

עַת לְחִשּׁוֹת וְעַת לְדַבֵּר

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Tao Te Ching (Stephen Mitchell translation)

Those who know don't talk.

Those who talk don't know.

משנה אבות א':י"ז

(יז) שְׁמַעוֹן בְּנוֹ אוֹמֵר, כָּל יְמֵי גְדֻלְתִּי בֵּין הַחֲכָמִים, וְלֹא מְצָאתִי לְגוֹף טוֹב אֲלָא שְׁתִּיקָה. וְלֹא הַמְדַרְשׁ הוּא הַעֲקָר, אֲלָא הַמַּעֲשֶׂה. וְכָל הַמְרַבֶּה דְבָרִים, מְבִיא חַטָּא:

Pirkei Avot 1:17

(17) Shimon, his son, says, "All my days I grew up among the Sages, and I did not find anything good for the body except silence. And the exposition [of Torah] is not what is essential, but the action. And whoever increases words brings sin."

משנה אבות ג':י"ג

(יג) רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא אוֹמֵר, שְׁחֹק וְקִלּוֹת רָאשׁ, מְרַגְּלִין לְעֶרְוָה. מְסַרְת, סִיג לְתוֹרָה. מַעֲשָׂרוֹת, סִיג

לְעֹשֶׂר. נְדָרִים, סִיג לְפָרִישׁוֹת. סִיג לְחֻכְמָה, שְׁתִּיקָה:

Pirkei Avot 3:13

(13) Rabbi Akiva says: Joking and lightheartedness acclimate toward promiscuity. Tradition is a safeguarding fence around Torah. Tithes are a safeguarding fence around wealth. Vows are a safeguarding fence around abstinence. A safeguarding fence around wisdom is silence.

מגילה י"ח א

דרש ר' יהודה איש כפר גבוריא ואמרי לה איש כפר גבור חיל מאי דכתיב (תהלים סה, ב) לך דומיה תהלה סמא דכולה משתוקא כי אתא רב דימי אמר אמרי במערבא מלה בסלע משתוקא בתרין:

Megillah 18a

The Gemara relates: **Rabbi Yehuda, a man of Kefar Gibboraya, and some say he was a man of Kefar Gibboraya, taught: What is the meaning of that which is written: “For You silence is praise”** (Psalms 65:2)? **The best remedy of all is silence**, i.e., the optimum form of praising God is silence. The Gemara relates: **When Rav Dimi came from Eretz Israel to Babylonia, he said: In the West, Eretz Yisrael, they say an adage: If a word is worth one *sela*, silence is worth two.**

Tzava'at HaRivash 133 (compendium of Teachings of the Ba'al Shem Tov and his student R' Dov Baer, the Maggid of Mezritch):

“Whoever engages in excessive talk brings on *cheit* (sin).” (*Avot* 1:17) [The term *cheit*] denotes deficiency. Even when speaking with others words of the wisdom of the Torah, silence is much more preferable. For in silence one can think of the greatness of [God],

blessed be He, and join oneself unto Him, blessed be He, more so than the joining by means of speech.

Sometimes one can be lying in bed, and to others it appears that he is sleeping, but at that very time he is actually in solitude with the Creator, blessed be He.



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