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## Honor and Its Meaning Among Ottoman Jews

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**O**n his deathbed in Istanbul at the end of the sixteenth century, Shlomo Ashkenazi wrote a will in which he instructed “that his children and his children’s children who inherit their share shall neither be able nor permitted to lease their share of the houses to any living soul in the world [whether] a Jew, or a Gentile, or an Ishmaelite.” Some 60 years later, some of the houses he bequeathed to them were abandoned or served as the scene of “innumerable crimes” committed by one of the heirs. Members of the family claimed this heir was “an evil doer who committed transgressions in public . . . and this brings upon us and our entire family disgrace and shame to the state of ignominy when it becomes public knowledge.”<sup>1</sup>

They were concerned that, apart from the damage to family honor, serious acts of crime might be committed that would endanger them. In view of the circumstances, they asked for permission to lease out the houses to strangers despite the oaths and vows in the will. Rabbi Yehoshua Benbenesht (1590–1668), one of the prominent sages in the capital, adjudicated the matter and scrutinized the wording of the will. Since the main intent of the testator was family honor, and yet upholding the will might cause “shame and disgrace” to the family, he permitted the requested change. Rabbi Benbenesht referred to the testator as someone whom

we knew for his good name and fame, we found him prodigious in honor and virtues, we heard that all of his intentions were to attain honor, to in-

crease the honor of his household and his excellent family . . . that all of his being and intent was for the honor and esteem of his name . . . that neither his sons nor descendants would be allowed to be known as *multezim* [a renter or a tax lessee; one who leases a tax collection concession], nor any of his servants because of the danger and because of the disgrace, that he not be disgraced in the eyes of the public to be the slaves of slaves.<sup>2</sup>

The honor of the deceased and family was therefore a sufficiently important value for the adjudicator (Heb.: *posek*) to overturn an explicit will and annul the strict sanctions that the testator had set down.

My objective in this article is to analyze the role of honor in the consciousness of Ottoman Jews, reconstruct what it meant to different strata of Ottoman Jewish society, and clarify its role as a component in the shaping of their mentality. I will study the cultural context of the Jewish-Iberian heritage, on the one hand, and the circumstances of life in an Ottoman urban environment, on the other.

Ottoman Jewry was an urban society in which, from the middle of the sixteenth century onward, the numerical and cultural dominance of Jews coming from the Iberian Peninsula was noticeable, particularly in the provinces of western Anatolia and the southern Balkans. Tens of thousands of Jews lived in the large urban centers such as Istanbul and Salonica. The population of medium-sized communities such as Izmir (Smyrna), Aleppo, Cairo, and sometimes Jerusalem numbered between one and five thousand, whereas in hundreds of small communities there were at most several dozen families. The economic pursuits of the Jews were diverse, constituting part of the fabric of urban life, a fact that influenced both their social structure (stratification, class) and their culture. They generally lived within an organizational framework known as a *kahal* (congregation), the Jewish community in every city comprising several congregations. The congregation was a social framework centered around the synagogue. It was governed by an elected oligarchic leadership that filled many roles, among them negotiating with the authorities and the provision of various services such as Jewish law court, education, poor relief, kosher food, a synagogue, and a cemetery.

The subject of the current study is a group composed mainly of Jews of Spanish and Portuguese origin and their descendants, a group that in itself was highly diversified. Lack of sources keeps us from discussing or even relating to the other ethnic communities—the Ashkenazim, Romaniotes, and others. Furthermore, considering the mobility and strong ties between the communities, drawing regional distinctions is an almost impossible task. This discussion relates to the totality of Jewish communities in the Ottoman cities, with emphasis on the large

urban centers in western Anatolia and the Balkans, from which most of our sources emanate.

The period I deal with here extends from the sixteenth century to the first half of the nineteenth century. This length of time is certainly a *longue durée*, justified both in relation to the history of the Ottoman Empire and that of Ottoman-Jewish society, which were stable and traditional societies. Although there were probably some changes in the second half of the eighteenth century, I think the more significant developments in the outlook of Ottoman Jews occurred only in the nineteenth century—changes that influenced and transformed their way of life, behavior, and values. One may not rule out the possibility that further research may indicate additional developments, such as the extent of preoccupation with personal or national honor. New economic circumstances may have led to a modified attitude to the place and role of women in the family circle and in society, and would in any case also have implications for the social norms that govern their behavior and, especially, their mobility. Change in this sphere could also be related to the enhanced importance of the individual, accompanied by a decline in the importance of the group and of ethnic solidarity, a process that continued throughout the entire period, becoming more marked in the eighteenth century.

The preliminary sources on which this study is based are Hebrew works of two categories: rabbinic literature (responsa, sermons, exegesis, and works of ethics), and folk literature, particularly proverbs that are known for their importance as a means of ascertaining the concepts of any given society.<sup>3</sup> The proverbs used in this article were taken from printed anthologies originating in Turkey and the Balkans.<sup>4</sup>

Most studies on the subject of honor, many of which have been conducted by anthropologists, deal with European societies. Mediterranean societies have been the focus of several such studies, but these deal only with its western extremities—the Italian city-states and the Iberian Peninsula, the region of origin of many Jews in the Ottoman Empire. Research on the Muslim world in this context has concentrated primarily on the study of contemporary Arab societies.<sup>5</sup> To date, no analysis of the concept of honor in the Ottoman Empire—certainly not among its Jewish population—has been conducted.

### Culture and Cultural Systems

Honor (Heb.: *kavod*; Judeo-Spanish: *onor*)<sup>6</sup> is culture-dependent. It is interpreted differently and has different components in every culture,

being one expression of its value system. In Hebrew, as in other languages, the term "kavod" has several meanings, and in the Hebrew sources I examined one may discern two basic meanings: (1) Honor as an internal value, quality, or personal virtue dependent on one's behavior; it is closely linked with family and public honor. (2) Honor as a gesture of esteem and as social behavior toward an individual or a group deemed worthy of it. Hebrew and Ladino do not reflect the aspect of gender that exists in Arabic and Turkish with regard to personal honor. In fact, Islamic civilization recognized two kinds of honor: male honor (Arabic: *sheref*), which can be earned by what society sees as masculine behavior (e.g., courage, generosity), and female honor (Arabic: *ird*), which refers to sexual behavior, particularly modesty and limited presence in the company of men.

As *dhimmi* (protected subjects) of an Islamic state, in which being Muslim was a prerequisite for honor (the legal language termed a convert to Islam a person "who was honored with the honor of Islam"), Jews were forced to seek esteem and honor among their own people. As is the case with values and norms, the meaning of honor and how to protect, enhance, or rehabilitate it was part of the informal apprenticeship or socialization process undergone by every child through constant observation of family members and others and daily encounters with them. A son learns the essentials of honorable male behavior at home, in the market place, and in the synagogue, where he also becomes aware of the congregational mechanism and social hierarchy. A daughter learns from her mother and her female relatives, especially at home. Each individual Jew learns to respect everything that symbolizes and preserves stability and order—parents, rabbis, and public leaders.

Ottoman-Jewish culture included a Jewish component, mainly of Iberian provenance, and an Ottoman urban component. One may discern three contemporaneous cultural systems: of the rabbinic elite; of the Jewish lay or popular culture; and of the Muslim-Ottoman system. Even though they were distinct, there were no clear borders delineated between them, and even those were permeable borders. A continuous, multifaceted linkage between the Ottoman and the Jewish cultures enabled the larger, powerful culture to influence that of the minority. Rabbis seem to have been attentive to their flock, and their works show response and interaction. Some of them understood that honor and shame were embedded in a certain cultural context. A growing sensitivity to honor obliged them to rule accordingly. R. Shmuel de Medina writes in the late sixteenth century that, indeed,

not all the times are equal and not all men are equal to ostracize, and due to our sins the hearts have changed and the era is bad and it is impossible to execute the commandments of Torah, especially in these matters, for a person may call his friend [a slave] but we assume he may not know what is the exact meaning of slave . . . in these days even in use of that very same name [mentioned in the law] it is proper to mitigate . . . and in my view it is detestable that a person might ostracize another for quarrels between them and perhaps the other said worse things, for a man can hardly control himself and is not judged in his moment of grief.<sup>7</sup>

In another case, De Medina ruled in favor of the slanderer, accusing the woman's husband and her vengeful father of having personal motives, and wrote the following:

And now I say to those judges, had this Shimon [the slanderer] uttered an apostasy, God forbid, would they punish him more severely? It is obvious they would not have done the half. If they did so for the honor of a person, then for the desecration of God, they should do many times more.<sup>8</sup>

Diffusion of norms and values from "below" is also evident, for example, in burial customs: Rambam rules that simple shrouds should be used for all dead, but his sixteenth-century commentator R. David ibn Zimra, who lived in Ottoman Egypt and Palestine, says that in his time people are accustomed to using expensive shrouds, and he adds that all depends on the (local) custom.<sup>9</sup> Changing norms thus caused a change in halakhah. Obviously, this subject calls for further research.

### Personal Honor

In Mediterranean Muslim civilization, one's social milieu, relationships, and obligations constructed one's status and greatly determined the course of one's life. Like its Muslim counterpart, Ottoman-Jewish society was traditional, patriarchal, and hierarchical. These characteristics to a large extent dictated its values and the maintenance of social distinctions that assigned importance to status, honor, and prerogative. Personal honor was the outcome of a combination of diverse and sometimes correlating factors that, to a great extent, reflected the character and values of Jewish society as well as the wider Muslim Ottoman society.

One may distinguish between the broad and the narrow meanings of personal honor, both of which are abstract. It is a quality based on what one senses or feels personally, on criteria that vary from one

place to another and from one era to another, and, no less important, that vary by reference group—for male society is unlike female society, an elite group is unlike a marginal one, slaves differ from freemen, an urban population is different from a rural population, and the like. Thus, honor is absolutely linked to social structures and dependent on specific circumstances. The fact that honor and shame are relative is aptly demonstrated in a query that relates to the imprisonment of a sage and wealthy member of one of the most important congregations in the capital because of his debt. By order of the tax collector, the man was publicly seized and brought by a soldier to the Muslim court of law, “something that had never been done even to any ne’er-do-well . . . because the main intent was to humiliate their honor, the spirit of the father and the spirit of the son as well, both together, to humiliate them and lower them down to the ground.”<sup>10</sup> The rabbi that was asked about the matter found the tax collector guilty of mortifying a respected man, and he stipulated

that the measure of shame is measured according to the one who causes shame and the one who is shamed, and since a person like him was humiliated to be seized in that way on the streets of the city, the [communal leader] should be punished for that. . . . Since the aforementioned hakham Rabbi Jacob Uziel and his son are among the city’s most prominent personages, and for them to have a tax inspector [Turkish: *bakikulu*] appointed over them and to be sent off to prison must be considered a grave shame and a serious affront, because all is gauged according to the one giving shame and the one who is shamed.<sup>11</sup>

Honor constitutes one of the elements of an individual’s social status. In the broadest sense, the word is also a synonym for a good reputation and respectability, and in the narrow sense (which will be discussed at length below) it stands for superiority, excellence in some merit that surpasses others—age, wisdom, or wealth.

