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TRACT DERECH ERETZ-ZUTA.

CHAPTER I.

THE qualities of the sages are: Modesty, meekness, eagerness, courage, bearing wrongs done to them, and being endeared to every one; submission to the members of their household, fear of sin, and judging every one according to his deeds.

Their thought concerning this world is: All that is in this world is of no importance to me, for this world is not mine. They are occupied in teaching others, and no one can see in their teaching anything wrong. Their questions are to the point and their answers are according to the Law.

One shall always be like an air-bag which is open to receive the air, and as a deep excavation which preserves the water therein contained, and as a glazed jug that preserves the wine therein; as a sponge that absorbs everything. Be as the lower threshold that all tread upon, and as a nail in the wall that is within the reach of every one to hang his clothes on.

If you have sustained a loss of your property, remember that Job lost his property, children, and health. Be careful about all that you see with your eyes, for the principal deception is by the eye. Be careful with your teeth (with your meals), that you should not eat too much. Do not discuss with the Sadducees, that you shall not fall into the Gehenna. When you hear others insult you, do not answer them. If people are praising you for having done a great thing, you shall nevertheless consider it of no importance.

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[paragraph continues] An ordinary man shall be considered to your eyes great, if you have insulted him, until you shall have asked him to forgive you. This passage may also be so rendered: If others say something bad about thee, though it be of a serious nature, treat it as insignificant. But, on the other hand, if thou say something bad about others, though it be insignificant, thou shouldst regard it as serious and have no rest until thou beg pardon. Your behavior shall not be bad, for this is no praise for the Torah (which you possess, but let your behavior be good, for this is a praise for the Torah).

Love the Law, and respect it; love all creatures, and respect them. Subject your will to the will of others, as was done by Leah for Rachel and by David for Saul. But ignore your will, and even the will of others, for the will of Heaven, as we find by Jacob that he did not kiss Joseph (because he was engaged in prayer). Love doubtfulness (*i.e.*, everything shall be doubtful to you until you convince yourself of it), and hate the expression: "And what of it?" (*i.e.*, even of the most unimportant things you should not express yourself thus). Keep aloof from everything that

may bring to sin, and from the abominable, and from what is equal to it, that you should not be suspected by others of transgression. Do not slander your neighbor, because he who does so has no remedy. Keep aloof from grumbling, for by grumbling you may come to growl at others, and it will be added to your transgressions. With seven patriarchs covenants were made, and they are: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Pinchas, and David--Abraham [Gen. xv. 18], Isaac [ibid. xvii. 21], Jacob [Lev. xxvi. 42], Moses [Ex. xxxiv. 27], Aaron [Numb. xviii. 19], Pinchas [ibid. xxv. 12], David [Ps. lxxxix. 4]. Seven patriarchs are resting in glory, and worm and maggot do not affect their earthly remains, and they are: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Amram their father, and, according to others, also David, as it is written [ibid. xvi. 9]: "Therefore is rejoiced my heart,

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and my spirit is glad; also my flesh shall rest in safety." Nine entered the Garden of Eden when they were still alive, and they are: Enoch (Chanoch) the son of Jared, Elijah Messiah, Eliezer the bondsman of Abraham, Hiram the king of Zor, Ebed-melech the Cushi [Jer. xxxviii. 7], and Jabetz the son of R. Jehudah the Prince, Bothiah the daughter of Pharaoh and Serech the daughter of Ascher, and, according to others, also R. Jehoshua b. Levi.

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