

Kibud Av V'em Dilemmas

Rabbi Mark Bleiweiss

It is difficult to honor parents *k'hilchata* and please everyone at the same time. Like all mitzvot, *kibud av v'em* needs to be performed as a mitzvah per se, because our Father in Heaven said so. Children should honor their folks *lishma*, in the same way they would wave a lulav or wrap tefillin. But few parents care to be honored as objects. Most like to think that their offspring honor them out of sincerely felt love and admiration. And *kibud av v'em* is one of the few mitzvot that requires customer satisfaction, in which the subjective aesthetic counts.¹

The general mitzvah to honor parents has two facets – *morah* and *kavod* – each referring to different modes of behavior.²

1. *Yerushalmi Peah* (1:1), “*hoil v’hi retzona hu chvoda*,” referring to the parental prerogative to determine the nature of their *kavod*. See *Minchat Chinuch* #33, “*vezeh pashut*,” on *mechilat kavod*. The author of *Sefer Chareidim* writes that one who serves his parents punctiliously only because *Hashem* commanded and not because he feels his parents are deserving, has fulfilled *kibud av v'em*, but may have transgressed “*arur mekalel aviv v’imo*” (*Devarim* 27:16). Although parents may not be *gedolim*, vis-a-vis the child they are unique and almost always deserve respect.

2. *Kiddushin* 31b, *Sifra Vayikra* 19:3. See *Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah* 240-1 for a summary of *morah* and *kavod* obligations. *Chayeh Adam* (67:3) extends the obligation to honor parents even in *thought*. Rav Herschel Schachter illustrates other everyday forms of practical service for adult sons and daughters, such as joining parents for Shabbat at their invitation, sending photographs and letters if they

Morah includes all reverential acts, from children standing when their parents enter the room to making sure never to contradict their parents’ words. *Kavod* refers to all acts of practical service, making sure parents have the food, clothing, shelter, and physical support they need.

The technical fulfillment of this mitzvah from the Torah should never reduce this ideally unself-conscious relationship to something forced and mechanical. “Here’s a glass of water, Dad, sir, can I get you anything else?” “Yes, Mom, I’ll take out the garbage, whatever you say, ma’am.” Rabbi Tarfon’s mother may have been proud, but most contemporary parents would cringe if their youngsters stood every time they entered the room.³ Honoring parents without patronizing them requires common sense and sensitivity. A child must know what to do at all times under all circumstances to please the folks naturally, not as generic procreation units, but as individuals with preferences, convictions, and idiosyncrasies.

Just as importantly, a child must know when, if ever, *not* to listen to his parents. Like all people, parents can go beyond the pale of acceptable behavior and may cease to deserve the kind of *kavod* the Torah mentions. The Gemara derives from a

live far away, and enabling parents to spend time with their grandchildren.

3. *Ibid.* The *Yerushalmi* recounts the extent to which Rabbi Tarfon would go to fulfill the mitzvah of *kibud em*: “Rabbi Tarfon’s mother went for a walk in her courtyard on Shabbat and her sandal straps broke [she could not fix them on Shabbat]. Rabbi Tarfon went and propped his hands under her ankles and she walked on them until she reached her bed. Once he fell ill, and when the rabbis came to visit him she asked them to pray for ‘her son who had been excessive in his fulfillment of *kibud em*.’ They asked, ‘What did he do?’ She told them. They responded, ‘Even if he were to have done this a thousand times over, he still wouldn’t have reached half the *kavod* the Torah requires.’”

Director, Yeshivat Hamivtar, Efrat, Israel;
Editor, *Jewish Spectator*.

Torah verse that if a father were to demand from his son to become impure or to refrain from returning a lost item, the son would have to disobey.⁴

What is the extent of this famous law? How far would parents have to go in their apostasy before they no longer qualify for *kavod*? What are the halachic ramifications? Is it okay for a son to carve a *zecher l'mikdash* square on his folks' neatly wallpapered foyer wall? Should he recoil at Aunt Millie's welcome-home bear hug if his parents would become outraged? And what if Mom refuses to *tovel* the dishes? Can he eat her food anyway? A systematic approach is needed to address these nuanced questions, and a competent *posek* who knows the individuals involved must be consulted. But, in general, how does a person approach the awesome responsibility of *kibud av v'em* given the complexity of life?

