

Parshat Kedoshim: Parents for Shabbat and Yom Tov
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אִישׁ אָמוֹ וְאָבִיו תִּירָאוּ וְאֶת־שַׁבָּתִי תִשְׁמְרוּ. אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם (ויקרא י"ט:ג)

Every man shall fear his mother and his father, and keep the Shabbat; I am G-d, your Lord.

There is an unbelievable Netziv that begins with אִישׁ אָמוֹ וְאָבִיו תִּירָאוּ; the Netziv explains that Shabbat includes Shabbat and Chagim. The posuk is focusing on the joy of Shabbos, the friendship and companionship between a man and his neighbor, a man and his relatives. This is the reason that is brought down in the Yerushalmi and the Rif in Eruvin as the reason that Chazal were עירוב חצירות – מתקן עירוב חצירות – in order to encourage the friendship and companionship between neighbors. Chazal wanted to support and encourage that this holy day should have a שמחת יום טוב and that can only be observed while sitting to dine with friends, neighbors, and loved ones. The Netziv then transitions focus to the first part of this posuk; when parents are guests in your home for Shabbat or Chag, the environment is not always jovial. Therefore, this posuk is telling us that the child-parent relationship has the concept of תיראו, fear; one must respect their parents and treat them with integrity while serving their needs. The way you treat your parents אִישׁ אָמוֹ וְאָבִיו תִּירָאוּ should come first.

As we near Pesach the Chareidi media has been placing a focus on grandparents. When hosting their children and parents, people can find that they feel as though they are both the glue, and as though are being pulled apart by each side. These glossy Chareidi magazines are addressing the child-grandparent relationship. Grandparents are living longer and are agile and spry, but can be set in their ways. And many times children are overtaken by the Olam's concept of, "My way or the highway." This can lead to aggressive and passive aggressive confrontation, and the so-called "sandwich generation" is faced with the dilemma of juggling both sides to ensure everyone is interacting in an amiable way.

It is on this posuk that Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch writes, "Fearing mother and father, and sanctifying Shabbos, are the educators and guide for Jewish people to the sanctification of their lives from cradle to the graves. It was not the measure of what parents do for their children, but the great and lofty mission which Hashem has given parents concerning their children in whose name Hashem said, 'כבד את אביך ואת אימך.' It is Hashem and His revelation of history and law to which the tribute of honor and fear is to be paid in honoring and fearing parents." This is to say, children and grandchildren should know that it is not just about what their parents and grandparents have done, and continue to do, but it is more important to recognize the mitzvah of honoring and fearing parents and grandparents. No less is the mitzvah of some sort of new acceptable minhag of the Olam in terms of what you do around the seder table, what you do in shul, what products you bring into the house, Shabbos and Chag are a time for family get-togethers with warmth and congeniality – ואת־שַׁבָּתִי תִשְׁמְרוּ. We must emphasize to ourselves, the sandwich generation, the proper respect for our elders around the table and in our local shuls; this is the fulfillment of אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם.