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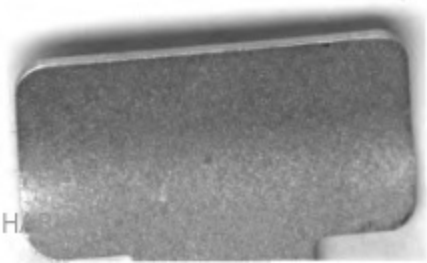

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The father, amazed at the ardor of his son's desire, endeavored to dissuade him, since he had already attained the age of twenty-eight years. Rather let Eliezer get married, and perhaps his sons, in the course of time, might dedicate themselves to the study of the Law.

The young man made no reply, but was so obsessed with the one thought which pursued him that he could neither eat nor sleep.

But soon after, while he was wandering in the fields, a voice seemed to say, "Why weepest thou? If thou thirstest for the study of the Law, flee to Jerusalem to the school of the famous master Ben Zakkai."

Eliezer acted upon this thought as though it had been an inspiration. Secretly he fled to Jerusalem without making his departure known to any one.

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"My son," answered the master, "the spring pours out its waters, and more is yet forthcoming. Rise and discourse upon the Law."

Obedient to his master's command, Eliezer began a learned discourse. His eyes burned with the light of inspiration, while from his lips flowed streams of wisdom.

The master, carried away with admiration, kissed his brilliant pupil on the forehead, exclaiming, "O blessed son of Hyrcanus! Happy is Israel, that boasts such a master!"

Hyrcanus sprang up in astonishment. "Of whom do you speak?"

"Of your son," replied Ben Zakkai, "Eliezer, who stands at your side."

The father, recognizing his son at last, embraced him and cried, "Happy am I, who possess such a son! I came to Jerusalem to disinherit you, but now your brothers shall be disinherited, and to you alone shall be my possessions!"

"Nay, father, let it not be so," replied the son. "Had I desired fields and cattle, I would have asked for them in my prayers to God, the Master of the earth. Had I desired gold, I would have prayed for it, for God is the Master of riches. But my desire and my prayers were for the study of His Word. God has answered my prayer and this suffices me."

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PERFORMANCE OF DUTY IRRESPECTIVE OF REWARD

A king hired laborers and assigned them to work in his garden without designating the wages they would receive, in order that the work which commanded but little pay might not be neglected in favor of that which would bring with it a greater compensation. At the close of the day he called one of the workmen and said, "Under which tree wast thou employed?"

"Under this one."

"This is a pepper tree," said the king. "Here is thy reward," and he handed the man a gold piece.

Then he called another, directing the same question to him. Upon receiving his reply the king said, "This is a caper tree; thy pay is half a gold piece."

A third workman, who had performed his labors under an olive tree, received twenty gold pieces.

"Why didst thou not make known to us the pay we were to receive?" they asked.

"Had I done so," replied the king, "how would my whole garden have received due attention?"

Rabbi Abin bar Kahana taught, "Do not say, 'I will follow this precept because a great reward is attached to its observance, but that one I will not follow because the reward is trivial.' God did not reveal the recompense for each and every law, in order that mankind might practice all with equal zeal."

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"You are right. We will eat only of those fruits which were not brought as offerings."

"Then you should not even drink water, since water too was used in the sacrifice."

The mourners were silent, for they knew not what to answer.

Rabbi Joshua then continued, "I will not counsel you to cease all mourning, since our sorrows are too deep to be cast lightly aside. But excessive grief is wrong, for under its crushing force man would cease to exist. Let us not forget the sorrows we have shared, but at the same time let us endeavor to rise above them and take up with patience and fortitude the duties which God would have us assume."

¶ ¶

WEALTH IS OFTEN USELESS

In Jerusalem there lived a wealthy woman named Martha, who was accustomed to every luxury and extravagance. The most delicate of perfumes wafted

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LIFE AS A VOYAGE

There was once a great ship which had been sailing for many days upon the seas. Before it reached its destination, a strong wind drove it from its course, and it drifted to the shore of a beautiful island. The passengers were of different opinions as to whether or not they should leave the ship to explore the island. They divided themselves into five parties.

