another mitzvah d'oraysa and an expression of hakaras hatov toward them.

DAY 5 – STORY: A Purim to Remember

Harav Leibel Katzך א"ל was a beloved rav and author of popular sefarim. He passed away at the height of the Covid pandemic in the spring of 5780 (2020). The following is told in the first person by one of his sons.

It was not a hard decision. I knew what I had to do.

For years and years, I had celebrated the Purim seudah at the Boro Park home of my very special parents, Rav and Rebbetzin Label Katz. My father loved the Torah and he loved doing mitzvos. He had learned at Mesivta Torah Vodaath. A young talmid there once described his first Simchas Torah at the yeshivah:

“I had never been in a yeshivah for Simchas Torah until my first year at Torah Vodaath as a ninth grader. It was an amazing experience. What I remember most is watching a bachur named Label Katz — I was told he was the best bachur in the yeshivah at that time. He did not stop dancing with the Torah and in front of the Torah, from the beginning of the first hakafah until the end of the last hakafah. He was smiling and his face was shining the whole time. His suit was soaked with sweat as he danced up a storm. It was a sight that will remain with me forever.”

My father’s Purim seudah was very lively, full of singing, divrei Torah and dancing. For many years after I was married, we traveled to Brooklyn to be at the seudah; I didn’t want to miss it. But when I had not only a family of my own but also talmidim, I felt that the time had come to host my own Purim seudah. I called my parents to ask for their permission. They not only gave permission, they said that I was doing the right thing. I felt much better after hearing that. Even so, my wife and I decided that our family should join my parents for the Shabbos before Purim, Shabbos Parshas Zachor.

The Friday night seudah was beautiful. When it ended, my wife called me aside. She wanted me know that when she had passed by the kitchen in middle of the meal, she heard my mother telling my sister that Purim would not be the same without me.

I was stunned. I knew that my parents enjoyed having me at their Purim seudah but I had not realized how much it meant to them.

Without wasting a moment, I decided that if my coming for the seudah meant so much to them, then I would cancel my plans and come to Boro Park as I did every year. My sister tried to talk me out of it. “It’s true that Mommy said that, but she understands why it’s important for you to make your own seudah at home.”

My mother also tried to convince me that I should not change my plans.

But I knew what I had to do. I had to take a lesson from my wonderful father and mother who excelled in the mitzvah of kibur av v’aim.

When I was growing up, my mother’s parents lived in our house and my father’s parents lived across the street. My father never wasted a moment; if he wasn’t answering balacha questions or giving shiurim, he was learning. But he still found the time to cross the street a few times a day to check on his elderly parents, and see if they needed anything.

For many years, my parents spent their summers at Camp Ohr Shraga where my father would deliver halacha shiurim to hundreds of bachurim. He loved spending Shabbos in the pure, uplifting ruach of the camp. But when his parents aged and needed even more care, he and my mother would travel from the Catskills to Boro Park every Shabbos to be with his parents. They did this for ten years.

When I was eleven years old, my grandfather was very sick. My brother's aufruf was going to take place in Lakewood and my father did not want to go because he was afraid that something might happen over Shabbos. But the doctor told him, "Rabbi Katz, you have nothing to worry about. Your father's vital signs are good. Nothing bad will happen to him over the weekend." With a heavy heart, my father packed the car and we drove to Lakewood.

That Friday night, I was sitting next to my father in shul. In the middle of kabalas Shabbos, he turned to me with tears streaming down his face. "Daven for Zeidy now," he urged. "He needs your tefillos."

As soon as Shabbos ended, we received the news that my grandfather had passed away. He had been taken to the hospital on Friday shortly after sunset, when my father had urged me to daven for him. My father's neshama had sensed that something was happening to his father at that time.

So now you understand why kibud av v'aim is so important to me. I grew up watching how important this mitzvah was to my father and mother. So when I heard that my mother would miss having me at the Purim seudah there was no question in my mind about what to do.

After Shabbos, I notified my talmidim and others that we had changed our plans and would not be home for Purim. They fully understood and everyone made other arrangements.

The Purim seudah at my parents' house was as beautiful and lively as ever. There was a lot of singing and dancing, especially at the end when I danced with my father as we sang one of his favorite niggunim, "Achake Lo" about our longing for Mashiach.

That was the last time I saw my father.

A few days after Purim, people began getting sick with Covid. My father was hospitalized and none of us were allowed to visit him. He passed away shortly thereafter. How grateful I am that I spent that Purim seudah with my dear parents.

Now, I await Mashiach and techiyas hameisim when I will see my father once again.

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DAY 6 – HALACHA

B'ezras Hashem, today we'll expand on the other four areas of *kibud av v'aim* that are mentioned in the Shulchan Aruch: dressing, covering, assisting them in entering or exiting the home. These four areas apply mainly to elderly or incapacitated parents who have difficulty with dressing themselves, or covering themselves with a blanket, or even walking. However, it can also apply to assist healthy parents in putting on their coat, walking them downstairs to leave the home, or up the stairs to enter the home, or walking in the snow, as it can be slippery. So, the next time a parent puts on a coat or jacket, hold it for them so it will be easier for them to put their hands in the sleeves.

Needless to say, if one's parent requires a walker, a cane, or a wheelchair, it's a golden opportunity to *chap arein* more mitzvos of *kibud av v'aim*. I experienced this with my father when he was in a wheelchair toward the end of his life. When I wheeled him in the hospital, I had in mind the mitzvos of *מכניס ומוציא* – taking him in and out, when entering or exiting the room and ward that he was in.

The Rama adds a very important addition to this halacha. He writes “*ישמשנו בשאר דברים שהשמש משמש רבו*.” A child should serve his parents in other types of service that a servant serves his master. This is an eye-opener as it includes dozens of areas of serving and honoring parents which become a mitzvah d'oraysa, with all the benefits and rewards of it. Just think: If the daughter of the Chofetz Chaim came to New York to tell stories about her father and stayed in your home, no doubt that you'd be looking for ways to serve and assist her in any way possible – escorting her in and out to a waiting ride, helping her get into the car, or out of the car when she comes home; and while she's in your home, you'll constantly ask her if she needs anything. *All the more so* you should do the same to your parents.

The Shulchan Aruch adds another aspect when honoring one's parent: it should be done “*בסבר פנים יפות*,” meaning, “service with a smile.” Not only is what you do for your parents important, but also more important, is *how* you do it. Chazal say that if a person feeds his parents a gourmet meal or does any other act of honoring them, but expresses annoyance while doing so, for example, commenting on how burdensome it was, he'll be punished. Another child may honor his parents minimally, perhaps just serving them cake and coffee, but if she does it happily, she'll be doubly rewarded in the Olam Haba.

Today's halachos are: first, each day add a new idea of honoring your parents. And, the second halacha is to fulfill this mitzvah b'simcha. Give your parents the feeling that serving them is not burdensome, but on the contrary, you're happy to assist them in any way you can.

(Moreover, when honoring parents is burdensome, one should remember that performing one mitzvah with tzar is equal to one hundred mitzvos performed without tzar. Thus, helping parents with shopping when one feels difficulty doing so, is as if she helped them one hundred times!)

DAY 6 – STORY: A Perfect Shirt

The year was 1939. The German army had invaded Poland and had begun what they called “The Final Solution,” their evil plan to get rid of every last Jew in the world. In every Polish town that they invaded, they ordered all Jews, men, women and children, to come to the center of town. From there, the Germans claimed, the Jews would be “relocated to labor camps.”

When the town in which Dovid lived was invaded and orders were given, the Jews were told, “You have two hours to assemble in the town square. Each person may take one small suitcase in which you may place only essentials. Nothing else will be allowed on the train.”*

“Essentials” meant items such as food, a sweater or toothbrush ... things that are very much needed for day to day living. Some people tried to sew jewelry and other valuables in the lining of their coats. The people had no idea that the moment they would step off the train, everything they had brought with them would be taken away. They would be left with nothing.

Dovid’s father took a shirt from his closet, but before putting into his own suitcase he asked Dovid to iron it for him. “Please iron it well,” he added. Dovid did not understand. Iron it well? What for? As this point in time, did anyone really care if his shirt had a few creases? They were worried about survival, not about neatly pressed shirts.

But that is what Dovid’s father wanted, so Dovid took the iron and got to work. It was not often that he ironed, but when he finished, he thought he had done a good job and that his father would be pleased. He was in for a surprise.

“Dovid, my very dear son, I can see that you tried your best but if you look here, you’ll see that you missed a couple of creases. Please iron it again.”

Dovid was stunned. “Tati, I’m so sorry, but I don’t understand. Why is it so important that this shirt should be perfectly pressed? We don’t know what the future holds. All we want is to remain alive. Everyone is busy trying to figure out what to take along for survival. Why are you so concerned about this shirt?”

Dovid’s father was quiet for a few moments before answering. When he began to speak, there were tears in his eyes.

“Dovid, I know exactly what’s happening. I don’t need a perfectly pressed shirt. I have a feeling that the ‘essentials’ we’re taking along won’t be ours for very long.

*“Nothing is certain — except for one thing. The *zechus* of every *mitzvah* we do is ours forever, no one can take it away from us. And *kibud av v’aim* is a very great *mitzvah*. I don’t know if you and I will be together once we get off that train, so I’m trying to give you the *zechus* of *kibud av v’aim* now by asking you to do things for me. It’s not the shirt that I need. I need that you should have the *mitzvah* of doing something for me.”*

*Dovid was amazed. At a time of such fear and uncertainty, his father was thinking about ways to grant *zechuyos* to his son.*

When the war was over, Dovid was the only survivor of his town. Only Hashem knows why he survived, but Dovid felt that it might have to do with his father’s perfectly pressed shirt.

*Adapted with permission from *What a Story!* by Rabbi Yechezkel Spero and *My Parents and Me* by Rabbi Shimon Finkelman. Both books are copyright ArtScroll/Mesorah.*

DAY 7 – HALACHA

B'ezras Hashem, today, at the end of the first week of this program, we'll summarize the halachos that we learned during this past week and end with an inspiring story.

1. When we fulfill the mitzvah of kibud av v'aim, we should have two kavanos in mind. One is that you are doing a mitzvah d'oraysa, like when bentching or eating matzah. The second kavanah is from the Chinuch who writes that we should have the feeling of hakaras hatov toward our parents for bringing us into the world and for all they've done for us in the course of our lives. The Chayei Adam adds, that this mitzvah is like paying a debt that we owe our parents for all the good that they've done for us. You should practice this at least twice daily when performing the mitzvah of kibud av v'aim.
2. The Yesod V'shoresh Ha'avodah writes that we must set aside a set time to learn the halachos of honoring parents. Therefore, keep a little notepad to jot down the halachos mentioned in this program, and constantly review them during your spare minutes of the day.
3. We must stand up twice daily, once in the morning and once in the evening when a parent enters our domain. Sefardim should ask their rav for final ruling regarding their obligation in this halacha.
4. If one's parents are moichel or object for a child to arise for them, stand up when they're not looking.
5. The mitzvah extends to serving one's parents in areas that a servant serves his master, and it includes dozens of areas of honoring parents which become mitzvos d'oraysa with all the benefits and rewards of it. Therefore, look for opportunities to honor them and try to anticipate their needs before they ask.
6. And last: When serving your parents, do it “בסבר פנים יפות,” service with a smile. In other words, it's not only what you do for your parents that's important, but, more important is how you do it. A small act of serving coffee or tea with a smile, is worth more than serving a gourmet meal with an expression of how burdensome it was to prepare it.

The story of the week is from Seder Ha'doros about the Tana, Rav Yehoshua ben Elem, and cited in Lekach Tov on Chumash, Parshas Va'eschanan.

Rav Yehoshua ben Elem was told in a dream, “Be happy, for you will have the same share in Gan Eden as Nanas the butcher.” When he awoke, he thought with pain “Woe is to me. For as long as I can remember, I have always been a yarei Shamayim, a G-d-fearing Jew, and I constantly engage in Torah study. I never walked four amos without tzitzis and tefillin, and presently, I have eighty talmidim. Now, I am told that all of my labor is equal to that of a butcher?”

He summoned his students and told them that he's not going to enter the Bais Hamedrash, until he meets this butcher and determine why his portion in Gan Eden is equal to his own.

He went with his students in search of Nanas and when they arrived in the city where Nanas lived, he found Nanas in his butcher shop. When Nanas saw him, he prostrated himself and humbly asked him “To what do I owe the honor of a Torah sage visiting me in my butcher shop?”

Rav Yehoshua answered “I came to ask you: what do you do and what is your occupation?” Nanas answered “I am a butcher. I have elderly parents who are unable to stand on their feet and each day, I dress them, feed them, and wash them.” Rav Yehoshua then kissed him on his head and said, “My son, you are very fortunate to have the opportunity of honoring your parents, and fortunate am I to be together with you in Gan Eden.” End of story.

The obvious question is: We would expect, that for one to receive a reward like that of Rav Yehoshua ben Elem, he would have to do something extraordinary. However, from Nanas’ reply, we see that he merely honored his parents according to the halacha. So, what were the greatness of his actions?

The answer is in the wording of Nanas’ response: He told Rav Yehoshua that caring for his parents was part of his occupation, this meant that:

1. For him, the mitzvah of *kibud av v’aim* was just as important as earning a livelihood. And, the same time and energy he invested in his butcher shop, he invested in the mitzvah of *kibud av v’aim*.
2. It was not what he did, but how he did it. Just as he would treat a customer courteously, with a smile, “*פיות בסבר פנים*” and without ever showing displeasure, so too, he treated his parents in the same manner.
3. In addition to honoring them with a cheerful countenance, he made sure they were satisfied with the way he served them.
4. Furthermore, just as a businessman is constantly looking for new customers and opportunities to increase his earnings, Nanas constantly sought more and new opportunities to increase the honor that he gave his parents.
5. And finally, just as a salesman tries to improve his skills in salesmanship, so too, Nanas worked to improve the way he honored his parents.

It was this conscientious approach to the mitzvah of *kibud av v’aim* that satisfied Rav Yehoshua ben Elem and comforted him.

Therefore, we learn from this story that when a person feels that honoring his parents is a privilege and aspires to make it his life’s occupation, he has reached the goal that the Torah has set for him in fulfilling the mitzvah of *kibud av v’aim*.

DAY 7 – STORY: Cheer Up!

The elderly man sitting with Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman looked so sad. He did not want to waste the Rosh Yeshivah’s time, so he got straight to the point.

“Rosh Yeshivah,” he said with tears in his eyes, “all my life I have given to others, especially my children. Together with my wife, I took care of my children from the day they were born. I placed

them in the best yeshivos and Bais Yaakovs, I helped them with their learning, I bought them whatever they needed and took them wherever they needed to go. They appreciated this and have given me much nachas.

“But now in my old age, I cannot do anything for them. Now, the opposite is true. They do everything for me. They come to my apartment to cook for me, they shop for me, they take me to my doctors’ appointments. They do everything for me — and I do nothing for them. Oh, Rosh Yeshivah, it is so painful! I used to give to my children. Now I take from my children.”

Rav Abaron Leib looked as this wonderful man with love and compassion. “You are making a mistake,” he said softly. “You said that when your children were growing up, you bought them whatever they needed. But was the money really your money? Everything belongs to Hashem, so you were using Hashem’s money to help your children.

“But now, in your old age, you are really helping your children. How? By giving them so many opportunities to fulfill the mitzvah of kibur av. Do you know what your sons and daughters are earning every time they help you? Do you have any idea what kind of reward Hashem will give them for all that they do for you? There is no way that they can ever pay you back for the mitzvos you are allowing them to earn.”

“So cheer up! You are still a giver — a real giver!”

Sometimes kibur av v’aim can be difficult and this is especially true when a father or mother is elderly. At such times, we should remind ourselves that when we help our parents, we are actually helping ourselves by performing the great mitzvah of kibur av v’aim.

Adapted with permission from Honor Them Revere Them, a lesson-a-day on kibur av v’aim by Rabbi Shimon Finkelman and ybl”ch Rabbi Zechariah Wallerstein ז”ל, published by ArtScroll/Mesorah.

DAY 8 – HALACHA

We previously mentioned the Rama who writes that the mitzvah of kibud av v'aim extends to serving one's parents in other types of services that a servant serves his master. Thus, this mitzvah includes dozens of areas of honoring parents, which become mitzvos d'oraysa, with all its benefits and rewards.

B'eizras Hashem today, we'll discuss a common problem in fulfilling the mitzvah of kibud av v'aim: The feeling of being taken advantage of by one's parent.

Rav Avrohom Pam once remarked "It's common for a child to complain, 'My mother always tells me to help her. She never tells my brother or my sister to do anything and they never have to help in the house. The whole time it's just me and me again. It's all on my shoulders.'" "But," continues Rav Pam, "how terribly mistaken is this child's anger. If he only understood what a mitzvah of kibud aim is being presented to him, not only would he hasten to do it, but he would feel a great joy at each opportunity. Besides the reward of longevity in this world, and a special reward in Olam Haba, this mitzvah adorns those who keep it with good middos," (b'eizras Hashem, we'll explain at a later time how this mitzvah helps us develop our middos.)

Indeed, Rav Pam cites Chazal who relate that although Rav Avimi had five grown sons, when his father Rav Abahu called from the front gate to announce his arrival, he would run to open the door for him, calling as he ran, "Yes, I'm coming to open the door for you." Even though Rav Avimi was a great Torah sage, he nevertheless ran each time his father arrived, in order to fulfill the mitzvah of kibud Av. He never relegated the duty to any of his older sons because it was too precious to him.

I previously mentioned the mashal of imagining a multi-millionaire comes into your neighborhood and needs a temporary secretary to assist him in managing a project. He's willing to pay a hundred dollars an hour, and you're chosen for the job among the many applicants. Would you complain if at times you felt overworked? Of course not! At that salary, you would wish that he gave you more and more jobs so you can save up money to help support your future husband in kollel. Well, a hundred dollars an hour is not even a speck of dust compared to the schar one receives in Olam Haba for just preparing a cup of coffee or tea for your parent. Even a million dollars is a speck of dust. Therefore, you should feel honored and privileged every time your parent asks you to do something. Each time it's more Olam Haba and a healthier arichas yomim -longevity.

The same principle applies with the attitude, "I already helped or babysat today. Now it's my sibling's turn." With that reply, you just forfeited another mitzvah and the reward for it. So, for example, at the Shabbos table, instead of quarreling whose turn it is to serve the food or clear the table, on the contrary, the children should compete with each other who gets to do the mitzvah.

I would like to relate a small incident that happened to me many years ago. I live in Kiryat Sefer and taught in a seminary in Yerushalayim twice weekly. Each Tuesday, I would go to visit my elderly mother in Har Nof and spend time with her. One

time, I met an old friend, and in the conversation, he asked me what I was doing in Har Nof. When I replied “To visit my elderly mother,” he replied, “How lucky you are that you still have a parent to fulfill the mitzvah of kibud aim. I greatly envy you and wish that I also had the same opportunity.”

The halacha of the day is to feel that honoring your parents is a privilege, and not a burden, and grab every opportunity to chap arein this mitzvah, especially while you’re still single when more opportunities arise to fulfill this mitzva.

DAY 8 – STORY: A Five Cent Lesson

Rabbi Simcha Dovid Paritzky was a quiet man. Few people knew that he was an outstanding talmid chocham. When he moved to Baltimore, the Rosh Yeshivah of Yeshivas Ner Yisroel, Rav Yitzchok Ruderman, got to know him and had tremendous respect for him. In his later years when he would go to Florida for the winter, he was a chavrusa of the famous gadol Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky.

At home, he never raised his voice — almost never. His son, Dr. Michael Paritzky, recalls only one time when he heard his father raise his voice.

“I was around 8 years old and I was coloring while sitting on the floor of my father’s office, which was in our house. I heard my father tell my mother that someone who owed him money had mistakenly sent him an extra five cents. And he asked her to please send the five cents to the person by mail.

“My mother didn’t understand. ‘But it’s only five cents,’ she said. ‘And the stamp on the envelope will cost us three cents. (This was a long time ago.) I’m sure he won’t mind ...’

“That was when my father raised his voice. ‘Flora,’ he said to my mother, ‘please send the man his five cents. I don’t care if it’s \$500, \$50, \$5, 50 cents or five cents. If it doesn’t belong to us, I don’t want it.’

“My mother sent the money as my father had requested. That was the only time I ever heard my father raise his voice, and I never forgot what he said.”

Many years later, Dr. Michael Paritzky was a very successful foot-and-ankle surgeon. He was so successful that one day he decided that he had to expand his office by adding more examination rooms. The renovations would cost \$30,000. Dr. Paritzky was able to borrow this amount from a local bank with whom he had a very good relationship. He was to pay back a certain amount each month.

One day, Dr. Paritzky was in his office when he received a special envelope from the bank. Inside was a letter that stated that his \$30,000 loan had been paid in full. “Today is your lucky day, Doctor,” his secretary said. But Dr. Paritzky did not think so. He found the letter very troubling. “This letter is a mistake,” he said. “The loan is not paid up in full. I only paid back \$10,000 and I still owe \$20,000. The bank made a mistake, a big mistake.”

Dr. Paritzky knew that even if the bank would discover that this letter had been sent by mistake, they probably would not be able to demand that he pay back the rest of the loan. He could save himself \$20,000.

But Dr. Paritzky did not think for a moment that he should keep the money. That's because, in his mind, he heard his father saying, "I don't care if it's \$500, \$50, \$5, 50 cents or five cents. If it doesn't belong to us, I don't want it."

He told his secretary, "Please arrange for the patients in the waiting room to see one of our other doctors. I must go to the bank right now."

He arrived at the bank and went straight to the office of the president, who knew him well. Dr. Paritzky showed the president the letter he had received from the bank. "It says here that I paid my loan in full. But I know that I paid only \$10,000. I still owe \$20,000."

"Are you sure?" asked the president. "Perhaps a friend of yours paid for you without your knowing. Or perhaps you simply forgot that you paid."

"No one paid for me," Dr. Paritzky said with confidence. "And I didn't pay it either. Your office made a mistake." The president then checked the bank records and saw that Dr. Paritzky was right. He still owed \$20,000.

The president was stunned. "Sir, I have been involved with this bank for many years, and I worked in other banks before that. And I have never met anyone as honest and G-d fearing as you are."

The president then called together the bank's entire staff and told the story of "the most decent and honorable man I ever met."

Dr. Paritzky's honesty had created a great kiddush Hashem. And he attributed his actions on that day to the lesson he had learned from his G-d fearing father many years before.

Kitzur Shulchan Aruch says that the best way to honor our parents is by learning Torah and doing mitzvos. This is especially true if we do mitzvos because of what we learned from observing our parents. Dr. Paritzky's kiddush Hashem surely brought great pleasure to the nesbamos of both his father and mother.

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DAY 9 – HALACHA

Yesterday, I addressed the issue of dealing with a child who feels that she is being taken advantage of by her parents who always ask her to help out. Today we will deal with a similar issue: A child whose honoring his parents is indeed a burden, for example, elderly parents, invalid parents, ill parents who require extra care, or even healthy parents who are high- need, and I'll present some insights into how to cope with this.

We're all familiar with Chazal in Pirkei Avos who state “לפום צערא, אגרא,” a person's schlar for fulfilling a mitzvah is proportionate to the tzar, to the discomfort and pain, in fulfilling it. We previously mentioned that the Avos D'Rebbi Nosson adds “טוב אחד בצער ממאה שלא בצער,” meaning, one mitzvah performed with tzar, is equal to a hundred mitzvos without tzar. For example, assisting a parent or preparing for him a cup of coffee when you're tired or exhausted is equal to helping him one hundred times or preparing one hundred cups of coffee for him.

The next thing to bear in mind is the mashal that we mentioned of imagining a multi-millionaire who comes into your neighborhood and needs temporary help in managing a project. You are hired and he pays you a salary of one hundred dollars an hour. After a hard day's work, you come home exhausted to rest, and you receive a phone call that he needs another job now, and he's willing to pay you double overtime, two hundred dollars per hour. Wow! I don't think that you'll even think twice, and you'll run over to his office to do the job. The question is: where did this extra energy come from? The answer is simple: “money talks.” But, as previously mentioned, even two million dollars is not even a speck of dust compared to the reward awaiting a child who honors his parents, and especially under stress when it's multiplied one hundred times.

The third point, which is the center of our discussion today and tomorrow, is viewing this issue from a totally different angle, starting with the famous story of Dama ben Nesina.

Chazal relate that Dama ben Nesina was sitting among the noblemen of Rome clothed in garments of gold. Suddenly, his mother entered the room, tore his garments, and hit him in the head. All of this time, Dama remained silent, and didn't react negatively toward her.

The Shulchan Aruch writes this incident in halacha as follows: “עד היכן מוראם – to what extent is the מורא that one must accord his parents? If a person is dressed in expensive clothing and sitting at the head table with dignitaries of the קהילה, and one of his parents approaches him and humiliates him by tearing his clothing, hitting him on his head, and spitting on him, (like Dama ben Nesina's mother). The Shulchan Aruch continues: “לא יכלם אותם – he shouldn't say a word to his parent, אלא ישתוק וירא ממלך מלכי המלכים שהוא צוהו בכך – but he has to remain silent out of fear of Hakadosh Baruch Hu who commanded him to do so.”

How do we understand this halacha? The tzar – emotional pain of such an embarrassment is a thousand times more painful and stressful than getting up in the middle of the night to tend to the needs of one's parent.

The answer lies in understanding the Torah's obligation of honoring and revering one's parents, which will be explained in tomorrow.

DAY 9 – STORY: Not for All the Money in the World

The phone rang in the home of Shlomo Simcha, a popular singer who lives in Toronto. "Mr. Simcha," the voice said, "my name is Chesky Stein and I'm a chosson. I'm getting married on Lag Baomer and I would like to hire you to sing at my wedding."*

Shlomo checked his calendar; he had not yet been hired to sing on that night. They agreed on a price and Shlomo wrote down all the necessary information.

