

THE CHOPP HOLDINGS EDITION
IN MEMORY OF MRS. CLARA CHOPP A"H AND MENUCHA MARKOWITZ A"H

TORAS AVIGDOR

AUTHENTIC TORAH THOUGHT FOR LIFE
RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT"L

CHODESH IYAR

gotavi
gotavi.co

**PARSHAS ACHAREI MOS – KEDOSHIM
HONORING ONLY HIM**

This booklet is dedicated in honor of

Tanya and Michael Farah

*May Hashem bless their growing family with simcha, nachat, and beracha, and
may their children continue to grow in ahavat Hashem and yirat Shamayim*

with warm wishes from your extended family at Toras Avigdor

Toras Avigdor Studied Weekly Across the Jewish World

The teachings of Rabbi Avigdor Miller zt"l, studied weekly in homes, shuls, and communities around the globe.



This Week's Featured Community

Khal Machzikei Hadas Scranton, PA

To have your shul featured, please email a photo along with the shul's location to info@torasavigdor.org



Communities Where Toras Avigdor Is Learned

Casa Grande, AZ
Phoenix, AZ
Beverly Hills, CA
Los Angeles, CA
Valley Village, CA
Waterbury, CT
Aventura, FL
Boca Raton, FL
Boynton Beach, FL
Delray Beach, FL
Fort Lauderdale, FL
Hollywood, FL
Miami Beach, FL
North Miami Beach, FL
Orlando, FL
Atlanta, GA
Dunwoody, GA

Savannah, GA
Chicago, IL
Lincolnwood, IL
Louisville, KY
Brighton, MA
Brookline, MA
West Roxbury, MA
Baltimore, MD
Olney, MD
Pikesville, MD
Oak Park, MI
Southfield, MI
St. Louis Park, MN
Chesterfield, MO
St. Louis, MO
Carteret NJ
Clifton, NJ

Deal, NJ
Edison, NJ
Elizabeth, NJ
Freehold, NJ
Jackson, NJ
Lakewood, NJ
Long Branch, NJ
Manchester, NJ
Oakhurst, NJ
Passaic, NJ
Springfield Township, NJ
Teaneck, NJ
Toms River, NJ
Las Vegas, NV
Brooklyn, NY
Mill Basin, NY
Flatbush, NY

Continues on the next page...

Marine Park, NY
Boro Park, NY
Kensington, NY
Williamsburg, NY
Midwood, NY
Gravesend, NY
Crown Heights, NY
Cedarhurst, NY
Far Rockaway, NY
Great Neck, NY
Kew Gardens Hills, NY
Long Beach, NY
Manhattan, NY
Monsey, NY
New City, NY
Pomona, NY
Rochester, NY
Spring Valley, NY
Staten Island, NY
Thiells, NY
Wesley Hills NY
West Hempstead, NY
Woodmere, NY
Woodridge, NY
Belle Harbor, NY
Staten Island, NY
Cincinnati, OH
Cleveland Heights, OH
Columbus, OH
University Heights, OH
Wickliffe, OH
Bala Cynwyd, PA
Philadelphia, PA
Pittsburgh, PA
Scranton, PA

Dallas, TX
Houston, TX
Plano, TX
Norfolk, VA
Seattle, WA
Montreal, Canada
Toronto, Canada
Jerusalem, Israel
Givat Ze'ev, Israel
Kiryat Ye'arim, Israel
Beit Shemesh, Israel
Beitar Illit, Israel
Neve Daniel, Israel
Yesodot, Israel
Chemed, Israel
Modiin, Israel
Modiin Illit, Israel
Rehovot, Israel
Elad, Israel
Achisamach, Israel
Bnei Brak, Israel
Tel Aviv, Israel
Ramat HaSharon, Israel
Rishon LeZion, Israel
Petach Tikva, Israel
Ashdod, Israel
Ashkelon, Israel
Netivot, Israel
Kiryat Malachi, Israel
Arad, Israel
Be'er Sheva, Israel
Dimona, Israel
Yerucham, Israel
Ofakim, Israel
Tiberias, Israel

Karmiel, Israel
Haifa, Israel
Har Yona, Israel
Afula, Israel
Hadera, Israel
Netanya, Israel
Charish, Israel
Rechasim, Israel
Vienna, Austria
Madrid, Spain
Barcelona, Spain
Ceuta, Spain
Seville, Spain
Gateshead, U.K.
South Hill, U.K.
Edgware, London, U.K.
Golders Green, London, U.K.
Hendon, London, U.K.
San Pedro Sula, Honduras
Buenos Aires, Argentina
Panama City, Panama
Mexico City, Mexico
Chiapas, Mexico
Hidalgo, Mexico
Veracruz, Mexico
Guatemala City,
Guatemala
San Marcos, Guatemala
Guayaquil, Ecuador
Caracas, Venezuela
Columbia
Havana, Cuba
San Salvador, El Salvador
Toncatepeque, El Salvador
San José, Costa Rica

Don't see your community? Contact us to add your location.