The first party determined not to leave the ship. "We will remain on board," said they. "A fair wind

may arise, the anchor may be raised and the ship may sail on, leaving us behind. We must forego the pleasure of examining the lovely island; safety counsels that we remain where we are."

The second party determined to go ashore for a short time to enjoy the perfume of the flowers and partake of the delicious fruits. They did so, returning in good time, all the better for having refreshed themselves.

The third party also visited the island, but they gave so little heed to the flying minutes that they reached the ship just as the sailors were weighing anchor. In the confusion, many lost their places and had to content themselves with less comfortable quar-

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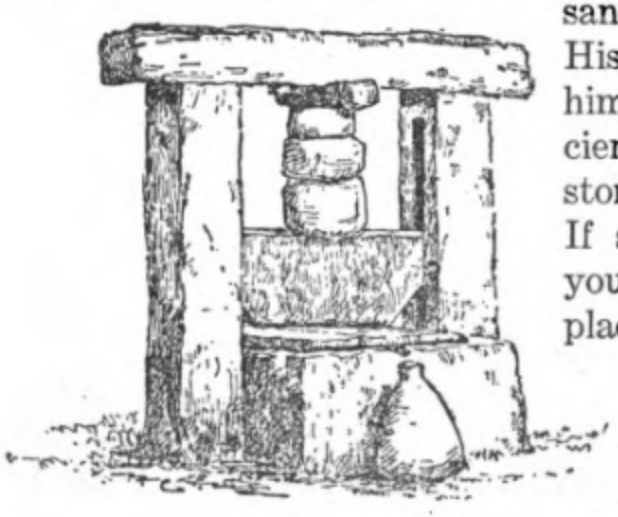
strewn with pleasant herbs. They who have not eyes to see enter the thorny path, and are torn and scratched by briers. But those whose vision is clear choose the path free from thorns. "He that walketh in his integrity as a just man, happy are his children after him."—*Proverbs 20:7.*

¶ ¶

KNOWLEDGE THE BASIS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

David said, "The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever." Let a man learn Midrash, Halachoth, and Haggadoth, but if his soul does not hate sin, he has gained nothing.

A man said to his friend, "I have a thousand measures of grain, a thousand measures of oil, and a thousand measures of wine." His friend answered him, "Have you sufficient space in which to store these possessions? If so, they are indeed yours, but without a place for them you have nothing."



Wisdom and knowledge belong to him who despises wrongdoing, for the fear of the Lord is his treasure.

Isaiah declared, "Zion shall be redeemed with justice, and they that return of her with righteousness."—*Isaiah 1:27.*

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WAIT FOR THE END

"The day of death is better than the day of one's birth." —*Ecclesiastes 7:1.*

Why? Because on the day of birth the life of man is an unwritten page, but after his death the world knows the good deeds that have been inscribed thereon.

Two ships sailed upon the high seas, one on its way out of the harbor, the other about to enter it. The onlookers rejoiced to see the outgoing vessel, but watched the other with regret. Then one wiser than the rest said, "I am moved by different emotions. One should not rejoice at the sight of a vessel which is about to set sail. Who knows what contrary winds and storms it may encounter? Let us rather be glad to welcome the vessel which returns to the harbor, for then we can see it enter in safety after having successfully weathered the storms of a long and dangerous voyage."

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WISDOM

KNOWLEDGE IS GREATER THAN WEALTH

"There is gold, and a multitude of rubies, but the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel."—Proverbs 20:15.

If a man has gold and silver, pearls and diamonds, even all the treasures the world affords, and has no knowledge, what does it profit him? If he lacks knowledge, his possessions are as nothing.

When gifts of gold and silver were being poured into the sanctuary as free will offerings, the soul of Moses was troubled because he had nothing to give.

Then God said to him, "Truly the words of thy lips are more precious to me than jewels." It was then that God singled out Moses from among all men and imparted to him His divine message.

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LEARNING MORE DESIRABLE THAN WEALTH

As Rabbi Jochanan was walking with several of his friends, he stopped and pointed to a vineyard not far away, saying, "That vineyard was once mine. I sold it for the benefit of the poor in order that I might be relieved of its care and devote my days to the study of the Law."