The next day, Shlomo received a phone call from an old customer. "Shlomo, this is Daniel Morgan. You sang at the weddings of our other sons and now our youngest son is getting married. The wedding will be on Lag Baomer."*

Mr. Morgan was a very wealthy man and Shlomo knew that he would pay him a lot more money than Chesky Stein had agreed to pay. But that made no difference. "I'm really sorry Mr. Morgan, but I can't sing at your son's wedding. I already agreed to sing at someone else's wedding on that same night."

Mr. Morgan was quiet for a few moments. "I'll tell you what," he finally said, "tell the other fellow that I will give him \$3000 if he will allow you to sing at my son's wedding."

Shlomo called the other chosson. "I'm sorry," Chesky said, "but I don't agree to this deal. I still want you to sing at my wedding."

But Mr. Morgan was not ready to give up. When Shlomo told him that Chesky had turned down his offer, Mr. Morgan replied, "Tell him that I will give him \$5000."

Chesky still would not agree to release Shlomo from their agreement. When Mr. Morgan heard this, he upped his offer to \$10,000.

Chesky did not agree.

This time Mr. Morgan said, "Look, you sang at the weddings of all my other sons and it added so much to the wedding. We want the same for this son. Tell that fellow that he should name his price. I will give whatever amount of money he wants so that he will allow you to sing at my son's wedding."

When Shlomo told this to Chesky he was amazed at his reply. "There is no amount of money that would cause me to release you from our agreement. I want you to sing at my wedding."

"That's fine," Shlomo said, "I will sing at your wedding. But if you don't mind my asking: Why is it so important to you that I should sing at your wedding? Wouldn't it make more sense to take all this money he is offering you and hire another singer for your wedding?"

This was Chesky's answer:

"My father took ill many years ago and is disabled. All these years, my mother raised us, took care of my father and also earned money to support her family.

"When I became engaged and we starting to plan the wedding, my mother commented, 'It would be so nice if Shlomo Simcha could sing at your wedding.' That is why I hired you. I hired you because

that is what my mother wanted. By having you sing at my wedding, I am expressing my hakaras batov for all that my mother had done for all of us all these years.

“And that is why no amount of money can make me change my mind.”

Shlomo Simcha was touched by this young man’s words. And so should all of us. What a beautiful way to show appreciation to a very special mother.

Adapted with permission from My Parents and Me by Rabbi Shimon Finkelman, published by ArtScroll/Mesorah

DAY 10 – HALACHA

Today is a continuation of yesterday's capsule, & b'ezras Hashem, we'll explain the story of Dama ben Nesina who remained silent when he was humiliated by his mother in public. We'll exemplify this in today's day and age by changing the scene to a bar mitzvah celebration. Imagine, that while the bar mitzvah boy is saying his drasha, his mother walks up to him, tears off his jacket, spits in his face, and hits him. We would expect the son to retort in some way and we would be astonished if he would accept this treatment in silence. How do we explain this?

Before I explain this, I want to make two comments on the story of Dama ben Nesina:

First of all, Tosfos is bothered by the obvious question, "Why would a mother embarrass her child in public in front of Roman noblemen?" They simply answer that she was not normal.

Secondly, this halacha of remaining silent from answering back a parent is only after a child is humiliated. However, if the child knows that his mother or the father is going to humiliate him, he can stop them before they do such a thing.

Back to the story. The key to understanding this silence lies in understanding the Torah's obligation of honoring and revering one's parents. We mentioned many times the Chinuch and the Chayei Adam who write that the ta'am of the mitzvah is to repay the parents for all they've done for us, especially in our younger years. First and foremost is the gift of life - they brought us into the world. If we were to enumerate all the benefits that a child receives from his parents, our list would be endless. Just think of how many times a child is fed, dressed, diapered, and held in his infancy. Then, add all the sleepless nights spent tending to a crying or sick child, and taking the child to the doctor plus the infinite times that a parent just stays at home so that the child won't be alone. All of these chasadim are only part of the picture, since each of them involves numerous preparations. For example, take a simple act of preparing a vegetable soup for dinner. First the mother must go to the store to buy vegetables, which involves selecting, weighing, and paying. She then brings home the vegetables, washes and peels them, puts them in the pot on the fire, seasons and cooks them. Then, she finally serves the family. When the family finishes eating, she puts the left-overs in the refrigerator, and finally, she washes the utensils. This is not to mention the father's role in earning a living to support the family. So, without exaggeration, parents are human chesed machines. With this in mind, gratitude toward our parents can reach astronomical proportions. And this is one of the reasons why the Sefer HaChinuch writes that a child must put utmost effort into his parents' honor and welfare. He writes that a child must bestow on his parents:

שיוכל כל כבוד וכל תועלת שיוכל lit. all honor and benefits that he could accord them.

A child must constantly remember that his parents exerted themselves tremendously to raise him. Thus, children should never say they don't have time for their parents, or that it's too late to be bothered, or that their parents are demanding something too difficult for them to do. When parents spent sleepless

nights caring for these same children, did they ever give up and say they're tired, or complain that caring for them was so difficult? Children should especially bear this in mind when caring for elderly parents who need extra care, attention, and understanding.

I further explain this concept with a mashal of a person who is in an automobile crash and his car fell into a ditch off the road. He's pinned to the wheel and can't move to open the door and escape. He pulls out his cell phone, calls 911 and within a minute, police cars come with blaring sirens to the rescue. Sergeant O'reilly approaches the ditched car with a crowbar, opens the door, and pulls him to safety. About a minute afterwards, the car goes up in flames. The sergeant literally saved his life. Now if Sergeant O'reilly, happens to embarrass the person who was in the accident by saying he was a reckless driver, would he retort? Of course not, because he owes him his life. And similarly, there wouldn't be any task too difficult to do for Sergeant O'reilly.

Now we begin to understand how Dama ben Nesina and our bar mitzvah boy can remain silent after being humiliated, and why no task should be too difficult for a child to do for his parents.

DAY 10 – STORY: A Lesson from Yosef HaTzaddik

The year was 1962. Chaim Dovid Ackerman, a bachur who lived in the United States, had spent two years learning in Eretz Yisroel without ever going home (as was common in those days). And now he was going home to spend yom tov with his family.

Chaim Dovid was learning at the Chevron Yeshivah in Yerushalayim. The yeshivah had talmidim from all over the world, including England. Before Chaim Dovid was to fly home, his friends from London invited him to arrange a stopover so that he could visit England for the first time.

Chaim Dovid called his parents and they told him that if that's what he wanted to do, then they were okay with it. Before long, his plane was touching down at Heathrow Airport in London.

On Friday, the bachurim were excited to learn that Rav Sholom Schwadron, the famed "Maggid of Yerushalayim," who also was Chevron Yeshivah's baal tefillah on Yomim Noraim, was in London and would be delivering a shmues in a local shul that night.

It was the week of Parshas Vayigash, in which Yosef HaTzaddik reveals himself to his brothers and then has his long-awaited reunion with his father Yaakov. Rav Schwadron was sure to have something interesting to say.

He certainly did. This is what he said:

Yosef HaTzaddik, was separated from his father for 22 years until they were finally reunited in Mitzrayim. The Torah says that when Yaakov Avinu arrived, "Yosef appeared to him" (Beraishis 46:29). Rashi explains: "Yosef appeared to his father."

Rashi never wastes words. He is always teaching us something that we might not have known. What is he teaching us by saying, "Yosef appeared to his father"? Isn't that what the pasuk says?

To understand the answer to this question, we have to ask ourselves a question. What should Yosef have been thinking as he was heading to the reunion with his father? What would the average son be thinking as he was about to see his beloved father whom he had not seen in 22 years? Most people would probably be thinking, "I can't wait to see my father!"

Yosef, however, had a different thought. He was thinking, "I can't wait for my father to see me! My father has missed me so much. He has suffered so much. I can't wait to bring him pleasure when I appear before him."

This is what Rasbi means when he says, "Yosef appeared to his father."

Chaim Dovid could not believe what he had just heard. It was as if Rav Schwadron was telling him, "Why are spending time in London with friends when your parents have not seen you in two years? Shouldn't you be thinking about the pleasure you will give them by coming home? Why are you postponing your reunion with your parents who care about you so much?"

Sunday morning, Chaim Dovid took the first available flight to America "to appear before his parents" and give them nachas.

Adapted with permission from The Maggid Speaks by Rabbi Paysach Krohn and My Parents and Me by Rabbi Shimon Finkelman, both published by ArtScroll/Mesorah

DAY 11 – HALACHA

B'ezras Hashem, today, we'll discuss the issur of causing one's parents tzar, any type of distress or discomfort. We'll begin with the issur of awaking one's sleeping parent by citing another famous story about Dama ben Nesina, who lived during the time of the second Bais Hamikdosh era.

The Chachamim came to him to purchase a precious stone they needed for the choshen, the kohen gadol's breastplate, and offered him six hundred thousand gold coins. However, since the key to the strongbox was under his father's pillow, Dama chose not to sell it to them in order not to wake his father. Hashem rewarded him for this sacrifice of a huge sum of money, and the following year, a parah adumah was born in his herd which he sold to the Chachamim for the same amount that he had lost the previous year while honoring his father.

The obvious lesson of this story is the importance of not waking a sleeping parent. The Bais Yosef derives an additional halacha from this incident: that a child may not cause a parent distress, even if by doing so it will mean sacrificing a tremendous monetary loss. Just to get an idea of what Dama lost, if we can assume that one gold coin is worth least ten dollars, six hundred thousand coins was six million dollars, no small sum even for today, and certainly not for then.

Therefore, when parents are resting on Shabbos, or after they go to sleep early on Friday night, a child must be very, very careful not to do anything in the home that may wake his parents. Whisper when talking near their room, close doors slowly so that they don't slam, don't walk on wooden floors with heels that make noise, and keep smaller children from playing in close range of the parents' bedroom. Even if a parent dozes off on a living room recliner, you must keep the house silent.

Chazal relate an incident that Rav Abahu once asked his son Rav Avimi for a drink of water. By the time Rav Avimi went fetch water from a well, his father had dozed off. Nevertheless, Rav Avimi remained standing by his father's bedside with the water in his hand, waiting patiently until he awoke. Chazal say that in this merit, he was zoche to explain a whole perek in Tehillim.

Another example of not awaking a parent is when returning from a simcha late at night, and the parents are sleeping. – don't slam the front door closed, immediately, remove your high-heeled shoes, slowly close the bathroom and your bedroom door, and for sure, don't speak on cell phones next to your parents' bedroom, and talk softly to your siblings.

An exception to this halacha is if a parent requests to be woken, for example, a father takes an afternoon nap and wants to be woken make a minyan for mincha, or to meet a chavrusa, or go to a shiur; or a parent has an appointment in the middle of the day; or you receive an important phone call for the parent, and you know that if you don't wake the parent, he'll be upset, then, it's mutar to wake them. Nevertheless, if possible, ask another person to wake him, for example, if the father wants to be woken, ask the mother to wake him, or if there is no parent available then, but you have a friend in the house, ask the friend to knock on the bedroom door to wake the parent.

Iy”H tomorrow, we’ll continue on with this topic with other examples of not causing a parent tzar.

DAY 11 – STORY: *The Chofetz Chaim Comes to Town*

The city of Vilna was abuzz with excitement. The leader of the generation, Rabbi Yisroel Meir HaKohen Kagan, better known as the “Chofetz Chaim,” was coming for a visit. There was going to be a huge kabalas panim, when every man and boy would have the opportunity to pass by the tzaddik and perhaps shake his hand.

In Vilna’s Rameilles Yeshivah, it was announced that the rebbeim and all talmidim would take part in the kabalas panim. The day before the Chofetz Chaim’s arrival, Shabsi Goldman, who lived in another city, received a letter from his father.*

Dear Shabsi:

We hope that you are well and that you are progressing in your learning. My dear Shabsi, I have heard the news that the great tzaddik of the generation the Chofetz Chaim is coming to Vilna. I have also heard that there will be a grand kabalas panim where all the Jews of the city will gather to greet the tzaddik. Shabsi, I am afraid for you to participate in that gathering. There will be thousands of people there and very possibly there will be a lot of pushing in a crowded area. You are very thin and not tall, and you might get hurt chas v’shalom. Shabsi, I know how badly you want to see the Chofetz Chaim but I am asking you to obey your father’s instructions and remain in the beis midrash of your yeshivah even as the other bachurim go to take part in that gathering.

*Thank you for always being the most wonderful son. With so much love,
Tati*

Shabsi read the letter a few times. He felt very bad. He knew that his parents tended to worry a lot. He was probably the only bachur in the yeshivah to receive such a letter. And he had never seen the Chofetz Chaim. Given the tzaddik’s age, this might be his only opportunity to see him. But he would not disobey his father. On the day of the Chofetz Chaim’s arrival, the entire Rameilles Yeshivah attended the kabalas panim — except for Shabsi Goldman, who remained in the beis midrash learning. When the grand reception was over, the bachurim returned to the yeshivah, and Shabsi’s classmates had a lot to say.

“Oh Shabsi, what you missed! It was amazing! Our whole shiur stood in front of the Chofetz Chaim — we got to see him from up close. And that’s not all — he gave all of us a bracha for arichas yomim. What a shame you weren’t there!”

Shabsi felt bad, but he did not regret listening to his father. He felt that the Chofetz Chaim would have told him that he did the right thing by obeying his father’s instructions.

Years passed. Europe became engulfed in the Second World War and the majority of the Jews of Vilna were killed. Shabsi survived the war and made his way to Eretz Yisroel. He managed to make contact with some of his former classmates who had survived the war and kept in touch with them. All of them lived to a ripe old age as the Chofetz Chaim had blessed them. And Shabsi Goldman, who had the Torah’s bracha for those who honor their parents, outlived them all.

Adapted with permission from My Parents and Me by Rabbi Shimon Finkelman published by ArtScroll/Mesorah.

DAY 12 – HALACHA

B'ezras Hashem, today we'll continue with other examples of not causing a parent tzar, and we'll refer to the story mentioned yesterday of Dama ben Nesina, who forfeited a huge sum of money in order not to awake his father.

Rav Moshe Feinstein asks the obvious question about this story: Surely, Dama should have woken his father, for when he learned of the huge sum that his son had forfeited, he would have certainly felt distressed at this loss. In this case, it would come under the halacha that we learned yesterday, that it's mutar for a child to wake a parent if the parent would desire to be woken in order not to miss a minyan or an appointment. Clearly, Dama's father would be upset if he missed an opportunity to acquire six hundred thousand gold coins, especially if the total value would be six million dollars, no small sum even for today.

Rav Moshe answers that evidently, Dama's father was mentally unstable, and so he regarded his sleep more important than his son earning a huge profit. (Interesting note: Dama's parents were a good shidduch, we previously cited Tosfos who comments that his mother was also mentally unstable.)

We learn from Rav Moshe's explanation a tremendous chidush in the mitzvah of kibud av v'aim: the requirements of honoring and revering parents are individual and are dependent on the parents' needs and their quirks, however bizarre they may be. Even if a parent's request makes no sense, nonetheless, the child must realize that her obligations remain the same. One must know how his parents want to be honored. Children who decide for themselves how and when to honor their parents are not keeping the mitzvah properly and are denying themselves the many benefits that this mitzvah has to offer. For example, a mother asks a child to wear a sweater because the weather is changing and it's chilly outside. However, the child doesn't think he needs one and she actually feels warm in it. (People say that when a mother asks a child to put on a sweater, it's the mother who's really cold, but that's irrelevant.) Since by not putting on the sweater you'll cause your mother tzar, you must obey her wishes. Similarly, if she requests for you to take vitamins, which you really think aren't necessary, or to do a household task now, rather than later, and you think it can be done later, you must listen to your mother, otherwise you'll cause her tzar.

There are many examples of not causing one's parent tzar, and baruch Hashem, our parents are mentally healthy and we won't be put through the trials Dama experienced. But since it's inevitable that a parent will ask a child to do something that she doesn't feel makes sense, the child must follow her parent's request or quirk no matter what the child feels about it.

Therefore, think twice before doing anything that your parents may dislike.

Realize that the issur of not causing one's parent tzar is part of the mitzvah of yirah – revering parent, and it includes 1. Disobeying a parent's wishes, and 2. Not doing anything that they detest.

And conversely, giving one's parents satisfaction is included in the mitzvah of kibud av v'aim.

DAY 12 - STORY: A Special Seder

Like every adult, I have special memories of my parents' Seder table.

My parents, R' Shmuel and Mrs. Selma Finkelman, struggled to pay their monthly bills, but our Seder table always looked beautiful. When my mother had the opportunity to choose a gift of silver from her employers, she chose a magnificent Kol shel Eliyahu that sat in the center of the table. That kos is now one of my most precious possessions and adorned my Seder table year after year.

One Seder at my parents' home stands out in my mind, not because of what took place, but because of what did not take place.

Like all children, my brothers and sisters and I would come home from school before Pesach excited to share all that we had learned about the yom tov and the Haggadah. One year, Bubby, my father's mother, came to spend yom tov with us. Bubby was old and frail; not long after this yom tov, her mind was not the same and eventually, it became necessary for her to live in a nursing home.

That year, before the Seder was to begin, my father told his children, "Bubby is here and she is not able to stay up very late. But she wants to be at the Seder. So we will have to make the Seder quicker than we normally do."

I remember how disappointed I was. Besides not being able to share all my divrei Torah, I knew that when we came back to yeshivah after yom tov, my classmates would announce how late their Seder ended. The later it ended, the more proud the boy was. And now, I probably would have the shortest Seder of all.

Of course, we did as my father said. Years later, I thought about that Seder and realized how right he had been.

My father excelled in his kibur aim. He worked hard, long hours and usually arrived home at around 6:30. My grandmother lived around two miles away and my parents did not own a car. Yet my father made sure to visit his mother often, even when her mind was not clear and she did not even recognize members of her own family.

My father also showed great respect for his mother-in-law, my other grandmother. After my grandfather passed away, "Bobby" would come to us for Shabbos very often. She would bring a treat for her grandchildren and a special treat for my father. It was obvious that she thought very highly of him and appreciated the way he honored her. She also appreciated what a good husband he was to my mother.

And when my mother was out of earshot, my grandmother would tell us, "Your mother is such a good daughter.

She takes care of everything I need and is never too busy to help me whenever I need her."

Adapted with permission from Honor Them Revere Them by Rabbi Shimon Finkelman and ybl"ch Rabbi Zechariah Wallerstein published by Art.Scroll/Mesorah

DAY 13 – HALACHA

B'ezras Hashem, today we'll give another insight into not causing our parents distress even under extreme circumstances, and even if it involves having to give up something that's precious to us, as illustrated by the following two stories.

The Arizal, considered his daily tevila in the mikveh as a vital part of his avodas Hashem. Nevertheless, his mother forbade him to go to the mikveh in the winter because it might harm his health (there were no indoor heated mikvas in those days). Despite the Arizal's devotion to tevila, he obeyed his mother's wish in order not to upset her.

A similar story is told of the previous Belzer Rebbe, Rav Aharon, before he became the rebbe. After recovering from an illness, the doctors forbade him to go to the mikveh. His father, Rav Yissachar Dov, was apprehensive that his son would not listen to the doctors, and specially commanded him to heed their instructions.

Nevertheless, all during the cold winter months he was observed by one of his cousins entering the mikveh building daily before dawn. The cousin could not believe that Rav Aharon would disobey his father, and early one morning he came and hid in the inner mikveh room. He saw Rav Aharon approach the mikveh and just barely dip his feet in the water. Then he said, "I am doing the mitzvah of kibud av by not immersing in the mikveh."

When the cousin related this to his father, Rav Yissachar Dov, he remarked, "That's a true tevila that purifies and sanctifies one's soul."

Our Sages were not only aware of the kedusha that one gets by immersing in a mikveh, they actually felt this kedusha. But they also realized the importance of listening to their parents and not causing them any distress. They understood that the holiness they received in this way surpassed the holiness that would be obtained from immersing in a mikveh.

Thus, we also learn from these stories a very important concept: a person will receive kedusha by obeying her parents' wish and not causing them distress.

Some interesting insights into causing a parent distress:

1. When siblings quarrel in their parents' presence, or when older siblings don't get along with each other.
2. Causing parents unnecessary worry, such as, when a child is away from home and doesn't keep in contact with her parents.
3. Rav Avrohom Pam once said that children should not come home late from a date as their parents will probably not go to sleep until their child returns safely.
4. If a child is away from home for a duration of time, for example, a sleepaway camp or to Eretz Yisroel, she should keep in contact with her parents in a way that they won't worry about her.

It goes without saying that children have to be trained that when a parent says "NO" it's no without if ands or buts. This is sometimes referred to as vitamin N.

As Rav Shimon Schwab once remarked “Lesson number one for children to learn is that the main people in the house are the father and mother, they are the balei habayis – the ruling authorities in the house to be honored and obeyed.

The underlying principle of previous 3 shiurim is that we must constantly remember to be careful not to cause any displeasure to our parents.

DAY 13 – STORY: A Bar Mitzvah to Remember

It was the month of Adar 5698 (1938). Reb Shmaya and Mrs. Rivkah Reichman, of Vienna were preparing to celebrate the bar mitzvah of their oldest son Eli. The plan was to have Eli called to the Torah on Shabbos morning in the Adas Yisroel shul where they davened and then to hold a melava malka celebration on Motzei Shabbos.

But a few days earlier, they received the news that Eli’s grandfather, Reb Dovid Reichman, had suffered a stroke and was too weak to travel from his home in Beled, Hungary. If the bar mitzvah would take place as planned, he would not be able to attend. What should they do? To Reb Shmaya and his devoted wife, there was only one solution.

“If Zeidy cannot come to the bar mitzvah, then we will bring the bar mitzvah to him. We will cancel our plans here in Vienna and celebrate with a small crowd in Beled. But Zeidy will be there and that is what is most important.”

They were not able to take their younger children along. Reb Shmaya, his wife and the older children arrived in Beled on erev Shabbos and began to prepare for a special Shabbos with Zeidy and Bubby Reichman. On Friday night, as they were eating the seudas Shabbos, they heard shouting in the street but tried to ignore it. They had come to celebrate and did not want anything to mar their joy.

On Motzei Shabbos, as they were preparing the grand melava malka, they found out that the shouting had come from non-Jews who were celebrating something terrible. On that Friday night, March 12, 1938, German troops had marched into Vienna as Germany officially annexed Austria, making it part of the German empire. This was to become known as the Anschluss (Annexation) and was another step that the wicked leader of Germany had taken toward his twin goals of conquering the world and ridding it of its Jews, chas v’shalom.

That Friday night, Nazi soldiers entered Jewish neighborhoods in Vienna where they beat Jewish men, smashed Jewish store windows and set some buildings on fire. They also searched for Reb Shmaya Reichman, whom they knew was a wealthy businessman. They could not find him because he had gone to Beled, Hungary so that his elderly, ill father could participate in his son’s bar mitzvah.

Reb Shmaya never returned to Vienna. Eventually, he would settle in Toronto, Ontario where he and his children were known as exceptionally fine, generous people who were always ready to help another Jew. One of his sons, Reb Moshe, was to become one of the greatest balei tzedakah the world has ever known. And all of this was possible because Reb Shmaya and his wife could not celebrate their Eli’s bar mitzvah without Eli’s zeidy being there. Kibud av had saved Reb Shmaya’s life.

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DAY 14 – HALACHA

B'ezras Hashem, today's capsule will a summary of the halachos that we learned this past week, and we'll end with an inspiring story.

1. Feel that honoring your parents is a privilege and not a burden. Grab every opportunity to chap arein whenever you can while they're still alive. Therefore, never feel that you're being taken advantage of when your parents always ask you to do something for them.
2. Children should never say that they don't have time for their parents, or that it's too late to be bothered, or that their parents are demanding something that's too difficult for them to do. When parents spent sleepless nights caring for these same children, did they ever give up and say they're tired, or complain that caring for them was so difficult?
3. Don't do anything that can cause your parents tzar – stress, discomfort, or displeasure.
4. Be careful not to wake your sleeping parent, such as, on Shabbos afternoon, or when coming home late from a simcha, or even if a parent is dozing on a recliner.
5. If a parent requests to be woken, try to have the other parent or a friend wake him.
6. Even if the parent asks the child to do something that the child doesn't feel makes sense, the child must follow his parent's requests or quirks, no matter what she feels about it.
7. A person will receive kedusha by obeying her parents' wish and not causing them distress, as noted by the story of the Belzer Rebbe.

The story of the week is a conversation overheard by a rav that occurred after a late maariv minyan. Reuven asks his friend "Shimon, if you're going my way, can you give me a ride?"

"Sorry," replied Shimon "I'm not going home now, I'm on my way to my parents." "What do you mean? You're going to your parents now?"

"Yes," answered Shimon, "You see, after I come home from work, eat dinner, help my wife in the home and with the children and then go to my nightly shiur and daven Maariv.

Then, when my day is finished, I go over to help my parents. They're elderly, and sometimes they need help in straightening up their home, or help in repairs and things like that. Or sometimes, it's just to help them finish up the day and get into to bed."

"Wow!" exclaimed Reuven "That's gevaldig that you go so late to your parents and take care of them. You do this once every week?"

"No, I go there every night." Replied Shimon in a calm tone. "What? You do this every night?" Exclaimed Reuven.

Revan's exclamation was accompanied by a puzzled look from Shimon. Shimon did not understand the reason for this amazement. He replied simply, "But they're my parents."

To Shimon, honoring his parents was so basic that he could not see how someone could think otherwise. Whenever the rav who overheard this story recounted it, he always remarked that he had never learned so much about the mitzvah of kibud av v'aim or been so inspired as he was from this short conversation.

So, the next time things get difficult when fulfilling the mitzvah of kibud av v'aim, just think to yourselves: "But, they're my parents."