Let us first examine personal honor in the broad sense: how it is attained, and what it signifies. Above we have seen elite members concerned with their image and respectability. Petitions to the Jewish or the Muslim courts by common people in suits involving honor, libel, and the like indicate that they, too, were concerned with personal honor. The way to attain it was through respectable behavior, which meant first and foremost conformity—observing social norms and the accepted rules of behavior. Honorable behavior endows a person with honor, and even a person of humble origin and modest means could attain it. He keeps it as long as he continues to behave properly. A Judeo-Spanish proverb that places honor above wealth is indicative of the im-

portance attributed to a respectable image for members of the lower class: “Mas vale tener [honor] en placa ke para en casha,” namely, “It is better to have honor among people in the marketplace than money in a chest.”<sup>12</sup> Components of honorable behavior in Ottoman-Jewish society are morality, religious piety, honesty, and a quiet and unostentatious lifestyle. Thus, for example, a humble family was praised in the early nineteenth century: “The father and mother of the girl as well as all the members of their household are extremely honorable, modest people, and they speak pleasantly and their actions are moderate so that no one else knows their business at all.”<sup>13</sup>

Contemporary mentality also precludes exposing family secrets and complaining to others about marital and familial troubles. All of these are important in a society that attributes supreme importance to tradition and preservation of the delimitations of social order. The important elements in masculine honor were independence as a breadwinner and being a father of sons, nobility of spirit, generosity, kindness, and mercy toward inferiors. Honor was primarily the province of independent adult males capable of protecting themselves, their property, their reputation, and their family. Everyone was subject to constant appraisal and surveillance by the society of which he was a part, and whoever was found wanting forfeited his honor, at times irretrievably. A visual sign for a male adult was his beard. Beards were a key and almost essential component of male honor in the Muslim Orient, their absence being characteristic of a slave or eunuch. The beard appears in proverbs as a symbol of masculinity and dignity; hence, any damage to one’s beard was interpreted as an insult to his masculine honor (discussed further below). On the correlation between the beard and masculine honor, see, for example, the proverb: “Ken barbas vee barves onra,” or, “As the beard is measured, so is honor meted out.”<sup>14</sup>

It was never taken for granted that a woman was entitled to honor unless she belonged to a wealthy or prestigious family. Some thought otherwise—as is evident from a late-seventeenth-century sermon (note the patronizing tone):

Although it might seem that the status of women is lesser and lower [than that of men], since they are not involved in Torah study, whereas the whole substance and existence of the world is for the Torah, therefore, it would seem that she is not worthy of honor. Yet after some research and study we have found that women are worthy of honor. . . . It would seem from this that it is a fitting and decent thing to present an eulogy for a virtuous woman, because in terms of honor, the woman is equal to the honor of a Torah scholar. . . . Looking at it more carefully, it is proper to give honor to virtuous women . . . especially since denying her honor is

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an offense to the family and her honor is of all its members. . . . Thus, for the sake of the honor of the entire family, she is worthy of honor and even more so is she worthy in respect of her own good deeds.<sup>15</sup>

The focus is on the family, mainly the husband and not the person of the woman. In late-sixteenth-century Salonica, people were trying to persuade the widow of a famous rabbi not to remarry, saying "Why should you marry? For you are a widow of a rabbi [Heb.: *hakham*] and you will not find his equal."<sup>16</sup> They were obviously troubled by her desecrating the deceased's honor and his memory.

Family honor is the pretext for justifying honorable treatment of women, but of course not of all women. To deserve it, a woman must fulfill the expectations and requirements of society, and here one must also differentiate between male and female society.

Modesty was an age-old paramount requirement in Judaism. Jewish males in Ottoman lands adopted their Muslim neighbors' norms, which demanded removal of women from the public eye. They too saw the male as being master and ruler of his own sexuality, and no less so of those subordinate to him. The sexual behavior and modesty of the women related to him either by blood or by marriage had direct implications for his honor, and any violation in this sphere was damaging not only to their good name but also to his reputation and male honor. In the early eighteenth century, a person is quoted reprimanding his friend harshly: "I just saw your wife standing at the window of your house, watching and seen by all passersby as a whore sitting on the road. Why do you overlook and not put her to shame?"<sup>17</sup>

Public opinion was almost obsessed with women's visibility. Restricting women's dress and movement was designed to prevent the violation of male honor and moral indiscretions within the male community. R. Eliezer Papo (1785–1828) thus wrote:

And the man also has a responsibility to reprove his wife and daughters and dependents with pleasing language and to keep them away from all manner of harm, and that any king's daughter's honor shall be in her remaining indoors, modest, overseeing her own household, and in this manner, a God-fearing woman is to be praised.<sup>18</sup>

The citation from Psalms, "The king's daughter is all glorious within" (Psalms 45:14), is frequently used to describe preferred female behavior from as early as childhood. Formal salutations in letters addressed to women also emphasize modesty and piety as the main qualities of a respected woman.<sup>19</sup> A popular saying sets forth a strict verdict—that one may not trust a woman: "Mujer onorada, a la punta de la mon-

tana," or, Only a woman at the top of a mountain can be a respected woman. Female honor is clearly synonymous with modesty.<sup>20</sup> In rabbinical writings, especially sermons, the image of the respected woman was portrayed in an idealized manner, such as the woman of valor in Proverbs (31, 10–31).<sup>21</sup> Women's acts of charity made a positive contribution to their image.

Women's scale of priorities was different from that of men. They considered qualities such as household skills, generosity, and benevolence to be more important than impeccable moral behavior. Thus, for example, the anthropologist Uni Wikan was surprised to discover that Muslim women in Oman believe that the behavior of an adulterous wife is the concern of her husband alone, and they accept the fact that there are women who do not care about their own honor. They would not ostracize such a woman, nor would they condemn her to her face for what she did. They believe that solidarity and friendship between the neighborhood women to be a more important value than morality.<sup>22</sup> Having no possibility to conduct a field study, I must make do with the indirect testimony provided by proverbs, stories, and especially romances that deal with love, intra-familial relationships, adultery and extra-marital relations, loss of virginity, etc., and were orally transmitted or sung by women among themselves. This gives the impression that the opinions and attitudes of women on these subjects were not identical to those of men. Folk sayings also indicate that, for women, the status of a married woman and mother was a much coveted ideal and a symbol of respectability.<sup>23</sup>

People also took steps to maintain their honor after death, first and foremost by well-planned public funerals and elaborate burial ceremonies. Many people of means took pains to leave detailed instructions about what was to be done after their death, leaving sums of money for the burial and alms, and so forth. For example, in the will drawn up in Salonica in 1669 for Simha, the widow of Menahem Akuni, she requested, among other things: "And they will provide for all of the needs involved in my burial and honor and the stone on my grave."<sup>24</sup> Everyone who read it knew exactly what she meant by "my honor." The location of the burial plot, the quality of the headstone, and the inscription it bore were meant to indicate the social status of the deceased, or at least that which he or she (or the relatives) wished to exhibit. Funerary inscriptions are indicative of the difference in the societal perception of a gender-based division of roles, but this is a subject outside the scope of the present study. In one specific case, a person asked for permission to replace the headstone on his mother's

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grave with a more expensive one, more befitting her honor—which obviously reflected on his own and that of the entire family.<sup>25</sup>

Honor was not the province of the individual alone but also of the collective. Individual behavior played an important role in preserving collective honor because, in Ottoman-Jewish society as in Mediterranean Muslim societies, it reflects on the entire group as part of mutual and collective responsibility. The family, then, is a unit that either has or does not have honor, similar to other larger social collectives—benevolent societies and groups, congregations and communities, cities, and even the entire Jewish populace (“the Israelite nation”). Collective honor is also embodied in the personality of the group’s leader—the father, head of the congregation, chief rabbi (*hakham bashi*), and the like. Each group needs another one, close yet different, to relate to. The following is an example of a bylaw enacted by members of an elite group, probably some rich people, most likely connected by family and business ties, to protect themselves, their property, and their honor against others in the community:

Some wealthy members of a certain congregation drew up a document of regulations among themselves, and this is its text: . . . And since we have . . . established a union constituted of several people who intend to help one another . . . whether in matters financial or in relation to one’s reputation, henceforth we the undersigned have pledged and undertaken a vow, upon our souls, . . . and for each one of us to respect his fellow’s honor and all matters concerning the honor of his name, with our persons and our property.<sup>26</sup>

As long as a group is managed and manages itself properly, its honor is maintained. Disputes, controversies, and criminality within it is detrimental to the honor of the collective. In more than a few communal regulations, emphasis was placed on the obligation to obey them “for the benefit and honor of the community,” the honor of the congregation providing an excuse for insistence on undeviating compliance to the rules.<sup>27</sup>

Iberian Jews were known for their pride and sense of superiority. Most post-expulsion testimonies on this matter are dated to the sixteenth century, as the expellees were resettling. Very little is still known about eastern Sephardim self-esteem in later generations. One may not overlook a close group: the Spanish-Portuguese “nation” (*nação*), whose sense of high status and distinguished lineage combined with ideologies of “purity of blood” had taken root in seventeenth-century Iberia. Yosef Kaplan demonstrated how the sense of honor and superiority led the Amsterdam community to enact a series of regulations designed to fash-

ion and preserve its image vis-à-vis its upper-class Christian neighbors. Kaplan also noted its differentiating attitude toward the poor: whereas the poor among the “nation” continued to retain some of their inherited honor and were worthy of the community’s protection, the Ashkenazi poor were totally devoid of honor.<sup>28</sup> The “isolationist” self-image of distinguished lineage and greatness influenced the Jewish Orientalistic discourse in nineteenth-century central Europe. The concept of honor (“grandeza”) and sense of superiority held by Jews of Spanish origin were among the factors that shaped their individual and ethnic-communal identity until the early twentieth century.<sup>29</sup>

We have previously noted supervision as an element restricting and regulating behavior. It was double dimensioned: the prohibitions set down by the Jewish religion and its interpretation in halakhah and in the congregational regulations; and the mores of life prevailing in an Ottoman city. Among the important mechanisms of supervision we may find a communal body such as “Memunei Averot,” an institution that existed in the Iberian Peninsula and was reestablished by its expelled Jews. Its members were appointed to prevent religious and moral transgressions. In addition to the intra-communal bodies, there were officeholders appointed by the Ottoman authorities to supervise public morality in the city. To these should be added unofficial yet nonetheless influential—public opinion, most conspicuously applied through rumors and gossip. Alongside there exists an element of self-supervision or self-restraint based on a sense of shame, and the fear of a shameful and degrading predicament. The internalization of external social supervision—the self-supervision, is in fact a social necessity, since the individual is rewarded for overcoming his impulses and punished for transgressing norms.<sup>30</sup> The mechanism of shame is most effective in small groups and minority communities, in which the interdependence maintains a rigorous set of rules of behavior together with discipline and obedience by means of constant mutual supervision that gives rise to self-supervision, an effort to interpret the actions of one’s fellow man, and an ethos of honor.

