

# Vayera - "and He Appeared"

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Torah Reading: Gen. 18.1-22.24

This week's chapters cover almost all the aspects attached to this topic.

Ascribed Honor

Acquired Honor

Challenge and Riposte..

And a new area I am learning about ...

Maintaining of Honor by means of an Oath.

Topics of Honor & Shame.

## **Ascribed Honor**

Ascribed honour is the social claim to status of a person attributed to him by birth or genealogy. Normally such honour is already received at birth<sup>54</sup> and derives mostly from the lineage.<sup>55</sup> Since kinship was the most important institution in antiquity, birth into a 'noble' family immediately meant ascribed worth in the eyes of the family's peers; the family itself would make claims to worth on behalf of its offspring, these being most commonly expressed when a marriage was being arranged. Within that family, siblings have differing degrees of ascribed honour.

A person's lineage becomes their starting point of Honor.

Therefore it is quite understandable why the ancients referred to themselves always as 'son of'. Naturally that ascribed honour has to be guarded very carefully; even though you cannot lose it, you can easily bring shame on your family if your behaviour is disrespectful and shameful. Thus the corporate honour of the family or group has to be observed and protected

## **Acquired Honor**

Acquired honour is the status built up by persons over their lifespan. A military victory<sup>58</sup> or social interaction involving 'challenge and riposte'

59 or benefaction<sup>60</sup> are normal fields where honour can be gained. Military victory and benefaction were open only to elites; non-elites, who made up at least 90% of the ancient population, could normally achieve prestige only through agonistic behaviour which was socially sanctioned in the common game of push-and-shove ('challenge and riposte').<sup>61</sup> Anyone in a village or neighbourhood who claimed special respect based on achievement was likely to be challenged by others because of the pervasive perception of 'limited good'.<sup>62</sup>

Citations from GUARDING THE PARENTS' HONOUR—DEUTERONOMY 21.18-21\*  
-Anselm C. Hagedorn

**Building up a Name or reputation enhances one's acquired honor by means of his deeds.**

### **Challenge & Riposte**

The challenge-riposte is essentially an attempt to gain honor at someone else's expense by publicly posing a challenge that cannot be answered. When a challenge has been posed, the challenged must make some sort of response (and no response is also considered a response). It falls to the bystanders to decide whether or not the challenged person successfully defended his (and, indeed, usually "his") own honor.

-David desilva "Honor, Patronage & Purity"

**Remember that the riposte or response must be held to the integrity of truth and action, not merely words.**

### **Maintaining the Integrity of Honor by Means of Oath**

"A man of honour may not lie to someone whom he is not prepared to affront, for to deceive a person intentionally is to humiliate him, and this amounts to an insult to which the norms of the community define the modes of honourable response. Given the ambiguity of the interpretation of his action, the person thus offended is entitled to interpret

the lie as an act of cowardice and to declare the liar dishonoured by it. The mentita Therefore represents a counter insult which demands of the person accused as a liar that he demonstrate by his response that he did in fact intend to affront, under pain of being proved otherwise a coward. Yet if he responds to the challenge, he is not dishonoured (for it is not dishonouring to affront another man): he is only dishonoured as a liar if he fails to do so. Hence the importance of the oath in relation Hence the importance of the oath in relation to honour. It commits the honour of the swearer just as 'crossed fingers' liberate it and aims to eliminate the ambiguity as to his true intentions. By invoking that which is sacred to him - his God, the bones of saints, his loyalty to his sovereign, the health of his mother or simply his own honour - he activates an implicit curse against himself in the eventuality of his failure to implement his oath or, at least, he assures that public opinion is entitled to judge him dishonoured. Moreover, he cannot attain the honour of the person to whom he is bound by oath by deceiving him. The latter is untouched by his deceit. If he proves false, the dishonour is his alone ; retribution can be left to public opinion or to the Gods". -Julian Pitt Rivers

Now we can see the severity of swearing an oath in terms of Honor, especially when YHWH Swears an oath as we will see in Chapters 22 .

How much more so now that we know how many have bound themselves by oath to Yeshua when invoking Romans 10:9?

If we take an oath in the name of our King, and do not maintain HIS Honor, then we will be shamed and dishonored.

There are 2 Ways or Categories in which Honor is bestowed.

1. Ascribed Honor which is attached to lineage or the family one is born into.
2. Acquired Honor which is bestowed by means of deeds one commits.

Check this out...

The Seed of Promise Equals Honor. -Lineage and Deeds Linked to the Promise

The Seed of man Equals Shame.- Lineage and Deeds also Linked to Shame

## **Chapter 18.**

### **verse 1-3**

Abraham recognizing the Honor of the 3 visitors /Messengers and bowing to them and being their servant. Recognizing their Authority.

### **verses 16-33**

Abraham's Challenge and Riposte with YAH but not in a manner in which Abraham is attempting to steal YHWH's Honor for himself, but recognizing his place and wanting to spread YHWH's Honor by being a just and righteous King.

## **Chapter 19**

YHWH acquiring honor for destroying the oppressors and cities who are unrighteous.

## **Chapter 20**

### **verses 1-7**

Abimelech and YHWH's challenge and Riposte.

### **verses 9-15**

Abimelech questioning Abraham, challenging his honor.

### **verse 16**

Sarah's vindication and restoration of Honor in midst of the people.

## **Chapter 21**

### **verses 1-7**

Ascribed honor of Isaac being born of the promise. The lineage of Abraham. The Lineage of Sarah, Seed of the promise..

### **verses 8-21**

Seed of Shame -sending Hagar and Ishmael out...

## **Chapter 22**

### **verses 1-10**

YHWH's testing the integrity of Abraham's honor...

### **verses 12-19**

The Honor of YHWH maintaining His Oath to Abraham.