

EIGHT CHAPTERS □ CHAPTER 4:3

by Rabbi Yaakov Feldman

Let's spell out some of the finer distinctions among these traits.

While it might be good to be "stingy" (better yet -- given that our choice of terms is fairly arbitrary -- "thrifty" or "frugal") when you're truly short of funds and need to save whatever you have for essentials, and it might be good to be "extravagant" with praise or love, it's most often best to be simply but wholeheartedly "generous".

Though it would do us well sometimes to try to be more "daring" (or "venturesome") with some life-choices and more "cowardly" (or "extra- cautious") when it comes to our investments, for example, it's best to be "courageous" (or "bravehearted") about things.

In as much as "brashness" has us seem self-assured and clever at first but proves to be crass in the end, and since being "dull" (or "humdrum") anesthetizes the soul, we'd do well to strive for even-keeled "simple happiness".

Given that "arrogance" is almost always loathsome and "meekness" is inglorious and off-putting, simple and guileless "humility" is best.

Knowing that blow-hearted "boastfulness" and its counterpart, feigned and contrived "humbleness", are always distasteful, we're encouraged to be honestly "earnest" instead.

Since "indulgence" always implies a lack of decent self-restraint, and "sloth" is actually rooted in too little self-respect, we should strive for simple "contentment".

As "wrath" is dangerous, and "indifference" is selfish and lazy, we're advised to foster "composure".

And finally, because "audacity" in the face of our wrongdoings signifies out-and-out hubris while "bashfulness" is just too diffident, we're to exhibit "shamefacedness" when we're wrong or wrong-headed.

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