Receive Toras Avigdor in your mailbox

W: TorasAvigdor.org/mail
E: info@torasavigdor.org
P: 732-844-3670



Free Digital Editions

Available in:

English • Yiddish • Hebrew • French • Spanish • Portuguese

TorasAvigdor.org/email

TORAS AVIGDOR PILLARS

Joey & Pamela Sakkal

Victor Braha

לעילוי נשמות
מרת פאנגלא בת
מורינו ר' ישראל ע"ה
Lowenthal
ומרת בראנדל
בת ר' משה דוד ע"ה
Steif




WWW.PROJECTEXTREME.ORG

ENABLING CHANGE
PROJECT EXTREME
REBUILDING LIVES
CAMP EXTREME
FOR STRUGGLING TEENS



718-633-3036

לזכות נתן יוסף
בן שהלה תמר חיה
ודבורה בת מלכה



HIARC



CHEIN
INSURANCE
AGENCY, INC.
1609 East 29th Street Brooklyn, NY 11229
Tel: 718-799-5602 Fax: 646-895-7646
pinchus@chein-insurance.com



CONNECT. EDUCATE. EMPOWER




LTC Technologies
ltctechgroup.com



GlattHealth
Healthcare Consulting Group



TapestryHealth™
TapestryHealth.com



Remove Negative
Google Reviews
Pay for Success Only
Call/Text 212.376.4550
CleanYourName.com



ASHPA
MANAGEMENT

PARSHAS ACHAREI - KEDOSHIM
WITH
RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ZT" L

BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

HONORING ONLY HIM

CONTENTS:

- Part I. Honoring Parents - 5
Part II. Honoring People - 10
Part III. Honoring Tzaddikim - 15-

Part I. Honoring Parents

The Kibbud Av Dilemma

When the Am Yisroel heard the Voice of Hashem at Har Sinai, the Aseres Hadibros, one of the *mitzvos* they were commanded was **כְּבֹד אֶת אָבִיךָ וְאֶת אִמֶּךָ**, to honor your father and mother, to fulfill their requests. And so you see it's a tremendous mitzvah! One of the Aseres Hadibros! It means if your mother says, "Chaim, carry out the garbage can outside," it's like putting on *tefillin*. Don't say, "I'll do it tomorrow." Don't say, "Let somebody else do it." You should seize the mitzvah! It's not less than *tefillin*! A glorious opportunity!

And yet in this week's *sedrah* we see a twist, an important twist, in this mitzvah and it pays to study it. Because here's a man, a *kohen*, and his sheep strayed out of the stable and wandered off and went into the cemetery. So

he told his son, “Hurry up and get the sheep before somebody will come along and steal the sheep. Run into the cemetery and bring the sheep home.”

But the son is thinking, “I’m a *kohen*. How can I go?” A *kohen* is forbidden from going into a cemetery, so the son is in a bind now. His father asked him to do something, he’ll fulfill a big mitzvah, but there’s also a *lav* of *tumas kohanim*, so it will be an *aveirah* too.

So I might think that *kibud av* is *docheh* the *issur* of *tumas Kohanim*. Maybe the mitzvah of honoring your father should take precedence over the sin of becoming *tamei*. But the Gemara says no, you have to ignore your father.

The Disappearing Mitzvah

But pay attention to the language of the Gemara, to the reason why not. You might have said that it’s merely a technical point; that the sin of a *kohen* not making himself *tamei* is an *asei* and a *lo sa’asei* – when a *kohen* becomes *tamei* he’s doing an *aveirah* and also he’s not listening to a mitzvah at the same time – while *kibud av* is only an *asei*; and therefore the mitzvah of *kibud* is not strong enough to knock off the mitzvah and *aveirah* of *tumas meis*. That’s a Gemara rule, that *עֲשֵׂה אִינוּ דוֹחֵה רֹחֵה וְלֹא תַעֲשֶׂה*. So maybe that’s the reason.

But the Gemara says that’s not it. Listen to what the Gemara says. The *posuk* in our *sedrah* says, *אִישׁ אָמוֹ וְאָבִיו תִּירָאוּ* – *fear your mother and father* (Vayikra 19:3), and included in that is to fulfill their requests. But then it adds, “אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם” – *I am Hashem, your G-d*”, and ‘your’ is written plural; it means all of you. And the Chachomim (Bava Metzia 32a) tell us that those words are added for the purpose of saying *בְּכֹבְדֵי הַיְבִיחַם* – *all of you are obliged to give Me honor*. Which means, even if your father and mother tell you to do something, but if it’s what I don’t want you to do, then it’s no mitzvah anymore.

It means that the mitzvah of honoring Hashem, of keeping His mitzvos, doesn’t just set aside the *din* of *אָב וָאִם*. Because merely to say it’s a *dechayah*, that one pushes away the other, that’s understating the subject. The Gemara is telling us that *there’s nothing to push away! There’s no honor due to a father who tells you to transgress the mitzvos Hashem. No kavod is due to him at all!*

The One Honoree

Now there’s a very big principle here which we learn, and that is that honor does not belong to anybody in the world unless Hashem tells us that we should give honor. The Chovos Halevovos in Shaar Avodas Elokim when

he speaks about the conditions of an *eved Hashem*, what it takes to be a true servant of Hashem, he says, לְכַבְּרוּ לַיהוָה – *to honor Hashem alone*. We honor only Hashem!

Oh, but it says כְּבֹד אֶת אָבִיךָ – *you have to honor your father and mother*? The answer is you only do it if Hashem tells you to honor them. That's why when you give honor to your father and mother, the Gemara in Kiddushin (30b) says it's like you're honoring Hashem. But when Hashem says no, then forget about it; there's no mitzvah at all. It doesn't mean forever and ever, but in this thing you're not *mechuyav* to have any *kavod* for him at all. It's the same as if a bird had chirped to you. It's nothing at all because all honor belongs only to Hashem.

So the father and mother are both begging him, “Chaim! Hurry up! The sheep will be stolen!”

No. The boy stands still; he doesn't move. He can say some words of *piyus*. He can tell his father and mother, “Pa, Ma, I'm sorry,” but whatever it is, he can't go.

Honor Is A Diamond Bracelet

Now what are we learning here? That when you honor your parents, you're not doing it merely because of your emotions. Just because of your emotions, you can't run into a jewelry store and seize a diamond bracelet. You need permission from the jewelry man. If he gives you permission, you can do it. The Almighty gives you permission to honor your parents and that's why we do it. We're taking something that's sacred and we're giving it to our parents because we have the license to do so.

