

GREAT FOR SHARING
AT THE SHABBOS TABLE!

בשבת



אור ישראל

Living Life Deeper

PARSHAS
DEVARIM

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CREDIT WHERE IT IS DUE

This week's *Parshah* opens with Moshe *Rabbeinu* reviewing the travels of the *Bnei Yisrael*. In the course of his speech, Moshe *Rabbeinu* mentions that the *Bnei Yisrael* were told not to engage the people of *Seir* in battle.¹ They were to bypass the land of *Seir*, as Hashem had given that land to the children of Esav, and the children of Yaakov have no part in it.

What was so special about this land that made it untouchable? The *Bnei Yisrael* battled many other nations on their way to Eretz Yisrael, why did the children of Esav receive special treatment?

The *Medrash*² explains that Esav did something that no one else did - something so amazing that the Jewish nation was disallowed from disturbing Esav's descendants. What was it that Esav did? He honored his father.

Esav was very particular when it came to serving his father, going so far as to wear special clothing whenever he assisted Yitzchok. We do not find that he had this special respect for his mother, nor do we find that his descendants possessed this same trait. Nevertheless, Esav's children were protected in the merit of his fulfilling the *Mitzvah* of honoring one's father. It is evident that the reward for honoring one's parents is beyond our comprehension. Why, then, do people treat this *Mitzvah* so casually?

The *Chovos HaLevovos*³ explains that as children, our parents provided our every need. As we grew, we came to expect it, because we never knew anything different. Thus, we've become immune to the kindness our parents shower upon us - in fact, we complain when things aren't to our liking!

There is so much that our parents do to meet our needs. Providing food, doctor visits, clothing and shelter is just a tip of the iceberg. They are there to celebrate our milestones, and they are there to support us during the trying times. While it may be difficult to truly appreciate all that they do for us, these *Pesukim* underscore how important it is for us to try our best in honoring our parents.

1 *Devarim* 2:1-8

2 *Devarim Rabbah* 1:15

3 *Sha'ar HaBechinah*, Introduction

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Mind the Gap - Taking the Next Step

How can one promote a feeling of gratitude, especially for something that one takes for granted?

Sometimes, acting in a certain way, even before truly feeling that way, can be helpful in generating the feelings behind the act.¹

If one does not feel grateful, but acts in a grateful manner, the feelings that accompany such acts will grow over time.

Additionally, even if one were to properly appreciate one's parents, it is still important to anchor those feelings with actions.²

Thus, taking a moment to recognize, and thank, the parent for packing lunch today, driving to and from school, etc. will cause a person to grow in their feelings of appreciation.

Make a goal - "Twice a day I will recognize and thank my parents for something that I have not yet thanked them." By making a plan which requires a physical interaction, we create a foundation of gratitude that we can build upon.

1 *Mesillas Yesharim* Chap. 7

2 *Alei Shur*, Vol. 2, p. 279

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**Inspiration without action is
like clouds without rain**- The Alter
of Novordhok, *Pisgamim U'Maamarim*
MiGedolei Baalei HaMussar, p. 52

THE LAW OF THE LAND

A curious case found itself in front of Judge Douglas McKeon,* of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of New York. Ms. Houpouridou, an immigrant from Greece, had traveled back to her homeland to care for her ailing mother. Because she was away for so long, her landlord sued to evict her, claiming that Ms. Houpouridou no longer lived in the apartment. Though Ms. Houpouridou paid her rent on time, the landlord would be able to charge more rent from the next tenant, and therefore sought the eviction.

After some deliberation, the appellate court decided in favor of Ms. Houpouridou. In rendering their decision, Judge McKeon wrote, *“There was a time in many cultures when the care of a sick or elderly parent by a child was the hallmark of familial responsibility. But, according to that frequently uttered refrain, times change. Mothers or fathers, sometimes both, would often live under the same roof with their offspring and the hands-on care provided would be substantial. To the outsider, considerable sacrifice seemed involved, but for the caregiver child, the care of mom and dad was the natural progression in life’s journey; those who reared and raised, and gave life, would be comforted and looked after in the twilight of their own. Sad to say, as with so many old-fashioned values, adherence dims with each new generation, and parental care in some instances has been reduced to an occasional call to a nurse’s aide or an infrequent, obligatory visit to a nursing home.*

But there are those, undoubtedly dwindling in number who remain students of the old school, staying true to basic traditions and still giving life to words now seldomly spoke: “my mother will never go to a nursing home.” Ms. Houpouridou is one of those rare individuals and her heartfelt decision to travel to Greece to be at her mother’s side during a final illness should not visit upon her the draconian penalty of forfeiture of her long-held regulated apartment.”

It is widely recognized that fundamentally, caring for one’s parents is paramount - even if it means leaving home for almost two years!

* Hudsoncliff Bldg. Co. v. Houpouridou, 22 Misc.3d 52 (App. Term 1st Dept., 2008)

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DID YOU KNOW?

- When one honors one’s parents, they cause the time of the final redemption to come closer.¹
- By recognizing all that our parents have done for us, and by honoring them properly, we will come to recognize and honor Hashem.²
- Honoring one’s parents includes: providing food, drink, clothing, shelter, helping them come in, and escorting them out.³

¹ Meah Shearim, Sha’ar 68

² Sefer HaChinuch, Mitzvah 33

³ Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah, 240:4