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Echoes of Wisdom

OR

Talmudic Sayings with Classic, especially Latin, Parallelisms,

BY

G. TAUBENHAUS,

Minister Cong. Beth Elohim, Brooklyn.

PART I.

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To the sacred memory of my beloved father,

BENJAMIN TAUBENHAUS,

I dedicate this book.

THE AUTHOR.

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PREFACE.

In presenting Talmud and Classics together, the object is not to throw the charge of plagiarism at any door, but to bring the Talmud nearer to the understanding of at least some of the many who, lacking all knowledge of the same, profanely disparage it.

The beautiful form is not the chief boast of the Classics. They are at their noblest when glorifying some metaphysical or practical truth. Where that is absent they fail to charm us. Homer and Virgil, Plato and Cicero have no fascination in spite of their rhythmic and blossoming diction when they correct no error, improve no moral, clarify no idea, and elevate no truth.

That wisdom which is the pulsation and vitality of the Classics is a part of the wisdom laid up in the Talmud, I say a part, because as to vastness of influence and loftiness of religious thought the Talmud is without a compeer. It is the luminous stratum of the Bible, and has been and is still, to a vast extent, the enlarged and illustrated Bible of Israel.

The present volume, comprising Talmudic sayings beginning with "Aleph," is the first of a proposed series to come forth in alphabetical order, and on the same plan.

Recognizing my indebtedness to the "Milin D'rabbanan" and to Ramage's "Beautiful thoughts of Latin Authors," whose translation I occasionally adopted, I wish this booklet a cordial reception.

THE AUTHOR.

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I.

"The pipe which affords sweet music to princes is not appreciated by weavers."—*Talmud.*

We should seek to earn the plaudits of refined taste. Although it is some accomplishment to please any class of people. The cheap dining-room is as much needed as the high-toned restaurant. Shall those starve who have no taste and no means for dainties and delicacies? But to please all tastes alike is a difficult matter.

So Horace: "What shall I give, what shall I not give. Thou refusest what another demands."

אכוב לחרי זמר לגרדאי לא מקבלוה מניה (יומא כ)

2. "Quid dem? Quid non dem? Renuis tu, quod jubet alter."—Epist. ii. 2.

II.

"At the door of the well-supplied store-room there are brethren and friends; but at the door of poverty neither brethren nor friends are seen."

This is a universal experience and it were useless to ask why it is so. Aristotle having been asked why people like to spend so much of their time with handsome persons remarked: "This is a question fit for a blind man to ask."

Everything in this world must feed on something. Love and friendship, too, must have some means of sustenance.

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We should seek to acquire some virtue, some noble qualification, whereby we may be held in esteem, and in prosperity we should bear in mind how difficult it is, under some circumstances, to obtain a helping hand when such is most needed.

"Whilst thou art favored by fortune thou shalt have many friends; when stormy times come thou shalt find thyself alone."—*Ovid.*

אבב חנואתא נפישי אחי ומרחמי (שבת ל"ב)

"Donec eris felix, multos numerabis amicos; Tempora si fuerint nubila, solus erit."—Ovid Trist i, 9.

III.

"Our fathers said they have forgotten the good things; we have not even seen them."

A famous cook obligated himself to furnish the recipes of a thousand dishes. But his culinary knowledge proved inadequate to the agreement. He was sued, and the judge Rabbi Jehudi acquitted him on the ground that it was not for the benefit of society to carry that art to such a high pitch.

"Who could tolerate such sordid luxury." (Juvenal.)

אבותינו אמרו נשינו טובה ואנו וכ' (נדרים נ')

Quis feret istas luxuriae sordes. (Sat. 1.)

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IV.

"The stones of one's house, the walls of one's house will testify against him."—*Tal.*

Wrong, though done unobserved and unwatched, will come to light. Our home will not afford us sufficient help to cover and hide it. We are reminded of the lines of Swift:

"For by old proverbs it appears,
That walls have tongues and hedges ears."

"Oh! Corydon, poor, simple Corydon! Do you think aught that a rich man does, can be secret? Even though his slaves should hold their tongues, his cattle will tell the tale; and his dogs and door posts and marble statues."—*Juvenal.*

אכני ביתו של אדם וקורות ביתו של אדם מעידין בו (תענית יא)

Secretum divitis ullum esse putas? Servi ut taceant jumenta loquentur et canis et postes et marmora.—Sat. ix.

V.

"By the way threaten the enemy."—*Tal.*

The idea is to check evil at the very start and not to allow it to gain any ground. The angel Gabriel, commissioned to go and to ripen the fruit of Israel's fields, was advised to cut off the Assyrians on the road. For to bless the harvest without obviating hostile invasion would have been tantamount to preparing a sumptuous banquet for the enemy. Indeed, that gardener is careless and indiscreet who makes

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no timely provisions against injurious influences.

Persius expressed the same thought. "Meet the disease on the road."

אנב אורחך לבעל דבבך אישתמע (סנהד צ"ה)

Venienti occurrite morbo.—Persius iii. 64.

VI.

"The reward of the religious discourse is haste."—*Tal.*

Our religious obligation does not centre in the hand. A man, carrying a hundred Bibles and having nothing in his heart and conscience to duplicate any portion of their sacred contents, carries a heavy load but not the word of God. An action itself does not determine its merit or demerit. Water is achromatic and receives an agreeable or disagreeable color from something else. A few minute rain-drops, upon which sun-rays fall, reflect the gorgeous hues of the rainbow, the sign of God's promise, the flag of Providence, which we see suspended in the sky after storms to announce, as it were, the victory over the enraged elements of nature. The same deed which, if performed by a sincere man, might elicit our hearty congratulation, is to us a source of annoyance and irritation if done by a hypocrite.

Religion is primarily an internal element: the consciousness of our higher relation. To strengthen and to foster this consciousness—what an inestimable gain! Light of truth and holy ardor within,

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what a strong impulse to ideal realization without!

"Hasten, my dearest Lucilius, think how you would accelerate your speed, were an enemy pursuing you."

—*Seneca.*

אנרא דפרקא רהיטא (ברכות ז')

Propero ergo, Lucili carissime, et cogita quantum additurus celeritati fueris, si a tergo hostis instaret.—Epist.xxxii.

VII.

"The reward of study (tradition) is the understanding."

—*Tal.*

The Talmudic sages reverenced tradition not as the despot of the mind; but as its emancipator, tutor and educator. They laid great stress upon finding the reason why things were said or done so, and not otherwise. They were rational followers of tradition. "Ask me a point of law," said Rami har Chami, "and though I will answer according to reason, you will find its parallel in tradition."

Rabbi Jochanan grieved when Rabbi Elieser, in an almost flattering manner, backed his statements with corroborative references to tradition, and mournfully cried: "Where is the son of Lakish, who, by cross-questioning, compelled me to be more exact and elaborate in my teachings?"

Once it happened, when the head of the Babylonian college was to be elected, that there were two prospective candidates, each of whom was distinguished in his way. Rabbi Joseph was a pro-

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found scholar, but less of a thinker; Rabbah was an acute dialectician, but less of a scholar. The community, at a loss in whose favor to decide, sent to Palestine for advice in the matter. The reply was that knowledge was preferable to subtlety and argumentive skill, because without knowledge the mind is helpless—*a tabula rasa*. Yet Rabbi Joseph, upon whom the choice fell, voluntarily left the field and made room for his more intellectual rival.

The most irrefutable argument in favor of tradition was made by the great Hillel when he convinced a heathen, who desired to embrace Judaism, on the condition of being exempt from the oral law, that even the alphabet cannot be learned without the assistance of tradition.

Reason is not antagonistic to tradition; tradition is no opponent of reason. Before we can speak we have to hear, and before we can form an opinion of our own, we must submit to the instruction and authority of others. Tradition is the sum of the experience and the outcome of the active brain of the past. It is generation speaking to generation, age impelling age—the magnificent scope of an immensely widened and broadened present, the chariot of progresive thought.