#### Loss of Honor

Just as one may attain honor by means of certain qualities and actions, so can it be forfeited and lost. Shame (Judeo-Spanish: *verguensa*)<sup>31</sup> is often the partner of personal honor though not necessarily its opposite. The slightest fear of the loss of personal or family honor was sufficient to prevent certain actions. Thus, shame is an effective means for

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curbing the individual's impulses, at times also serving as a sanction by the community. It may very well be that, among the inhabitants of the Middle East, it was shame and the fear of disgrace that preoccupied more people and to a greater extent than did honor and its pursuit. An affront to one's honor was as severe as a physical offense.

There are different ways in which a person can lose his honor, such as by committing an act that brings disgrace upon himself—immoral behavior,<sup>32</sup> chronic inebriation,<sup>33</sup> soliciting alms,<sup>34</sup> and the like. Other acts also led to the same result. Thus, for example, a hasty and secret marriage ceremony was considered disgraceful for a well-born girl:

It is inconceivable that a respectable and modest woman of a great and well-bred family in the city would be married in secret, concealing herself without the consent of her father and mother and relatives, for that is not the way of even the most humble women of this city, certainly not of a daughter of a noble family.<sup>35</sup>

Some people considered divorce a disgraceful matter that should be avoided at all cost.<sup>36</sup> Certain crafts carried a stigma, there being a very marked difference between popular sayings and proverbs maintaining that "all labor honors he who performs it" and a reality that recognized a hierarchy of occupations. At the top of the list stood commerce, considered an easy and honorable profession, and at the bottom were ignominious professions with paltry compensation, great effort, and other disadvantages.<sup>37</sup>

Another possibility was that someone would impinge on the honor of an individual by a physical act, such as an indecent gesture, a blow, or pulling one's beard,<sup>38</sup> or through verbal insult directed at the injured party or his ancestors. It was not rare that men hit women, and that women attacked men. Wife-beating was considered disgraceful in certain circles, and Rabbi Yosef Karo (1488–1575) recommended that men "display sensitivity and mercy for the honor of Jewish women."<sup>39</sup> At times it was sufficient just to call someone by his original name to mock and humiliate him or her.<sup>40</sup> An examination of the halakhic questions dealing with the issue of insults indicates what values were held to be important by the people of that time: lineage, proper behavior, and female modesty. An insult, even if only implied, regarding a woman's innocence and modesty, especially a married woman, was considered a great affront to the man in whose charge she was.<sup>41</sup> Insulting the ancestors of a family or cursing someone's parents, especially if those attacked were respectable people, was considered a particularly grave insult. Epithets such as "convert," "son of a slave woman," "bastard," or "son of a whore" were considered especially denigrating. Others, such as "impure," "dog"

or "a dog son of a dog," and "uncircumcised son of an uncircumcised father," or an insinuation of religious or moral delinquency ("transgressor," "informer"), were held to be derogatory and disgraceful.<sup>42</sup>

Even referring to a person's poverty entailed some disgrace. Poverty carried a clear connotation of dishonor because it was usually associated with a lowly social status, lack of a livelihood or an ignoble profession, filth, and ignorance. Thus we read in an appeal to a rabbi relating to a dispute over taxation:

Shimon answered Reuven in a contemptuous manner and said disdainfully: Did your father or your father's father ever pay this tax? And Reuven felt that his father's honor had been violated because his father was the teacher of Shimon, and he had spoken of him scornfully and derisively. Let our rabbi now instruct us what to do with Shimon, and whether Reuven is obligated to be concerned about his father's honor.<sup>43</sup>

However, poverty was not necessarily identical to dishonor (see more on this below). The ambivalent attitude toward it is clearly seen in proverbs having a double meaning—idealization, on the one hand, and reflection of a life of need and humiliation, on the other, inevitably connected with disgrace and dishonor. Thus there may be situations in which, paradoxically, it is the poor man who is honorable while the rich man is devoid of honor.<sup>44</sup>

In his encyclopedic commentary on the Torah, *Me-am loez*, R. Jacob Khuli devotes extensive attention to a discussion of shaming, emphasizing the gravity of the offense of humiliating someone in public. Incidental to relying on the words of the Shulhan Arukh on the subject (*Tur hoshen mishpat*, 420–21), he cites many examples of insults, both direct and indirect (toward the father, wife, or others related to the one being humiliated). The lively description he brings attests to the frequency of these incidents and their relevance:

There are those who sit in reserved seats in the synagogue; when someone arrives late and finds someone in his seat, he yells at him and that person is embarrassed. A quarrel then ensues where one person hits his fellow as the ignorant folk do. . . . No one has the right to shame his fellowman, and certainly not in the synagogue . . . particularly when he damages his reputation, because there is never an atonement for that. . . . If someone quarreled with his friend and said I am not a criminal, or I am not a bastard, or I am not an apostate, even though he did not say more than that it is as though he had stated explicitly that his fellow was a criminal, or a bastard, or an apostate. One who calls his fellow a wicked man is considered to have damaged his reputation by calling him wicked, and as though he called him a transgressor. If someone quarrels with his wife



and calls her a prostitute, he should be punished according to the discretion of the city leaders, and they should fine him and ostracize him even though there is no witness. . . . A person who calls his fellow a pariah, or a dog, or impure, or a thief, or an informer, or a leper and other such insults and curses or calls him by an offensive name in order to shame him, or says to him "cursed" or "son of a whore" or said that you look like a bastard or a son conceived of an impure liaison—all of these and the like are cases of damaging one's reputation.<sup>45</sup>

A rare example of the manner in which a communal leader was purposely humiliated is found in an incident that happened in Jerusalem in the second quarter of the eighteenth century:

Every day several young fellows who were his enemies, greeted him with curses and indignities, making rhymed curses and insults using his name and his father's name to sing at their feast. Then they would anger him with indignities and curses and insults and write and throw the papers where he had to pass. They humiliated him in ways that had not been done to Haman and Amalek.<sup>46</sup>

The circumstances determined the gravity of the insult—whether it took place in private or in public, such as in the synagogue or the street, and the social status of the participants—the one giving affront, the one who was affronted, and even those who witnessed the incident. The following case is instructive because it demonstrates the importance of not losing face in public: in a deposition of an unworthy rabbi in one of the Balkan communities ca. 1580, the rabbi pled to maintain his honor, a matter that seems to have troubled him more than his dismissal:

The rabbi came to them and said: What are you doing? You should know that this is a criminal sin for you offend my honor and you transgress the oaths you gave me. And he swore to leave his office voluntarily but not in disgrace. . . . [and he said] I will not do it [appeal to the rabbis of the city] for it is a shame to me, and I only said so out of grace and love to you, so that you should not shame me and I do not wish to litigate with you about the oaths because it is disgracing me and I forgive you all [the oaths you have made].<sup>47</sup>

The exchange of sarcastic remarks, insults, and verbal blows was not uncommon among circles of rabbis but was never dealt with, apparently because it occurred within the framework of their private correspondence, not in public.

Another way to deprive someone of his honor was for the communal leaders to impose sanctions on him.<sup>48</sup> The primary means of accom-

plishing this was through excommunication [Heb.: *herem*], which also entails an element of humiliation because being socially isolated and ignored makes the usual, accepted expressions of respect impossible. Other city officials also had the authority and means to punish someone in a humiliating manner—making him ride backward on a donkey, cutting off his beard, making him carry a sign bearing a humiliating text, or condemning him to a shameful death—by hanging or decapitation—in contrast to the dignified death by strangling reserved for the well connected.

Just as with the living, the honor of the dead could also be violated by certain acts. Thus, for example, speaking ill of the dead was considered impinging on their honor.<sup>49</sup> Many rabbinical judges avoided handing down certain rulings lest this reflect badly on their predecessors who had ruled differently.

The importance that Muslim society attributed to personal honor is evident when the religious law and the sultan's law are examined in relation to the punishments they imposed on the guilty party and the understanding shown for acts of retaliation committed by the injured party. Ottoman law meted out severe punishments for slandering or disgracing a person—even a non-Muslim—in public. The Muslim court records [Sijillat] of Jerusalem contain instances in which Jews were sentenced to flogging because they humiliated other Jews in public.<sup>50</sup>

There were some strategies to rehabilitate. One way was cursing or hitting the aggressor back in order to insult him. Another was using the court: either suing the aggressor and asking for punishment, or obtaining a certificate of innocence or some confirmation that refuted the accusations.

In a case that happened in sixteenth-century Egypt, the adjudicator exonerated a person who had ostracized someone who insulted him and his family: "No doubt they may ostracize him either because they were cursed or because of his father's honor and his family's honor, for who would care more about it than them."<sup>51</sup> Appeals to the courts and litigation on matters of honor evinces that men and women saw it as a means to defend or restore one's lost honor. Jewish communal regulations also related to this subject, setting punishments for anyone who had insulted his fellow using embarrassing epithets.<sup>52</sup> The adjudicators wrote forcefully on this matter, though without the ability to enforce most of the sanctions they felt were fitting. There is indeed scant testimony of violent acts of retaliation for such humiliation; at any rate, there is no information about the influence of the dueling culture that was prevalent in Europe. As for women, as already noted, a woman's immodesty was likely to violate the honor of the man in whose charge

curbing the individual's impulses, at times also serving as a sanction by the community. It may very well be that, among the inhabitants of the Middle East, it was shame and the fear of disgrace that preoccupied more people and to a greater extent than did honor and its pursuit. An affront to one's honor was as severe as a physical offense.