Continuing on his way, he presently called their attention to a fine field, remarking, "That field, too, was mine, but I sold it in order that I might have more time for the study of the Law." Again pointing to another field which they passed, the rabbi said, "This was the last piece of property which I had, but I disposed of it in order to devote myself wholly to the sacred writings with nothing to distract me from my chosen duties."

The friends inquired anxiously what provisions the good rabbi had made for his old age.

"Be not troubled," he answered smilingly. "I gladly relinquished those things which are of but transitory worth for a service which will be rewarded in eternity."

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THE INEXCUSABLE SIN

Some persons may argue thus, "I will commit a sin and afterwards repent. Then I will commit other sins and repent again." To such no opportunity for repentance will be given. Perhaps one may think, "I will sin, but on the Day of Atonement I will fast and

pray and thus be forgiven." Neither fasting nor prayer will avail in such a case. The Day of Atonement is ordained in order that man may be at one with God, when he asks forgiveness for his wrongs. *But premeditated wrongdoing can not be atoned for by prayer or fasting.* Before man asks for divine forgiveness let him first seek forgiveness of his fellow man and truly determine to do him no further injury.

He who prays and fasts while trying to enjoy the fruits of his sins is like one who holds fast to a poisonous serpent the while he bathes in many waters. Not until he throws away the poisonous creature can he become clean, even though he try to cleanse himself in a thousand waters.

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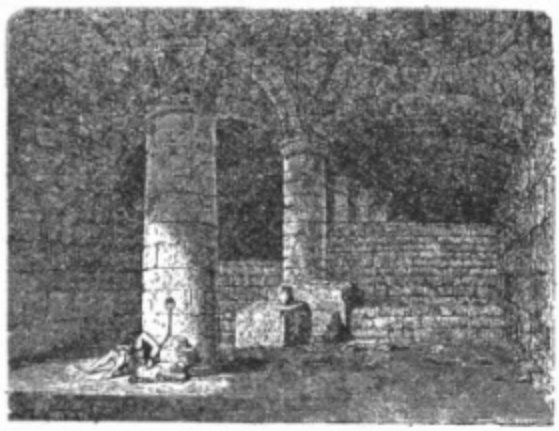
NEVER TOO LATE TO REPENT

As long as man lives, God hopes for his repentance. A story is told of a band of robbers who were confined



in a dungeon. One of them succeeded in forcing a passage through which all escaped but one, whom the keeper seized and began to flog.

"Thou unhappy one!" he exclaimed. "There was a means of escape and thou didst not take advantage of it."

God says to sinners, "The way to repentance is open; if thou dost not follow it, thou shalt not escape."

¶ ¶

THE FUGITIVE FROM TEMPTATION

"My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not," said Solomon. This proverb has as its source the saying of David, "Evil pursueth sinners." He who is strong enough to withstand temptation is looked upon as one who obeys the whole decalogue. And he who obeys a commandment is as worthy of Divine favor as though he observed all the teachings of the Torah.

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HONESTY

STRICT HONESTY

The rabbis have taught: "Thou canst learn of the righteousness of God from the acts of His creatures, for if human beings are upright and just, how much greater must the justice of God be."

A number of merchants came to the town in which Rabbi Pinchas ben Jair resided. They gave into his

keeping two large measures of barley, but forgot to claim them when they left the town. The rabbi sowed the barley and, when harvest time came, brought it to the threshing floor and winnowed it. The following year he again sowed the barley and threshed it in the

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harvest season. This he did again and again until, after seven years, the merchants once more passed through the town, and this time asked the rabbi for the grain which they had left in his keeping. The rabbi said to them, "Come, I will show you your treasures," and gave them the gold which the plentiful harvests had yielded.

¶ ¶

SCRUPULOUS HONESTY

Simeon ben Shetach once bought a donkey from an Ishmaelite. Shortly after the purchase, the rabbi's pupils discovered a precious stone hanging about the animal's neck.

"The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich," said one of them.

"Nay," answered ben Shetach, "this doth not belong to me. I bought the donkey, and not the stone," and he at once returned the jewel to the Ishmaelite.