DAY 14 – STORY: For the Sake of His Learning

"A person must need a very great zechus to marry a gadol hador. How did the Rebbetzin merit to marry her husband?"

This question was asked to Rebbetzin Batsheva Kanievsky a"b, wife of the prince of Torah in our generation, Rav Chaim Kanievsky ז"ל. No one can claim to know the answer to this question for sure, but Rebbetzin Kanievsky offered a possible answer.

"When I was young, I honored my father (Harav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv) very much under difficult circumstances." "It happened during the Israeli War of Independence in 1948. There were severe food shortages; people had to stand in line for hours to buy bread and other basic foods. My father would stand in line every day to get food for our family. My father learned Torah every free moment, from early morning until late at night. His having to stand on line every day took away much precious time from his learning.

"One day, I said to him, 'Abba, from now on, I will take care of getting food so that you can learn without being disturbed.'

"At that time, we were not living at home in Meah Shearim because our home was too close to the war zone. We were living temporarily in the Mishkenot neighborhood with my mother's parents, Rav and Rebbetzin Aryeh Levin. But to get our daily food rations, I had to walk to Meah Shearim where our apartment was, because food was given out in each neighborhood only for residents of that neighborhood. And we were visitors to the Mishkenot neighborhood, not residents.

"It was very dangerous during wartime for me, a young girl, to walk every day from Mishkenot to Meah Shearim to stand on line for food. But I did it so that my father could learn our holy Torah without interruption.

"Perhaps that is why Hashem granted me such a special husband who, like my father, never stops learning."

Adapted with permission from Rav Elyashiv by Rabbi Yehudah Heimowitz and My Parents and Me by Rabbi Shimon Finkelman published by ArtScroll/Mesorah

DAY 15 – HALACHA

I previously mentioned that single girls should chap arein and grab every opportunity to fulfill the mitzvos of kibud u'moreh av v'aim while they're still in their parents' home.

When I was informed that there are also married women in this group, I was very impressed to hear that these women are continuing to grow spiritually from these classes, and B'ezeras Hashem, and the in next two capsules we'll discuss a married woman's obligation in this mitzvah, vis-a-vis her obligation to her husband and her family. Nevertheless, the information is also helpful for the single participants to keep in mind when they'll b'ezeras Hashem get married and have families of their own.

The first yesod is the psak of the Shulchan Aruch and the Schach who write that a married woman has the same obligation and mitzvah of kibud av v'aim as long as it doesn't interfere with her obligations to her husband. I've spoken to rabbanim who told me that the mitzvah of kibud av v'aim should also not interfere with her obligations as a mother to her children. Therefore, you should look for as many opportunities as you can to fulfill this mitzvah when visiting your parents, or when they visit you. Some examples that we've mentioned before: stand up when they enter the room, anticipate their needs, ask if they need help with anything, see if the garbage has to be removed, wash dishes, help in arranging items in a cupboard or folding their wash, preparing and serving them a drink, help with putting on their overcoat, and see if they need assistance in leaving or entering their home or going in and out of a car by opening the door of the home or the car for them.

Also, when you're not in your parent's presence, or you live in another city, call and send them e-mails regularly, send them pictures of grandchildren, birthday, anniversary, and l'shana tova wishes etc. Remember the lesson of R' Yehoshua ben Elem: Honoring parents should be our occupation. And we're trying to cash in on profits of this mitzvah no less than looking for profits from a business.

The second yesod is that the best method of chinuch to train one's children in the mitzvah of kibud av v'aim is for the parents to role model this mitzvah with their own parents, i.e., the grandparents, as children learn more from what they see than what they hear. Therefore, when one's children are of age, they should see how you honor and respect your parents when you visit them or when they visit you, and this will serve as a role model for them how they should honor and respect you.

The more that they see how you honor your parents, the more of an impact it will make on them to imitate your behavior. And don't forget, whenever you do something for your parents, do it "בסבר פנים יפות," service with a smile.

Additionally, when your children see how you honor your parents, you should point out to them that this is how we properly fulfill the mitzvah of kibud av v'aim.

I discuss this concept at length in my book on chinuch, "The Do's and Don'ts of Raising Children." B"H, it's been sold out in the stores, but copies are still available from one of my students who lives in Flatbush.

Contact me at: rabbi@toraschaim.org for information on purchasing them.

DAY 15 – STORY: A Drive That was Well Worth It

Rabbi Meir Zlotowitz, founder and president of ArtScroll Publications, was an extremely busy person. He was usually at his desk from early morning until late in the evening — when he wasn't traveling to Eretz Yisroel or other places to meet with gedolei Yisroel and other important people.

As busy as he was, his family was always on his mind. As long as his father and mother were alive, Rabbi Zlotowitz did whatever he could for them.

Some days, he would be driving somewhere, and the GPS or Waze route, which is the fastest way between two points, would take him past his parents' house — but he purposely would not go that way! “Right now I am in a big hurry to make an appointment,” he would explain, “and I don't have time to stop in and visit my parents. I don't feel right passing by their house and not stopping in to at least say ‘Hello.’ So I will go a different way.”

One year, Rabbi Zlotowitz, his wife and children were planning to spend Pesach at a hotel in the Catskill Mountains. He invited his parents to join them and was disappointed when his parents declined the invitation without giving any explanation. The more he thought about it, the more Rabbi Zlotowitz was convinced that he knew why his parents didn't want to come.

Throughout the year, his father was very careful that everything he ate was one hundred percent kosher. On Pesach, he was even more careful. Rabbi Zlotowitz guessed correctly that his father was afraid that perhaps in the kitchen at the hotel they were not as careful as he would be at home.

So this is what Rabbi Zlotowitz did. On a nice spring day before Pesach, he invited his father to join him on a drive to the Catskills. Rabbi Aharon Zlotowitz always enjoyed spending time with his son. Soon they were in Rabbi Meir Zlotowitz' car on the way to the mountains.

After a couple of hours, they arrived at the hotel. Rabbi Zlotowitz escorted his father into the kitchen where the Pesach food was being prepared. Rabbi Aharon Zlotowitz saw how careful the cook was to keep everything kosher l'Pesach and also how the mashgiach of the kitchen was making sure that everything was being done correctly.

When they left the hotel, Rabbi Aharon Zlotowitz said to his son, “We can eat the food from this kitchen.” And to Rabbi Meir Zlotowitz' great joy, his parents were now happy to join his family at the hotel for Pesach.

Rabbi Meir Zlotowitz was a very busy person and driving his father to the hotel took up most of a day — time when he could have been accomplishing a lot as President of ArtScroll Publications. He believed — and all of us have to believe — that we never lose out from doing a mitzvah, especially a mitzvah as precious as *kibud av v'aim*.

Adapted with permission from Rabbi Meir Zlotowitz by Yisroel Besser and My Parents and Me by Rabbi Shimon Finkelman, published by ArtScroll/Mesorah

DAY 16 – HALACHA

B'ezras Hashem, today we'll continue to discuss the halachos of honoring parents for married women.

We previously mentioned, that a women's obligation of kibud av v'aim does not change after marriage. However, if honoring her parents interferes with her domestic responsibilities, meaning, her husband or her children, she's absolved from her obligation to honor her parents. For example, if her parents ask her to visit them but her husband or her children need her to prepare for them supper, her responsibility to her family takes preference, and she should respectfully refuse her parents' request. Even so, she and her husband should try and satisfy her parents to avoid friction with them. For example, perhaps she can postpone her parents' visit for a later time, or, if possible, her family can prepare a quick, ready to eat meal for themselves. Moreover, it's commendable for her husband to be mevater on his own needs and allow his wife to tend to the needs of her parents.

Another example is if a wife's parents want her to come to them for Shabbos but the husband wants to be home, she must respectfully reject their invitation.

Important note: the halacha of a husband's precedence over the wife's parents' wishes is only if the husband's request is legitimate, such as, in the above example of preparing a meal for him. However, if the husband is spiteful, meaning that he's angry at his wife's parents and doesn't want her to do anything for them, she should ignore his wishes. But, if this will create shalom bayis problems, the wife needs guidance from a competent rabbinical authority who is familiar with the couple's family situation to avoid a shalom bayis crisis.

If a married woman is alone with her parents, for example if her husband went away on a business trip and she's temporarily staying by her parents, she's obligated in all the halachos of kibud av v'aim like a single woman.

All the halachos of revering parents – morah av v'aim, apply to married women. Thus, it's assur to sit or stand in her parents' designated place at home or in shul, or to contradict or validate their words. Also, she's still fully obligated to arise m'lo komaso – entirely – for her parents when they enter her domain. Likewise, in shul, she must arise for her mother when she enters the ezras nashim. Even when she's preoccupied with tending to her families' needs, she should arise for her parents, since by doing so, she doesn't detract from her families' obligations.

Regarding living in the same home or in close proximity with one's parents or in-laws, Rav Avigdor Miller strongly advises couples not to live in the same home as their parents or in-laws. Living in close proximity to parents or in-laws has its pros and its cons.

The pros: More opportunities to fulfill the mitzvah of kibud av v'aim, and you can role-model honoring your parents to your children. In this way, you'll have an easier time of being mechanech them in this mitzvah by showing them proper honor of one's parents. As we previously mentioned, children learn more from what they see than from what they hear. **The cons:** Parents or in-laws may mix in to their children's marriage causing shalom bayis problems. They think that since

have more experience in life, they want to educate the newly married couple how to do things right or how to properly raise their children, for example, when, how and for what to discipline them. Parents don't realize that their married children have their own opinions and some children want to learn themselves how to raise their children, as the expression goes, "Experience is the best teacher."

Or, the parents may spoil their grandchildren by giving them too many treats against the wishes of their parents, or give them treats that the parents don't approve of.

I know of a woman who complained to me that her mother-in-law would constantly purchase items for her family that were totally not to her taste.

I devote an entire chapter on this topic in my book "The Do's and Don'ts of Staying Happily Married" which is available at your local bookstore. Or contact me for a discounted price.

DAY 16 – STORY: A "Deal" With the Rain

For over forty years, Rabbi Shmuel Fellman was a very respected and beloved rav in a Tel Aviv shul. His most important shiur of the week was given on Shabbos afternoon which began with Gemara and ended with beautiful thoughts on the weekly parshah. The day came when he could no longer give that shiur or any other. He could barely see.

Rav Shmuel's son was Rabbi Ben Zion Fellman of Bnei Brak, a very beloved rosh kollel. When Rav Ben Zion found out that his father was going to be asked to retire, he was extremely upset. He knew that his father, even without his vision, could still accomplish a lot as a rav. He also knew that both his father and mother would be very hurt if his father was forced into retirement.

Rav Ben Zion thought of a solution. He called up the shul's gabbai and said, "Please do not say anything to my father. Allow him to remain as your rav. As far as his Shabbos afternoon shiur which is his main shiur of the week, do not worry. I will give the shiur each week."

"You will give the shiur?" the gabbai asked in shock. "But it takes an hour and twenty minutes to walk from Bnei Brak to our shul in Tel Aviv. You are going to walk so far every single week?"

"Yes," Rav Ben Zion replied, "every single week."

And so, for the next fifteen years Rav Ben Zion walked for an hour-and-twenty minutes to Tel Aviv on Shabbos afternoon so that he could substitute for his father at his weekly shiur.

Rav Ben Zion's mother was grateful to him but she was worried. "What will happen if you get caught in a downpour on the way?" she asked him. "It's Shabbos and you can't carry an umbrella."

"Do not worry, Mama," Rav Ben Zion assured his mother. "I have a 'deal' with the rain — it always waits until I arrive at the shul!"

For a very long time, it never rained during his walks to Tel Aviv. One day, Rav Ben Zion told some of his talmidim, "I am so grateful to Hashem. I walk to Tel Aviv every Shabbos and not once has it rained."

The next Shabbos it poured as he was walking. Rav Ben Zion felt that it was not a coincidence that it poured only on the week when he had spoken about it not raining. The Gemara teaches that there is more bracha when things are kept quiet, out of the public view. He decided that never again would he speak about his weekly “miracle.”

And for those fifteen years, it never again rained during his Shabbos walk. And his father remained at his position until his passing.

Adapted with permission from My Parents and Me by Rabbi Shimon Finkelman published by ArtScroll/Mesorah

DAY 17 – HALACHA

The Shabbos seudos provide one of the greatest opportunities to be mechanech oneself and one's children in the mitzvos of kibud u'moreh av v'aim. Today, B'ezras Hashem we'll discuss these opportunities.

For single women:

Before Shabbos, prepare yourselves to focus on the following three concepts:

1. Hakaras hatov that you owe to your parents.
2. To be treated like a king and queen as noted by the Rambam, and will be explained at a future time.
3. Each act of honoring them is another mitzvah d'oraysa.

During the meals have these three kavanos in mind at least twice when you're serving or clearing the table. Parents should not have to get up for anything.

Preempt their needs. Some examples:

1. Be aware if a parent forgot his or her reading glasses, or of a drink that was forgotten to be served, bring it to them before they ask for it.
2. Before the father recites Hamotzi, put the salt in front of the him, and remove the challah board from his place after he distributes the challah.
3. Place the serving bowl or serving plate by the parents so that they don't have to reach for it.

Act with derech eretz: The parents are first to be served, the father then the mother. They are the first to take from the center bowl or plate. If the mother serves, wait until she starts eating before you eat yourself, (unless she gives you reshus). Needless to say, a child should not argue with a sibling or parent whose turn it is to serve or clear. The opposite – each sibling should be vying for the mitzvah and waiting for the parent to give her the opportunity to fulfill another mitzvah of kibud av v'aim. The same applies when clearing the table after a meal or cleaning up on Motzei Shabbos.

Don't interrupt parents who are speaking and listen intently if the father says a d'var Torah. Don't do anything that they detest. For example, bicker with a sibling or eat in a manner that doesn't appeal to them. And finally, don't forget to compliment your mother for the delicious food and thank her for cooking and preparing the Shabbos meals.

For mothers:

Before anything, you must make sure that your child knows the halachos. Don't rely on the school, as you never know what they teach and what your child retains. Therefore, at the Shabbos meal, from time to time, the father should go over the basic halachos in the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch or the Chayei Adam. Look them over beforehand to prepare himself. I have a brief list of the principle halachos in my booklet on kibud av v'aim; and the booklet will be available by e-mail at the

conclusion of this series. (For hard copies, you can contact me.) After all the halachos are given over, review them three times a year when the mitzvos of kibud u'moreh av v'aim appear in the parshas ha'shavua: Parshas Yisro, (the Aseres Hadibros), Parshas Kedoshim where morah av v'aim appears, and in Parshas Va'eschanan, where the Aseres Hadibros are repeated.

Adding to the previous ideas which I mentioned for single women, train children derech erez at the meal, such as, no grabbing, the parents take first from the center plate, waiting for the parents to start eating before they eat, not interrupting when parents are speaking, etc. Explain to them about the schar in Olam Haba and arichas yomim that await them for each time they do their parent's will and honor them.

Use a reward system as an incentive to fulfill mitzvos. Ask: "Who wants a mitzvah?" and have charts with rewards. Train them how to ask: "Can you please pass..." and then, make sure they say "thank you" when you give it to them. (Of course, the parents should be a role model and say "please" and "thank you" when requesting something from their children).

If a child didn't ask properly, teach him how to ask and then have him repeat it. Rav Wolbe writes that parents need much patience in training children because they're starting from scratch with derech erez, and they don't usually get it the first, second, or even the third time, as children must break their previous habits. He adds that much savlanus, patience, is one of the keys of successful parenting.

Also, if the father takes his son to a shalom zachor or a kiddush, teach him not to grab the food, and not to stuff his pockets with the food or the sweets. Obviously, the father also has to role model this himself in order that the child should want to copy his father's actions.

When grandparents come for Shabbos, it's a golden opportunity for parents to role model honoring their parents or their in-laws. Serve them first and tend to their needs as mentioned above. They should wash first, and when possible, they should recite the Kiddush, Hamotzi, and lead the Zimun if there are three adults.

There are different minhagim regarding seating a parent or in-law at the head of the table during the Shabbos seudah.

I only touched the tip of the iceberg of the different areas of fulfilling the mitzvos of kibud u'moreh av v'aim at the Shabbos meals. A complete treatment of this topic appears in my essay "Achieving a Harmonious Shabbos Meal and Pesach Seder" available from me by e-mail. This essay also appears in my book, "The Dos and Don'ts of Raising Children."

DAY 17 – STORY: A Present for His Mother

What would you do with 84 hard-earned dollars?

Shaya Alpert, a young teenager, knew exactly what he wanted to do with it.

He earned that money one Erev Pesach. Shaya lived a high rise apartment building in New York's Lower East Side. Many of the building's residents were elderly and it was very difficult for them to go outside to the street and burn their chametz. Shaya would knock on the doors of the Jewish residents and offer to burn their chametz for them. He never asked for money, but if someone gave him a tip, he accepted it. One time, he tried to refuse the tip, but the person was insistent, so in the end, Shaya accepted it.

That person was none other than the gadol bador Rav Moshe Feinstein. Shaya's father Rabbi Nisson Alpert, was a close talmid of Rav Moshe and like a son to him. Shaya too was very close to Rav Moshe. Once, when Rebbetzin Feinstein was hospitalized, Shaya was asked to spend the night in Rav Moshe's apartment so that he would not be alone.

So when Rav Moshe gave Shaya his chametz along with a five-dollar bill, Shaya did not want to accept the money.

But he had no choice when Rav Moshe told him, "If you don't take the money, I will not let you burn my chametz!"

One Erev Pesach after completing his rounds and burning the chametz, Shaya went upstairs to his family's apartment. He rang the bell and his mother came to the door. "Mommy," he said, "I don't want to come inside because I smell from the smoke of the fire. Could you please bring me a clean shirt and I'll change here?"

He then handed his mother an envelope that held the 84 dollars he had earned that morning. "Mommy, this is for you. Please buy yourself a dress for yom tov."

Shaya's mother was speechless. But in her heart, she thanked Hashem for granting her such a special son.

There are other ways for a child to show appreciation to his father or mother for all that they do for her. It can be a small gift, a nice note or some other nice surprise. Parents appreciate when they are appreciated.

DAY 18 – HALACHA

At the onset of this series, we mentioned the Chayei Adam who divides the mitzvah of kibud av v'aim into three areas: Maaseh – acts of doing

Dibur – speech, how we speak to our parents And Machshava – our thought process

The past 2 ½ weeks, we spoke mostly about maaseh, and b'ezras Hashem, we'll also speak about honor in speech at a future time.

In today's capsule, we're going to speak about a lesser-known area of kibud av v'aim – machshava, which I call a game changer in fulfilling this mitzvah, and elevates the mitzvah of kibud av v'aim to higher level. How does a child honor his parents in machshava?

The Chayei Adam explains:

“A child should imagine his parents as great and honorable people, even if others regard them as ordinary people.” And then makes an extraordinary statement:

“זהו עיקר הכיבוד – this is the ikar kibud,” i.e., regarding one's parents in high esteem is the most essential part of kibud av v'aim.

“Because without this thought, any honor that a child gives his parents through actions and speech is insincere as she doesn't really consider her parents great enough to be honored.” It's like an insincere thank-you to someone who gave you a very valuable gift. Saying thank you without really meaning it is just lip service.

Rav Chaim Shmulevitz adds that a child who has not elevated his parents to the point where he considers them among the gedolei hador, has not properly fulfilled the mitzvah of kibud av v'aim even if he honors them in other ways.

The obvious question is: What if the parents are neither great nor honorable people, how do we fulfill this mitzvah?

Rav Avrohom Pam explains that since every person possesses some virtuous qualities, a child should search for those qualities in his parents and think about them constantly. For example, the father may be a big baal tzedakah or big baal chesed, never refusing to give a person a helping hand, or to give tzedakah to a needy cause; or, he's very punctual with his minyan, shiur, or chavrusa, being always on time; or, if the mother is an excellent balabusteh in managing the home, or is very patient and never loses herself at the children, or is very makpid on tznius; or, if both are very makpid on lashon hara, and don't speak lashon hara at all in the home. I'm sure that one can find plenty of maalos, positive character traits, in her parents if she does some searching. And if a child notices her parents doing something wrong, she must judge them favorably, P'kaf zechus, thereby keeping the parents' esteem elevated in her eyes.

So now we have a big assignment ahead of us. We must start searching for our parents' sterling middos and elevate them with these middos until we consider them as great and honorable people.

DAY 18 – STORY: *The Best Bid*

“Will everyone please find his seat! The bidding will begin momentarily...”

It was Simchas Torah morning at Congregation Anshei Achdus. Shacharis had just ended, hakafof were soon to begin, as every year, before hakafof, the gabbai would be selling aliyos to the highest bidder. This included Kol HaNe’arim, the aliyah when all the young children were called up together to the Torah; and Maftir, which on Simchas Torah was usually sold for quite a large sum.*

The two most special aliyos, Chasan Torah, when the last parashah of the Torah is completed; and Chasan Beraishis, when we begin the Torah once again, were not sold. Chasan Torah was always given to the rav, and Chasan Torah was given to Reb Dovid, an elderly talmid chocham who had been davening in the shul since he was a young man.*

“Now listen carefully, everyone...” the gabbai continued, to everyone’s surprise.

“... This year, since the shul is badly in need of funds, we have decided to sell Chasan Torah to the highest bidder. I’ve spoken to Reb Dovid about it and he is fine with it. So let’s begin the bidding by selling Chasan Torah.”

People were excited. It had been many years since Chasan Torah had been sold. Reb Dovid seemed very calm. He was a humble man and was probably happy to help the shul by giving up his annual zechus.

*One person, however, was not happy at all — Reb Dovid’s devoted son, Reuven.**

“It’s not right,” he thought to himself. “Aside from the rav, there is no one in our shul who can match my father’s Torah knowledge. When the rav is away, my father is always the one who fills in and gives the shiurim. How can they take this kibud (honor) away from him?”

Reuven was upset but he was not about to start an argument. That would certainly not bring honor to his father. As he sat lost in his thoughts, he heard the bidding begin.

“Five hundred dollars for Chasan Torah... Five hundred dollars... Five hundred dollars going once...”

Reuven looked around, trying to figure out who had made the bid. It didn’t take long. Mr. Bindman, the richest member of the shul was smiling, as were his sons and grandsons. He had made the bid.*

“I wish I could buy the aliyah for my father,” Reuven thought. “But there’s no way that I, a simple manager in a local clothing store, can outbid Mr. Bindman. You know what? I can at least try. Worst comes to worst, I’ll borrow some money from a gemach and pay it back in monthly installments.”

“Six hundred dollars!” Reuven shouted.

All heads, including Mr. Bindman’s, turned in Reuven’s direction. Was he serious? He was going to get into a bidding war with the shul’s richest member?

“Seven hundred,” Mr. Bindman called out. “Eight hundred,” Reuven responded.

“Nine hundred,” Mr. Bindman announced. When the bidding had started, he was smiling. Now, he looked quite serious. The atmosphere in the shul was tense. No one had expected a bidding war between the shul’s richest man and someone who barely made a living.

Reuven also looked serious and though he didn’t show it, he was nervous. For him, this was a lot of money. But he was determined to get that aliyah for his father.

“One thousand,” Reuven announced. You could hear people gasp. They couldn’t believe what was happening. Mr. Bindman turned to his sons. “I could go much higher, but I see that Reuven wants the aliyah very badly. Probably he’s buying it for his father. I think I’ll stop here.”

Reb Dovid was called to the Torah for Chasan Torah and everyone, including Mr. Bindman, was happy for him — and for his wonderful son who beamed with pride and pleasure as he watched his father ascend the bimah. “Paying this pledge is not going to be easy,” he thought, “but I have no regrets.”

Shortly after this incident, Reuven decided to take a bit of money he had saved up and use it to start a spice factory. His new business did very well and within a short time, he was wealthy. Paying the pledge was not difficult at all.

Reuven was already looking forward to the next Simchas Torah ...

Adapted with permission from Food for Thought by Rabbi Yitzchok Hisiger and My Parents and Me by Rabbi Shimon Finkelman published by ArtScroll/Mesorah

DAY 19 – HALACHA

B'ezzras Hashem, today we'll discuss instances when a child is not obligated to listen to her parents.

1. If a parent asks for something that can harm himself and is against the doctor's orders, the child may disobey her parent. For example:
 - a. If a parent has breathing issues, and his doctor forbade him to smoke, but he wants a cigarette, or,
 - b. If he's a diabetic and wants to eat sweets, or,
 - c. If he has high blood pressure and wants to eat salty foods, or,
 - d. If he has high cholesterol or triglyceride count and wants to eat fatty, or heavily fried foods, or,
 - e. If he's is an alcoholic and wants an alcoholic beverage.

In these and similar instances, there's no mitzvah of kibud av v'aim.

2. If a parent requests of a child to do an aveira, whether to transgress an issur d'oraysa, an issur d'rabanan, or an accepted minhag, the child is not obligated to comply with his wishes. For example, if the parent is unaware of the parameters of borer, and asks the child to sort something, such as, a clothing mixture not for immediate use, or to sort and pack away mixed cold cuts at the end of a meal, the child can refuse her parent's wishes. If the parent asks "Why?", she should politely answer: "Doesn't it say in the Shulchan Aruch or in the Mishna Brura, or in Shmiras Shabbos Ke'hilchasa that it's prohibited?" Or "That's what my rav taught us in high school or seminary. (Correcting a parent who misquotes a halacha will b'ezzras Hashem be discussed later.)"

However, if one's parents are more modern and are not so conscientious about observing proper halacha, the child should seek rabbinical guidance regarding her obligations in correcting them if she knows that they won't listen.

3. There's a machlokes between the Shulchan Aruch and the Rema, which varies between Ashkenazim and Sefardim, if a child is obligated to honor non-observant parents who are halachically considered resha'im. (Nevertheless, according to all opinions, it's assur to be disrespectful to them.) This halacha also depends on why the parents are non-observant, and rabbinical guidance is necessary regarding the child's obligations in the mitzvah of kibud av v'aim in this situation.

