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## Stories With a Twist [72]

**Yet He did not Shame Her**  
Insights into Babylonian Talmud, Kiddushin 31a  
Revised October 2025

### Background to Our Story

#### Roman Gathering



#### Honor your father and your mother



[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Honor\\_your\\_father\\_and\\_your\\_mother](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Honor_your_father_and_your_mother)

Honor your father and your mother is one of the *Ten Commandments*, which are widely understood as moral imperatives by legal scholars, Jewish scholars, Catholic scholars, and Post-Reformation scholars. The *Book of Exodus* describes the Ten Commandments as being spoken by God to *Moses*, inscribed on two stone tablets by the finger of God, or written on tablets by Moses.

Honor your father and your mother so that you may live long in the land that Hashem your God is giving you. – Exodus 20:12

In the *Torah*, keeping this commandment was associated with individual benefit and with the ability of the nation of Israel to remain in the land to which God was leading them. Dishonoring parents by striking or cursing them was punishable by death. In the *Talmud*, the commandment to honor one's human parents is compared to honoring God.

What constitutes "honor?" One must provide them with food and drink and clothing. One should bring them home and take them out and provide them with all their needs cheerfully. – *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* 143:7

The commandment to honor one's human parents is compared, by at least one writer, to honoring God. The Talmud says that since there are three partners in the creation of a person (God and two parents), honor showed to parents is the same as honor shown to God.

**The Text: Babylonian Talmud, Kiddushin 31a**

פעם אחת היה לבוש סירקון של זהב והיה יושב בין גדולי רומי, ובאתה אמו וקרעתו ממנו, וטפחה לו על ראשו, וירקה לו בפניו, ולא הכלימה.

*Once Dama ben Netina was wearing a fine cloak of gold and was sitting among the nobles of Rome. And his mother came to him and tore his garment from him and smacked him on the head and spat in his face, and yet he did not embarrass her.*



### Explaining the Story

What's going on in our story? (The sequence of events)

### Comprehension and Analysis Questions

**?** Why did Dama ben Nethina's mother act the way she acted?

Answer 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Answer 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Answer 3 \_\_\_\_\_

**?** Why is the setting of our story - Once Dama ben Netina was wearing a fine cloak of gold and was sitting among the nobles of Rome - important?

**?** What do you think went through the minds of the nobles of Rome when they witnessed the incident?

**Extra Bonus ?** Why didn't Dama ben Netina try to explain to the nobles of Rome his mother's behavior?

### "The Twist" – Or the Lessons We Can Learn from the Text

**!** "Putting your values to the test" or, when doing the right thing under very challenging circumstances is a difficult task!



Our short story, like similar stories in Tractate Kiddushin, is brought by the Sages to demonstrate the extent of the Mitzvah of honoring one's parents. Faced with undeserved abuse by his mother, Dama ben Netina refrains from reacting, teaching the Romans and all of us that doing the right thing under challenging circumstances can be very difficult, and yet possible.