# LIBRARY COPYRIGHT NOTICE

www.huc.edu/libraries

## Regulated Warning

See Code of Federal Regulations, Title 37, Volume 1, Section 201.14:

The copyright law of the United States (title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material.

Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specific conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be “used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research.” If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of “fair use,” that user may be liable for copyright infringement.

This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law.

# Kibud Av'v' Eim: A Trauma Informed Interpretation of the Commandment to Honor One's Parents

Emily Dana

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for Ordination

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion

Rabbinical School

Cincinnati, OH

Date: March 15, 2024

Adviser(s): Rabbi Julie Schwartz, MAHL, NAJC BCC, ACPE CE

**Abstract**

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the tension between Jewish text and thought from the Torah to today and the lived experience of those with emotionally immature parents. To do this, I will engage with modern psychology and alternative Jewish interpretations of this commandment. There is a lot of biblical scholarship on this commandment and a lot of other academic scholarship on the psychology of parents and their children, but rarely are they discussed together.

Chapter One is an introduction to the commandment in the Torah itself as well as the concept of emotionally immature parents. It introduces some of the questions that will be examined later in the thesis.

Chapter Two, Texts and Traditions That Hurt, is an exploration of the traditional interpretations of Kibud Av v'Eim as well as the connections that are drawn between God and parents throughout Jewish tradition.

In Chapter Three, I present a number of psychological theories and begin to connect them to the issue at hand. In this chapter, I emphasize the trauma informed lens that can help to ease the tension between lived experience and Jewish tradition.

Chapter Four will bring all of the previous work together and discuss ways in which Jewish communities can become more trauma informed so as to welcome in children of emotionally immature parents. Immediately after chapter, four, two rituals, one for the individual, and one in a communal setting are presented.

**Acknowledgements**

I have collected mentors and community for as long as I can remember. It is impossible to thank every single person who has helped to shape this work, but I will highlight a few of the incredible people in my life who have guided me on this journey and whose presence in my life has been invaluable.

First, I would like to thank my advisor on this thesis, Rabbi Julie Schwartz. Without her guidance and reassurance, as well as tremendous editing skills, this work would not exist. It is truly an honor to call myself her student. I am so grateful that she still agreed to advise this thesis despite no longer spending as much time and energy at HUC. Without her, I would not be the chaplain and rabbi I hope to be.

I also owe a great debt to Cantor Yvon Shore for her help with the ritual section of this thesis as well as her tireless care and emotional support over my four years at this campus. Her Spring 2023 class, Healing Liturgies and Rituals helped to shape how I use my own experiences to create ritual and resources and can be helpful to others.

I give thanks to Rabbi Elyse Winick who, way back in 2016, when I was a sophomore at Brandeis, encouraged me to think about Kibud Av v'Eim, sending me on the path to writing this thesis.

I also thank Rev. Carrie Finegan, BCC who helped me to shape many of the ideas that ended up shaping this work over my CPE unit at Nationwide Children's Hospital in 2023.

My Rockdale Temple family, especially Rabbi Meredith F. Kahan and Rabbi Erin Binder, have been a source of support, laughter, and love through all of the ups and downs of the last two years.

My gratitude for my friends and classmates is immeasurable. I thank Rachael Houser for being one of the kindest human beings I know and planning outings as well as for being an incredible sounding board for many of the ideas contained in this paper. My classmates, Aaron Budman, Samuel Rheins, and Madeline Budman have been incredible companions through the hills and valleys of the last year and have taught me so much about the kind of rabbi I hope to be.

# Table of Contents:

**I. An Introduction to Kibud Av' V'eim**

At age 12, LK's mother forced her to use a wheelchair and to never walk in public; her mother reveled in the attention she received. There was never any diagnosis. LK's mom branded her as a sick child from a very young age, putting her through numerous medical tests and surgeries and giving her heavy duty muscle relaxers even when it wasn't clear that she needed them. The first time she was allowed to walk again was at her Bat Mitzvah. LK trusted her mom. And to her, her mom owned her Jewish world, serving as the camp nurse at her Jewish summer camp and doing her best to always be working at any synagogue that they were attending. She was constantly reminding her children that the Holocaust could always come back for them. The one place LK did find community, at least to some extent, was at camp. Jewish ritual, practice, and community, never seemed like something she was allowed to claim for herself. Now, she is successful and happy living in Arizona with her husband, but her connection to Jewish ritual and community has been lost. At least for now. LK's mother, suffering from what LK presumes to be Munchausen by Proxy, was certainly emotionally abusive to her as well as physically abusive to some extent. The underlying cause of her behavior towards her daughter would describe her as an Emotionally Immature Parent .

What is an emotionally immature parent? The concept of emotionally immature parents was widely popularized by Lindsay Gibson PhD in her books Adult Children of Emotionally Immature Parents and Recovering from Emotionally Immature Parents.[1] Emotionally immature parents lack the ability to cater to their child's emotional needs and

[1] Gibson also recently published a new book, Disentangling from Emotionally Immature People, New Harbinger Publications Inc, 2023. Parts of this book will be included in this chapter and throughout the paper as a whole

engage in emotional intimacy with their children or others. In her books, Gibson lays out a number of personality traits that are often associated with emotional immaturity: rigidity, low stress tolerance, egocentrism, lacking in ability for self reflection, and subjective to a fault(62-68). They also tend to treat their children as their caretaker rather than the other way around. Not every emotionally immature parent will have all of these qualities, however, they are common across most situations. Often emotionally immature parents will raise emotionally immature children. If the children learn emotional intimacy and empathy from other sources, they may be able to break the cycle. Having emotionally immature parents will often cause lifelong effects to children (referred to henceforth as CEIPs or children of emotionally immature parents) such as feeling emotionally lonely in their parent child relationship, feeling like their interactions are one sided, feeling coerced and trapped, struggling with emotion vulnerability and emotional contagion,[2] and struggling to hold firm boundaries (Gibson).

In his book on parental relationships and duties within Judaism, Honor Thy Father and Mother, Gerald Blidstein prefaces his presentation of the texts on honoring one's parents in the tradition by saying this: "it should be obvious that a survey of normative materials on an aspect of the family does not presume to capture the family as a lived experience…. no family, after all, lives its life—ambivalent and crisis-strewn as it may be—as an expression of what ought to be done as found in a code" (xiii). Many analyses of this topic also note that while children are commanded to honor and revere their parents in

[2] According to Psychology Today, "Emotional contagion refers to the phenomenon in which a person unconsciously mirrors or mimics the emotions of those around them. Emotional contagion can be triggered by nonverbals such as facial expressions as well as by overt conversational or behavioral cues." This phenomenon can be problematic when people are not aware of what feelings are their own and what feelings have just spread to them.

many texts, in very few, if any, they are commanded to love them. The purpose of this thesis is to examine the tension between Jewish text and thought from the Torah to today and the lived experience of those with emotionally immature parents. Modern thought and theories from the psychological field will be utilized as tools of reinterpretation and healing. Solutions, for both the individual, and those aiming to support Jewish children of emotionally immature parents in their communities, will also be presented.

Because a significant amount of child abuse goes unreported, it is not well documented or known of by researchers. There is little research on the ways in which religious tradition, Jewish or otherwise, is weaponized by parents in relation to their children. However, throughout history, in many different time periods and locations, there is clear documentation of people in power wielding religion as a sword against those with less power. This paradigm can be applied to a parent and their child or children.

In Gibson's newest book, Disentangling from Emotionally Immature People, section 17, titled,"They always seem morally superior and righteous," she writes the following about emotionally immature people: "their egocentric moral outrage suggests that you have a moral obligation to do what they want, and it is so compellingly conveyed that many people fall for it. Narcissists see themselves as deserving and morally righteous in any request because they are certain they are right"(Gibson 114). This passage is specifically describing narcissistic emotionally immature people, but other emotionally immature people can also display these tendencies when in emotional distress or within interpersonal conflict. This presentation of moral superiority leads easily into the weaponization of religious morality to get someone, in the context of this study, their child,

to obey them. AT, a Generation X child of emotionally immature Boomer parents, notes that though she would not consider her parents completely narcissistic, they did present themselves as the moral authority over their children and household as she was growing up. Often, when any of the four children in the house, of which AT is the third in birth order, did something that upset their parents, the commandment to "honor their parents" was and is invoked as if doing something that the parents disapproves of was not only "against" the parents, but was a transgression against Judaism as well..

Many Jewish children of emotionally immature parents struggle with the role of Judaism in their life because of the role that their parents played in their relationship with the tradition. Some may have also experienced the use of the tradition as a tool to get the children, even when they are adults, to "obey" or "honor" their parents. The basis for this use of the tradition may actually have nothing to do with the tradition itself, but it is difficult to distinguish without a careful study of the common interpretations of the commandment of *Kibud Av'v' Eim*.

There is textual proof[3] of the importance of the parent child relationship in Jewish life and how it relates to God's relationship with God's people. The commandment of *Kibud Av'v' Eim* (Honor [your]mother and father) is the root of the tension that Jewish children of emotionally immature parents may experience. It is important to address these textual sources prior to complicating this relationship with the presence of one or more emotionally immature and the lived experiences that come with that situation.[4] Many

[3] When paraphrasing or writing in my own words, I will use gender neutral language, however, I have chosen to translate the original texts with their gendered sense in order to stay true to the text and approach it as what it is as opposed to what the modern progressive reader would prefer.
[4] Not every text will be cited in full in the body of the text, however, I will endeavor to cite each text and provide footnotes to additional texts that make similar assertions when they are relevant.

readers may already be familiar with the biblical verses containing the commandment *Kibud Av'v' Eim*. They are Exodus 20:12: "Honor your father and your mother, that you may long endure on the land that your God יהוה is assigning to you," as well as Leviticus 19:3 "You shall each revere your mother and your father, and keep My sabbaths: I יהוה am your God." Both of these verses present *Kibud Av'v' Eim* as a part of the ten commandments that Moses transmitted to the Jewish people from God.

Two different verbs are used in the Hebrew of these two verses, and consequently they are translated differently. Exodus 20:12 uses the word כַּבֵּד, *kaveid*. Most translators render this as "honor" or "respect." The *qal (*simple) form of this verb means "be heavy, honored," metaphorically or literally. The *niphal* (passive) form of the root כבד is usually translated as "to be honored." In the case of Exodus 20:12, the verb is in the *piel (*transitive) infinitive form and refers to the action of the subject honoring another entity.[5] In this context, that other entity is the parents, but this word is also used in commandments instructing the Israelites to honor God (BDB 3513).[6]

Leviticus 19:3 uses the word תִּירָאוּ which comes from the root, that means "to be in awe" or "fear." While in this case, this root is used to express the awe or fear of parents, the root ירע, *yara,* is often used to express the fear of God that Jews are commanded to have. This fear of God is instilled so that *Am Yisrael* will obey God's commandments and avoid sin. It is also used as a reassurance that one should not be afraid when God is present.[7] Deuteronomy 5:16 is also often used as a biblical source for the commandment to honor

[5] The ten commandments are not aligned grammatically, so doing a close grammatical reading of the immediate context does not bring more meaning to the commandment.
[6] This connection between parents and God will be further explored in the following chapters
[7] Traditional interpretations of these biblical verses and how they are used in Jewish thought will be presented in the following chapter.

one's parents: "Honor your father and your mother, as your God has commanded you, that you may long endure, and that you may fare well, in the land that your God is assigning to you." The Hebrew verb in Deuteronomy 5:16 is the same as in Exodus 20:12. Here, like in many instances of commandments in Deuteronomy, the commandment is transactional; if one honors their parents, they will receive a certain reward.[8] This text implies that children have an obligation to "repay" their parents for creating them or bringing them into this world and that there is a reward for properly honoring one's father, a concept that will be further explored in Chapter 2.

One of the main purposes of this study is to take a trauma-informed perspective on an ancient commandment and a tradition that is constantly growing and changing in our modern world. There is no reason to completely discount the tradition, however, the way that this commandment can be weaponized by parents to harm or attempt control over their child may cause those children to struggle with the traditional interpretations of the commandment in light of their own experience.

I will begin by exploring the importance of the commandment and the parental relationship in Jewish text and life through the exploration of biblical, post biblical, rabbinic, medieval, and modern sources. Next, I will address the ways in which these texts have been interpreted and how those interpretations may be harmful to those with emotionally immature parents. I will approach this task using analysis of the interpretations themselves and their implications and interviews of Jewish children of emotionally immature parents. Following that, I will bring forward modern psychological theories that may help to introduce a new perspective on old texts and concepts. Lastly, I

[8] A deeper exploration of these rewards and their impacts on CEIP will be in the next chapter.

will discuss possible ways in which to reconcile the experience of CEIPs and the commandment to honor one's father and mother through reinterpretation of the text, exploration of encouraging text, and the formation of new ritual.