"Not to know what happened before one was born is always to remain a child."—*Cicero.*

אנרא דשמעתא סברא (שם)

"Nescire autem, quid antea, quam natus sis, acciderit, id est semper esse puerum."—Or. 34.

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VIII.

"Silence is the reward of the visit of condolence."—*Tal.*

Considering what tattlers we are, and how unmanageable a thing the tongue is, it is not at all to be wondered at that the suppression of speech at the house of mourning has been declared a virtue. But our saying has a loftier meaning. We come grumbling into the world. Some of us continue the mortifying exercise until a few shovels of earth put an end to it. But most of us imitate the hooting of the owl and strike the plaintive notes of the pessimist too often. We have domineering dispositions, hence we are beside ourselves when aught goes against our will and expectation.

A great calamity is not the unbearable part of life. We murmur more against sultriness than against the thunder. When the worst occurs we are calmed. Resignation is an unfailing antidote. But trivial losses, common-place disappointments, avoidable altercations, insults that we magnify, cares which we invite and wants which we create are the most provoking and vexing things, nipping so many joys in the bud. And if we reflect upon the final and inevitable blast or upon the danger which threatens our house, our very life, every hour of our existence, does it not look comical and irrational to pine and complain about trifles? "It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of

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feasting," says the wise Solomon. For here our vanity and discontent is fed. There in the shadow of the departed soul, solemn considerations loom up and humility and resignation or, what is the same, silence recommends itself as wisdom.

"To be silent is learned by the many misfortunes in life."—*Seneca.*

אגרא דבי טמיא שתיקותא (שם)

"Tacere multis discitur vitae malis."—Thyest 319.

IX.

"The reward of fasting is charity."—*Tal.*

If fasting itself were a religious act the people who gladly starve themselves in order to fatten their purse would be the most religious. What ordinance would be so welcome to the miser as that which gave him the religious right to keep his family in starvation at short intervals? But it was customary to distribute the savings in consequence of fasting among the poor. This impressed upon the fast-day a true religious character. Self-denial, not for the sake of accumulation, but for the sake of extending a helping hand to those who cannot do without it, is charity, indeed.

"Let us use those things intrusted to us, let us not boast of them; and let us use them sparingly

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as a loan deposited with us which will soon depart."
—*Seneca.*

אנרא דחעניתא צדקתא (שם)

"Utamur illis non gloriemur; et utamur parce, tamquam depositis apud nos et abituris."—Epist. lxxiv.

X.

"The reward of the funeral oration is the lamenting voice."—*Tal.*

"It is some relief to weep; grief is satisfied and carried off by tears."—*Ovid.*

אנרא דהספידא דלויי (שם)

Est quaedam flere voluptas, expletur lacrymis egeritur-que dolor."—Trist iv. 3.

XI.

"While the sand is yet on thy feet, sell."—*Tal.*

When you return with merchandise from your journey sell at any profit, and do not wait for a better market. This advice Rab gave to his son, when he said to him: "I have done my best to educate and fit you for the learned profession, and failed. Now let me teach you how to conduct yourself as a business man."

The son of Rab must have belonged to those

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who liked to defer things from day to day, and citing to him the golden rule of mercantile pursuits, Rab meant to teach him at the same time a moral and religious lesson. The rule to create and not idly wait for the opportunity, and to quickly embrace it when it presents itself, is as beneficial in religion as elsewhere. "While we are deliberating, the opportunity is often lost."—*Syrus.*

ארחלא אברעיך זבינך זבין (פסחים ק"נ)

"Deliberando saepe perit occasio."

XII.

"Love overlooks station."—*Tal.*

When under the influence of love, it is immaterial to us whether what we do is dignifying or not. To illustrate this, the Talmud refers to Abraham, who, in his anxiety to do the will of God, rose up early in the morning and did the work of a servant.

"Dignity and love do not blend well or continue long together."—*Ovid.*

אהבה מבטלת השורה (סנהדרין ק"ה)

"Non bene conveniunt, nec in una sede morantur majestas et amor."—Met. ii. 846.

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XIII.

"Love depending upon a thing ceases when the thing ceases."—*Tal.*

"If it were expediency that cemented friendships, the same, when changed, would dissolve them."—*Cicero.*

(אהבה שתלויה בדבר בטל דבר בטלה אהבה ׳אבות פ׳ ה׳)

"Si utilitas amicitias conglutinaret, eadem commutata dissolveret."—De Amicitia, ix.

XIV.

"Woe is me from my Maker and woe is me from my nature."—*Tal.*

A small quantum of religion amounts to next to nothing. We cannot go beyond our standard of duty, and if that does not rise above the ground, the little we accomplish will make us rejoice, and fancy that we perform wonders, as children do when they walk on a ladder which has a safe and horizontal position. But if our religious conception is of a high grade, and to live religiously means to us to give to life such shape and symmetry as will reflect some of the grandeur of the Divine attributes, then conscience will not be pacified by the defective performance of dilettantism, nor rocked to sleep by the shallow song of the amateur. But in that struggle for spiritual dominion and for emancipation from the

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delusion of earthly splendor, how frequent is the repulsion! As an eagle, whose pinion fails in his lofty flight to the sun, sinks exhausted upon some strange mountain, where he has to tarry to regain strength, and is suffering in the meantime from both a thirst for the upper air and a longing for more genial environs, so many a man with strong religious propensities, moving amidst the temptations and allurements of the world, finds himself often between two realms—one which he cannot call his, and one that gives him no satisfaction. Body and soul—what opposites! Yet man has to live in both. The world and the religious idea—what antagonists! Yet the one has to be worked out in the other. The flesh is the loom of immortality; matter the door to eternity.

The saying is attributed to Rabbi Meier, who was a disciple of Elisha ben Abijah, the famous apostate, called in the Talmud Acher. It bears a striking resemblance to the words of Faust: "Two souls, alas! within me contend." The same sentiment Seneca expresses: "What is it, Lucilius, that we are intentionally going one way, still drives us another? What is it that impels us to the very place from which we desire to recede?"

אוי לי מיוצרי ואוי לי מיצרי (ברכות ס"א)

"Zwei Seelen wohnen, ach! in meiner Brust, die eine will sich von der andern trennen."—Goethe's Faust.

"Quid est hoc Lucili, quod nos alio tendentes alio trahit, et eo unde recedere cupimus, impellit?"—Ep. 52.

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XV.

"Woe unto me, if I speak; woe unto me if I do not speak."—*Tal.*

Rabbi Jochanan Ben Saccai made that exclamation with reference to the frauds and imposters of his age.

"If I speak about them, some of my disciples becoming familiar with their vulpine practice might be tempted to try it. Should I not expose them they will continue undisturbed to take advantage of my disciples who are ignorant of their methods."

"It is misery," says Syrus, "to be compelled to suppress the very thing you desire to proclaim."

אוי לי אם אומר אוי לי אם לא אומר (בבא בתרא ס"ט)

"Quam miserum est tacere cogi quod cupias loqui."

XVI.

"Woe unto people who see and do not know what they see; stand and do not know upon what they stand."
—*Tal.*

The saying, though dressed in sceptical phraseology, opposes scepticism. There is a difference, according to Kant, between scepticism and the sceptical method. "Scepticism—a principle of technical and scientific ignorance—undermines the foundations of all knowledge, in order, if possible, to destroy our belief and confidence therein. The sceptical method aims at certainty." Indeed, in the Bible, especially in the book of Job and Ecclesiastes, that

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method is used in order to bring about a complete surrender of reason to faith. The Talmud, too, avails itself of it, and has many a dispute which is left undecided because revelation sheds no light upon it, and the evidences on both sides appeal with equal force to reason.

