

Deception by means of words is as great a sin as deception practiced by means of acts. Thou shalt not deceive any human being even by merely keeping silent. To gain a man's good-will by hiding the truth from him, is called stealing a man's heart.

To one who sinned and afterwards mended his ways, thou shalt not say : Remember thy former deeds.

An evil tongue does evil to three persons : to the calumniator, to him who listens to him, and to him who is maligned. Though the whole of the calumny is not believed, some part of it will always stick. Good and evil doth come from the tongue : nothing is better than a good tongue, nothing worse than an evil tongue. Never call a man by his nickname.

Do not praise your fellowman overmuch, lest from praise you pass to fault-finding. For such are the ways of those that go about as talebearers. They begin by telling some good of a fellowman and end by speaking evil of him. These four shall not appear before God : The mocker, the liar, the hypocrite, and the slanderer. Some sin against God alone, others sin only against men ; Do not live near a pious fool.

He who accuses his fellowman is first tried for his own offenses.

CHAPTER IV.

Truth is the signet of God. Let your Yea be in truth and your Nay be in truth. Speak with your lips as you think in your heart. The Yea of the righteous is Yea and their Nay is Nay. If something is as clear to you as the bright moon, say it ; if not, leave it unsaid.

Breach of faith is idolatry. If you say to a child, I will give you something, keep your promise, otherwise

you accustom it to tell lies. The righteous promise little and do much, the wicked promise much, and do not even a little.

Truth lasts, but falsehood vanishes. The liar is not believed even when he is telling the truth; this is his worst punishment.

He that knows himself wrongly suspected, should by all means clear himself of that false suspicion. For it behooves us to stand pure both before God and men. It is our duty to unmask the hypocrites, for they disgrace the name of religion. If you see any wrong in your neighbor, take him to task. For he that could prevent his fellowman from doing wrong and failed to do so, shares in his guilt. Love without rebuke is no love.

Wherever flattery prevails, the morals become corrupted and the right is wrested. He that honors his neighbor on account of his money, will in the end part company with him in disgrace. Push no man away from you with both hands; while your left is pushing him away, your right should be receiving him back.

Don't blame your fellowman for faults which you yourself possess. For how shall he rebuke others who, if he says: Brother, pull out the mote that is in thine eye, may be answered: Cast first the beam out of thine own eye. Physician, cure thyself. Adorn thyself first and then adorn others.

He that judges his fellowman in mercy will be judged by God in mercy. He that has harbored in his heart a false suspicion against his neighbor, should beg his pardon. To persevere in a quarrel, is to persevere in sin.

"Seek peace and pursue it;" seek peace with thyself, and strive after peace with others. Execute truth, justice and peace in your gates (*Zech. 8:16*). These three are one and the same. Truth is in justice; where jus-

tice prevails there is peace, and where peace dwells, there is justice.

With the same measure that we mete withal it shall be measured to us again. He that forges arrows, may one day be killed by one of his own arrows. God visits punishment on no man until his measure of guilt is full.

The righteous, the men of pure lives, say : Blessed is our youth, that has not put our old age to shame. The repentant sinners say : Blessed is our old age, which has made atonement for our youth. Both say : Blessed is he who has never sinned, but as for him that has sinned, let him return and mend his ways and be forgiven.

The repentant sinner in a certain sense stands on a higher moral plane than he that has never transgressed. Blessed is he that repents while still in the full vigor of manhood.

He who says : I will sin and afterwards repent, will not be forgiven. It is not by sackcloth and fasting but by repentance and good works that forgiveness is obtained. The aim and end of all wisdom are repentance and good works. Even the most righteous shall not attain so high a place in Heaven as the truly repentant.

“Repent one day before thy death.” There was a king who bade all his servants to a great repast, but did not indicate the hour ; some went home and put on their best garments and stood at the door of the palace ; others said : There is ample time the king will let us know beforehand. But the king summoned them of a sudden, and those who came in their best garments were well received, but the foolish ones who came in their slovenliness, were turned away in disgrace. Repent to-day lest to-morrow ye might be summoned.

CHAPTER V.

The reward of good works is like dates ; sweet and ripening late. When you hear of a death say : " Blessed be the righteous judge." When the righteous dies, it is the earth that loses. The lost jewel will always be a jewel, but the possessor who lost it—well may he weep. A myrtle even in the desert remains a myrtle.

Hospitality is the most important part of Divine worship. He who gives charity in secret is greater than Moses himself. Iron breaks the stone, fire melts iron, water extinguishes fire, the clouds drink up the water, a storm drives away the clouds, fear unmans man, wine dispels fear, sleep drives away wine, and death sweeps all away. But Solomon the wise said : " Charity saves from Death."

" If your God is a friend of the poor," asked a heathen of Rabbi Akiba, " why does he not support them ?" " Their case," said the sage, " is left in our hands, that we may thereby acquire merits and forgiveness of sin." " But what a merit it is !" the other replied. " Suppose I am angry with one of my slaves, and forbid him food and drink, and some one goes and gives it him furtively, shall I be much pleased ?" " Not so," the other replied. " Suppose you are wroth with your only son and imprison him without food, and some good man has pity on the child, and saves him the pangs of hunger, would you be so very angry with the man ? And we, if we are called servants of God, are also called his children."

Even when the gates of heaven are shut to prayer, they are open to tears. Prayer is Israel's only weapon, a weapon inherited from the fathers, a weapon tried in a thousand battles.

Prayer is the service of the heart which God requires of us. The gates of repentance are always open, the gates of prayer are never closed. Thou man of little faith, why raisest thou thy voice in prayer? When you pray lift up your heart to God, not your voice.

Before prayer examine thy heart, whether it be in a prayerful mood; if thou art distracted pray not at all. Prayer without devotion is a body without a soul.

When you pray turn your eyes earthward, and your heart heavenward. Cleanse your heart from sin before you pray. Pray not for things which are past and done. Pray for your neighbor to the God of Mercy.

God will surely hear the prayer of him who prays for others though he himself stands in need of divine mercy.

He steals the rich gifts of this world who enjoys them without rendering thanks for them both to God and men. Though all prayers may cease, the prayer of thanksgiving shall never cease.

Be thou always as God-fearing in secret as thou appearest in public, acknowledging the truth, and harboring the truth in thy heart, and say every morning: LORD of the world, not in reliance upon my own righteousness, but trusting in Thine infinite mercy do I make supplication unto Thee.

Blessed is he whose noble deeds go as mourners behind his bier. Blessed is he who on departing from this earth, bequeath a good name to his children. In the hour of death neither gold, nor silver, nor jewels will accompany man, but only the memory of his good deeds.

The righteous man is the splendor, the glory, the ornament of the place where he dwells. When he leaves it, away goes its splendor, its glory and ornament. The righteous are more glorious in their death even than in their life.