So when you come home and your mother says, ‘do this and this errand for me’. ‘Carry out the garbage can to the street’. So you're doing it because you're honoring your mother like Hashem told you, and so really you're honoring Hashem, not your mother.

Of course honoring parents is a matter of human nature; it's expected to be the commonsense reaction of all human beings! Only an ingrate, a person whose *neshama* is so sullied with conceit that he can't recognize the good that his parents have done with him, wouldn't understand that.

Even if all our parents had done for us was to bring us into this world, that itself is a happiness. It's fun to be alive! That's a very great truth that unfortunately people don't want to talk about. The mere fact that you're sitting and breathing is a great happiness. Your heart is pumping away, your blood is circulating through all of your arteries and veins. Your lungs are expanding and contracting constantly; everything is working perfectly. It's

a joy to be alive! There's nothing like the great happiness of being alive in this world. And it's your parents who gave you that happiness.

Running With Your Barrel

Don't say, "I have problems, I'm not so happy to be alive." We should never fall into that wicked attitude; it's an attitude based on non-thinking, on a failure to think. I'll prove it to you. Let's say you had nothing at all — you lived in a barrel, let's say, and you didn't have a nickel in your pants pocket; you don't even have pants — and someone told you that you had a fatal illness, *chas v'shalom*, and a certain doctor could save you. You'd run to the doctor! You wouldn't wait a second! You'd pick up your barrel and run! Because you like being alive and you want to enjoy the thrill as long as possible. And therefore, just because of that, just because of the life that our parents gave us, we owe them a gratitude of respect to no end.

But that's only the beginning. Your parents fed you too. They could have said, "Look, we gave you life. Take care of yourself from now on. Go look for food yourself. Scrounge. You can't find a grocery store? So go someplace in the country, maybe you'll find wild berries to eat. There's grass that's edible too. I gave you life! I have to support you too?"

But your parents didn't abandon you in the woods — not only did they bring you into this sweet world, but they brought you up. They gave you whatever you needed for so many years.

The Fine Line

But all these commonsense reactions are quashed before the Word of Hashem. They are only expressed, only fostered, according to the Will of Hashem. **לְכַבְּדוּ לְבָרוּ!** Of course once Hashem gives you the command, the permission to honor your father and mother, so you cultivate that emotion; absolutely. But when it comes up against *kavod Hashem* — fulfilling the Torah is *kavod Hashem* — then it's nothing at all. You don't cultivate that emotion; you quash it.

It doesn't mean you have to be impolite, but you have to be strong; and so when your father says, "Chaim, come here. I want to show you something on the television, a good movie," you have to react with *chochma*, with some cunning. "Ta, I don't care for it. I'm busy with schoolwork." He'll get the hint. Every time he turns on the wicked machine you're busy with schoolwork? Sooner or later he'll understand.

It's not a simple thing because it's very wrong, very dangerous, to disrespect a parent. And a child who's not well-trained on how to navigate these dilemmas, he has to learn on the job how to react politely. But

whatever it is, this he always has to remember; that he doesn't honor anyone in this world except Hashem. And therefore, although he has to be aware of being too insolent to them, he can never go away from that principle of the Chovos Halevavos that one of the conditions of a loyal *eved Hashem* is לְכַבֵּד לַיהוָה, to honor Hashem alone.

It means you're never honoring human beings on their own merit alone because you can only give honor according to a prescription, and the prescription is in the Torah. You can't hand it out indiscriminately.

Foolish Honor

That's what it states in the book of Mishlei (26:1) לֹא-נְאֻדָּה לְכֶסֶל כְּבוֹד – it's not fitting to give honor to a fool. Let's say a fool comes down the street and you're in an expansive mood and so you give him honor; it's like walking into a store, sticking your hand behind the counter, taking merchandise and handing it to this man. It's not yours to give! הֵבִי לֵה' כְּבוֹד – Honor belongs to Hashem, and you're taking it and giving it to someone to whom He didn't permit you to give it.

Now, who is a *kesil*, that's a different subject. But if your father tells you to go into the cemetery to get his sheep and you're a *kohen*, so he's a *kesil*, that's no question. You can't give him that *kavod*. And if someone isn't a *ma'amin* at all, if he doesn't believe in Hashem, he doesn't believe in the Torah, he's certainly a *kesil*. If he's not a *shomer mitzvos*, he's a *kesil*. If a man transgresses the Torah, he's certainly a *kesil*. It's forbidden to honor him!

Stolen Valor

There was an Orthodox organization that once made an annual banquet and they chose as The Man of the Year to receive their award, a man whose wife was a *goya*. Not she was a *giyoress*; she was a real *goya*. She didn't want to become a *giyoress* at all. But he had a lot of money and a lot of rich friends so they called him up and they gave him a big diploma in a glass case with a frame: "The Man of the Year."

Now, I'm not saying you have to put him to shame – I'm not saying you shouldn't either – but whatever it is, it's forbidden to give recognition, to accord honor to one who is not recognized by the Torah as a fit recipient! It doesn't mean you have to make fights with anybody, no. But you have to be careful in the respect that you accord to them. You have to deal correctly, you have to deal justly, but you have no license to confer upon him this commodity which Hakadosh Baruch Hu said belongs to Me.