On the same Talmudic page from which the above saying is copied, there is a controversy between the school of Hillel and that of Shammai about the priority in the order of the creation of Heaven and Earth which embarrasses and confuses reason, because both theories, contradictory as they are, seem, each in its turn, admissible and legitimate.

The idea which our saying is intended to convey is that if we ignore revelation and disparage faith, we will reason and theorize without arriving at any satisfactory conclusion. Every affirmative meets its negative, and every thesis is weakened by the opposition of an antithesis. Duty the contract and agreement of society, the leading thought in the Book of Life, becomes misty and illegible, and if reason unassisted by revelation does stand by it, it is only as an interrogation.

"O miserable thoughts of men! O shaded minds! In what dangers and what darkness is spent whatever there is of life!"—*Lucretius*.

אוי להם לבריות שרואות ואינן יודעות מה רואות עומדות ואינן יודעות על מה הן עומדות (חגיגה י"ב)

"O miseras hominum mentes! O pectora caeca!"—II. 13.

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XVII.

"Woe to the wicked and woe to his neighbor.—*Tal.*

"Your affairs are at stake when the next house is on fire."—*Horace.*

אוי לרשע ואוי לשכנו (סוכה נ"ו)

"Tua res agitur paries cum proximus ardet."—Ep. i, 18.

XVIII.

"Either company with man or death."—*Tal.*

Choni Hamagol, who is highly spoken of in the Talmud for his piety and learning, once saw a man plant a tree, and said: "You do not expect to eat the fruit of this tree; why do you plant it?" "I have found trees in the world," answered the man; "my father planted such trees for me, and I plant them for my children." Pleased with this wise reply, Choni Hamagol walked away. In a place of solitude he was overtaken with sleep, where he slept for seventy years. At the end of that period he awakened, and returned home, where he inquired for his son. He was dead. His grandson refused to recognize him. He went into the school where the sages philosophized. He heard his name mentioned with respect. A scholar, discussing a point of law, said; "This is as clear to-day as it was in the days of Choni Hamagol." The resurrected man

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cried out: "I am Choni Hamagol." But no one gave credence to his story. He prayed for death.

"If his solitude be such that he could not come in contact with man, he would wish to get out of life."—*Cicero.*

או חברותא או מיתותא (תענית כ"ג)

"Tamen, si solitudo tanta sit ut hominem videre non possit, excedat e vita."—De Offic i. 43.

XIX.

"This people is likened to the dust and is likened to the stars, because if it goes down it is to the dust, if it ascends it is to the stars."—*Tal.*

We fall deep and rise high. Clinging to our teachings and principles we are superior to all nations; abandoning them we are inferior. Politically and socially our history presents the same opposites. Either we are despised or raised to the highest honors; either are we called, "the people chosen by God" or "the people cursed by God."

"Man is a god or a brute," is a Latin saying adopted from Aristole.

אומה זו כשולה לעפר וכשולה לככבים כשהן יורדין יורדין לעפר
וכשהן עולין עולין עד לככבים (מגילה ט"ז)

"Deus aut bestia."

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XX.

"Speak moderately about a man's merits when he is present, but do him justice in his absence."—*Talmud.*

Praise is discriminative, hence, not without offensiveness; it is like a golden sword which glorifies him to whom it is given, but is a menace to others. Praise going in the direction of merit hints that those who are unnoticed are undeserving. But we cannot afford to treat all alike, and gratitude insists upon its rights. If the heart is full of admiration, why should it not come out? Place the good man in a light where he will be seen to the best advantage. Omit nothing in his life that tends to render his name more endeared. Let every gold button, every jewel, every grace and ornament in the apparel of the good soul shine out with pleasing distinction. "By praise emulation is excited." But when you face him, control your feeling and let the laudatory words be few, or you run the risk of being taken for a common flatterer.

So Syrus: "Admonish thy friend secretely, but praise him the more publicly."

אומרים מקצת שבחו של אדם בפניו וכולו שלא בפניו (ערובין י"ח)

Secreto amicos admone, lauda palam.

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XXI.

"The scholarship is appreciated, the daughter is not appreciated."—*Tal.*

Rabbi Jochanan desired to have Seira for a son-in-law and made to him a proposal to that effect. But Seira who was a proud Babylonian did not like to marry into a Palestine family, and avoided Rabbi Jochanan as much as he could, in order not to be compelled to repeat the refusal and to embarrass the sage a second time. Accidentally, however, they met on the road, and coming to a stream, Seira carried the Rabbi over on his shoulders. Rabbi Jochanan then remarked: "My wisdom is good enough, my daughter is not good enough for you."

"Philosophy does not consider pedigree. She did not receive Plato as noble, but made him so."

אורייתין כשרה בגתין לא כשרן (קדושין ע"א)

"Platonem non accepit nobilem Philosophia, sed fecit."
—*Seneca.* Ep. 44.

XXII.

"If one of the society dies, all its members should tremble."—*Tal.*

Let it not be said that he died because he was old and feeble, or because he led an indiscreet life, or

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because he was poor and had not the means to attend to himself properly, or because he was rich and fattened himself excessively.

"We all are reserved for death...Nor is there any question about the thing, but about the day."—*Seneca.*

אחד מבני חבורה שמת ידאגו כל חבורה (שבת ק"ו)

Omnes reservamur ad mortem.—Nat. Quaest. vi, 1.

XXIII.

"Do you think that fear of God is a small matter?"—*Tal.*

The rational fear of God is the highest attainment inasmuch as it excludes the fear of man, as Ibn Ezra puts it: "Because I fear the One God, I fear no one else." So we understand the blessing which Rabbi Jochanan gave unto his disciples: "May it be your portion to fear God as much as you do men." (Then you will fear men less.)

"To obey God is liberty."—*Seneca.*

אטו יראה מלתא זוטרתא (ברכ' ל"ג)

Deo parere libertas est.—De Vit. Bet. 15.

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XXIV.

"Does it follow that he is no great man because he does not know this?"—*Tal.*

We cannot know and learn everything, and that which we have learned and believe to have mastered, we cannot always apply with equal skill. Rabbi Jochanan was perplexed by a simple question of Vespasian. Rabbi Saphra disappointed his interrogators, to whom he had been highly recommened. Rabbi Jehudah was silent when asked to explain a Biblical passage.

When Plato defined man as being a two-footed animal without feathers, he was ridiculed by Diogenes, who, on the following day plucked a cock, brought it to the academy and said: "This is Plato's man."

"Even the great Homer nods at times."—*Horace.*

אטו מאן דלא ידע האי לאו גברא רבה הוא (מ'ק ט"ז)

Quandoque bonus dormitat.—Homeros (A. P.)

XXV.

"Do you think that the sage can proceed in the manner of the dealer in spices."—*Tal.*

His article cannot be put in the scales. It is not a thing about which to say: "I want just so much and no more and no less." You desire to have ten different rules to apply to ten different conditions in life, and he imparts only one, but in that, the principles

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of all others are contained, and it is for you to find them.

There is no book, philosophical, theological or poetical, no matter how excellent and exhaustive it be, that you could read with any benefit if your reason and imagination did not assist you. Good style is but a pleasant manner of presenting a subject whereby an interest for it is created. The way to truth may be pointed out, but self-culture must do the rest.

We are reminded of Lessing's Nathan: "Strange! how is this? What wills the Sultan of me? I came prepared with cash—he asks truth. Truth? As if truth, too, were cash—a coin disused, that goes by weight—indeed, 'tis some such thing. But a new coin, known by the stamp at once, to be flung down upon the counter—it is not that."

So Cicero: "For our mode of speaking is to be adapted to the ear of the multitude, to fascinate and excite their mind and to prove things which are not weighed in the scales of the goldsmith."

אטו תנא בי רוכלא ליחשב וליזול (גיטין ל״ג)

Heac enim nostra oratio....ad ea probanda quae non aurificis statera . . . examinantur. (De Or. II, 38.)

