

Tzemach Tzedek
Ohr HaTorah
Parshas Kedoshim
איש אמו ואביו תירא

Vayikra 19:3 – “A man shall fear his mother and his father.”	קדושים י"ט ג': איש אמו ואביו תירא
In Yevamos 5a it is taught: Could it be that the honor of father and mother overrides Shabbos? The Torah says: “A man shall fear his mother and father, and My Sabbaths you shall guard”—you are all obligated in honoring Me.	יבמות פ"א ה' ע"ב: יכול יהא כיבוד אב ואם דוחה שבת — תלמוד לומר: "איש אמו ואביו תיראו ואת שבתותי תשמרו" — כלכם חייבים בקבודי
Kiddushin 1:29a: “Ish” (man)—I have only [a law for] a man. From where [do I include] a woman? When it says, “A man shall fear his mother and father,” behold here are two [people included].	קדושין פ"א כ"ט ע"א: "איש" — אין לי אלא איש, אשה מניין? קשה הוא אומר "איש אמו ואביו תיראו" — הרי כאן שנים
(According to Rashi: It speaks to both; “Tirau” is plural, so both man and woman must fear their mother and father.)	לשנים הוא אומר — רש"י: ור"ל "תיראו" (הוא) (לשון רבים, בין איש בין אשה ייראו את אמו ואביו)
In Derech Lamed Beis Netivos HaTorah (ד"ל) it concludes: If so, why does it say “Ish”? “Ish”—a man—has the power to act; a woman does not have [complete] power to act because she is under the authority of others.	ודרך ל"ב נתיבות — עולה אם כן מה ת"ל "איש"? "איש" — ספק בידו לעשות; אשה — אין ספק בידה לעשות מפני שרשות אחרים עליה
In Bava Metzia end of chapter 2 (32a) it also says: Could it be that honoring parents overrides...? One might think since honoring parents is equated with honoring G-d—as it says here “Honor your father and mother” (Shemos 20), and it says there “Honor Hashem from your wealth” (Mishlei 3)—therefore, one might think to listen to the parent. Scripture teaches us: Do not listen to them.	בבא מציעא סוף פרק ב' ל"ב ע"א: יכול יהא כיבוד אב ואם כיו"י ס"ד הואיל והוקש כיבוד אב ואם לכיבודו של מקום — שנאמר כאן: "כבוד את אביך ואת אמך" (שמות כ'), ונאמר להלן: "כבוד את ה' מהונך" (משלי ג') — הלכך לצייט ליה — קא משמע לן: דלא לשמע ליה — עכ"ל
See also Krisos 6, Shabbos 7, Yevamos [5], Yerushalmi Pe'ah 1, Kiddushin 1:61b, Midrash Rabba 293:1, 217:2, 259:1.	בריתות ו', שבת ז', יבמות [ה'] ב' ו"א, ירושלמי פאה א' [ה' א'], קדושין (א) ס"א ב', רבות קצ"ג א', ר"ז ב', רנ"ט א'
Zohar, Vol I, 5a–b; Vol III, on Parshas Kedoshim 81b–82a, and in Raya Mehemna there: “His father is none other than Hashem,” and “His mother is the Congregation of Israel.”	זהר ח"א דף ה' סע"א–ע"ב, ח"ג קדושים פא"ב–פב"א וברענא מהימנא שם: "אין אביו אלא הקדוש ברוך הוא", "ואין אמו אלא קנסת ישראל"
In Lamed Beis Nesivos it is explained: Kibbud av v'eim refers to the positive command, and “You shall fear” refers to the prohibition. Therefore, regarding fear, the Torah places the mother first (because negative commands are associated with	וב"ל נתיבות: כיבוד אב ואם — הוא קיום מצות עשה, ו"תיראו" — הוא לאו תעשה. לפיכך ביראה הקדים אם לאב, כי לאות תלויין במלכות; ובכיבוד הקדים אב, שמצות עשה תלויה בזעיר אנפין