## II. Chapter Two: Texts and Traditions That Hurt

The emphasis on the commandment *Kibud Av'v' Eim* (Honor your father and mother) often results in tension or anxiety that many children of emotionally immature parents feel when engaging with Judaism. Rabbinic commentaries on this and similar verses from the Torah emphasize the importance of the relationship between parents and children and more specifically the duties that the children have to their parents. For example, Bavli Kiddushin 1:9 states that if one can only endeavor to follow one mitzvah perfectly throughout their life, it should be the one to honor one's parents.[9] Considering the vast number of commandments that are present in the Bible and rabbinic literature, this is a significant statement. One of the texts that is built on in much of the later commentary on the commandment to honor one's parents is Bavli Kiddushin 30a-32b. Modern Jewish sources, while they do take into consideration more of the nuance that is present in the relationship between parent and child, still encourage children to have relationships with their parents whenever helpful. Reading these sources, or just encountering the ideas around them in daily life can cause turmoil in a child's theology even once they are out of their parents house as well as complicate the child's relationship with Judaism.

The extensive rewards that Jewish tradition describes if one honors their parents put a lot of pressure on the relationship between a child and their parents so long as both are alive. These rewards, along with the commandment more generally, are especially difficult to reconcile with lived experience when the relationship between a child and their

[9] "Mishnah: He who performs a single mitzvah receives much good, his life is lengthened, and he inherits the land… R. Jose b. Bon said: 'this refers to one who selected one mitzvah and never violated it all his life.' Which mitzvah is this? MarUkban said: 'Such as the honoring of parents" (Blidstein 75).

parent is particularly difficult. The presence of these texts may indicate, however, that an incentive had to be placed on the completion of this commandment due to how difficult it is to follow. The tradition presents a number of rewards that one will or can receive for honoring one's parents. The only instance of the commandment within the biblical text that does not also mention a reward is Leviticus 19:3 in the second instance of the ten commandments. The presence of a reward for honoring one's parents, or the threat of a punishment for not doing so, places pressure on the child to honor the parents in order to receive these rewards and shows once again the emphasis that is placed upon this kind of obedience and honor in the tradition. When one experienced manipulative or forced obedience in childhood, this can become even more triggering. The rewards presented by the text are a long life, the land that God has promised to the Israelites, and admittance to the world to come. These verses also fail to explain what exactly honoring one's parents entails, so the parent, for better or for worse, can dictate the meaning and try to impose it on their child.

Deuteronomy 5:16, in its basic meaning, presents the first two rewards, and the medieval commentary expands upon this: For example, Ramban on Deuteronomy 5:16 writes: "He added an explanation in the commandment, Honor thy father and thy mother 'as the Eternal thy God command thee' from the mouth of the Almighty, as I have explained, and therefore he added, and that it may go well with thee, just as it is said, Yea, the Eternal will give that which is good, and our land shall yield her produce." The ability to live off the land was very important to the Jewish community prior to the invention of modern agriculture because the bounty of the harvest determined life or death for the Israelites;

this reward had tangible benefits. Chizkuni explains the meaning of the phrase, "so it may go well with you" in Deuteronomy 5:16 as follows:

> In the first version of the commandment to honor our parents, this promise of a reward was absent. In other words, God promises an additional reward for honoring our parents. A careful reading of the first version of the Ten Commandments will reveal that the letter ט is the only letter of the Hebrew alphabet that did not appear in it. The second version therefore includes it, as that letter symbolizes טוב goodness. Moses caught on to this and took it upon himself to make up for this deficiency by adding a line that included this letter.

Chizkuni's theory is that Moses added this phrase in order to complete the alphabet in the next instance of the ten commandments.

The apocryphal book of Ben Sira[10] also presents a reward for the honoring of one's parents. There are also a couple of post-biblical sources, namely Philo of Alexandria and the apocryphal book of Ben Sira that address this commandment: Ben Sira 3:5 reads, "he who honors his father will be long of days, he who honors his mother bestows it upon God" and also writes, "honor your father will all your heart, and do not forget the mother who created you; remember that you came from them; and what can you give like that which they have given you." This text, while a lovely idea on its surface, can also be used to manipulate CEIPs into doing things that they do not want to do or elicit guilt or shame. If the parents are clearly worthy of love and care, the adult child will naturally feel the desire to love and care for their parents just as they did when they were children. This becomes more complicated when the child has a complex or difficult relationship with the parents and may feel as if the parent did not care for them when they were children.

[10] This book is a compilation of poetic writings written during the Second Temple Period. The whole book only survived in its Greek translation, having been translated by the grandson of the author, but fragments of its Hebrew text have been discovered over time. (The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia)

In Talmud Bavli Kiddushin 40a:5, Rava indicates that the phrase "that your days may be long and that it may go well with you" in Deuteronomy 5:16 is referring to one receiving a reward for completing this mitzvah in this life as opposed to the World to Come or only in the World to Come. He connects it with Proverbs 21:21 in which rewards in this life are offered in exchange for acts of loving-kindness. Rashi's comment on this Talmudic passage also notes that the phrase יאריכון ימיך, lengthening one's days, does not only refer to this world but means lengthening one's days into the next world i.e the World to Come.

A place and a reward in the World to Come are also presented as rewards for the honoring of one's parents, as well as other mitzvot, specifically in rabbinic texts. Shabbat 127a:15, commenting on Mishna Peah 1:1, states:

> And did we not learn in a mishna: These are the matters that a person does them and enjoys their profits in this world, and nevertheless the principal exists for him for the World-to-Come, and they are: Honoring one's father and mother, and acts of loving kindness, and bringing peace between a person and another, and Torah study is equal to all of them. By inference: These matters, yes, one enjoys their profits in this world and the principal exists for him in the World-to-Come; other matters, no.

Here, not only is a reward in the World to Come promised for completion of mitzvot, but also what was present in Deuteronomy 5:16 i.e. the idea of faring well in life by honoring one's parents. This passage from Mishna Peah 1:1 is familiar to many modern Jews because it has been adapted for the morning liturgy as *Eilu D'varim*. Therefore, even those who may not even have examined the concept of the world to come or even know what the words mean, have chanted this prayer or heard a *shaliach tzibur,* a prayer leader, chant this piece of liturgy. It may be one of the more familiar texts that provides an interpretation of the commandment to honor one's parents. An interesting aspect with regard to this reward of a "place in the World to Come '' is that recently, millennials and

some younger people have started, according to the Pew Research Center, to dabble in beliefs about the afterlife. This being said, for those growing up in a predominantly Christian culture, the cultural conception of the afterlife skews towards the Christian ideas of heaven and hell and less so towards the rabbinic concept of the "World to Come."

When God is linked in Jewish text and thought to a parent that one has a difficult relationship with, it can be difficult to separate the two and develop a relationship or belief in God, and relatedly the tradition. Some of these texts seem to equivocate God and the parents which can imply that parents are more than human and be used by the parent or parents to manipulate their children and inflate their worth in order to convince their children, even as adults to do what their parents would like them to do. As LK says, "Anyone can be a parent; God is only God." These associations with regard to fear, cursing and honoring of parents being connected to the same actions towards God can be difficult for those who struggle to fear in the biblical sense,[11] not curse, and honor their parents. This is particularly difficult for those who feel as if their parents are not worthy of honor in the same way that God is and struggle to respect a being that has been obviously revealed as human like one respects God. Additionally, there is the aspect that any human being capable of reproduction or adoption is able to become a parent, and we, as Jews, believe that there is only one God who is unique among all other beings on the earth. The link to God may also result in the parents overstating their authority. The result of this tension between text and lived experience is often a loss of the possibility of a relationship with God and a turn towards an atheistic view of the world.[12]

[11] I.e. be in awe of their parents as the Israelites are commanded to be in awe of God
[12] Plenty of atheists can have wonderful and fulfilling lives; this section is not intended to discount this. Rather, it is to note that these CEIPs don't even get the chance to explore a belief in God or relationship with God due

The link between fear of a parent and fear of God as well as the honor of parents being equated with the honor of God shows the strong link between God's relationship with God's people, Israel, and parents' relationship with their children. This concept can result in adult children who have difficult relationships with their parents turning away from *Am Yisrael* as well. The words for "fear" and "honor" are used in the two commonly cited instances of this commandment. What is the difference between fearing one's parents and honoring one's parents? Bavli Kiddushin 31b:14 depicts reverence, or fear of the parent as not sitting when the parent is standing and not contradicting the parent and honoring the parent through personal service: "he gives food and drink, dresses and covers him, brings him in and brings him out." Sifra Kedoshim Section 1:10:10 also defines the distinction between fear and honor:

> Which is fear? He shall not sit in his place, and he shall not speak in his place, and he shall not contradict his words. Which is honoring? Giving him to eat and to drink and clothing and covering and bringing in and taking out. "A man, his mother and his father you shall fear": I might think that if his father or mother told him to transgress one of the mitzvoth of the Torah he should heed them; it is, therefore, written "and My Sabbaths you shall keep" — You are all obliged to honor Me. (Vayikra 19:4) "Do not turn to the idols (elilim)": Do not turn to serve them (in thought). R. Yehudah says: Do not turn to scrutinize them.

Both fear and honor, in these interpretations, do not hold the same connotations that they do in modern English which is part of the reason that many may struggle with these distinctions whether or not one is a CEIP. Fear, in the Bavli Kiddushin 31b and the Sifra Kedoshim texts, appears to be similar to how one would act if a king or someone very important was in one's presence; it is giving them respect by honoring their position.

---

to the tension between the tradition and their lived experience. It is no longer an open choice for them because of the way that God has been presented.

Fear or reverence of parents, and more specifically one's father, is presented as equal to the commandment to fear and revere God. For the purpose of this section, the focus will be all that falls under the umbrella of fearing God (not cursing , honoring), but there are other instances in which parents are compared to God. These comparisons are prevalent throughout hundreds of years of Jewish text, not just localized to one period of time. For example, Bavli Kiddushin 30b reads:

> "honor your father and your mother (Exodus 20:12), and it is also stated, 'honor the Lord with thy substance (Proverbs 3:9)--Scripture equates the honoring of parents with the honoring of the Lord. It is stated, 'you shall fear every man his mother and his father' (Lev 19:3), and it is also stated, "You shall fear the Lord" (Deut 6:13--Scripture equates the fear of parents with the fear of the Lord. It is stated, 'He who curses his father or his mother shall be put to death (Ex 21:17), and it is also stated, 'whoever curses his God shall bear his sin. And he who blasphemes the name of the Lord shall be put to death (Lev 24:15-16)--Scripture equates cursing of parents with blasphemy against the Lord.[13]

The Talmud is clear on the connection between these verses and how they should be interpreted: honoring one's father and mother is on the same level as honoring God and so on and so forth with fearing and not cursing one's parents.

Mekhilta d'Rebbi Ishmael expresses this equivocation explicitly, similarly to Bavli Kiddushin: "Rebbi says: Beloved is the honoring of parents by Him who spoke and brought the world into being, His having equated their honor and fear to His honor, and their curse (i.e., their being cursed) to His. It is written "Honor your father and your mother" and, correspondingly, "Honor the Lord from your wealth" — their honor being equated. It is written, "A man, his mother and his father shall you fear" and (Devarim 6:13) "The Lord your God shall you fear" — their fear being equated."

[13] Translated from the original by Blidstein and found on pg 4 of Honor thy Father and Mother

Rashbam, in his comment on Leviticus 19:3, addresses honoring one's parents as being equal to honoring God as well: "just as in the Ten Commandments the command to honor parents appeared next to the commandment to observe the Sabbath, honoring parents is almost on a par with honoring the Creator Himself, the Torah placed these two commandments next to one another here too. This is the plain meaning of the text." Here, Rashbam is equating the proximity of the commandments to one another with the ideas in the commandments being linked to one another.[14] In Ramban's commentary on Exodus 20:12, he describes five commandments that are crucial if one wants to have a good life, and these commandments include the commandment to honor one's father and mother. By honoring one's parents, one is honoring God.

While there are not many modern texts, other than those which are quoting the texts of the rabbis, that make this comparison between the honoring of parents and the honoring of God, the underlying idea has been passed down through generations. This transmission of the commandment may not have always been executed intentionally, but the result is that the child of an emotionally immature parent, even after they become an adult, may struggle with the concept of belief in a God.

God is also linked to parents as a partner in the creation of the child. This idea can cause further tension between the lived experience of one with difficult parents and a relationship with the Divine. If one cannot see God without seeing God as being inextricably connected to one's parents, it is hard to form a relationship with God if one has a bad or no relationship with one's parents. Rabbinic tradition emphasizes the role of parents as

[14] This is a common strategy used by the rabbis throughout rabbinic literature. Additionally, the aim of this section is not to examine how convincing or not the arguments of the commentators may be, but to present evidence that there is a textual basis for the idea that honoring one's parent is connected to honoring God

creator in conjunction with God. Bavli Niddah 31a says that there are three entities involved in the creation of a person: the two parents and God. The father is responsible for the bones, nails, and brain; the mother is responsible for the skin, the flesh, the hair, and the pupil of the eye, and God places the soul, eyesight, ability to hear, speak and walk along with the legs, ability to understand, and wisdom. The concept of these three entities being partners in the creation of a person is also found in other Talmudic sources: PT Peah 1:1:27, PT Berakhot 9:1:9, PT Yevamot 2:6:2, BT Kiddushin 30b:21. Some of these Talmudic sources may have been quoting Sifra, but the original or earliest source of this concept is unknown.

