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CHAPTER IV.

MISHNA A. Ben Zoma was in the habit of saying: Who is a wise man? He who learns from everybody, as it is written [Ps. cxix. 99]: 'Above all my teachers have I obtained intelligence!' Who is a hero? He who conquers his passions, as it is written [Prov. xvi. 32]: 'One that is slow to anger is better than a hero; and he that ruleth his spirit, than the conqueror of a city.' Who is a rich man? He who is satisfied with his lot, as it is written [Ps. cxxviii. 2]: 'For thou eatest the labor of thy hands: then wilt thou be happy, and it shall be well with thee.' 'Wilt thou be happy' in this world, 'it shall be well with thee' in the world to come. Who is honored? He who honors his fellowmen, as it is written [I Samuel ii. 30]: "For those that honor me will I honor, and those that despise me shall be lightly esteemed."

MISHNA B. Ben Azai was in the habit of saying: "Hasten to fulfil the commandment of little importance as if it were of much importance, and flee from all manner of sin, for the fulfilment of one precept brings about that of another, and one transgression brings about another; for the reward of virtue is virtue itself, and the reward of sin is sin." He likewise said: "Despise no man, and consider nothing as too far removed to come to pass; for there is no man but hath his day, and no event that may not come."

MISHNA C. R. Levitas of Jabneh said: "Be exceedingly lowly of spirit, for the hope of man is the worm." "R. Johanan b. Baroquah said: "Whoso profanes the name of Heaven in secret, they punish him openly.

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[paragraph continues] Error, like design, is punishable as to the profanation of His name."

MISHNA D. R. Ishmael said: "He that learns in order to teach, they grant him the faculty to learn and to teach; he that learns in order to practise, they grant him the faculty to learn, to teach, to preserve, and to practise."

MISHNA E. R. Zadoq was in the habit of saying: "Wear not the law of God as a crown to exalt thyself withal, nor use it as a spade to dig therewith (for wealth)." [And thus was Hillel wont to say: "And he who serves himself with the tiara perishes."] Thus thou art to learn that he who makes use of his learning in the Law to further his own selfish ends loses all merit.

MISHNA F. R. Jose said: "Whosoever honors the Torah is himself held in honor, and whosoever dishonors the Torah is himself dishonored with men."

MISHNA G. R. Ishmael said: "He that refrains himself from judgment, frees himself from enmity, and rapine, and false swearing; and he that is arrogant in decision is foolish, wicked, and

puffed up in spirit."

MISHNA H. He used to say: "Judge not alone, for none may judge alone save One; and say not, 'Accept ye my opinion,' for they are free to choose, and not thou."

MISHNA I. R. Jonathan said: "Whosoever fulfils the Law in poverty will at length fulfil it in wealth, and whosoever neglects the Law in wealth will at length neglect it in poverty."

MISHNA J. R. Meir said: "Lessen your business, that you have more time for the study of the Law, and be lowly in spirit unto every man; and if thou idlest away thy time without study of the Law, thou wilt have many idlers against thee; and if thou laborest in the Law, He hath much reward to give unto thee."

MISHNA K. R. Eliezer b. Jacob said: "He who performs one precept has acquired unto himself one advocate, and he who commits one transgression has gotten

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to himself one accuser. Repentance and good deeds are as a shield against punishment."

MISHNA L. R. Jehudah the Sandlar said: "Whatsoever congregation is for the sake of Heaven will in the end succeed; and that which is not for a divine purpose will in the end not succeed."

MISHNA M. R. Elazar b. Shamna said: "Let the honor of thy disciple be as dear unto thee as the honor of thine associate; and the honor of thine associate as the fear 1 of thy master; and the fear of thy master as the fear of Heaven."

MISHNA N. R. Jehudah said: "Be careful in thy study, for error in study counts for an intentional sin."

MISHNA O. R. Simeon was wont to say: "There are three crowns--the crown of the Law, the crown of the priesthood, and the crown of royalty. But the crown of a fair name excelleth them all."

MISHNA P. R. Nehorai said: "Betake thyself to a place of Torah, and say not that it will come after thee, because thine associates will confirm it unto thee, and (moreover) lean not unto thine own understanding."

Tosephtha--Aboth of R. Nathan.

2"Who is a wise man? he who learns from everybody." Who is the most modest? One who is as modest as Moses our master was, as it is written [Numb. xii. 3]: "But the man Moses was very meek." Who is the richest of all? One that is satisfied with his lot, as it is written [Ps. cxxviii. 2]: "When thou eatest the labor of thy hands: (then) wilt thou be happy, and it shall be well with thee." Who is the greatest of all heroes? One that controls his passion, as it is written [Prov. xvi. 32]: "One that is slow to anger is better than a hero; and he that ruleth his spirit, than the

conqueror of a city." And one that

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is the ruler of his spirit is considered as if he had conquered a city full of heroes, as it is written [ibid. xxi. 22]: "A wise man scaleth the city of the mighty"; and "mighty" means mighty in the Torah, as it is written [Ps. ciii. 20]: "Mighty in strength, that execute his word." There are others who say that it means the ministering angels, as it is written [ibid.]: "Bless the Lord, ye his angels, mighty in strength," etc. There are still others who say that the greatest hero is he who makes his enemy his friend.