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Malchus), while for honor, the father is first (because positive action is linked with Ze'ir Anpin).	
As explained in Parshas Miketz 199 on the verse: "To work it and to guard it."	כְּמוֹ שְׁנֵתִּבְאָר בְּפֶרֶשֶׁת מִקֵּץ קצ"ט — בְּפֶרֶשׁ "לְעִבְדָּהּ וּלְשֹׁמְרָהּ".
Accordingly, "And My Sabbaths you shall guard" (which is placed above honoring parents), this refers to a level of absolute unity—"There is one and no second; He has neither son nor brother"—this refers to Kesser (the supernal crown).	וְלִפִּי זֶה, "וְאֵת שַׁבָּתוֹתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ" — שְׁלֹמֶעֱלָה מְכִיבוֹד אָב וָאֵם — זֶהוּ עֲנִיָּן "יֵשׁ אֶחָד וְאֵין שֵׁנִי", גַּם "בֶּן וְאָח". "אֵין לוֹ" — וְהוּא בְּחִינַת "כֶּסֶת".
And this is [the meaning of]: "You are all obligated in My honor"—"Show me Your glory" (Shemos 33), this refers to the Supreme Kesser.	וְזֶהוּ: "כָּלְכֶם חַיִּבִּים בְּכַבֻּדִּי" — "הִרְאֵנִי נָא אֵת". "כְּבֹדְךָ" (שְׁמוֹת ל"ג) — זֶהוּ "כֶּסֶת עֲלִיוֹן".
See Raya Mehemna, Parshas Pinchas 255b, and also explained there in Raya Mehemna on Kedoshim: "There is no god with Me."	רְאֵה רַעְיָא מְהִימְנָא פֶּרֶשֶׁת פִּינְחָס דְּרַ רִנ"ה ב', וְכֵן פִּירֵשׁ בְּרַעְיָא מְהִימְנָא כָּאן בְּפֶרֶשֶׁת קְדוּשִׁים: "וְאֵין אֱלֹהִים עִמָּדִי".
Zohar I:81a: "Three partners are found above in the mystery of man..." (See the deletions, Section 2).	פ"ג א': "תִּלְתָּא שְׁוִתְפִּין אֲשֶׁתְּכַחוּ לְעִילָא בְּרִזָּא דְּאָדָם כּו', בְּהִשְׁמֻטוֹת סִימָן ב'.
There is room to comment here on the concept of "Yisrael sustaining their Father in Heaven."	יֵשׁ לְהַעֲרוֹת עֲנִיָּן "יִשְׂרָאֵל מְפָרְנִסִּים לְאֲבִיהֶם". "שִׁבְשֻׁמִּים".
This is explained in <i>Likutei Torah</i> , Parshas Mattos, in the maamar <i>Rashei HaMatos</i> , in the verse "Come, eat of My bread..."	וְנִתְבָּאָר מִזֶּה בְּלִקּוּטֵי תוֹרָה, פֶּרֶשֶׁת מַטּוֹת, בְּדַבּוּר "הַמִּתְחִיל רִאשֵׁי הַמַּטּוֹת, בְּפֶרֶשׁ: "לָכוּ לֶחֱמוּ בִלְחֻמִּי".
Just as a person receives vitality from bread because its root is in the "mouth of Hashem"—"mouth" meaning <i>source</i> —	דְּכֻמוּ שְׁהָאָדָם מְקַבֵּל חַיּוּת מִן הַלֶּחֶם מִפְּנֵי שִׁשְׁרָשׁוֹ — מִבְּחִינַת "מוֹצֵא פִּי ה'", "מוֹצֵא" הֵינּוּ מְקוֹר.
so too the level of Memale Kol Almin , called "like the appearance of man," receives its vitality from the level of the supernal Will (<i>Sovev Kol Almin</i>)—	כֵּן בְּחִינַת מַמְלָא כָּל עֲלָמִין הִנָּקְרָא "כְּמֵרָאָה אָדָם" — נִמְשָׁךְ לְבְּחִינָה זֹאת חַיּוּת מִבְּחִינַת רִצּוֹן עֲלִיוֹן — הַסּוֹבֵב כָּל עֲלָמִין.
and this happens through Torah and mitzvos , which are encloded in <i>Asiyah</i> , and through them the supernal Will is drawn down.	וְהֵינּוּ עַל־יְדֵי הַתּוֹרָה וְהַמִּצְוֹת שֶׁנִּתְלַבְּשׁוּ בַּעֲשִׂיָּה, וְעַל־יְדֵיהֶם נִמְשָׁךְ רִצּוֹן הָעֲלִיוֹן.
This is the meaning of: "My beloved, My sustainer, and My bread." (end quote; see there).	וְזֶהוּ עֲנִיָּן "רַעְיָתִי פֶּרְנִסְתִּי וְלֶחֱמִי" — עֲכָלוֹם — עֵינִן וְשֵׁם.
See also the maamar <i>Hinech Yafah Ra'ayasi</i> , where "Their Father in Heaven" is explained as the light of Abba (Chochmah) clothed within Ze'ir Anpin , which is called "Shamayim" (Heaven).	וְעֵינִן עוֹד מִזֶּה בְּדַבּוּר הַמִּתְחִיל הַנּוֹד יִפָּה רַעְיָתִי, וְשֵׁם פִּירֵשׁ: "אֲבִיהֶם שִׁבְשֻׁמִּים" — הֵינּוּ אוֹר אָבָא הַמִּתְלַבֵּשׁ בְּ"בִזְעִיר אֲנָפִין — הִנָּקְרָא "שָׁמַיִם".

