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by Rabbi Yaakov Finestone

Dedicated for an elevation for the Neshama of Moshe Shimon ben Dov Berish

WHO WILL BE YOUR NEIGHBOR IN THE WORLD TO COME?

PARSHAS KI SAVO

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Ilem was once told in a dream that a butcher named Nanas would be his neighbor in the World To Come. Rabbi Yehoshua was stunned! His life was devoted to learning Torah and doing mitzvos. How could it be possible that a simple butcher would be his neighbor in the next world? Rabbi Yehoshua decided to find out more about Nanas. He traveled with his students from town to town, asking if anyone had heard of Nanas the butcher. Finally, Rabbi Yehoshua found the town where Nanas lived. He went to Nanas and asked him about the good deeds that he did. Nanas told him that he had elderly parents who were not capable of taking care of themselves. He fed them, gave them drinks, washed them and dressed them. When Rabbi Yehoshua heard this, he kissed Nanas on his head and said, "I am truly fortunate to have you as my neighbor in the world to come." (Love Your Neighbor by Rabbi Zelig Pliskin, quoting Sefer HaDoros).

As the Jews were about to enter the Land of Israel, they reaccepted upon themselves certain mitzvos. The mitzvos were announced by the Leviim in the form of blessings

and curses to which all the Jews responded amen. One of the mitzvos that they reaccepted was to give proper honor and respect to one's parents. The Torah says (Devarim 27:16), "אָרוּר מְקַלֵּל אָבִיו וְאִמּוֹ וְאָמַר כָּל-הָעָם אָמֵן". "Cursed is the one who degrades his father or his mother, and the entire people will say, Amen".

Rav Avraham Pam zt"l points out a fascinating insight. **Rashi** defines the word "מְקַלֵּל" as "to degrade". **Rav Pam** zt"l says that this admonition is not limited to dishonoring a parent with words or deeds. **It also includes failing to respect**

"Cursed is the one who degrades his father or his mother, and the entire people will say, Amen".
(Devarim 27:16)

parents in one's heart or looking down on them! It applies even if one does not express his feelings openly! This is also the deeper meaning of one of the confessions

that we say on Yom Kippur, "זָלְזוּל הוֹרִים וּמוֹרִים", asking Hashem for forgiveness (one must also receive forgiveness for the person you disrespected) for showing contempt for parents and teachers. Here too, it means to be disdainful of them, even if only in your mind!

If parents don't "measure-up" to our expectations, we must realize that they grew up with different life experiences than we did. Their education system was much different than ours. Their challenges in life have also impacted who they are. **Chayaei Adam** (67:30) says that an

integral part of the mitzvah of honoring parents is “to think highly of them, as if they were great and noble people”. It may be a challenge, at times, to feel that way. However, we must remember that the greatness of our parents is not always noticeable to us. We don’t know their true greatness and how Heaven views them since we do not know the challenges in life that they had to overcome. We don’t know what good deeds they did in quiet manner. They may be greater than we realize. At the very least, our parents deserve great respect for giving us life

and raising children as good as we are. (Messages from Rav Pam by Rabbi Sholom Smith)

Rabbi Meir Simcha HaCohen of Dvinsk zt”l, in his sefer Meshech Chachma, says that the wording of the Torah is “מְקֻלָּה” from the root “קל”, which means light or easy. A child may cause pain to his parent, thinking that it is no big deal. After all, his loving parent will forgive him afterwards, not wanting his child to receive a punishment for his actions. To counter that attitude, the Torah says, “אָרוּר”, this child will be cursed. He may never cause pain to a parent.

**We should never act disrespectfully to our parents,
thinking that it is okay since they will eventually forgive us.
Our parents deserve our utmost respect in words, deeds, and even in our hearts!**

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Rabbi Yaakov Finestone is the director of JEP Queens. For almost 50 years JEP Queens has been in the forefront of kiruv. JEP has changed the lives of thousands of Jewish children enrolled in public schools and kiruv schools. Many are shomrei Torah and mitzvos today because of JEP.

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