According to *Sefer Hachinuch*, *kibud av v'em* is a logical expression of gratitude a person feels for being alive, a debt he owes in part to parents.⁵ The idea is more radical than it may seem. An abused child and a *mamzer* have to honor their parents, whereas an adopted child has no such Torah obligation.⁶

4. *Baba Metzia* 32a, *Yevamot* 6a. The Gemara in *Yevamot* 5b explains the derivation of this halacha: "Yachol kibud av v'em docheh Shabbat, talmud lomar: 'ish imo v'aviv tirau v'et Shabbotai tishmoru (Vayikra 19:3).'" The *Magid Mishnah* (*Aveda* 11:9) says a son should not listen even if his father has asked him "sheyavi lo ezeh davar." In other words, if the father tells him directly to go against the Torah the son certainly should not listen, but even if the father tells him to do something that *unintentionally* goes against the Torah, the son still should not listen; For example, the son cannot agree to bring his father an item on Shabbat if he would have to carry it in public. The father does not have to be evil, even his ignorance of Torah is reason enough to ignore his request.

5. *Sefer Hachinuch*, Mitzvah #33 (*Shmot* 20:12).

6. *Chulin* 11b, *Shulchan Aruch Even Haezer*, 15:11. Rav Melech

The mitzvah is not merely a form of reciprocation for all those changed diapers, suffered temper tantrums, and endless tuition bills; otherwise adopted children would have been obligated too. These acts of kindness deserve to be appreciated, but they do not address the heart of the mitzvah.

Parents are not the only concern within the scope of *kibud av v'em*. Consider the mitzvah's placement within the ten commandments. There is a reason it appears in the first column, with all the other mitzvot-between-man-and-God, and not in the second mitzvot-between-man-and-man set. *Kibud av v'em* is not an abstract ethic meant to strengthen family values. It is an imperative to honor the Creator Himself.

But then why is the mitzvah so subjective in nature? Some parents do not forbid their children to sit in their designated dining room chairs, while others do. If honoring parents is really about honoring *Hashem*, why should parents have any say in the matter at all? The Gemara helps to clarify the ambiguity: "Honoring parents is equated with honoring God, as it says, 'Honor your father and mother,' and later it says, 'Honor God with your possessions.'"⁷ The verse in *Mishlei*

Schachter ("Various Aspects of Adoption," *The Journal of Halacha and Contemporary Society*, 4), citing *Shmot Raba* (4), suggests that adopted children might be obligated to exceed ordinary *kibud av v'em* in honoring their adoptive parents, even though they are exempt technically from the mitzvah itself. See Rambam, *Mamrim* 6:11, for a discussion of a *mamzer's* obligations regarding parents.

7. *Kiddushin* 30b, *Baba Metzia* 32a, *Yerushalmi Peah* 1:1, based on verses in *Vayikra* 19:3 and *Mishlei* 3:9. According to the Gemara in *Kiddushin*, when a man honors his parents, it is as if *Hashem* dwells in their midst. When Rav Yosef heard his mother's footsteps, he exclaimed, "Let's rise, the *Shechina* is coming!" (*Kiddushin* 31b). The *Yerushalmi* actually elevates honoring parents in that a child might conceivably have to go begging in order to support them, whereas in honoring *Hashem* a person only has to give *maaser* out of his income,

requires individuals to honor *Hashem* through material wealth which – critically – varies from one person to another. A farmer offers his livestock as *korbanot*, a craftsman donates his goods for *bedek habayit*, ordinary people set aside *trumot* and *maasrot*. The overall requirement is universal, but its implementation is personal, depending on what each individual has to offer. Honoring parents works the same way. A child must intend generally to honor *Hashem*, but must consider the particular needs of his own parents in fulfilling the mitzvah.