In both of the above examples, i.e., non-observant parents or parents that are not so conscientious of observing proper halacha, it's important to try and keep harmony in the home. Rabbinical guidance is necessary if it gets to a point where parents say "Is this how the Torah teaches you how to honor your parents?" (Actually, the reality is that secular children treat their parents with much more disrespect than Torah-observant children.)

4. If a child suffers from abusive parents, she may evade them to avoid being abused, but in their presence, she must act respectfully, such as, not to shame them or scream at them. Rabbinical guidance must be sought in dealing with this situation.

5. Likewise, rabbinical guidance should be sought if:
 - a. Parents object to their married children living in Eretz Yisroel,
 - b. If they object to a child's choice of marrying a suitable mate as disobeying them can cause much friction between the child and her parents.
 - c. If a parent commands a child not to speak with another Jew because he has issues with him or her.
6. We previously mentioned, that although a married woman is still obligated in the mitzvah of kibud av v'aim, she is absolved from this mitzvah if honoring her parents interferes with honoring her husband or tending to her family's needs, and may cause shalom bayis problems.

DAY 19 - STORY: "And the Winner is..."

Rabbi Avraham Ravitz was a famous talmid chocham and a respected member of the United Torah Judaism party in the Israeli Knesset. He drew people closer to Torah and dedicated his life to Klal Yisroel.

When he suffered kidney failure, the doctors said that a kidney transplant was needed to save his life.

By that time, all of Rabbi Ravitz' 12 children were adults. Each one of them wanted the zechus of donating the kidney that would save their father's life.

But donating a kidney is not that simple because the blood types of the donor and recipient have to match and there are other factors involved as well. After all the tests had been run, two of Rabbi Ravitz' sons were found to be the best matches for their father.

Each wanted to give his kidney. This would mean undergoing surgery to remove the kidney and then having to recover from the surgery. This did not worry either of them. What wouldn't a son do for his father?

They went to the gadol bador, Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, to ask him who should be the one to give the kidney.

Rav Elyashiv said that he would cast the Goral haGra, a method taught by the Vilna Gaon to find the answer to very important questions. It is done by turning the pages of a certain type of Tanach in a very specific order. When a person follows this method, he will find the answer to his question in a pasuk on the page that he turned to at the very end.

The goral was cast and a pasuk clearly indicated the name of one of the two sons. He donated a kidney and the surgery was performed.

This story became a news sensation in Eretz Yisroel. All the newspapers, even those published by non-religious Jews, wrote about how this Jew's life had been saved after his 12 children volunteered to donate a kidney, and how Rav Elyashiv solved the problem through the goral haGra.

"Rachamim" an elderly Jew living in Tel Aviv read these newspaper articles. He was amazed and at the same time, he was very sad. Rachamim was not religious. He had two grown children, a son

and a daughter. A few years earlier, his kidneys had failed and he needed a transplant. Both of his children were matches, but neither wanted to donate a kidney to save their father's life.

The son said, "I already made plans to travel overseas, I can't let a surgery delay my plans."

The daughter said, "The new college term is soon going to begin. If I have surgery, it will ruin the beginning of the term."

Eventually, a donor was found and Rachamim's life was saved. But every time he thought about his children's attitude, it made him sad.

"I gave my children their very lives, I was so devoted to them, I spent all my money on them, I sent them to excellent schools, I nurtured them and made sure that they had whatever they needed — yet, they were too busy with their own lives to come to my rescue when my life was in danger."

Rachamim read the story about Rabbi Ravitz and how his 12 children were "fighting" over who would be lucky enough to help him. Rachamim said to himself, "The Torah must be so special that it could make children be so devoted to their parents. What a shame that I never studied Torah or practiced its mitzvos."

"But it's not too late. I will start keeping mitzvos now and will continue to do so until the end of my life."

And that is how Rachamim became a baal teshuva. His story became known when he started attending minyan daily and told the members of his shul why he had started coming. The kibud av of Rabbi Ravitz' children had caused this man to attach himself to Hashem and His Torah.

Adapted with permission from Food for Thought (volume 2) by Rabbi Yitzchok Hisiger and Honor Them Revere Them by Rabbi Shimon Finkelman and ybl'ch Rabbi Zechariah Wallerstein ז"ל, published by ArtScroll/Mesorah

DAY 20 – HALACHA

B'ezras Hashem, today we'll continue to discuss various instances when a child is not obligated to listen to her parents. First, I want to clarify what I mentioned yesterday that if a parent requests of a child to do an aveira, whether to transgress an issur d'oraysa, an issur d'rabanana, or an accepted minhag, the child is not obligated to comply with his wishes. However, in a situation where a child wants to accept upon herself a chumrah that her family doesn't observe, and her parents disagree, claiming that she shouldn't be different than the rest of the family and that there should only be "one Torah" in the house. Generally speaking, since by accepting the chumrah she'll cause tzar to her parents which is a Torah prohibition, she must refrain from doing so. This is similar to the stories that we previously mentioned of the Arizal and the Belzer Rebbe who refrained from immersing themselves in the mikvah so as not to cause tzar to their parents.

Some present-day examples of chumros are:

1. Not to carry on Shabbos even though there's a kosher eruv in their area or the city.
2. Not to eat certain accepted mehadrin hechsheirim that the parents use.
3. To drink and eat only chalav Yisroel dairy products, when her family eats chalav stam products with a reputable hechsher.
4. Or, if a boy from a non-chasidish family wants to grow a beard or long payos against his parents' wishes. Nevertheless, for a final ruling, one should ask a shaila from a rav who is familiar with the family situation.

If a father and mother requests two separate activities at the same time, for example, the father asks the daughter to prepare dinner and the mother asks her to help with the dishes or to go shopping, the father's request must be honored first because the mother is also required to honor the father. In the case of divorced parents, the child can honor either parent first.

A few halachos regarding lashon hara. If a parent asks a child about another person and replying will involve saying lashon hara. For example, a parent asks a child "I heard that one of your classmates was expelled from class. What exactly happened?" Or "Who was the neighbor's child who was always getting in trouble?" In either case there is no to'eles – benefit – to reveal the identity of the child, and answering the truth is assur because it's outright lashon hara. Therefore, child should say "I don't know" or "I wasn't present." Even though it's not true, it's mutar to so reply, to prevent you from the issur of saying lashon hara.

If explaining to the parent that it's lashon hara will only irritate him, for example, if the parent will ask "Why can't you tell me," And you'll say "Because it's lashon hara." But the parent doesn't understand why because he's unaware of the halacha that lashon hara is also when someone tells the truth, and may ask "What's the big problem? it's mutar." And, if you'll further tell them "But the Chofetz Chaim writes that it is lashon hara," they'll get all upset at you and retort, "Why is the truth lashon hara?" or "Why are you being so frum?" and a quarrel may result between

them. If this is the situation, Rav Chaim Kanievsky says not to bother correcting or trying to explain yourself, as Chazal say just as it's a mitzvah to speak up at times, so too, it's a mitzvah to be silent when your words won't be heard, and certainly, if it will create friction between the parent and the child.

There's a machlokes in the poskim if a teacher or a rebbi asks "Who is disturbing the class? if it's mutar to point out the student. For example, every time the teacher turns her back on the students to write something on the whiteboard, somebody makes a funny noise. Or if the teacher goes out of the classroom, and when she returns, she finds that somebody made a balagan, a mess, and she wants to know who did it. So, she asks somebody "Could you please tell me who did this?"

The same machlokes applies if a parent asks her child "Who disturbed my sleep?" or "Who put their fingers into the icing on the cake?" Rav Moshe Feinstein paskens that even though it may be to'eles because you're trying to train the child in keeping an orderly class or in derech erez, it's assur to ask the students or one's children to divulge the person as it trains them to speak lashon hara. Other poskim disagree, and say that since it's to'eles, one may answer. Rav Chaim Kanievsky said that it all depends on the situation.

I'm not the one to decide the halacha among these Torah giants, and if any of the participants are teachers or parents, she should ask a shaila what to do if any of the above situations arise.

DAY 20 – STORY: *The Champion*

When Mr. Shaul Tzvi Zeisler's father passed away, a non-Jewish neighbor came to the shivah house. Before Mr. Zeisler could say anything, the visitor blurted out, "You are a champion!" He proceeded to explain:

I live directly across the street. I am retired and I don't have to get up at 5:30 in the morning. But a number of years ago, I was up early one morning and I saw how you came to your father's home to take him to the synagogue. I watched how you held his hand gently and helped him down the front stairs. I watched how you walked him to your car. I could not get over how you treated him with such dignity.

I got up early the next morning and watched again how you treated him with such loving care. No one in my community does this. I made it a point to get up early every morning just to watch how you took care of your father — such loving care! That daily scene carried me through the entire day.

The man became emotional as he concluded, "But now that he died, where I am going to get my inspiration? What I am going to do now?"

The man burst into tears and quickly left the house.

I sometimes daven Mincha in a shul where one of the regular mispallelim was a man in his nineties who could not walk without assistance. Every day he was escorted to shul by his daughter or a grandchild, and every day when Mincha ended, his daughter or grandchild was waiting to walk him home. He was always greeted with a smile, a smile that said, "Tatty (or Zeidy), it is such a pleasure, such azechus, to be able to assist you."

How fortunate we are to be a part of the Am Nivchar, who live by Hashem's mitzvos, as taught to us by our dear parents.

The first story was adapted with permission from Reflections of the Maggid by Rabbi Paysach Krohn and My Parents and Me by Rabbi Shimon Finkelman, published by ArtScroll/Mesorah

DAY 21 – HALACHA

B'ezras Hashem, today's shiur is a summary of the halachos that we've learned this past week and we'll end with an inspiring story.

8. For married women:

- a. A married woman has the same obligation of the mitzvah of kibud av v'aim as long as it does not interfere with her obligations to her husband and her family. Therefore, you should look for as many opportunities to fulfill this mitzvah when visiting your parents or when they're visiting you.
- b. Role modeling kibud av v'aim is the best way to train children in this mitzvah, as a child learns more from what they see than from what they hear. If the child sees how you honor and respect your parents, they'll know how to honor and respect you.
- c. All the halachos of revering parents – morah av v'aim, apply to married women. Thus, it's assur sit or stand in her parents' designated place at home or in shul, or to contradict or validate their words. Also, one is still fully obligated to arise m'lo komaso – entirely – for her parents when they enter her domain.
- d. The Shabbos meals are golden opportunities to train oneself and one's children in the mitzvos of kibud u'moreh av v'aim. Review capsule #17 for details.

9. We upgraded the mitzvah by mentioning the third area of kibud - machshava, in thought, viewing our parents as gedolim v'nechbadai ha'aretz, great and honorable people. The Chayei Adam writes that this is the ikar chiyuv, the most essential part of kibud av v'aim, and Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz adds that a child who has not elevated his parents to the point where he considers them among the great and honorable people, has not properly fulfilled the mitzvah of kibud av v'aim, even if he honors them in other ways.

Rav Avrohom Pam explains that since every person possesses some virtuous qualities, a child should search for those qualities in his parents and think about them constantly. A child must search for his parents' sterling middos, and elevate them with these middos until she considers them great and honorable people.

10. We mentioned instances where children do not have to obey their parents, for example:

- a. A parent wants to eat something that the doctor says endangers his health, such as sweets for a diabetic, or salty foods for a parent with high blood pressure.
- b. When parent requests of his child to transgress an issur or an accepted minhag. If the parent is unaware of the issur, the child should respectfully answer "Doesn't it say in the Shulchan Aruch or in the Mishna Brura, or in Shmiras Shabbos Ke'hilchasa that it's prohibited?" Or simply, "this is what I was taught in high school or seminary."
- c. A shaila should be asked if a child should tell her parents a halacha that they won't observe.

11. If a parent asks a child about another person and answering it by revealing the identity of the person will involve saying lashon hara where there's no to'eles – benefit, the child should say “I don't know” or “I wasn't present.” Even though it's not true, it's mutar to so reply in order to save oneself from the issur of speaking lashon hara. (Don't bother correcting the parent if it will only irritate him.)

12. A shaila should be asked regarding dealing with non-observant or abusive parents, or parents who oppose a child's choice of a shidduch, or object to their married children living in Eretz Yisroel,

13. One should ask a shaila from a rav who is familiar with the family situation before accepting a chumrah upon herself if it will irritate her parents.

14. If a father and mother request two separate activities at the same time, the father's request must be honored first. In the case of divorced parents, the child can honor either one first.

Today's story, told over by Rav Yitzchok Zilbershtein of Bnei Brak, is the titled “Mommy, why davka me?”

A mother once went into the living room where a few of her children were playing and talking, and asked her daughter “Rivky, could you please take out the garbage today?”

Rivky replied, “Mommy, how come you're always asking me?”

The mother was surprised, so she went to Brachi and asked, “Brachi, how about getting a mitzvah and taking out the garbage.”

“But I took it out yesterday,” she said. “Why should I do it again today?”

She then went to her son, “Yanky, how about you getting the mitzvah of taking out the garbage today?” “Oy, mommy, I'm so tired, I have no kochos.”

She went to the fourth child. “Dovi, how about taking out the garbage?”

Dovi replied “I have a great idea. Since we don't agree who should take out the garbage, let's make a goral – throw lots to see whose turn it is.” At that time, the grandfather who was listening from another room lost his patience. He walked into the living room, rolled up his sleeve on one of his arms and told them the following:

“You see this number here? You all know that I was in the concentration camps during World War Two, and baruch Hashem, I survived, but I never told you the whole story, so, sit down and listen.

“When I was a child the Nazis, yemach shemam v'zichram, came into our town, and the general of the army rounded everybody up from their homes into the street. He made what's called selectzia, a selection. He had two rows of trucks lined up in the street one on the right and one on the left. I found out later that the ones on the left went to the death camps, and the ones on the right went to the labor camps to do hard labor. When it came to my family's turn, they took my mother, my younger siblings and myself to the left truck, and my father went to the right truck.

“After we sat down, my mother opened her sack of belongings that she took with her and said ‘Oy! Tatty’s tefillin is here! How’s he going to put on tefillin tomorrow?’ So, she asked me to go bring the Tefillin to my father. I was very afraid because it was dangerous. If they catch someone out of the truck, that’s it, it’s one bullet in his head and he’s finished. But my mother said ‘It’s a mitzvah, tatty can’t go without his tefillin. You must bring them to him.’ I saw that I had no choice, so I put the tefillin under my jacket and looked outside. At that point, there were no soldiers or dogs patrolling. They must have taken a break. I ran to the adjacent truck on the right side, entered it and looked for my father. When I finally found him, I gave him the tefillin, and he gave me a bracha. As I was about to return to the left truck, they closed the doors and we took off.

“I was now in the right truck and my mother and siblings were in the left truck. I never saw them again, and my father and I survived the war. I then realized that this whole incident was bashert from Shamayim to save my life.

“So kinderlach, let me tell you something. What would have happened had I told my mother ‘But mommy, why are you telling me again to do something? Give it to one of my brothers or my sisters.’ You know what would have happened? I wouldn’t be here now, and you wouldn’t never have been born. I’m only here to tell the story because I listened to my mother, so Hakadosh Baruch Hu rewarded me with life, and I survived the camps.

“You too, dear children, don’t refuse when your mother tells you to do something. And if she asks you to take out the garbage or any other request, whether it’s the fifth time or the tenth time, don’t refuse.”

Rav Zilbershtein concludes, “I’m sure that the grandfather’s story made a lifelong impression on the children. And I’m sure that reviewing this story will also make a lifelong impression on you.”

DAY 21 – STORY: Seder Ha’doros relates:

The Butcher’s Reward

It was revealed to R’ Yehoshua ben Ilem (who lived in the days of the Mishnah) in a dream: “Rejoice in your heart, for you and Nanas the butcher will reside near each other in Gan Eden; your portion is like his portion.”

When R’ Yehoshua awoke, he said to himself, “Woe is to me! From the day of my birth I have always been preoccupied with awe of my Creator, and I toiled only in Torah. I did not walk four amos without wearing tzitzis and tefillin. I had 80 talmidim — and my actions are equal to that of this butcher?”

He sent word to his talmidim: “I will not enter the beis midrash until I see who is this man and what are his activities that he should be my companion in Gan Eden.”

His talmidim wasted no time in trekking from city to city until they located the city where the butcher lived.

When R' Yehoshua entered the city and asked, "Where is Nanas the butcher?" he was told, "Why do you seek him? You are a tzaddik and exceedingly pious — and you ask about someone like him?"

R' Yehoshua responded, "What does he busy himself with?"

They replied, "Our master, don't inquire about him until you meet him." They sent a message to Nanas: "R' Yehoshua ben Ilem wants to meet you."

Nanas replied, "Who am I and who are my ancestors that R' Yehoshua is inquiring about me?" They told him, "Just come with us."

Nanas thought that they were lying, so he said, "I will not go with you, for you are playing games with me!"

They returned to R' Yehoshua and said, "You, who are a light of Yisroel, the light of our faces and the crown of our heads — why did you send us to him? He does not want to accompany us!"

R' Yehoshua responded, "I will not rest until I meet him."

R' Yehoshua then went to Nanas, who fell before the sage's feet and said, "What has happened today that the crown of our heads has come to his servant?"

R' Yehoshua said, "There is something that I must discuss with you. What is your work and what are you busy with?"

Nanas replied, "My master, I am a butcher. I have an elderly father and mother who are not able to care for themselves. Every day, I dress them, feed them, and bathe them with my own hands."

R' Yehoshua immediately stood up and kissed Nanas on his head. "My son," he told him, "Praiseworthy are you and praiseworthy is your lot. How good, how wonderful! Praiseworthy is my lot that I will merit to be with you in Gan Eden."

Both Rav Aharon Leib Shteinman and Rav Chaim Kanievsky zichronom tzaddikim levrachah, said that no one ever became a gadol b'Yisroel without excelling in the mitzvah of kibud av v'aim.

Adapted with permission from Honor Them Revere Them, a lesson-a-day on kibud av v'aim by Rabbi Shimon Finkelman and ybl"ch Rabbi Zechariah Wallerstein ז"l published by ArtScroll/Mesorah

DAY 22 – HALACHA

For the last two weeks, we focused on kibud, honoring parents, with the focal point on hakaras hatov, the gratitude that we owe to our parents for bringing us into the world and caring for us from our infancy until we marry. B'ezras Hashem, today we'll begin explaining the mitzvah of morah, revering parents, the obligation of treating them with awe and respect.

Generally speaking, morah refers to activities that tend to reduce the esteem that parents are held, while kavod refers to deeds that reflect honoring one's parents.

The Torah states in Parshas Kedoshim “אִישׁ אָמוֹ וְאִמּוֹ תִירָא”¹. The Rambam, in Sefer Hamitzvos, and the Sefer Chareidim* explain this pasuk as follows: A child must regard his parents as a king and queen whose wishes are a royal command and to whom he fears to disobey or do anything that they detest. This is the yesod of morah av v'aim: regarding them as king and queen. Today we don't have kings but we can get an idea from Achashverosh – how Esther was afraid to enter his chamber without permission. Today we have dictators in certain countries and the people are scared stiff to say a word against this leader. If they do, they suddenly disappear.

This concept of kibud u'moreh av v'aim explains why we should constantly want to give our parents nachas by endeavoring to please and satisfy them in every way we can, just as citizens want to constantly please the king or queen of their country. And, l'havdil, if the Gadol Hador was staying in one's house, the entire family would be looking for ways to please him in any way that they can.

Additionally, a child must behave with awe, reverence, and respect toward his parents no less than how one would similarly behave in the presence of a king or a queen. Unfortunately, today in too many families, we find parents wining and dining on their children as if the Torah states “כְּבֹד אֶת בְּנֶךָ וְאֶת בִּתְּךָ”²! – Honor your son and your daughter!!

One reason for this attitude is that people are influenced by the mindset of society, as the Rambam writes: “People are influenced by their friends and the society in which they live.” The mindset of today's society is that democracy should be preached in family life. Although democracy has been successful in running countries, it contradicts the Torah's mandate of autocracy of the home where the parents are the rulers. What society call democracy; the Torah calls chutzpah. As Rav Shimon Schwab once stated: “Lesson number one for children to learn is that in the home, the father and the mother are the balei habayis, the ruling authorities of the house to be honored and obeyed.”

*This is a sefer on the Taryag Mitzvos by Rav Elazar Azikri who was one of the mekubalim living in Tzfas in the early 1500's together with the Arizal, the Ramak, Rav Chaim Vital, and others. He authored the zemer Yedid Nefesh which we sing by seudas sh'lishis on Shabbos. He is often quoted by the Chofetz Chaim in his sefarim.

The following story adds insight into this concept. A new restaurant was crowded with customers at its grand opening, accompanied by balloons, music, free

souvenirs, free tasting, etc. One man was comfortably seated at a table in the center of the room smoking a cigar. As the smoke filled the room, one of the customers walked over to the owner and asked him to politely tell the man either to stop smoking or to smoke outside where it would not disturb the other people, as his conduct was making a bad impression of the restaurant at its grand opening. The owner replied simply “That’s my father. I don’t tell him what to do.”

With this preface, we can, b’ezeras Hashem, proceed with the halachos of morah av v’aim in the forthcoming capsules.

DAY 22 – STORY: A Change of Plans

“A freilichen Purim Rebbe!”

It was Purim day in the city of Pressburg and the home of the Rav, Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Undsdorfer, was teeming with visitors. The Rav was very beloved by everyone and his table was crowded with the many mishloach manos he and his rebbetzin had received.

The front door opened and in walked Reb Beirish, one of Pressburg’s richest Jews and someone who was very close to Rav Undsdorfer. He greeted the rav, placed a fruit platter and bottle of wine in front of him and then said in a loud voice for all to hear:

“Aside from the food and drink, there is something else that I am adding to the mishloach manos!” Reb Beirish withdrew an envelope from his pocket and declared, “In this envelope is a large sum of money which I am giving specifically so that the Rav can finally realize his dream — he can purchase a boat ticket for a trip to Eretz Yisroel!”

“Mazal tov!” everyone shouted and then the crowd erupted with singing and dancing. Everyone knew about Rav Undsdorfer’s love of Eretz Yisroel and that he had never been able to make the six-week journey, mainly because of the expense. But with Reb Beirish’s gift, money was no longer a problem.

After Purim, Rav Undsdorfer began to plan his journey. He booked passage on a boat leaving one week after Pesach. He prepared his assistant to deal with the many problems that come a rav’s way.

Two days after Pesach, Rav Undsdorfer traveled to the city where his parents lived, to say “Goodbye” and to receive their bracha for a safe journey.

Finally, the great day arrived. As Rav Undsdorfer placed the final items into his suitcases, a long line of well-wishers was forming outside his home. It seemed that every Jew in Pressburg wanted to offer his good wishes and receive a bracha before the Rav departed.

And then it happened. A man on horseback arrived bearing a telegram for the Rav. With trembling hands, Rav Undsdorfer opened the envelope and read the telegram, once and then a second time. He was quiet for a minute or so before announcing, “There has been a change in my plans. I will not be going to Eretz Yisroel.” He walked over to the wagon driver who had been waiting to take him to the harbor, paid him his fee and sent him off.

Everyone was stunned. What had happened? What could have made him cancel plans for the journey that had been his dream for so long? His rebbetzin asked the question that was on everyone’s mind and this is what Rav Shlomo Zalman answered:

“The telegram that I just received is from my mother. This is what it says:

To my dear Shlomo Zalman:

We hope you will have a safe and enjoyable visit to the Holy Land. As soon as you arrive there, please send us a telegram informing us of your safe arrival. It is enough that I will be worrying about you throughout your six-week journey. I don’t want to have to worry about you any more than necessary. So a telegram upon your arrival would be very much appreciated.

With much love,

Mother

Rav Unsdorfer turned to face the crowd outside his home and said: “Yes, I want so much to visit our holy Eretz Yisroel, the land of our forefathers, the precious land that Hashem has given to His people. But I cannot go if this will mean that my mother, and probably my father, will be worrying about me for six weeks as I sail the seas. I cannot and will not be the cause of that.”

Rav Unsdorfer never visited Eretz Yisroel. And he never regretted his decision.

Adapted with permission from My Parents and Me by Rabbi Shimon Finkelman published by ArtScroll/Mesorah

DAY 23 – HALACHA

B'ezras Hashem, today we begin with the halachos of yirah, revering parents, the obligation of treating parents with awe and respect.

I previously mentioned that when honoring one's parents, a child should keep in mind to fulfill the mitzvah d'oraysa of kibud av v'aim, and the inyan of hakaras hatov that she owes her parents. In this way, she elevates the mitzvah to a new level, like adding a neshama to a body. Similarly, when fulfilling the mitzvah of yirah, by adding the kavanah of awe and respect for them by regarding your parents like a king and a queen, as we mentioned in last capsule, you're likewise elevating this mitzvah to a new level by adding a neshama to it.

We'll begin with the halacha of the prohibition of sitting or standing in a parent's designated place as mentioned in the Shulchan Aruch.

A simple example is sitting in a parent's place in the living room or the kitchen. In the living room we have two possibilities. First, let's say at the Shabbos meal each parent sits at opposite ends of the table on two armchairs. So, it's assur to sit in both places even in a different chair. And secondly, it's assur to sit on their chair even if it's not in their place, such as if it is moved away to sweep or vacuum the floor. Similarly, in a father's study or if a mother works from home at a special desk, a child should not sit in their place.

In the kitchen, where the chairs are usually the same, but each parent has his or her designated place, it's assur to sit in that place.

Similarly, if a parent has a designated place at family get-togethers, a child may not sit in that place.

Note: As I previously mentioned, although parents can be moichel, we should nevertheless keep the halacha in order to internalize the concept of parents being equal to the king and queen. And, even so, Rav Moshe Feinstein holds that you still get a mitzvah if you fulfill it.