There is yet another example of partnership in the creation of a child between the parents and God in Sefer HaChinuch 33:1-4 which reads:

> Having finished all that we are obligated towards the Creator Himself and His glory, He turns now to command us about those matters which concern created beings. He begins with the father, for in relation to his offspring, he is akin to a creator, being partner with [God] in the forming of the child. God is our first Father, and he who begets the child is our last male parent.

The same sentiment is presented in Ramban's comment on Exodus 20:12. Here, once again, the parent of a child is a partner with God in the creation of the child, and there is an implication that the child should be grateful to their parent for this. This text, assuming that the parent is familiar with it, could also be used as part of the common argument that "you only get one mother/father."

Some of these texts seem to imply that a child has a duty to repay their parents simply for their existence and the bare minimum of raising the child even if the parent was difficult or abusive in some way. Sefer HaChinuch, Mitzvah 33 says: "A man should realize

that his mother and father are the cause of his being in the world, and therefore it is truly proper that he remember them all the honor and do them all the service he can.They labored greatly on his behalf during his childhood."[15] R. Bachya Ibn Pekudah writes:

> If some good happens to us through the act of someone who had no intention of benefitting us, we owe him no thanks… it is known that the motives of a parent are purely egocentric, for the child is truly a limb of his parent… he will labor to exhaustion to guarantee the peace and security of his child? All this because of the instinctive feelings of parental love and mercy implanted in man. Nevertheless, both Torah and reason oblige man to serve.

It is unclear, however, whether there is any case in their minds when a child is no longer required to honor their parent because their parent was not diligent. All of these statements about the raising of a child are relatively general and not specific as to the way in which the child was raised. This makes it difficult to apply these interpretations to situations in which parents acted questionably.

R. Saadiah Gaon (10th century) and R. Bachya Ibn Pekudah (11th century) and Sefer HaChinuch focus on "repaying" the parents for raising them and the amount of sacrifice and effort that the parents needed to do in order to do so. R. Saadiah Gaon writes in Sefer Emunot veDeot Chapter 3, "Furthermore, divine Wisdom forbade fornication in order that men might not become like the beasts with the result that no one would know his father so as to show him reverence in return for having raised him."

Even if this commandment is not meant to be easy, there may be a point at which it is actually harming the child to "honor" their parents in the way commanded in the Torah. We are commanded, in every other mitzvah throughout the Torah, to live by the commandments, not die by them. Honoring an abusive or high-conflict parent can be

[15] This source is one of the only ones that combines the importance of being grateful for one's creation with gratitude for the "nurture" and sacrifice involved with raising a child.

tremendously harmful to the mental health of the child. Additionally, were these issues present in any other kind of relationship, the abused or used party would be encouraged to leave the relationship not to make more of an effort to honor their abuser.

Why is it harmful to expect, or command children who were hurt by their parents to honor and care for them.The ways in which children are instructed to honor their parents shows the importance of this relationship in Judaism. What does honoring one's parents look like in Judaism? Many of the thinkers who wrote on the topic emphasized the importance of honoring one's parents in the tradition or in relation to God, but there are less instructions on how to fulfill this commandment. As with most questions within the tradition, there is not one answer to this question. Some answers include that one should honor their parents with the wealth that is in their possession i.e. economic sacrifice of some kind is necessary to properly fulfill the commandment of honoring one's parents (Palestinian Talmud Kiddushin 1:7). Here, the Babylonian Talmud disagrees with the Palestinian Talmud saying that while the honoring of one's father and mother requires personal service to them, one does not have to sacrifice economically to do so. Almost every source that interprets this commandment states that one needs to honor their parents with deeds, rather than just with words.

When the tradition is linked with one's parents or family of origin, especially when this link is developed at an early age, it is difficult for the child, even once they are an adult, to develop a connection or "ownership" with regard to mitzvot.  Especially in a modern world, where it is much easier to not explore mitzvot such as the observance of Shabbat

than to do so, the experience of living with an abusive or emotionally immature parent who claimed Judaism as their property, gives them all the more reason to do so.

The passing down of the tradition is also often linked with the mitzvah of honoring one's father and mother; this can be a difficult idea for those with EI parents. This argument, when made by parents, assumes that children may also be motivated by the passing down of the tradition and links parents and their children with the continuation of the Jewish people as a whole. The use of this argument by the parents also puts a lot of responsibility on the child, putting the entire burden for the continuation of the Jewish people on their shoulders. Maimonides appears to see children honoring their parents as necessary for the continuation of Jewish society because the family unit is what makes up the community. He writes, "he who strikes his father or whose mother is killed on account of his great audacity, and because he undermines the constitution of the family, which is the foundation of the state." Maimonides' view is similar to ones put forth by the Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle. Other thinkers in the 12th-17th centuries also emphasize the necessity of filial piety in relation to Jewish communal survival. Ralbag (R. Levi ben Gershom) says that the honoring of one's parents "will ensure that succeeding generations will accept the teachings of their elders, generation after generation, and they will all, therefore, be strong in their observance of the Torah of the Lord." Abarbanel says that the honoring of parents elevates the importance of the tradition and ensures that future generations will believe in the commandments and rely on the tradition (Blidstein 21-22). This is a common sentiment in modern Jewish culture as well and plays into possible issues

of intermarriage. This entire argument is based on the assertion that honoring one's parents is or will be enough to for continued Jewish survival.

In a post Holocaust world, this argument can cause a lot of guilt in children who don't "honor" their parents in the way that their parents expect. This thinking about the Holocaust is most likely caused by the passing down of generational trauma,[16] especially with regard to the third generation.[17] However, this fact does not negate the harm that can be done to the children in the third generation especially when these ideas are pushed on them starting at a very young age. There is evolving research to suggest that this trauma may even have been passed down through epigenetic factors over time, but more research is needed. This being said, psychologically, there is no question that the trauma is passed down. When children marry non-Jews they are told that they are preventing the continuation of the Jewish people on a larger scale.

[16] This concept will be further explored in the following chapter
[17] I.e. those whose grandparents were Holocaust survivors or had families that barely got out of Europe before the Germans took over and rounded up all of the Jews.

## III. Chapter Three: Modern Psychological Interpretations of the Parental Relationship

Modern psychological theories can help one to understand the experience of CEIPs. These theories build on and are used in conjunction with one another in much of the research on parenting. Most of these concepts are based around how one's family of origin and childhood experiences impacts one's adult life. In this chapter, each theory will be explored and then applied to the issue at hand. Each psychological theory or concept, after it is explained, will be related to dissonance between the commandment to honor one's parents and the actions taken by one's parents. In this chapter, the following are the theories that will be explored: Family Systems Theory, the concept of the "good enough parent,"and the concept of modeling in parenting. Throughout this exploration, the concepts of generational trauma will also be explored and then expanded on in the following chapter.

While all of the psychological research collected for this study does endorse the building of strong and healthy family systems that help children to be prepared for the wider world as adults, it does not tend to "command" children to honor or respect their parents. This is especially true if the parent was abusive or traumatizing and if the child is now an adult. Early psychoanalytic theory did put a strong emphasis on the influence of parenting, however, in most of the research and thought in the modern period, the responsibility is on the shoulders of the parent because there has been more research done into child development and what does and doesn't work in the brain of a child. Children are not just small adults; they lack experience, knowledge, and the ability to cognitively comprehend their own experiences without the guidance of caregivers. All that they learn

in their very early childhood is from their parents. Therefore, most of the issues that arise, aside from genetic or developmental issues, should be considered in the context of the parents and their choices, not blamed on the lack of obedience of the child.

### A. Family Systems Theory

According to the official website for Family Systems theory, "Bowen Family Systems theory is a theory of human behavior that views the family as an emotional unit and uses systems thinking to describe the unit's complex interactions. It is the nature of a family that its members are intensely connected emotionally." This theory draws on the necessary interdependence that develops within systems of people, whether that be a single family unit or some other type of community. One of the key concepts within Family Systems theory is the concept of differentiation of the self from the family system. Differentiation is "capacity of a family member to define his or her own life's goals and values apart" from the other members of the system (Friedman 27). People with a high level of self differentiation are able to remain secure in their "I" while still being in relationship with other people. High levels of self differentiation are also a sign of emotional maturity. Those who are emotionally immature will often get tangled in the emotions of others and end up creating children who are enmeshed with them because they make no distinction between their childrens' emotions and theirs. They are not self aware of the way in which their own emotions and reactive tendencies affect the people around them. This also results in the crossing of boundaries often and limiting the child's ability to develop their own identity.

Jewish texts do not appear aware or understanding of the concept of differentiation. There is clear examples of this in aggadic texts, particularly in the Palestinian Talmud, of mother-son relationships in which the son would do absolutely anything for his mother no matter what sacrifice it required from him. For example, Yerushalmi Peah 1:1:23 describes how Rebbi Tarphon honored his mother:

> "Rebbi Tarfon's mother went to promenade in her backyard on the Sabbath. Rebbi Tarfon went and put his two hands under her feet and she walked on them until she got to her couch. Once he fell ill and the sages came to visit him. She told them: Pray for my son Tarfon because he honors me too much…they said to her, even if he did this a million times, he did not yet reach even half of the honor that the Torah requires."

This instance seems to imply that the son is actually taking the commandment too far, past the appropriate level that his mother would have expected, however, the rabbis do push back when she says this. There is another instance in the previous section of this tractate that says that Dama ben Netinah emblemized the lengths to which one must go in order to honor one's parents because even when his mother was beating him in front of the entire council, he handed her back her slipper when it fell off.

Another relevant concept from family systems theory is the concept of emotional triangles. These "triangles," which are not inherently good or bad, can be between three people, one person and two opinions, two people and one concept/object or any permutation of these. For the purpose of this study the main characters in the triangles will be the children, parents, other family members, and aspects of Jewish tradition. The concept of emotional triangles in Family Systems theory can help those who grew up with or are still interacting with emotionally immature parents. It can aid in understanding the positions they have ended up in and how to use that awareness to cope. It may also be

useful to organizers of Jewish community to understand the reasons that these people may not participate in Jewish traditions and communities even as adults.

The first triangle, and the one that this study has been primarily addressing is the triangle between Judaism, the parent or parents, and their child. No matter how old the child is, this triangle is present, for better or for worse. The parents choose the Jewish community (or lack thereof) that the child grows up in. They choose what rituals are practiced in their home and when to attend communal events. Especially when children are young, the parents essentially establish the relationship their child will have with Judaism.[18] The triangle can involve parents bringing in Judaism in a beautiful way, which helps their child to love and find meaning in the tradition. However, the triangle, depending on how the parents triangulate the tradition in their child's life can also have a negative impact on the life of the child or family. The impact of these triangles, much like all things with regard to parenting, can affect different children in the same family differently.

Parents can also establish a triangle between them, the commandment to "honor your father and mother" and their child or children. The goal of this triangulation may be to try to get adult children to continue supporting or having a relationship with their parents when they are pulling away or to encourage obedience while they are still in the house. This is a common strategy, but is commonly an ineffective one. When the child is acting in a way the parent does not approve of, this commandment is weaponized to alter the child's behavior. The tradition does not support this kind of blind obedience with regard to anything, not even the honoring of one's parents. Parents who choose to triangulate the

[18] This does not preclude the child from reconnecting to Judaism as an adult or leaving the denomination that they grew up in, either becoming more or less observant, but it, much like one's family of origin in general, has a lifelong effect.

commandment often present the tradition as if it does. Unfortunately, unlike in triangles where there are three people all acting with their own motivations, it is common for parents to, either intentionally or unintentionally, shape and change the relationship that their children have with Judaism. Rabbi Yehuda Sherpin, in his Chabad.org piece on honoring or not honoring one's parents, he says that "Torah and mitzvot may never be "weaponized," to be used as a tool to manipulate or control, and to make unfair or hurtful demands of children under the guise of legitimate respect is counter to Torah."

The holy texts of Judaism are often viewed as the "word of God." Using this fact, other family members can also create a triangle of Judaism or Jewish text, the CEIP, and the parent. The concept of *Kibud Av'v' Eim* is also used often in this triangle. For example, a grandparent may argue that there is a religious obligation for the CEIP to maintain a relationship with their parent no matter how their parent is behaving. They assert that i.the Torah requires that one be in relationship with their parents so long as they are alive and mourn them according to Jewish custom once they have died. The tradition does put limits on the commandment, but most of those family members or others trying to "fix" the relationship between a CEIP and their parents are referencing the commandment colloquially and not examining its meaning through the tradition as a whole or even the Torah texts themselves. There is a significant issue with regard to this triangle and the one that I will address next of Jewish community, CEIPs, and Judaism; It is impossible for a third person to change a relationship that they are not a part of, whether they are inserting themselves or someone else is bringing them in. The effort may be successful for a short period of time, but it is ineffective in the long term.

The "ownership" of Jewish community by the parent also triangulates the child, parent, and Jewish community. LK's mother,according to her adult daughter, projected ownership over their Jewish community while simultaneously abusing LK. This was part of what drove LK away from Judaism. The feeling that her mother "owned" the community and was inseparable from the community  has resulted in her struggling with her relationship with any part of Jewish tradition. LK says that she would have no relationship with Judaism now had it not been for Jewish overnight camp where she got the chance to participate in ritual, community, and Jewish traditions with distance from her abusive parent. LK still holds many of the values that she got from her Jewish upbringing but struggles to want to engage with the tradition due to the lingering PTSD and Complex PTSD[19] she has from her childhood.