Parents should be seen as extensions of the *Borei olam*. By bearing offspring, they come close to emulating Him. They have now taken part in the ongoing drama of creation. The connection runs deeper. As a child grows, he has no immediate knowledge of the Creator. For children, parents are omnipotent. Combined, they represent the awesome Source of justice and wisdom as well as the nurturing *Shechina*, comforting them when they cry, giving despite their children's inability to articulate gratitude. Parents help children to crystallize the foundation of their eventual *emuna*(faith). There tends to be a correlation between effective parenting and a child's ability to develop *yirat shamayim*, although exceptions exist on either side of this rule. What matters most is that parents see their primary roles as *Hashem's* emissaries. It follows therefore that children do not always have to obey parents when parental requests go against halacha.

Which areas of halacha override the child's obligation to obey parents? The Gemara mentions only mitzvot that come from the Torah. Rambam broadens this to include all rabbinic law as well.⁸ The underlying principle is that both children

but if he lacks enough he does not have to go begging.

8. *Mamrim* 6:12. The *Kesef Mishneh* explains that because all rabbinic words fall within the rubric of the Torah prohibition not to stray from rabbinic teaching (*Devarim* 17:11), rabbinic law assumes Torah

and parents are subservient to their Creator. Parents, too, have obligations concerning their children, to ensure *brit milah* and *pidyon haben* when relevant for their sons, to help them find spouses, to educate them in Torah. Parents who demand that their child go against the Torah or the rabbinic leadership of their generation, themselves become remiss in their obligations. Their particular request should not be heeded. This child must remember, however, that he is exempt only from specifically anti-Torah, anti-rabbinic demands made by parents, but must still continue to fulfill his overall *morah* and *kavod* responsibilities.⁹

Later authorities illustrate this principle. If a son wants to travel away from parents to study Torah in a place where he feels there will be a greater “sign of blessing” for his learning, he can disregard any parental opposition.¹⁰ A son can marry a woman of his choice despite his parents' disapproval.¹¹ A son

status.

9. Rav Schachter, private conversation. A parent who makes illegitimate requests still usually deserves *morah* and *kavod*. The child should keep in mind that parents in general love their children more than their children love them, as *Chazal* assume in *Sanhedrin* 72b, and deserve respect regardless of their shortcomings.

10. *Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah* 240:13, 25. If a student feels returning for a second year of yeshiva in Israel will bring him closer to *Hashem*, and his parents object, he does not necessarily have to listen to them. *Kibud av v'em* is undermined if deferring to them distances him from *Hashem*. The Gemara in *Megilla* 16b states, “*Talmud Torah* is greater than honoring parents because for all the years Yaakov Avinu studied in Ever's yeshiva he was not punished,” whereas for the years he lived with Lavan he was punished for neglecting his obligations to his parents.

11. Ramo, *ibid*. The *Netziv (Meshiv Davar Yoreh Deah* 50) makes an exception in a case when such a marriage would cause shame to a parent. Rav Schacher points out that parents have no right to run their children's lives. If a son wants to go into Jewish education,

should consciously resist parents who try to prevent him from keeping any rabbinic mitzvah.¹² If a father asks for water just when his son is busy burying a dead person, and no one else is available to complete the burial, the son must ignore the request. If, however, a mitzvah can be completed at a later time or by another person, it is more important that the son first fetch the water.¹³

When exactly does a child draw the line between resisting parents and giving in for the sake of *kibud av v'em*? The Chatam Sofer writes that every commonly accepted Jewish custom (*minhag*) has the authority of a vow, and therefore must be kept even if this means going against a parent's wishes.¹⁴ Which *minhagim* can be considered less commonly accepted? The Maharshah rules that a son should override his father's request not to say *kaddish* for his deceased mother because such an established *minhag* is as binding as rabbinic law.¹⁵ Rav Chaim Pinchas Sheinberg told a son to stop "*shuckling*" *excessively* during his *tefilla* because it embarrassed the young man's father, but that the father did not have the prerogative to stop him from "*shuckling*" altogether.¹⁶ Rav Hershel Schachter says a son who

parents overreach their authority if they insist that he become a lawyer.