There are different ways in which a person can lose his honor, such as by committing an act that brings disgrace upon himself—immoral behavior,<sup>32</sup> chronic inebriation,<sup>33</sup> soliciting alms,<sup>34</sup> and the like. Other acts also led to the same result. Thus, for example, a hasty and secret marriage ceremony was considered disgraceful for a well-born girl:

It is inconceivable that a respectable and modest woman of a great and well-bred family in the city would be married in secret, concealing herself without the consent of her father and mother and relatives, for that is not the way of even the most humble women of this city, certainly not of a daughter of a noble family.<sup>35</sup>

Some people considered divorce a disgraceful matter that should be avoided at all cost.<sup>36</sup> Certain crafts carried a stigma, there being a very marked difference between popular sayings and proverbs maintaining that "all labor honors he who performs it" and a reality that recognized a hierarchy of occupations. At the top of the list stood commerce, considered an easy and honorable profession, and at the bottom were ignominious professions with paltry compensation, great effort, and other disadvantages.<sup>37</sup>

Another possibility was that someone would impinge on the honor of an individual by a physical act, such as an indecent gesture, a blow, or pulling one's beard,<sup>38</sup> or through verbal insult directed at the injured party or his ancestors. It was not rare that men hit women, and that women attacked men. Wife-beating was considered disgraceful in certain circles, and Rabbi Yosef Karo (1488–1575) recommended that men "display sensitivity and mercy for the honor of Jewish women."<sup>39</sup> At times it was sufficient just to call someone by his original name to mock and humiliate him or her.<sup>40</sup> An examination of the halakhic questions dealing with the issue of insults indicates what values were held to be important by the people of that time: lineage, proper behavior, and female modesty. An insult, even if only implied, regarding a woman's innocence and modesty, especially a married woman, was considered a great affront to the man in whose charge she was.<sup>41</sup> Insulting the ancestors of a family or cursing someone's parents, especially if those attacked were respectable people, was considered a particularly grave insult. Epithets such as "convert," "son of a slave woman," "bastard," or "son of a whore" were considered especially denigrating. Others, such as "impure," "dog"

or "a dog son of a dog," and "uncircumcised son of an uncircumcised father," or an insinuation of religious or moral delinquency ("transgressor," "informer"), were held to be derogatory and disgraceful.<sup>42</sup>

Even referring to a person's poverty entailed some disgrace. Poverty carried a clear connotation of dishonor because it was usually associated with a lowly social status, lack of a livelihood or an ignoble profession, filth, and ignorance. Thus we read in an appeal to a rabbi relating to a dispute over taxation:

Shimon answered Reuven in a contemptuous manner and said disdainfully: Did your father or your father's father ever pay this tax? And Reuven felt that his father's honor had been violated because his father was the teacher of Shimon, and he had spoken of him scornfully and derisively. Let our rabbi now instruct us what to do with Shimon, and whether Reuven is obligated to be concerned about his father's honor.<sup>43</sup>

However, poverty was not necessarily identical to dishonor (see more on this below). The ambivalent attitude toward it is clearly seen in proverbs having a double meaning—idealization, on the one hand, and reflection of a life of need and humiliation, on the other, inevitably connected with disgrace and dishonor. Thus there may be situations in which, paradoxically, it is the poor man who is honorable while the rich man is devoid of honor.<sup>44</sup>

In his encyclopedic commentary on the Torah, *Me-am loez*, R. Jacob Khuli devotes extensive attention to a discussion of shaming, emphasizing the gravity of the offense of humiliating someone in public. Incidental to relying on the words of the Shulhan Arukh on the subject (*Tur hoshen mishpat*, 420–21), he cites many examples of insults, both direct and indirect (toward the father, wife, or others related to the one being humiliated). The lively description he brings attests to the frequency of these incidents and their relevance:

There are those who sit in reserved seats in the synagogue; when someone arrives late and finds someone in his seat, he yells at him and that person is embarrassed. A quarrel then ensues where one person hits his fellow as the ignorant folk do. . . . No one has the right to shame his fellowman, and certainly not in the synagogue. . . . particularly when he damages his reputation, because there is never an atonement for that. . . . If someone quarreled with his friend and said I am not a criminal, or I am not a bastard, or I am not an apostate, even though he did not say more than that it is as though he had stated explicitly that his fellow was a criminal, or a bastard, or an apostate. One who calls his fellow a wicked man is considered to have damaged his reputation by calling him wicked, and as though he called him a transgressor. If someone quarrels with his wife

and calls her a prostitute, he should be punished according to the discretion of the city leaders, and they should fine him and ostracize him even though there is no witness. . . . A person who calls his fellow a pariah, or a dog, or impure, or a thief, or an informer, or a leper and other such insults and curses or calls him by an offensive name in order to shame him, or says to him "cursed" or "son of a whore" or said that you look like a bastard or a son conceived of an impure liaison—all of these and the like are cases of damaging one's reputation.<sup>45</sup>

A rare example of the manner in which a communal leader was purposely humiliated is found in an incident that happened in Jerusalem in the second quarter of the eighteenth century:

Every day several young fellows who were his enemies, greeted him with curses and indignities, making rhymed curses and insults using his name and his father's name to sing at their feast. Then they would anger him with indignities and curses and insults and write and throw the papers where he had to pass. They humiliated him in ways that had not been done to Haman and Amalek.<sup>46</sup>

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she was. This could be rectified by divorce, but occasionally the deed was so grave that only murder could purge the family of the taint and restore its honor. Murder resulting from violation of family honor was not rare in Muslim society, and it may be that some Jews tended to accept this as a normative solution.<sup>53</sup>

### Honor as Social Behavior

The concept of honor embodies a second meaning: a sense of superiority and privilege, or an attitude of respect. Many aspired to attain honor, but the teacher of ethical behavior mockingly admonishes those who pursue it:

For he who pursues honor, all his life is passed in pain, since all his thoughts, desires, and wishes are that others will honor him, and he toils to become wealthy and spends much in the matter of honor. And if any time such a man is not honored . . . his very body will ache, and if he is able, he will instigate a fight and quarrel. . . . As for anyone who is disdainful of his honor and does not heed him, he is vindictive and vengeful as a serpent.<sup>54</sup>

Anyone who seemed to be treating his fellow with *too* much respect was suspected of having the opposite intention.<sup>55</sup>

A person was honored not just for being a human being but because of certain qualities he had or earned. Displays of honor and respect—here in the sense of manners, certain actions, extra privileges, gestures, or social behavior that Ottoman-Jewish society was able to offer—were limited to certain groups of people who in any case were respected. The criteria for eligibility, which reflected the values of Jewish society, were in fact similar to those of the wider society: leadership positions, wealth, pedigree, age, and a high religious education. The obligation to show respect is not necessarily grounded in the law; in general, it is more of a social dictate. The poor do not dispute or appeal the demand of the rich and wise to be honored. Among the teachers of ethical behavior, there were some who recommended an attitude of mutual respect.<sup>56</sup> Women and children do not bear honor of their own, usually partaking of the status and honor of those who are responsible for them. One acquired eligibility to be treated with honor in various ways, as I will outline below.

*Family lineage.* One's family is a factor over which the individual has no control. Joseph Hacker has commented briefly on the importance of family lineage among Jews of the Iberian Peninsula, as it emerged

from the writings of the expellees and their descendants.<sup>57</sup> Proverbs, too, demonstrate the importance of a good pedigree as evidence of a positive character and of a status that is not necessarily dependent on wealth: "La limpieza es media rikeza" (Family lineage is half richness)<sup>58</sup> and "Si vistes un ombre pregunta por su nombre" (If you see a person ask for his name [thus assuming that the family name is indicative of a person's character]).<sup>59</sup> There is another well-known proverb: "Basta ke yo soy de Abravanel" (It is enough that I am descended from Abravanel [one of the most noble Sephardi families]), or, in another version, "Basta ke mi nombre es Abravanel" (It is enough that my name is Abravanel).<sup>60</sup> Nonetheless, one may postulate that this quality was considered more highly by the financial and economic elite in Jewish society, and its importance is noted prominently in the written appeals to people of prominence that emphasize the family connections of the addressees.<sup>61</sup> References to honor and family lineage appear regularly only from the mid-1580s and continue to be an important element in wording funerary epitaphs in the succeeding centuries. Pedigree was also an important component of a woman's honor, and it obliged an attitude of consideration and respect toward her.<sup>62</sup> Pride in the family pedigree is what lies behind the cultivation of family sagas and narratives, such as those of the Meyuhas family in Jerusalem. Family stories emphasize its seniority, greatness, and the miraculous events that happened to its forefathers, thus enhancing the honor of the family vis-à-vis other families vying for prestige and honor.<sup>63</sup>

*Elders and parents.* Esteem and respect toward elders, especially older members of the family, is an old and well-known basic value that was valid until the early twentieth century. These, for example, were the instructions of R. Eliezer Papo to the readers of his book in the early nineteenth century:

And it is a supreme obligation to treat elders with respect . . . and it is also proper to treat them with respect by asking their advice in every matter. . . . The elderly person too will defend his own honor and will not let himself come to disgrace, nor do anything that is unbecoming to the elderly, nor should he speak in a place where he knows that he will not be heeded, and in this way his honor will be intact.<sup>64</sup>

Old age thus calls for appropriate, dignified behavior, and thus the image reinforces itself. A popular saying connects old age with dignity: "Vyejo por onor, mansevo por dolor" (The old man, for honor; the young man, for pain).<sup>65</sup> Showing respect toward the elderly also includes the obligation of children to honor their parents, and a wife her husband. The obligation toward parents includes the recital of the

kaddish after their death, as well as other acts. The respect a woman owes her husband is discussed in the rabbinic literature and is also a motif in popular literary works.<sup>66</sup> Disobedience and disrespect toward the husband or his parents might even cause him to sue for divorce.

