



Ask The Rabbi

Researched at Ohr Somayach, Jerusalem

This Issue Contains:

1. Family Workout
2. Yiddle Riddle



Yoel <yoel...@ix.netcom.com> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

My parents are frequently asking me to work out. They are very into this new fad of exercising all of the time but it doesn't appeal to me. I am not out of shape, per se, I just do not lift weights or use our treadmill: They do not interest me. I also think that working out the way they do does not show modesty (by the way, they aren't from [Observant] but I am trying to be). I know that I should fulfill 'Kibud Av V'Eim' [honor father and mother], and take care of my body, but I think I am in fine condition and get enough exercise walking around school. My parents aren't 'commanding' me to do it, they just advise it to me all the time. What should I do?

Also, thank you very much for providing this service.

Dear Yoel,

One of the big enthusiasts of this 'new exercise fad' is Maimonides. Good health, writes Maimonides, is a prerequisite for mitzvah observance. He promises that anyone following his health program — which includes vigorous daily aerobics — will enjoy good health.

So your parents are right. You should exercise.

But even if they're wrong...You should exercise. You see, your parents gave you life. They fed you. They changed your diaper. And even now, look how concerned they are about you! Who else would 'nudge' you all the time to exercise!

Although you may be in good physical shape, your attitude towards your parents seems a bit 'flabby.' Honoring parents is not only in the way you act and speak towards your parents. It's also in the way you think about them. Although your parents may be 'simple' and 'ordinary,' but in your eyes they should be like prestigious dignitaries.

When the Torah says to honor your parents, it's not talking about some Biblical parent who lived in ancient times: It's talking about someone who may be sitting in front of the TV with a beer and a bag of potato chips! That's the person you're supposed to honor!

There's a very important point to realize here. When a child is trying to become observant, it's natural that parents will be extra sensitive to any of his objections. They may perceive such objections as a revolt against them. Therefore, it's especially important that you try to compromise as much as possible (within the guidelines of Halacha — e.g., modesty).

When you listen to your mom and dad, they will see in you a son whose Torah values teach him to respect his parents.

By the way, working out with treadmills and weights isn't supposed to be interesting! (Maybe that's why they're called 'dumbbells.')

Listening to music can make exercise easier. Or try something fun, like racquetball or Frisbee. I'd like to write more, but I've got to run...I have a court reserved for my daily squash game, and I can't keep my partner waiting! (He's also an Ohr Somayach Rabbi! Honest!)

So if till now your favorite exercise has been jogging your memory and climbing the walls, maybe it's time to start bending over backwards and jumping on the bandwagon!

Sources:

- Maimonides Hilchot Dayot 4
- Chayah Adam 63:3

Yiddle Riddle

Which two Tractates in the Talmud begin with the same Mishnah?

Thanks to Avi Steinhart, Jerusalem

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