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Also see the explanation of “Shamayim = Eish uMayim” in <i>Torah Or</i> , beginning of Parshas Bereishis, in the maamar <i>HaShamayim Kis'i</i> :	ועין בפירוש "שמים = אש ומים" בתורה אור ריש פ': בראשית, בדבור המתחיל השמים כסאי
They are the levels of Chesed and Gevurah , the source of the emotional attributes of <i>olam</i> , ascending and descending.	שהם בחינות חסד וגבורה, מקור בחינת עולם, ו"ק — מעלה ומוריד
Torah, however, is Chochmah and Binah , which “preceded the world by 2,000 years,” as in “I will teach you wisdom.”	והתורה היא חכמה ובינה, ש"אלפה שנה קדמה". "לעולם", על דרך: "אאלפה חכמה
“The drippings of wisdom” is Torah that was clothed in <i>Ze’ir Anpin</i> , etc.	ובולות חכמה — זו תורה שנתלכשה בזעיר אנפין'.
And this is the idea of “Their Father in Heaven,” and that is the meaning of “Honor your father”—Yisrael sustain their Father, giving Him food and drink, etc.	וזהו ענין "אביהם שפשמם", וזהו: "כבוד את אביו". — הינו: "ישאל מפרנסין כו", מאכיל ומשקה כו
“Kabeid” also means to draw down the revelation of Kavod Ila’ah (supernal Glory), which is beyond being, where before Him all is considered as nothing.	וגם פירוש "כבוד" — להמשיך גילוי כבוד עילאה, שלמעלה מהיש — וכלא קמיה כלא חשיב ממש
This is through bittul (self-nullification), to be absorbed in the Body of the King, as mentioned in the maamar <i>Ani Yeshena</i> , in the explanation of “My beloved.”	והינו עלי ידי הבטול — לאשתעבא בגופא דמלכא, "כנזכר בדבור המתחיל אני ישנה, בפירוש "רעיתי
And one must be in the level of a son , as stated in the maamar <i>Vechol Banayich</i> , that <i>Binah = Ben Y-H</i> .	וצריך שיהיה בבחינת "בן", כנזכר בדבור המתחיל וכל בניה, דפירוש: בינה = בן ייה
And this is the idea of prayer in ratzo v’shov (ascent and return), like “Kol HaNeshama Tehallel Kah.”	וזהו ענין עבודת התפלה בבחינת רצוא ושוב, על דרך: "כל הנשמה תהלל יה
“And your mother” refers to Malchus , source of Beriah-Yetzirah-Asiyah. Also, “For if you call Binah ‘Mother’,” she is called the Shechinah , and also called Kenesses Yisrael , which gathers flow from Yisrael above.	ופירוש "ואת אמך" — היא בחינת מלכות, מקור דבריה-יצירה-עשיה; גם: "כי אם לבינה תקרא" — ונקראת שכינה, ונקראת כנסת ישראל, שכוונסת השפע מישאל דלעילא
And also because souls are included and gathered within her, in the level of a wellspring of living waters , as explained by the <i>Ramaz</i> .	וגם שהנשמות נכללים ונאספים בתוכה, בבחינת באר מים חיים, בפירוש הרמ"ז
And it may be said: the bones come from the father , and the flesh from the mother .	ואפשר לומר: כי עצמות מן האב ובשר מן האם
And this corresponds to: bones represent Chochmah , and flesh represents Ratzo (yearning, movement upward).	והינו: עצמות — זהו חכמה, ובשר — רצוא
And in these two levels one honors father and mother, and all of this relates to the concept of kibbud (honor).	ובשתי בחינות אלו יכבד אב ואם כו. וכל זה ענין כיבוד