12. *Biur HaGra Yoreh Deah* 240:35, *Pitchei Teshuvah* 240:22, *Aruch Hashulchan* 240:45. The *Tur* (*Yoreh Deah* 240) quotes his father's *psak* (*Teshuvot HaRosh* 15:6) that a son who wants to forgive another Jew should ignore his father's wishes to the contrary. It is not within a father's power to cause hatred between Jews (see the passage from *Baba Metzia* 62a quoted below in note #20).

13. *Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah* 240:12.

14. *Teshuvot Chatam Sofer, Yoreh Deah* 170. See also *Yechave Daat* 5:256. The Chida (*Chaim Shaal* 1:5) disagrees: *kibud av v'em* takes precedence over any *minhag* not mentioned explicitly in *Shas* or *Midrash*.

15. *Yam Shel Shlomo, Kiddushin* 1:63.

16. Rav Scheinberg, *Shoalim B'teshuvah*, p. 12.

wants to fast *Bahab*¹⁷ should give in to any parental opposition because so few people observe this *minhag* today.¹⁸

Can a parent ever lose all rights to *kavod*? Rambam rules that even if a father is a *rasha* (wicked) and does not keep mitzvot, the son must still honor and fear him.¹⁹ Other *poskim* follow the view of the Tosafists that there is no obligation to honor such a parent unless he makes *teshuvah* (repentance).²⁰

What is the halachic definition of a "*rasha*?" *Rishon Letzion* highlights a distinction Rambam makes between a "*rasha gamur*," (a total *rasha*) whom the son does not honor but still cannot strike, and a simple "*rasha*," who deserves *kavod*.²¹

17. The Monday, Thursday, and Monday following certain major festivals.

18. Rav Schachter, private conversation. Rav Abba Bronspigel, in a related lecture, encouraged compromise if a son wants a *mechitza* at his wedding and his parents do not: the son should give in because the custom of *mechitzot* at weddings is neither deeply rooted nor universal. Rav Bronspigel's father-in-law, Rav Elie Monk, was surprised when he first saw a *mechitza* at a wedding in the United States since there was no such *minhag* in his home communities in France and Germany. Similarly, Rav Bronspigel says a son should not eat a double *k'zayit* of matzoh on Pesach against his parents' wishes because so many *poskim* deem a single *k'zayit* to be sufficient.

19. *Mamrim* 6:11, *Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah* 240:18.

20. Ramo, *Schach, Aruch Hashulchan*, *ibid*. The *Taz* (240:17) cites the Gemara in *Baba Metzia* 62a, "*lav oseh maaseh amcha hu*," to show that a father does not deserve *kavod* unless he is an upstanding member of *klal yisrael*, but concludes that it is nonetheless forbidden to cause such a father distress. Radbaz (*Mamrim* 6:11) rules that a son whose evil father made *teshuvah* would be obligated in *kibud av* retroactively. The implication seems to be that even if a parent is a *rasha gamur*, a son would be well advised to honor him *anyway* in case one day he makes *teshuvah* and the son will retroactively have been lacking in *kibud av*.

21. *Rishon Letzion Yoreh Deah* 240 distinguishes between the "*rasha*

According to the Chazon Ish, there are virtually no *reshaim gemurim* in the world today, rendering the view of Tosafot all but inapplicable.²² Most Jews are so ignorant of Jewish law, that someone who behaves like a *rasha* is usually no different than the hapless *tinok shenishba* (baby kidnapped by Gentiles): he is not evil, he simply does not know better.²³ If a child finds his parents negligent in specific areas of halacha, this is almost always due to their ignorance, and he would be obligated in *kibud av v'em*. Only in extreme cases, such as the case of parents who express unapologetic hostility towards a child's observance out of hatred for religion, does Rav Ovadya Yosef suggest the child sever family ties altogether.²⁴

A counterpoint to all these halachot needs to be emphasized.

gamur" in *Mamrim* 5:12 and the simple "*rasha*" in *Mamrim* 6:11, whose status is similar to that of the "*tinok shenishba*," *Mamrim* 3:3.

