

Quotes of Kitzur Shulchon Oruch by Rabbi Shlomo Ganzfried Volume 1 Translated by Rabbi Eliyahu Touger

Yehudah ben Tema would say: “Be bold like a leopard and swift like an eagle, run like a deer, and be brave like a lion to do the will of your Father in heaven” (Ovos 5:23). “Bold like a leopard” implies that a person should not be embarrassed before the people who scoff at his service of God, blessed be He.” “Swift like an eagle” relates to a person’s sight, teaching that he should be swift to close his eyes when he sees evil for that is the beginning of sin. The heart desires, the eyes see, and the limbs complete the act. “Run like a deer” relates to one’s feet. One’s feet should run to good. “Brave like a lion” relates to the heart. The courage required in the service of God is rooted in the heart. This teaches that a person should apply his heart to do His service, overcome the evil inclination, and be victorious over it, as a mighty man overcomes his enemy, conquers him, and throws him to the ground.¹

A person who sees that a colleague has sinned or is proceeding on an improper path is commanded to try to influence him to rectify his behavior, and to inform him that he is sinning by performing these wicked acts, as we are commanded: “You shall surely rebuke your colleague” (Leviticus 19:17). One should rebuke a colleague in

¹ 4 – Chapter 1:3

private, regardless of whether he is rebuking him about wrongs committed between man and man or about wrongs committed against God. He should speak to him gently, in a soft tone. He should explain to him that he is saying these things only for his benefit, to allow him to acquire a portion in the world to come. Whoever has the opportunity to protest against the committing of a sin and fails to do so is considered responsible for that sin, since he did not protest.²

A person should be very careful not to do anything that will make him suspect of having committed a sin (even though he has not committed it). Thus, [*Shekalim* 3b] relates that the priest who would take money to purchase sacrifices from the Temple treasury would not enter wearing a garment in which anything could be hidden, for a person must satisfy his obligations towards humanity as well as those owed God, blessed be He, as [Numbers 32:22] states: “and you shall be guiltless before God and before Israel.” Similarly, [Proverbs 3:4] states: “You shall find grace and favor in the eyes of God and of men.”³

It is a positive mitzvah to give charity to the poor of Israel, as [Deuteronomy 15:8] states: “You shall surely open your hand for

² 134 – Chapter 29:15 – See more details there for greater context

³ 136 – Chapter 29:20

him,” and [Leviticus 25:36] states: “And your brother shall live with you.” Whoever sees a poor man requesting help and turns away from him without giving him charity violates a negative command, as [Deuteronomy 15:7] states; “Do not close your heart or shut your hand from your poor brother.” Charity is the sign of the descendants of our Patriarch Abraham, as [Genesis 18:19] states: “for I know him; that he will command his children...to perform tzedokoh.” The throne of Israel will not be established and the true faith will not stand except through tzedokoh, as [Isaiah 54:14] states: “I shall be established through tzedokoh.” Giving tzedokoh supersedes all the sacrifices, as [Proverbs 21:3] states: “The performance of tzedokoh and judgement will be more desirable before God than an altar.” Israel will be redeemed only through tzedokoh, as [Isaiah 1:27] states: “Zion will be redeemed through judgement, and those who return to her through tzedokoh.” A person will never become poor because of giving tzedokoh, nor will any evil or damage come because of tzedokoh, as [Isaiah 32:17] states: “The work of tzedokoh is peace.” Whoever shows mercy will have mercy shown towards him, as [Deuteronomy 13:18] states: “He will grant you mercy, have compassion on you, and make you flourish.” In contrast, the lineage of anyone who is cruel is a matter of question. The Holy One, blessed be He, is close to the call of the poor, as [Job 34:28] states: “And He hears the cries of the poor.” Accordingly, one should take great care lest they cry out, for a covenant has been established with them, as [Exodus 22:26] states:

“And it shall come to pass that he will cry to Me, and I will hear, for I am compassionate.” The Jerusalem Talmud (see Shir Hashirim Rabboh 6:11) states: “The door which will not open for the poor will open for the physician.” A person should meditate on the fact that, at every moment, he asks God for his livelihood. Just as he requests that the Holy One, blessed be He, hear his cry, so too should he hear the cry of the poor. He should also meditate on the fact that the wheel of fortune turns constantly, and ultimately either he, his children, or his grandchildren will need to receive charity. A person should not think: How can I reduce my wealth by giving it to the poor? He must realize that the money is not his, but rather a trust granted to him in order to carry out the will of the One who entrusted it to him. This is the portion which he will ultimately receive for all his labor in this world, as [Isaiah 58:8] states: “Your tzedokoh will proceed before you.” Tzedokoh wards off harsh decrees and prolongs one’s life. Every person is obligated to give charity according to his potential, even a poor man who derives his livelihood from charity... Even if he is able to give only a small amount, he should not hold himself back, because the small amount he gives is equivalent to a large amount given by a rich man.⁴

⁴ 152-153 – Chapter 34:1-2

What is meant by wronging someone with words? One should not inquire about the price of an article from a colleague when one has no intention of buying it. If one seeks to purchase grain, one should not tell him, “go to so and so,” when he knows that the latter does not have any grain to sell. To a Baal Teshuvoh, one should not say: “Remember your previous deeds.” If a person was afflicted with suffering, Heaven forbid, one should not say anything to him which resembles the remark made to Job by his colleagues (Job 4:6-7): “Can you not rely on your fear of God?... Please, try to recall, did an innocent man ever perish?” (They addressed him in this fashion only because he had complained against God’s providence and His attributes.) If a person asks with regard to an aspect of wisdom, one should not approach a person unfamiliar with the subject and ask him: “What is your opinion of the matter?” The same applies with regard to similar matters which cause emotional aggravation. It is forbidden to call a person who has an uncomplimentary nickname by that name - even though he is already accustomed to being called by it and is no longer embarrassed - if one’s intent is to shame him. This is also considered as wronging someone with words.⁵

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⁵ 270-271 – Chapter 63:2-3

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