That's the great principle the Torah is teaching us in the *possuk*. You have to honor and fear your parents absolutely. Others too. A lot of people

deserve honor. But it's only on condition that you know, "אָנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם – I am Hashem your G-d." I come first. בְּכֹבֹדִי בְּלָכֶם הַיְיָּיִם בְּכֹבֹדִי – *All honor is due only to Me.*

Part II. Honoring People

Forbidden Greetings

Now, it pays to study this subject a little bit more at least to see how it is applied in practice, because the ramifications are very wide, very big. And we'll begin with a statement in Mesichta Brachos (14a). אָמַר רַב – Rav taught, הַנּוֹתֵן שְׁלוֹם לְחֵבְרוֹ קִדְּםָּ שְׂיִתְפַּלֵּל – that if you greet somebody in the morning and you say "shalom aleichem" to him before you said Shemoneh Esrei, you're committing a big sin.

Remember that tomorrow morning. If you haven't prayed yet, if you haven't said a greeting to the Almighty, so be careful how you greet your fellow man. You can say 'Good morning' to him, but don't say *shalom* to him. Don't ask how he feels. Because before you've greeted the Almighty and honored Him with your prayers, you don't honor anybody.

And even when you say, "Good morning," you should have in mind that you mean the Almighty. "Good morning to You," with a capital Y. Your friend doesn't have to know what you mean, but that's your intention. "Tzafra tava l'mara – a good morning to You, Sir." You mean Hashem; if your friend down below happens to be listening in, so let him listen.

Forbidden Korban

And Rav says, if you do it, if you do greet your friend before *davening*, בָּאֱלוֹ עָשָׂאָו בְּמָקוֹ – *it's like you made this man a forbidden altar*. What's a forbidden altar? It's not an altar where you sacrifice to an idol. It's for Hashem, but it's in the wrong place. A *korban* is only in one place – that's in the Sanctuary, the Beis Hamikdash. Suppose somebody is in a pious mood and he wants to bring an offering outside in the backyard on his grill, where he roasts things, so that's quite a severe sin – he's *chayav kareis*. He's worshiping Hashem, but it's in the wrong place. It's forbidden to bring offerings anywhere in the world except in the Beis Hamikdash in Yerushalayim.

And therefore, when a man thinks he's doing a good deed by honoring his fellow man in the morning, the act itself might have been good, but it's in the wrong place, the wrong time.

What is Man?

And Rav quotes a statement from the book of Yeshaya (2:22). חָרְלוֹ לָכֶם – *Desist from men*, אֲשֶׁר נְשָׁמָה בְּאַפּוֹ – *whose breath is in his nostrils*. It means his whole life is nothing but a breath. A man can perish in a second. כִּי בְמָה נְחֻשָׁב הוּא – *What importance does a man have?* And Rava makes a play on words. אַל תִּקְרִי בְמָה אֶלָּא בְמָה כִּי בְמָה נְחֻשָׁב – *Don't read the word bameh; change the nekudos and read it bamah*. You made him into a bamah, a forbidden altar.

Rav is telling us that man is nothing. What is a human being? A bag of blood, flesh and blood; mostly water. What is there to honor? Nothing at all. There's only one thing about a man that's important. *And that is because the Almighty wants you to honor him!* The Almighty ascribed importance to him, and therefore he's sacred.

Now, once Hashem said that man is great, so there's nothing in the world that's as important as a human being. One human being is more important than all the stars! But how do we know that? Only because Hashem tells us that. The sacredness of human life stands only on the principle of the Divinity. But as soon as people lose sight of the Divinity, then human life is valueless.

Homicide on Campus

Imagine a man comes running out of the college laboratory and he's shouting with hysteria. He saw the scientist commit murder on a gorilla just now. A gorilla is a big man! All the scientists consider him the same as any other. He's a primate! They took a big gorilla, a 300-pound man, and they put him out on the table and they strapped him and they cut him up for the sake of science. So he ran shocked out of the laboratory, screaming for the homicide squad.

So the police come running, sirens screaming, and detectives converge on all sides – a homicide in action is being reported! And so they surround the science building and they burst into the laboratory. And they see a big ape on the table.

So the policeman gives a spit and says, “What did we waste our time for?” and they walk out.

Now the policeman, he understands. The homicide detective, he has traditions. He grew up in an Italian home, with an Italian father and mother, and he didn't go to college to become corrupted. And so he knows that a man is a man, an ape is an ape.

היום

RESERVE YOUR DEDICATION TODAY

ספר תורת אביגדור
FIVE VOLUMES
OF PURE WISDOM



TORAS AVIGDOR
AUTHENTIC TORAH THOUGHT FOR LIFE



**DEDICATION
OPTIONS**



HONORING THE LEGACY OF RAV AVIGDOR MILLER ז"ל

25 YEARS

הרב אביגדור מילר ז"ל יובל חמשים ועשרים שנים

זכותו ותורתו יגן עלינו

Full 5
Volume Set
REACH OUT TO
347.451.0332

Book
Sponsor
REACH OUT TO
347.451.0332

Parasha
Dedication
\$2,600

Chapter
Dedication
\$1,000

General
Dedication
\$500

[Torasavigdor.org/25years](https://torasavigdor.org/25years)

The Absentminded Professor

The professors however, they discarded all of the traditions and they say a man and an ape are the same kind; we're all primates, just accidents of development in different stages. That's why abortion is nothing to them, killing the elderly is nothing.

Of course, if you took a scientist and strapped him on the table to investigate his intestines — after all, why shouldn't we kill an ape in order to study his body and benefit the rest of the apes — oh, he'd raise the biggest tumult. Human life! Sacred! But actually according to him there's no difference at all! Only that when we strap *him* to the table he sees things he didn't see before.

But actually he's only an ape. The only difference is the Divinity. Without *emunah*, there is no difference! Man's logic is not sufficient to supply the difference. It's only Hashem! The fundamental basis on which humanity must stand is Divinity.

Divine Greetings

And therefore Rav said, "If you're going to greet a man in the morning before you greet the Almighty, you're making this fundamental error because what is man if not for Hashem? And so your very first duty is to greet the Almighty. Once you have done that, once you have recognized the Divinity, then you're ready to go on to what follows, to honor man. It's only a sequence — as a result of Hashem, mankind is sacred.