The concept of homeostasis from Family Systems theory may also be helpful in the discussion of the fifth commandment and in understanding Jewish families generally. Homeostasis is the tendency of any set of relationships to strive perpetually, in self corrective ways, to preserve the organizing principles of its existence. This applies in families, congregations, any social organizations. In many families, the nature of the family to try to preserve the status quo manifests in the repetition of patterns across generations. When someone from a later generation tries to break the cycle, it disrupts the system's status quo and can cause conflict; the person trying to break the cycle is often labeled as the "problem" or the "identified patient" because they are the ones viewing the system from the

[19] This condition, which is considered in some ways to be a subset of PTSD instead of its own distinct diagnosis, is caused by long term trauma, generally from childhood starting at a young age that leaves people struggling with their identity, relationships and emotional regulation, according to the Cleveland Clinic. People with CPTSD often experience the symptoms of traditional PTSD as well such as flashbacks, hypervigilance, and dissociation.

outside and seeing its issues. They are trying to break the cycles that have been passed down for generations and fighting against the urge to return to a state of homeostasis. The other members of the system try to return the system to the status quo even if they themselves were suffering in the status system.[20]

### Homeostasis and Generational Trauma

The concept of homeostasis is applicable on a single family level, but, within the Jewish community, it is especially crucial to think about homeostasis in the context of generational trauma both from the Holocaust and previous traumas. In this case, both the greater Jewish community and individual families are "systems" to consider. A state of trauma is a state of homeostasis in many Jewish families. Often this is trauma that is not consciously passed down,[21] but it gets passed down and is sometimes then wielded by parents as a tool. The Jewish people have been traumatized as a community long before the Nazis put European Jews into concentration camps and eventually killed roughly six million Jews in the first half of the 20th century. Throughout our entire history, people have been actively trying to wipe Jews out.[22] This has established a level of trauma as the baseline in the Jewish family, or the point at which the system finds homeostasis. Much of the research on generational trauma has only come about in a post-Holocaust world, but it is clear from other Jewish writings that there was trauma beforehand. [23]

---

[20] I.e. the familiar, even with its downsides, is easier to deal with than change even when change would allow the system and the individuals within it to live happier or easier lives.
[21] No well meaning parent wants to pass down trauma that will end up impeding their children or grandchildren's ability to live healthy and happy lives. EI parents often do anyway.
[22] See Firestone 168-169 for a brief history of Jewish persecution
[23] Even in biblical texts such as Jeremiah, Isaiah, or Lamentations, there is language that would indicate that Jews are coping with trauma.Displacement, which the Israelites, and later the Jewish people, have faced a

Much of the recent psychological research supports the idea of generational trauma i.e. if the trauma is not healed in the generation who experienced it, it will be passed down to their children. As Tivkah Firestone writes in the first chapter of her book on Jewish communal trauma, "traumatic memory torments us and will own us if we do not contain it. But when we face and acknowledge it, it may then be possible to convert it to something positive" (12). The Jewish community hesitates to acknowledge the trauma it holds perhaps due to the strong emotions that are carried with the history of pain. Reality is sometimes too difficult to comprehend in the conscious mind. According to Firestone, there are two common ways that trauma is passed down. Firestone draws on the work of psychiatrist Vamik Volkan who has studied collective trauma in many different situations and communities, not just in relation to the Holocaust. Volkan claims that unconsciously, parents can place the images of trauma into their childrens' minds. The Jewish community also does this with regard to the Holocaust when they present survivor testimony or play videos depicting the destitution of the concentration camps when they were liberated by the allies in the presence of young children. Additionally, the stories of possible tragedy that some parents place in their children's minds are those that are passed down through generations. Trauma can also be passed down from generation to generation in its effect on nervous systems and epigenetic factors.[24] Unfortunately, due to the traumatic events of Jewish history, not only the events of the history, but the fear as well has been passed down through generations. Trauma in the early life of a child can also leave the child with a sense

number of times throughout history, is inherently traumatic. The destruction of the First and Second Temple was also a traumatic event.

[24] The work of Rachel Yehuda, a neuroscientist and medical academic, explores the way in which trauma in one generation presents in later generations. She has done studies on the families of Holocaust survivors and the babies of mothers who were in the World Trade Center on 9/11.

of learned helplessness or a lack of agency that continues into adulthood in order to fully recover from trauma caused by one's family of origin.

Generational trauma is relevant both for trauma survivors and the environment that those survivors create. Firestone writes, "clinical studies demonstrate how, once a neural pathway is activated by a high intensity situation, subsequent stressors, even milder ones, will travel along the same pathway"(36). These concepts demonstrate the way in which trauma can create an "internal representation of reality that is still passed from generation to generation, wittingly or not"(37).

Fear can also wreak havoc on one's nervous system and life as a whole especially when it is instilled at a very young age. It can also turn into a manipulation tool for later generations. When living in states of hypervigilance and fear, it is hard for children to be children. This state can be caused by either the actions of their parents or the images planted in the childrens' heads. When the parents view themselves as perpetual victims, it is hard for them to develop agency for themselves or their children.[25] This childhood trauma can be exacerbated in a house with an EI parent.. The parent's desire to control their environment can also limit the agency that the child is able to have even into adulthood.

Sometimes, with regard to the Holocaust, parents and grandparents believe that they are protecting their family by implanting those images in their heads. If anti-semitism is really around every corner and if Jews needed to be living in fear, always knowing how to get out of whatever place we were in, Jews would be thankful for their protection.

[25] The parent may not be doing this consciously, but even if it is done unconsciously, it can have an effect on the child.

Anti-semitism is a very real threat in the modern world, especially in recent months. However, presenting it as a constant fear to a child at a young age limits the child's ability to be a child while they are still, at least in theory, under the protection of their parents. The conversation about anti-semitism can be had as the child gets older and can be presented in a practical and age appropriate fashion rather than presenting it as a generalized fear that the Holocaust could happen again.

**B. Good enough parent**

The concept of the "good enough parent," originally discussed as the "good enough mother"[26] is one that was originally introduced by British psychoanalyst D. W. Winnicott in his 1971 book, Playing and Reality. His theory was focused on how the mother's attentiveness to her child impacted early stages of development, but later thinkers have expanded upon the concepts.

It is important to note that a parent is not "good enough" simply by providing for their child's basic needs i.e. food, water, shelter according to any of the theorists on this topic. The fact that the "good enough parent" is not well-defined in the popular parlance is one of the reasons that some psychologists choose not to use the term, however, it is useful for the purpose of examining the quality of parents in this context. A "good enough" parent must not only fulfill their child's basic physical needs but also their emotional needs for connection, comfort, and guidance on how to emotionally respond to the events of their lives. The vast majority of emotionally immature parents do not meet the qualifications of

[26] Due to the fact that at the time of the development of the theory, a disproportionate amount of childcare was done by the mother. In a modern world, this theory can be applied to more than one parent. It is essentially used in relation to whoever is the caretaker for the child, especially when the child is very young and just learning how to be in the world as a human being.

being a "good enough parent" according to this definition. due to their tendency to be self centered and unable to see past their own thoughts and feelings to meet their child's emotional needs. The concept of a parent being "good enough" may help those who had emotionally immature parents to decide the weight that they choose to give the commandment to honor their father and mother.

Dr. Mark Epstein defines being a "good enough parent as being able to "survive a child's rage." He states that a parent needs to be able to deal with their child's intense emotions without retaliating against them or abandoning them. This is the emotional component to being a "good enough parent." This ability to stay calm and connected to their child even when in difficult situations or coping with difficult emotions also helps the child to form a secure attachment to their caretakers. Bettelheim also notes the importance of being able to deal with the intensity of a child's feelings, writing:

> If we wish to understand our child when he is moved by strong emotions, we must try to comprehend through empathy with him what is going on deep within him, and to respond with our feelings and actions to what we thus discover within ourselves about our child. And to be able to do that, we cannot permit ourselves to be carried away by our reaction to the child's overt behavior.[27]

This feat is hard for emotionally immature parents because they are so focused within their own selves and emotions without being cognizant of where their focus lies. As a result, they may struggle to tolerate and empathize with their child's emotions.

[27] Controversy has arisen over Bettelheim's work after his death. Some of the statements he made about Jews in the concentration camps were objectionable, however, he was a survivor of two of the camps himself, and some of these theories may have come out of his own trauma (JTA). In this book, none of the controversial points are mentioned, and I am ensuring that his work is not the only work that I am using in this section. He was also not the originator of the idea of the "good enough parent" and others have written about it in subsequent years.

Based upon Epstein's definition, it would seem that most emotionally immature parents would be incapable of being "good enough" for their children. On a very basic level, many EI parents are unable to deal with hard situations or difficult emotions themselves which means that they are not able to model stability for their children during hard times. Additionally, emotionally immature parents tend to take almost everything personally, so instead of seeing that their child is having a normal reaction to an experience, they take any level of emotion that their child expresses as a threat to them. This is because they are uncomfortable with deep emotional connection due to the vulnerability that it requires. EI parents are also often much more focused on their own emotions and motivations than they are anyone else's including their child's.

Bettelheim places an emphasis on empathy as a part of being a good-enough parent. Providing an empathic response to a child requires that the other party imagine what that child may be feeling and understanding them from the "inside." It is the parent's responsibility to attempt to understand the feelings and motives of their child because "much of [their inner thoughts and feelings] is not accessible to their conscious minds, and they are therefore unable to articulate it"(89). Children are not born having the language to talk about their feelings. They must learn this through watching and interacting with their caretakers and peers while at a young age. Because emotionally immature parents are often not aware of or comfortable with their own feelings, they struggle to have empathy for their childrens' feelings and to identify what their child may be feeling that is motivating their behavior. Deep emotions also lack language to properly describe them, and one can only understand them by finding them within one's own experience.

Not being a good enough parent to a child while they are young can establish a pattern of attachment that will, in all likelihood affect a child's behavior in the future. Children learn what relationships are "supposed" to look like at a young age and how they can expect to be treated by the people in their lives. When the parent demonstrates that emotions are "dangerous" or signs of weakness, the child will grow up with those beliefs and may either overshare due to an inability to express emotions appropriately or remain closed off from emotional intimacy due to a fear of vulnerability. Many adult children of emotionally immature parents, if they have not made the conscious effort to heal from their childhoods by seeking out therapy or other healing methods, may find that, as adults, they enter into romantic or platonic relationships with emotionally immature people later in life because that is what is comfortable for them.

My proposal is that if a parent was not a "good enough" parent based on the definition put forward by Mark Epstein, the commandment to honor one's father and mother should only be observed to the level that it does not damage the adult child's mental or physical health.

### C. Modeling In Parenting

Children, especially young ones, watch how their parents act rather than what their parents say. Whether or not one is an effective parent, according to both the psychological research and others is much more predicated on how one acts rather than on the exact words that one uses when speaking with their child in any given situation. It is well known that children emulate their parents actions and even their emotions. All parents and children have heard the saying "do as I say, not as I do," but Bettelheim, in Good Enough

Parent, points out that "this simply does not work when teaching children… deep down they are responding less to our commands than to their perception of our character and conduct"(129). Children emulate not only the values that the parents knowingly hold but also those that are unconscious but still shape the parent's actions. For example, in a stressful situation, say a natural disaster or dealing with financial troubles, the parent's anxiety level can dictate whether the child is traumatized by the experience. If the parent is calm and comforting, the child may remember these moments as a moment of connection, rather than trauma.[28]

This concept of modeling in parenting also applies with regard to Jewish ritual and practice. Judaism is a religion focused on "deed, not creed." There are beliefs that come with Judaism, but in the home, especially when children are young, Judaism is most often expressed in action and absorbed by the members of the household. If the parents tell the children to obey the commandments but are not themselves doing so, or are doing so reluctantly, the child will not be motivated to engage with the commandments. This includes not only things like attending Shabbat services or ritual obligations but also the commandment to honor one's father and mother itself. If a child sees or hears their parents disrespecting their own parents, whether in front of the grandparents or behind their backs, the child will emulate this with respect to their own parents.

Viewing parenting as "deed, not creed," also reduces the need for traditional discipline of children because, if parents are "themselves responsible, upright self

[28] Trauma is more so about the emotional response that one has to an experience rather than the actual event itself. Multiple people can experience the same event and some of them may be traumatized by it while others may not be. (Based on the definition from the American Psychological Association updated 2018)

disciplined persons" and "living examples of the values" they hold, their children will adopt those values (Bettelheim 103). Children need models, not critics. Additionally, the research shows that in situations in which the "creed" is put forward, but there is no "deed" behind it, it is less effective: As Bettelheim writes, "a child is rarely convinced that something is wrong simply because his parents say it is. It becomes wrong to him because he wishes to be loved by his parents, to be thought of by them (113)." Children inherently look up to their parents and place their parents' opinions and values over all others in their life. This concept should emphasize to parents how much of a responsibility they have to their children. There is no other person who has as much of an impact on a child as their parents do.

