

## Developing Humility toward Others

*For you are called to freedom, brothers; only don't use this freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but serve one another through love. For the entire law is fulfilled in one statement: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. - Galatians 5:13-14 HCSB*

Seek out opportunities to serve secretly. Acting humble in order to gain the acclaim of others is not acceptable.

When you perform a mitzvah, keep in mind the following quote: "All the good things I do are but a drop in the ocean in comparison to what I ought to do."<sup>1</sup>

When you perform a mitzvah for someone, particularly the poor, ask them to bless you. Not only does God listen to these kinds of prayers<sup>2</sup> but it alleviates the shame the person may have from receiving help from your hand. Valuing their prayer of blessing lets them feel that, though they are poor, they still have something to offer. It also emphasizes their possession of a fragment of the image of God and transfers their gaze from you to Him.

Take great pains to serve those who work for you or work with you. Consider their time as more valuable than your own. Consider their needs as more important than your own. Pay your employees well and on time. Provide them with the tools they need to get the job done quickly and safely. Provide opportunities to train and improve themselves.

Always give credit where it is due. Make sure that you never steal another's glory. He is not honorable who receives honor but who gives honor away.

Make it impossible for anyone to rightly accuse you of lashon hara. To speak of the faults of others lightly makes it apparent that you think lightly (if at all) of your own.

Competition in sports or business has its place – but never mistake ability or skill for human value. Human worth does not come with human achievement. Jesus died for the bum on the street as well as the most successful business mogul.

As a matter of personal discipline, try identifying in each person you come across some way in which they are your superior. A physicist may think he is great until he has to call on a simple handyman to unclog his toilet. Then from that point on always associate that person with that trait.

Do not judge others by their achievements but rather by their achievements compared to their potential. A retarded man who does not pass on gossip and who tries to settle arguments may actually be greater than a genius who, though successful by worldly standards, is only achieving a fraction of what he could.

Periodically sit under the teaching of someone who knows much more than you. A high school science teacher may come to believe he knows much about his subject but that same teacher in the presence of Stephen Hawking will quickly realize how little he understands. Purposefully stretch your mind by the teachings of great minds. This is the basic principle behind the entire book of Proverbs.<sup>3</sup>

Carefully listen to others. Humbly remaining unsure of your own correctness will make you tolerant of other views and thus able to learn what you can from them. Don't be so open minded that your brains fall out but recognize that wisdom can be found everywhere.

Very deliberately listen politely to all constructive criticism. Thank people for their advice, even when you disagree with it and don't plan on following it.

When dealing with the less intellectually gifted apply the Golden Rule. Ask yourself "How would I like someone smarter than me to treat me?"

Collect and tell stories that elevate humble, hard-working saints.

Never seek revenge. Leave that particular form of justice in the very capable hands of Nathan N'Qamah.

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<sup>1</sup> from "the Gate of Humility" in the *Orchot Tzaddikim* (The Path of the Righteous)

<sup>2</sup> Proverbs 22:9; Deuteronomy 15:9; 24:15

<sup>3</sup> Proverbs 1:5-6