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TRACT DERECH ERETZ--RABBA. (WORLDLY AFFAIRS.)

CHAPTER II. [1](#)

THE Sadducees, the common informers, the wicked, the hypocrites, the heretics, of them the Scripture says [Job, xiii. 16]: "For a hypocrite cannot come before him"; the terrifying, the overbearing, the haughty, the barefaced, those who develop only their muscular strength, of them the Scripture says [Psalms, xxxvii. 17]: "For the ovens of the wicked shall be broken; but the upholder of the righteous is the Lord." Evil-thinkers, story-tellers, talebearers, smooth-tongued persons, of them the Scripture says [ibid. xxxv. 5]: "May their way be dark and slippery, and may the angel of the Lord pursue them." Those who assault their neighbor in private and those who insult him in public, those who trifle with majorities, and those who cause quarrels, they will become as Korah and his society, of whom the Scripture says [Numb. xvi. 33]: "And the earth closed over them, and they disappeared from the midst of the congregation." Those who forestall fruit, those who raise the prices, those who diminish the measure, those who accept payment in large-sized shekels, and those who live on usury, of them the Scripture says [Amos, viii. 7]: "Sworn hath the Lord by the excellency of Jacob. Surely I will not forget to eternity all their works."

The following leave no inheritance to their children,

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and if they do leave to their children, nothing of it comes to their grandchildren: viz., those who play at dice, and those who raise tender cattle (in Palestine); those who do business with the money obtained from the fruit of the Sabbatical year, and those who pay with coins (of doubtful genuineness) coming from the sea-countries, and a priest and a Levite who obtained advances on their shares (of heave-offering and tithes), and those who disgrace the Holy Name, of them the Scripture says [Ps. ix. 18]: "The wicked shall return into hell, all the nations that are forgetful of God." And of them it is also written [Eccles. i. 15]: "What is crooked cannot be made straight." Those who motion with their hands, stamp their feet, walk on their toes (to show pride), of them the Scripture says [Ps. xxxvi. 12]: "Let not come against me the foot of pride, and let not the hand of the wicked chase me off." The conceited, the slanderers, those who indulge in obscene language, those who are wise in their own eyes, of them the Scripture says [Mal. iii. 19]: "For, behold, the day is coming which shall burn as an oven," etc,

One who lets his young son marry an older woman, and one who marries off his daughter to an old man, and one who bestows favors upon those who are unworthy, concerning such Scripture says [Deut. xxix. 19]: "The Lord will not pardon him." The collectors, the war-instigators, the publicans, of them Scripture says [Ezek. xxvii. 27]: "Thy wealth and thy warehouses, thy

commerce, thy mariners and thy pilots, thy caulkers and the conductors of thy commerce, and all thy men of war that were in thee, and in all thy assemblage which was in the midst of thee, fell into the heart of the seas on the day of thy downfall." One who betrays his partner, one who does not return a thing found to its rightful owner, one who loans money to another in order to get possession of his house or fields in case of non-payment, and one who lives immorally with his wife, and one who maliciously

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slanders his wife in order to divorce her, of them the Scripture says [Jer. xvii. 10]: "I the Lord search the heart, probe the veins."

Those who are wronged and do not wrong, etc. [see Yomah, p. 33, l. 9]; those who consider themselves contemptible and despicable, those who overcome their passion, and are altogether modest, of them the Scripture says [Is. xlix. 8]: "Thus hath said the Lord, In the time of favor have I answered thee, and on the day of salvation have I helped thee, and I will preserve thee, and I will appoint thee as a people of my covenant to raise up the land, to divide out desolate heritages." Trustworthy men, those who keep other people's secrets, those who gladly return articles intrusted to their care, and found things to their rightful owners, of them Scripture says [Ps. ci. 6]: "My eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may abide with me." One who loves his wife as himself, who honors her more than himself, and one who leads his children on the right path, and one who marries off his son in due time to prevent him from sin, of them it is written [Job, v. 24]: "And thou shalt know that there is peace in thy tent; and thou wilt look over thy habitation, and shalt miss nothing. And thou shalt know that thy seed is numerous, and thy offspring as the herbage of the earth."

One who loves his neighbors and is friendly to his relatives, and one who marries off his sister's daughter, and one who loans even a small amount to a poor man in his need, 1 of them the Scripture says [Is. lviii. 9]: "Then shalt thou call, and the Lord will answer."

One who executes his trust rightfully, 2 those who truthfully repent, and those who receive the repentant into their midst and instruct them so that they shall not

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return to their former sins, of them it is written [ibid. 8] Then shall break forth as the morning-dawn thy light.

