

GREAT FOR SHARING
AT THE SHABBOS TABLE!

PARSHAS
KEDOSHIM

בשבת

BY RABBI NETANEL NAAMAT
RABBI NAFTALI ZIONS
RABBI AVICHAI BENSOUSSAN



אור ישראל

Living Life Deeper

WITH DIGNITY AND RESPECT

Parshas Kedoshim is packed with *mitzvos*, both positive and negative commandments. Amongst the many *mitzvos* is the directive to 'rise before the elderly.'¹ The Gemara² explains that the *passuk* is not only referring to a wise and thoughtful senior, but the verse includes one who has lived many years, regardless of how enlightened or informed they may seem to be.

Of course, the most basic reason behind this *mitzvah* is the importance of the civility and courtesy in respecting one's elders, whether or not the person is learned.³ However, the Sefer Hachinuch (attributed to R' Aharon Halevi, 1235-1290) adds a new dimension to this important *mitzvah*.⁴ He explains that in the natural course of a person's life, one experiences Hashem's hand in their affairs. These experiences, amassed over a lifetime, change a person's outlook and perspective, prodding them to recognize Hashem's influence. And though the effect may be modest, the impact is still there. Because of this change, the elderly person becomes a person worthy of respect - every little step in the direction of *avodas Hashem* is something to be praised and honored. And when we acknowledge and give respect to someone who has grown from their experiences, we become influenced as well.

There are multiple lessons that can be gathered from this Sefer HaChinuch. Among them is the idea that it is expected that over the course of a lifetime, a person will take notice of Hashem's interactions and apply them to one's life. Another is the importance of respecting one who has grown in their *avodas Hashem*, even if only in subtle ways. Lastly, by giving respect to our elders, we influence ourselves, impressing upon our psyche the importance of life experience.

There are times where we might think that we know better, or that our ways are superior. However, it is important to remember that there are certain things that can only be attained through experience, and those things are worthy of our respect.

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Mind the Gap - Taking the Next Step

The act of rising for the elderly is not a particularly difficult act. Perhaps it takes some habituation, but other than that, it should be something that we can get used to.

However, there is more to keep in mind than simply standing up. When we have the opportunity to give respect to a senior, we should use that as a reminder of our purpose in this world - we are here to recognize Hashem's existence and mastery over all. We respect those who are closer to those feelings, and we aspire to one day have that understanding ourselves.

When we stand, it can be an empty act, devoid of understanding or feeling, or it can be an act, not only of respect, but of deepening our realization and awareness of Hashem in our lives.

This thought process can turn something that seems to be mundane into a truly spiritual experience.

1 Vayikrah 19:32

2 Kiddushin 32b-33a

3 Ramban on Devarim 6:18 s.v. ועשית הישר

4 Mitzvah 257

לעילוי נשמת יונתן בנימין בן ישראל מנחם, ז"ל

The "Saba" in this week's story

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It's plain to see that Mussar study is indispensable. Rising to the next level of *ruchniyus*, and pursuing *shleimus* are completely dependent upon

Mussar. - Rav Aharon Kotler zt"l,
Mishnas Rabbi Aharon Al HaTorah pg.

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A LIFETIME OF EXPERIENCE

Mr. Tzvi Zuckerman* was finally able to find a quiet moment with his mother, who was sitting *shiva* for his grandfather. The house was normally busy, as visitors would come and go, but at this point things had slowed down.

"I was thinking," said Mrs. Shira Zuckerman, "Saba really appreciated the past three years. The fact that you had moved close to the home that he was in and were able to learn with him every morning meant a lot to him."

Tzvi nodded and smiled. "It's nice of you to say that, and I know he felt that way. However, I have to tell you, I gained so much in the past three years, I'm kicking myself that I didn't take advantage earlier."

"What do you mean?" asked Mrs. Zuckerman. "Before the move, you spoke to Saba every week, at least!"

"I know, of course we had a great relationship. But there was more that I had missed. Saba lived through the war, and raised his children to be Torah Jews. He had stories of miracles that occurred to him throughout the war, and he had a perspective born from years of experience. Our weekly, 'Good Shabbos,' calls were nice, but only in the past three years did I really get to know Saba.

"And like I said, I'm glad that I did. Besides the learning itself, the experience has given me a better understanding of what experience means. After everything that he had gone through, he would often say, "*Boruch Hashem asher lo azuv chasdo.*" Just to hear him say that would send chills down my spine, knowing what his life's experiences were. Simply put, speaking with Saba was a lesson in connecting and having a relationship with Hashem."

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**Based on a true story, names have been changed.*

DID YOU KNOW?

- At what age is one considered 'elderly?' Seventy years old.¹
- The verse, 'Before the elderly, rise,' can be interpreted as, 'Before one becomes elderly, stand up, and repent!'²
- There's a very practical benefit to rising for the elderly. By showing respect, we make it easier for us to listen and learn from the wisdom and experiences their elders have had.³

1 *Yachin Uboaz* on *Avos* 5:21 s.v. בן שבעים

2 *Magon Avos* quoting *Zohar* on *Avos* 5:21 s.v. בן שבעים

3 *Ralbag* on *Vayikrah* 19:32 s.v. מפני שיבה