And so if you honor your fellow man without Hashem, it's nothing at all. You honor your fellow man only because Hashem said honor your fellow man. Oh, that's why you're doing it? So now you can go all out. If you honor him because of that, then Hakadosh Baruch Hu says it's like you're honoring Me. Hakadosh Baruch Hu says when you honor a *frum* Jew you're honoring Me. It's My *kavod* that you're fulfilling My Will.

And so you should honor *frum* people. Even though you live in a neighborhood where everybody is *frum*, don't get accustomed to it. Don't overlook the fact that everyone deserves to be honored. You see a *frum* man in the distance, you should feel honor towards him. That's what Hakadosh Baruch Hu wants.

Greeting Everyone

Gentiles too. Not the same as a *frum* Jew — a Jew is the *mivchar ha'adam* — but Hashem consents that you should honor decent gentiles. Like Rabi Yochanan ben Zakkai did: אָמְרוּ עָלָיו שֶׁלֹא קָרְמוּ אִתָּם בְּשֵׁלוֹם מַעוֹלָם – *Nobody ever greeted him first, אַפְלוּ נְכָרִי בַשּׁוּק* – *even a gentile in the street*. It means if he

saw somebody coming from the other side of the street towards him, he was the first to say *shalom* before that person had an opportunity.

Now that's some trick because Rabi Yochanan ben Zakai was busy. He didn't walk four cubits without studying Torah. He was thinking in Torah all the time, but he always kept in mind, "Maybe somebody is coming, and I have to get the jump on him." He had to keep his mind on that.

But he did it only because he was fulfilling the *ratzon Hashem*. And so even though he was always quick on the draw, but still it was measured in such a quantity that was permitted. To say *shalom* and to say it cordially and to say it first, that much the Almighty permits, but more than that He didn't allow. And so Rabi Yochanan ben Zakai didn't put his arm around the gentile's shoulders and walk down the street with him and ask his opinion, "What do you say about the weather? What do you say about this or that?" He's not interested because any more than he has the right to give is *gezel*. He's stealing from Hashem because we honor who Hashem wants and according to what He wants.

Honor in the Home

Now, included in this subject is that a man should honor his wife because that's what Hakadosh Baruch Hu desires. Hashem says, **מְכַבְּדָהּ יוֹתֵר**, *מְגוֹפּוֹ* – you should honor even more than you honor yourself (Yevamos 62b). Whatever that means, we won't discuss now, but he has to honor his wife. She's a *frum* Jew! Same thing a wife for her husband. He's a *frum* Jew and you should honor him. And so they are always polite and considerate to each other because Hakadosh Baruch Hu consents to that; He says, "It's an honor for Me when you honor your spouse."

It's a wonderful opportunity. Years pass as you give honor to your wife and she gives honor to her husband, and all the while Hakadosh Baruch Hu is crediting them with achieving this tremendous purpose. And it's more than if they went outside and honored other people because other people you meet once in a while, but a husband and wife are always in contact. And therefore it's a glorious opportunity to honor Hashem!

Because **אִישׁ וְאִשָּׁה, שְׁלוֹם בֵּינֵיהֶם** – when a man and a wife live properly together, **שְׂכִינָה בֵּינֵיהֶם** – the Shechina is there. And so a man looks at his wife, he doesn't see a woman there. He sees the Shechina. They told of a certain *chassidische rebbe* who used to think this way. He said when he looked at his wife, he saw between him and her the four letters of the name of Hashem in fire, *yud-kay-vay-kay*. He worked on it. He took it seriously! Because it's true! If you live with a kosher wife, she deserves honor, more honor than you give yourself. When the wife comes and says, "Chaim, I need money to

buy a new dress, please,” so he says, “Here it is.” Right away he gives it to her. And she says thank you. Politeness, respect, reigns supreme in the house. Always do things in a way that demonstrates a certain regard for your mate.

Misplaced Honor

But suppose he lives with his wife improperly. They don't keep *taharas hamishpacha*. Or if she happens to be a *gerushah* and he's a *kohen* or some other forbidden form of marriage, then even if he'll imagine he sees the name of Hashem in between them, he's seeing hallucinations. What type of *kavod* could there be? He has no right to love her, and she has no right to love him. They are forbidden. That's a sin, and it's the opposite of honoring Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

Once a man came to me from New Hampshire. A man with a big black beard – no mustache, however – and he told me he loves the Lubavitcher Rebbe. Very nice; he loves the Lubavitcher Rebbe. Me too. So why did he come to me?

So he tells me that the Lubavitcher sent him to me.

What's the matter? So he explains to me that he became a real *ba'al teshuvah*. There's only one flaw. He has a gentile wife and she doesn't want to be Jewish.

“What's the problem?” I said. “Get rid of her!”

“I can't,” he tells me. He loves his wife; he can't.

“But don't you love Hakadosh Baruch Hu more?”

He said, “My wife is my Sabbath queen.”

The Real Queen

She's his Shabbos Malkah. I don't know what that means, but whatever it means, loving Hakadosh Baruch Hu does not leave room for loving a gentile wife. No matter how attached he is to her. Now I suppose he could convert her; I suppose he'll find *rabbonim* who will help him out. But there's no question that if she's going to continue as a gentile and he continues to love her, so he's not loving Hashem – it doesn't matter what type of beautiful queen she is.

And if a man took an ugly wife, a shrew, a nuisance who talks all the time and she's berating him and scolding him – let's say he doesn't consider her his Shabbos queen – but she's a kosher Jewish woman. She lives according to the Torah, so he honors her because Hakadosh Baruch Hu wants him to do that.