XXVI.

"If the king says: 'Let the mountain be removed,' it will surely be done."—*Tal.*

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"When Caesar says: 'Do this,' it is performed."
—*Shakespeare.*

Retraction, though it have the smile and loveliness of mercy, weakens authority.

"It is something to hold a sceptre with firm hand."—*Ovid.*

אי אמר מלכותא עקרנא טורי עקר
טורי ולא הדר ביה (ב"ב ג:)

Est aliquid valida sceptra tenere manu.

XXVII.

"If you will lift the weight, I, too, will lift."—*Tal.*

Barak said to Deborah: "If you go, (to war), I, too, will go."

"It is inborn in man to be satisfied to be a follower, when it is risky to be a leader."—*Tacitus.*

אי דלית דורא דלינא ואי לא לא
דלינא (ב"ק צ"ב:)

Insita mortalibus natura, propere sequi quae piget inchohare.—Hist. i, 55.

XXVIII.

"The peasant clings to his basket even if a crown is placed upon his head."—*Tal.*

Rabbah had risen from extreme poverty to be at

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the head of the College of Pumpaditha and the chief figure of his age. Once he sent Purim gifts of an ordinary nature to a man of high station and refined taste. Abayi seeing the poor selection the sage made quoted the above adage as a possible criticism which the patrician might fling at him, when receiving the coarse presents.

Promotion, like a new and beautiful garment, improves appearance, but does not change habits. The wider the leap and the more abrupt the elevation, the more difficult is the task of perfect assimilation.

"Whatever is innate or inbred, may be corrected by art, but cannot be rooted out."—*Seneca.*

אי חקלאה מלבא ליהוי דיקולא
מצואריה לא נחית (מגילה ז:)

Quidquid infixum et ingenitum est lenitur arte, non vincitur.—Ep. xi.

XXIX.

"Had I not picked up the potsherd wouldst thou have found the pearl?"—*Tal.*

So Rabbi Jannai observed, when his disciple, Rabbi Jochanan, made an excellent point in argument.

While we may claim the credit of application, we ought not to forget our indebtedness to our teachers for the knowledge we acquire with their assistance.

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Carneades, speaking about Chrysipus, whose writings he absorbed, said: "If Chrysipus had not lived I should never have existed."

Our sages have appreciated the evolution of instruction to such an extent that they taught: "If one learns from a person one maxim or one word, he owes him the respect due to a teacher." One maxim or one word may enable us to uncover pearls of wisdom.

"You buy an inestimable treasure from your teacher."—*Seneca.*

אי לאו דדלאי לך חספא מי אשכחת
מרגניתא מתותיה (יבמ' ב')

Emis . . . rem inestimabilem . . .bonarum artium praeceptore.—De Ben. iv.

XXX.

"Had not a great man praised thee, I might have taken exception to what you say."—*Tal.*

We rely not only upon the superior judgment of the great man, but also upon his superior sense of justice, and taking it for granted that he will not stoop to misrepresentation, we extend courtesy to his protege.

"Good men will yield thee praise, then slight the rest."

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" 'Tis best praise-worthy to have pleased the best."
—*Capt. John Smith.*

Cicero expresses the same idea: "For it is undoubtedly true, that applause is sweet, when it proceeds from those whose own life has been most applauded."

אי לאו דקלסך נברא רבה וכ' (יבמ' צ''ב)

Est enim profecto jucunda laus, quae ab iis proficiscitur, qui ipsi in laude vixerunt.—Fam. xv, 6.

XXXI.

"Were it not for this day, there would be many Josephs."
—*Tal.*

Rab Joseph was in habit of giving a banquet to his friends on the feast of weeks, because to the event of that day he felt indebted for his exalted position.

There would be more consistency, gratitude and light of beneficence in the world, if those who enjoy distinction should honor the sources which lend it to them.

"Law is what distinguishes right and wrong.
—*Cicero.*

אי לאו האי יומא כמה יוסף איכא בשוקא (שבת ס''ט)

Lex justorum injustorumque distinctio.—Leg. ii, 5.

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XXXII.

"If this prince will rule, thou wilt be his subject, and if that prince will rule, thou wilt be his subject. (There is nothing for thee to gain.)—*Talmud.*

So the wife of On Ben Peleth reasoned with her husband when he intimated to her his intention to join the conspiracy of Korah against Moses.

The moral is: "We should not take sides in contests of the great. Let them fight it out among themselves. So Seneca:

"What is it to you, Marcus Cato! It is not a question of liberty. The question is whether Caesar or Pompejus shall be master of the commonwealth. The conquest does not concern you. What matters it to you who of them conquers?"

אי מר רבא אנת תלמידו ואי מר רבא
אנת תלמידו (סנהד ק"ט)

Quaeritur utrum Caesar, an Pompejus possideat rem publicam. Dominus eligitur, quid tua, qui vincerit.—Ep. 14.

XXXIII.

"If the book, then no sword, if the sword, then no book."
—*Tal.*

Peace favors and war impedes culture and refinement. When the book glories, the sword is rusty, and when the sword is unsheathed, the dust accumulates on the book.

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No man can be both a scholar and a soldier; a servant of God, and an enemy of His creature; an upholder of religion, and an assasin of truth.

We are reminded of Lucan: "Faith and probity are not found among the men who follow the camp."

אי ספרא לאו סיפא ואי סיפא
לאו ספרא (ע"ז י"ז)

Nulla fides probitasque viris qui castra sequuntur.—Bel. Civ. x.

XXXIV.

"If you have hired out yourself, you have to beat the wool if you are told to do so."—*Tal.*

We should either not undertake to do anything which is beneath our station, or we must abide by the agreement.

Rab came to Nahardua, and incognito performed the function of interpreter. At that time the leading Rabbi of the city did not speak directly to the people. He suggested the text and the points to be discussed, but the homily was worked out, and delivered in the idiom of the masses, by one who was engaged for that purpose, and was called Methurgeman or Emora.

In some instances he towered intellectually high above the Rabbi, as was the case with Judah Bar Nachmaini who acted as speaker for one so ignorant that he could not even furnish a suitable text for the

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occasion, and he, astonished at the uninstructed usurper, cried out in the words of the prophet: "Woe, if it is said to a piece of wood awake, and to a stone arise."

It was not so bad with Rabbi Shilo. His erudition entitled him to the position which he occupied with dignity. But his scholarship was inferior to that of Rab, and as the latter was progressing in his discourse, it dawned upon Rabbi Shilo that his temporary Methurgeman was no less a personality than the famous Rab. At once he rose from his seat, and interrupting the speaker, said: "I am not worthy to preside where you stand." Rab, however, insisted upon finishing the work he began.

"Either do not begin or finish," is also a Latin proverb.

אי תגרית ליה פוץ
עמריה (יומ' כ')

Aut nunquam tentes, out perfice.

XXXV.

"The parts of one's own bodily structure will testify against him."—*Tal.*

The idea is not that we can know a man's mind and character by looking at him. "Do not judge the contents by the pitcher, is a Talmudic sentiment which reminds of Shakespeare, when he says: "There

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is no art to find the mind's construction in the face."

Is the spirit of a Samuel, an Isaiah, Ezrah, Akiba, Copernicus, Goethe in the face? How many people there have been and are, who likened them in size and weight of body, and resembled them in complexion and features, but intellectually were no more like them than is the moon like the sun.

Moses had to perform wonders with his staff to prove to Pharaoh that he was sent by God. The prophet Elisha was molested by the bad boys for his bald-headedness, and perhaps some other bodily defect. Hannah was taken for an inebriate by the High Priest Eli. Rabbi Jehudah was told that he resembled a swine breeder more than a scholar, because he had a flushed face. In a conversation with Rabbi Joshua Ben Chananyah who had an ungainly appearance a Roman princess expressed her astonishment that such a bright intellect should have no manifestation in facial delineation.