Next, there is a need, especially in this context, to briefly address the dangers of parents believing that like God, they are able to give "commands" and be listened to based solely on their position of authority. Not every high conflict or emotionally immature parent will end up allowing this to inflate their ego, but it is certainly possible, especially in relation to the amount of times that God is linked with parents in Jewish text and tradition. At the end of the day, parents are human. They are fallible and should not be given the same level of respect as God. Their commandments, no matter how intimidating, should not hold the same weight as God's.

**IV: Texts and Traditions that Help**

It is important to emphasize that there is no one way that Judaism mandates the respect and honor of one's parents and no one version of a "correct" parental relationship in Judaism. Any person, rabbi or otherwise, who teaches this is not being honest about the plasticity of Jewish texts and traditions.[29] Throughout Jewish history, including only the texts of the biblical through medieval periods and not including those texts written by modern thinkers, there are an array of opinions of what children need to do for their parents and what limitations there are with regard to the acquiescence to parental authority. Not every interpretation is well known, but in a tradition that allows for the questioning of everything, the honoring of parents is no different even though it has a strong emotional charge for many.

From a psychological perspective, family is considered so "personal" and the level of differentiation of the average person from their family of origin is low. Because of this, it is harder to detach oneself from their visceral emotions about parent-child relationships. This is particularly hard for parents who may see even the concept of reinterpreting this commandment as insulting to them because "of course children should honor their parents."[30] A reinterpretation, or a new understanding, of this commandment can shift how an adult child of an emotionally immature parent thinks about Judaism and can help them to feel more welcomed into Jewish spaces. Additionally, when the commandment is

[29] There are very few texts or practices in Judaism that have not been interpreted in a variety of different ways by rabbis throughout history. One of the crucial elements of rabbinic Judaism is the debates over the meanings of texts and how they should be used to help one to live a Jewish life.
[30] This is a statement that has been made to me personally a number of times as well as to many friends who have similar issues with their parents.

referenced or used as a manipulation tool colloquially, the variety contained within the history of interpretation of *Kibud Av'v' Eim* is not usually taken into consideration.

In this chapter, a number of new interpretations and limitations on the commandment to honor one's father and mother will be introduced and analyzed. The second half of the chapter will take the reader out of the text and into the Jewish world by examining the presence and impacts of the generational trauma that is pervasive within the Jewish community. It will also explore how children of emotionally immature parents can seek new community and what those communities can do to be welcoming to them, as well as considering how ritual practice can be used to help in the healing process or reconnect an adult who has been estranged from their Jewish family to reconnect to Judaism and/or the Jewish people. Not every argument or resource contained within this chapter will be appealing or helpful to all people; rather, the aim is to present a variety of interpretations and insights that could be useful as a child of an emotionally immature parent or parents reexamines their relationship to Jewish text and community.

## A. New Interpretations of the Commandment

There are a number of new ways for interpretation and factors to keep in mind for those CEIPs who struggle with the incongruence of this commandment and their experience. Ideally, some of these considerations can lessen the tension between Jewish tradition and the experience of the child of an emotionally immature parent. In the following pages, the word *kavod* within the commandment to honor one's father and mother will be more closely examined. The modern connotation of this word often muddles its meaning from the text, especially for those referencing the commandment in English

without carefully considering the implications of the Hebrew word and its root. *Kaveid* or *Kavod* comes from the root that means "weight," or "honor." In the commandment to honor one's father and mother, both in Exodus 20:12 and Deuteronomy 5:16 , the transitive (*piel*) infinitive form is used.

Taking into consideration the literal meanings of the root of the word *kaveid* in the text, a child, when they are old enough and educated enough to make this choice, should only have to give their parent the weight, honor, or respect, that the parent has given them The parents should receive the honor that they deserve based on their actions with regard to their child. the impact that they deserve to have in their child's life based on their own actions toward their child. Once the child is an adult themselves, they should be encouraged or allowed to provide for their parents and respect them to the level only to the "weight" that the adult child believes is necessary. Each parent-child relationship is unique.

Especially in cases when the parent is emotionally immature,the "weight" that the adult child chooses to ascribe to their parent may not be to the level that the parent believes is necessary. Emotionally immature parents, and people in general, have a tendency to take only their emotional needs into account, so they may not understand why their child wants to distance themselves. If the parent is or was self absorbed, neglectful, or downright abusive, the child should be given permission to give that parent very little "weight" in their lives. Those parents do not deserve a say in their child's actions or decisions. It is less consistently hard for those who did not have emotionally immature or difficult parents to "honor" their parents, and it is likely that they do not struggle with it as much as those who have always struggled to respect their parents when they feel unseen or

disrespected by their parents. Essentially, each adult child should have the choice of how much "weight" they do or do not want their parent or parents to have in their lives.

Most rabbis seem to agree that the commandment to "honor" or "respect" one's parents is about the actions that one takes with regard to their parents. The commandment, as any commandments within Judaism are, is not pertaining to their feelings towards or about their parents. This is helpful for CEIP to keep in mind as they wrestle with their relationship with their parents and their relationship with the commandment. In the modern colloquial understanding of the commandment, "honoring" and "loving" are often equated, however, there is little traditional basis for this. Respect is also often lumped into the meaning of "honor" in the commandment. One also does not have to feel respect in order to respect one's parents in the way that Jewish tradition instructs the community to do. Many emotionally immature parents will take offense at any thing that is not done for them or any perceived slight assuming that it means that their children do not love them. Not only is this often not true on the part of the child, but the parent does not have the right to control their children in whatever way they'd like once their children are adults. "Honoring" one's parent does not mean that the child, especially their independent adult child, will listen to every single thing that their parent tells them to do. A CEIP can still honor their parents according to Jewish law while also doing things that their parents do not approve of. For example, Rabbi Yosef Kolon, also known as Maharik, said that a child does not have to honor a parent at the expense of their own emotional pain: A child does not have to listen to their parents about who they should marry if it would cause them undue hardship (Blidstein 88-90).

There are a number of limits to the commandment to honor one's father and mother throughout the halakhic literature. Generally, parents are not to cause their child to disobey the commandment to honor their father and mother. For example, Moed Katan 17a says that a man who strikes his grown son has placed a stumbling block in front of him and therefore violated the commandment to not put a stumbling block in front of the blind (Blidstein 123).[31] That behavior will cause the son to lose respect for the father due to his father's actions themselves and no fault of the son. Maimonides, in Mamrim 6:8-9, also expresses a similar opinion: Although children are commanded to go to the above mentioned lengths (of filial piety), the father is forbidden to impose too heavy a yoke upon them, to be too exacting with them in matters pertaining to his honor, lest he cause them to stumble.[32] He should forgive them and shut his eyes; for a father has the right to forego the honor due him.[33] By provoking his son, the father is causing the son to disobey the commandment to honor his father and the fault is placed on the father, not the son. This text appears to remind the reader that both the parent and the child have to act in accordance with Jewish law in order to fulfill the commandment to honor one's father and mother. Striking of one's child is acceptable when the child is still young because it is used as a way of discipline and the child is still directly under their father's authority, but it is

[31] Commandment is found in Leviticus 19:14. Various commentators and halakhic authorities have argued about what it means for a child to be considered "mature" in this situation. R. Moses Isserles argues that one is not considered "grownup for this purpose until he is twenty two or twenty four years old" and Ritba argues that the level of maturity is not determined by age and is rather related to the temperament of the child and whether they can have a conversation to solve the issue without a physical altercation (Blidstein 125).
[32] See Blidstein 124 and 208, Chapter V, footnote 7
[33] I.e. a parent can lessen the burden of filial piety and responsibility on their children if they so choose

inacceptable once the child has matured into an adult just as it would be unacceptable for one grown man to strike another grown man without cause.[34]

The mitzvah of honoring one's parents is intertwined with the practice of other commandments. For example,

God's commandments, in any case barring a life or death situation, override whatever commandment the parent has given according to most opinions. This is because both the parent and the child are obligated in the honor of God and the following of God's commandments. God's authority is stronger than any human's authority. For example, Sifra Kedoshim, a midrashic text says, "You shall each revere his father and his mother, and keep My sabbaths: I am the Lord your God"(Leviticus 19:3)—'you shall each revere…": perhaps I might think that one is obliged to obey even if one's mother or father desired that one violate a commandment—therefore the Torah says, 'keep my sabbaths… you are all required to honor me."[35] Kiddushin 32a argues on both sides of this dispute: if one's father asks for a drink of water but obeying this command would result in the violation of a divine mitzvah, he should let the commandment be performed by others and honor his father. However, if the mitzvah is a ritual mitzvah and cannot be performed by others, it is agreed that the child should perform the mitzvah over fulfilling the command of his father.

The Talmud Bavli also addresses the issue of a parent commanding their child to do something that would make them impure in some way. The reasoning that Bavli Bava Metzia 32a:15 provides is "the reason is because the Merciful One writes, 'you shall obey

[34] This is not the opinion of modern scholars, rather, the collective opinion of the rabbinic authors and the norms within earlier society.

[35] Sifra Kedoshim par 1 sec 10 87a as translated by Gerald Blidstein in Honor Thy Father and Mother on page 80

my Shabbatot,' but if it were not so, I would say [the child] must obey [the parent]. But why? This [obligation to honor and obey one's parent] is a positive mitzvah and [the other] is a prohibition…a positive mitzvah does not come and override and prohibition." Essentially, if God has forbidden one from doing something, a commandment from a lesser authority, a parent, does not override the prohibition. With regard to the mitzvah of going to the land of Israel, Rabbi Meir of Rotenburg, a 13th century tosafist, makes a similar point.: "Can a father prevent his son from going to the land of Israel, since we rule that it is a mitzvah to go up to the land, and it is stated, 'I am the Lord,' that wherever a parental request conflicts with a mitzvah the parent is not to be obeyed, for the honor of God takes precedence over the honoring of parents." This is the same reasoning that Bava Metzia gave with regard to Shabbat. Sources are not entirely agreed about what commandments can be broken to honor one's parent or parents.

The weighing of the mitzvah to honor one's parents and other mitzvot is also discussed with regard to Shabbat.Yevamot 5b:13 says,

> As it is taught in a *baraita*: One might have thought that honoring one's father and mother overrides Shabbat; therefore, the verse states: "You shall fear every man his mother and his father and you shall keep My *Shabbatot*, I am the Lord your God" (Leviticus 19:3). The *baraita* explains the derivation from the verse: All of you, both parent and child, are obligated in My honor, and therefore honoring one's parents does not override the honor of God, Who commanded the Jewish people to observe Shabbat.[36]

The argument that one might think that honoring one's parents overrides Shabbat is based both on the general importance that the rabbis put on honoring one's mother and father, and on the proximity of these two commandments in Leviticus 19:3. This last line is especially important due to the amount of times that parents have been compared to God

[36] This argument has often been made due to the textual proximity of these two commandments as they are in the same verse in Leviticus

and the parallel commandments that are given. However, this baraita argues that God's commandment outweighs the commandment of a parent.[37] By using the same argument that parents and children are both obligated in the honoring of Shabbat, Yevamot 6a:10 says that even if one's father tells them to do something that would make them ritually impure or cause them to disobey the mitzvot of Shabbat, the child should not obey.

Even though there is an emphasis on filial responsibility, there are also limits to this responsibility according to most rabbis. This is true especially with regard to a parent who abuses their child or commits a crime. There are certain morals and material things that one should not sacrifice even for the sake of honoring one's parents. Modern rabbis, of all denominations, seem to agree on this, and a number of them choose to emphasize these limitations. Rabbi Dov Linzer, a modern Orthodox rabbi, writes: "Honoring one's parents is a weighty biblical mitzvah. But there are other things that matter more. Taking care of one's health and well being is one of them." By this, Rabbi Linzer is implying that if, in order to "properly" honor one's parents, the child would have to do something detrimental to their health, the child is obligated to care for their own health first. In many situations, it is possible to do both things. For example, Maimonides says that if it is emotionally or physically difficult for a child to engage with their parent or parents, they are allowed to distance themselves and get someone else to care for them. Getting someone to care for their parents, while they remain at a distance, still fulfills the mitzvah. This statement from Maimonides also gives precedent for children distancing themselves from their parents. The question remaining is why these different interpretations of the commandment have not become more accepted within the community at large.

[37] These comparisons and their implications are discussed in Chapter 2

There are limits both to filial submission. It is clear from the texts previously discussed in Chapter Two that one is supposed to honor one's parent in a way that brings the parent direct benefit, but there is a question as to whether one is obligated to honor a parent's "because I said so" or unsubstantiated command. As Blidstein writes, "it is a matter of disagreement, though, whether the parent is to be obeyed when he simply desires that his will be done for its own sake, when filial submission is itself his goal"(83). One of the hallmarks of an emotionally immature parent is the expectation from the parent that their child will take care of them emotionally and obey their desires even when they are irrational or harmful to the child, whether as a minor or as an adult. One must consider this fact when gauging the need or lack thereof for filial submission. Blidstein continues: "Some medievals and moderns argue that the child is obliged to honor his parents' every wish within the limits of religious propriety and financial responsibility [with] little or no right to evaluate the motives or purposes embodied in the requests"(85).