*Religion and rabbis.* This category includes respect for the Jewish law and commandments, for the synagogue and the ritual objects within it, a topic outside the scope of the present article. Respect for the rabbis is the one relevant to us. The Code of Jewish Law [Shulhan Arukh], in the laws relating to the study of Torah, includes an extensive chapter devoted to "the laws pertaining to honoring his rabbi and a Torah scholar."<sup>67</sup> Disrespecting a Torah scholar was an offense punishable by excommunication.<sup>68</sup> One was expected to behave with special manners and gestures with respect to those who served in rabbinical positions. The honors due to presiding rabbis were stipulated in their writs of appointment, and emerge in passing from the responsa literature.<sup>69</sup> The talmudic privilege allowing rabbis to excommunicate on grounds of an affront to their honor (or the honor of "Torah") was widely accepted, though communal leaders wished to control it.<sup>70</sup>

Scholars who devoted their lives to Torah study were also treated with honor by virtue of their being representatives of the Torah. Special deference was granted to those who came from the Land of Israel.<sup>71</sup> It is nonetheless clear that the true state of affairs was far from being ideal and that disrespect to Torah scholars (at least from the latter's viewpoint) was widespread. Their complaints about "disgracing the honor of Torah and its scholars" had been voiced frequently since the late sixteenth century, leading one to believe that this argument was exploited whenever the rabbis were offended by the attitude of the public or the actions of the leadership.<sup>72</sup> Rabbis' insistence on a respectful behavior toward them was mocked and criticized; at times this was interpreted unfavorably, even among rabbinic circles.<sup>73</sup> The rabbis themselves were asked to maintain their honor, and that included a neat and agreeable appearance. R. Elijah haCohen of Izmir (d. 1729), repeated what had been written in earlier sources and recommended that the rabbi

make sure that at all times his clothes are white, that he pray in clean garments . . . and that he conduct his debates with purity of language and pleasant ways and provide answers to the heretics and apostates . . . that he anoint himself with aromatic oil and perfumes to remove the odor of sweat and the like which cause people not to draw near him when he speaks but rather to keep at a distance, and then despise his words of admonishment and his words of Torah and moral teachings.<sup>74</sup>

Additional advice is found in the letter of response written by R. Abraham Palaggi (Izmir, 1810–99), who advised R. Moshe haCohen-Neher: "When you sit among the elders of the land who have acquired wisdom and engage in a halakhic debate, guard your tongue and lips from speaking deceit and let whatever you write in a book be with honor and not with disrespect, calmly and not troubled."<sup>75</sup>

*Wealth.* As in many other urban societies whose members' principal occupations were crafts and commerce, wealth was an ideal, and the rich man a symbol of success. Honor was closely connected to money and property, a linkage expressed quite cogently by a popular saying: "Ay paras ay onor" (Where there is money, there is honor).<sup>76</sup> This can also be attributed to a woman (who cannot be considered for public office or as possessing Torah knowledge), especially when she uses her wealth for philanthropic purposes. The wealthy could be identified from afar because of their appearance, especially their elegant and expensive dress, often sufficient to inspire a respectful attitude.<sup>77</sup> Consumption of luxuries was used as a means to display wealth and rank. The importance of clothing as a status symbol is quite apparent in the admonishment by the poet Rabbi Menahem de Lonzano (1550–1624), who laments of his contemporaries: "And all honor is given to those who wear fine linen and embroidered cloth. . . . According to my clothing and shirt, according to my gown and my turban so is my honor and splendor. Woe to a generation that honors clothing."<sup>78</sup> Poor people were naturally devoid of this sort of honor because of their lifestyle and ignorance.<sup>79</sup> They were thought to be unable to lead a moral life and were exposed to constant supervision. Self-image was a different matter—though they accepted their social inferiority, many poor resisted the disdain, belittling, and patronizing stand, and defended their dignity and respectability as much as possible.

*Rank or position in communal organizations.* The obligation to show respect for public leaders, who were usually of the upper strata of the congregation, was part of the social order. In contrast to the previous categories, where showing respect was based largely on age-old norms, it was necessary to firmly anchor gestures of respect, privilege, and authority in communal regulations, under threat of imposing sanctions against offenders.<sup>80</sup> Nevertheless, it seems that acceptance of authority was not the strong point among Jews, for it was necessary to repeatedly reinforce this by means of bylaws, sermons, and moral advice.<sup>81</sup> I assume that aspiration for honor was one of the main motives for seeking leadership positions.

## Manifestations of Honor

[38] Respect toward those deserving it was manifested in many ways. The first was by obeying orders, instructions, and wishes. Special importance was accorded to obedience to the communal leaders and rabbis, an obligation grounded in their writs of appointment and in communal regulations.

Physical gestures of subordination and submission, including standing in the person's presence, or kissing his hand or beard, were another manifestation common to Muslim and Jewish society. Among the Jews there were additional symbolic acts of respect whose significance was known to all. These usually took place in the synagogue, the sole locale in which the whole congregation gathered: allocating a seat of honor, calling the person up to the Torah, prayers and blessings recited in a person's honor, and so forth. The rabbi (called "Marbits torah") would be called to the Torah in rabbinic titles, have his hand kissed, and given the honor of walking after the Torah scroll.<sup>82</sup> At times the group displayed its esteem and respect for an individual by generous donations of money in his honor for charitable purposes on various festive occasions.<sup>83</sup> The individuals themselves used the synagogue to demonstrate and increase their status and honor by wearing expensive clothing, giving generous donations in public, inviting many relatives and friends to family celebrations in their congregational synagogue, and using the religious ritual articles that they themselves had donated.<sup>84</sup>

The importance of these privileges and honors in the synagogue was so great that, at times, disputes and quarrels broke out over who was eligible to receive them. Sabbaths on which there were family celebrations—particularly when there was more than one—were likely to be marked by disputes and quarrels over the dispensing of the honors. In order to prevent this, insofar as possible, rules were set down regulating priorities in honors.<sup>85</sup>

A third way—indeed the most common—in which a person was honored was the manner in which he was addressed, whether orally or in writing. Naturally, we have almost no evidence of the oral salutations. Pioneer scholars such as David Benvenisti, Michael Molcho, and Moshe David Gaon described family life on the weekday, Sabbath, and holidays. They referred to the respect shown by members of the household toward the father of the family, who was called "señor," and the special status enjoyed by family elders and Torah scholars, but they did not elaborate on this point, nor were they critical.<sup>86</sup> An Ottoman document dated A.H. 990 (1582) shows that Jews who filled offices of some authority (such as customs lessees) insisted on respectful forms of ad-

dress toward them and sought the honorific titles common in Ottoman society, such as "Chelebi." This aroused the wrath of Muslims who felt that they were being humiliated by their inferiors.<sup>87</sup>

However, much written testimony has been preserved—both in letters sent to individuals, rabbis, and functionaries and in collections containing drafts of letters and promissory notes. The salutations show the social register—the hierarchy within the class of rabbis and other notables—and are also indicative of a growing tendency for exaggerated use of honorific titles.<sup>88</sup>

Whereas showing respect was the equivalent of good order, the opposite case was a clear sign of a lack of social order and of instability, which also constituted a threat to normal life. Lack of respect for rabbis and appointed officers was perceived as a sign of the times and as one of the more serious evils that was spreading in Jewish society. Already a motif in the poems of R. Menahem de Lonzano at the turn of the seventeenth century, this concept is repeated with increasing frequency in works throughout that century and in communal regulations of the eighteenth century, all connected with growing social tensions within Jewish society. The outbreak of Sabbatianism was accompanied by an upheaval in all customary modes of behavior; in a query coming from Izmir in 1667, we read: "For two years now the world has been thrown into confusion by those well-known disturbances, the youth are disrespectful to the elders, the young behave insolently to the old, everyone does as he pleases, and there is no law and no judge."<sup>89</sup> R. Yosef Almosnino (1642–88) was asked a question dealing with insolent behavior toward the rabbi and violation of the honor of prominent embers of the community "because in this generation our people are unruly, and they have no respect for the honor of a Torah scholar. My own eyes have seen ignorant people insulting and shaming the God-fearing and those who honor His name."<sup>90</sup>

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, R. Eliyah haCohen laments the disregard for Torah scholars and the rabbis' low social standing: "And if there is a Torah scholar, the jesters of the generation mock him because he is ugly or has a defect, and they disparage his honor." In another book he writes: "Furthermore, permission that has been given nowadays to call a great sage by the title of rabbi or by the title 'shalem' [perfect] is because the generation is insolent and the honor of the Torah is debased, therefore in order to enhance the honor of the Torah and to have the public feel awe that they may heed their words, we call them by the titles 'rabbi' and 'shalem.'"<sup>91</sup> Things did not improve. On the contrary: a regulation of one of the butchers' guilds in Istanbul in 1732 states that "Everyone acts according to his own desires,

[39]

*Honor Among  
Ottoman Jews*●  
Yaron Ben-  
Naeh

and whoever is most violent, prevails. The youth disrespect the elders, and they have no pretext of shame whatsoever."<sup>92</sup>

### Honor and Wealth

Not only was there a strong, though not absolute, linkage between honor and money, but honor also had practical significance as a social and economic asset. By virtue of a man's good reputation, the word of an honorable man was a "palavra de onor" (a word of honor) that could be relied on. An honorable person was accepted as a trustworthy witness. He was considered innocent in a case of charges against him, in absence of sufficient proof. He was qualified to give testimony and to act as guarantor of various transactions, and he was a worthy candidate for various public offices. These included guardianship of orphans, responsibility for the community's charitable funds and endowments, and the like, all prestigious and lucrative. Honorable status had a calculable monetary value. This was most clearly expressed in the procedures of the customary prearranged marriages. The bride's family honor was scrupulously assessed so as to set a suitable dowry and arrange for a befitting wedding celebration. The groom or his father would give gifts and jewelry according to his social status.<sup>93</sup> The dowry and gifts were ceremoniously and publicly displayed prior to the wedding, thus demonstrating to all the worthiness of the families being joined together.<sup>94</sup> Like dowries, the exchange of gifts and food parcels on Purim and other holidays was planned and calculated exactly, to give everyone a clear indication of the economic and social standing of the parties involved. Such importance was attached to large dowries that in the eighteenth century many people were impoverished when trying to make a good match for their daughters. Up until 1900, Ottoman Jewish communities enacted bylaws against extravagant expenditures and sumptuous consumption whose main reason was display of wealth on family festive occasions.