Of course, if he has a beautiful wife and a kind wife and a wise wife and he loves her also, certainly she deserves it. But he should never forget that it's only the element of Hashem in all of his relationships with other people. Because when you forget for a moment, and you love someone for himself, and you forget that it's the will of Hakadosh Baruch Hu then you have already missed the entire point.

Part III. Honoring Tzaddikim

Government Jobs

Now, one more point, just to finish the subject for tonight and then we'll listen to your questions. It's a more delicate topic and forgive me if I step on your toes but it's important nonetheless.

The Rambam in Mesichta Avos (1:10) has a comment on a certain statement. The Mishna says **אַל תִּתְוַדַּע לְרִשׁוֹת** – *don't make yourself familiar with the government; don't get too close to them*. Now who is the government? You might think it's some Irish politician, an Italian or somebody like that. No. The Rambam says there even if the king is a *tzaddik* like Shaul, a *melech* who is anointed by Hashem, **אַל תִּתְוַדַּע**, don't get too close to him.

Now, that's a remarkable statement. And the Rambam explains that it's because once you get too close to the king it's easy to forget about Hashem. The personality, the power, the glory of a king is so impressive that sometimes you'll do things, what the king wishes you should do, that Hashem does not want you to do. And so better, **אַל תִּתְוַדַּע לְרִשׁוֹת** – *don't become too familiar with the king* if there's a chance it may cause you to forsake the honor of Hashem.

Losing Everything

And the Rambam says, **כְּמוֹ שֶׁאֵירַע לְדוֹאֵג הָאֲרוּמִי** – that's what happened with Doeg. What happened to Doeg? Doeg was the **אֲבִיר הָרְעִים אֲשֶׁר לְשָׂאוּל**, the chief of all his shepherds; it means the chief of the leaders that Shaul had. And he became very close to Shaul. Shaul Hamelech was a *tzaddik talmid chochom* and Doeg honored him for that. Also he was fulfilling the mitzvah of honoring a Jewish king, the *moshiach Hashem*. A big mitzvah. Hakadosh Baruch Hu said **שׂוֹמֵם תְּשִׁימוּ עָלָיָהּ מִלֶּדֶד – שִׁתְּהָא אֵימְתוֹ עָלָיָהּ** – *we're commanded to give deference, respect and fear to a king*.

What happened? Shaul had a certain suspicion about Dovid Hamelech; he was afraid that Dovid was plotting to get rid of him and take over the throne. And Doeg wanted to show the king that he sympathized with him,

that he was loyal to him, and so he started telling the king things against Dovid. Other things he did too; in order to please Shaul, he fanned the flames of enmity against Dovid. And what happened as a result? Doeg lost everything. He even lost his *chelek l'Olam Haba!*

Beware of the Spell

So what do you see? Although Shaul was the *moshiach Hashem* and it's a mitzvah to honor him, but once it's done in a wrong way, then it's no longer a mitzvah and now you're honoring somebody else other than Hashem. A big sin! **לְכַבְּרוֹ לְבָדוֹ!** You shouldn't fall under the spell of anybody's personality, even the greatest *tzaddik!*

It's a *chiddush*, isn't it? You'd think for a *tzaddik* you're *batel*. No. Even when you're talking to the greatest *tzaddik*, you're still responsible to Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Otherwise, *chas v'shalom*, it's possible for a person to make such a misstep because he wants to honor a *tzaddik* that he'll slip. You might tell him *lashon hara* about another *tzaddik*. Or maybe because of your desire to give *kavod* to your rebbe you'll sit in the *beis medrash* with your *chaveirim* and speak about other *tzaddikim*. You'll slip.

And Hashem says, "No excuse! No excuses! You should never forget Me! Just because you're overwhelmed by the personality of a king or a *tzaddik*, don't ever forget that honor belongs only to Me. Even though your *rebbe* is a *tzaddik* — he's not a *tzaddik* like Shaul; Shaul was a bigger *tzaddik* — you shouldn't fall under the spell of his personality, even if you think he's the greatest *tzaddik!* Because **צְדִיק הוּא ה'שָׁמַיִם**, Hashem is the only *Tzaddik* (Eichah 1:18).

Listen to Tzaddikim

Now, if you tell this to people outside they'll protest against that. "What's Rabbi Miller telling you in that place?! *Tzaddikim?* You have to listen to them!"

Yes, very good. You should listen. But always remember, you're listening to Hashem. Whether it's the Chofetz Chaim *zichrono livracha* or Rav Aharon Kotler *zichrono livracha*; whether it's one of these great men or it's Rav Yosef Yitzchok, the old Lubavitcher Rebbe *zichrono livracha*, or the old Gerrer Rebbe *zichrono livracha*, all of them can cause a person to be lead on the way to success; absolutely a *tzaddik* can help you come close to Hashem, but don't get lost on the way. It's only Hashem! **לְכַבְּרוֹ לְבָדוֹ!**

And so if you'll go, let's say, to a famous *rosh yeshivah* and honor him by sitting in front of him at his *shiur* or to a great *rebbe* when people are gathered at his table; he's conducting a *tish* and a thousand people are

listening to him, of course, that's excellent. It's a way of serving Hashem, absolutely! The *kavod* of *tzaddikim*, the *kavod* of *talmidei chachamim*, certainly it's a *kavod* for Hashem.

Don't Get Lost

But let's say a man loves a *rebbe* and he dances around the *rebbe* but he forgets for a moment that the *rebbe* is nothing but a representative of Hakadosh Baruch Hu, so that man also has strayed from the truth. You honor him and dance around him only because he is a messenger, an emissary for Hakadosh Baruch Hu. That's all. You shouldn't forget for a moment that all your enthusiasm is only for Hashem.