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And the concept of “ You shall fear... ” is explained in <i>Raya Mehemna</i> , Kedoshim chapter 2, as being the fulfillment of the negative commandments.	וענין “תיראו” — פירש ברענא מהימנא קדשים פ”ב — שזהו קיום מצות לא תעשה.
For awe is the root of the 365 negative commandments, and therefore, by awe the Torah places the mother first , as mentioned earlier.	פי היראה היא שרש לשם”ה לא תעשה, ולכן במורא הקדים אם — כנ”ל.
And all of this is through: “ And My Sabbaths you shall guard. ”	”וכל זה על-ידי: “ואת שבתותי תשמרו
For the inner courtyard that faces east is opened on Shabbos , and this is the idea of the additional soul (neshamah yeseirah) ,	פי חצר הפנימית הפונה קדם כו’ — וביום השבת יפתח, וזהו ענין נשמה יתירה
as explained in <i>Torah Or</i> , in the maamar <i>Vayakhel Moshe</i> , that it is the supernal will (Ratzon HaElyon), which is above Chochmah , and revealed on Shabbos.	כמו שכתוב בתורה אור, בדבור המתחיל ויקהל משה כו’ — שהוא רצון העליון, שלמעלה מהחכמה, המתגלה בשבת.
According to this, honor and awe of father and mother comes from the will that extends from Chochmah and Binah , which are called father and mother .	ולפי זה, כיבוד ומורא אורי אב ואם — זהו על-ידי הרצון הנמשך מחכמה ובינה, הנקראים אבא ואמא.
And this is the meaning of “ Make His will like your will... ”	וזהו: “עשה רצונו כרצונך” כו’
But also, “ And My Sabbaths you shall guard... ” corresponds to: “ Nullify your will before His will... ”	אבל צריך לומר: “ואת שבתותי תשמרו” — זהו “בטל” “רצונך מפני רצונו”.
These three levels correspond to that which is mentioned in <i>HaShamayim Kisi</i> , that “ the heavens are My throne and the earth is My footstool ” — this relates to honoring father and mother.	וגם שלשה בחינות אלו — על דרך הנזכר בענין “השמים כסאי והארץ הדום רגלי” — זהו ענין כיבוד אב ואם.
And the concept of “ What house will you build for Me... ” encompasses “ Bechol Me’odecha ” — this is the meaning of “ And My Sabbaths... ”	ובחינת “אי זה בית כו’” — מקיף על “בכל מאדך” — “וזהו” “ואת שבתותי תשמרו”.
For the levels of Nefesh–Ruach–Neshamah are drawn from father and mother , but Yechidah , which corresponds to “ bechol me’odecha ,” is the soul of the soul , and this is the additional soul of Shabbos.	פי נפש–רוח–נשמה נמשכו מאב ואם, אבל יחידה, שהיא “בכל מאדך”, זהו נשמה לנשמה — והינה נשמה יתירה דשבת כו’.
Alternatively, the reason the mother is mentioned first in fear is because Torah Sheba’al Peh , which is Chitzoniys HaTorah , descended into the world of separation , and if one does not merit, it can draw him after materialism.	ועוד יש לומר, מה שהקדים “אמך” במורא — כי תורה שבפעל פה, שהיא חיצונית התורה, ירדה לעלמא דפרוודא כו’, ולכן אם לא זכה — נעשית לו כו’.