When the parent is considered wicked or has committed a crime that they will be unable to come back from, the extent to which one is commanded to "honor" them is debatable. Most of the time, in Jewish tradition, one is commanded is to honor one's parents no matter their character, but there are a few exceptions to this. First, if the desire of the parent is counter to what the Torah says, the child does not have to obey the command. Second, a child of an unrepentant murderer is not, in most cases, required to honor one's parent despite the biological and religious imperative to do so.

The law wrestles with the role that this commandment plays within real life situations. The Shulchan Aroch encapsulates both sides of this argument, putting a strong

emphasis on whether or not the parent has repented for their crimes. In 240:18 reads: "Code: A bastard[38] is obliged to honor and fear his father; even if his father is an evil-doer and a violator of the law he must honor him and stand in awe of him. Gloss: And some say that one is not obliged to honor one's wicked father unless he repents (Blidstein 134). The difficulty with this passage as well as many of the other texts that mention the "wicked father" or "wicked parents" is that what a person needs to have done to be called wicked is not clearly defined and most scholars seem hesitant to depict a parent as such. The code, according to Blidstein's interpretation, is taken from Maimonides and the gloss containing the other opinion is added by the writer(s) of the Shulchan Aroch.

### B. Reclaiming Agency and Reconnecting to Judaism

There is no question that there is generational trauma within the Jewish community. The persecution that the people, as a whole, have encountered and feared has persisted through history.[39] This section, first, will address the issue of generational trauma in the Jewish community and how young adult Jews these days might deal with it. Then, this chapter will discuss the ways in which clergy and Jewish communal professionals may make their communities more trauma informed and the ways in which CEIPs may explore Jewish ritual and community as adults.

#### 1. Dealing with Generational Trauma

Despite the presence of generational trauma, one does not need to unnecessarily continue to live in fear. There are ways in which one can find agency and take back some of

[38] Mamzer, child born from wedlock or an impure marriage
[39] See chapter 3 for a fuller discussion of generational trauma and its history and effects within the Jewish community.

the control of the narrative that one chooses to live. In order to find this agency, it is important to disidentify from being a victim. This reconfiguring of identity is especially important for those who are not visibly Jewish and living in a setting that does not contain perpetual anti-semitism. It is natural to be afraid during the acute instances of anti-semitism that have once again started to occur in Europe and North America. However, to remain emotionally regulated, it is important to avoid allowing a state of fear to be present every second of every day. There is nothing wrong with the fear that comes from real danger, but, fear without reasonable risk of harm is a way in which agency is removed. The fear can also interfere with one living a fulfilling and happy life doing what is fulfilling for that individual.

How can the adult child of parents who presented themselves and their families as victims gain agency and perhaps a connection to the Jewish people that is not solely tied to the tragedies that Jews have faced over thousands of years of persecution? In Firestone's section on disidentifying from victimhood in Wounds into Wisdom, she notes that "identifying ourselves as victims freezes our focus on the past, and therefore foreclosed on our future." It is possible to hold both the tragic past and the residual fear that has been passed down and also hold hope and agency in the future. Hope and agency are required to create a bright Jewish future. The younger generations[40] are starting to do this in the ways that they are able to create vibrant Jewish lives for themselves. Unfortunately for others, especially in the older generations,[41] due to the intensity of their past trauma, the reclaiming of a Jewish identity unlinked from tragedy is tremendously difficult or even

[40] Gen Y and younger
[41] Baby Boomers, Gen X

impossible. It is too painful to engage with the tradition because it reminds them of all that they have lost.

There are a number of different ways that young Jews who have experienced emotional trauma from childhood have begun to seek more agency. First, especially with the rise of services and websites like 23 and Me and Ancestry.org, young Jews have begun to explore their own roots, seeking out the places and people that they came from even if those stories were not told to them by their relatives. The images that have been passed down over time have often been the terrible ones and not the ones that can create connection and joy between modern Jews and their Jewish past.[42] Exploring genealogy may also help Jews to find relatives who their families may have lost touch with over the course of time.

Second, many young Jews have created physical space between themselves and their parents in order to reclaim agency over their own lives. In Firestone's book, she tells the stories of third generation young adults taking trips to Hawaii and other distant places in order to develop their own identities. Distance from past trauma and identity development also occur when young adults go to college and have new experiences, Jewish or otherwise..

There are also ways in which CEIPs can reclaim or develop their own Jewish identities if their childhood completely stifled their relationship with Judaism. Here, it is useful once again to utilize Family Systems Theory, introduced in the previous chapter. The

[42] In the last 20 years, thousands of Jewish young adults have gone on Birthright trips which encourage them to engage with Judaism as adults. Birthright Israel both attempts to instill a love and connection to Israel in young adults and "cultivate Jewish identity and an attachment to the Jewish people." By showing young adults the growing and exciting parts of Jewish life and Israeli life taking place, positive images may become associated with Jewish tradition that may hold childhood baggage. It is unclear how much actual effect these trips have on the identities of Jews because identity can be difficult to measure. All of the research done has not shown an increase in Jewish involvement after the ten days in Israel. See Ten days of Birthright Israel : a journey in young adult identity by Leonard Saxe and Barry Chazan

concept of triangles can be found particularly useful. The CEIP has the choice of where they want to stand in the triangle if at all, and therefore, are able to reclaim their agency.

CEIPs can triangulate themselves, Judaism, and their parent(s) once they are adults or in the families that they themselves create. This can be helpful in the process of healing. The process of intentional triangulation can be helpful for CEIPs to reclaim a tradition that their parents may have weaponized or taken ownership of. There are a number of different levels that this may take place on: LK, whose story was introduced in Chapter One, states that it is still too triggering and painful to participate in most ritual observance but that she keeps the values that she gained from Judaism present in her adult life, and by engaging with these values, and keeping in touch with the members of the community she loves, she remains somewhat connected.[43]

Others who perhaps have more physical, emotional, or temporal distance from their parents are able to find their own community and the traditions and ideas that may be meaningful for them and perhaps even helpful in their healing process. Perhaps CEIPs can explore traditions or practices that they did not encounter in childhood. These traditions may be less painful to engage with because they are not as associated with the parent. For example, if one didn't engage with the traditions of sukkot in childhood, they may choose to shake the lulav and etrog or build a sukkah.

Utilizing the triangle between their past child self, their current adult self, and Judaism may help in the process of reconnection to Judaism. By talking to one's past self about their parental relationship in the past and their relationship with Judaism in the past, the adult CEIP can provide compassion for their younger self and let go of some resentment

[43] She has, however, helped to test and develop the rituals that are presented at the end of this chapter.

within the situation. In this process, they may also be able to reconnect or seek out parts of the tradition that may be helpful in their adult lives or relationships. Doing this exercise may also help to ignite a desire to seek a new Jewish community that is more suitable to the adult self.[44]

### 2. Seeking New Community

Seeking out Jewish community can be helpful to young adults healing from trauma.[45] This is true regardless of whether the community is religious or not, but Judaism, as an ethno-religion provides a community that clearly can hold a great deal of trauma. Because of the amount of trauma that has occurred in the story of the Jewish people both in Israel and in the diaspora, traditions and communal values have been built to hold trauma. No community is perfect when it comes to being trauma informed, however, arguably, a Jewish community, whether traditionally observant or not, is more aware of trauma than a community based around Crossfit or other shared interests.

Entering into a community is not an easy task, but in recent years, various Jewish communities around the United States have endeavored to create spaces that are welcoming to young adults who may have not entered into any Jewish space since their B'nai Mitzvah.[46] For example, IKAR in Los Angeles aims to "create a different kind of Jewish

[44] On a practical level, Judaism, especially American Judaism, is constantly changing and evolving and new creative groups and spaces are opening up each year trying to cater to young adults. Young adults in 2023 are experiencing a very different Jewish world than they did >15 years ago as children.

[45] Trauma that has been developed in relationships i.e. the abuse or mistreatment by a parent is best healed by developing healthy relationships and attachments later in life. Human connections and developing secure attachment can help one to deal with childhood trauma (Modlin 2021)

[46] It is important to note that most of these new programs have been started in large cities, many of which are coastal and they may be significantly more difficult to access for those living in rural areas in the Midwest and South of the United States. This being said, there are community leaders in places like Cincinnati and other Midwest metropolitan areas attempting to create these communities to welcome young adults into Jewish community.

experience." In their own words, IKAR is "a dynamic multi-generational community that fosters a yearning for personal, purposeful, creative engagement in Jewish life, particularly among young and disaffected Jews." Mishkan Chicago, which was established by Rabbi Lizzi Heydemann in 2011, loosely based on the goals of IKAR, has similar goals to engage young adult Jews who may not feel like they fit in in a traditional synagogue space in Chicago. There are also programs established by synagogues that aim to engage this group of Jews.

The COVID-19 pandemic damaged the Jewish world as well as the greater world, however, one good positive development that did arise was an increased number of online or hybrid Jewish communities.[47] The barrier to entry into an online community is often much less intimidating than entry into a physical community. If the synagogue itself is associated with complicated feelings or difficult memories from childhood, entering into an online community avoids this obstacle. The growth of online Jewish communities also help to make Judaism more accessible to those who were disabled by the pandemic or who are coping with the social anxiety of walking into a room full of people that they do not know.

**What Congregations and Clergy Can Do**

Jewish clergy and communities need to make an effort to be trauma informed not only for the benefit of the children of emotionally immature parents who discussed here, but for the benefit of all of their community members. In the wake of political unrest, economic downturn, and a global pandemic that affected every person in some way, there are very few people who have not experienced trauma. Not all people who have

[47] Anecdotally, it appears that synagogue membership decreased over the course of the pandemic and many liberal Jews began attending services on Zoom or via livestream wherever they enjoyed it the most. For example, many Jews across the USA watch the livestream of services at Central Synagogue (NYC) without living in the area or becoming members of the synagogue.

experienced trauma are consciously aware of its effects on them. The Office on Women's Health quotes a statistic from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Association (SAMHSA) that, according to their research, 55%-95% of people in the United States have experienced trauma. The importance of clergy and congregational communities in the wake of these statistics can not be overstated. The CDC presents six guiding principles for the creation of trauma-informed communities: safety, trustworthiness and transparency, peer support, collaboration and mutuality, empowerment, and cultural, historical, and gender issues. For the sake of brevity, only the principles that are most applicable to a synagogue setting will be addressed here.

When endeavoring to create a trauma informed community, there are a few things one needs to keep in mind. First, when someone new walks into your community, there is no way for clergy or community leaders to know what they are carrying with them with regard to trauma or other experiences of adversity. Next, note the fifth of the CDC's principles of creating a trauma informed community: as discussed earlier in this chapter, one of trauma's most harmful effects is the lack of agency in the midst of the trauma. CEIP's especially may struggle if they felt as if they had no agency over their Judaism earlier in their lives. It is important that community leaders empower them to get involved in different ways in the synagogue. This might include joining a committee, participating in social action, or any of the creative opportunities that synagogues provide in the 21st century.

There are a number of different things that community leaders can do in order to create more trauma informed communities as a whole. The first thing is to be patient with

these individuals as they attempt to join and then trust the community. Trauma survivors may be fearful and overwhelmed simply by the act of contacting or walking into a community for the first time. The first impressions that a potential congregant has upon visiting a new synagogue may be experienced quite differently by a trauma survivor and one who does not have that personal history. A trauma survivor does not have the same amount of resilience when entering a Jewish space and may quickly decide that the congregation is not safe. . The level of openness and trust that a trauma survivor will have to manage this new experience is dependent upon the level of healing that the trauma survivor has accomplished in their journey up to the point that they walk into the room.

### 3. The Power of Ritual

Rituals have been practiced by almost every culture and civilization throughout time. There is a reason for this. According to Barabara Bizou, in The Joy of Ritual, rituals "mark significant times, ease us through transitions, and, especially in times of rapid change, bring structure and stability into our lives (11). The ritual actions in and of themselves are not necessarily what is helpful. It is the meaning that we ascribe to the physical actions so that that adds a spiritual dimension (14). While the word "spiritual" or "religious" is often used to describe the practice of ritual, rituals need not always take place in a spiritual or religious setting. Rituals work psychologically because our brains cannot distinguish the difference between ritual with ascribed meaning and actual events of life. They also give people something to hold on to when it feels as if one is living in a state of great instability, externally or internally. Ritual is a way of melding intention and action for a social or personal function.

There are a number of functions that ritual can play both in community or society and for the individual: Rituals help to maintain social structure and worldview, deal with difficult emotions at an individual or communal level, and help to identify and deal with transitions. Social structure and coordination "among individuals, families, and communities and among past, present, and future can be facilitated by ritual" (Roberts 19). Rituals also help to bring a community together and are most often formed in the context of a community.

Judaism has many rituals built into its practice that the Jewish people have found important throughout its history and across the world.[48] Rituals can help to link the past, present, and future to one another (Roberts 21). There may be differences between the ways that each community exactly performs the rituals, but every Jewish community has specific practices for marking time and facilitating transitions. One of the beautiful things about Judaism is that if one chooses, the traditions provide rituals that can be adapted to fit any situation. For every season and most human experiences, Judaism, in its many shapes and colors, has constructed traditions and rituals to support the human experience.