22. Chazon Ish *Yoreh Deah*, *Shechita* 2. The *Shechina's hashgacha* has not been readily apparent since *churban habayit*, so the common sinner today must be approached with understanding and love, and should not be regarded as a *rasha gamur*.

23. Radbaz (*Mamrim* 3:3) has a broad definition of *tinok shenishba*. This category refers to anyone ignorant of Jewish law, even people who have had the law explained to them. Torah law and philosophy are often so subtle and complex, it cannot be assumed that a person not brought up in the system will understand a halacha based on a verbal explanation. If a son were to inform his less knowledgeable mother that there is no authoritative *heter* (permit) for a married woman to appear without a head covering, for example, she would probably be considered a *tinok shenishba* if she continued to go bare-headed in public.

24. *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch Yalkut Yosef* 240-1:4. The *Kitzur* notes that if a parent converts to another religion, the child does not have to honor him either in life or in death. Rav Schachter cites the case of a father who has refused his wife a Jewish divorce (*get*) for twenty years: such a man is evil, and his children should not speak to him. Still, even in these worst-case scenarios, it is forbidden for the child to scorn, curse, or strike the parent physically.

If a son legitimately refuses a parent's request, he must do so with respect and tact, mitigating any hurt or rejection his parent may feel as a result. If a father asks his son to make scrambled eggs for him on Shabbat, the son obviously cannot comply. But the son does have to make *havdalah* and take out the frying pan the instant Shabbat is over.²⁵

Children would be wise to approach this topic with a modicum of fear and trembling. According to the *Zohar*, our mother Rachel was punished with death for causing grief to Lavan, even though her noble intention was to save him from idolatry. If such a *tzadeket* (pious woman) could be punished on account of such a *rasha*, how much more should children (who usually are not on the righteous level of Rachel) be concerned with how they treat their parents (who usually have not descended to the moral depths of Lavan).²⁶

One way to acquire guidelines in *kibud av v'em* dilemmas is to be aware of how modern *poskim* have approached some of the sensitive issues involved. The following is a sampler of twelve questions that can arise. A *posek* should be consulted for potential variability in individual situations.

What if a father constantly criticizes or teases his son's observance? Does the son have to be quiet if speaking up would cause anger and yelling? The *Mechaber* rules unambiguously that it is forbidden from the Torah for a child to contradict his parent's words. Rebuking parents may only be done in an indirect and unembarrassing way, as when a son asks his father to interpret

25. Rav Scheinberg, p. 8.

26. Cited by the Chida (*Chaim Shaal*). *Midrash Tanchuma* at the beginning of *parshat "Lech Lecha"* also notes Avraham Avinu's apprehension that people would think he had abandoned his own evil father. The midrash emphasizes that *Hashem's* words, "*Lech lecha*," were meant to exempt Avraham explicitly from any such obligation.

a passage of Torah that highlights the point of rebuke.²⁷

Can a son create a zecher l'mikdash²⁸ square in his parents' foyer? A son cannot fulfill this *minhag* in his parents' home against their will, but he can always learn with his father about its source in the fourth chapter of *Baba Batra* and allow the subject to come up naturally.²⁹

Should a son recoil at Aunt Millie's bear hug if his parents would be outraged? Rambam says it is "disgusting and idiotic" to hug and kiss sisters and sisters of parents (as opposed to mothers, daughters, grandmothers, and granddaughters, none of whom present a problem). Some interpret his mild language to mean that doing so is not right, but is also not forbidden *m'ikar hadin*, even *d'rabbanan*. Rav Schachter and other *poskim* allow men to stand passively if their own sisters or their parents' sisters shower physical affection on them, and if recoiling would cause others to mock them. This would not be true if the same scenario involved any other woman.³⁰

27. Rav Scheinberg, p. 12, based on *Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah* 240:2, 240:11, *Sanhedrin* 80b. Rabbi Eliezer was asked the extent of *kibud av v'em*, and he answered, "until his parent takes his wallet and throws it into the ocean, and [the son] still does not embarrass his parent by protesting" (*Kedushin* 32a). Dama ben Netina was a leading city official and general whose mother slapped him in front of his parliament and his troops, at which point her sandal fell and he extended his hand to support her (*Yerushalmi Peah* 1:1).