Similarly, if you visit your parents' place of work, you cannot sit in their place. The same halacha applies if your mother has a designated place in shul. Or, if your parent has a designated place where he or she davens at home, termed a קבו"ע מקום, especially for Shemoneh Esrei, you shouldn't daven there.

However, if in a crowded shul there are no other places to daven, a parent can be moichel for you to sit in her place.

By the way, you cannot daven Shemoneh Esrei directly behind your mother as you can cause her discomfort if you daven a longer Shemoneh Esrei, because she cannot take three steps back.

There is no issur of sitting or lying on a parent's bed, or sitting in the driver's seat of their car. One should avoid standing on their chair to reach for something high. Although it's not assur, it's simply a lack of derech erez. Would you stand on the king or queen's chair to get something?

Just as I mentioned that arising for a parent automatically generates a feeling of kavod because one doesn't arise for a repairman or a cleaning lady, so too, not sitting in the parent's place automatically generates a feeling of awe and respect for them and internalizes the feeling that they are indeed considered as a king and queen.

I'll add another insight into this concept. Once a day, when you pass your parent's designated place, have this thought in mind: I don't sit in their place because I'm regarding them as a king and queen.

By keeping this concept in mind, you have just added a neshama to this mitzvah and are a head taller than others who do not have this kavanah.

DAY 23 – STORY: Like a Guest in His Own Home

"Father, is it okay if I use this sefer?"

The speaker was the legendary Kamenetz Rosh Yeshivah, Rav Boruch Ber Liebowitz. It was in the middle of World War I. Rav Boruch Ber's father, Rav Shmuel Dovid, had been a wealthy man but the war had caused his business to collapse and now he was a poor man. He and his wife had moved in with their son and his family.

Anyone who would have not known the truth would have thought that Rav Boruch Ber had moved in with his parents. Anytime he wanted to use something, he would ask his parents' permission. He did this not only to honor them, but so that they should not feel like poor people.

He did not wait for them to ask him to get something or do something for them. Every so often he would approach his father and mother and ask, "Can I get you something? Are you sure that you have everything you need?"

One of the gedolim who had a close-up view of Rav Boruch Ber's keibud av v'aim said, "He is so busy with his parents — I am amazed that he has time to learn!"

Rav Shmuel Dovid regularly attended his son's shiurim. Before beginning each shiur, Rav Boruch Ber would approach his father for permission, and at the conclusion of the shiur, he would ask, "My dear father, did I say a good shiur today?"

Once, a soldier approached Rav Shmuel Dovid and said, "Give me your watch!" But Rav Shmuel Dovid did not want to part with one of the few possessions he still owned. Suddenly, the soldier withdrew a dagger and was about to stab Rav Shmuel Dovid. Rav Boruch Ber did not waste a second. He lunged at the soldier and screamed, "Do it to me, not to him!"

Suddenly, an army officer appeared. "What's going on here?" he shouted. Gazing at the soldier in obvious anger, he said, "Get off here and don't ever touch these people again."

Who was that officer? No one will ever know. Rav Boruch Ber later said, "Thezechus of the mitzvah of keibud av is what saved me."

The day came when remaining in their city became too dangerous; it was time to flee to Vilna. Traveling was very difficult for the elderly Rav Shmuel Dovid, but Rav Boruch Ber did his best to make it as easy as possible. When they came to a fence that had to be scaled, Rav Boruch Ber lay down on the ground so that his father could stand on him, making it easier to climb over the fence.

Rav Shmuel Dovid took ill in Vilna and passed away. For a long time, Rav Boruch Ber worried that perhaps he didn't do enough to try and save his father's life. Then he met the Chofetz Chaim, who was able to calm his fears. Rav Boruch Ber would later say, "The Chofetz Chaim gave me new life!"

He named his famous sefer on Gemara "Bircas Shmuel" in memory of his father. Rav Boruch Ber planned to also write a sefer on Chumash in memory of his mother, but passed before he was able to do so.

Toward the end of her life, Rav Boruch Ber's mother-in-law, Rebbetzin Zimmerman, moved in with him and his family. When he would hear her calling, he would run and say, "I'm coming, I'm coming..." so that she would know that help was on the way.

On Shabbos, Rav Boruch Ber would sit at one end of the table and his mother-in-law would sit at the opposite end. One Shabbos, some talmidim came to visit their rebbi and a lively discussion took place. Rebbetzin Zimmerman said to her granddaughter, "If I could, I would move closer so that I could hear what they are saying!" Rav Boruch Ber heard his mother-in-law's comment and immediately moved his chair closer to hers.

DAY 24 – HALACHA

B'ezras Hashem, today we'll continue with the halachos of yirah, revering parents, the obligation of treating them with awe and respect in speech.

The Shulchan Aruch states that a child should not contradict a parent's statement in his/her presence (just as one would not do so to a king or a queen).

For example, if a parent tells her child that this camp is not suited for her, and the child replies "No, it is suited for me," that's contradicting. However, the Shulchan Aruch states that the issue is in the parent's presence, but in the absence of one's parents, it's mutar to express an opposing opinion to others. Therefore, you can tell a friend that "Although my parents think that this camp isn't suited for me, I think otherwise."

Note: This halacha does not apply to a son engaged in Torah study with his father, who can express a dissenting opinion. However, arguing over a p'shat in a Gemara must be done in a respectful manner, and not in the way that he argues with his chavrusa. Imagining that his father as the gadol hador, how would the son voice his disagreement over his father's p'shat? The same applies to a daughter who disagrees with her parent about a Torah topic.

The following are four additional halachos of contradicting parents:

1. If parents ask their child's opinion, he can express his honest opinion even though it differs from his parents' opinion. For example, parents will ask a child which brand of an item is the best quality or which store is the best place for bargains. If the child knows that her parents disagree, she can still say her opinion.
2. If a child observes a parent transgressing a halacha, or is incorrectly quoting a halacha, it's assur to say outright "You transgressed an assur" or "You incorrectly quoted the halacha." You must say in a questionable manner "Abba or Ima, (Totty, or Mommy), doesn't the Torah or Shulchan Aruch or Mishna Brura say as follows...?" or "I think I learned in my halacha class differently." Or "Is it possible that the halacha is otherwise?" This way you're not directly pointing out their mistake. And, although they may realize their mistake themselves, they won't feel as ashamed. By the way, the same derech erez applies when a wife wants to correct her husband. For example, she should say "I think I learned in my halacha class in seminary or high school as follows." Or "Can you double check the halacha?"

However, before correcting, it's vital to verify the proper halacha. Sometimes it's only a minhag or a chumrah and it's not kedai to correct one's parents or husband in this matter. A shaila should be asked before attempting to correct a parent as it also depends on the individual family situation.

Additionally, if a parent is not interested in the halacha and won't listen to what you say, ask a shaila how to proceed.

3. If a parent confronts a child and accuses her of doing something that she didn't do, for example "Why did you take the first slice of the freshly baked cake? It was meant as a gift for the neighbor or for a relative." To say "I didn't take it" is

contradicting the parent. Instead, ask the parent permission to explain yourself and then explain why it wasn't you.

4. If a parent asks you to check over sum total of something, for example, expenditures to see if there's mistakes, you can point out the mistake. But rather than saying "You made a mistake" say "I see there's a mistake," or "There's a mistake in the sum total."

DAY 24 – STORY: Give Them Nachas

Rabbi Shimsbon Pincus had just completed a sefer that was to become famous in the Torah world. Shearim BeTeFillah is such an outstanding sefer that it is hard to believe that someone who lived in our times wrote it.

When the printer called him to say that the first boxes of sefarim were ready for delivery, Rav Shimsbon said that he didn't want them delivered to his house, or to a company that distributes sefarim. Instead, he wanted them delivered to the home of his parents, Rabbi and Mrs. Avrohom Chaim Pincus, who lived in Yerushalayim. He knew that his parents would have tremendous pleasure from seeing the sefer that their son had written and he wanted them to enjoy that nachas as soon as possible.

His parents lived in an apartment building and the printer's truck driver would bring the boxes of sefarim to the ground floor. It would be Rav Shimsbon's task to bring them from the ground floor to his parents' apartment.

When a talmid heard about this, he said to Rav Shimsbon, "Rebbi does not have to go to meet the truck. I will be happy to wait in front of the building for the delivery and then carry the boxes upstairs to Rebbi's parents."

Rav Shimsbon was touched. "Thank you so much for offering, but I prefer to do this mitzvah myself. It wouldn't be the same if someone other than myself opened the first box and presented my father and mother with the very first copy of Shearim BeTeFillah. And carrying the boxes upstairs is part of the mitzvah. I really don't want anyone to do it for me."

We don't have to write sefarim to give our parents nachas. There are so many ways to make them proud of us. We should not be modest when it comes to giving our parents nachas, meaning, we should not hide our accomplishments from our parents. They deserve to take pride in what we have achieved.

This lesson was once taught in Camp Agudah by none other than the Philadelphia Rosh Yeshivah, Rabbi Shmuel Kamenetsky shlita.

Rav Shmuel was a special guest at the camp that Shabbos. On Motzei Shabbos, Rabbi Dovid Frischman approached Rav Shmuel. "Tonight at our melava malka, I will be giving a special Gemara shiur. I would like to invite the Rosh Yeshivah to attend." Rav Shmuel said that he would be very happy to attend the melava malka and be present for the shiur.

That night, as Rabbi Frischman completed his shiur and sat down, he noticed Rav Shmuel coming towards him. Rabbi Frischman thought that the Rosh Yeshivah wanted to comment on one of the points in the shiur. He was wrong. Rav Shmuel did want to speak to him about the

shiur, but not about what he had said in the shiur. As Rav Shmuel got closer, Rabbi Frischman noticed that Rav Shmuel looked upset.

“Rav Dovid,” the Rosh Yeshivah said, “I don’t understand. Your father is here in camp. How could you not invite your father to the melava malkea so that he could listen to your shiur and have nachas?”

Rav Dovid’s father, Reb Meir Frischman, was the longtime Director of Camp Agudah. It was very rare that he attended a camp melava malkea, which is why his son had not thought to invite him. But upon hearing what Rav Shmuel said, Rabbi Dovid Frischman realized that Rav Shmuel was right. His father would have derived great pleasure from hearing his son’s special shiur and therefore, he should have invited him.

Rabbi Dovid Frischman has told this story in public so that others can learn from his mistake.

Adapted with permission from My Parents and Me by Rabbi Shimon Finkelman published by ArtScroll/Mesorah

DAY 25 – HALACHA

B'ezras Hashem, today we'll continue with the halachos of yirah, revering parents, the obligation of treating them with awe and respect in different areas of speech. And again, we'll see how the halachos of speaking properly to one's parents reflect the Rambam's concept of regarding parents as a king and a queen.

We'll first discuss a lesser known halacha.

The Shulchan Aruch writes: **לא מכריע דבריו בפניו, אפילו לומר נראים דברי אבא** – a person should not validate a parents' statement even in their presence. Meaning, if one's parent is discussing a matter with someone who expresses a contrary opinion to his parent, it's assur to say in the presence of the parent, "I agree with my parent," or "My parent is correct." For example, a parent is complaining to a manager of a restaurant "You'd attract more customers if you'd improve your service." If the manager argues and says that he's mistaken, and his service is indeed fine, it's assur for a child to interject and say "My parent is correct."

On the surface, it's seems difficult to understand. On the contrary, it should be mutar to support a parent's opinion, and moreover, supporting a parent's view shows honor. However, the Chayei Adam explains that the opposite is true. It actually shows a lack of reverence by implying that the child views his opinion as equal or superior to that of his parents, and that she's qualified to judge the merit of her parent's opinion. Nevertheless, it's mutar to get involved if you can offer arguments to refute the other person's opinion, and, in the above example, it's mutar to point out to the manager where his service needs improvement. This halacha only applies in the presence of one's parent (as stated in the Shulchan Aruch "בפניו"); and, when not in her parent's presence, it's even praiseworthy to state that she believes that her parent's opinion or statement is correct as this shows honor to her parents.

Some additional halachos regarding speaking to one's parents:

1. A child should never interrupt a parent, a very common occurrence at the Shabbos table. This is also one of the **שבעה דברים בגולם** – seven traits of an uncultured person, as stated in Pirkei Avos.
2. If a child is present in a discussion with parents and others, don't speak ahead of the parent. Besides the fact that it's not kavod, it's also one of the **שבעה דברים בגולם**, speaking before somebody who is older and wiser than you.
3. Part of honoring parents in speech is when requesting something from them. A child must speak to them softly and politely, in a manner that reflects both hakaras hatov that he owes to them, and the respect that a child should give for his parents, which is the same respect as requesting something from a king or a queen.
4. Speaking disrespectfully to one's parents is certainly not a reflection of the gratitude a child owes his parents, nor does it reflect their status of king and queen. On the contrary, when a child speaks disrespectfully or arrogantly to his parents, the first thought which comes to the parent's mind is "Is this the way my child speaks to me after all that we've done for her?" A child should never give the

impression that she considers a parent someone who's obligated to serve her. Unfortunately, as I previously mentioned, sometimes the way a child requests something from her parents gives them the impression that the mitzvah of honoring parents is the reverse, "kabeid es bincha v'es bitecha" – "Honor your son and your daughter!"

How then should a child make a request from her parents? Rav Elyashiv said that when requesting of a parent to do something for you, for example, to purchase an item, a child should preface "Would you like to purchase something for me while you're shopping?" This implies that the parent is doing it because he desires to do it for you, and not because you're asking him directly to do it. And of course, don't forget to express appreciation by saying "Thank you."

DAY 25 - STORY : "Just Keep Doing Such Mitzvos"

Kitzur Shulchan Aruch writes that a person can still do the mitzvah of kibud av v'aim even after her parents have left this world. Every mitzvah that the child does, every word of davening and learning, every act of chesed, is azechus for her parents and brings them great pleasure in Gan Eden.

Rabbi Tzvi Kowalsky was a great tzaddik who grew up in Bnei Brak, where he became close to the Chazon Ish. One year before Yom Tov, as young Tzvi was about to return home from yeshivah after being away for many months, the Chazon Ish told him, "Before leaving for home, review the halachos of kibud av v'aim." The Chazon Ish knew that Tzvi would have honored his parents in any case, but he wanted to make sure that he would do it in the best possible way.

All his life, Reb Tzvi's kibud av v'aim was exceptional. He became a famous maggid shiur, and sometimes his proud father would enter the beis midrash a bit late to listen to his son's shiur. Reb Tzvi would interrupt the shiur to take care of his father. He would run to help his father to his seat, and hand his father his own Gemara so that he could follow along. (Someone would run to bring Reb Tzvi another Gemara.)

Once, Reb Tzvi found out that his father was going to a certain shul to attend a seudah in honor of the yahrtzeit of a tzaddik. He knew that his father enjoyed a hot glass of tea at the end of his meal. He called the caterer of the seudah and said, "My father is coming to the seudah tonight. He enjoys a cup of tea at the end of his meal. Will you be serving tea?" The caterer told him that tea was not on the menu, so Reb Tzvi arranged for someone to bring a thermos of hot tea to the seudah for his father.

During the first eleven months after a parent leaves this world, it is a great mitzvah for his sons to lead the davening on weekdays. During the year following the passing of Reb Tzvi's father, there was only one time when he did not lead the davening. And it was not his fault.

It was at Shacharis at Bnei Brak's Itzkowitz shul, known as a "minyanim factory because many minyanim are formed there for Shacharis, mincha and Maariv throughout the day and much of the night. For Shacharis, there are minyanim from early morning until the latest time when we are still allowed to daven Shacharis according to Halacha.

One morning, Rabbi Kowalsky was standing near the amud so that he could lead the davening at the next minyan, which would be the final minyan of the morning. And then he heard the voice of an elderly man. "I can't walk home by myself. Can someone walk me home?"

This man had just finished Shacharis. He was hoping that someone who had davened at the same minyan would come forward to walk him home. But no one did. It seems that they were all in a hurry to get to work and did not have the time to walk him home. A few minutes passed and the old man's voice could be heard once again. "I can't walk home by myself. Can someone walk me home?"

Rav Kowalsky, who by now was standing at the amud, turned around. No one was offering to walk the man home. He approached the old man and said in his friendly way, "Come; I would be happy to walk with you." He took the man's hand and they slowly made their way to the apartment building where the man lived.

When they arrived in front of the building, the elderly man thanked Rav Kowalsky warmly, but Rav Kowalsky was not finished. He wanted to complete the mitzvah, so he accompanied the man up the stairs to the door of his apartment.

When Rav Kowalsky returned to shul, the last minyan had already begun so he was not the chazan. That was the only time that he did not lead the davening in memory of his father in the eleven months after his father's passing.

That night, his father appeared to him in a dream. "Tzvi," his father told him, "It is fine for you not to serve as chazan, as long as instead, you do such mitzvos!"

Adapted with permission from Honor Them Revere Them, a lesson-a-day on k'ibud av v'aim by Rabbi Shimon Finkelman and ybl"ch Rabbi Zechariah Wallerstein, published by ArtScroll/Mesorah

DAY 26 – HALACHA

B'ezras Hashem, today we'll discuss the final segment of the halachos of Yirah, revering parents, the obligation of treating them with awe and respect in another area of speech that reflects Rambam's concept of regarding a parent as a king and a queen.

The Shulchan Aruch gives the following additional examples of morah av v'aim:

לא יקראנו בשמו, לא בחיינו, לא במותו, אלא אומר אבי מורי – it's assur for a child to address or refer to a parent by his or her first name even after the parent passes away, as it's demeaning them, rather he should say “avi mori” (or “imi morasi”).

It's quite obvious that calling parents by their first names is totally disrespectful as one would never address a king, queen or any head of state by their first name. This is the opposite of displaying any type of morah for them.

Moreover, there are other restrictions to mention one's parent's first name, for example, if someone asks you “Are you related to Sara Plonis?” It's assur to say, “yes, I'm Sara's daughter.” Or say to a friend, whose father's name is Yehuda Leib, “My father's name is also Yehuda Leib.” The issur applies even when not in the presence of the parent, and even after the parent passes away. There is no issur to mention one's family name or to mention the first name in writing.

Most poskim hold that it's muter to say a parent's first name by adding a title, such as; Mr., Mrs., Reb, Rabbi, or Dr. And, in the examples above, if you're asked “Are you related to Sara Plonis?” can you answer by saying “Yes, Mrs. Sara Plonis is my mother.” Or, “My father's name is also Reb, Mr. or Rabbi Yehuda Leib.”

Similarly, if quoting something from a parent, and the listener asks “Who is your parent?” you should preface it with the appropriate title (Mr., Reb, Rabbi, Mrs., Rebbetzin).

According to these poskim, when talking to one's child, it's mutar for a parent to refer to his own parents, i.e., the grandparents, as Zaidy, Grandpa or Saba Dovid, or Bubby, Grandma, or Savta Rivka.

However, Reb Moshe Feinstein is machmir not to mention a parent's name even with a title, and is only muttar if a child is specifically asked for his parent's name. For example, when applying for a camp or when opening a bank account, if one is asked by the secretary or the clerk for her parent's name, the child should answer “I am the daughter of Mrs. Rivka Plonis,” or “the daughter of Rabbi, Doctor or Mr. Yaakov Ploni.” If it sounds a little bit awkward, Reb Moshe holds one can ask his parents for reshus to mention their name without a title.

Even though reshus helps to mention a parent's name without a title, a child still gets a mitzvah for refraining to mention their names without adding a title. A child whose father's name is Abba should not call him “Abba.” Use a different title, such as, “Totty” or “Daddy.”

When davening for a parent, for example, refuah sheleimah, preface their name with אמי or אבי, don't add any honorable title, such as, “Rabbi,” “Ray,” or

“Rebbetzin.” This is also true when even davening for a rav of a shul or a big talmid chocham – you should not preface the name with “Rav” or “Rebbi.” Just mention the person’s name and his mother’s name.

When in the presence of someone who has the same name as you parent, it is mutar to call the other person by that name, as the parent will not assume that you mean him or her. However, this is mutar only by a common name, for example, Avraham or Bracha, but not if it’s an uncommon name, for example, Tanchum, Zundel, Fradel, Kaila, etc., you shouldn’t call the other person by that name. With uncommon names, some suggest, to add the last name, for example, “Zundel Cohen” or “Fradel Levine.”

DAY 26 – STORY: “Because My Father Told Me”

Rabbi Dovid Trenk was a very beloved menabel, rebbi and friend. And he was also a very wonderful son to his parents. For many years, his mother worked in Manhattan and would take the subway home. It was very convenient because the train stopped only a few blocks from her home. Very often, Mrs. Trenk would come out of the subway station to find her son Dovid sitting in his car, waiting for her. He had arranged his schedule that day so that he could be at the station when his mother came off the train so that he could drive her home.

When Rabbi Trenk was almost 80, he became ill with a terrible disease that eventually took his life. Though the illness made him very weak, he tried his best to do as many mitzvos as possible.

When he was no longer able to go to shul, he davened at home. One morning after he finished davening Shacharis, Rabbi Hillel Brull came to visit. Rabbi Trenk had taken off his tefillin but had not yet wound the retzuos. In order to put the tefillin back in their velvet case, the retzuos need to be wound around the box that houses the tefillin.

Rabbi Trenk asked Rabbi Brull to wind the tefillin for him and explained why he could not do so himself. “When I was 14 years old, my father visited me at Camp Munk and saw that I was winding the retzuos while I was seated. He told me that not only should I put the tefillin on while standing (which is the halacha according to Ashkenazic custom for both the shel yad and shel rosh), but I should even stand while winding the retzuos and putting the tefillin away. But today I don’t feel strong enough to stand anymore. So please wind the retzuos and put the tefillin away for me.”

Rabbi Brull was happy to do so, but he did not understand. “Rabbi Trenk, I am sure that your father (who had passed away long ago) would be moichel if, at this point in your life, you sat down to wind the retzuos.”

“It’s not a question of being moichel,” Rabbi Trenk responded. “I know that my father would not be upset with me if I sat. All his life, my father never raised his voice to me, never showed any anger. But I still want to do it the way he told me. So please do it for me.”

When Rabbi Trenk’s sons became bar mitzvah, he taught them as his father had taught him, to wind the retzuos and put away the tefillin while standing.

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DAY 27 – HALACHA

B'ezzras Hashem, today we'll speak about honoring elderly parents.

Elderly parents give their children a golden opportunity in the mitzvah of kibud av v'aim in many areas that they cannot manage themselves, as noted by the stories that we mentioned in days #7 & 14 about Rav Yehoshua Ben Elem, & the man who went after a late maariv to help his elderly parents.

It is at this stage of their lives that children can fulfill the mitzvos mentioned in the Shulchan Aruch of: helping the parents get dressed, covering them, assisting them in entering and leaving the home, and perhaps even feeding them. In fact, someone once told me that he walked several miles to an old age home on Shabbos to help feed his elderly mother because she wouldn't eat unless he was with her.

However, if parents require care beyond the capabilities of the child, for example, they are handicapped, senile, or suffer from a debilitating condition, the child is obligated to provide them with professional care. When coping with parents in this situation, the child should seek advice and assistance from an orthodox social worker or support group since it's a tremendous emotional strain to see his parents deteriorating emotionally or physically. Learning about the realities of old age can alleviate some of the child's stress. Additionally, the child must get rabbinical guidance to determine his precise obligations toward his parents, vis-a-vis his spouse and children. One should certainly consider home care if it's practically and financially possible.

Sometimes, elderly sick people are happiest in their own homes where their surroundings are familiar to them. A familiar environment can even encourage them to live, thus, slowing down the physical and mental deterioration. Additionally, home care gives the child more opportunities to do the mitzvah of kibud av v'aim, and it also gives the grandchildren wonderful lessons in how to care for the aged, thus preparing them for the future when they may have to care for their own elderly parents.

I read an article stating that children whose grandparents are lovingly involved in their lives feel more emotionally secure. They enjoy a sense of their lives being rooted in the past, and also have a positive image of human aging and enhanced respect for their own parents.

I have to mention an incredible story which happened to the sister of my shul's rav which he personally told me.

The rav's sister was diagnosed with the machla, and, after many treatments, the doctors gave her only six weeks

to live. She told the doctor that she had an insurance policy to live longer. "What's that all about?" the surprised doctor asked her. She replied "I have an elderly mother living with me who I care for with mesiras nefesh. She's so senile that she can hardly recognize me or my children."

The daughter cared for her mother four more years even though she herself was very sick and was surviving on medication. After four years, her mother passed

away and her medication ceased to work. The doctors tried chemo but it was of no avail.

Exactly six weeks after her mother passed away, she finally succumbed to her illness and passed away herself. We see how true are the Torah's words of "Lma'an ya'arichun yamecha."

Moshe emes v'sorasos emes.

DAY 27 – STORY: A Minyan and a Meeting

Daniel Steinberg was about to leave on a business trip and his suitcases were packed. His schedule for the next two days had been carefully arranged. There was only one thing that was still undecided. Where would he daven Shacharis?*

He would be staying in a hotel right where he needed to be. The problem was that the nearest Orthodox shul was an hour's drive from there and had one minyan at 6:30 a.m. That meant he would have to be up at 5, and he usually had a hard time getting out of bed. There were times when he would go on a business trip and daven in his hotel room. He knew that this was not the right way, but he just could not get up so early — or so he thought.

This time, though, there was a special reason why he wanted to daven with a minyan. It was within the first eleven months after his father passed away. A son should try to be the chazkan on weekdays during those months and should say the Kaddish that is said at the end of davening, even if he is not the chazkan.

Right before he left his home, Daniel made a decision. There is no way that I'm not going to shul. Saying Kaddish is a big zechus for my father. I am not going to give up this zechus.

Sure enough, the first morning of his trip, Daniel was up by 5 o'clock and was in his car by 5:30. He arrived at the shul on time and was the chazkan for Shacharis.

