

Translation

**Rabbi Yishmael says: Be simple with a superior, calm/cooperative/placid with youth and receive all people happily.**

Maimonides

"Plainness" is understood. Placid means calmness and patience. By means of this counsel he said: when you stand before a man of high station, make yourself plain before him. Render service to him and stand before him as he would wish, and do not assume self-importance toward him.

However, when you are with one of dark hair, meaning to say, with one young in years, do not act thusly. Rather, assume self-importance

toward him and neither jest nor be familiar with him. Subsequently, he said: do not think that what I cautioned you against being familiar with one young in years would require that you greet him with indignation and with a sullen visage. Such is not the intention; rather, you should greet all men, small and great, free man and slave, every member of the human species, with cheerfulness. This exceeds what Shammai said: ". . . [greet all men] with a pleasant countenance" (PA 1:15). The translator said: it appears to me from the master's words that he defines the word "m'kabel" from "hakbalath panim - greeting the presence," as if it (i.e. "m'kabel") were "makbil - greet [actively]," as derived from, "makbilloth halula'oth" (Ex 26:5), for it (i.e., the meaning of the Hebrew word "makbilloth") is taken from the Aramaic translation of "neged - opposite," or "nochach - before." Thus regarding this subject as said in the Arabic,

רְבִי יִשְׁמַעֵאל אוֹמֵר, הָיִי קַל  
לְרֵאשׁ וְנוֹחַ לְתַשְׁחָרֵת, וְהָיִי  
מְקַבֵּל אֶת כָּל הָאָדָם בְּשִׂמְחָה :

the terminology for "meeting and greeting" conveys: so and so met me with either cheerfulness or sullenness. And here, through [its meaning in] that language, the master defined "m'kabel" [as "greet"]. Know that this is so. (See Targum Josh 5:13 & Lam 2:19).

Reuven Bulka

*(As a Tree By the Waters)*

The present *mishna* deals with ego difficulties relative to communal functioning. Primarily, they may be said to focus around individuals who have not reached the position of prominence in the community they felt was appropriate for them. The general tendency of

such individuals is to downgrade those who have superseded them and to discourage those who would in the future gain the very positions they have failed to attain. The advice

of this *mishna* is to conquer this ego difficulty, not to destroy the structure of community. In other words, do not envy or cover another individual's position and show envy by not co-operating with leadership. Rather, *be amenable with a superior*. Do not ask why that individual is better than you and why you should follow. Rather, say that this is a position of responsibility, and the only way that responsibility can be realized is if the public co-operates. Then there is the matter of the attitude to those who are on the way towards gaining positions of prominence and becoming superiors, the youth of the community. Do not let the disappointment and frustration with your stunted growth lead you to discourage those who are on the way up the communal ladder. Your melancholy at not having made it should not be employed in discouraging those younger than you who will realize and achieve what you failed to achieve. Rather, *be co-operative with youth*. Finally, *receive all people with cheerfulness*. You may have a chip on the shoulder from what you perceive has been denied to you. Nevertheless, it is up to you not to spread your melancholy to others and to deny them the excitement that they feel towards their work or towards life in general.