Those who judge rightfully, those who reprove truthfully, those who propagate purity, and those who are pure of heart, of them it is written [Ps. lxxiii. 1]: "Truly, God is good to Israel, to such as are pure of heart." Those who sigh, weep, and in their lamentations are hopeful of the redemption of Jerusalem, of them it is written [Is. lxi. 3]: "To grant unto the mourners of Zion, to give unto them ornament in the place of ashes." Those who are merciful, feed the hungry, quench the thirst of the thirsty, clothe the naked, and distribute charity, of them the Scripture says [ibid. iii. 10]: "Say ye to the righteous that he hath done well." The poor, the bashful, and those who are humble in spirit, and those who are submissive to youth, and those who carry out their promises, of them the Scripture says [Job, xxii. 23]: "And if thou decree a thing, it will be fulfilled unto thee, and upon thy ways the light will shine." Those who exert themselves in the

study of the Law, and study it for the purpose of observing it, and those who search for the opportunity to do good, and those who frequent the temples, of them the Scripture says [Prov. viii. 24]: "Happy is the man that hearkeneth unto me, watching day by day at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors." Those who pursue righteousness, and seek peace for their nation, and those who participate in the affliction of the community, and those who stand by the community in case of distress, of them the Scripture says [Nahum, i. 7]: "The Lord is good, a stronghold on the day of distress."

On account of the following four things an eclipse of the sun occurs (see Succah, p. 40): When the head of a college (Ab Beth Din) died and was not properly lamented; when a betrothed damsel cried for help (Deut. xxii. 23-28) in town and no one offered help; male sodomy; and the shedding of the blood of two brothers at one and the same time (there is no explanation of this

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in any of the commentaries, and it seems to us that there happened something like that in the author's time which is unknown to us).

On account of the following four things the eclipse of both the sun and the moon occurs: Those who write defamatory reports about others, giving false testimony, raising tender cattle, and destroying fruit-bearing trees. On account of the following four things the personal property of citizens is seized by the government: For keeping paid notes (with the intention to demand another payment), for the practice of usury, for not exercising one's power to prevent sin when he could do so, for subscribing publicly to charity and not paying the subscription.

On account of the following four things the estates of the citizen are destroyed: For robbing or withholding the wages of a wage-earner [Lev. xix. 13]; for removing the yoke from one's own neck and placing it upon the neck of another, and for haughtiness above all.

R. Dusthai b. R. Jehudah said: Do provoke the wicked (see Megilla, p. 13), as it is written [Prov. xxviii. 41]: "They that forsake the law praise the wicked, but such as observe the law contend with them"; but lest one say, is it not written [Ps. xxxvii. 1]: "*Do not fret thyself because of the evil-doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity*"? say to him that this is the answer of him whose heart-beating prevents him from doing so (because of this passage), but the true interpretation of this passage is thus: "Do not fret thyself *to be* equal to the evil-doers, neither be thou envious to be like them of the workers of iniquity."

There is no sitting above (in heaven), neither is there eating, drinking, sleep, multiplication, animosity, hatred, provocation, envy, nor stubbornness, weariness nor delay, and that is what David the King of Israel said [ibid. xviii. 12]: "He made darkness his hiding-place" (*i.e.*, it is dark and hidden to all mortals). To what end did David

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say this? To none other than to praise of the Holy One, blessed be He, who is "Yah," rules on high, whose unity is one, whose name is one, and who rests in three hundred and ninety heavens, and on each His name and mode of pronunciation are marked; and in each of them there are servants, seraphim, *ophanim* (wheels, Ezek. I.), cherubim, *galgalim*, and a throne of

glory; and there is no wonder at that, for even as a mortal king has many palaces for the seasons of the year, so much the more the Everlasting, since all is His. And when Israel are doing His will, He rests in the seventh heaven, named Araboth, and does not keep distant from His world, as it is written [Numb. vii. 89]: "From between the two cherubim: and thus he spake unto him." When offended He ascends to the highest heaven, and all cries and weeping are not listened to, and fasts are ordered, and they roll themselves in ashes, cover themselves with sacks, and shed tears (and all in vain, until He has mercy upon them).

Footnotes

[1:1](#) Chapter I. belongs to Tract Kedushin, and will be added to that tract.

[3:1](#) Some say it means when the lender himself is in need, and it seems to us that it is the correct meaning.

[3:2](#) The text reads "Hamnadin," which means "those who put under the ban," but the commentators came to the conclusion that this is an error. We have translated it according to Elias Wilna.

[Next: Chapter III.](#)