28. This is an unpainted area left on the wall near a house entrance, representing our sorrow that the house of G-d in Jerusalem is still in ruins.

29. *Baba Batra* 60b, Rambam *Taanit* 5:12, *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* 560:1. See note #14 regarding *minhagim* that are not kept universally, and notes #31 and #32 regarding his inability to impose halacha on his parents.

30. Rav Schachter, based on Rambam *Issurei Bia* 21:6, private conversation. Not hugging Aunt Millie might be considered a harmful

What if Mom won't tovel the dishes? A son who eats in his parents' house technically "borrows" their dishes, and one who borrows dishes is just as obligated *d'rabbanan* to take them to *mikveh* as their owner (whereas if he were a non-borrowing guest in someone else's home, he would be exempt). Although food that comes in contact with such dishes remains kosher, it may be hard to find a lenient opinion permitting the son to use the dishes themselves *lechatchila*, especially those used with non-solid foods.³¹ The son might also recommend to his mother Rav Aryeh Kaplan's brief and eloquent formulation of the subject in *Waters of Eden* if she is open to learning.

Should a son have his parents' mezuzot checked if he fears they may be invalid? A guest in a non-Jewish house is obligated to affix a mezuzah on the doorpost of his room if he stays more than thirty days, whereas in a Jewish house he is obligated immediately.³² Rav Moshe Sternbuch says that this applies only in a commercial guest house, but a person staying with family has no such obligation. A child still might try to persuade his parents to have their mezuzot checked, or to spend his

midat chasidut, as the Ramchal describes in the twentieth chapter of *Mesillat Yesharim*, if she is the direct sister of either the father or the mother. They will not understand, and in their eyes his recoiling looks "disgusting." But if Aunt Millie is Mom's best friend or an aunt by marriage, it would be forbidden to accept her bear hugs, even if recoiling would outrage the rest of the family. Rav Mordechai Willig suggests developing a cold that erupts in messy sneezes every time Aunt Millie approaches, and the author has found carrying bulky luggage during such interactions to have been helpful as well.

31. Rav Tzvi Cohen in *Tvillat Kelim* 3:1. For a general reference, see *Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah* 120:1. A son once *toveled* all his parents' dishes in the middle of the night without their knowledge, accidentally misplacing one of the glasses. He was duly smacked when his mother figured out what he had done.

32. *Aruch Hashulchan Yoreh Deah* 286:48 based on the Gemara in *Menachot* 44a.

own money as a “gift.”³³ Rav Scheinberg says that if the issue would cause tension, even if there were no mezuzot on the doorposts at all, the son should keep quiet.³⁴

Can a child who adopts his Hebrew name protest if his parents continue to call him by his former secular name? Rav Moshe Feinstein rules that the child cannot protest since there is no prohibition in using a secular name.³⁵

Can a parent determine what a child wears? Rav Feinstein questions whether dress custom has *minhag* status at all. Barring issues of *tzniut* (modesty), *shaatnez*, or forbidden clothing styles such as *begeh isha*, or *chok akum*, there seems to be no halachic reason to oppose a parent's wishes.³⁶

Can a child settle in Eretz Yisrael against his parents' wishes? Rav Ovadya Yosef says he should disregard his parents, especially if his intention is to fulfill the mitzvah *d'oraita* and all the mitzvot dependent upon the land. The parents themselves are obligated to make *aliyah*, so they are unjustified if they try to prevent their child from doing so.³⁷

33. *Teshuvot V'hanhagot* 2:537.

34. Quoted in *After the Return*, by Becher and Newman, Feldheim, 1994, p. 41.

35. *Iggerot Moshe Orach Chaim* 4:66.