One's social status was the main criterion for payments and revenues of various kinds, and it is clear that contemporaries knew how to evaluate it: for the loss of honor—say, as the result of an insult—an appropriate cash compensation could be imposed. When a woman was divorced, she received her weekly expenses in accordance with her honor and social status.<sup>95</sup> One of the communal regulations in Izmir required the individual to make a donation to the synagogue, its size determined by an appraisal of his honor.<sup>96</sup> The registers of the burial society of Izmir stressed that all efforts made to show respect and es-

teem for the individual ("las kozas del kavod"), such as giving gifts at family celebrations, should befit his social standing, "to the great according to his greatness and to the lowly, according to his lowliness."<sup>97</sup>

### Conclusion

Ottoman Jewry was an urban, class-hierarchical society that valued pedigree and wealth. Tremendous importance was attributed to the social order and social distinctions in the public sphere and individual lives of both Jews and non-Jews. As shown above, the concept of honor was one of the central codes of Ottoman-Jewish society during the period from the sixteenth through the early nineteenth centuries. Ottoman Jewry's perception of honor was shaped by Ibero-Jewish values and by urban Ottoman culture. The desire to attain, preserve, and enhance honor dictated various behavioral and social norms whose literary documentation and the discourse relating to them enable us to understand what contemporaries considered to be honorable or, in contrast, insulting, disrespectful, and humiliating.

We identified two types of honor. The first was honor in the broad sense of the word—namely, respectability and a good reputation, which was attainable by anyone who followed the conventional norms of behavior, avoided shameful deeds, and abided by both the congregation's regulations and the laws of the land. Since honor is culture-dependent, its meaning has changed not only in different periods and places but also in relation to a person's social status and gender. For good or ill, the honor of an individual was projected onto his family and all members of his group or ethnic community, even surviving his death. Collective honor played a central role in shaping the self-identity of the Jewish community and drawing a boundary between it and other ethnic communities. One could lose individual honor in various ways, whether by his own action or that of others, and it was not always possible to regain it.

Honor in the second, narrower sense was mainly the province of the elite. In contrast to the first category of honor, this one could not be lost. Only the rich and the very learned were entitled to be honored by society. Ottoman society scrupulously maintained the social hierarchy and the external distinctions between members of different religions and social classes. Class distinctions by means of clothing and lifestyle made it easier to identify a person's status, enabling one to honor those deserving of it with proper gestures of respect.

Honor was an important component in the conceptual framework. Much use was made of these concepts with respect to relationships and personal character in everyday life, and they were reflected in the choice of families with whom to marry, of business partners, and even of neighbors. Rabbis took these concepts into consideration in their rulings: fear of shame was a constant and powerful factor in the life of the individual, particularly among those of the middle and lower classes—much more so than the pursuit of honor, which was attributed mainly to those higher up the social scale. It seems that, under constant societal supervision, the threat of shame, disgrace, and ignominy was the major factor in the self-restraint of deviant behavior and criminality.

Analysis of the issue of honor and shame elucidates aspects of the value system and mentality of Ottoman-Jewish society and sheds light on its everyday life as well as on the ideals it set for itself. As in other areas of culture, the value of honor bears similar weight both in the Oriental Jewish and in the Ottoman and Arab Muslim societies. The encounter aroused no conflict; on the contrary, it frequently reinforced long-standing Jewish values.

### Notes

An earlier version of this article appeared in Hebrew in *Mehkerei yerushalayim be-folklor yehudi* 23 (2004): 9–38. It was written during my postdoctoral tenure as a Mandel scholar in the Mandel Institute of Jewish Studies, Hebrew University.

- 1 R. Yehoshua Benbenesht, *Shaar yehoshua*, vol. 2, ed. E. Bar-Shalom (Jerusalem, 1992), Hoshen mishpat, 71:51a–b, 54a–b. Unless otherwise noted, all translations from foreign-language sources are mine.
- 2 Benbenesht, *Shaar yehoshua*, vol. 2, Hoshen mishpat, 71:51a–b, 54a–b. On the fear of violating family honor, see the proverb “El Dio ke no de a averguensar”—namely, that God would not let it happen, or that He would protect from disgrace (A. Levi, “Brakhot, ihulim ve-divrei nimusin be-ladino shel yehudei Izmir bi-shnot ha-70,” *Sefunot* 16 [1980]: proverb 308, p. 384).
- 3 T. Alexander-Frizer, *Maaseh ahuv va-hetsi: Ha-sipur ha-amami shel yehudei sfarad* (Jerusalem, 2000), 45–58.
- 4 I examined the following anthologies, all of them produced in the twentieth century: A. Alkalay, *Imrot u-fitgamim shel yehudei sfarad* (Jerusalem, 1984); M. D. Gaon, *Besamim mi-sfarad*, ed. Y. Gaon (Jerusalem, 1989); Y. Y. Yehuda, “Mishley Espanyolit-Yehudit,” *Measef zion* 2 (1928): 80–95; Y. Moscona, *Pninei sfarad* (Tel Aviv, 1982); Z. Kolonimus,

*Proverbs and Sayings of the Sephardic Jews in Bosnia and Herzegovina* (Belgrade, 1976); Z. Kolonimus, *Sayings and Tales of the Sephardic Jews in Macedonia* (Belgrade, 1978), 95–31; E. Saporita y Beja, *Refranes de los Judios Sefardies* (Barcelona, 1978); and E. Shaul, *Folklor de los Judios de Turkiya* (Istanbul, 1994). For a methodological discussion and references to additional anthologies, see T. Alexander-Frizer, *Milim masbiot mi-lehem: Le-heker ha-pitgam ha-sfaradi-yehudi* (Jerusalem, 2004).

- 5 On shame in an Islamic context, see U. Wikan, “Shame and Honor: A Contestable Pair,” *Man* 19 (1984): 635–52, esp. 639–40, 643; G. M. Kressel, “More on Honor and Shame,” *Man* 23 (1988): 167–70; S. Brandes, “Reflections on Shame and Honor in the Mediterranean,” in *Honor and Shame and the Unity of the Mediterranean*, ed. D. D. Gilmore (Washington, D.C., 1987), 121–34; and M. E. Meeker, “The Black Sea Turks: Some Aspects of Their Ethnic and Cultural Background,” *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 2 (1971): 329–32.
- 6 See J. Nehama, “Honor,” in *Dictionnaire du Judéo-Espagnol* (Madrid, 1977), 391. “Kavod” is one of the Hebrew words integrated into the vernacular of the Jews of the Ottoman Empire; see D. M. Bunis, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Foundations of Modern Judeo-Espagnol (Judezmo)*, (Jerusalem 1993), entries 1901–5.
- 7 R. Shmuel de Medina, *Sheelot u-tshuvot* [Responsa], (Salonica,

1596), Yoreh deah, 213: 148d, 149c.

- 8 *Ibid.*, 183: 124b.
- 9 “It [using silk and embroidered shrouds] is a bad custom in this kingdom, especially among women, and the rabbis do not have the power to abolish it” (Mishne Torah, Shoftim, Hilkhot Avelut, chap. 4, 1–2, and Ibn Zimra’s commentary on Mishne Torah). See also Shulhan Arukh, Yoreh deah, 352: 1–2, 353: 1.
- 10 Shaar Yehoshua, vol. 2, Hoshen mishpat, 69: 48a–b.
- 11 *Ibid.* On a disgrace to a respected rabbi that was “intended to denigrate and disgrace the Torah”, see also Shaar Yehoshua, vol. 2, Yoreh deah, 22: 296a (=318a); and note 38 below.
- 12 Moscona, *Pninei sfarad*, 144. For another version, see Gaon, *Besamim mi-sfarad*, 101.
- 13 R. Binyamin Pontrimoli, *Shevet binyamin* (Salonica, 1824), 300: 134a–b.
- 14 Moscona, *Pninei sfarad*, 101. On the beard in Muslim society in the seventeenth century, see, e.g., L. d’Arvieux, *Voyage dans la Palestine* (Amsterdam, 1718), 142–47. On the beard in Jewish medieval context, see E. Horowitz, “Mashmauyot ha-zakan bikhilot yisrael,” *Peamim* 59 (1994): 124–48, esp. 138–46.
- 15 R. Yosef Yihya, *Bnei yosef* (Salonica, 1710), 55d, 56d, 57a.
- 16 De Medina, *Sheelot u-tshuvot*, Yoreh deah, 105.
- 17 R. Moshe Israel, *Masat Moshe*, vol. 1 (Constantinople, 1734), Yoreh deah, 13: 54b. Some



- rabbis compared Jewish women with the chaste Muslim women, and complained about the former's licentiousness (Hemdat yamim, *Holydays* [Izmir, 1731], 32c).
- 18 R. Eliezer Papo, *Pele yoets*, part 1 (Constantinople, 1824), "Nashim," 46a. Many responsa attest that this was male public opinion.
- 19 Yehoshua Ben Reuven, *Kol yehoshua* (Constantinople, 1732), 18b.
- 20 Kolonimus, *Sayings and Tales . . . Macedonia*, no. 830, and Kolonimus, *Proverbs and Sayings . . . Bosnia and Herzegovina*, no. 592.
- 21 R. Yehoshua Benbenesht, *Ozney yehoshua* (Constantinople, 1677), 93a–b. Rabbinic literature preserved accounts regarding respectable women who avoided going out, and the judges' consideration for them. The records of the Muslim courts of law show similar behavior.
- 22 Wikan, "Shame and Honor." The case of a husband practicing restraint and continuing to live with his adulterous wife was discovered by Yosef Ginat among Bedouins in Israel (J. Ginat, *Nikmat dam* [Tel Aviv, 2000], 237). See also L. Abu Lughod, *Veiled Sentiments: Honor and Poetry in a Bedouin Society* (Berkeley, 1986).
- 23 Concerning women's desire for marriage (and for love), see, e.g., the proverbs cited in T. Alexander, "Yesodot shel makom ba-pitgamim shel yehudei turkiyah: Ha-olam veba-bayit," *Pe'amim* 41 (1990): 125, and T. Alexander and G. Hasan-Rokem, "'Ein yom shlishi bli shemesh': Gilgulei mashmaut be-fitgamim shel ishah yehudiyah," *Mi-kedem umi-yam* 4 (1991): 281–82.
- 24 R. Aharon haCohen Perahiya, *Parah mateh aharon*, vol. 1 (Amsterdam, 1703), 50: 100a. In another will, the testator emphasized the linkage between family honor and the expenses on the burial (R. Hayim Vital, *Beer mayim hayim* [Jerusalem, 1966], 72: 205b).
- 25 "[A]nd he placed the headstone upon it as the custom was and afterward Reuven saw that this headstone was not respectable enough for her, and he wished to remove it and place it on the grave of his grandson and to pay more money to obtain a better one" (R. Yitzhak haCohen Hasid, *Ohel yitzhak* [Salonica, 1801], Hoshen mishpat 106: 121b). Another person tells that he buried his daughter in fine, costly linen shrouds befitting her dignity (R. Shlomo haLevi, *Lev Shlomo* [Salonica, 1808], Even Haezer 35: 49c–d). See also R. Hisday haCohen Perahiya, *Torat hesed* (Salonica, 1723), 66: 72b.
- 26 R. Hayim Shabtai, *Torat hayim*, vol. 3 (Salonica, 1703), 25: 40b. On the competition between Jews and other religious and ethnic groups for place of honor and precedence in official events, see Yaron Ben-Naeh, "Ha-hevrah ha-yehudit be-arei ha-imperyah ha-otomanit bameah ha-yod zayin (Istanbul,

