

Remember the Shabbos day to sanctify it. (20:8) Honor your father and your mother. (20:12)

“Remembering” *Shabbos* should be a part of our lives. It is the vehicle by which we come closer to Hashem. How can we squander a moment? How can we fail to remember? This *mitzvah* is followed by the commandment to honor one’s parents. The juxtaposition of these two *mitzvos* upon one another (they are repeated in *Parashas Kedoshim, Vayikra* 19:3), in which both *mitzvos* are included in the same *pasuk*) implies a special relationship between the two. The fact that in *Vayikra*, they follow after the enjoinder of *Kedoshim tiheyu*, “You shall be holy,” indicates that, although every *mitzvah* consecrates us as it elevates us spiritually, these two *mitzvos* each has a unique character which transports us to a higher realm. While it stands to reason that this idea applies to the sacredness of *Shabbos, kibbud av v’eim*, honoring one’s parents, is a common sense *mitzvah* which should be classified as a “no-brainer.”

The *Zohar HaKadosh* (3:81, cited by *Horav Gamliel Rabinowitz, Shlita*) states that Hashem equates His Holiness to the sanctity of these two *mitzvos*. Thus, if a person is meticulous in honoring his parents and takes great care to properly observe *Shabbos* – he will become very holy.

Having established that these two *mitzvos* share a similar form of sacredness, it is logical that one who honors his parents will be able to better observe *Shabbos*. Understandably, one who is careful to observe these two *mitzvos* will merit *siyata di’Shmaya*, Divine assistance, in distancing himself from sin.

The *Tanna D’vei Eliyahu* writes that *kibbud av v’eim* precedes *shemiras Shabbos* (in *Parashas Kedoshim*) in order to teach us that if a person honors his parents, even if he is lax or deficient in his *Shabbos* observance – he will eventually be forgiven. This is a powerful statement. *Chillul Shabbos* is one of the most serious sins. To assert that one may be forgiven for *chillul Shabbos* just because he honors his parents boggles the mind.

The *Gemorah* and *Midrashim* cite a number of examples of *Tanaaim* and *Amoraim* who meticulously honored their parents. Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai states (*Succah* 45b): “I could exempt every person in the world from judgment, from the day I was created until today. If my son, Elazar, joins me we could exempt everyone who was created from the beginning of the world until today. If Yosam ben Uriyahu joined, we could exempt every person from the beginning of time until the end of time.” *Rashi* explains that Yosam was a humble and righteous king who honored his father to the fullest letter of the law. Indeed, when his father was afflicted with leprosy and could no longer function as king, Yosam did not actively take over the position. He continued as a *dayan*, judge, and would always attribute his judgments to his father. We derive from here the tremendous merit one derives from carrying out the *mitzvah* of *Kibbud av v’eim*. Yosam’s merit was powerful enough to exempt the world from judgment from the time of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai until the end of time. That being the case, it is easier for us to comprehend how *kibbud av v’eim* can expiate

even the transgression of *chillul Shabbos*. Nonetheless, I think the rationale is quite simple. One who honors his parents, but disgraces Hashem (through *chillul Shabbos*), indicates that his *kibbud av* is neither exemplary nor real. Is Hashem any “less” of a father than one’s mortal father? Where do we draw the line on fatherhood? One who rejects Hashem as his father, who does not take into consideration that he owes Hashem much more than he owes his mortal father, conscientiously rejects the spirit of the *mitzvah* of *kibbud av v’eim*. In order to carry out the *mitzvah* without deficiency, we must understand and acknowledge the *mitzvah* of *shmiras Shabbos k’hilchasa*. We just have no other way.

Horav Avraham Mattisyahu, zl, of Stefanest, a scion of the Ruzhiner *Chassidic* dynasty, was known as a miracle worker. As such, people – regardless of their religious affiliation – came from far and wide to petition his blessing. Indeed, his grave, which is in Givatayim (east of Tel Aviv), is a place that is frequented by many who pray and seek his intercession on their behalf. A young man once approached him for a blessing to save him from conscription into the army. The *Rebbe* asked him if his reason for not going to the army was that he feared being forced to eat non-kosher food. The man replied that neither eating non-kosher nor desecrating *Shabbos* troubled him as he was clearly not religious. The issue revolved around his responsibility for his mother’s care. She was elderly, and he was her sole caregiver. No one would attend to her needs the way observe these two *mitzvos* will merit *siyata di’Shmaya*, Divine assistance, in distancing himself from sin.

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