Our Parents Dignity

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When our parents are older and depend on us, we must pay close attention to maintaining their dignity while taking care and assisting them. This important lesson is learned from a passage in the Jerusalem Talmud, which states that: “it is possible for a son (or daughter) to feeding his parents delicious delicacies and still be considered a bad son; and it is possible for a son to force one of his parents to work in the mill, and be considered a good son. “

The Talmud illustrates this idea with two real stories:

In the first case, a son was feeding his father every day with luxurious food: meat, probably very expensive, from exotic birds, a food reserved for royalty. One day the father asked his son: “My son, where do you bring me this delicious food from? And the son replied with disdain: “Shut your mouth, old man! A dog eats what he is given in silence. And you should do the same, and eat your food without asking questions. ” This son, the Rabbis said, will be “destined to Gehinam” (hell), since the material effort he is doing for his father cannot compensate for the humiliation and emotional pain he is causing his father, treating him in this way.

The second illustration, also a real case, refers to a son who worked hard in his father’s mill. One day, the king summoned all his subjects to the palace and demanded that they come to assist the kingdom with a very difficult job, (probably extracting precious metals from the mines). That job was much more difficult and degrading than working in the milling. The king obligated each family to send one worker. The son decided that he would volunteer to work for the king in that difficult job, instead of his father, and he asked his father to take his place in the mill to feed the family. The Gemara says that ironically, this son who “sent his father to work in the mill” will inherit paradise. Because by asking his father to work there, he prevented him a great humiliation.

The great lesson that the Sages teach us is that in the matter of honoring the parents (as in many other topics) we must keep very carefully the dignity of our parents. And wee should know that for parents is extremely difficult to accept any help from one of his or her children. And this makes them very

sensitive about the way that help or assistance is offered and given.
When a son or daughter help their parents, they should do so with joy, and not as a burden. With a smile and with positive body language. If a child □”□ makes his parents feel that “they are a burden” while helping them, the emotional pain that the parents suffer is not only immeasurable but also, possibly, irreparable …
The Sages exhorted us to speak to our parents with sweetness, and simultaneously with the respect due to a higher authority.
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