Saloniki ve-Izmir)" (Ph.D. diss., Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1999), 88. On the violation of the honor of the Jewish populace and the Jewish faith, see R. Daniel Gerassi, *Odeh ha-shem* (Venice, 1684), 29a; Tuviyah haCohen, *Maaseh tuviyah* (Venice, 1717), 25a; and R. Shmuel Yitzhak Modiano, *Neeman shmuel* (Salonica, 1703), 22: 22a–b.

27 On damaging the community's honor, see R. Shlomo le-Veit Halevi, *Sheelot u-tshuvot* (Salonica, 1652), Yoreh deah, 10: 31b. For congregational regulations on these subjects, see R. Yosef Karo, *Avkat rokhel* (Salonica, 1791), 179: 105a, and R. Avraham de Botton, *Lehem rav* (Izmir, 1660), 68: 40a–b.

28 See Y. Kaplan, "Yahasam shel ha-yehudim ha-sfaradim veba-portugalim la-yehudim ha-ashkenazim be-amsterdam bameah ha-17," in *Tmurot ba-historyah ha-yehudit ha-hadashah, shai li-shmuel ettinger*, ed. S. Almog et al. (Jerusalem, 1988), 412. For more on the Spanish-Portuguese identity and the nation's concern for honor and purity, see M. Bodian, *Hebrews of the Portuguese Nation* (Bloomington, Ind., 1997), 81–92, 132–51.

29 P. Morag-Talmon, "Hishtalvutah shel edah vatukah be-hevrat mehagrim: Ha-edah ha-sfaradit be-yisrael" (Ph.D. diss., Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1980), 86–121; Alexander-Frizer, *Milim masbiot mi-lehem*, 201–6, 292. On "grandeza," see M. Shaul, "La 'Grandeza' de los Sefaradis," *Aki Yerushalayim* 59 (1999): 11–13. For the extensive literature on

the subject of Jewish Orientalism in the nineteenth century and the image of the Sephardic-Portuguese Jew, see I. Scorsch, *From Text to Context: The Turn to History in Modern Judaism* (Hanover, N.H., 1994), 71–92, and T. M. Endelman, "Benjamin Disraeli and the Myth of Sephardic Superiority," *Jewish History* 10, no. 2 (1996): 21–35.

30 N. Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, vol. 2: *State Formation and Civilization* (Oxford, 1982), 229–50, 270–91.

31 Nehama, *Dictionnaire*, "Vergwensa," 588–89. The term has additional meanings: "Es una vergwensa" means this is a scandal. "Es vergwensa" and "ke vergwensa" are used to designate something that must not be done.

32 On the use of shame as a deterrence, such as to dissuade people from male homosexual relations, see "when the two of them meet when they grown old, how much shame and disgrace, humiliation and embarrassment, debasement and ignominy they will feel when they remember how they lay together" (R. Eliyah haCohen, *Shevet musar* [Constantinople, 1712], 12a–b). Even an argument over trivial issues was considered undignified; see Papo, *Pele yoets*, part 1, "Yaldut," 99a. This source is cited and dealt with in Y. Ben-Naeh, "Moshko the Jew and His Gay Friends: Same-Sex Sexual Relations in Ottoman Jewish Society," *Journal of Early Modern History* 9, nos. 1–2 (2005): 95.

33 See, e.g., the accusation of drunkenness as a serious in-

- fringement on the honor of the head of the burial society (R. Meir de Boton, *Sheelot u-tshuvot* [Izmir, 1660], 19: 34b). On drunkenness as a source of disgrace in a popular proverb, see Moscona, *Prinei sfarad*, 80, and Gaon, *Besamim mi-sfarad*, 116.
- 34 The proverb says it is better to die of hunger than to knock on people's doors (Shaul, *Folklor de los Judios*, 11), but the will to live was stronger. For a remarkably sensitive description of the hesitations of the poor man before begging, see HaCohen, *Shevet mussar*, 30c. The communal establishment distinguished between "modest" poor of good lineage and lowly "professional" poor, and made a great effort to help them.
- 35 R. Yosef Almosnino, *Edut bi-yhosef*, vol. 1 (Constantinople, 1711), 43: 76b.
- 36 See, e.g., a case from seventeenth-century Egypt: a couple asked to be separated but not to be divorced, because "they were honorable people and do not want any undermining of this, not in their lifetime and not in death" (R. Avraham haLevi, *Ginat vradim*, vol. 2 [Constantinople, 1717], Orah hayim, IV 22: 78b).
- 37 R. Yosef Shmuel Modiano, *Rosh mashbir*, vol. 1 (Salonica, 1821), Yoreh deah, 10:10c. For an interesting reference to honorable living in the agreements of Jewish Istanbul guilds in the second half of the eighteenth century, see Y. Barnai and H. Gerber, "Gildot yehudiyot be-kushta be-shalhei ha-meah ha-yod het," *Michael* 7 (1982): 217, 224. "Clean" domestic work was considered ideal; see R. Hayim Palaggi, *Kaf ha-hayim* (Salonica, 1859), 21: 142a.
- 38 R. Moshe Mitrani, *Sheelot u-tshuvot*, vol. 2 (Venice, 1630), 38: 20a. On the shaving of the beard as a humiliating act, see *ibid.*, 2nd pagination, 188: 184d. The Kadi of Jerusalem ordained lashes meted out to a Jew who struck another Jew, tore out his beard, and insulted him in public (A. Cohen and E. Simon-Pikali, *Yehudim be-veit ha-mishpat ha-muslemi: Hevrah, kalkalah ve-irgun kehilati bi-yerushalayim ha-otomanit, ha-meah ha-18* [Jerusalem, 1996], doc. 241, p. 281. See also notes 10 and 11 above).
- 39 Karo, *Avkat rokhel*, 184: 118d. R. Hayim Palaggi censured a husband who was vigilant of his wife's behavior only when it affected his welfare and honor (R. Hayim Palaggi, *Tochehat Hayim*, vol. 3 [Izmir, 1874], 30b).
- 40 Thus, e.g., "the reason that she does not want them to call her Simha is that the children laugh and make fun of the name Simha" (R. Hayim Avraham ben R. David, *Tiferet Adam* [Salonica, 1863], Even ha-ezer 18: 74d).
- 41 See, e.g., R. Elijah Mizrahi, *Sheelot u-tshuvot* (Constantinople, 1560), 71: 121a, and De Medina, *Sheelot u-tshuvot*, Yoreh deah, 183: 123d-124a.
- 42 See, e.g., R. Hayim Yaakov, *Sama deHayei* (Amsterdam, 1739), Yoreh deah, 21: 60c. On male honor in the sexual context, see Ben-Naeh, "Moshko," 81, 89, 97-99.
- 43 Benbenesht, *Shaar yehoshua*, vol. 2, Yoreh deah 20: 291a. In another instance, a young man committed suicide because he was ashamed about not being able to afford his wedding expenses (R. Elijah haCohen, *Min-hat eliyahu* [Salonica, 1824], 6c).
- 44 See, e.g., the proverbs showing the poor to be proud—that, though they are deficient in money, they have good family lineage or family honor. The popular saying "No es vergwensa de ser prove" (It is no shame to be poor [Nehama, *Dictionnaire*, "Vergwensa"]) proves in fact the opposite of what it was intended to state.
- 45 R. Jacob Khuli, *Me-am loez*, Exodus (Constantinople, 1733), Mishpatim 247b. On insults and the social mechanism involved in insult in the cities of early modern Italy, see P. Burke, "Insult and Blasphemy in Early Modern Italy," in his *The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge, Engl., 1987), 95-109.
- 46 R. Meyuhah Bekhar Shmuel, *Mizbah adamah* (Salonica, 1777), Yoreh deah 18a.
- 47 R. Bezalel Ashkenazi, *Sheelot u-tshuvot* (Venice, 1595), 25, 79b.
- 48 On shameful punishments leveled by the community leadership, see, e.g., R. Yehoshua Zonzin, *Nahalat li-yehoshua* (Constantinople, 1731), 17: 23d, and R. Shlomo Ibn Hasson, *Mishpatim yesharim* (Salonica, 1732), vol. 2, 84: 89d.
- 49 See, e.g., a question dealing with the slanderous accusation that the respected deceased had

turned to a gentile court of law (R. Hayim Palaggi, *Ruah hayim*, vol. 2 [Izmir, 1877], 32: 77d). On the gravity of an affront to the honor of the dead, see Khuli, *Me-am loez*, Exodus, Mishpatim, 248a.