Two of the most crucial functions of rituals in the context of this study are rituals' ability to hold multiple contradictory viewpoints at once as well as to contain and help to ease difficult emotions. In this case, there may be both a connection to Judaism, and trauma from parents which can cause a significant amount of internal conflict. Before addressing the reentry or reshaping of ritual by CEIPs, the associated emotions and difficulties must be

[48] For example, the practice of Shabbat has endured over the entire course of the existence of the Jewish people even though we now live in a world where busyness is prized over necessary rest., Interestingly enough, in books about disability justice as well as secular ritual, the practice of a "Sabbath" has seen a resurgence in popularity because people are starting to realize that if they push themselves past their limits, they will end up in burnout and even less productive.

addressed . Many potential obstacles arise from pain experienced during childhood or the memory of how the parents engaged with and shaped ritual engagement.This may occur even if the CEIPs  have distanced themselves physically or emotionally from their parents or healed themselves from the past trauma caused by their parents. Also, some may have felt anger or jealousy at the lack of Jewish practice in their homes while others may have struggled with the experience of forced ritual within the home during childhood. Perhaps other families in the community did Shabbat rituals together each Friday night and the CEIP always felt jealous that that wasn't happening in their house.[49] The incorporation of ritual may eventually help to heal some of these feelings, but if the trauma or emotions haven't been dealt with at all, the CEIP may hesitate to get anywhere close to Jewish rituals..

The following obstacles stem from the tendency of CEIPs to suffer from perfectionist behaviors and tendencies.[50] Joy or a sense of playfulness can be challenging issues for the CEIP considering the performance of a ritual. In order to find joy in ritual, the individual must be willing to include play and experimentation. Not every ritual will be as meaningful for one person as it is for another. It is hard to find the desire to experiment and play if one was never allowed to experience this joy and playfulness as a child or was taught that acting "immature," even as a young child was a fault.[51] Often this is because, in a house with an emotionally immature parent, the child is expected to act mature far beyond their years.

---

[49] These rituals may also have symbolized a level of family cohesion that was not present in a house with an emotionally immature parent.

[50] These can be tendencies that they were directly taught through parental criticism when something wasn't done to the parent(s) standards, from emulating the perfectionism that the parent imposed on themselves, and from the expectations that were set within the house growing up. Perfectionism, when established early on in life, can be a predictor of anxiety disorders or other psychopathologies and can interfere significantly with functioning both individually and in relationships.

[51] Joy also necessitates a level of vulnerability (Brown 2012). Emotionally immature people, and consequently their children can struggle with vulnerability.

Many children of emotionally immature parents were not allowed to act "playful" or "immature," and may judge themselves if they feel that they are now acting that way.

Related to this issue is that of “surrender” or “release” and leaning into ritual which are components that often make its performance feel more meaningful. That can be particularly difficult for trauma survivors or those who felt that their lives were once out of control. Much of ritual is allowing the tradition or structure of the practice to be in control which can challenge the safety that a CEIP seeks in their environment. This is one of the reasons that it is important to start with small acts or practices while maintaining an environment that feels safe. It may also be beneficial to start with rituals that allow the individual to retain a certain amount of control. Detailing or discussing the actions of the ritual performing it may help with the helplessness that may have developed earlier in life.

Next, a CEIP may struggle with the idea that if one can't do a ritual perfectly, following the *halacha* exactly then it is not worth trying to do the ritual at all. This is all or nothing thinking which is often a direct result of growing up in an environment with one or more emotionally immature parents. Additionally, in childhood, a CEIP may have been often criticized for being "bad" at something even if they had not been taught how to do it, were too young to really master it, or had never done it before. This can easily result in the CEIP experiencing a lot of fear or anxiety when approaching something new. From the perspective of the vast majority of Jewish clergy in our modern world, trying to ease into or do some part of the mitzvah is a good first step towards creating a Jewish ritual practice that is meaningful for the individual. Easing into a Shabbat practice is a good example here: the first week, perhaps one can light candles and say the blessings over the candles,

kiddush, and challah. The next step would perhaps be avoiding social media for the 25 hours of Shabbat. There is no need to go from living a life with no Shabbat observance to following every single piece of the law overnight.[52]

There are a number of different elements that could be incorporated in rituals for CEIPs. The intention, or function, of the ritual is more important in many ways than the ritual itself. Some possible intentions may be to disconnect the trauma of childhood from Jewish practice or simply to explore what Jewish ritual, communal or personal, may look like in adult life. Shabbat evening ritual is a wonderful place to start because it is adaptable and done in the home. One could have Shabbat dinner with their household or invite friends over or just light candles and then proceed with their typical Friday night. If there are children in the home, the parents can remind themselves of the blessings and traditions as the children experience them for the first time. Parents who have struggled with their own parents may also find meaning in blessing their children. Additionally, the teaching, or learning together of ritual may help the parent to create positive associations with Jewish ritual for themselves and their child.

Perhaps, one would feel comfortable returning to a Jewish space during the days of Awe which is a time for reflection and renewal as one enters into the new Jewish year. One caveat to this is that, around this time, there is a significant amount of talk around forgiveness and atonement which, when one is earlier in their healing process, can be difficult to deal with psychologically as the distinction between torah and trauma can

[52] It may also be helpful to express that many Jews who have been actively practicing for their whole lives are unable to do every ritual/obey every law to the letter.

become blurry. While the anonymity of a large congregation can be comforting to some, to others it may be overwhelming.

At the end of this chapter are two rituals, one communal, and one individual. The goal of these rituals is to help to mend the bond between the, now adult, child of emotionally immature parents and Judaism and/or *Am Yisrael*, the Jewish people. With regard to the communal ritual, the goal is to establish connection and relationships within a Jewish community that feel emotionally safe and secure. The ritual is designed to take place outside of the synagogue, in the sukkah, to lower the barrier to entry. Large groups of people and sanctuary based rituals may be intimidating, and perhaps even triggering for those who have not entered into a Jewish space since they were children. It also aims to recognize the CEIP where they are on their journey, no matter where they have come from or what they have been through. The goal is also to feel as if a community is "theirs" as opposed to belonging to their families. This ritual would be facilitated by a rabbi and/or whoever has connected this person to the community.

The goals of the ritual presented for the individual, which contains other more generally "healing" focused readings as well are as follows: The first goal is to find the positive Jewish childhood memories if they exist and bring back some of that love and joy that can be accessed through Judaism through music, art, or writing. The second goal is to symbolically break the bond between the past and the present or future. The ritual gives the CEIP options as to what components may seem most meaningful for them, giving options in the sections for the past and the future. These options may help the CEIP to explore what Jewish life could look like for them outside of the context of their parents and

what traditions they may want to bring into their own home or community. The beauty of this ritual is that it does not require a CEIP, if they do not want to, to step into a synagogue, lowering the possible barrier to entry.

As has been presented in this thesis, there are many ways that the modern Jewish world can become a more welcoming space for CEIPs. However in order to heal generational trauma, we must reexamine the commandment to honor one's father and mother. As Reform Jews we understand Judaism to be a living religion that evolves in each generation. Our ability to reinterpret that commandment is a sacred act that will help us create more inclusive communities.

So much healing can occur in existing Jewish communities when Jewish professionals and other members of the community endeavor to regularly use the alternative interpretations presented in this thesis and approach CEIPs in trauma informed ways. Using modern psychological research, we can find the approach that is so crucial to creating t Jewish communities that are safe and life giving to trauma survivors. As Jews in many communities say, we must focus on the spirit of the law as well as the letter of the law in order to have a healthy community.

**Appendix: Rituals and Resources**

**Ushpizin Ritual for Reconnecting with the Jewish People(15-20 min max):**
In the construction of the ritual, we are assuming that the person is an adult and has had a Beit Mitzvah[53] in their past. This can be adapted if not. The italicized text would be read by the leader. The other text can be read by any participants.

**Setting:** In the sukkah, either that of the synagogue or a synagogue member who is connected to the CEIP. Can happen anytime during the period of Sukkot. Minimum of three people present; the person that the ritual is for can choose who they want to be there. Ideally, one of them is a person who has connected them to the synagogue/community in the first place.
**Materials:** twigs/branches that are small enough to be held in one's hands (can be replaced by yarn or pipecleaners depending upon climate and availability), pipecleaners or yarn.

Part One:
Open with Hinei Mah Tov (how good it is to be together on this day)

*Sukkot is the holiday of gathering. In ancient times, after harvesting the crops, all of the Jews who lived outside of Jerusalem would come and celebrate together. For today's purpose, the two traditions of Sukkot that we are going to focus on are the 5 species and the reading of the book of Kohelet, Ecclesiastes.*
*We are told that, for the lulav, we need to bind together these different kinds of plants to create this one strong thing.*
*Much like the plants, we are stronger together.*

"Two are better off than one, in that they have greater benefit from their earnings.
For should they fall, one can raise the other; but woe betide him who is alone and falls with no companion to raise him!
Further, when two lie together they are warm; but how can he who is alone get warm?
Also, if one attacks, two can stand up to him. A threefold cord is not readily broken!" (Eccl 4:9-12)

*Now let us gather together our twigs, representing each of us, and bind them together (yarn, pipecleaners or grass stalks) can be used to do so. We are stronger together as a community than simply as individuals.*

Part Two:

*As we grow into adulthood, in each season of our life, there are new things that we value and hold dear to ourselves. Growth and change is something to be celebrated.*

[53] Gender Neutral term that encompasses those who are male, female, and nonbinary

*We are reminded in the book of Ecclesiastes:*
A season is set for everything, a time for every experience under heaven:
A time for being born and a time for dying,
A time for planting and a time for uprooting the planted;
A time for slaying and a time for healing,
A time for tearing down and a time for building up;
A time for weeping and a time for laughing,
A time for wailing and a time for dancing;
A time for throwing stones and a time for gathering stones,
A time for embracing and a time for shunning embraces;
A time for seeking and a time for losing,
A time for keeping and a time for discarding;
A time for ripping and a time for sewing,
A time for silence and a time for speaking;
A time for loving and a time for hating;
A time for war and a time for peace.
(Ecclesiastes 3:1-8)

*Close your eyes. Place your feet firmly on the surface of the earth (assuming that the sukkah does not have a floor in this case), breathe deeply, and consider the following questions (the leader can ask the questions, or the other participants can rotate around reading the questions)*

What are your goals for this new season?
What does it mean for those you care about to witness you entering into a new season?
What values are you taking with you into this new season?
Who are you with as you transition into this next step?

Each of the people you have chosen to be here with you today have written you a letter, [54]blessing you and the connection that they have developed with you over the course of your relationship. They have made promises to you as you have brought yourself home into our community. It may not feel like home yet, but the hope of all who will have the blessing of getting to know you, is that you will eventually come to call this community one of your homes.

<u>Part Three:</u>

Mi Shebeirach:
May the one who blessed our ancestors and guided them with their community bless _____ as he/she/they commits themselves to our sacred community. May _____ be blessed with meaningful relationships, passion for the bettering of our community and allow God's light

[54] Depending on the person and the situation, these letters can appear in a format closer to the traditional tennaim contract document or can just be heartfelt letters exchanged between people. The important thing is that they are personal to the person who the ritual is centered around.

to shine through. May we, as your community, support you through whatever ups and downs may lie ahead and hold you with all of the compassion and wisdom that we can muster. May we be blessed to treat one another as we are made in the image of God.

Shecheyianu:

HEBREW TEXT
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהֶחֱיָנוּ וְקִיְּמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לַזְּמַן הַזֶּה.

TRANSLITERATION
Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, shehecheyanu, v'kiy'manu, v'higiyanu laz'man hazeh.

TRANSLATION
Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of all, who has kept us alive, sustained us, and brought us to this season.

**Healing Ritual for the Individual (20 min max)**
As you adapt this ritual in order to make it the most useful for you, please treat this as a sort of menu, choosing one or two things from the "past" and "future" settings or doing them all if they all feel meaningful.

**Trust (Karyn Kedar)**
It's called Diving into the Wreck,
I told her.
These are the healing years,
I told her.
You are so brave.
I know it's frightening, but once
You clean out a bit of the darkness,
Your heart will begin to open and
Light will emerge
I told her.
Be brave.
And just think about it,
I said. We are all wreckage waiting to be found.
And in the wreckage,
Treasure.

**Past:**

1. What were your favorite Jewish songs as a kid? Create a playlist and listen to it all the way through. Perhaps you want to consider journaling about the positive memories that were associated with those songs. For example, singing a particular song with your friends at Shabbat Shira if you went to camp or a CD while your grandmother cooked. Try to focus on music that elicits positive memories.
2. What Jews loved you to who you are today? Who in your Jewish community have you looked up to over the years? What qualities do you admire about them? Write a letter to one of them. This does not have to be sent, rather it is an exercise for you.
3. Choose a Jewish family recipe or one from a cookbook and make it for yourself or your family. Think about being mindful and engaging with the sensations you are feeling as you make the recipe. For example, if you are baking challah, notice the smell of the yeast in your nose and the stickiness of the dough against your hands. Try to engage all of your senses in this act.