Homer was blind, and Sophocles, charged by his sons with silliness, read his latest work to his judges, and thus proved that he was not the dotard complained of. Socrates was declared an immoral man by a famous phrenologist.

Diognes Leartius, tells about Cleanthes: "He boasted that on the principles of Zeno he could judge a man's character by his looks. A young man brought him a profligate fellow having a hardy look from working a good deal in the field, and requested

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him to tell his moral character. Cleanthes, having hesitated a little, bade him depart, and as he departed he sneezed: "I have the fellow now," said Cleanthes, "he is a debauchee!"

But what, if that fellow had not sneezed, the philosopher would have been puzzled.

Of course, we cannot ignore and disparage appearance. Is it not by it that we can tell one thing from the other? There is truth in the popular saying: "Appearance is everything." Science is nothing else than our knowledge of appearances. But the appearance of mind and moral character are works and actions. Would Raphael's hands, without the great work he performed have secured for him his renown of a great artist? What, if Epaminondas had lacked the opportunity to manifest his moral courage, would history have taken notice of him? The halo of Moses minus his stupendous achievements would have been a mere cipher.

What then is the meaning of our saying? That things done in all secrecy, will in many instances leave traces upon him by which they will be known. "If a calamity has befallen the community," says the Talmud "it is the duty of every individual to mourn and let no one say: "I will mourn publicly, but do good unto my heart in safe retreat, who will know what I am doing?"

We are reminded of Dryden:

"Sorrow nor joy can be disguised by art;
Our foreheads blab the secrets of the heart."

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Cicero declares that "the countenance is the image of the mind, and the eyes are its interpreters," but involuntarily admits their deceptiveness.

איבריו של אדם מעידין בו שנאמר
אתם עדי נאם ה' (תענית יא)

"Imago animi vultus, indices oculi.—De Orat. iii, 59.

XXXVI.

"When the sun rises the weak rise."—*Tal.*

To the sick and troubled heart the shades of night are peculiarly depressing, and the very stars are emblematic of flowers strewn upon graves.

In such an unhappy mood, Young wrote: "Night, sable goddess! from her ebon throne, in rayless majesty, now stretches forth her leaden sceptre o'er a slumbering world. Silence, how dead! and darkness, how profound! Nor eye, nor listening ear, an object finds; Creation sleeps. 'Tis as the general pulse of life stood still, and nature made a pause, an awful pause! prophetic of her end."

Morning is resurrection. Beaming with awakened glories the world rises as from an abyss of darkness to new life and expectation. Man recovered from his stupor looks again for his opportunity. There is some relief in the chamber of anguish and sorrowful watchfulness.

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"The morn is up again, the dewy morn, with breath all incense, and with cheek all bloom, laughing the clouds away with playful scorn and living as if earth contained no tomb."—*Byron.*

Figuratively, the saying means that when the good man is in the ascendency, others ascend with him. It is associated in the Talmud with a beautiful myth. Abraham wore a jewel which restored to health all the sick that had an opportunity to cast a glance at it. When the Patriarch died, the Almighty hung it upon the sun. Now, Abraham's jewel is the blessing of God, that he shall be a benefit to those who wish him well. That blessing did not cease with Abraham's death, but was transferred upon the righteous who followed him. In the Bible, the righteous are compared to the rising sun.

"One comfort," says Carlyle, "is that great men taken up in any way are profitable company. We cannot look, however, imperfectly upon a great man without gaining something by him. He is the living light-fountain which it is good and pleasant to be near. The light which enlightens, which has enlightened the darkness of the world, and this not as a kindled lamp only, but rather as a natural luminary shining by the gift of Heaven."

(אידלי יומא אידלי קצירא ב"ב מז)

Apollo morbos depellit.

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XXXVII.

"Who is a hero? He who subdues his passions."

That the man of great and extraordinary power is a hero is admitted by all. There is, however, a difference of opinion with regard to the sphere of exercising and concentrating that power. The people in general hail it in the external. Their hero destroys cities, overthrows kingdoms and conquers nations. But the wise seek heroism in the breast. With them the question is not, how many people one holds in obedience to his will, and in subjugation to his whims, but how much influence and commanding power he has over himself. The microcosm of his inner being is the seat and realm of true heroism. The greatest hero is he who has the requirements to plant himself the idol of his environs, but scorns the opportunity in conformity to nobler principles.

The heroes of the people with some exceptions acted the dual part of strength and weakness; bravery and cowardice; the master and the slave. Quite interesting and suggestive is Lucian on the subject, and his dialogue of Alexander and Hannibal, invoking the aid of Minos to decide their dispute about precedence, speaks for itself.

Says Hannibal: "I took the Celtibarians, and conquered the Western Galatians; passing over great mountains, I overran all those parts about the Eridanus, and subverted so many cities; and subdued the

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plains of Italy, and came over to the suburbs of the ruling city Rome, and slew so many on one day that I measured their rings by the bushels, and bridged rivers with the dead . . . All these things I did as a Barbarian, and unskilled in Grecian literature, and I never recited Homer as he (Alexander) did, nor was I educated by the sophist Aristotle, using as my guide a good natural education. These are the things in which I declare myself to be superior to Alexander."

To this speech of Hannibal, Alexander makes the following reply: "I ought, indeed, answer nothing, O Minos! to a man so impudent. For fame is sufficient to inform you how great a king I was, and how great a robber he . . . . Being elected general, I deigned not to be contented with ruling as many as my father left me; but comprehending the entire world in my ambition, and thinking it a shocking thing if I did not rule over all, I invaded Asia and conquered . . . and taking . . . and constantly subduing all before me . . . After this, O Minos! you remember how many dead I sent you down on one day. The ferry-man says that his boat was not sufficient for them . . . Do you judge, oh Minos! For these few observations are enough out of many."

The Talmud relates the following story about Alexander. He besieged a city in Africa, which was inhabited exclusively by women, but overcome in argument by the female deputation that came to him to negotiate for peace, he promised to withdraw his

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forces, and to do no injury to the city. He requested them, however, to bring him bread, and oh! how great was his disappointment, when in place of bread, they brought him gold. He assured them that he meant what he said, and had no desire for gold, but was hungry, and actually craved for bread, and the women shouted: "What! didst thou have no bread at home that thou hast come that perilous distance to beg for it?" Hereupon he wrote on the gate of the city: "I, Alexander the Great, have been a fool until I came to this place, where I have learned wisdom."

That Hegel should have inveighed against those who, favoring a calmer polity, questioned the greatness of Macedonia's most discontented son, seems strange, to say the least. It were wicked to think that the famous philosopher had the ambition that his voice be appreciated in the house of the Prussian Pharaoh.

Shakespeare's Roman play, Julius Caesar, is perhaps nothing else than a satire on Rome's heroes. They all look upon life as upon a plaything, yet with what a resolution they brandish the sword in the interest of their ambition, and how rapturously they speak about virtue. What a comical heroism! Is the life held so cheap, worth the steel and the sentiment they lavishly bestow upon it?

Even Brutus, "the noblest of them all," is no satisfactory personification of the higher conception of true heroism. He has brilliant traits in character,

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but is too conscious of them, and that consciousness breeds self-admiration. In spite of his moral superiority, he sees too often through the eyes of Cassius, and is his follower when he should be his leader. He despises the method of Cassius of raising funds, but applies to him for pecuniary aid when in need, and loses his temper when refused. His philosophy is not enough to hold him when the thought of Portia's death comes upon him without the strength which the spirit of the grape administers. Losing his battles, he, rather than bear the ignominy of defeat, puts an end to his life—an act for which he boldly censured Cato.

The Bible, too, unfolds a picture of perverted heroism in the life of Samson. That muscular Danite kills lions, removes cities, but is a helpless boy in the presence of Delilah—a characteristic which prompted our sages to remark: "Samson followed his eyes."