He's a *tzaddik*, a nice-looking *tzaddik*, with a long beard and nice *peyos*. He's wearing a white silk robe; a real *chassidische tzaddik*, let's say. And a thousand people are sitting around him and they're looking with eyes of the greatest respect on him. Beware! Beware of a mistake! Don't forget Hashem. That's what you have to be thinking about when you look at the *tzaddik*. If you look at a *tzaddik* and you respect him and you fear him and you forget about Hashem, it's nothing at all.

And if let's say you'll come to your *rebbe* and you'll engage in *machlokes* with kosher people because that *rebbe* may not have a good attitude about other people; it could be; a *rebbe* is a *bosor v'dom* and he might want you to be *cholek* on other Jews. Oh no! That might be your big downfall! You can be polite to your *rebbe*, but don't listen to him. Don't listen to him!

Very important! Don't get lost! You're alive for the purpose of honoring Hakadosh Baruch Hu alone. He is the One you have to have in mind. And you can never let allegiance to anyone be blinding allegiance – it means with unthinking and by emotions – and the cause of your undoing. Your first and only allegiance is to Hashem.

The Death of a Tzaddik

I'll tell you an interesting Gemara about this subject. The Gemara (Avoda Zara 18a) tells us about Rabi Chanina ben Tradyon, how the Romans put him to death because he studied Torah *berabim*. They wrapped him around with *sifrei Torah* and they set fire to them and he was burned to death. And then they took his wife out and they beheaded her.

So the Gemara asks, why was Rabi Chanina ben Tradyon put to death? Now, we understand that there are reasons why great *tzaddikim* die. Their death is a *kapparah* for the generation, no question about that. Hakadosh Baruch Hu has a number of reasons why a *tzaddik* sometimes suffers

yesurim or dies a painful death. But the Gemara wanted to know is there anything specific that we could point to?

Say His Name

And the Gemara answers, שְׁהִיָּה הוֹגֵה אֶת הַשֵּׁם בְּאוֹתוֹתָיו בְּפִרְהָסִיא - *he uttered the name of Hashem in public*. When he taught his *talmidim* Torah sometimes it was necessary to speak about Hashem. Certain *halachos* require the mention of Hashem's Name and instead of merely saying *yud-kay-vav-kay*, he pronounced it as it originally was supposed to be pronounced.

Now when he did this, it was with the greatest reverence. You can be sure, he did it *b'dchilu u'rechimu*, with the greatest fear and the greatest love. And he did it because you have to teach the secret to someone and it shouldn't go lost. Especially in his time, when the Romans were about to begin one of the worst periods of oppression in history, the war of Beitar, and the *Chachamim* would be slaughtered, so the secrets of the Torah would be forgotten. And so Rabi Chanina ben Tradyon took upon himself in his own yeshiva to teach his great *talmidim* the secret Name of Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

But because he did it publicly before the yeshiva, instead of doing it to one or two individual select *talmidim*, it was considered a mistake on his part. And for a great man like that even a small sin was considered big enough to deserve punishment; that's why he was sentenced to suffer a painful death.

A Trad Wife

But the Gemara asks further. That's Rabi Chanina but why was his wife put to death? What did she do to deserve that fate?

And the Gemara answers like this: דָּלָא מִיָּחָה בֵּיהּ - Because she didn't protest against him. She didn't prevent him from doing that.

Now, that's a puzzle. After all, we know there's a rule — if you don't know it, now is the time to learn it — that אִשָּׁה כְּשֶׁרָה עוֹשֶׂה רָצוֹן בְּעֵלָהּ - *a pious woman has an ideal of doing the will of her husband* (Tana D'bei Eliyahu 9:1). It's an ideal of hers, as much as possible, to make her husband happy, to cooperate and to obey. And that's a run-of-the-mill regular husband. A husband who's a *tzaddik*, a *gadol hador* like Rabi Chanina ben Tradyon, all the more so. דָּלָא מִיָּחָה בֵּיהּ.

So what's expected of the wife of Rabi Chanina ben Tradyon? She knows it's out of the ordinary to say Hashem's Name, that ordinarily it would be considered a lack of honor to Hashem, but what should she do?

She should interfere when her husband is saying a *shiur* in the yeshiva? She should come into the *beis hamedrash* and say, “Chanina, what are you doing?” It’s his *hachra’ah*; it’s his *psak halacha* that it’s a *tzorech hasha’ah*. He decided it was necessary to pronounce the name of Hashem in order there shouldn’t be any misconception in the *halacha*. And she knew he was a great man, one of the *tzaddikei hador*. So she was *batel* to him; she had the utmost *kavod* for him.

A Bold Wife

“Oh no,” Hakadosh Baruch Hu says. “You have to honor only Me! Even if you’re dealing with your great husband, and you’re a quiet little woman, nevertheless, when it comes to My *kavod* nothing else means anything. He’s not a husband. He’s not a *rosh yeshivah*. Nothing at all! It’s up to you to overlook all considerations and only to think of the honor of Hashem.

How should she do it? That’s not the subject now. She was a wise woman. She wasn’t a plain person. She could have said, “Chanina, I heard you said great things in the yeshiva today, big *chiddushim* today. Can you explain it to me?”

So he’ll say, “What do you understand? After all, you’re only a woman.”

“Look, but I’m interested to know. I also have a *neshama*. Let me hear something about it.”

And little by little, she’d worm it out of him and then maybe when he would spill the beans, she’d be able to stand up for the honor of Hashem. She could have done it in a wise way.

That’s a remarkable thing to demand of her, but it was demanded so severely that she was put to death for that. Yes, a Jewish woman has respect for her husband, absolutely. But if she sees her husband doing something wrong she has to tell him it’s wrong. It’s against the Torah. And if he’s a *rosh yeshivah* and he says that’s my *psak halachah*, she should say, “It smells funny. You shouldn’t do it. Go and ask Rabi Akiva. Find out if it’s wrong or not.” But she didn’t do that. She didn’t put Hashem’s *kavod* first and she was punished for that.

A Lesson for Life

Now that’s beyond our understanding; it’s an extreme case but we’re told the story because it’s an extreme subject this subject of **לְכַבְּדוּ לַבְּרִי**. And it’s a fitting end to this subject for now because it’s a stark lesson of this great principle that the Torah teaches us, that the honor of Hashem is the only ideal that deserves our respect in this world.

Of course you must honor. **כְּבֹד אֶת אָבִיךָ וְאֶת אִמֶּךָ**. You must honor your parents. You must honor *talmidei chachamim* and you must honor your

friends; יהי כבוד חבֵרְךָ חָבִיב עָלֶיךָ – *the honor of your fellow man should be precious to you.* A man has to honor his wife, מְכַבֵּרָה יוֹתֵר מִגּוּפוֹ, and she has to honor him.

Yes, you must honor all those whom Hashem desires you should honor. But you never lose sight of what the Chovos Halevavos taught, that among the most important characteristics of an *eved Hashem* is לְכַבְּרוֹ לְבַדּוֹ, that you give honor to Hashem alone. It means that whatever *kavod* you give to anyone is only because He wants it so, because He consents to it. And when it's done like that and it's done according to His parameters, that's included in honoring Hashem.

Have a Wonderful Shabbos

Feeling inspired & uplifted?

Help spread that feeling to Jews everywhere!

Toras Avigdor strives to spread Rav Miller's Torah & hashkafah freely around the world, supported only by idealists like YOU who are looking to bring yidden closer to Hashem.

Join this movement NOW!

torasavigdor.org/give

732-844-3670

Let's Get Practical

Honor Every Morning

In the parsha, the Torah commands us to honor our parents and then adds, “אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם.” Chazal explain: בְּלֶכְתְּם חֵיבִים בְּכַבּוּדִי – all honor belongs first to Hashem. When we honor parents, spouses, or even tzaddikim, we are not honoring them independently; we are honoring Hashem by fulfilling His will. This week, *bli neder*, whenever I say “Good morning,” I will think for two seconds that I am greeting Hashem first – צִפְרָא טָבָא לְמַאֲרֵי דְעֵלְמָא. Before I acknowledge any person, I acknowledge the One Who gives that person importance.

This week's booklet is based on tapes:

R-37 – The Honor of Hashem | **86** – Tehillim 146 | **945** – All Glory is His
E-54 – Honor is Mine, Says Hashem | **E-76** – Foundation of all Foundations

Listen to the original lectures of Rav Miller zatzal on the Mipihu Phone Line

USA: 718-400-7220 | Israel: 778509304 | UK: 3303505768

Mipihu is a project of Yeshiva Gedolah Beis Yisroel – Rav Miller's Yeshivah



Shabbos Inspired

לע"נ שרה נטשה בת דבורה שהין · דינה ברכה בת שרה נטשה · דבורה מזל בת שרה נטשה

Take Notice of Shabbos

A person could go into the Beis HaMikdash, spend a long time there, and see absolutely nothing special. This is because matters of *kedushah* require preparation. Before the *Kohen Gadol* went into the *Kodesh HaKodashim* he would prepare himself beforehand for an entire week. He would involve himself solely in acquiring the greatness and sanctity that was called for. And then, in fear and trepidation, shaking from head to toe, he would enter the Holy of Holies and feel the *kedushah* with every fiber of his being. But when the Gentile conquerors entered the Beis HaMikdash, they didn't see anything special at all.

Once a non-Jew entered the *beis midrash* of a large yeshivah and saw hundreds of people there immersed in their learning, many of them arguing excitedly in loud voices. He was surprised by the sight. He noticed another non-Jew calmly going about his business, and he walked up to him and asked, "What is going on here? What's the big argument all about?"

"I don't know, sir," he answered. "I've been working here thirty years, and every day they yell and argue and carry on like this. But I've never seen them hitting each other..." If this non-Jew entered the Beis HaMikdash, what would he see? Nothing but a big slaughterhouse with marble walls. But a Jew who entered the Beis HaMikdash would see *kedushah* so strong you could touch it.

So it is with Shabbos. Many people have already been through hundreds of Shabbosos, living in the same house with HaKadosh Baruch Hu without even realizing He was there. They were unaware that they were sharing that wonderful oneness and unity called *Shabbos Kodesh*. It never occurred to them what an embrace of *kedushah* they were receiving. That's why they didn't take advantage of Shabbos, acquiring for themselves the greatness and beauty it has to offer. They were in the Beis HaMikdash and didn't even know it.

Since a person can keep Shabbos week after week without knowing what it actually is, our holy Torah tells us, "*See that Hashem gave you the Shabbos.*" (*Shemos* 16:29) Hashem is saying to us, so to speak, "When I give you the mitzvah of shofar, you will find out what a shofar is. And when you eat matzah, you'll sense the greatness contained within it. But Shabbos is not like that. A Jew can keep one Shabbos after another and never know its beauty.

"*See that Hashem gave you the Shabbos.* I am informing you specially: You should know all about Shabbos and realize that on Shabbos you can reach a love and closeness to Me that is unattainable any other time, because this day is blessed and sanctified above all times."

Sponsored L'Refuah Shelema for
Afshin Mordechai ben Shanaz

Adapted by R' Y. Levy from Nefesh Shimshon, Shabbos Kodesh, Rav Shimshon Pincus, Feldheim

For a FREE Sefer Nefesh Shimshon on Shabbos please email our friends at cbhass@agudah.org