36. *Ibid*, *Yoreh Deah* 1:81. The *teshuva*, however, does not address the issue of *minhag hamakom*, when a parent asks a child to go against the dress code of his community.

37. *Yechave Daat* 3:69, 4:49. For a survey of sources, see Rav J. David Bleich, *Contemporary Halakic Problems*, vol. 1, Ktav, New York, pp. 9-13. Rav Yosef's *psak* and reasoning are consistent with many *poskim*, including *rishonim* like Maharam Rothenburg (*Teshuvah* 79) and *Mabit* (*Teshuvah* 1:139). The *Shaarei Tzedek* (*Mishpatei Haaretz* 11:5) is less decisive on the issue because of the Gemara in *Kiddushin* 31b in which Rav Ami, with the sanction of Rabbi Yochanan, leaves *Eretz Yisrael* in order to greet his mother. Nevertheless the *Shaarei*

If parents keep a certain minimum level of kashrut, can his son argue with them to raise the level to "glatt"? Rav Scheinberg cites the Ramo's *heter* (permissiveness) to transgress the rabbinic prohibition against eating non-Jewish bread in cases of potential enmity; all the more so, he rules, a child should set aside strict opinions (*chumrot*) and eat his parents' food as long as it is technically kosher.³⁸

Can a son refuse a drunken father's request for more liquor? According to Rav Yosef, the son should – politely and respectfully – just say no. Serving the harmful liquor may not be a part of *kavod d'oraita* at all, especially because it may constitute a Torah violation of “*lifnei iver*, assisting a person in sinful behavior.”³⁹

Can a child use his parents' dishes if they have a non-Jewish maid? The *Mechaber* rules like Rabbenu Tam, that the rabbinic prohibition against *bishul akum* applies even in Jewish homes and restaurants. Rav Feinstein rules that if the maid was ever left alone without fear that her Jewish employers would return, the dishes become unkosher. However, there may be leniencies depending on the particulars of the situation.⁴⁰

Can parents force a son to spend Shabbat in a non-observant environment if the son himself will not transgress any halacha? No, Rav Scheinberg excuses the son altogether, since honoring parents should make the son feel closer to, and not farther

Tzedek refrains from giving final *psak* against settling in *Eretz Yisrael*. A minority of *poskim* may favor *kibud av v'em* over *aliyah* (see *Baal Hafla'ah*, *Parshat "Lech Lecha"*).

38. Rav Scheinberg, p. 16, citing the Ramo, *Yoreh Deah* 112:15.

39. *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch Yalkut Yosef* 240-1:20.

40. *Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah* 113: 15, *Iggerot Moshe Yoreh Deah* 1:61. See “The Live-in Maid,” by Rav David Katz, *The Journal of Halacha and Contemporary Society*, 12.

from, *Hashem*.⁴¹

These by no means exhaust the range of possible issues. Can a child offer parents food if they might not make a blessing on it? How does a son broach potential *yichud* problems with step-sisters, relatives, and friends of family? Can he eat his parents' food if he suspects it was cooked on Shabbat (out of ignorance)? Can a son invite parents for Shabbat lunch if he suspects they will arrive by car? Torah is a comprehensive life system that requires constant fine-tuning. Family members are not always fine-tuning on the same level, and it remains the children's responsibility to prevent as many conflicts as possible before they arise.

In the end, parents should not worry that their youngsters' systematic approach to *kibud av v'em* will take the genuineness out of the relationship. True love is best expressed by well-intentioned forethought. Children, in turn, should be careful that their conscientious forethought is motivated by true love and respect. After all, the manner with which they treat their parents may well catch up with them one day when, with God's help, their own children will eventually seek to honor Him.⁴²

41. Rav Scheinberg, p. 15. Shabbat is given for pleasure and not for misery (see *Shaarei Teshuva Orech Chaim* 267:1), and *kibud av v'em* cannot compete with *oneg Shabbat* (see footnote #4).

42. Rashi, *Nedarim* 32a: "*Deb'mida sheadam moded, ba modedin lo.*"