"It is foolish to command others, and not to be able to control ourselves."—*Syrus.*

איזהו גיבור הכובש את יצרו (אבות ד')

"Stultum est imperare caeteros qui nescit sibi."

XXXVIII.

"Who is wise? He who learns from every man."—*Tal.*

To Pythagoras we are indebted for the term philosopher. He refused to be called wise, and thought

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that man could be at best only a lover of wisdom. For the same reason our sages preferred the title of *Talmid Chacham* (pupil of the wise) to that of wise.

The wise man is pre-eminently a student, and learns even when teaching. Rabbi Chaninah used to say: "Much I have learned from my teachers, more from my associates, but most from my pupils."

It is a bad sign, if one thinks he has finished school, or he has to look to the clouds for a teacher. Thought is bountifully diffused. Rabbi Jochanan taught that by being observant, we could learn many a moral lesson even in the zoological realm.

King Solomon, you remember, refers to the ant, that creeping dot, as an efficient professor of economy and industry.

As to man, how much could be learned from him? "Surely, the proper study of mankind is man."

"No one is sufficiently wise by himself."—*Plautus.*

איזהו חכם הלומד מכל אדם (אבות ד')

Nemo solus satis sapis.—Mil. Glor. iii.

XXXIX.

"Who is honored? He who honors others."—*Tal.*

It is said about Napoleon, as he returned in a coach from his successful wars with Italy and Austria, the people everywhere manifested their loyalty and admiration in a loud and conspicuous manner, but

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he took little notice of all the proceedings. Bourienne, who sat with the Emperor, said to him: "It must be delightful to be greeted with such demonstrations of love and attachment." "Bah!" Napoleon said, "this same unthinking crowd, under a slight change of circumstances, would just as eagerly follow me to the scaffold."—*Little's H. L.*

Honor must be reciprocal. He who receives it must have a good opinion about the one who confers it, and unless one sees and honors God in His creation all honors are farcical.

"He who can . . . honor anyone, will quickly be honored himself."—*Seneca.*

איזה מכובד המכבד את הבריות (אבות ד')

Qui sic aliquem vereri potest cito erit verendus.—Ep. xi.

XL.

"Who is rich? He who takes delight in his portion."

The most of us claim a share in wisdom. We may have minutes of recognizing our stupidity, but self-infatuation quickly returns, and is the printing press of our opinions, and the mint of our actions. What is more natural to us than that we should be numbered among the wise? Do we not despise that man as a blasphemer who dares to question our wisdom? Not so as to riches. Our discontent and incessant

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struggle for more and more evidences that the world is a poor-house and its inmates are beggars.

The fact however, is that the rich by far outnumber the wise, and if there are comparatively so few who consider themselves actually rich, it is on account of the scarcity of wisdom.

"You cannot, with propriety, call him happy who possesses much; he more justly claims the title of happy man who understands how to make a wise use of the gifts of the gods."—*Horace.*

איזהו עשיר כל שיש לו נחת רוח
בעשרו דברי ר"מ (שבת כה)

Non possidentem multa vocaveris recte beatum; rectius occupat nomen beati, qui deorum muneribus sapienter uti.
—Ode iv, 9.

XLI.

"Which is the summum bonum? A good heart."—*Tal.*

The dialogue form of philosophy is older than are the writings of Plato. The book of Job is dialogue from beginning to the end, and a more inspiring philosophy is nowhere found.

In the Talmud that method of philosophising is fruitfully applied, and our heading is an abreviation of a paragraph in the second chapter of the Sayings of the Fathers, where a master and his disciples briefly discuss a subject which is at the bottom of all sound philosophy.

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Rabbi Jochanan, the founder of the famous school at Jamnia, proposes to his disciples to carefully consider that something in which the truly religious life centers. "Go and see," he says, "which virtue, which quality a man should cultivate with the utmost care and solicitude."

Rabbi Elieser answered: "A good eye," that is contentedness and pleasantness, which regards the whole world as if it were a bouquet in the hand of God.

Rabbi Joshua answered: "A good friend." This sage thought that we cannot afford to treat all alike, but out of the whole mass of men we ought to select some one to whom we should attach ourselves, and that some one, it is understood, must be a good person, capable of uplifting his associate.

Seneca quotes Epicure to have said: "You must be more careful with whom you eat, than what you eat. For good cheer without a friend is the life of a lion or wolf."

Rabbi Jose answered: "A good neighbor," that is good surroundings.

"I consider neighborhood the first step to friendship."—*Terence.*

Rabbi Simon answered: "Looking ahead."

"The cautious seldom err."—*Confucius.*

Rabbi Elasar answered: "A good heart." And the master declared this answer the best of all.

That the golden rule is altogether omitted from

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this discussion goes to show that Hillel did not press it upon his disciples as the test and criterion of the good life, and the sum total of Judaism. Had he done so, then Rabbi Jochanan, who was the exponent of his teachings, would either not have propounded the question of the chief good which he must have regarded as settled, or if he had done it with a view of enlightening his disciples on the subject, or of testing their reasoning and speculative faculty, he would, at least, have done his master the honor of quoting his favorite saying as the torch of life.

Hillel gave utterance to that rule accidentally only, and in a sense suitable to the occasion. A heathen came to him, and expressed the desire of embracing Judaism on the condition to be instructed in all its precepts and tenets while he stood on one foot. Hillel saw that he had to deal with an impudent fellow. "Stans in pede una," (standing on one foot) was a satirical phrase. And he cited the golden rule as a lesson which the heathen was most in need of at the time. "What is disagreeable to you, do not unto others." Hillel meant to say: "You came to have sport with me, how would you like it if others sported with you?"

To declare that rule the quintessence of Judaism; the apex, and all other teachings as its supporters; the great general, for whose safety and elevation all other teachings and usages are in the field, is to make the idea of God subservient to the purpose of man.

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Moreover, that rule raising, as it does, the ego of each individual as the measure and standard of the conduct of others, as the supreme court and sovereign of our entire being, is destructive to all rule, since there is among men a signal difference in the temperament, taste, desire, circumstances and even in the conception of right and wrong. According to that rule, a man has to consult in every case his likes and dislikes, and make his actions fit the one or the other. A man, for instance, who detests to be advised and corrected, would have absolutely no right to let others have the benefit of his advice. A man who thinks it shameful and unmanly to receive charity, and is satisfied in his mind that, were he poor, he would rather starve than make use of the kindness of people, would be perfectly justified to refuse every application of the needy for assistance.

Time and again inquiry was made into the fundamental principle of Judaism with no favorable result, which goes to show that there has been no unanimity on the subject among the learned in Israel, and that it is an ungrateful task, as the Marsho puts it, "to make Judaism stand on one foot." (See the following chapter.)

Rabbi Elasar's answer that the good heart is the chief good, leaves enough room for speculation. What constitutes the good heart? Is not the good heart easily misled? Can the good heart be acquired? But in the sense that the chief good is the good which

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has its spring in the heart, it may be said that Rabbi Elasar struck the highest keynote. Without the heart pleasantness is only a painted flower, friendship an impossibility, foresight makes the pedant, and religion leads to hypocrisy.

According to Seneca, the chief good depends upon the judgment and the possession of a virtuous mind.

איזו היא דרך טובה שידבק בה האדם.....
לב טוב (אבות פ' ב')

Summum bonum in ipso iudicio est, et habitu optimae mentis.—De Vit Bea. ix.

XLII.

