

Earning Children's Honor

By: Rabbi Zalman Posner

In a world of crises, an immediate problem is the dissolution of the family. We regret the passing of the fabled Jewish family, not out of sentimentality, but from realistic appreciation of a personal experience. The devoted family, an anchorage amid confusion, is rapidly disappearing, even among Jewish people. "What can we do?" is the distressed cry of parents seeing their children growing away from them, going elsewhere for guidance and even affection. We attempt, futilely, to recreate the old family spirit, and wonder why we don't succeed.

The atmosphere of a Jewish home was not produced by spontaneous generation, nor did it evolve in a vacuum. It was the product of a process. A principle guided the elders and was naturally and inconspicuously transmitted to the children by emulation through admiration. Color and warmth in a Jewish home did not consist of isolated and superficial ceremonials performed primarily "for the children." Parents kept Judaism because it was important to them. The Torah way, emphasizing responsibilities along with privileges, teaching and practicing self-control, was followed enthusiastically by adults, and then by youngsters. Unconsciously perhaps, the child recognized and admired parents with an ideal they adhered to, and bonds between the generations were forged and strengthened.

"Revere your mother and father and observe my Shabbats." Parents who deserve respect will be respected, and they will earn it by "observing my Shabbats," living by principle rather than self-indulgence and convenience. Inwardly children cannot respect parents who follow them, let them "decide."

Evasion of responsibility by parents does not encourage self-reliance on the part of children. The foundation of the home is the responsibility of parents; their duty is to be honest examples, intelligent guides. The respect and reverence of the children will create a home that is the greatest reward a parent can know.

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18 May | 5 Sivan

Shavuot (May 18-20)

Shavuot Begins: 8:36 pm (Tuesday)

Shavuot Ends: 9:53 pm (Thursday)

Parashat Naso

Shabbat Begins: 8:40 pm

Shabbat Ends: 9:56 pm