"Yasher koach for leading the davening," a voice called out to Daniel when Shacharis ended. "Michael Rothschild's my name. I noticed on your tallis bag that your name is Daniel Steinberg. Are you by any chance related to Reb Nota Steinberg*?"*

"Yes, he was my father. That's why I was chazkan and said Kaddish after Aleinu."

"He passed away? I'm so sorry! I knew your father well — he was such a special person."

"Well," replied Daniel, "it's really amazing that I'm in this far-out place on business and I meet someone who knew my father. That makes me feel good."

Mr. Rothschild was silent; he seemed to be thinking about something. "You know," he finally said, "our organization, the Chofetz Chaim Heritage Foundation, will soon publish a book called Chofetz Chaim — A Lesson-a-Day on the laws of lashon bara. Each lesson is to be learned on a specific day of the year, and people donate money to our organization to dedicate a lesson in memory or in honor of someone.

"I want to dedicate one day in memory of your father. I'll give you my secretary's number and she'll tell you which dates are still available so you can choose one. Most of the dates have already been sold."

Daniel was very touched by this kind offer. As soon as he returned from his trip, he called Mr. Rothschild's secretary, who was expecting his call. "Yes, Mr. Rothschild told me that we are giving you a free dedication in memory of your father. Well, you are very fortunate because we still have one date open — all the others have already been sold.

"So that's the date you'll have to take. It's..." and she proceeded to tell Daniel the one Hebrew date that was still available.

When Daniel heard the date, he almost dropped the phone. It was the date of his father's yahrtzeit!

He had made a special effort to daven with minyan for the sake of his father's neshama and Hashem had arranged that he honor his father in yet another meaningful way.

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DAY 28 – HALACHA

B'ezras Hashem, in today's shiur we'll give a summary of the halachos of kibud av v'aim that we learned this past week, and again, end with an inspiring story.

The main theme of this week was morah av v'aim – awe and reverence for one's parents. We began with the Rambam who writes that a child must regard her parents as a king and a queen whose wishes are likened to a royal command; and that she's afraid to disobey them or do anything that they detest. The following halachos reflect this.

It's assur so sit in a parent's place. At home, work, or shul. Although parents can be moichel, one should nevertheless keep this halacha in order to internalize the concept of parents being as chashuv as a king and a queen. Rav Moshe Feinstein says even though parents moichel, one still gets a mitzvah if she fulfills it. There is no issur of sitting or lying on their bed, or driving their car in the driver seat.

It's assur to contradict or validate a parent's opinion in the presence of others. When correcting in areas of halacha, say in a questionable manner: "Abba, Ima, doesn't the Torah or Shulchan Aruch or Mishna Brura say..."

Ask a shaila if one should correct her parents in the event that won't anyway obey the halacha.

Rav Elyashiv says that when a child requests of a parent to do something for her, for example purchase an item, the child should preface "Would you like to purchase something for me while you're shopping?" and don't forget, to express appreciation and to say "Thank you."

When mentioning a parent's first name add a title. Rav Moshe holds that one should also ask them reshus. When davening for a parent, for example refuah sheleimah, preface the name with אבִי or אִמִּי only, no other title. Ditto when davening for a talmid chocham.

Some halachos of proper speech toward parents:

1. A child should never interrupt a parent who is speaking.
2. If a child is present in a discussion with parents and others, don't speak ahead of the parent.
3. A child must speak to her parents softly and politely, in a manner that reflects both hakaras hatov that she owes to them, and the respect that a child should give for her parents.
4. A child should never give the impression that she considers a parent someone who's obligated to serve her.

We also mentioned the halachos regarding elderly parents. At this stage of their lives, children can fulfill the mitzvos of helping their parents to get dressed, covering them in bed, assisting them in entering and leaving the home, and, at times, even feeding them.

However, if parents require care beyond the capabilities of their child, for example they are handicapped, senile or suffer from a debilitating condition, the child should look into the options of homecare if it's practically and financially possible, as elderly sick people are happiest in their own home where the surroundings are familiar to them. The living environment can give them more courage to live, slowing down the physical, and mental deterioration. Besides the fact that it gives the child more opportunities to do the mitzvah of kibud av v'aim, it also gives the grandchildren wonderful lessons in how to care for the aged, thus preparing them for the future when they may have to care for their own parents.

When coping with parents in this situation one should seek advice, and assistance from an orthodox social worker or support group, since it's a tremendous emotional strain for a child to see her parents deteriorating emotionally or physically. Learning about the realities of old age can alleviate some of the child's stress. Additionally, a child must get rabbinical guidance to determine the precise obligations toward her parents, vis-a- vis her spouse and her children.

Yesterday we spoke about how honoring parents gave a woman, who was diagnosed with the machla, four more years to live. Today we'll give a glimpse of the reward in the next world in an unrelated story to hilchos kibud av v'aim.

In his elderly years, R' Elyashiv once collapsed. Hatzalah was called and immediately a paramedic came and did all kinds of procedures until he was revived. The rav profusely thanked the paramedic for saving him and giving him another lease on life. Afterwards, the rav was taken to the hospital for observation. Everything was normal, and he went back to his normal routine.

A big philanthropist in America heard of this story, and had an interesting idea. He flew to Eretz Yisroel searched for this paramedic and after finding him, said that he has an offer to make. "What's the offer?" asked the paramedic. The philanthropist replied "I would like to buy the mitzvah of saving Rav Elyashiv's life from you." The paramedic he looked at him in amazement, "Buying a mitzvah?" The philanthropist replied "Yes, Yaakov bought the bechor rights from Eisav. What's the problem?" The paramedic said that I never heard of such a thing before. The philanthropist took out an envelope from his pocket and showed him a check for \$180,000, not shekalim, but dollars. He said that he wanted to buy the mitzvah for \$180,000. The man started thinking in his mind, with that money he can renovate his home, help marry off a few children, or maybe start a kollel; who knows what he can do with that money. Now, he started thinking twice but he didn't want to decide on the spot, so he asked the philanthropist if he can ask a shaila before he agrees.

The philanthropist agreed, and he went to Rav Elyashiv. Upon entering, Rav Elyashiv recognized him right away, and again, profusely thanked him for saving his life.

The paramedic then presented his question to the Rav. "Someone approached me and wants to buy the mitzvah of saving your life for \$180,000..." and before he continued, Rav Elyashiv interjects "What? for \$180,000 you're selling a mitzvah... for that money? What's one mitzvah worth compared to \$180,000 which is

nothing. Even 180 million dollars is nothing compared to one mitzvah in Olam Haba, how could you do such a thing? It's unheard of!"

That was Rav Elyashiv's reply, and the story ends there.

With that, I leave you to realize that every time you're mikayaim a mitzvah of kibud av v'aim, even the smallest act of serving them a cup coffee or a drink, think: \$180,000 is nothing-gurnisht compared to the reward of that mitzvah.

DAY 28 – STORY: A Reason to be Happy

Jonathan Rothman woke a up with a start. For the fifth time in the past two weeks, he had the same dream. It was not a bad dream — but what did it mean?*

In the dream he saw his father, who had passed away many years before. Each time, his father appeared to be very happy. But he did not say anything. What was it that made him so happy?

Jonathan told the dream to his family, to his friends, to his business partners, even to his doctor. No one could explain the dream to him. He was a very wealthy man. He was willing to pay any amount of money to know what the dream meant. But no one could help him.

One day, Jonathan passed by a shul. He had an idea. "I'm not religious," he thought, "but I know that rabbis are wise people. Maybe the rabbi of this synagogue can tell me what the dream means."

Soon he was sitting in the rav's office telling him about the dream. When he finished, the rav said, "I don't know what the dream means, but I have a suggestion. In Israel, in the city of Bnei Brak, there is a great rabbi, one of the greatest in our generation, who might be able to help you. His name is Rabbi Aharon Leib Shteinman. I could arrange for you to meet with him and you can tell him about your dream."

Jonathan arranged to take a three-day trip to Eretz Yisroel. Soon after his arrival, he was sitting in the small, very simple apartment of the gadol hador, Rav Aharon Leib. With the help of someone who served as an interpreter, Jonathan described his dream. When he finished, Rav Aharon Leib sat in silence for a few minutes, thinking Finally, he said:

"Tell me, do you use your money to do kindness for others?"

"Well," Jonathan replied, "I do give charity, to Jews and to non-Jews."

"In recent weeks," Rav Aharon Leib then asked, "have you done anything special with your money?" Jonathan did not have to think very long. "Yes. Though I'm not religious, I'm a proud Jew and I know that the Talmud is very meaningful to the Jewish people. Recently, someone told me about a new edition of the Talmud being printed in Israel that would have special diagrams in the back to make it easier to understand the different cases that were being discussed. They were looking for sponsors to give money for the printing costs. It seemed to me that this new edition will help students to better understand the Talmud and would be a very good thing for the Jewish people."

"So," Jonathan concluded, "I donated \$150,000 toward the printing of these ... 'Gemaras' I think they are called."

Rav Aharon Leib smiled. "I think we have the answer. Let me ask you a question. If a father is starving and terribly thirsty and his son comes forward to offer him food and drink, do you think the father would smile at that son? Of course he would!"

"Your father has been very 'hungry and thirsty' in the Next World. He cannot do any good deeds there; he needs you to do good deeds because that will help him in the Next World. When you gave \$150,000 for those Gemaras, it was like offering food and drink to a starving, thirsty person.

"Your father is very grateful for what you have done. And that is why he comes to you in dreams and appears happy."

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DAY 29 – HALACHA

B'ezras Hashem, in today's shiur we'll discuss honoring in-laws, grandparents, and older siblings.

Unfortunately, in today's society, the name mother-in-law or shvigger has a derogatory connotation. However, the Torah Hashkafa is totally different, and it's not a given that there must be a friction between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law.

The Shulchan Aruch states that one is required to honor his in-laws, though to a lesser degree than honoring his parents. The exact parameters of this honor are not defined in halacha, nevertheless there is no obligation to serve them food, but one should stand or rise a bit when they enter within her four amos (6-8 feet). One should speak to them in a humble and respectful manner, and preferably not sit in their place unless they're moichel.

When visiting one's in-laws, one should act as a daughter by offering to help them just as she would help when visiting her own parents. One should not call them by their names, rather Abba and Ima, Mommy and Daddy or Totty and Mommy, whatever they feel comfortable with. One must honor her in-laws even if she doesn't get along with them, or she feels that her mother-in-law is meddling into her marriage. In my book on marriage, I devote an entire chapter on handling this relationship and dealing with strained relations with one's in-laws. One tip that I can give now is that a relationship with one's in-laws can get off to a good start with a simple gesture of expressing hakaras hatov by saying to them "I want to thank you very much for bringing such a wonderful husband into the world." One shouldn't forget that it was her in-laws who raised and educated her spouse in whom she found everything that she was looking for. They must have done quite a good job and deserve a great deal of gratitude for their accomplishment.

Once one begins speaking and feeling this way, gratitude towards her in-laws will drastically change. Even after years of marriage if you haven't yet done this, you can still do so now. For example, at your anniversary celebration, you can call them up, or if they call you, express your gratitude in the way that was previously mentioned.

There's a machlokes if honoring grandparents should be like honoring one's parents or if a lesser degree of honor is sufficient. Best to be machmir and give them the same honor as your parents. This honor also extends to great grandparents.

One must honor a step-parent as long as the biological parent is still alive. After the parent passes away, there's no obligation to honor the step parent but it's recommended to do so. One must honor a step mother even if her natural mother is still alive, for example, if the parents are divorced and the father remarried. Even if the biological mother protests and resents honoring the step mother, one doesn't have to listen to her and she has to honor her step mother.

One must also honor older siblings. However, the honor is to a lesser degree than to a parent. You call them by their name and sit in their place, and there's no

obligation to serve them or stand up for them. You should honor them in a manner that they feel honored, for example, serve them first at the Shabbos seudah or during the weekday meals; talk to them with derech eretz, agree to their requests, for example when preparing food for them, and give them priority in matters that they feel they should receive priority.

DAY 29 – STORY: “I Didn’t Mean That!”

It was a difficult time in Eretz Yisroel. There had been a number of terrorist attacks in and around Yerushalayim and people had been hurt. Some people were changing their schedules so that they could be home more of the time and in the street less.

One of those who did not change his schedule was Rav Shmuel Abaron Yudelevitch, a great gaon and tzaddik. He was a son-in-law of the famed tzaddik Rav Aryeh Levin and a brother-in-law of the posek hador Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv.) Rav Shmuel Abaron began his day before dawn when he arose to prepare to daven at a minyan vasikin. He would arrive home in the evening after davening Maariv following a day filled with Torah, tefillah and chesed. He placed his trust in Hashem that He would watch over him as he went about his avodas Hashem in the way that he had since his youth.

Then one day, he received a letter from his mother, who lived in Northern Israel, in the town of Kfar Tavor:

Dear Shmuel Abaron:

I have read about the terrible terrorist attacks in Jerusalem. May Hashem watch over acheinu Bnei Yisroel wherever they are. Shmuel Abaron, I am very worried about you since I know that you get up very early and go to sleep very late. I assume that when you walk the streets of Yerushalayim in the early morning hours and late evening hours there are not many people in the street. I am afraid for you to be out walking alone. It seems that to be in the streets alone in such times is more dangerous. Shmuel Abaron, please don't leave your house during nighttime hours.

Daven in the morning when it is already light outside and make sure to be back in your house before dark.

Be well. Best your regards to Rasha and the children,

Mama

There are no words to describe how upset Rav Shmuel Abaron was by this letter. On the one hand, he wanted very much to follow his mother's words. On the other hand, all his life, he had tried to do every mitzvah in the best possible way. He had been davening Shacharis at a minyan vasikin since before his bar mitzvah. And as for Maariv, though we are allowed to daven Maariv before sunset, the preferred time is after dark when we can also fulfill the mitzvah of Shema in its proper time.

What was he to do?

Rav Shmuel Abaron thought the matter through and came to the conclusion that since his mother was asking him to daven Shacharis and Maariv in a way that was not ideal, Halacha did not obligate him to obey her. It is also possible that he felt that since he had been davening this way for so many years, it was considered a neder (vow) and one is not allowed to go against a neder.

Even so, the thought that he was not obeying his mother's wishes gave him no rest. His children saw that he was not himself.

"What is wrong, Tatta?"

"What is wrong? I am going to shul when it is still dark, as I always do. But I know that Bubby would not be happy if she knew I was doing so."

Someone had an idea. He wrote a letter to Rav Shmuel Abaron's mother, telling her that Rav Shmuel Abaron was so distressed because of what she had asked of him. His mother was not surprised that her son was still davening vasikin and Maariv after dark. She knew very well how important every mitzvah was to her dear son. She was not happy to hear that her letter had upset him so much, though she was touched that he had taken her letter so seriously.

Soon, Rav Shmuel Abaron received another letter:

Dear Shmuel Abaron:

I hear that you are upset because you are not obeying my request. Please understand: I was not insisting that you leave your home only when it is light outside and return while it is still light. It was only a suggestion that you do so. If you feel that you must continue to daven at the time that is ideal, I fully understand and respect that.

*Be well, my dear son. And may Hashem continue to watch over you. Love,
Mama*

After reading the letter, Rav Shmuel Abaron's joy was indescribable.

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DAY 30 – HALACHA

B'ezras Hashem, today we'll discuss some halachos of honoring a deceased parent.

Chazal say that a child is obligated to honor her parents after they pass away. Moreover, it is a greater honor than honoring living parent, because when the parents are alive, a child might honor them because of either yirah, he fears them and concerned about the consequences if he doesn't honor them, or honors them to receive constant benefits from them or for an eventual yerushah, inheritance, after they pass away. However, after parents pass away, the honor is l'shem Shamayim, purely for hakaras hatov.

The first halacha that we'll explain is adding an appellation when mentioning them.

For example, when citing a dvar Torah from a deceased parent during the first year of aveilus, such as, "My father or my mother said...", some add: הרינו כפרת משכבו after one's father's name, and הרינו כפרת משכבה after one's mother's name, meaning, "may I be an atonement for his or her soul". Some also say this when just mentioning their name, while others only say either zichrono le'vracha or alav hashalom for a father, or zichronah le'vracha or ale'ha hashalom for a mother. One should ask her rav for guidance which one is preferable.

Rav Moshe Feinstein explains that הרינו כפרת משכבו is not to be taken literally because no living person can actually accept punishment for a deceased person, but it's rather an expression of honor that the child would like to suffer in this world instead of her parents in the next world.

After the first year, a child should not say הרינו כפרת משכבו or הרינו כפרת משכבה but zichrono le'vracha or alav hashalom, or zichronah le'vracha or ale'ha hashalom.

Some other honors for a deceased parent:

Naming a child after a parent or a grandparent. Chazal say that giving a name after a deceased parent to a child that was born to the family during the first year of mourning is a kapparah for the family.

One should give tzedakah in their memory. Some suggest paying for lighting in a shul or a beis ha'medrash. Some write "Pily nishmas..." in the back of a check or on the memo that they're giving to tzedakah.

It's also an honor to say over a halacha or d'var Torah from them such as, "My father or my mother told me this or said this."

If nobody is learning mishnayos in their memory, a child should pay somebody to learn mishnayos. If there's nobody to say Kadish, for example the parent was not Torah - observant, and the daughter became a baalas teshuva, one should pay somebody to say Kaddish for the parent.

A candle is lit on the yahrzeit. Some go to the cemetery and say Tehillim in chapter ט"ק the letters of the name, for example, for לאה, say 8 pesukim of the letters: א, ל, and ה, and then 8 times the pesukim of the letters ג-ש-מ-ה. Afterwards, say קל מלא קל מלא קל מלא, יהי רצון, and also Kaddish is there's a minyan of men. A child should give

tzedakah on the day of the yahrzeit. (Attached is a guide for visiting a cemetery)

NOTE: There are some days that קל מלא רחמים is not said.

Yizkor is recited the four times a year, and when one pledges tzedakah, she should say b'li neder. On the night of a yahrtzeit of one's parent, a child should not participate in a wedding meal. Regarding other festive meals, ask your rav for a final ruling as there are different opinions on this.

A child must realize that a deceased parent receives a share in every mitzvah that she performs. Moreover, it's evident from Chazal that a child's mitzvos have even the ability to even save her parent from the punishment of gihenom. This is a very important concept if one's parents are non-Torah-observant. If a daughter can be mekarev her parents to do teshuva, ma tov u'ma na'im, that's excellent. But the next best thing is for the daughter to do as many mitzvahs as she could as this will help them in the next world.

If a parent is widowed or divorced the child should help them remarry.

If, chas v'shalom, a non-observant parent wants to be cremated, or not buried according to halacha, such as one on top of the other person, or in a non-Jewish cemetery, a child must use all means to prevent this. Because otherwise, the neshama will have tremendous tzar in the next world.

I'd like to conclude this capsule with the words of the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch simanim כ"ו and כ"ז.

אף על פי שאמירת הקדיש והתפילות מועילות לאבות – even though reciting kaddish and tefillos help the parents after they pass away, מכל מקום אין אלו העיקר – nevertheless, this is not the ikar, i.e., primary honor or benefit. אלא עיקר הוא – but the ikar kavod and to'eles for deceased parents to benefit to them – שהבנים ילכו באורח מיישר – that the children should go in the proper path. In other words, the path of the Torah. כי – because in this way they merit the parents, בזה מוזכים את האבות – and so is stated in the Zohar. In another place he writes a similar thought, מי שהוא רוצה – who ever wants to truly honor his parents, יעסוק בתורה – should busy himself with learning Torah and doing maasim tovim. – שזהו הכבוד הגדול לאבות – as this is the greatest kavod that one can do for his parents, שאומר הבריות – that the people should say בן כזה – praised be parents who raised such a son (or daughter).

DAY 30 – STORY: “Why Me?”

“Yossi, I need you to bring in the groceries from the car so that I can start preparing supper.”

“Mommy, why me? Why do I always get stuck with these jobs? The other kids never get asked to do these things. It's always me. It's not fair.”

Yossi hadn't noticed it, but his father had come home from work as his mother was asking him to help. Yossi's father heard his response and he was not happy. Instead of speaking to Yossi directly, he tried something else.

“Children, after Yossi brings in the groceries, I want everyone to sit down at the table. There’s something I want to tell you.” A few minutes later, he began.

Children, let me tell you a story about myself.

You know that I am a Holocaust survivor. When the Germans entered our town, they rounded up all the Jews and brought us to the local train station where two trains were waiting to depart. An officer announced that we were to file past him and he would direct us to which train we would be boarding. We had no idea that this officer was conducting a selectzia (selection) that was usually done after the prisoners arrived at the concentration camp. The train on his right was for able-bodied men who would be sent to work in a slave labor camp. The train on the left was for those considered unfit for work. They would be taken directly to the gas chambers upon their arrival at the camp.

My father was directed to the right. My mother and all of her children were sent to the left. We had no idea that we were being sent to a concentration camp. We boarded the train and my mother started to rummage through her bundles looking for some food when her hand felt something made of velvet.

“Oh, no!” she exclaimed. “Tatty’s tefillin! He forgot to take them with him when they separated us!”

My mother turned to me, her oldest child, handed me the tefillin bag, and said, “Yitzzy, run quickly across the platform to the other train. Tatty is in the car right across from ours. Give him the tefillin and quickly come back.”

I was very frightened. “Go across the platform to Tatty’s train?” I thought to myself. “There are Germans on the platform with guns. We were warned not to leave our train. What will happen if they see me?”

“But Tatty needs his tefillin,” I told myself, “And Mommy asked me to go. How can I not go?”

I ran across the platform, entered the other train, found my father, and handed him the tefillin. He gave me a hug and I turned to leave... as the doors of the train closed. And the train began to move...

My mother and all my siblings met their deaths in the gas chambers. I spent the war years in a labor camp; that is how I survived.

“And so, children,” Yossi’s father concluded, “I am alive today because when my mother asked me to do something that I really didn’t want to do, I did it. I didn’t ask, ‘Why me?’”

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DAY 31 – HALACHA

B'ezras Hashem, in today's shiur we'll discuss the prohibitions of harming one's parents physically or verbally.

It's a serious aveira to smite one's parents as the Torah states in Parshas Mishpatim (21:15) וּמַכֵּה אָבִיו וְאִמּוֹ מוֹת יוֹמָת – One who smites his father or his mother is liable will be put to death (i.e., if there are 2 witnesses, hasra'ah – warning, and a beis din of 23 which no longer exists). The prohibition is to smite a parent in a way that causes bleeding. Otherwise, it's the same prohibition as smiting another Jew. This same prohibition applies to cursing one's parent.

Since we are addressing Bais Yaakov graduates who are Shomrei Torah u'mitzvos, no one in this group will smite her parent even without causing blood, and will hopefully never curse her parent. Thus, these prohibitions are irrelevant to us.

However, what can be relevant, is if a child can treat her parent when it causes bleeding. Some examples: Removing a splinter, dressing an open wound, receiving an injection if one's daughter is a nurse or a paramedic, taking a sugar count by removing some blood, or, if a dental hygienist can treat her parent.

Because of the seriousness of this matter, in all instances, one should always ask a shaila before treating her parent when there's a possibility that bleeding will result, as there are leniencies in situations such as:

1. If a parent is suffering and needs immediate treatment or prefers to be treated by his child; or, the child will provide better treatment than another person; or, it's difficult to find an outsider to treat the parent.
2. If calling a nurse to treat a wound will entail large financial loss and the child can treat it for free. This may be the case if the parent is a diabetic and needs her sugar to be tested daily by taking blood samples, and her child is the only one who can do it.

If a child is needed to give her parent insulin shots, she child should receive training to limit the possibility of causing a wound.

These halachos do not apply when treating one's grandparent.

The Shulchan Aruch writes that a child who embarrasses or degrades her parent in any way, even by hinting, will be cursed by Hashem, as she violates the Torah's warning of אָוֵר מִקְלָה אָבִיו וְאִמּוֹ – cursed be the one who degrades, humiliates or despises his father or mother (Devarim 27:16). For example, a child makes fun of how they speak, such as, a funny accent or tone of voice, imitates them in a humiliating manner, comments that the way they dress is old fashion, remarks about their physical appearance in a demeaning manner, such as, they have a funny nose, large ears, or they're overweight.

One who speaks lashon hara about her parents also transgresses this warning.

According to the Sefer Chareidim, this curse applies even if a child scorns her parent in her heart, i.e., in her thoughts, meaning, that she thinks about it but

doesn't say anything, such as thinking that her parents are old fashion or funny looking.

This concept is in sync with the Chayei Adam that we mentioned who writes that part of kibud av v'aim is regarding parents as great and honorable people which is impossible if a child scorns her parent in her heart.

DAY 31 – STORY: Know Your Priorities

It was erev Shabbos Chanukah and Menachem had come with his wife and children to spend Shabbos with his parents. He had arrived late on a short Friday afternoon. He quickly unpacked and got his family settled. Looking at his watch, Menachem realized that if he hurried, he would have just enough time to daven mincha before lighting the Chanukah lecht. Halacha states that it is best, if possible, to daven mincha on erev Shabbos Chanukah before the lighting.

Menachem knew that there was a minyan only a few short blocks away. He hurried to the shul and was happy to see that mincha had not yet begun. Around twenty minutes later, mincha was over and Menachem headed back to his parents' home.

"Perfect," he thought to himself. "I'm already dressed for Shabbos. Twenty minutes left until candle-lighting for Shabbos. That leaves us just enough time for everyone to light the Chanukah lecht before the ladies bentch Shabbos lecht."

As he approached his parents' house, Menachem was surprised to see his father standing by the front door looking quite worried.

"Ta, is everything okay?" he asked.

"Menachem... Menachem... where were you?" his father asked. "Oh, I went to daven mincha before lighting Chanukah lecht."