**Present:**
You have been through a lot in your life, and normal "grounding" exercises or meditations may not feel useful. You may record the following meditation for us or listen to any 4-7-8 paced breathing meditation online. The breath is not only core to the human species, it is also core to Judaism in its texts and liturgy. Close your eyes and feel your weight on the floor. Try to become aware of your breathing. Place your hand on your heart and count four

beats in, hold for 6 or 7 beats and release for 8 beats or until there feels like there is no air left in your lungs.

Breathe in 1-2-3-4
Hold 1-2-3-4-5-6-7
Release 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8

Breathe in 1-2-3-4
Hold 1-2-3-4-5-6-7
Release 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8

We'll do this one more time:
Breathe in 1-2-3-4
Hold 1-2-3-4-5-6-7
Release 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8

Allow yourself to return to the room you are in. Check in with yourself. How are you feeling. Allow yourself to just be in what you are feeling without judging it.

**Future:**
*Think back to the things you noted in the "past" section. What of those would you consider bringing with you into the future?*
-create a plan to have Shabbat dinner with the family that you have created as an adult (chosen or blood). This dinner can include the traditional rituals or blessings or can just be a time to be in community with the people you love and cherish. You may also choose to listen to the playlist you created as you cook or set the table.
-Write two letters to yourself, one about what you are leaving behind from your Jewish past and the other about what you want to take with you. These can be ideas or values that you still hold from your Jewish upbringing or rituals that you may want to adapt for your future home. Think about what may be meaningful to you. Then release (as much as is healthy for you in that moment) the things that do not serve you anymore. You may choose to burn the letter about things you are releasing or get rid of it in some other way.

**Resources:**

It is possible that everything here will not resonate with you. It is not intended to appeal to every person. Incorporate what is helpful to you and put aside the rest

**Debbie Perlman:**

**Eighteen:**

From the center, Eternal Guide,
You watch our steps
As we move on diverse paths.

The route is ours
The map is Yours
Give us eyes to look beyond the next step
To search for the horizon

The scene is ours
The vista is Yours.

Give us ears to identify the passwords,
To filter out the clamor.

The message is ours
The code is Yours

Give us hands to part the thicket
To push aside the undergrowth.

The tree is ours
The forest is Yours

Give us feet to hurry past confusion,
To stride along straightways

For we are the walkers,
And You, our Native Land

We are the travelers,
And You, our Welcome Home

Let me sow feather grass seed
To wave in summer breezes.

Take up the spade with me, Eternal Life Creator;
Take up the trowel.

Together we will plant
A garden of gladness,
Together in the midst of uncertainty

**Twenty One:**

Hekop me to examine my days,
To locate moments of fulfillment
Within ghte hours of Misgivings

Let me plant bright bulbs
For spring blooming after winter's dark

Help me to examine my space,
To make a nest of comfort
Among the prickles of danger

Let me fence out anxiety
With a hedgegrow of happiness

Help me to examine my purpose,
To seek lofty reasons of being
That soar above petty trials

**One Hundred Thirteen:**

You divide our attention, Courage Builder,
Growing callouses around our affections
So the finers playing out these times of loss
Are toughened against the leaving

You wander with us through aisles of distractions
Holding our lists, binding up our abrasions
With reminders of practicalities, touches
That lend reality to our intention

You divide our attentions, Courage Builder
With Your call to focus, to function
To make new arrangements for changed days
Even as we shrink from imagining

You are there for us, Holy One,
Bearing the unadorned truth of love
That holds and holds and then lets go
Honoring Your design

**One Hundred Forty Six**
I am frightened, Holy One,
Of uncertainties. The questions,
Speculations, unknown futures,
Riddles without answers

Todays follow in their narrowed path,
New duties, treatments, routines,
All concocted to stabilize
Yet I distrust their efficiency
Sliding, slipping, gasping
Limbs stiff, I hesitate.
No easy climbs, No careless tasks.
Help me to consolidate

You alone unlock my puzzle,
Lending strength to attempt each day.
Still my fright with words that praise You
Slow my breathe with sustaining Care

**Rabbi Karyn Kedar**

**Amen:**

**Bearing Witness**

Every day that we are gifted
Another moment of life,
We are offered an invitation
To awaken the spirit to
The grandeur and reality of love.

We are summoned
To bear witness to the beautify
And miracle of everyday living

To bear witness
Is the crucial step
Towards becoming fully human

**Quiet My Soul, O Holy One**

Still the sounds that torment my mind
And make my heart weep.
At times the quiet is deafening
And the silences lonely,
I pray and wait.
The difference,
Dear God,
Is You.
Gently still my fears
So that my heart
May hear and rejoice
And peace may descend
Like a steady rain at daybreak.

Quiet my soul, O Holy One.
Still the sounds that torment my mind
And enter my silences with an inner stirring,
For love is in the quiet of God's presence
And I long to surrender into the hush.

**Fear and Hope**

Inside the human heart is fear.
There is also hope.
The two wrestle constantly, like Jacob and his God
Sometimes one prevails. Sometimes the other
The struggle is sometimes silent, other time loud
But it is constant--fear, hope, fear, hope.
Flashes of light and shadow twirling inside us all the time

It is so much easier when there is love.
When love is in your life
It becomes the context for it all
Love is the measure of a life well lived
It is the beacon of possibility
When you love, the fear is less harsh
Hope a bit stronger

**Give Away the Pain**

Forgiveness is not an emotion
That erases all wounds
We cannot condone.
We do not forget
We release the anger and pain
When we forgive,
We give away the pain that binds us

**Build a Vessel of Compassion**
We are all broken,
Working out the dents.
We are tender beings.
The fragments have sharp edges and carry sparks of light.
This is the truth of our humanity:
To take what is shattered, piece by piece,
And build a vessel of beauty, of compassion

**In Between**

How I long for twilight.
The very moment of in
Between
The dance
Between sun and moon,
Daily,
Generating light,
Reflecting light.

And, I too,
Daily radiating light,
Reflecting light.

I scan the heavens
I wait to witness when both are visible.
The two great lights,
One of day and one of night,
Both of heaven and earth,
One rising, the other disappearing.

Rising.
Setting.
Still.
Not here.
Not there.
And yet, where?
Where did you go?

God of ambiguity,
I ask You,
You know my heart,
Have I always lived in some perpetual
twilight?
In between

Where are You?
Are You in the in between?

## Bibliography:


American Jewish University. “Parents and Children.” Accessed May 19, 2023. https://www.aju.edu/ziegler-school-rabbinic-studies/our-torah/back-issues/parents-and-children.

“APA Dictionary of Psychology.” Accessed February 3, 2024. https://dictionary.apa.org/.

“Blocked, Distanced and Betrayed.” Accessed May 8, 2023. https://www.chabad.org/theJewishWoman/article_cdo/aid/2554115/jewish/Blocked-Distanced-and-Betrayed.htm.

Central Conference of American Rabbis. “ARR 139-141.” Accessed May 17, 2023. https://www.ccarnet.org/ccar-responsa/arr-139-141/.

Cleveland Clinic. “Complex PTSD.” Accessed September 3, 2023. https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/24881-cptsd-complex-ptsd.

COLUMBIA POLITICAL REVIEW. “Religion as a Shield, Not a Sword: Why We Need to Pass the Do No Harm Act,” April 14, 2021. http://www.cpreview.org/blog/2021/4/religion-as-a-shield-not-a-sword-why-we-need-to-pass-the-do-no-harm-act.

“Dr. Miriam Adahan’s Advice on Create a Soothing Inner Voice - The Jerusalem Post.” Accessed May 8, 2023. https://www.jpost.com/jerusalem-report/dr-miriam-adahans-advice-on-create-a-soothing-inner-voice-634484.

“Emotional Contagion | Psychology Today.” Accessed February 11, 2024. https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/basics/emotional-contagion.

“Full Article: Intergenerational Consequences of the Holocaust on Offspring Mental Health: A Systematic Review of Associated Factors and Mechanisms.” Accessed October 24, 2023. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/20008198.2019.1654065.

“Honor Your Father and Mother.” *U.S. Catholic* 73, no. 1 (2008).

IKAR LA. “IKAR – IKAR’s Mission Is to Reanimate Jewish Life and Develop a Spiritual and Moral Foundation for a Just and Equitable Society.” Accessed October 14, 2023. https://ikar.org/.

“Infographic: 6 Guiding Principles To A Trauma-Informed Approach | CDC,” February 23, 2023. https://www.cdc.gov/orr/infographics/6_principles_trauma_info.htm.

Jewish Telegraphic Agency. “Bruno Bettelheim, Psychoanalyst and Holocaust Survivor, Dead at 86,” March 20, 2015. https://www.jta.org/archive/bruno-bettelheim-psychoanalyst-and-holocaust-survivor-dead-at-86.

“Love Is Not Enough: Bettelheim, Bruno: 9780029032800: Amazon.Com: Books.” Accessed August 13, 2023.

https://www.amazon.com/Love-Not-Enough-Bruno-Bettelheim/dp/0029032806/ref=sr_1_8?crid=1G2D33MXIOFEW&keywords=love+is+not+enough&qid=1691933464&sprefix=love+is+not+enough%2Caps%2C711&sr=8-8.

Mishkan Chicago. "Progressive Jewish Community." Accessed November 23, 2023. https://www.mishkanchicago.org/.

"Mourning and Longing from Generation to Generation." *American Journal of Psychotherapy (Association for the Advancement of Psychotherapy)* 43, no. 2 (April 1989): 193. https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.psychotherapy.1989.43.2.193.

"Must One Honor Abusive Parents?" Accessed May 18, 2023. https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/5145030/jewish/Must-One-Honor-Abusive-Parents.htm.

My Jewish Learning. "Jewish Parent/Child Relationships." Accessed May 7, 2023. https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/jewish-parentchild-relationships/.

My Jewish Learning. "Must One Honor an Abusive Parent?" Accessed May 17, 2023. https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/must-one-honor-an-abusive-parent/.

"Parenting and Perfectionism | Psychology Today." Accessed December 11, 2023. https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/psymon-says/202301/parenting-and-perfectionism.

"Publications: Child Care in Practice: EBSCOhost." Accessed January 26, 2023. https://web-s-ebscohost-com.huc.idm.oclc.org/ehost/command/detail?vid=0&sid=ae294b8b-6afe-4bc9-b783-72a07f3ba274%40redis&bdata=JkF1dGhUeXBlPXNzbyZzaXRlPWVob3N0LWxpdmU%3d#jid=J23&db=aph.

Reform Judaism. "The Present Parent." Accessed August 18, 2023. https://reformjudaism.org/reform-jewish-life/youth-family-community/parenting/present-parent.

"Religious-Related Abuse in the Family: EBSCOhost." Accessed May 19, 2023. https://web-p-ebscohost-com.huc.idm.oclc.org/ehost/detail/detail?vid=29&sid=5ef7413c-05e5-4830-97db-6659f01a9f7b%40redis&bdata=JkF1dGhUeXBlPXNzbyZzaXRlPWVob3N0LWxpdmU%3d#AN=87551489&db=aph.

"Ritual Studies in Psychology of Religion on JSTOR." Accessed September 27, 2023. https://www-jstor-org.huc.idm.oclc.org/stable/23912407?searchText=ritual+AND+psychology&searchUri=%2Faction%2FdoBasicSearch%3FQuery%3Dritual%2BAND%2Bpsychology&ab_segments=0%2Fbasic_search_gsv2%2Fcontrol&refreqid=fastly-default%3A792eeb579fa188fbc9c961b88fee7558.

"Rituals in Families and Family Therapy: Imber-Black Ph. D., Evan, Roberts Ed. D., Janine, Whiting Ed.D., Richard A.: 9780393704150: Amazon.Com: Books." Accessed October 14,

2023. https://www.amazon.com/Rituals-Families-Family-Therapy-Imber-Black/dp/0393704157.

Tablet Magazine. “Is Jewish Trauma Genetic?,” December 11, 2014. https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/arts-letters/articles/trauma-genes-q-a-rachel-yehuda.

The Bowen Center for the Study of the Family. “Introduction to the Eight Concepts.” Accessed July 1, 2023. https://www.thebowencenter.org/introduction-eight-concepts.

“The Joy of Ritual: Spiritual Recipies to Celebrate Milestones, Ease ... - Barbara Biziou - Google Books.” Accessed October 6, 2023. https://books.google.com/books/about/The_Joy_of_Ritual.html?id=9k0yvgAACAAJ.

The On Being Project. “Rachel Yehuda — How Trauma and Resilience Cross Generations.” Accessed October 26, 2023. https://onbeing.org/programs/rachel-yehuda-how-trauma-and-resilience-cross-generations-nov2017/.

“The Power to End Abuse in the Jewish Community | Menachem Creditor | The Blogs.” Accessed May 17, 2023. https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/the-power-to-end-abuse-in-the-jewish-community/.

Trauma Informed Community. “Trauma Informed Community.” Accessed November 25, 2023. https://www.traumainformedcommunity.org.

“VA.Gov | Veterans Affairs.” General Information. Accessed September 3, 2023. https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/treat/care/toolkits/clergy/spiritualityMeaning.asp.

“What Is a ‘Good Enough Mother’? | Psychology Today.” Accessed January 26, 2023. https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/suffer-the-children/201605/what-is-good-enough-mother.