> " Which passage in the Bible," says Bar Kappara, "comprises all the essentials of the Thora (Law)? That which in the book of Proverbs reads: 'In all thy ways asknowledge Him, and He will make level thy path.' "

Bar Kappara was not the only Talmudic sage who read the Bible with such discrimination. Other sages have done the same thing. Rabbi Akiba, for instance, designated the injunction of love for fellowman as the emphasis of revelation. Ben Azai found more light in the words: "This is the book of the generations of Adam." Ben Zoma recognized the supremacy of the passage: "Hear, O Israel, the Eternal is

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our God, the Eternal is One. "Ben Pazai was satisfied that the words: "And the one lamb thou shalt take in the morning," were the most significant in Scriptures. And while Rabbi Simlai accorded to the teaching of the Prophet Amos: "Seek me and ye shall live," the merit of comprehensiveness, Rabbi Nachman was more pleased with the words of Habakkuk: "And the righteous shall live by his faith."

Even in the Bible, where every letter stands for something and every dot is suggestive, there is a gradation of meaning. Happy, he who finds in it the most fertile spot, and the fountain-head of instruction and enlightenment.

Reading is a privilege. The book is the chief victory of man. "Were I to pray for a taste," says Sir John Hershel, "which should stand me instead under every variety of circumstances, and be a source of happiness and cheerfulness to me during life, and a shield against its ills, however things might go amiss, and the world frown upon me, it would be a taste for reading." But there is economy to be used in that exercise. Not all books are desirable auxiliaries, and the pages of the best book have not the same value and importance. To know to imbibe the good of the good book, as the bee knows how to extract honey from the flower, is an enviable accomplishment.

To be sure, the Jew knew how to use his Bible. It was to him in its entirety the gift of God. He read it again and again. Yet he took out of it one verse

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which he attached to his name—the first letter of that verse corresponded to the first letter of his name—and that was his theme of meditation in solitude, his weapon in danger, his protector against temptation, a lamp to his feet, the companion of his mind, and a part of his consciousness. It was the diminutive Bible he carried in his very bosom, and hoped to use it as a pass-word at the Gate of Heaven. "That I, too, do," Seneca writes, "of the many things I read, I apprehend somewhat."

איזו היא פרשה קטנה שכל נופי תורה תלויין
בח (ברכות ס"נ)

"Hoc ipse quoque facio: ex pluribus, quae legi aliquid adprehendo."—Ep. ii.

XLIII.

"And he brought a very fine glass and broke it, and they, (the invited guests) became sad."—*Tal.*

Rabbi Ashi, at the wedding of his son sought to lower the tone of hilarity of the invited guests by breaking a glass in a conspicuous manner.

This incident explains the origin of the usage of breaking a glass at a wedding. (See Tosefoth.)

"Fortune is like glass, it breaks while shining."
—*Syrus.*

אייתי כסא דזוניתא ותבר וכ' (ברכות ל'א)

"Fortuna vitrea est, tum cum splendet frangitur."

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XLIV.

"The world has been given over to fools."

Rabbi Ächa made the insinuation when he was informed that Rabbi Chisdai, a high state official, could give no satisfactory answer, when asked by King Shabur, whether there was an injunction in the Bible concerning burial.

"All places are replete with fools."—*Cicero.*

אימסר עלמא בידי דטפשאי (סנהר' מ"ו)

"Stultorum plena sunt omnia."—Ep. ix, 22.

XLV.

"Man does not know whereby he may profit."—*Tal.*

Cromwell used to say: "One never goes up so high as when one goes, and one does not know where one goes."

"Let your hooks always be ready; in the pool where you least expect, there a fish will be."—*Ovid.*

אין אדם יודע במה משתכר (פסחים נ"ד)

"Semper tibi pendeat hamus, quo minime credas gurgite piscis erit."—Art. Am. iii, 425.

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XLVI.

"Let your heart be in your study."—*Tal.*

Cicero quotes a Greek proverb expressing the same thought: "Apply your talent where best you are skilled."

אין אדם לומד תורה אלא ממקום שלבו חפץ (ע"ג יט:)

"Quam quisque norit artem in hac re exerceat."

—Tus. i, 18.

XLVII.

"No man is expected to admit that he is wicked."—*Tal.*

No man is to accuse himself unless it were before God.—L. Mat.

אין אדם משים עצמו רשע (יבמ' כ"ה)

"Accusare se nemo debet, nisi coram deo."

XLVIII.

"You do not cut your finger unless it has been so decreed above."—*Tal.*

The idea is not that it is proclaimed in Heaven that this one or that one shall cut his finger, but that law governs all things, and even such a small thing as cutting one's finger occurs according to law—being

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the effect of carelessly handling a thing with a sharp edge. There is no such thing as chance. The law of cause and effect operates everywhere, and as the law has its origin in the Deity, it may be said philosophically, that whatever happens has been decreed above. "He who is the builder and creator of all has written the fate of all."—*Seneca.*

אין אדם נוקף אצבעו מלמטה אא"כ מכריזין עליו מלמעלה (חולין ז:)

"Ille ipse omnium conditor et rector scripsit quidem fata."—De Prov. v.

XLIX.

"No man is suspected of having done anything unless he has done it, or has done some of it, or had at least the thought of doing it."—*Tal.*

Malice is one thing, and suspicion is another. The wiles of hatred do not come under this heading. Nor is here meant the suspicion which is begotten by a feverish imagination, that arch blunderer that sees spectres climb the lamp-post, and mocking faces float in the vacant air.

But the suspicion conceived and kept up by the impartial and sober-minded is not without some foundation.

"You can fool some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time, but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time."—*Lincoln.*

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"No one has ever deceived all, nor have all ever deceived one."—*Pliny.*

אין אדם נחשד ברבר אלא אם כן עשאו ואם לא עשה כולו עשה מקצתו וכו' (מ"ק יח:)

"Nemo omnes, neminem omnes fefellerunt."—Pangyr, 62.

L.

"A man is not accountable for what he says or does under the influence of pain and grief."—*Tal.*

Heine, perhaps, thought of this passage when he ridiculed the priests, who, in proof of the indispensibility of religion, boastfully cite the fact that some of the outspoken atheists and sceptics have, in the last hour of their lives, expressed a desire for the sacrament. This, according to the illustrious humorist, argues against the priests inasmuch as it goes to show that as long as those men had their wits they were above such needs.

In the Talmud, however, the saying is used in a solemn sense, in answer to a serious question concerning the believer. Why is it, that he, too, weeps and mourns over losses? Believing in Providence and the noble destiny of man, is it not rather inconsistent to lament death which to him is the door to his better and real home?

The answer is, that allowance must be made for some inconsistencies. Religion seeks to refine our

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nature and not to destroy it; to soften our heart and not to harden it; to purify our earthly relations and not to annul them. The sages take the hint from Holy Writ. Job, in his state of intense suffering, is not free from impious utterances, and is not charged with heresy or blasphemy.

"What shame or bound can there be to our affectionate regret for so dear a person."—*Horace.*

אין אדם נתפס בשעת צערו (ב"ב מז:)

"Quis desiderio sit pudor out modus tam cari capitis."

LI.

"No man sees his own guilt."—*Tal.*

We have an excuse for every mistake we make, and a euphonious name for every vice we have. Thus, "the timid claims to be cautious, and the miser frugal."
—*Lat. Prov.*

אין אדם רואה חובה לעצמו (שבת קי"ט)

"Timidus se vocat cautum parcum sordidus."

LII.

"Not hay, but meat makes the lion roar."—*Tal.*

The criticism to which the successful man is often subjected to by such as fail in the emulation is in

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many instances unjust. What assurance have we that we would act better in his circumstances? Unless we belong to the class of the godly, who pray not for riches, but for daily bread, we have no right to censure the sons of a better fate. Acquire wealth and your definition of charity and quality will radically change.

"Even the most illustrious generals became insolent in prosperity."—*Tacitus.*

אין ארי נוהם מתוך קופה של תבן אלא משל בשר (ברכות ל"ב)

"Rebus secundis etiam egregrios duces indolescere."
Hist. ii, 7.

LIII.