- 50 A. Cohen, E. Simon-Pikali and O. Salama, *Yehudim be-veit ha-mishpat ha-muslemi: Hevrah, kalkalah ve-irgun kehilati bi-yerushalayim ha-otomanit, ha-meah ha-16* (Jerusalem, 1993), doc. 170, pp. 165-66, and doc. 171, p. 166; Cohen and Simon-Pikali, *Yehudim . . . ha-meah ha-18*, doc. 238, pp. 279-80.
- 51 R. Moshe Alashkar, *Sheelot u-tshuvot* (Sdilkov, 1834), 44b.
- 52 See, e.g., R. Yehiel Bassan, *Sheelot u-tshuvot* (Constantinople, 1736), 44: 28c.
- 53 R. Haboucha, *Types and Motifs of Judeo-Spanish Folktales* (New York, 1992), 345-50; Cohen, Simon-Pikali, and Salama, *Yehudim . . . ha-meah ha-16*, doc. 170, pp. 165-66; A. K. Sanjian and A. Tietze, *Eremya Chelebi Komurjian's Armeno-Turkish Poem "The Jewish Bride"* (Wiesbaden, 1981), 79.
- 54 Papo, *Pele yoets*, part 2, "Kavod," 3b.
- 55 "Ken mucho te onra desonrarte kere"—namely, Someone who honors you excessively means to embarrass you (Gaon, *Besamim mi-sfarad*, 102); "El plazer achado en kara es una desonra"—Praising a person to his face is a lack of honor (Saportay Beja, *Refranes*, 160).
- 56 Papo, *Pele yoets*, "Kavod," 2b. Admonishments on this subject may be found in the writings of

- R. Elijah haCohen of Izmir. See also Yaron Ben-Naeh, "Oni vеха-hitmodedut imo ba-hevrah ha-yehudit ha-othmanit," *Sefunot* 23 (2003): 195–238.
- 57 See Y. Hacker, "Yotsei sfarad ba-imperryah ha-othmanit ba-meah ha-tet zayin: Kehilah ve-hevrah," in *Moreshet sfarad*, ed. H. Beinart (Jerusalem, 1991), 473.
- 58 Kolonimus, *Proverbs and Sayings . . . Bosnia and Herzegovina*, no. 573.
- 59 Gaon, *Besamim mi-sfarad*, 100.
- 60 B. Uziel, *Min ha-folklor el ha-safrut bi-yehudit-sfaradit (Ladino)*, ed. S. Rephael (Tel Aviv, 1988), 12; Shaul, "Grandeza," 11.
- 61 On calling attention to the fact that the person was distinguished, see, e.g., R. Judah Zarko, *Yefeh nof* (Venice, ca. 1578), 12b.
- 62 R. Yomtov Zahalon, *Sheelot u-tshuvot*, part 2 (Venice, 1694): 177: 142d. For examples of the use of the epithet "honorable" on women's gravestone inscriptions, see Y. S. Immanuel, *Matsevot saloniki*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem, 1963), 583, 740.
- 63 On the Meyuhaf family as an elite within the Judeo-Sephardic elitist group, see Alexander-Frizer, *Maaseh ahuv va-hetsi*, 207–20, and P. Morag-Talmon, "Mishpahot sfaradiyot bi-yerushalayim ba-meah ha-19," in *Mishpahot be-yisrael*, ed. L. Shamgar-Handelman and R. Bar-Yosef (Jerusalem, 1991), 33–49.
- 64 Papo, *Pele yoets*, part 1, "Zaken," 72b–74a; see also *ibid.*, part 2, "Kavod," 1a–2a. Papo makes suggestions for honoring parents in additional ways, such as

- bringing them for burial in the Holy Land and taking measures to commemorate them.
- 65 Saporta y Beja, *Refranes*, 197.
- 66 See, e.g., Alexander and Hasan-Rokem, "Ein yom shlishi bli shemesh," 278–79.
- 67 Shulhan Arukh, Yoreh deah, 242–44. On the obligation to show respect to rabbis and Torah scholars, see Papo, *Pele yoets*, "Kavod," 2a–b.
- 68 R. Hayim Benbenesht, *Baey hayey*, Hoshen mishpat, vol. 1 (Salonica, 1791), 236: 296a.
- 69 For a verdict of an individual who dishonored a former rabbi, see R. Yaakov leVeit haLevi, *Sheelot u-tshuvot* (Venice, 1632), 50: 97c. On the marks of honor due to the communal rabbi, see M. Benayahu, *Marbits torah* (Jerusalem, 1953), 41–54, and R. David Ibn Zimra, *Sheelot u-tshuvot*, vol. 3 (Fyorda, 1781), 518: 27b. Withdrawing authorities from him was considered "a diminishment of respect."
- 70 For a communal regulation from Manissa (Magnesia) in the sixteenth century, see Karo, *Avkat rokhel*, 206: 131c. On the punishment of someone who shows disrespect for a Torah scholar, see R. Avraham Alegre, *Sheelot u-tshuvot* (Salonica, 1793), Orah hayim, 8: 22b, and Benbenesht, *Baey hayey*, 236: 96a.
- 71 For a source from Izmir in the mid-nineteenth century, see R. Hayim Palaggi, *Tokhehat hayim*, vol. 1 (Salonica, 1840), 26b. On the respect shown to emissaries from the Holy Land, though greatly idealized and without reservations, see A. Yaari, *Shluhei*

*erets-yisrael* (Jerusalem, 1951), 33–43.

- 72 For a case of dishonoring the rabbis, see Benbenesht, *Shaar yehoshua*, vol. 2, Yoreh deah, nos. 17–22. On the attitude toward rabbis, see Ben-Naeh, "Ha-hevrah ha-yehudit," 355–57.
- 73 "The insistence on honor and the anger demonstrated by the Torah scholars is not bad because their intention is only for the sanctification of God's name and for the glory of the Torah" (R. Shmuel Yaffe Ashkenazi, *Yefeh enayim* [Venice, 1631], 31c).
- 74 HaCohen, *Shevet mussar*, 10b. In another place he complained about the inflation in rabbinic honorary titles; see R. Elijah haCohen, *Yado ba-kol* (Izmir, 1867), 97b.
- 75 R. Hayim David Hazan, *Nediv lev* (Izmir, 1860), 116: 227b.
- 76 Alkalay, *Imrot u-fitgamim*, 129. This assumption was challenged by the lower strata of society, and other proverbs stated that it was better to be a poor man with honor than a rich man without.
- 77 As the proverb says, "Los panios dan honores"—The clothes honor the man. See Moscona, *Pninei sfarad*, 139, and Gaon, *Besamim mi-sfarad*, 101.
- 78 R. Menahem de Lonzano, *Shtei yadot* (Venice, 1618), 135b–136a.
- 79 On poverty as a material, cultural, and social condition, see Ben-Naeh, "Oni vеха-hitmodedut," 199–206.
- 80 See, e.g., De Medina, *Sheelot u-tshuvot*, Yoreh deah, 139: 90b. On the obligation of the young to listen to their elders and to show them the proper respect,

see R. Moshe Almosnino, *Meamets koah* (Venice, 1588), sermon 22: 177b.

- 81 E.g., a sermon in praise of obedience: "It is a good practice to listen to the community leaders and to treat them with honor" (R. Naftali Ashkenazi, *Imrei shefer* [Venice, 1607], 95b).
- 82 R. Hayim Palaggi, *Hikekei lev*, vol. 1 (Salonica, 1840), Orah hayim, 9: 13c.
- 83 However, "The Kolelut [the overall leadership of the Jewish communities] of the Holy City of Jerusalem shall outlay no funds for honors for any person in the world" (*Sefer Takanot ve-haskamot u-minhagim hanohagim*, ed. R. Hayim Avraham Gagim [Jerusalem, 1842], 33: 35a). On fraternal societies in the Ottoman Empire, see Y. Ben-Naeh, "Beyn gildah le-kahal: Ha-havarot ha-yehudiyot ba-imperryah ha-otomanit ba-meot ha-yod zayin vеха-yod het," *Zion* 63 (1998): 287, 291–93.
- 84 See, e.g., Mitrani, *Sheelot u-tshuvot*, vol. 1, 180: 83a–b; Perahiya, *Parah mateh aharon*, vol. 2, 98: 141c.
- 85 See R. Hayim Benbenesht, *Sheelot u-tshuvot*, vol. 2 (Constantinople, 1743), Orah hayim, 69: 46a, 11: 8b.
- 86 See Papo, *Pele yoets*, "Zaken," 72b–74a, and A. Galanté, *Histoire des Juifs de Turquie*, vol. 3 (Istanbul, 1985–86), 110.
- 87 A. Refik, *Istanbul Hayati*, vol. 1 (Istanbul, 1930), no. 40, p. 124. There is evidence for Jews using this title in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Istanbul and Cairo.

- 88 For the compilations of bills and letters, see Zarko, *Yefeh nof*; R. Moshe haCohen, *Et sofer* (Fyorda, 1691); and Yehoshua ben Reuven, *Kol yehoshua*. Hundreds of formularies of letters from Jerusalem of the seventeenth century have been published in Mina Rozen, *Ha-kehilah ha-yehudit bi-yerushalayim ba-meah ha-yod zayin* (Tel Aviv, 1985), 363–562.
- 89 Benbenesht, *Baey hayey*, 175: 206d.
- 90 R. Yosef Almosnino, *Edut bi-yehosef*, vol. 2 (Constantinople, 1733), 31: 66b, 67c.
- 91 HaCohen, *Shevet mussar*, 35d; R. Eliyah haCohen, *Agadat eliyahu*, vol. 1 (Izmir, 1755), 112b.
- 92 L. Bornstein-Makovetzky, *Pinkas beit ha-din be-kushta, 1710–1903* (Lod, 1999), 120.
- 93 For examples of bills of betrothal and wedding arrangements, see R. Daniel Istrosa, *Magen giborim* (Salonica, 1754), Orah hayim, 73: 122a–b, and R. Moshe Shilton, *Bnei moshe* (Constantinople, 1713), 44: 90a–d. A Salonican regulation orders an addition to the daughters' inheritance beyond "the tithing, when it is insufficient for the value of the daughters' honor" (R. Yosef David, *Beit David*, vol. 2 [Salonica, 1746], Orah hayim, 74: 70d).
- 94 M. Atias, "Minhagei nisuin be-saloniki," *Edot* 1 (1946): 28–35, esp. 29–32.
- 95 See, e.g., R. Ezra Malki, *Ein mishpat* (Constantinople, 1780), Orah hayim, 2: 54c; R. Moshe haCohen, *Kehumat olam* (Constantinople, 1740), 3: 2d; and Cohen and Simon-Pikali, *Yehudim . . . ha-meah ha-18*, index. As for a widow, see Gagin, *Sefer Takanot*, 12: 32a.
- 96 R. Hayim Palaggi, *Masa hayim* (Izmir, 1874), 6: 2d.
- 97 A. Galanté, *Histoire des Juifs d'Anatolie*, vol. 1: *Les Juifs d'Izmir* (Istanbul, 1937), 299–300.