"But Menachem," his father said, still obviously upset, "Shabbos... what about Shabbos? We have to be ready for Shabbos!"

It was then that Menachem realized that he had made a mistake. His parents never rushed into Shabbos, getting things ready until the last minute. In their home, the table was set and everyone was dressed well before candle-lighting time. His father would spend the hour before Shabbos learning or saying Shir HaShirim.

By davening mincha, Menachem had arrived home with just minutes to spare before Shabbos, and the Chanukah lecht had not yet been kindled. Instead of davening mincha, he should have remained at home so that everyone could light the Chanukah lecht a few minutes earlier. He should have made his father's feelings his priority. Had he davened mincha later, his father would have been calm, not upset.

It was a lesson he would never forget.

Adapted with permission from My Parents and Me by Rabbi Shimon Finkelman published by ArtScroll/Mesorah

DAY 32 – HALACHA

B'ezras Hashem, today we'll discuss an interesting halacha of kibud av v'aim that we learn from Eisav.

Eisav was a rasha, but the honor that he gave his father was unmatched by anyone in mankind even of the greatest of our Torah sages. Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel said "There is nobody who honored his father as I did. However, I didn't reach 1/100th of the amount of honor that Eisav accorded his father. Rav Zalman Sorotzkin explains that Eisav honored his father for ulterior motives. He was fearful of being banished from his father's house because of his wicked behavior. Had Eisav been sincere in his honor, he would have also honored Rivka. But, the fact that he didn't show her similar respect that he accorded Yitzchok, shows that his honor to his father was insincere, and was only to be in good standing with him to eventually receive the brachos.

Despite Eisav's lack of sincerity, it's evident from Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel's praise, that his behavior toward his father serves as an example for us how to properly honor our parents.

Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel said that when he served his father, he wore soiled clothes and when he left his father's home, he changed to clean garments. However, Eisav dressed in royal clothing each time he served his father. Although Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel had good reason for wearing soiled clothes he admitted that he was wrong in doing so.

Based on this midrash it would be appropriate for a married child to dress nicely when visiting her parents. However, while still living in one's parents' home, the parents are generally moichel this kavod since it would be difficult for a child to be dressed in her finest clothes each time she honors her parents.

An insight into wearing presentable clothes when honoring one's parents can be inferred from the Chayai Adam that we mentioned many times, who writes that we must imagine our parents as great and honorable people even if others regard them as ordinary people. We cited Rav Pam who explained that since every person possesses some virtuous qualities, a child should search for those qualities in his parents and think about them constantly. We also mentioned the Rambam who writes that a child must regard his parents as king and queen whose wishes are like a royal command.

Therefore, just as a person would wear suitable garments when visiting an adam chashuv, a talmid chocham, a rosh yeshiva, or, l'havdil, a king or any other dignitary, when possible, one should certainly dress nicely when fulfilling the mitzvah of honoring her parents.

Dressing nicely will greatly improve your feeling of kavod for them, as you only dress nicely for chashuv people similar to the effect that standing up for one's parents has. Since you don't stand up for ordinary people, when you stand up for your parents it automatically shows chashivus.

Surprisingly, I haven't seen this halacha brought down in any halacha sefer on honoring parents. Nevertheless, since part of the mitzvah of kibud av v'aim is to give parents nachas, I'm sure that, whenever possible, wearing nice attire when honoring one's parents will give them much simcha and nachas.

This is the final capsule of the halachos. B'ezras Hashem, tomorrow, we'll begin a general chazara of all the halachos that we learned.

DAY 32 – STORY: “I’ll Send You a Minyan”

“Attention passengers. Traffic control has informed us that there is a thick fog over New York and the airports have been closed. We will have to land at Dulles International Airport in Washington, D.C.”

Four businessmen were flying from Cleveland to New York for a trade show. Their early-morning flight was supposed to land in New York with plenty of time for them to join a minyan near the airport for Shacharis.

Now, that would be impossible. “You think we’ll be able to find a minyan in the airport?” Yoel Friedman asked his companion Moshe Steinhardt.

“Well, we are four. And there’s that group of chassidim on the plane who had been visiting their rebbe in Cleveland. I’m pretty sure there are six of them. So we already have a minyan!”

When the plane landed, the ten men approached an airport official and asked if he could arrange for them to daven in a quiet corner of the terminal. The official was very respectful of their request and directed them to a corner that was free of foot traffic but was in clear view of people walking by. The men put on their tallis and tefillin and began to daven.

Moments later, a well-dressed man walked by. He looked very sad. Noticing the minyan, he walked over to Moshe and said, “Excused me, but my father died a few days ago. I am returning home after attending the funeral. I don’t really know how to pray but I know how to say Kaddish. Can I say Kaddish for my father at the end of your service?”

“Why, of course!” replied Moshe. Here, have a seat and I’ll tell you when to say Kaddish.” One of the men actually had with him an extra set of tallis and tefillin and helped the man to put them on the correct way.

Towards the end of davening, the men motioned to the stranger to recite the final Kaddish. As he was reciting it, he burst into tears. When davening ended, the man told the others something incredible:

“As I told one of you earlier, a few days ago, my father passed away. I don’t live near any synagogues, and until this morning, I had not recited a single Kaddish. Last night my father came to me in a dream and said, ‘Robert, I need you to say Kaddish for me — why aren’t you saying Kaddish?’

“I explained to my father that I barely knew how to pronounce the words of Kaddish, and besides, there were no synagogues in my area, so it was not possible for me to recite it. My father asked me, ‘If I send you a minyan, will you say Kaddish for me?’

“I replied that yes, of course I would recite Kaddish if I came upon a minyan.

“I woke up trembling and tried to put the dream out of my mind. I had a flight to catch, so I got dressed and hurried to the airport.

“And that’s when I met your minyan — the minyan that my father sent me so that I could say Kaddish.”

Adapted with permission from Around the Maggid’s Table by Rabbi Paysach Krohn and My Parents and Me by Rabbi Shimon Finkelman published by ArtScroll/Mesorah

DAY 33 - HALACHA

B'ezras Hashem, the remaining 8 capsules will be devoted to a review of the halachos that we've learned, with a few added new insights and stories as we go along.

Before I start, I'd like to mention the following 2 important points:

1. Unlike the halachos of daily living that appear in Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim, such as, tefilla, brachos, Shabbos and yom tov, where we have the Mishna Brura as the final posek among the different halachic opinions, there is no similar work in the other parts of the Shulchan Aruch. However, I've tried to verify the halachos from the sefarim available on hilchos kibud u'moreh av v'aim to the best of my ability. And, generally speaking, one should consult her rav for a final psak.
2. I have tried to cover most of the pertinent halachos of kibud u'moreh av v'aim. An excellent source for all the halachos on these mitzvos can be found in *The Fifth Commandment by Rav Moshe Lieber, (ArtScroll)*.

We begin. The importance of knowing the halachos of any mitzvah is noted by the Chofetz Chaim who cites the Shelah that one cannot properly fulfill a mitzvah unless he studies the halachos of that mitzvah. And, the Yesod V'shoresh Ha'avodah writes that we should set aside a regular time to study the laws of honoring our parents, since each person is obligated to know these laws and keep them in mind constantly, and in today's terms 24/7.

Therefore, it would be helpful to review these halachos either from your notes or from the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch. Indeed, Chazal say that one who learns Torah but doesn't review what he learned is comparable to one who sows his field but doesn't reap the harvest – eventually all the grain rots and all the hard work goes down the drain.

I advise to keep a small note in your purse with a halacha and review & practice it a few times daily. Afterwards, gradually add to the list and practice a second halacha, & continue this until you've practiced all the halachos. Every so often, review the previous halachos.

After practicing a halacha a few times, it will come to you automatically when the opportunity comes your way. For example, you'll automatically stand when you see your parents, and you'll view them as great and honorable people and feel the hakaras hatov each time you obey their wishes etc. But, besides adding quantity to the mitzvos of kibud u'moreh av v'aim, i.e., looking for more opportunities to fulfill them, we also want to add quality to them by adding the neshama of the mitzvah to it, i.e., the kavanah. We'll upgrade these mitzvos from a dry act to an act with inner meaning, similar to adding kavanah when we daven and concentrate on the words we say. By doing so, we'll be a head taller than most people who don't even think about the reason of fulfilling this mitzvah and fulfill it by rote – mitzvas a'nashim me'lumadah, as stated in Yeshayah (29:13).

We mentioned 2 kavanos to have in mind while doing the mitzvos of kibud u'moreh av v'aim:

1. That you're doing a mitzvah d'oraysa, and not a stam mitzvah, but honoring parents is one of the Aseres Hadibros.
2. The feeling of hakaras hatov toward your parents for bringing you into the world, caring for you from infancy and for all they've done for you in the course of your life, as noted by the Chinuch and the Chayei Adam.

The Chayei Adam divides the halachos of kibud av v'aim into 3 categories. Maaseh - acts of doing, Dibur - speech, and Machshava - the thought process.

We'll start with maaseh - acts of doing. We mentioned the obligation to stand up when your parents enter the room. This must be done at least twice daily, once in the morning and once in the evening. And, even if parents are moichel, you'll still get the mitzvah if you stand up for them; and if they object, then stand up when they're not looking, because the mitzvah is for you to honor them whether they see it or not. And don't forget to have the two kavanos in mind when arising for them. Sefardi participants should consult their rav if they must arise more than twice daily.

I'll leave you with a powerful thought from Rav Avigdor Miller on hakaras hatov. He said that if one cannot express hakaras hatov to a human being such as a parent or spouse who she can physically see and relate to, how then, can she express hakaras hatov to Hashem whom she doesn't see, and, if she does express hakaras hatov to Hashem, it's empty and meaningless.

DAY 33 – STORY: “Look in My Son’s Sefer”

Rav Shmuel Baruch Werner is a great talmid chocham and the author of Mishpetei Shmuel on Gemara. In that sefer, he asks a difficult question and does not offer an answer. After his sefer was published, he had a very unusual dream.

In the dream, he saw an elderly woman who identified herself as Mrs. Genochovsky, the mother of the gaon and tzaddik, Rav Avrohom Genochovsky, who lived in Bnei Brak. After his mother passed away, Rav Genochovsky wrote a sefer called Cheder Horasi on Masechta Horiyos, in memory of his dear mother. In the dream, Mrs. Genochovsky said to Rav Werner, “Why don’t you look in the sefer that my son wrote in my honor — you will find that he discusses this question of yours!”

When Rav Werner awoke, he wasted no time in opening his copy of Sefer Cheder Horasi. Sure enough, Rav Genochovsky raised his question and offered a beautiful answer! When Rav Werner told Rav Genochovsky about his dream, Rav Genochovsky said that what he found most amazing is that from her place in Gan Eden, his mother seemed to be familiar with the contents of her son’s sefer.

When a child does a mitzvah on this world, he really has no idea how much pleasure this brings to his father or mother in Gan Eden.

Adapted from My Parents and Me by Rabbi Shimon Finkelman, published by ArtScroll/Mesorah

DAY 34 - HALACHA

B'ezras Hashem, today we'll continue with reviewing other areas of maaseh, acts of doing, in the mitzvah of kibud av v'aim.

The Shulchan Aruch mentions six main categories of maaseh: the first two, which are the most common, are providing or serving parents with food and drink. The third and fourth are dressing and covering them, and the fifth and sixth are assisting them in entering or exiting the home.

Bear in mind, that each act is another mitzvah, and just think: you get 7 mitzvos in preparing a cup of coffee and serving it to your parent. 1. Putting the coffee into the cup, 2. Cooking the water, 3. Pouring it, 4. Mixing it with the coffee, 5. Adding sugar, 6. Adding milk, and 7. Serving. Amazing! This is only one example, and, during a meal, you can accumulate dozens of mitzvos, especially on Shabbos.

The third category of dressing parents usually applies to elderly or incapacitated parents, but it also includes helping young and healthy parents to put on their coat or jacket, or by holding the garment so it's easier for them to insert their hands into the sleeve.

The fourth category of covering parents and can also apply if a parent is ill in bed, or to elderly or incapacitated parents.

The fifth and sixth categories of assisting parents in entering or exiting the home, is applicable by holding the door open for them or holding their hand, if necessary, for example, if it's slippery outside, or helping them get in and out of a car. Needless to say, if one's parent requires a walker, cane or a wheelchair it's a golden opportunity to chap arain more mitzvos of kibud av v'aim.

The Rema adds an important addition to these 6 halachos. He writes *ישמשנו בשאר דברים שמשמש משמש רבו*, literally a child should serve his parents in other types of services that a servant serves his master. This is an eye opener as it includes dozens of areas of serving and honoring parents which become mitzvos d'oraysa with all the benefits and rewards of them.

Additionally, a child should be one step ahead of the game. For example, if a parent comes home and needs a hot or cold drink upon arrival, she should be there for them, and ask immediately if and what they'd like to drink. Also, preempt them if you see that they're hungry or thirsty, by asking "What can I serve you?" Or, ask them if they need help with shopping or unloading and putting away groceries. And, when a married daughter visits her parents or in-laws she should offer to help and see what they need assistance in.

The Shulchan Aruch adds an important concept when serving your parents, do it *בסבר פנים יפות*, as the expression goes "service with a smile." In other word, it's not only what you do for your parents that's important, but also more important is *how* you do it, meaning, to fulfill this mitzvah b'simcha, giving your parents a feeling that you're happy to assist them in any way and not with a krechtz or a sigh of difficulty. A small act of serving coffee or tea b'simcha is worth more than serving

them a gourmet meal with an expression of how burdensome it was to prepare and serve it.

We also addressed the issue of a child who feels that she is being taken advantage of by a parent who is always asking her to do things for her. However, a child should change her mindset and consider that honoring her parents is a privilege and not a burden, and therefore, instead of trying to evade doing extra jobs for one's parents, on the contrary, a child should compete with her siblings in getting the most mitzvos as possible. This especially applies at the Shabbos meal when there's so much to do – setting, serving and clearing.

It also may be a good idea for each child to make her own list of how many mitzvos of honoring her parents she did that day and constantly try to add to it.

And finally, children should never say that they don't have time for their parents, or that it's too late to be bothered, or that their parents are demanding something too difficult for them to do. When parents spent sleepless nights caring for these children did they ever give up and say that they're tired or complain that caring for them was too difficult? Children should especially keep this in mind when caring for elderly parents who need extra care, attention and understanding.

Regarding the attitude of feeling difficulty in fulfilling the mitzvah of *kibud av v'aim*, we mentioned in day 14 the story of Shimon who told Reuven that he goes to his parents every evening after a late *maariv* to help them “finish off the day.” When Reuven heard this, he asked Shimon with a surprised look “What? You do this every night?”

Shimon who did not understand the reason for this amazement, simply replied, “But they're my parents.”

To Shimon, honoring his parents was so basic that he could not see how someone could think otherwise. Whenever a *rav* who overheard this conversation recounted this story, he remarked that he had never learned so much about the mitzvah of *kibud av v'aim* or been so inspired as he was from this short conversation.

So, the next time things get difficult when fulfilling the mitzvah of kibud av v'aim, just think to yourself: “But they're my parents.”

DAY 34 – STORY: One Condition

Yoel Hendler was orphaned of his father as a young boy; his mother never remarried. She raised him with exceptional love and devotion. When Yoel reached marriageable age, he decided that he was not going to allow his mother to live alone as she aged. He would only marry a girl who would agree that his mother could live with them.*

*Understandably, it was very difficult to find a girl who would agree to such a precondition for marriage. Whenever a *shidduch* was suggested for Yoel, it was quickly withdrawn as soon as his condition was mentioned.*

*Yoel's *rosh yeshivah* was sure that he was wrong for making such a precondition. When the *rosh yeshivah* consulted with Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, the great *posek* told him, “I agree*

wholeheartedly with this fine, exceptional ben Torah. He should only marry a girl who will agree to have her mother-in-law live with them. And I offer my bracha that he should find that girl very soon!"

Three months later, Yoel found the girl he was looking for. As soon as he became engaged, he hurried to tell Rav Shlomo Zalman the news. Of course, he was overjoyed and offered his heartfelt bracha once again.

The day after the wedding, Rav Shlomo Zalman phoned Yoel and said, "Now is the time to find appropriate living quarters for your mother. She cannot live with you; it is not the normal way for a newlywed couple to begin their married life with a parent living with them. I told you to seek a wife who would agree to your condition because you are an exceptional son of exceptional character, so I wanted you to find someone on your elevated level.

"You have found her, and I am sure that your mother will be overjoyed to have not only a devoted son but also a devoted daughter. May Hashem bless you both."

Adapted with permission from The Splendor of the Maggid by Rabbi Paysach Krohn and Honor Them Revere Them, by Rabbi Shimon Finkelman and ybl"ch Rabbi Zechariah Wallerstein, published by ArtScroll/Mesorah

DAY 35 – HALACHA

B'ezras Hashem, the next two summaries will be devoted to the halachos of morah av v'aim, revering parents and treating them with awe and respect.

The Rambam in Sefer Hamitzvos writes that a child must regard her parents as a king and queen, whose wishes are a royal command and to whom is she's afraid to disobey or to do anything that they detest. Therefore, a child must behave with reverence and respect toward her parents no less then she would behave in the presence of a king and a queen.

Unfortunately, in too many families we find the opposite: parents wining and dining on their children, as if the Torah states כבד את בנך ואת בתך.

We mentioned a story of the grand opening of a restaurant, where someone was sitting in the center smoking, and was filling the restaurant from his smoking cigar. When the visitors went over to the owner and asked him to please remove him, the owner said “He’s my father, I don’t tell him what to do.”

One must not cause her parents stress even under extreme circumstances. This includes two things. The first is obeying a parent’s wishes and the second not doing anything that they detest. Therefore, think twice before doing or saying anything that your parents may dislike.

Some examples: It’s assur to wake a sleeping parent. Therefore, exercise caution on Shabbos afternoon and keep small children from playing in close range of the parents’ bedroom. If you come back late from a simcha, remove your high heel shoes if the floors are not carpeted. Close doors slowly, whisper to each other if you’re near your parents’ bedroom, and surely, keep your distance from their bedroom when you’re speaking on your mobile phone. If a parent dozes off on a living room recliner, you must keep the house quiet.

If a parent requests to be woken, such as, for an appointment, a minyan or a shiur etc., it’s preferable if it’s not done by the child, rather by the other parent or a relative.

An interesting insight into causing a parent distress is when siblings quarrel in their presence or when older siblings that don’t get along with each other.

Disobeying a parents’ request will usually cause them tzar and is assur. It goes without saying that children have to be trained that when a parent says “no” it’s NO without any ifs ands or buts. This is sometimes referred to as vitamin N. Indeed, Rav Shimon Schwab once remarked that lesson number one for children to learn is that the main people in the house are the father and mother, they are the balei habayis, the ruling authorities of the house to be honored and obeyed.

Instances where children do not have to listen to their parents:

- When parents ask for something that can harm them and is against the doctor’s orders.

- When the parents request of a child to do an aveira, whether to transgress an issur d'oraysa, an issur d'rabanana, or an accepted minhag. This is a serious issue when someone has parents who are more modern and are not so conscientious about observing halacha properly. One should seek rabbinic guidance if a child should say anything to try and stop her parents from transgressing an aveira if they may not listen. Similarly, if one has parents who are non-Torah-observant, she should seek rabbinical guidance regarding her obligation in kibud av v'aim.
- If a child suffers from abusive parents, she may evade them to avoid being abused, and she should seek rabbinical guidance regarding her obligation in kibud av v'aim.
- If a parent asks a child about another person and answering him/ her will lead to lashon hara, it's assur to answer, and one should say simply "I don't know."
- Regarding married women – if honoring her parents interferes with honoring her husband or any other of her family obligations and may cause shalom bayis problems, a daughter is absolved from her obligation of honoring her parents. Rabbinical guidance should be sought if this will cause friction between the parents and their daughter.
- One should seek rabbinical guidance if parents object to their married children living in Eretz Yisroel, or if they object to a child's choice of marrying a suitable mate.
- If a child wants to accept a chumrah, and by doing so, it will cause tzar to the parents, she should ask a shaila before accepting it.

If one's father and mother request separate activities that conflict with each and the daughter can't do both at the same time, the father's request must first be honored because the mother is also required to honor the father. If the parents are divorced the child can honor either one first,

I want to end this summary with a powerful story about disobeying parents from Rav Schach.

A bachur once came to him with the following shaila: "My father wants me to stop smoking, but it's extremely difficult for me, and it would cause me much anguish and distress to stop. What does the halacha say? Am I permitted according to halacha to disobey him?"

Rav Schach answered "I know how difficult it is to stop smoking as I was also a smoker until I once had an operation and the doctor told me that I must quit. I had no other choice, and believe me, I felt more pain from stopping to smoke than from the illness and the operation combined.

"But I'm telling you one thing, forget the halacha. All your arguments are not enough to disobey your parents because of the tremendous hakaras hatov that you owe them. You simply cannot go against the wishes of your father."

So, the next time your parents ask you to do something that's difficult, and I'm certain that it won't be as difficult as stopping to smoke, remember the words of Rav Schach:

“Because of the tremendous hakaras Hatov that you’re obligated towards your parents, you cannot simply go against their wishes.”

DAY 35 – STORY: Four Great Lights

Some 500 years ago in the city of Worms lived a man named R’ Chaim who traced his lineage to R’ Hai Gaon and Dovid HaMelech. He had three sons: R’ Betzalel, R’ Yaakov, and R’ Helmann. When the three sons expressed a desire to study in the great yeshivos of Poland, R’ Chaim allowed the two younger sons to go but asked that his bechor, R’ Betzalel, remain behind to care for him, as he was getting on in years.

After being away for some time, the two brothers returned home. They had grown tremendously in their learning from having sat at the feet of geonim and tzaddikim and from having studied side by side with young men of great spiritual striving. R’ Betzalel was also a talmid chocham, but it was obvious that his brothers had surpassed him in their level of knowledge. This greatly distressed R’ Betzalel.

Taking note of this, R’ Chaim blessed R’ Betzalel that in the merit of his kibud av he would have sons who would illuminate the world with their Torah knowledge.

And so it was. The eldest son, R’ Chaim ben R’ Betzalel, was rav of a large community and author of many sefarim. The second son, R’ Sinai, served as rosh yeshivah in Prague and rav in Nikolsburg. The third, R’ Shimschon, served as rav in Kremetz, Poland. The youngest and most illustrious son was R’ Yebudah, who became known as the Maharal of Prague and whose classic works of Jewish thought illuminate the world of Torah scholarship to this day.

Adapted with permission from Honor Them Revere Them, a lesson-a-day on kibud av v’aim by Rabbi Shimon Finkelman and ybl”ch Rabbi Zechariah Wallerstein ז”ל, published by ArtScroll/Mesorah.

DAY 36 – HALACHA

B'ezras Hashem, today we'll continue reviewing the halachos of yirah, revering one's parents.

1. It's assur to sit or stand in the father's or mother's designated place at home or in shul, whether the parent is or isn't present, or to sit in their chair even if it's not in the usual place. Also, it's not derech ertz to stand on their chair.
2. There's no issur of sitting or lying on their bed or driving in their car in the driver's seat where they usually sit.
3. It's a good idea that once or twice a day when you pass your parents designated place have this thought in mind: I don't sit or stand in their place because I'm regarding them as a king and queen.
4. A child shouldn't contradict a parents' statements in their presence just as she would not openly contradict a king or a queen. If a parent asks a child's opinion, she can express her honest opinion even if it differs from her parents. If a parent asks a child to check over the sum total of expenditures, she can point out the mistake, but say "there's a mistake," rather than "you make a mistake."
5. A child should not validate a parents' statement in their presence, for example, if one's parent is discussing a matter with somebody who expresses an opinion contrary to her parents, it's assur to say in the parent's presence "I agree with my parent or my parent is correct."
6. A child should never interrupt a parent who is speaking, a very common occurrence at the Shabbos table. It's also one of the **שבועה דברים בגולם**, the traits of an uncultured person.
7. If a child is present at a discussion with his parents and other people, don't speak ahead of her parents. Besides the fact that it's not kavod, it's also one of the **שבועה דברים בגולם**, speaking before somebody older than you and greater than you in chochmah.
8. When requesting a parent to do something for you, for example to purchase an item, you should preface: "Would it be possible to purchase etc." as it sounds less demanding. And of course, don't forget to say "Thank you."
9. A child must always speak to his parents softly and politely in a manner that reflects both **הכרת הטוב** that she owes them, and the esteem that a child has for her parents which is the same esteem that she would have if she was speaking to a king or a queen.
10. It's assur for a child to refer to his parent by his or her name, for example, if she's asked "Are you related to Sarah Plonis?" it's assur to say "Yes, I'm Sarah's daughter," or to say to a friend whose father's name is Yehuda Leib, "My father's name is also Yehuda Leib." This issur applies even when a child isn't in the presence of her parents, and even after the parent passes away.

11. Most poskim hold that it's muter to say a parent's first name by adding a title, such as, Mr., Mrs., Reb, Rabbi, Rebbetzin, or Dr. However, Rav Moshe Feinstein is machmir, and is only muttar if a child is specifically asked for her parent's name. For example, when applying for a camp or when opening a bank account, and one is asked by the secretary or the clerk for her parent's name, the child should answer "I am the daughter of Mrs. Rivka Plonis," or "the daughter of Rabbi, Doctor or Mr. Yaakov Ploni." If it sounds a bit awkward, Reb Moshe holds one can ask his parents for reshus to mention their name without a title. However, a child still gets a mitzvah for refraining to mention their names without adding a title. The same machlokes applies if one may refer to his father to his children, for example, to tell his children that we are going to visit Saba (or Zaidy) Dovid or Savta (or bubby) Rivka; best to either get their permission or refer to them by their last names.

12. When davening for a parent, for example, for a refuah sheleimah, preface the name with just avi (or avi mori), or imi (or imi morasi). Don't add Rav, Rabbi or Rebbetzin. This is also true when davening for a Rav, or a Rosh Yeshiva, just mention their name and their mother's name. No titles.