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VARIED STANDARDS OF JUSTICE

Alexander of Macedon journeyed to a distant country in order to observe the manner of dispensing justice in that land. It chanced that two men appeared before the judge, one of whom made the following statement: "In the first field which this man sold me I discovered a buried treasure. It does not belong to me, for I paid for the field alone, and not for that which lies hidden in it."

The other said, "No; when I sold the field it included whatever was found therein."

The judge turned to the one, saying, "Have you a son?" and to the other, "Have you a daughter?"

Since both answered in the affirmative, the judge declared, "Let your children marry one another and the gold will belong to them both."

The judge, seeing Alexander's astonishment, inquired of him, "Do you not agree in the justice of my verdict?"

"Oh, yes," returned Alexander.

"How would the case have been settled in your country?"

"We should have sentenced both plaintiff and defendant, and confiscated the treasures for the king's use."

"Does the sun shine in your land?"

"Yes".

"Have you beasts in your fields?"

"Certainly."

"Then," said the judge, "it must be for the sake of the dumb animals that God causes the sun to shine and the rain to fall, for surely the human beings who dwell there are undeserving of such blessings."

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CHARITY REWARDED

Once, when Rabbi Akiba was a passenger at sea, he witnessed the sinking of a vessel not far away. It grieved him greatly, especially as he knew that there was on board a learned man with whom he was well acquainted.

Not many weeks later, in the streets of Cappadocia, the rabbi, to his great joy, met the man he believed had been drowned. The rabbi greeted him heartily and listened with pleasure to the account of his rescue.

In answer to the inquiry as to what had been his last act before boarding the vessel, the man said, "As I was making my way down to the ship, a poor man approached me, asking for alms. I gave him a loaf of bread, for which he thanked me with the words, 'As thou hast saved me from starvation, so mayest thou be saved when danger threatens thy life.' "

"Verily," said Rabbi Akiba, "here is the proverb exemplified, 'Cast thy bread upon the waters for thou shalt find it after many days.' "—*Ecclesiastes 11:1.*

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THE POOR WOMAN'S SACRIFICE

A poor woman brought a handful of meal for a sacrifice, which an unworthy priest accepted in a contemptuous manner. "What an offering is this!"

he said. "What shall be used for the sacrifice and what remains for the priest?"

But a voice rebuked him with these words: "Thou dost a great wrong to scorn this poor woman, who hath nothing but a handful of meal to give. Look rather upon such a gift as though she had offered up her own body as a sacrifice to the Eternal."

¶ ¶

FRIENDS THE RICHEST BLESSING

A certain rich man who had ten sons took a solemn oath that, on the day of his death, he would bequeath to each of them a hundred denarii. As time went on, he lost some of his money and had but nine hundred

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and fifty gold pieces remaining. He gave the nine hundred to nine of his sons.

The youngest said to him, "My father, how canst thou leave me penniless?"

The father answered, "Of the fifty remaining denarii, I have taken thirty with which to buy my shroud. The remaining twenty shall be thine. However, I have ten dear friends. These I bequeath to you; they are worth more than a thousand gold pieces."

Shortly after, the father died. Each of the nine sons received his inheritance and went his way. The youngest son remained at home and was compelled to spend the sum which had been left to him, so that he had but a single gold piece left. He thought to himself, "Of what profit are the friends my father bequeathed to me? How can it be that they are worth more than a thousand denarii?" He concluded, however, to invite them to his home, and spent the remaining gold piece to buy food for their entertainment.

They ate and drank together and said, one to the other, "See, this lad has more regard for his father's friends than all his brothers. It is equally our duty to show our friendship towards him." As they were about to depart, each gave him a goodly sum of money wherewith he bought land and cattle. The Lord blessed his endeavors and he became even more prosperous than his father had been. He thought to himself, "My father spoke truly when he said that friends are more precious than all the riches of the world."

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BENEFITS NOT FORGOTTEN

As Bar Kappara was walking along the harbor at Caesarea, he witnessed the sinking of a ship. One of the survivors, the proconsul of the city, succeeded in

swimming to the shore, where Bar Kappara rendered him assistance. He took him to his own home, and supplied him with food and clothing, together with six selaim, since the proconsul's possessions had all gone down with the ship.

Some time after, the Jews of Caesarea were threatened with imprisonment by order of the court. They took counsel with one another, in great anxiety as to what measures to undertake. Then one suggested that Kappara, who was held in respect by the administration, make an appeal to the governing powers. They gave him 500 denarii with which to plead their cause.

When Bar Kappara appeared at the court, he was recognized by the proconsul, who greeted him heartily

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WRONGDOING NEVER EXCUSABLE

Rab Huna, who was at one time very rich, lost most of his possessions and was reduced almost to poverty.

One day, as he was discussing his affairs with a number of his colleagues, the question arose as to whether misfortune were punishment meted out to man for his sins. The visitors declared with one voice that misfortune was always caused by wrongdoing on the part of man.

Rab Huna was displeased with this conclusion, since it seemed a reflection upon his character, and he said, "So you think I am guilty of a sin? Tell me frankly and I will try to retrieve my error."

One of his colleagues replied, "As far as we know, you have always acted uprightly. But we have heard it said that during the wine harvest you did not give your servant the portion allowed him according to law."

"You think I did not give him his portion!" laughed the host. "Do you doubt that he steals from me far more than what I am required to give him?"

"And because you suspect your servant of stealing, you in turn steal from him? Whoever takes from a thief is himself no better than a thief."

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THE FAR REACHING EFFECTS OF SLANDER

Rabbi Samuel ben Nachman relates the following: "A man asked a serpent, 'Why is it that a bite from thee in one member of the body causeth the poison to penetrate into every part?'

"The serpent replied, 'Ask that question of the slanderer. He speaketh here and causeth death in Rome, or if he speaketh in Rome, his words may cause death here, or even at the end of the world!' "

¶ ¶

THE TEST OF THE RIGHTEOUS

"The Lord trieth the righteous, but the wicked and him that loveth violence His soul hateth."—Psalm 11:5.

Rabbi Jonathan said, "The potter tests not the porous vessels which break when he taps them, but rather the perfect specimens, for however sharply he may strike them, they do not break. Thus God tries the righteous, but not the sinners. The flax dealer, knowing that his flax is good, beats it again and again, for the oftener it is struck the better and stronger it becomes, whereas the fibres of the weak stalks fall to pieces at the first stroke."

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former husband, refused to do as she was bidden. In the course of one of their daily rounds, the man became aware that they had come to a street not far distant

from the section which he desired to visit. Raising his voice, he stormed and threatened, demanding to be led thither. After repeated refusals on the part of his wife, he attacked her and beat her unmercifully.

Among those who ran to the scene of the uproar was Rabbi Jose. He recognized the woman as his former wife and his heart was stirred to pity by her present humiliation. His magnanimous nature caused him to forget her past offenses, and his one thought was to relieve her misery. He provided a shelter for the unfortunate pair, and maintained them out of his own meagre income for the remainder of their lives.

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FILIAL PIETY

LOVE THE BASIS OF FILIAL DUTY

According to Rabbi Chanina, one man may provide his father with the best that the land offers and yet deserve the wrath of God, while another who sets his aged parent to work may inherit the blessings of Paradise.

A certain man placed before his father an excellent meal, including a fine and tender fowl. "My son," said the father, "where did you get this delicious fowl?"

"Eat, old man," was the churlish answer, "else it will be thrown to the dogs."

Although the father was supported in physical comfort, the son deserved the punishment meted out to the wicked.

Another man supported himself and his aged father by grinding grain at a mill.

One day the king's officers appeared in the village to exact a tax from the people. The son requested his father to take his place at the mill, saying: "It is safer for you to be thus occupied for the time being, lest the king's men insult and perhaps maltreat you. Let me confront them and thus shield you from danger."

Although the young man had set his old father to work, his act was one of filial piety and deserving of the blessings of Paradise.

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FILIAL PIETY KNOWS NO PRICE

One day several priests journeyed to the home of Dama ben Nethina, in Ashkelon, in order to purchase a precious stone for the breastplate of the High Priest.

This stone was to replace a gem which had been lost. After the bargain had been concluded, Dama went into the adjoining room to bring the gem to the purchasers.

There he found his old father, who had fallen asleep, with one foot on the chest in which the jewels were kept. Unwilling to disturb the old man's slumber, he retired noiselessly from the room.

When he returned empty-handed, the would-be purchasers thought that he desired a greater price for the jewel, and offered him ten times the original sum.

When his father awoke from his sleep, Dama entered the room again and secured the stone.

The priests wished to pay him the ten thousand gold pieces, but he refused them, saying, "Far be it from me to accept that amount. I will not take advantage of my father's slumber. Give me the price we agreed upon at first and I shall be content."

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UNDERVALUING HUMAN LIFE

Nimrod said to his people, "Come, let us build a great city for ourselves, and let us dwell therein, lest we be scattered upon the face of the whole earth, as were the first people. Let us build a lofty tower ascending to heaven, and let us make a great name on the earth, for the Holy One has power only in the heavens.

They began to build, making bricks for the tower since there were no stones wherewith to build it. Thousands of laborers toiled and struggled in their eagerness to complete the huge tower, which, it is said, attained the height of seven miles. If a man fell and was killed, they paid no heed to him, but if a brick fell, they sat down and wept, saying," Woe unto us! when will another brick be put in its place?"

Then God called to the seventy angels, who surround the throne of His glory, and said to them, "Come, let us descend; let us confuse the seventy nations by changing their one language into seventy."

When the builders wished to speak to one another, they found that each spoke a strange language. Then each one took his sword and fought the other so that half the people of the world were slain. Then the Lord scattered them upon the face of the earth.

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FAITH TRIUMPHANT

It is related that, in the war which the Amalekites waged against the Israelites, when Moses held up his

hands, Israel prevailed. That is, as long as the Israelites looked heavenward, submitting their hearts in willing obedience to their Father in Heaven, they prevailed, but when they failed to do so, they were defeated. When the hands of Moses grew heavy, they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat upon it. Moses would have no cushion to ease him, for, since Israel was in distress, he would not do otherwise than share their distress with them.

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THE POWER OF THE TONGUE

Rabbi Simeon ben Gamaliel said to his servant, "Go to the market and buy me something good to eat."

The servant did as he was bidden, and bought a tongue.

Another time the rabbi said, "Go to the market and buy me something that is not good."

The servant went and returned with a tongue.

His master said to him, "What does this mean? When I told you to buy something that was good you brought a tongue."

The servant answered, "From the tongue issues the good and also the bad. There is nothing better than a good tongue, and nothing worse than an evil one."

The rabbi soon after invited his disciples to partake of a meal at which tongues both hard and soft were served. They selected the soft ones and allowed the others to remain untouched. Said the rabbi, "As you choose the soft tongues and reject those that are hard, so also use only a soft tongue in your intercourse with one another."

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IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD

A certain pious Jew paused on his way to town to engage in prayer. A prince who was about to pass by him greeted him, but the Jew, absorbed in his devotions, did not return the greeting. The prince flew into a rage and could scarcely contain himself until the man had concluded his prayers, when he cried:

"Fool! You disregard your own Law, which commands self-preservation. By your own act you endanger your life. Why did you not regard my greeting? If it had pleased me to pierce your heart with my sword, who would have called me to account for your death?"

"Sir, subdue your wrath, I beg of you. Suppose you were in the presence of the king and engaged in conversation with him. If, in the meantine, a friend passed by and greeted you, would you turn aside from your interview in order to reply to the salutation?"

"It were the worse for me if I did so."

"You acknowledge the homage due to an earthly king,—a human being who is here today and gone tomorrow. Consider, then, what I owe in reverence to the King of Kings, in whose presence I was standing when you interrupted my prayer. What would you have me do?"

The prince acknowledged the justice of the argument, and permitted the man to go on his way.

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THE SPIRIT HALLOWS THE SACRIFICE

King Agrippa one day desired to offer a thousand sacrifices upon the altar. He sent word to the High Priest as follows: "Let no one but me offer a sacrifice this day."

Soon after, a poor man carrying two turtle doves appeared before the priest, saying, "I pray you, offer these up."

"I can not," answered the priest, "for the king has forbidden it."

Then said the man, "I catch four turtle doves each day; two provide me with food, and the other two are for the sacrifice. If you do not accept them for this purpose, I am deprived of my sustenance."

Moved by the man's sincerity, the priest accepted the offering. That night Agrippa had a dream in which this incident was pictured. He sent for the High Priest the next day and said to him, "Did I not command thee to accept no sacrifice but mine?"

"The priest related what had occurred, and when Agrippa heard the story, he said, "In the eyes of the Eternal the two turtle doves are as acceptable as the richest offering in my kingdom. I commend your judgment; thou hast done well."

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"It is yours!" cried the friends heartily.

With stern displeasure the rabbi then exclaimed, "You refused a tithe of your harvest to your Heavenly Father and yet are willing to give it to one of His creatures!"

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with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might.' I have loved Him with all my heart and with all my might, but never before this hour have I understood the meaning of 'with all thy soul.' Now, indeed, am I given the opportunity to love God with all my soul."

His disciples pleaded with him, "Master, how long will this torment endure?"

"I have always pondered over the words 'with all my soul', and at last I am permitted to give my life as proof of my faith in God," said Rabbi Akiba, and, as he was breathing the word "echod", his soul departed.

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"They were pious men," replied the lad, "and King Nebuchadnezzar was worthy of having a miracle performed in his reign. But thou art not deserving of such. Even if thou sparest my life, there are others who may seek it. But know that, in the days to come, God will lay my death at thy door!"

But the emperor ordered the lad to be led to his execution.

¶ ¶

MARTYRDOM FOR RELIGION'S SAKE

An edict had gone forth from Rome, prohibiting, on pain of death, the observance of Divine worship on the part of the Jews.

Certain sages, fearing that disobedience would result in the destruction of their people, advised submission to the tyrannical decree.

Among such advisors was Rabbi Joseph ben Kisma, who, because of his submissiveness, was held in favor by the administration.

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TIMES AND SEASONS ARE IN GOD'S HANDS

Rabbi Akiba and his pupils were in the habit of assembling every morning under a certain fig tree in order to pursue their studies. The owner of the tree came each morning, even earlier than they, to gather the fruit.

The rabbi said, "Perhaps our presence here is displeasing him. Let us go elsewhere."

The rabbi and his pupils therefore went to a different place, but the owner came to them and said, "Why did you leave? I felt honored by your presence and now you have deprived me of that pleasure."

They answered, "We feared you might suspect us of taking the fruit of your fig tree."

Yielding to his persuasion, however, they returned to the former place. Thereafter the owner rose early as before and came to the scene of their studies, but did not disturb the fruit. As the sun poured down upon the tree, the figs became worm eaten.

"Truly," said the rabbi to his disciples, "the man knows best when the fruit should be plucked. Even so God knows when the time has come to take His chosen ones unto Himself."

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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ISRAEL'S SURVIVAL

A quarrel arose among the straw, the stalk, and the chaff, each maintaining that for its sake the field had been sown. Finally the wheat said, "Wait until

you are brought to the threshing floor and you shall see on whose account the field was sown."

It came to pass as the wheat had said. The master prepared for the threshing. The chaff was blown away by the wind. The master threw the straw upon the ground and burned the stalk. But he carefully preserved the wheat, and all who saw it admired the perfect grains.

Thus it is with the nations of the earth. Each one thought, "I am of paramount importance; on my account was the world created." Then said Israel, "Wait until the appointed day and we shall see on whose account the world was created. As the Prophet Isaiah has said, 'Thou shalt rejoice in the Lord, in the Holy One of Israel.' "

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THE IMPORTANCE OF BOTH WRITTEN AND ORAL LAW

The Prophet Elijah related the following story: "In my wanderings I talked at length with a certain man who had zealously studied the Written Law, but was not concerned with the Oral Law. He said to me, 'The Holy Word was delivered upon Sinai and I accept it, but the Oral Law was certainly not proclaimed from Sinai'.

"My son," I answered him, "there was once a good man who had two dear friends whom he loved with equal tenderness. One day, as he was about to depart on a short journey, he bade farewell to his friends and gave each as a parting gift a measure of grain and a bundle of wool.

"The one friend ground his grain into flour and baked several loaves of bread. He had the wool spun into yarn and then woven into a fine table covering. The other friend allowed his gift to remain untouched.