"*Despise no man.*" As it is written [Prov. xiii. 13]: "Whoso despiseth the word shall fall in debt to it; but he that feareth the commandment will be rewarded."

He also used to say: "One who is taught the Law while young is like unto a heifer which was tamed while yet small, as it is written [Hosea, x. 11]: "And Ephraim is as a well-taught heifer that loved to tread out the corn." The one who is taught the Torah in his old age, however, is like a cow which was tamed when already old, as it is written [ibid. iv. 16]: "For like an untamable cow is Israel disobedient."

He also used to say: "He that is taught the Torah in his youth is similar to a woman who kneads her dough with warm water, and one that is taught the Torah in his old age is similar to a woman who kneads her dough with cold water."

1R. Eliezer b. Jacob said: "One that is taught the Law when young is similar to a screed which was written on new paper, and one who is taught the Law when old is similar to a screed which was written on old paper."

R. Simeon b. Gamaliel adds to the above the following: "One that is taught the Law when young is similar to a young man who marries a young woman; they are suited to and desire each other. One that is taught in his old age, however, is similar to an old man who marries a young woman: she is suitable to him, but not he to her. She desires him, but he avoids her, as it is written [Ps. cxxvii. 4]: "Like arrows in the hand of a mighty man, so are the children of youth"; and immediately after it is written [ibid., ibid. 5]: "Happy is the man that hath his quiver filled with them."

One that learns and forgets is similar to a woman who bears children but buries them, as it is written [Hosea, ix. 12]: "But though they were to bring up their children, yet would I bereave

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them, that there should be no man." Do not read •••••• (would I bereave them), but •••••• (would I forget them). As it is written [Deut. xi. 18]: "Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart," etc., *i.e.*, the words of the Torah shall be distinguished from each other, and at same time shall be marked upon thee side by side, as it is written [Prov. vii. 3]: "Bind them around thy fingers; write them upon the table of thy heart" (*i.e.*, as the fingers are separate from each other and still side by side of each other), and it is also written [ibid. vi. 21]: "Bind them upon thy heart continually, tie them about thy throat."

MISHNA Q. R. Janai said: "Neither the security of the wicked nor the afflictions of the righteous are within the grasp of our understanding."

MISHNA R. R. Mathia b. 'Heresh was in the habit of saying: "Be beforehand in saluting every man! Be the lion's tail rather than the fox's head!"

MISHNA S. R. Jacob said: "This world is, as it were, the antechamber of the world hereafter; therefore, prepare thyself in the antechamber, that thou mayest be admitted into the banqueting hall!"

MISHNA T. He used to say: "Better is one hour of repentance and good deeds in this world than all the life of the world to come, though one hour of refreshment of spirit in the world to come is better than all the life in this world."

MISHNA U. R. Simeon b. Elazar said: "Do not seek to appease thy friend in the hour of his passion, and do not seek to console him in the hour when his dead is laid out before him; and do not interrogate him in the hour of his vow, and strive not to see him in the hour of his disgrace."

MISHNA V. Samuel the Little used always to repeat the following passage [Prov. xxiv. 17, 18]: "At the fall of thy enemy do not rejoice, and at his stumbling let not thy heart be glad, lest the Lord see it, and it be

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displeasing in his eyes, and he turn away from him his wrath."

MISHNA W. Elisha b. Abuyah said: "He who learns as a lad, to what is he like? To ink written on fresh paper. And he who learns when old, to what is he like? To ink written on blotted paper.

MISHNA X. R. Jose b. Jehudah, the villager of Babylon, 1 said: "Whom does he resemble, who learns from the young? Him who eats unripe grapes and drinks the wine fresh from the wine-press! But whom does he resemble, who learns from old men? Him who eats ripe grapes and drinks old wine!"

MISHNA Y. Rabbi was in the habit of saying: "Look not upon the pitcher, but upon what it contains. Many a new pitcher is full of old wine, and many an old one does not even hold new wine."

MISHNA Z. Rabbi Eliezer the Kapar said, "Envy, sensuality, and ambition destroy life."

MISHNA AA. He likewise said: "Those born unto the world are destined to die; the dead to live on again; and those who enter the eternal life, to be judged. Therefore let it be recognized, understood, and remembered, that He the Almighty, the Creator, Architect, He is the counsellor, He the judge, He the witness, He the accuser. He is always ready to give judgment; blessed be He! for, before Him there is no injustice, no oversight, no regard for rank, no bribery. Know that

all will appear in the account! Accept not the assurance of thy passions, that the grave will be a place of refuge for thee. For without thy consent wert thou created, wert born into the world without thy choice; thou art now living without thine own volition, without thine approval thou wilt have to die; so likewise without thy consent thou wilt have to render account before the Supreme King, the Holy One, blessed be He!"

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Tosephtha--Aboth of R. Nathan.

1Said Elisha b. Abuyah: "A virtuous man who has studied the Law diligently is similar to one who builds a foundation of stones and a superstructure of bricks; though they be inundated, yet they cannot be moved. One who is not virtuous, in spite of having studied the Law, is similar to one who lays stones on a brick foundation: the smallest freshet will overturn the building."

He used to say: "The former is also similar to lime which is spread upon stones, even heavy rain cannot melt it; and the latter is similar to lime which is spread on bricks, the lightest shower will melt it."

He also used to say: "The former is also similar to a cup which has a $\psi\eta\phi\omicron\varsigma$ (a four-cornered polished stone), even when it is turned over, still some of its contents remain; but the latter is similar to a cup without a $\psi\eta\phi\omicron\varsigma$, as soon as it is turned over, everything in it is spilled."

He used to say: "The former is also similar to a horse which has a complete harness; and the latter is similar to a horse which lacks a bridle: the man who mounts him is soon thrown off."

He also used to say: One who is taught when young, absorbs the words of the Torah in his blood, and he can utter them explicitly, but the reverse is with one who is taught when old. There is also a proverb to this effect: "If thou hast not desired them in thy youth, how wilt thou reach them in thy old age?"

He also used to say: "The words of the Torah are as hard to purchase as golden vessels, and as easy to lose as glassware, as it is written [Job, xxviii. 17]: 'She cannot be estimated after gold and glass.'" He brings together gold with glass, as golden vessels when broken can be repaired; but glassware when broken cannot be repaired, unless melted and formed again. And what does it mean: "And not in exchange for her (can) vessels of refined gold (be taken)"? [ibid.]. That the countenance of him who occupies himself with the words of the Torah, and observes them, shines as refined gold; but the countenance of him who occupies himself with them, and does not observe them, becomes dark as glass does.

He also used to say: "It is possible for a man to study the Law continuously for twenty years and forget it in the course of

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two years." How so? If he has not gone over what he had learned for six months, he will pronounce the unclean clean, or *vice versa*. If he has neglected to go over his studies for twelve

months, he will confuse the sayings of the sages; in eighteen months, he will forget the beginning of the Tracts; and in twenty-four, even that of the chapters; and finally will have to be silent altogether. Of him said Solomon [Prov. xxiv. 30, 31]: "By the field of a slothful man I once passed along, and by the vineyard of a man void of sense: and, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, nettles had covered its surface, and its stone wall was broken down." And when the wall of a vineyard falls, the entire vineyard is soon destroyed.

He also used to say: "One who causes his friend to perform a meritorious deed, it is as if he himself had done it." This can be compared to a human king who caught a bird and gave it to one of his servants, saying: "If thou wilt be careful of this bird, I will reward thee; otherwise, I will take thy life for its." So also has the Holy One, blessed be He, said to the Israelites: "The words of the Torah which I gave to you, if you will observe them I will reward you; otherwise, I will take your lives for them," as it is written [Deut. iv. 9]: "For it is not a vain word for you; on the contrary, it is your life."

Tosephtha--Aboth of R. Nathan.

1Ben Azai said: "If the mind is tranquil because of acquired wisdom, it is a good sign; 2 but if made restless by acquired wisdom, it is a bad sign. If the mind is tranquil on account of faith in the Creator, it is a good sign; but if the mind is restless on account of believing in the Creator, it is a bad sign. If one has the sympathies of the sages at the hour of his death, it is a good sign for him; if he has not, it is a bad sign for him. When dying, if his face is turned upward, or he looks straight in the faces of the persons around him, or if his countenance shines, it is a good sign for him. The reverse is unfavorable."

When R. Johanan b. Zakkai was dying, he raised his voice

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in weeping. Said his disciples to him: "Master, thou art as a high pillar, the light of the world, a strong hammer--wherefore criest thou?" He answered: "Am I going before a human king? Such a one is angry at me, it can be only for this world; if he imprisons or slays me, it is only for this world. Moreover, I might appease him with words or bribe him with money. But I am going before the King of kings of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He: if He should be angry at me, it includes both worlds, and whom I cannot appease with words or bribe with money. Besides, there are two ways before me: one leads to the garden of Eden and the other to Gehenna, and I do not know whether I will be condemned to Gehenna, or I will enter the Garden of Eden, as it is written [Ps. xxii. 30]: 'Before him shall bend the knee all that are going down into the dust,' etc.

It is also written [Ex. xxx. 23]: "And then will I take away my hand"; also [Ezek. ii. 10]: "And he spread it out before me, and it was written within and without," etc. "Within" means this world; "without" means the world to come. Others say: "Within" means the sufferings of the righteous, and the welfare of the wicked in this world; and "without" refers to the reward of the upright, and the expiation of the wicked in the world to come.

"And there were written therein lamentations, and dirges, and woe" [ibid.]. "Lamentations" refers to the expiation of the wicked in this world, as it is written [ibid. xxxii. 16]: "This is the

lamentation wherewith they shall lament for her; the daughters of the nations shall lament for her." "*Dirge*" 1 refers to the reward of the upright in the world to come, as it is written [Ps. xcii. 4]: "Upon a ten-stringed instrument, and upon the psaltery; and with the sweet sound 1 of the harp." "*And woe*" refers to the expiation of the wicked in the world to come, as it is written [Ezek. vii. 26]: "Mishap shall come upon mishap, and report shall be spread upon report."

Before he (Rabban Johanan b. Zakkai) died, he said: "Clean the house of all defilement, and put in a chair for Hezekiah, King of Judah."

He used to say: "Whoever dies with a sound mind, or when yet able to talk, or while conversing about the Law, or while

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doing something meritorious, or in a state of gladness, or while laughing, it is a good omen for him; if otherwise, it is a bad omen. If one die on the eve of Sabbath, or at the close of the Day of Atonement, it is a good omen for him; but if at the close of the Sabbath or on the eve of the Day of Atonement, it is a bad omen."

There is a tradition that when R. Eliezer fell ill, it was on the eve of a Sabbath. When R. Aqiba and his comrades visited him, he was sleeping in his chamber; so they stayed in the dining-room. When Hyrcanus his son entered to remove his phylacteries, he was prevented from doing so by his father, who began to cry. He left the chamber, and said to the sages: "My masters, methinks that my father is not clear in his mind." R. Eliezer, however, overheard him, and rejoined: "My son, it is not I who am not clear in my mind, but thou. For thou hast neglected the lighting of the lamps, for which thou art liable to a death penalty by the hand of heaven, and hast instead occupied thyself with the removal of my phylacteries, for which thou art guilty only because of *Shbuth*." When the sages heard that his mind was clear, they sat down at a distance of four ells 1 from his bedside. They inquired of him as to cleanness and uncleanness of many subjects among them; also an amulet or torn phylacteries, are they subject to defilement or not? He answered: "They are. Dip them as they are, and be careful about them, for they form part of the great Halakhoth which were told to Moses on Sinai." And they kept on asking him concerning cleansing, defilement, and the legal baths, saying: Rabbi, What is this? and, What is that? and he answered accordingly--clean, or unclean.

Then R. Eliezer said to the sages: "I wonder whether the scholars of this generation will be punished with death by the hand of heaven?" They inquired: "Rabbi, why so?" And he rejoined: "Because they have not served me."

Later on he said to Aqiba b. Joseph: "Aqiba, why hast thou not served me?" He answered: "Rabbi, I had not the opportunity." And he rejoined: "I wonder whether thou wilt die a natural death." There are others who say that he did not rejoin anything.

When R. Eliezer spoke thus to his disciples, his blood froze within him. Said R. Aqiba: "Rabbi, what will my death be?"

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[paragraph continues] He answered: "Aqiba, thine will be the hardest of all!" Thereupon the latter sat down before him, and said: "Rabbi, now teach me." And he taught him three hundred Halakhoth concerning a bright spot (in the skin of one's flesh). At the same time he raised his two arms, and laid them on his breast, saying: "Woe to me! that my two arms, which are like two holy scrolls, must leave this world. If all the seas were ink, and all the reeds were pens, and all mankind were writers, they could not write down everything I have learned and repeated, and what I heard while serving the sages in the college, and I have not left out of the Torah even as much as a drop of the sea. Moreover, I learn three hundred Halakhoth in the verse, 'Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live' [Ex. xxii. 17] [there are others who say three thousand Halakhoth], and nobody ever asked me about them, except Aqiba b. Joseph; for he said to me once: 'Rabbi, teach me how melons are planted, and how they are pulled out.' I said one thing, and the entire field became covered with melons, He then said: 'Rabbi, thou hast taught me their planting; teach me also how they are pulled out.' And I said one thing, and all the melons were gathered together in a heap."

R. Elazar b. Azariah inquired of him as to cleanness and uncleanness of many subjects, and he answered: "It is clean," or "unclean," accordingly, correctly; and when answering of one thing that it was clean, his soul left him while saying "clean." Whereupon R. Elazar b. Azariah rent his garments, and, weeping, went out and told the sages: "My masters, come and see R. Eliezer, who is clean for the world to come, because his soul left him while saying 'clean.'"

After the Sabbath, R. Aqiba came and found his coffin while being borne from Cesarius to Luda; he immediately rent his garments, and tore his hair till the blood flowed and dropped to the ground. He wept and cried: "Woe to me! Rabbi, because thou hast died. Woe to me! my master, because thou hast left the whole generation as an orphan." When standing in line he said: "'My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and its horsemen' [II Kings, ii. 12], there are many foreign coins which no money-changer can change besides you (*i.e.*, I have many hard questions of law which cannot be solved by any one besides you)."

1"Ben Azai said: '*Hasten to,*'" etc. He used to say: If

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thou hast performed a meritorious deed, and art not sorry for it, it will draw many meritorious deeds in its train; but if one transgresses, and is not sorry for it, it will draw many sins in its train. For one meritorious deed draws another, and one transgression draws another in its train, as the reward for a meritorious deed is the performance of another, and the punishment for a transgression is a transgression."

He also used to say: "Set something apart for charity, before you are compelled to do so by others, so that you get the reward of both the charity and the setting it apart, and not that the reward for the latter shall go to the one who compelled you to do it."

He also used to say: "Lower thy seat two or three rows, from the place you intend to occupy. For it is better thou shalt be told to ascend than to descend, as it is written [Prov. xxv. 7]: 'For better it is that it be said unto thee, Come up higher, than that thou shouldst be put lower in the presence of the prince.'"

There are three persons whose life is not worth living: one who must eat at the table of others; one who lives in an attic; and one whose wife dominates over him. There are others who say: One who suffers in his body.

He used to say: "It is easier to rule the whole world than to associate and discuss with hypocrites."

Tosephta--Aboth of R. Nathan.

R. Aqiba said: "The safeguard for honor is refraining from laughter; the safeguard for wisdom is silence; the safeguard for vows is abstinence; that for cleanness is holiness; and that for meekness is the fear of sin."

He used to say: Do not mingle with the scoffers, for thou mayest learn their doings; do not eat with an ignorant priest, for thou runnest the risk of desecration. Be not free with vows, lest thou wilt trespass upon oaths; do not get into the habit of dining sumptuously, for this may bring thee to eat the bread of charity; do not come to a doubt (upon slight evidence), and it will prevent thy coming to a certainty (upon scant proof); and do not go to a foreign country, for thou mayest be compelled to follow the ways of idolaters. So also said David [I Sam. xxvi. 19]:

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[paragraph continues] "Because they have driven me out this day so that I cannot attach myself on the inheritance of the Lord, saying, Go, serve other gods." Canst thou for a moment think that King David was an idolater? He only meant to infer that he who leaves Palestine and goes to a foreign country is considered as if he were an idolater.

He also used to say: "Whoever is buried in other countries, it is as if he were buried in Babylon; whoever is buried in Babylon, it is as if he were buried in Palestine; whoever is buried in Palestine, it is as if he were buried under the altar, because the whole (soil) of Palestine is fit for an altar; and whoever is buried under the altar, it is as if he were buried under the throne of glory, as it is written [Jer. xvii. 12]: 'A throne of glory, exalted from the beginning, is the place of our sanctuary.'"

He used to say: "The ignorant can never be truly pious."

He also used to say: "Why do disciples die while young? Not because they are adulterers, or robbers, but because they interrupt their studies, and occupy themselves in idle conversation, and also because they do not begin again where they stopped."

R. Simeon b. Elazar said: "The Israelites who live outside of Palestine are unconsciously worshipping idols. How so? And idolater gives a feast in honor of his son, and he invites all the Jews of the place, and although they eat and drink of their own, and their own servants wait on them, yet it is considered as if they had eaten the sacrifices of the dead, as it is written [Ex. xxxiv. 15]: 'Any one call thee, and thou eat of his sacrifice.'"

"*And contemns festivals.*" R. Aqiba said: "Whoever marries a woman not suitable to him

transgresses five negative commandments; for 'thou shalt not avenge,' 'nor bear any grudge' [Lev. xix. 18]; for 'thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart' [ibid., ibid. 17]; for 'thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself' [ibid., ibid. 18]; and [Lev. xxv. 36] 'that thy brother may live with thee': as he hates her, he desires her death, consequently he abolishes the commandment of the multiplication of mankind."

He also used to say: "Whoever eats unhealthy food transgresses thrice: he despises himself, as well as the food, and pronounces a benediction upon unwholesome things."

R. Jehudah b. Ilai said: "When one dies and leaves a son, who did not care to learn the Torah from him, and he goes and

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learns it from others, his only desire is to be flattered (and as the father was too proud to flatter, therefore he did not have the merit of teaching his son)."

R. Elazar the Kapar said: "Do not be as the lintel, which no hand can reach; neither as the upper cross-beam, on which the engravings are defaced; and not as the middle threshold, at which sometimes the feet strike; but as the lowest one, on which every one steps, and which, when in the end the entire building is demolished, is still left in its place."

Tosephtha--Aboth of R. Nathan.

1R. Jose said: Whoever venerates the Torah is himself honored by the people, as it is written [I Sam. ii. 30]: "For those that honor me will I honor, and those that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." "*Those that honor me*" refers to Pharaoh, King of Egypt, who honored the One who said, "Let there be the world," and went out at the head of his court; and when his servant remarked that kings usually went in the rear of their court, he answered: Am I then going before a human king? I am going before the King of kings of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He. Therefore the Holy One, blessed be He, also honored him and meted out his retribution Himself, as it is written [Habakkuk, iii. 15]: "Thou didst pass along over the sea with thy horses."

R. Joshua b. Kar'hah said: "Pharaoh rode into the sea on a stallion, as it is written [Ex. xv. 19]: 'For the horse of Pharaoh went in,' etc.; but when his retribution came, it was done with a horse and chariot, as it is written [Habakkuk, iii. 15]: 'Thou didst pass along over the sea with thy horses,'" etc.

"*Those that despise me shall be lightly esteemed*," refers to Sennacherib, who despised the One who said, "Let there be the world"; therefore he was despised by the Holy One, blessed be He, as it is written [Is. xxxvii. 24, 25]: "Through thy servants hast thou . . . till besieged places." Therefore the Lord punished him through an angel, who shaved his head and beard, and he returned to his kingdom shamefacedly.

"*R. Ishmael the son of R. Johanan b. Broka said: 'Whoever learns for the purpose of teaching,'*" etc. He used to say:

[paragraph continues] "Though thou hast not undertaken to accomplish the entire Law, yet thou art not free to neglect it altogether; and the more one occupies himself with it, the more reward he accumulates."

"*R. Eliezer b. Hisma said,*" etc. R. Johanan b. Nuri, however, said: "The Halakhoth, the purification, and the law of menstruation and Qininim are the essentials of the Torah."

He used to say: "The support of the wise, the institution of courts and their maintenance, bring much good to the world."

R. Johanan b. Dehabai said: "Whoever says this Halakha is not seemly, forfeits his share in the world to come."

He used to say: "Do not keep away from a precept which has no limit, or from a labor which has no end. This can be compared to one who was hired to take water from the sea and spill it on the land. When, seeing that the sea does not decrease and the land is not submerged, he becomes disgusted and refuses to continue the work, he is to be told as follows: 'You ignoramus! Why should you become disgusted? Continue your work, and get your pay of a golden dinar every day.'"

"*R. Eliezer b. Shamua said: 'Let the honor of thy disciple,'*" etc. Whence do we know that one shall be as particular regarding the honor of his disciple as regarding that of his colleague? From Moses our Master, who said to Joshua: "Choose for us men" [Ex. xvii. 9]. He did not say *choose for me*, but *for us*. Infer from this that he regarded him as his equal, although he was master and Joshua the disciple. And whence do we know that one should be as particular regarding the honor of his colleague as regarding that of his master? It is written [Numb. xii. 11]: "Then said Aaron unto Moses, Alas, my lord." Was not (Moses) his younger brother? Infer from this that he regarded him as if he were his master. And whence do we know that one should be as particular in regard of the honor of his master as regarding that of Heaven? As it is written [ibid. xi. 28]: "And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Moses from his youth, answered and said, My lord Moses, forbid them," We see that Joshua equalled Moses to the Shekhina.

At first they used to say: There is grain in Judea, straw in Galilee, and chaff on the other side of the Jordan; afterward they changed it to: There is no grain in Judea; there is no straw in Galilee, but chaff; and on the other side of the Jordan there is neither.

Tosephtha--Aboth of R. Nathan.

1R. Nathan said: "There is no love such as the love of the Torah; there is no wisdom such as the wisdom of manners; there is no beauty such as the beauty of Jerusalem; there are no riches such as the riches of Modea; there is no strength such as the strength of Persia; there is no adultery such as the adultery of the Arabians; there is no haughtiness such as the haughtiness of Elam; there is no hypocrisy such as the hypocrisy of Babylon, as it is written [Zech. v. 11]: 'And he said unto me, To build for it a house in the land of Shinar'; and there is no witchcraft such as the

witchcraft of Egypt."

R. Simeon b. Elazar said: "A sage living in Palestine is praiseworthy. When he leaves it for a foreign country, his wisdom diminishes; and although his wisdom diminishes, still he has preference to a sage who never lived in Palestine. This can be compared to metal of Nadai which is brought to the countries of the sea: although depreciated in its original value, it is nevertheless more valuable than all other iron of the world."

Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel said: "Whoever maintains peace in his own household, it is considered as if he maintains it among every one in Israel; and whoso causes envy and contention in his household, it is considered as if he had done so among every one in Israel; for every one is king in his own house, as it is written [Esther, i. 22]: "That every man should bear rule in his own house."

Rabban Gamaliel said: "The following four regulations of the Romans annihilated the subjugated nations: the unlimited taxes, the high license on bath-houses, and theatres, and grain tithe."

He used to say: "The words of the Torah are as difficult to acquire as silken garments, and are lost as easily as linen ones. Nonsense and foolish things are easily acquired, but are hard to lose as a sack is; for sometimes one buys a sack in the market for a sela, and uses it for four or five years."

R. Jehudah the Prince said: "Whoever indulges in the pleasures of this world, the pleasures of the next are withheld from him; but one who does not, will not forego them there."

He also used to say: "The upright who fare badly in this world can be compared to a cook who prepares a feast for himself:

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although it had cost him much trouble, still he has done it for himself. The wicked, however, who fare badly in this world, are as the cook who prepared a feast for others: although it had cost him much trouble, nevertheless he has done nothing for himself, but for others."

He further used to say: "All those things which are done in private shall be done as if they were done publicly."

"Hillel said: 'Do not isolate thyself from the community.'" He also used to say: "One who eats much, merely increases his excrement, and who (adds flesh to his body) multiplies worms and moths; but whoever increases his good deeds, secures bodily rest."

R. Elazar b. Shamua said: "The disciples are divided into three classes: Hewn stones, corner-stones, and a polished stone. A disciple who has studied Midrash, and only knows how to answer the question of the scholar appertaining to Midrash, and answers in that is compared to a hewn stone which has only one surface; one who has studied Midrash as well as Halakhoth, and he is able to answer a scholar in both, is like a corner-stone which has two surfaces; and one

who has acquired a knowledge in Midrash, Halakhoth, Agadoth, and Tosephthas, and is enabled to answer in all four branches, is like a polished stone which has four surfaces, one on each of its four sides."

R. Jehudah b. Ilai said: "Whoever constitutes the Torah as the chief good, and considers [worldly](#) affairs as a secondary thing, will attain importance in the world. If, however, he does the contrary, he will become insignificant in the world. This can be compared to a regiment which has to go between two roads, one of fire and the other of snow. If it keeps near that of fire, it will be scorched; and if near that of snow, it will freeze. It is therefore best to go in the middle, and it will thus be guarded from heat and cold."

Tosephtha--Aboth of R. Nathan.

¹"R. Simeon b. Elazar (in the name of R. Meir) said: '*Conciliate not thy friend in the hour of his anger,*'" etc. He used to say: "If some of thy neighbors praise, and others reprimand thee, love the latter and hate the former; for the latter are

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bringing thee to a life in the world to come, and the others are withdrawing thee from it."

He also used to say: "Wherever a righteous man goes his heart goes along; if he stands still, his heart does so also."

He further used to say: "One who applies himself to the study of the Law is assisted in his application. However, if he neglects it, he is further prevented from it by such as a lion, wolf, tiger, hyena, and snake; or soldiers or robbers surround and punish him, as it is written [Ps. lviii. 12]: 'Verily, there is a God that judgeth in the earth.'"

Abba Saul (b. Nanes) said: "The scholars are divided into four classes: One studies, but does not teach others; a second teaches others, but does not study himself; a third one both studies for himself and teaches others; and a fourth neither studies himself nor teaches others. The first class learn a chapter, or two or three, study them repeatedly until they know them by heart, but do not teach them to others; the second learn an entire section two or three times, teach it to others, but not having studied it repeatedly forget it; the third learn one, or two, or even three, entire sections, teach them to others, and study them themselves, and therefore do not forget them; and the fourth class are those who have learned an entire section two or three times, but have not taught it to others, neither have they studied it themselves, and thus they forget it."

R. Hanania b. Jacob said: "One who keeps awake at night studying the Law, it is a good omen for him; however, if he spends the night only in conversation, it is a bad omen for him."

R. Jacob b. Hananiah said: "One who is awake by night, but does not study, it were better for him not to have been born."

R. Elazar the Kapar said: "If one honor his friend for pecuniary considerations, he will in the end be dismissed in disgrace; but if he scorns him for a meritorious purpose, in the end he will

be dismissed honorably. Whence is the former deduced? From the case of Balaam the wicked, who honored Balak for a mercenary purpose, as it is written [Numb. xxii. 18]: "And Balaam answered and said unto the servants of Balak: If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold." And whence do we know that he was dismissed in disgrace? As it is written [ibid. xxiv. 11]: "And now flee thou to thy place . . . but, lo, the Lord hath kept them back from honor." Whence is the latter case derived? From that of Moses our master, who

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scorned Pharaoh for a meritorious purpose, as it is written [Ex. xi. 8]: "And all these thy servants shall *come down* unto me, and bow themselves down unto me, saying." Was, then, Pharaoh standing upon the roof, and Moses on the ground? Say, then, that Moses said to Pharaoh: "Even all thy servants who bow before thee on thy altar will come down and entreat me, but I will not listen to them." And whence do we know that he was dismissed honorably? It is written [ibid. xii. 3 1]: "And he called for Moses and Aaron by night."

They answered: "Are we, then, thieves, that we shall go out in the night?" Wait till the Holy One, blessed be He, will bring us seven pillars of honors, and accompanied by them we will go forth joyfully and openly, as it is written [Numb. xxxiii. 3]: "On the morrow after the passover-sacrifice the children of Israel went out with a high hand."

On account of the four different means of forgiveness, R. Mathia b. Heresh went to visit R. Ishmael b. Elazar the Kapar in Ladakia. He interrogated him: "Hast thou heard the four different means of forgiveness on which R. Ishmael used to lecture?" He rejoined: "I have heard they are three, but repentance must be to every one of them." It is written [Jer. iii. 22]: "Return, ye backsliding children, I will heal your backslidings." And again [Lev. xvi. 30]: "For on that day shall (the high-priest) make an atonement for you to cleanse you." Also [Ps. lxxxix. 33]: "Then will I visit with the rod their transgressions, and with plagues their iniquity." And also [Is. xxii. 14]: "Surely this iniquity shall not be forgiven unto you until ye die." How can these four contradictory passages be explained? Thus: If one has violated a positive precept, and has repented, he is forgiven immediately--to this case the first passage is applied. If one has violated a negative precept and has repented, the repentance is suspended until the Day of Atonement, when he is forgiven--to this the second passage is applied. If one has committed a sin for which he is liable to *Kareth*, or death by the court, and has repented, the repentance and the Day of Atonement are suspended until he is cleared by sufferings--to this case the third passage is applied. However, one who has profaned the name of heaven has not the power to repent, and no sufferings clear him, and the Day of Atonement does not atone for him; but repentance and sufferings are suspended, and only death absolves him--to him is applied the last passage.

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Issi b. Jehudah said: "Wherefore do scholars die before their time? Not because they commit adultery or robbery, only because they condemn themselves."

R. Itz'hak b. Pin'has said: "Whoever is versed in Midrash, but not in Halakha, has not tasted of wisdom; and he who is the opposite, has not tasted of the fear of sin."

He used to say: "One who is versed in Midrash, but not in Halakha, is like unto a strong man,

but who is unarmed; one who is the opposite is like an armed weakling. One, however, who is versed in both is like unto a man who is both strong and armed."

He further used to say: "Be careful in greeting thy neighbors. Do not enter a house of strife, neither strive to see it. Be among thy colleagues, and be thou a head to a fox rather than a tail to a lion."

Tosephta--Aboth of R. Nathan.

1"R. Nathan b. Joseph said: 2'He who neglects the words of the Law on account of his riches, he will finally do so on account of poverty; but he who observes the Law even when he is poor, he will finally do so when rich.'" He used to say: "The consoling of the mourners, the visiting of the sick, and the bestowing of favors bring much good to the world."