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Therefore, guarding is necessary, as mentioned in <i>Torah Or</i> , Parshas Bereishis, maamar <i>LeHavin Inyan HaBerachos</i> .	ועל-כן צריך שמירה, כנזכר בתורה אור, פ' בראשית, דבור המתחיל להבין ענין הברכות.
And see more on this in the maamar <i>Kabeid Es Avicha</i> , Parshas Yisro.	ועין מזה בדבור המתחיל כבד את אביו, פ' יתרו.

[NOTE: 📖 Summary

This deep and layered maamar by the **Tzemach Tzedek** explores the mitzvah of **Kibbud Av Va'eim** (honoring father and mother) through the lens of **Kabbalah and Chassidus**, connecting it with **Shabbos**, the **inner soul structure**, and the **relationship between man and God**.

Key themes:

1. **Father and Mother as Chochmah and Binah:** The bones come from the father (Chochmah), and the flesh from the mother (Binah/Ratzon). This pairing reflects the internal intellectual-spiritual makeup of the soul. Honoring them is a mystical process of honoring one's own Divine source.
2. **Yirah and Kavod:** "Fear" (תירא) corresponds to negative commandments and is rooted in *Malchus*, while "Honor" (כבד) relates to positive commandments, connected with *Ze'ir Anpin*. Therefore, the Torah places **the mother first in awe** and **the father first in honor**—each aligning with a distinct Divine function.
3. **The Role of Shabbos:** "וְאַתָּה שְׁבִתוֹתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ" is what empowers proper Kibbud Av Va'eim. Shabbos reveals **Ratzon Elyon** (Supernal Will) above Chochmah, manifest as the **Neshamah Yeseirah** (extra soul). The command to honor parents is sourced from this Will, and it aligns one's will with God's: "Make His will like your will... nullify your will before His."
4. **Spiritual Soul Structure:**
 - **Nefesh, Ruach, Neshamah** = drawn from Av and Eim (Chochmah/Binah).
 - **Yechidah** = root of *Bechol Me'odecha*, revealed on Shabbos, connecting to the "soul of the soul."
1. **Talmud Torah Sheba'al Peh and the Danger of Descent:** Since the Oral Torah descends into the *alma d'piruda* (world of separation), it can either elevate or pull one into gashmiyus if not guarded. This is why fear and vigilance are emphasized, and the mother (symbolizing Malchus) is mentioned first in this context.



Practical Takeaway

- **Honoring your parents is more than ethical—it is a spiritual avodah.** It aligns your inner faculties (Chochmah and Binah) with their Divine roots and builds vessels to receive supernal light.

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- **Fear (awe) and honor** must be balanced, and their application reflects different modes of avodah: restraint (Malchus) and expression (Ze'ir Anpin).
- **Shabbos is the key to unlocking deeper avodah**—its holiness enables the revelation of the Yechidah (the essence of the soul) and empowers all levels of Divine service.
- **Oral Torah must be approached with humility and fear**, since its descent into worldly intellect can mislead if not accompanied by yiras Hashem and Shabbos-based alignment.

Chassidic Story (The Tzemach Tzedek)

Story: The Tzemach Tzedek's Yirah for His Mother and His Shabbos Preparation

One Friday afternoon in Lubavitch, the **Tzemach Tzedek** was deeply immersed in preparing for Shabbos. As was his custom, he would seclude himself for hours beforehand, reviewing deep maamarim and immersing in mikvah, in total dveikus. That day, shortly before candle-lighting, he heard his elderly mother, **Rebbetzin Devorah Leah**, call for assistance.

Despite the awe of the approaching Shabbos and his elevated spiritual state, the Tzemach Tzedek immediately halted his preparations, stepped out from his secluded room, and personally attended to her needs with warmth and precision. He would later explain that **Shabbos is the root of kavod**, but **kibbud eim is the vessel** that contains its light.

Years later, a student asked the Rebbe why the tzaddik himself answered the call when many attendants were available. The Rebbe quoted the maamar we just learned, paraphrasing:

"The awe we have for our mother reflects our ability to guard what is holy. Just as the Neshamah Yeseirah is only effective when we honor our soul's origin, so too is Shabbos effective only when we treat our parents as vessels of Elokus."

Source: *Sefer HaSichos Diburei Kodesh (Lubavitch Archives)*, oral traditions from the household of the Tzemach Tzedek. **END NOTE]**