

Quotes of Kitzur Shulchon Oruch by Rabbi Shlomo Ganzfried Volume 2 Translated by Rabbi Eliyahu Touger

When a person sees his father violate the Torah's instructions, he should not say, "Father, you have transgressed against the Torah's words." Instead, he should say, "Father, isn't it written in the Torah that...," as if he is asking him, and not as if he is rebuking him. Thus, his father will draw the conclusion on his own, without becoming embarrassed.¹

A teacher of children who neglects the children and leaves the schoolroom, or performs other work while he is with them, or is lazy in performing his task, is among those whom [Jeremiah 48:10] adjures: "Cursed be he who performs the work of God deceitfully." Therefore, an individual should not be appointed to be a teacher unless he is God-fearing, teaches them at a fast pace, and instructs them carefully. A teacher should not stay up very late at night, lest he be listless while teaching during the day. Similarly, he should not fast or refrain from eating or drinking, nor should he eat and drink more than normal, because such activities prevent him from being able to teach properly. When a person deviates [from these principles], he forfeits his privileges, and he should be removed from his position.²

[Leviticus 19:26] states: "Do not act as a soothsayer and do not tell fortunes." What is meant by a soothsayer? One who says, "Since my bread fell from my mouth...," "Since my staff fell from my hand...," "Since my son called me from behind...," "Since a raven called to me...," "Since a deer crossed my path...," "Since a snake appeared on my right...," or "Since a fox appeared on my left...," "...I will not travel on this path, for it will not bring success." Similarly, this includes those who listen to the chirping of a bird and try to predict the future or view this as a good or bad omen. This category also includes someone who, when asked to repay a loan, says, "Please do me this favor. Don't press me about this now. It's the beginning of the day and I don't want to start the day by paying money." The same applies when one makes such statements on Saturday night or on Rosh Chodesh. Similarly, this category includes those who say, "One must slaughter this rooster because it crowed at night" or "One must slaughter this chicken because it crowed like a rooster." All of the above and any similar acts are forbidden, and a person who performs them transgresses one of the Torah's negative commandments. [Regarding the latter instance,] there are authorities

¹ 599 – Chapter 143:10

² 667 – Chapter 165:12

who say that if one orders that a rooster or chicken be slaughtered without stating the reason, it is permitted to slaughter it. This is the prevailing custom.³

One must take care not to throw fragments of glass and the like in places where they can cause injury...If one's neighbor has a headache, Heaven forbid, and hammering will disturb him, one should not beat out grits or the like in one's home, lest the noise of the pounding reach one's neighbor's home and disturb him.⁴

It is a positive commandment to construct a guardrail for one's roof, as [Deuteronomy 22:8] commands: "And you shall make a guardrail for your roof." The guardrail must be at least ten handbreadths high and must be strong enough to support a person who leans against it. Since we do not use our roofs, there is no obligation [to construct a guardrail around them]. It is not, however, merely a roof that requires a guardrail. In any situation where there is a danger that a person may stumble and die, we are obligated to construct a guardrail or other appropriate protective device. Whoever is negligent and does not tend to such a situation negates the fulfillment of a positive commandment and violates a prohibition, as the verse continues, "Do not allow a dangerous situation to prevail in your home" [loc. cit.]. Thus, a person who has a storage vat in his courtyard must build a wall that is ten cubits high around it, or place a cover over it, so that another person will not fall in.⁵

It is forbidden to castrate a human being, an animal, a beast, or a fowl. [This applies to both] kosher and non-kosher animals, in Eretz Yisrael and in the Diaspora. A person who castrates a living being is liable for lashes. It is even forbidden to give a male human or a male animal a potion to drink that will deprive him of his virility.⁶

A person who intentionally commits suicide is considered to be a wicked person of the worst order, as [implied by Genesis 9:5]: "I will surely demand the blood of your lives." The entire world was created for the sake of each particular individual. Whoever kills a single person is considered as if he destroyed the entire world. Accordingly, no [mourning rites] are observed for [a person who commits suicide]. One should not rend one's garments over his death, mourn for him, or have him eulogized. He should, however, be buried. Also, the taharoh rites should be performed for him, and he should be dressed in shrouds. The general principle is: Whatever also affects the honor of

³ 668 – Chapter 166:1

⁴ 707 – Chapter 184:3-4

⁵ 716 – Chapter 190:1

⁶ 717 – Chapter 191:5

the living [i.e., the family that he left,] may be performed on his behalf. (The custom regarding the recitation of Kaddish is discussed by the Chasam Safer, Yoreh De'oh, Responsum 326 Imrei Esh, Responsum 122; and Rav David Cohen, Responsum 30.)... As a general rule, we do not assume that people are wicked. Therefore, if a person is found strangled or hanged, we act on the presumption that was murdered by others and not that he committed suicide [unless there is conclusive evidence to the contrary]... A child who commits suicide is not considered to have done so intentionally. Similarly, if it appears that an adult committed suicide because he was emotionally unstable or because he was possessed by madness, he is not considered to have performed the transgression intentionally. Similarly, [the restrictions mentioned above do not apply when] a person kills himself under duress, because he fears that he will be tortured - as King Saul committed suicide to escape the desultory treatment he would have received by the Philistines [1 Samuel 31:4]. He should be treated no differently from other deceased persons; nothing should be withheld from him.⁷

A mourner is forbidden to study Torah, because [studying leads to happiness], as [Psalms 19:9] states: "The precepts of God are just, gladdening the heart," and a mourner is forbidden to engage in anything that brings him joy. One is forbidden to study the Torah, the Prophets' works, the Sacred Writings, the Mishnah, the Talmud, works of Jewish law, and the Aggadic texts. One may, however, study the Book of Job and the Book of Eichoh, the prophecies of retribution in the Book of Jeremiah, the Talmudic chapter *Eilu Megalchim* (the third chapter of *Mo'ed Koton*), which discusses the laws pertaining to a mourner and a person placed under a ban of ostracism, the tractate of *S'mochos*, and the laws of mourning in the works of the later halachic authorities. Even those works that are allowed to be studied, may not be studied intensely, investigating a question or an answer [for this brings a person happiness].⁸

Blessed are You, God, who has chosen wise men and their teachings. Please, in Your great mercies, make me one of those who bring merit to the many. And in that way, I will gain merit together with them, to purify my spirit and my soul. May you erase in Your abounding mercies those sins that I have committed, and may You cause me to turn to You in complete repentance.⁹

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⁷ 751 – Chapter 201:1-3

⁸ 773 – Chapter 210:1

⁹ 795