R. Meir said: "One who transgresses one precept doubtfully, it is considered as if he had done it in certainty. How so? One commits a sin and has cognition of it, he brings a sin-offering of the value of a sela, or the tenth part of an ephah of the value of a *Dupondius*. However, if he is in doubt whether he sinned or not, he must bring a trespass-offering of the value of two selaim. (So is the Law.) Now, let us see. It is certain that goodness of heaven exceeds considerably heavenly chastisement, is there not room to draw an *a fortiori* conclusion that if chastisement, which is less than goodness, still if one is in doubt whether he did or did not sin, heaven requires him to bring a trespass-offering to pacify his conscience and to be rewarded for bringing the offering, so much the more in case of goodness of heaven which exceeds chastisement, that heaven rewards him in case of doubt as if it were sure that he did it."

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R. Nathan b. Joseph said: There is a case where one transgresses ignorantly, and nevertheless it is considered as if he had done it wantonly. How so? If one has killed a person unawares, and escapes to a city of refuge, and the avenger of the blood find him before he reach the city of refuge and kill him, he is free. However, if one killed a person wantonly, and the avenger of the blood kills him (before the court has pronounced sentence, not heeding the warning of witnesses), it is equal to ordinary murder, although the avenger thought that he might do so as a relative of the murdered person, and he may be killed for the crime. Now let us see: Which is in excess, goodness or chastisement of heaven? Surely the former. Now, if chastisement, which is less, if one commits a sin erroneously, still in such a case, it is considered as if done intentionally, so much the more so in case of goodness which is in excess.

R. Aqiba said: "One who connects himself with transgressors, although he has not done as they did, he is nevertheless punished as they are. However, if he connects himself with the performers of the precepts, although he has not taken part in the performance, he nevertheless is rewarded as they are. How so? When two persons give their testimony that some one has killed a person, and it is found that their testimony is collusive, they are sentenced to death; and as they are brought to the stoning place, somebody comes running up, saying: 'I know something about these witnesses'; and when his testimony is also found to be collusive, he, too, is sentenced to death; and when he is brought to the stoning place, he wails: 'Woe to me! had I not come with them, I would not have been sentenced.' Hence the same *a fortiori* conclusion stated before must be drawn. If one connects himself with transgressors and it is so, much the more

one will be rewarded if he connects himself with performers of precepts."

R. Simeon said: "The punishment of the liar is that even when he tells the truth he is not believed, as we find with the sons of Jacob, who at first lied to their father, and he believed them, as it is written [Gen. xxxvii. 31]: 'And they took Joseph's coat, and killed a he-goat'; also [ibid., ibid. 33]: 'And he recognized it, and said: It is my son's coat.' In the end, however, when they spoke the truth, he did not believe them, as it is written [ibid. XIV. 26]: 'But his heart remained cold, for he believed them not'; and [ibid.]: 'And they told him, saying: Joseph is yet alive, and he believed them not.'" There are others who

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say: "The holy spirit which had left Jacob our father during the absence of Joseph returned to him at that time, as it is written [ibid., ibid. 27]: 'The spirit of Jacob their father revived.'"

Tosephtha--Aboth of R. Nathan.

1R. A'hai b. Joshiah said: "One who buys grain from the market is compared to an infant whose mother died, and which, although nursed by many other nurses, is never satiated. One who buys bread from the market, is comparable to one for whom a grave was dug for interment. One who eats of his own is like an infant reared at the breasts of his mother."

He used to say: "One who eats of his own, his mind is tranquil; but if he eats of that belonging to his father, mother, or his children, and especially of that belonging to strangers, his mind can never be tranquil."

Footnotes

[84:1](#) Rashi explains it: The honor of a disciple can be as dear to one as one's self, because the honor of the disciple is one's own glory, which cannot be so in case of a neighbor; and therefore the Torah equals it to the FEAR of one's master, which includes honor also.

[84:2](#) Chapter XXIII. of the original.

[85:1](#) This is added here to R. Eliezer b. Jacob. In the Mishna, however, this statement is ascribed to R. Elisha b. Abuyah.

[87:1](#) The most of the Tanaim came from Palestine, and when there was one from Babylon he was pointed out.

[88:1](#) Chapter XXIV. of the original.

[89:1](#) Chapter XXIV. of the original.

[89:2](#) The explanation at length of this saying is to be found at p. 50 Of our "Eben Harosha." See also the letter of the late Professor Steinthal printed in our "Schulchan Aruch und seine Beziehungen, etc," in which he fully agrees with us. See also Section Moed, Vol. VI., Tract Hagiga, p. 32, foot-note, concerning Ben Azai.

[90:1](#) "Sweet sound" in Hebrew is ••••• "dirge" is •••. The Talmud plays upon the similarity of the two words.

[91:1](#) As he was at that time excommunicated.

[92:1](#) See Chapter IV., Mishna *B*.

[93:1](#) Chapter XXVI. of the original.

[95:1](#) Chapter XXVII. of the original.

[97:1](#) Chapter XXVIII. of the original.

[98:1](#) Chapter XXIX. of the original.

[101:1](#) Chapter xxx. of the original.

[101:2](#) In the Mishna, however, this saying is ascribed to R. Jonathan.

[103:1](#) Chapter XXXI. of the original.

[Next: Chapter V.](#)