

HONOR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER

*Samuel*

The Pschiatrists are busy today with young men and women who are revolting against one or both of their parents. Of the eight men who were graduated with me as Rabbis, three of them have undergone long years of pscho-analysis in an attempt to rid their minds of conflicting feelings towards their parents. Modern pschology has demonstrated clearly that it is not so easy to obey the fifth commanment, HONOR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER.

Detailed case histories of young men and women who received the best in education and who come from the type of home we call cultured and desirable, have shown us that most fathers and most mothers do not know how to raise their children properly. We know from these case histories that many fathers and mothers do irreparable damage to the minds and lives of the children they love dearly.

In the face of these scientific facts it becomes somewhat difficult for the ethical teacher to instruct his students that they must honor their parents. The modern teacher of ethics is forced to say to his pupils, HONOR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER IN ALL THAT THEY DO WHICH IS GOOD AND RIGHT.

It is the crazy quilt of modern society which has forced us into this situation. In the ancient Hebrew Society, the role of the parent was much more set than it is today. The role of the father in the ancient society was as the teacher, law-giver, judge, and counsellor of the family. In a world without books, and in a society without a strong national govt, or strong law courts, the father occupied the seat of authority. Failure to obey him in the old days, was equivalent to betraying one's country today. As the man who knew the law and passed it on to his children, as the judge who decided disputes within the family, the father could not be disobeyed if society was to stand.

Today, however, governmental institutions have taken over the duties of the ancient patriarchs. Any man can discover the law by reaching books which are plentiful or by reading a newspaper. Members of the family do not go to the father to settle a dispute, they go to a law court. Children do not study at their father's feet, as they used to, they go instead to the public school. The father of today is no longer the source of law or justice,; he has become, as it were, the man without a job.

THERE CAN BE NO question today but that the father must develop a new place for himself within the family. He must within the context of our modern society find a creative role he can play with respect to his children, so that he can earn their love and respect. Unfortunately, too many of our fathers become one of two things. They become 1) the boss- they order everybody around, but since their bossing is without roots in a constructive function, they are disregarded in one way or another. Or 2) the modern father becomes a Pal- he does everything with his kid at the kid's level, and the result is that the kid soon regards him as another kid-no more or less.



It is only on a constructive plane that the father can restore his place of honor within the family. He must somehow become an aid in the educative process, and once again earn his place as the man of learning within the family-and not just the man with the big yell or the big smile.

THE ROLE OF THE WOMAN today has not changed as greatly as has the role of the father. The source of authority in society has passed from the father of the Patriarchal days to the govt. insts. of today, but the mother's role of intimate friend with her child remains. In the old days as well as today, the mother was the source of personal attention; not authority, but kindness. The constant concern of Rebecca for Jacob is matched in modern times by our mothers concerns for their young ones. The young child of today finds it easier to love his mother than to love his father.

Unfortunately, however, even the mother's of today are beginning to stray- see notes

Conclusion:- It is unfair to place before the child a command that he must nec. fail to obey at least in part-

MOTHERS AND FATHERS MUST EARN THE RESPECT OF THEIR CHILDREN AS NEVER BEFORE

They must do this by giving them 1) personal attention and love

2) constructive leadership in meeting the deeper problems of their life.