"When the traveler returned, he inquired what had been done with the offerings. The one friend invited him to partake of a meal. His humble board was spread with the cloth woven from the wool that had been given him. The bread served was that made of the grain. The

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SPECIAL PROTECTION WITHIN THE FOLD

A shepherd went forth daily into the field and tended his flocks of sheep and goats. It happened that one day a stag joined the flock and grazed among them. When the herd was led into the fold, the stag went with the rest and remained in their midst. The shepherd was glad to welcome the stranger into his fold and grew to love him. His herdsmen were instructed to give heed that no harm befall the stag.

Surprised that the shepherd should single out this one animal for special care, the herdsmen said, "Thou hast so many sheep and goats and never sayest that we should guard them, but this stag thou wouldst have us look after with unusual watchfulness."

The shepherd answered them, "It is the custom of sheep and goats to graze in the fields and to return at eventide to the fold. But the nature of the stag is otherwise. It is his habit to wander into distant places. Therefore, since he has herded with our flocks, it is our duty to care for him, lest he wander away into forests where wild beasts roam."

Thus it was the custom of the Israelites to welcome proselytes into their midst. For when such a one elected to forsake the ways of the heathens, our forefathers were cautioned to guard and guide him, lest he return to the practices of idolatry.

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RESPECT FOR PROPHECY REWARDED

A rumor had gone forth in Rome that a revolt of the Israelites was imminent. A numerous army was equipped to quell the uprising and punish the offenders.

The general at the head of this army was well acquainted with the customs of the Israelites. Indeed, he was inclined to adopt their belief and renounce the idolatrous customs of his own people, the Romans.

As was the custom in those superstitious times, he sought to discover by a sign what the outcome of his campaign would be. He shot an arrow and carefully observed the direction in which it pointed. The arrow fell towards Jerusalem. The general stood in a different position and shot another arrow. It, too, like the first one, pointed towards Jerusalem. He stood

in each of the two remaining directions, and each time a mysterious force turned the arrow's point toward Jerusalem. Amazed at the occurrence, the general

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THE INTERPRETATION OF BIBLICAL PASSAGES

AN APPROPRIATE NAME

The mountain of the Lord had been known as Horeb since the creation of the world. But when God revealed Himself to Moses in the burning bush, the

name Sinai was given to the sacred mount, for the name is derived from "S'neh", which means thorn bush.

¶ ¶

GOD'S PRESCIENCE

According to Rabbi Akiba, God knew the work of the righteous and of the sinners from the very beginning. "For the Lord regardeth the way of the righteous.—*Psalms 1:6.*

The words of Genesis 1:2, "and the earth was without form and void", refer to the deeds of the evildoers, and the words "Let there be light," in the following verse, refer to the life of the righteous.

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REDEEMING ONE'S PAST

Rabbi Meir asked his teacher, Rabbi Elisha ben Abuyah, for an explanation of Solomon's proverb, "Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof."

Rabbi Elisha replied, "A man may spend his youth in evildoing, and then repent and practice righteousness in his old age; or a man may study in his youth and retain nothing, and in his old age devote himself diligently to learning. Rabbi Akiba explained it in this wise, 'If the begining is good, the end will also be good.' "

"How would you interpret, 'The gold and the crystal can not equal it?' " continued Rabbi Elisha.

"Understanding of the Law is as difficult to acquire as are gold and crystal vessels," was Rabbi Meir's answer. Akiba offered this explanation, "As gold and crystal vessels, though broken, may be mended, so may a wise student make good that which he has forgotten."

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THE TEST OF THE LEADER

While Moses was a shepherd in the wilderness, tending the flocks of his father-in-law Jethro, a young lamb strayed away from the fold. Moses left the flock and set out in search of the missing lamb. He found it a long distance away, eagerly drinking from a spring.

"Thou poor little creature," said Moses, pityingly, "I did not know that thou didst wander away to quench thy thirst. Thou must be weary after so long a journey."

He placed the young animal upon his shoulders, and carried him back to the sheepfold.

Then God said to Moses, "Since thy heart is filled with compassion for this lamb, how much more will it be stirred to pity at the sufferings of thy fellow creatures. Thou hast proved thy worth. Come and be My shepherd and lead My flock, Israel."

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