13. When in the presence of someone who has the same name as your parent, it's mutar to call the other person by that name, as the parent will not assume that you mean him or her. However, this is mutar only by a common name, for example, Avraham or Bracha, but not if it's an uncommon name, for example, Tanchum, Zundel, Fradel, Kaila, etc., you shouldn't call the other person by that name. With uncommon names, some suggest, to add the last name, for example, "Zundel Cohen" or "Fradel Levine."

And finally, one should also be careful not to cause parents any unnecessary worry, for example, when a child is away from home she should keep in contact with her parents as they tend to worry about her whereabouts and safety.

Rav Avrohom Pam remarked that children should not come home late from a date as their parents will probably not go to sleep until their child returns safely.

Rav Yitzchok Zilbershtein relates how careful we must be not to cause a parent any worry with the following story:

The Chazon Ish would visit his mother daily for half an hour, just to sit and talk with her. One day he was so engrossed in his learning that he forgot to visit her. When his sister, who was the wife of the Steipler Rav, paid her a visit that day, their mother innocently mentioned that she had not seen her son yet that day.

After the daughter left, she stopped by the Chazon Ish's home to tell him that their mother had inquired about him. He immediately realized that he had forgotten to visit his mother, and instantly grabbed his hat and coat and started running to her house. Observing his frenzy, his sister tried to calm him down, but the Chazon Ish ran so quickly that she could not catch up to him.

He was not only running to do the mitzva, he also realized that his mother was concerned about him and he wanted to alleviate her unease as soon as possible.

DAY 36 – STORY: A Tzaddik’s Assurance

A week before Rabbi Shmuel Tzvi Kowalsky’s passing, when he was seriously ill, he attended the wedding of the son of a major supporter of his kollel. The chosson’s older brother, also a supporter of the kollel, flew from America to attend the wedding. During the wedding feast, this brother began to experience severe chest pains. Medics arrived via ambulance, an electrocardiogram was performed, and after reading the results, the medics advised that the patient be transported to a hospital immediately.

All this time, the chosson’s parents were not aware of what was transpiring. The patient had been whisked away to a side room and they had no idea that he was not well. The patient therefore said that he wanted to return to the ballroom for a short while before going to the hospital so that his parents would see him and assume that all was well.

Just then Rav Kowalsky arrived at the wedding. Another brother of the chosson hurried over to him and apprised him of the situation. Rav Kowalsky pondered the matter for a few moments before responding, “Tell your brother that he should not go to the hospital. He should remain at the wedding and not worry. I take responsibility for his health.”

Upon returning home, Rav Kowalsky told his family, “I have taken upon myself a great responsibility.” He then divided Sefer Tehillim among the family and they recited chapter after chapter until 3 a.m. He then said, “That young man came from America to rejoice in his parents’ simcha and he wanted to remain in the hall to save his parents from pain and distress. This mitzvah is sufficient to shield him from harm so that he will live long.”

A few days later, the young man returned to America and made an appointment with a cardiologist. When the doctor perused the printout from the electrocardiogram that had been administered at the wedding, he said, “I don’t understand what those medics were concerned about. There is nothing here that indicates a heart problem.”

The young man commented, “I don’t know for sure which doctor was right, but I know one thing: In Rav Kowalsky’s zechus, the wedding was not marred by my leaving.”

Adapted from Honor Them Revere Them, a lesson-a-day on kibur av v’aim by Rabbi Shimon Finkelman and ybl”ch Rabbi Zechariah Wallerstein, published by ArtScroll/Mesorah.

DAY 37 – HALACHA

B'ezras Hashem, today we'll review the halachos of kibud av v'aim for married women.

A married woman's obligation in the mitzvah of kibud av v'aim doesn't change as long as it doesn't interfere with her obligations to her husband and her family. Therefore, she should look for as many opportunities as she can to fulfill this mitzvah when visiting her parents, such as, standing up when they enter the room, anticipating their needs and asking if they need help with household chores, for example, taking out the garbage, washing the dishes, helping to arrange items in the cupboard, folding wash, preparing and serving them food etc.

However, if honoring her parents interferes with her domestic responsibilities, i.e., her husband or her children, she's absolved from her obligation to honor her parents. Even so, she and her husband should try and satisfy her parents to avoid friction with them. Other areas of honoring parents at the Shabbos meals will be discussed in the following capsule.

If a wife's parents want her to come to them for Shabbos but the husband wants to be home, she must respectfully reject their invitation. Seek rabbinical advice if this would cause friction with her parents.

When a married couple moves into one of the parents' home for Yom Tov, the couple are faced with the delicate balance of tending to their family's needs, while, at the same time, the parents would like the couple to spend more time with them.

At times, the parents may want to give unsolicited advice how the couple should raise their children. It's a very sticky situation, especially if the parents help support them. Rabbinical guidance is necessary how to cope with the delicate balance.

The Shulchan Aruch states that one is required to honor his in-laws, though to a lesser degree than honoring one's parents. The exact parameters of this honor are not defined in halacha. There is no obligation to serve them food, but one should stand or rise a bit when they enter within 4 amos of where you are. One should speak to them in a humble and respectful manner, and preferably not sit in their place, unless they're moichel. When visiting one's in-laws for Shabbos or weekday one should act as a daughter by offering to help just as she would when visiting her own parents. One should not call them by their name, rather Abba, Ima, Mommy, Daddy or Totty.

One must honor her in-laws even if she doesn't get along with them, or she feels that her they're meddling into her marriage. In my book on marriage, I devoted an entire chapter on handling this or a strained relationship with one's in-laws. One tip how the relationship with one's in-laws can get off to a great start is with a simple gesture of expressing hakaras hatov by saying to them "I want to thank you very much for bringing such a wonderful husband into the world." One should not forget that it was her in-laws who raised and educated her spouse in whom she found everything she was looking for. They must have done quite a great job and

deserve a great deal of gratitude for their accomplishment. Once one begins thinking and feeling this way, her attitude will drastically change toward her in-laws.

Even after one is married a few years, she can still express hakaras hatov by calling them at a special occasion, for example, an anniversary, and thanking them at that time.

If the couple live in another city, keep in touch with them by calling and sending e-mails regularly. Also, send them pictures of the grandchildren, birthday, anniversary, and shana tova wishes etc.

Rav Avigdor Miller strongly advises couples not to live in the same home as their parents or in-laws. Living in close proximity to parents or in-laws has its pros and its cons.

The pros: More opportunities to fulfill the mitzvah of kibud av v'aim, and you can role-model honoring your parents to your children. In this way, you'll have an easier time of being mechanech them in this mitzvah by showing them proper honor of one's parents. As we previously mentioned, children learn more from what they see than from what they hear.

The cons: Parents or in-laws may meddle into their children's marriage causing shalom bayis problems.

A woman once complained to me that her mother-in-law would constantly purchase items for her children and her family that were totally not to her taste.

I devote an entire chapter on this topic in my book "The Do's and Don'ts of Staying Happily Married" which is available at your local bookstore, or contact me for a discounted price.

Seek rabbinical advice regarding one's obligation to care for elderly, sick or infirmed parents which may be an emotional strain on the daughter and it may interfere with her obligations to her family and her husband.

With children, role modeling is the best chinuch in the mitzvah of kibud av v'aim as children learn more from what they see then from what they hear. Therefore, when they're of age, they should see how you honor and respect your parents when you visit them and when they visit you, and this will serve as a role model how they should honor you. Mention to your child that this is how we fulfill the mitzvah of kibud av v'aim. The more they see how you honor your parents, the more of an impact it will have on them to imitate your behavior. And don't forget that each time you do something for your parents, do it **בסבר פנים יפות**, "service with a smile," show that you're happy to do it.

All the halachos of revering parents applies to married women as well. Thus, it's assur sit or stand in her parents' designated place at home or in shul, or to contradict or validate their words. Also, she's fully obligated to arise m'lo komaso – entirely – for her parents when they enter her domain, whether at home or in shul.

DAY 37 – STORY: Relieved of Other Burdens

In There Is No Such Thing as Coincidence (published by Hamodia), the following story is told:

There came a point when my elderly father could no longer live alone. My wife and I convinced him to come live with us on a trial basis for two months. We thought that if it would work, he would rotate living among my siblings and myself for two months at a time.

But that is not what happened. For whatever reason, my siblings felt that they could not care for him. He lived with us until his passing seven years later.

A very interesting thing happened. After my father's passing, various issues cropped up that took up much of my time and put a serious strain on my and my wife's schedules. These issues could have existed while my father was living with us, but Hashem had made sure that they did not.

Before my father moved in, members of our family had required special dental work: retainers, root canals, tooth extractions... While my father was with us, not once did any of us need anything other than standard dental checkups.

And after his passing, new dental problems began.

After my father's passing, my son's yeshivah informed me that he seemed to be hyperactive. While my father was alive, he had not seemed to have this problem.

When my father lived with us, a shidduch was suggested between a son of mine and a girl who lived overseas. Her father offered to travel to Eretz Yisroel where we live to discuss the shidduch, and that is where the entire shidduch process, from beginning to end, took place. After my father's passing, a shidduch was suggested for another son with a girl from overseas. This time we had to travel overseas, where the shidduch was consummated.

At my place of work, my responsibilities had always left me with the time I needed to care for my father. After his passing, new projects necessitated the extension of my working hours. I could not have managed had this happened during my father's lifetime.

Clearly, the burden of caring for my father, which I had willingly placed upon myself, had relieved me of many other burdens.

DAY 38 – HALACHA

B'ezras Hashem, today we'll review the halachos of kibud av v'aim at the Shabbos table and with elderly parents. For children: At the Shabbos table, parents should not have to get up for anything. Besides serving one's parents, preempt them with their needs, for example: if they need reading glasses, a drink or a l'chaim that was forgotten to bring to the table; after the father recites hamotzi and cuts the challah, move the challah board from the father and place the salt next to him and a drink if he needs one. Place serving bowls by the parents so they don't have to reach for it, and don't forget that each act is another mitzvah of kibud av v'aim. Train yourself with derech erez: serve the parents first, the father then the mother, they also take first from the center bowl or plate, and if they serve wait until they start eating before you eat yourself unless you ask permission. Needless to say, a child should not argue with siblings or parents whose turn it is to serve or clear. On the contrary, each sibling should be vying in competition for the mitzvah, and waiting for the parent to give her the opportunity to fulfill another mitzvah of kibud av v'aim. The same goes for cleaning up on Motzei Shabbos.

Don't interrupt a parent who's speaking and listen intently if the father says a d'var Torah.

Don't do anything that they detest and may cause them tzar, for example, to bicker with siblings, or eating in a manner that doesn't appeal to them. And, either at the end or during the meal, don't forget compliment your mother how delicious the food was and thank her for cooking the Shabbos meals.

For married women: the Shabbos meals serves as a golden opportunity to train their children in the mitzvah of kibud av v'aim. From time to time review the basic halachos in the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch three times a year: in Parshas Yisro, Kedoshim and Va'eschanan. Train the children in derech erez at the meal, no grabbing, and wait for the parents to eat before eating. Explain to them about the schar in olam habah, and the long life, אריכות ימים, that one gets when honoring one's parents. Use a reward system as an incentive to get another mitzvah. Ask them "Who wants a mitzvah?" and make a chart with rewards. Train them how to ask – "Can you please pass...?" and when they pass it, say "thank you." If they didn't ask properly, teach them how to do it, and then have them repeat it.

When parents or in-laws visit for Shabbos, some couples honor them by having the father sit at the head of the table. He should be honored with making kiddush, washing first, be served first, and bench מוזמן if there are three men for a זימון.

With elderly parents, it is at this stage of their lives that children can fulfill the mitzvos of helping their parents to get dressed, covering them in bed, assisting them in entering and leaving the home, and, at times, even feeding them.

However, if parents require care beyond the capabilities of their child, for example they are handicapped, senile or suffer from a debilitating condition, the child should look into the options of homecare if it's practically and financially possible, as elderly sick people are happiest in their own home where the surroundings are familiar to them. The living environment can give them more courage to live,

slowing down the physical, and mental deterioration. Besides the fact that it gives the child more opportunities to do the mitzvah of kibud av v'aim, it also gives the grandchildren wonderful lessons in how to care for the aged, thus preparing them for the future when they may have to care for their own parents.

When coping with parents in this situation one should seek advice, and assistance from an orthodox social worker or support group, since it's a tremendous emotional strain for a child to see her parents deteriorating emotionally or physically. Learning about the realities of old age can alleviate some of the child's stress. Additionally, a child must get rabbinical guidance to determine the precise obligations toward her parents, vis-a-vis her spouse and her children.

DAY 38 – STORY: Rosh Hashanah Dilemma

My father, R' Shmuel Avigdor Finkelman, passed away in the summer of 2011. For many years, he suffered from a debilitating condition that made it very difficult for him to walk. In the last years of his life, this condition was aggravated by general weakness.

All his life, my father was meticulous regarding tefillah b'tzibbur; he had to be in shul — early — for minyan no matter how hard it was for him to get there. However, in his last years this became increasingly difficult. He would be taken to shul in a wheelchair and often needed assistance in shul. We realized that for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, when the davening starts in the morning and does not end until mid-afternoon, someone would have to be with him the entire time. My brothers and I arranged to divide the tefillos among ourselves so that one of us would be with our father for each tefillah.

I had mixed emotions about this arrangement. I knew that it would be azechus for me to assist my father. However, I was concerned that my davening would not be the same as in previous years. My father davened in a wonderful shul with a very distinguished rav, but the minyan was limited to some 40 men. I davened in a shul with some 300 men, a shul that is renowned for its beautiful singing and inspirational davening. I would definitely miss it.

As Rosh Hashanah approached, I had an idea. At that time, one of my sons was learning in a local mesivta. He was a responsible boy and felt very close to my father. Perhaps, since I was the head of my house, it would be better for me to daven where I felt I would daven best, and my son could daven with my father?

I spoke to my son about it and he agreed to this arrangement if I felt it was the right thing to do. I wasn't sure, so I decided to seek daas Torah. I went to discuss the matter with the Rachmastrivka Rebbe, Rav Chai Yitzchok Twerski, one of the tzaddikei hador.

The Rebbe's response left no room for doubt. "Your son belongs in yeshivah, and you belong with your father."

Of course, I followed the Rebbe's directive, and I am very happy that I sought his guidance. The last year of my father's life, he took ill shortly after Rosh Hashanah. The last time that I saw him in good spirits was when I davened with him that Rosh Hashanah. I felt so good davening with him and being able to assist him. I would give anything to be able to do it again.

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DAY 39 – HALACHA

B'ezras Hashem, today we'll review the halachos of kibud av v'aim with other relatives, deceased parents, and medical treatment for a parent.

Besides parents, one is also obligated to honor grandparents. It's a machlokes if one must honor them like parents, or a lesser degree of honor is sufficient. Best to be machmir and give them the same honor as a parent. This honor also extends to great-grandparents.

One must honor a step parent like a parent as long as his/her spouse, i.e., biological parent is still alive, if the biological parent passes away there is no obligation to honor a step parent, but it's recommended to do so. One must honor a step parent even if the natural parent is still alive. For example, if the parents are divorced and they remarry; and even if the biological parent protests and resents honoring the step parent, one must still honor him/her.

One must also honor older siblings. However, the honor of is a lesser degree than for parents – you can call them by their name, sit in their place, and there's no obligation to serve or stand up for them. One should honor them in a way that they feel honored, for example, serve them first, talk to them with derech ertz, acquiesce to their requests, for example preparing food for them, and give them priority in other matters.

There's a machlokes regarding medical treatment for a parent when it causes bleeding, for example removing a splinter or dressing an open wound or receiving an injection if the child is a nurse or a doctor, or if the child is a dental hygienist. The halacha is that it's preferable that the treatment should not be done by the child. A shaila should be asked if there's nobody else available, if the parent is suffering and needs immediate treatment or prefers to be treated by his child, or if the child will provide better treatment than another person.

Some honors for a deceased parent:

1. Naming a child after a deceased parent or grandparent; if it's during the first year of the petirah it's a kapparah for the family.
2. Giving tzedakah in their memory. Some suggest to pay for lighting in the shul or the bais ha'medrash, and some write l'iluy nishmas plus the name on the back of a tzedakah check that's given in their memory, or say it when giving cash.
3. It's also an honor to say over a halacha or d'var Torah from them, such as, "My father or my mother told me this or said this."
4. If there's nobody who's learning mishnayos in their memory, a child should pay somebody to learn mishnayos. Likewise, if there's nobody to say kaddish, for example, the deceased parent had no sons or the parent was not observant and the daughter became a baalas teshuva, she should pay somebody to say kaddish for the parent if there's no other relative to recite kaddish.
5. See day #30 for the minhagim of going to the cemetery on the yahrzeit, (A concise guide to visiting cemeteries is available from me.)

6. Give tzedakah on the yahrzeit in the parent's memory.
7. Yizkor is recited 4 times a year, and when one pledges tzedakah, add b'li neder.
8. On the night of the yahrzeit of one's parent, a child should not participate in a wedding meal, regarding other festive meals for example an engagement, a family get together, or a party, consult your rav for final ruling.
9. A child should realize that a deceased parent receives a share in every mitzvah that a child performs. And it's evident from Chazal, that a child's mitzvos have the ability even to save a parent from the punishment of Gehennom. This is a very important concept if one's parents are non-observant. If a child cannot be מוקרב them to do teshuva, the next best thing is to do as many mitzvos as she can as this will help them in the next world.
10. A child should help a widowed or divorced parent remarry.
11. A child must use all means to prevent a non-observant parent who wants to be cremated, not to be buried according to halacha, or to be buried in a non-Jewish cemetery it. The neshama gets tremendous tzar from these practices, and one should do her utmost to try and prevent them.

We'll conclude this segment with the words of the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch (26:22):

Even though kaddish and tefillos help for a deceased parent, nevertheless, this is not the main benefit for them, rather, the main benefit is that the children go in the proper path of the Torah as stated in the Zohar.

DAY 39 – STORY: A Son's Reflections

In an essay on kibud av v'aim, Rabbi Moshe Yaakov Kanner tells of a visit to a young man who was undergoing treatments for a life-threatening disease. The man was telling of his background and he began to speak about his parents and how much they had done for him all his life. He reflected:

There are people who don't appreciate what it means to have a father and a mother. Some think they are smarter than their parents; others have complaints against their parents, and because of this, they don't honor them properly.

We have no idea how much our parents give to us, both in the physical and spiritual realms. We have no idea as to the power of a parent's bracha! They bless us with all their heart, and therefore, their blessings can accomplish so much. People seek all kinds of segulos and they don't seek their parents' bracha — especially on Friday night.

I will tell you something that happened with me.

Once, I was trying unsuccessfully to obtain a permit from a certain government office. I decided that I would fly overseas to visit my parents. On Friday night, I asked my father for a bracha and he blessed me with love. As soon as my plane landed on my return flight, I was informed that the permit had been granted.

Shulchan Aruch states that it is also a mitzvah to honor a father-in-law or mother-in-law. A talmid of Rav Avraham Pam recalled:

My father-in-law had passed away and we were going out of town to spend Pesach with my mother-in-law. I wanted to leave on the morning of Erev Yom Tov so that I could perform bedikas chametz in the preferred way on the night of 14 Nissan. But I knew that my mother-in-law wanted us to arrive that night. When I consulted Rav Pam, he told me, "Bedikas chametz is mid'Rabbanan (a Rabbinic mitzvah, since we also declare our chometz ownerless); to assist and bring joy to your mother-in-law, who is a widow, is mid'Oraisa (mandated by the Torah). Don't worry — go!"

Adapted from Honor Them Revere Them, a lesson-a-day on kibud av v'aim by Rabbi Shimon Finkelman and ybl"ch Rabbi Zechariah Wallerstein ז"ל published by ArtScroll/Mesorah

DAY 40 – HALACHA

B'ezras Hashem, today, I'll say a few final words as this series comes to a close. First of all, thank you all for participating in this amazing program.

From all the positive feedback of the participants, it's obvious that B"H you were all inspired by the information that was presented. However, as I mentioned in the beginning of this series, the objective of these capsules is to bear in mind that they are not just for information, meaning, to put in your mind and think about them, it's more, they're for transformation – to do and to change how we fulfill this mitzvah.

Habits are not easy to change, and unless one holds on to the inspiration, she will fall back into her old habits and this entire program will turn into pleasant memories.

Indeed, Rabbeinu Yonah comments that there's a yetzer hara to cause one to forget any inspiration that enters her heart. Inspiration cannot be preserved with a one-time dose. Constant reminders are needed in order to retain it.

Therefore, as previously mentioned, if one wants to retain the inspiration from this series, she must review each day's lesson and keep a note of it in her purse, look at it from time to time, and fulfill it at least twice that day. Add to this list daily so that you don't forget the previous day's halacha. Eventually you'll have the wide variety of the halachos and different concepts of the mitzvos of kibud u'moreh av v'aim, that will become part of you.

The following is a list of the main concepts that one should have in mind when performing the mitzvos of kibud u'moreh av v'aim.

1. Remember the lesson of Rav Yehoshua Ben Elem. Honoring your parents should be a lifelong occupation. You need to look for more opportunities to do this mitzvah, no less than constantly looking to earn more profits from a business.
2. The rewards.
 - a. In this world – a long and good life, as stated in the Aseres Hadibros: “Le'maan ya'arichun yamecha & u'le'maan yeetav lach. In today's day & age, people are constantly looking for ways to increase their life span & to combat old age with special diets, herbs, vitamins and exercise. But our Holy Torah provides us with its own prescription: kibud av v'aim. We mentioned the story of the lady who lived 4 years longer than the doctor expected because she cared for an elderly mother, and the story of the boy who survived the concentration camp because he listened to his mother.
 - b. In the next world – Rav Zilbershtein tells the story of a deceased mother who came to her son during shiva and told him her judgment was alleviated in the zechus of honoring her parents.
 - c. According to the rule of middah keneged middah, there is another reward of this mitzva: By honoring one's parents, one receives children who will in turn honor her.

One should also keep the following in mind:

1. That each act of honoring your parents is another mitzvah d'oraysa.
2. The tremendous hakaras hatov that you owe to your parents for bringing you into this world and taking care of all your needs from infancy, as mentioned in the Chinuch & Chayei Adam.
3. A child must regard her parents as the king and queen whose wishes are a royal command. She should never disobey her parents or do anything that they detest. She should constantly endeavor to give her parents nachas by pleasing them in every way. A child must speak to them softly and politely as she would speak to a king and a queen.
4. An integral part of this mitzvah is to train yourself to regard your parents as great and honorable people by elevating them in the middos that they personify.
5. All acts of honoring parents should be done with a cheerful attitude – be'sever panim yafos.

Chazal say that when a child honors her parents, Hashem says “It is as if I dwelt among you and you honored Me.” Conversely, if a child does not honor her parents, Hashem takes His Shechinah out of their home saying “It’s good that I left the home, for had I been there, the child would have also distressed Me.”

I will conclude this series with the words of the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch (143:21):

Whoever truly wants to honor his parents, should busy himself with Torah and maasim tovim, as this is the greatest honor one can give his parents – that people will say “Praised be the parents who raised such a son (or daughter).”

We should be zoche to properly fulfill the mitzvos of kibud u'moreh av v'aim and to bring true nachas to our parents.

חזק חזק ונתחזק!

DAY 40 – STORY

R' Avrohom traveled to Eretz Yisroel at the end of his father's life to visit him. By that time, R' Avrohom was recognized as a leader of the generation and an askan (activist) for many vital causes. During his visit, R' Avrohom tried to carry out all his askanus from his father's home. Whenever an issue was presented to him, R' Avrohom acted as if it were his father who had to make the decision. It was almost as if he just “happened to be there” and the tumult in the apartment was all because of his father.

R' Avrohom once wrote in a letter, “In our generation, it was known and accepted that if we had the opportunity to fulfill our father's words or desires, we felt eternally fortunate. And if, chas v'shalom, we did not do so, we attributed every negative occurrence that befell us to that failing. On Erev Yom Kippur, our first kabbalah (resolution) was to strengthen ourselves and better our fulfillment of kibud av v'aim”

Rav Avrohom's father, Rabbi Abaron Aryeh Leib Kalmanowitz, was an ideal role model for how to perform this mitzvah. Once, he returned home towards the end of a harsh winter after being

away for six months. After greeting his wife and inquiring about her welfare and that of the children, he would not take the time to rest for a few minutes after a difficult journey through heavy snow. With his wife's permission, he borrowed a pair of boots from a neighbor and trekked eight miles to visit his parents. He then turned around and walked eight miles back home.¹

A Beautiful Esrog

The gaon and tzaddik Rabbi Michel Yehudah Lejkonovit̄z related that a young man once become emotional as he told him, “Rosh Yesheivah — Baruch Hashem that I have merited to acquire a most beautiful esrog!” Rav Michel Yehudah was perplexed, as the month of Tishrei had long passed, so there was no need for an esrog.

The young man explained:

My elderly mother's condition has deteriorated considerably as of late and she needs constant care and companionship. Therefore, I decided that as of today, she will live in my apartment with my family.

To me, there is no difference between bringing home a beautiful esrog for the mitzvah of arbaah minim, or bringing my mother to my home for the mitzvah of k'ibud aim...

Rav Michel Yehudah commented:

The mitzvah of arbaah minim is exceedingly precious. It is with great joy that one seeks a beautiful esrog, and when he finally finds the one that is to his liking, he brings it home with great happiness. This young man drew a comparison between the esrog search and bringing his mother to his home, to ingrain within himself how happy he should be over the opportunity to honor his mother.²

¹ A Blazing Light in the Darkness by Avrohom Birnbaum (ArtScroll/Mesorah).

² Otroseihem Amalei, compiled by Rabbi Binyomin Ginsburg.

Scaling Heights

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