"Say before the dead what is creditable to the dead."
—*Tal.*

"Nothing should be said about the dead, if not good."—*Lat. Prov.*

אין אומרין בפני המת אלא דבריו של מת וכו' (ברכות ג)

"De mortuis nil nisi bonum."

LIV.

"The son of David Messiah, will come at a time when it will be difficult to procure a fish for a patient."
—*Tal.*

The belief was that the Messiah will come when the general condition of things will be very critical.

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Can we conceive of harder times than when fish are rare? Plutarch quotes the following as a favorite saying of Cato: "It is hard to preserve a city when a fish sold for more than an ox."

אין בן דוד בא עד שיתבקש דג לחולה ולא ימצא (סנהד' צ"ח)

"Difficulter posse salvam esse urbem in qua majoris piscis quam bos venerat.—Plut. Cato. Ma.

LV.

"The blessing is in the thing which is hidden from the eye."—*Tal.*

The eye is not an ever competent and safe guide Though its services are beyond all computation, and we can ill afford to keep the shutters always closed upon it, we are bound to go astray if we place too much confidence in this whimsical sovereign of our senses, which often magnifies and diminishes things,

There is no thing which discloses to the eye or any other sense, its inner being. Subtract from any given object its attributes or those.characteristics by which it is known, and an unknowable something is left in which these attributes have their origin and sustenance.

Then we have to consider that everything has a relation to something else which determines its real value. We enjoy the present hour because we hope that there is another one for us in waiting. What, if

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we knew that this was our last, the luminaries of the lighted firmament could not comfort and calm us.

"Our knowledge," says Buckle, "is composed not of facts, but of relations which facts and ideas bear to themselves and to each other, and real knowledge consists not of an acquaintance with facts, which only make the pedant, but in the relation of facts which makes the philosopher."

"Let the soul find out the good of the soul."

—*Seneca.*

אין הברכה מצויה אלא בדבר הסמוי מן העין (תענית ח)

"Animi bonum animus inveniat."—De Vit. Bea. ii.

LVI.

"A handful does not satisfy the lion."—*Tal.*

It is one thing to deal with the multitude and another, to deal with an individual.

Some Talmudists take the saying in the sense that the grasshopper does not satisfy the lion, and it reminds of the Latin Prov.: "The eagle does not catch flies."

אין הקומץ משביע את הארי (ברכות ג')

"Aquila non capit muscas."

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LVII.

"The captive cannot accomplish his own release."—*Tal.*

In some instances our helplessness and dependence upon others is more apparent than in others, but in reality, we are always inadequate to the task, and in need of some support and lifting hand. Independence is a shallow phrase. The link must be attached to another link to be a part of the chain. "The bell must be pulled, that its sounds shall be heard." Thoughts need the wing of language.

Success is not independent. The teacher must have pupils, the author readers, the potentate subjects.

Abuzurg-Mihir, the Persian Seneca, is said to have invented the play of chess, with a view of proving to King Hormuz how little the ruler can do without the assistance and protection of army and people.

"No one is sufficiently strong to rise by himself; some helping hand is always necessary."—*Seneca.*

אין חבוש מתיר עצמו מבית האסורים (שם ה')

"Nemo per se satis valet ut emergat."—Ep. 52.

LVIII.

"It is in the work of the loom that woman is expected to show her wisdom."—*Tal.*

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So Rabbi Elieser observed, when a woman embarrassed him by raising the question, why the worshippers of the golden calf did not all die the same death, since they committed the same sin. What he meant to say is what Lord Littleton expressed with the help of the muse

> "Seek to be good, but aim not to be great:
> A woman's noblest station is Retreat,
> Her fairest virtues fly from public sight,
> Domestic worth—that shuns too strong a light."

Theodorus, annoyed by the arguments of the female philosopher Hypparchia, asked: "Who is the woman that left the shuttle so near the warp?"

Juvenal is too severe on the literary woman when he says: "I hate her who is forever poring over and studying Palaemo's treatise; who never violates the rules and principles of grammar, and, skilled in antiquarian lore, quotes verses I never knew, and corrects the phrases of her friend as old-fashioned which mer would never heed. A husband should have the privilege of committing some solecism."

אין חכמה לאשה אלא בפלך (יומ' כ"ז)

"Odi hanc ego quae repetit volvitque Palaemonis artem soloecismus liceat fecisse marito."—Sat. vi.

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LIX.

"Do not attack a dead lion."—*Tal.*

The great man is frequently called in the Talmud lion. To attack a great man when he can no longer defend himself, is as cowardly as to wreak vengeance on a dead lion.

"That he knew and was well aware that nothing was easier than to ascribe the blame of an act to the dead."—*Caesar.*

אין מושיבין את הארי לאחר מותו (גיטין פ"ג)

"Scire et intelligere caussam peccati facillime mortuis delegari."—Bel. Gol. vii, 26.

LX.

"No monuments are erected unto the righteous. Their words perpetuate their memory."—*Tal.*

"The erection of a monument is useless: the remembrance of us will last if we have deserved it by our lives."—*Plin. m.*

אין עושין נפשות לצדיקים (שקלי ד')

"Impensa monumenti supervacua est; memoria nostra durabit si vita meruimus."—ix, 19.

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LXI.

"No one is so poor as he who has no sense."—*Talmud.*

"There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so."—*Shakespeare.*

"The mind is the master of every kind of fortune: itself acts in both ways, being the cause of its own happiness and misery."—*Seneca.*

אין עני אלא בדיעה (נדרים מ"א)

"Valentior omni fortuna animus est."—Ep. 98.

LXII.

"The habitual disputant can be no defender."—*Tal.*

"In excessive altercation, truth is lost."—*Syrus.*

אין קטינור נעשה סנינור (ברכות ירו')

"Nimium altercando veritas amittitur."

LXIII.

"You cannot compare the foolishness which is harmful to that which is innocent"—*Tal.*

How we enjoy the foolish prattling of children! Thus, there is many a joke which may be appreciated by the devout religionist. Austerity is no virtue and

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joviality no vice. But the humor which misrepresents principle, and sports with the moral feeling, is like an obscene picture.

"That laughter costs too much which is purchased by the sacrifice of principle."—*Juvenal.*

אינו דומה הבל שיש בו חטא להבל שאין בו הטא (שבת קי"ט)

"Nimium risus pretium est si probitatis impendio constat."—vi, 3.

LXIV.

"Do not compare the man who has a subsistence to the one who is without it."—*Tal.*

Our disposition and character are in alliance with the body. The stomach is the autocrat whose mandates must be attended to. Hunger is a despicable tyrant, and the care for the next day's food will enable to do many a thing which under other circumstances might not be dreamed of.

"The belly is the teacher of art and the bestower of genius."—*Persius.*

אינו דומה מי שיש לו פת בסלו למי שאין לו פת בסלו (יומא ע"ד)

"Magister artium ingeniique largitor venter."—Prologue.

LXV.

"There is a difference between learning one's lesson a

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hundred times and learning it a hundred and one times."—*Tal.*

Study makes the scholar, and if we desire to master a branch of knowledge it is not enough to resort to it occasionally, but we have to build our nest in it, and make it our home.

There are precepts in our religion which cannot be sufficiently repeated because they are the beacon lights on our path. If one said: "I know them therefore I can do without their recital, it was regarded by the Talmudic sages as an unmistaken sign of the decrease of his religious fervor. Our old ritual contains not only the forcible expression of daily supplication and thanksgiving, but the essence of the theology and doctrinal portion of Judaism. How dear it was to our fathers! Every day it had the interest and novelty of a new revelation.

"That never is too often said which cannot be sufficiently learned."—*Seneca.*

אינו דומה שונה פרקו מאה פעמים לשונה פרקו מאה פעמים ואחד
(חגינה ט')

"Nunquam nimis dicitur quod nunquam satis discitur."

LXVI.

"A stater (small coin) is in the vase, what a noise it makes."—*Tal.*

Among shallow surroundings it is an easy matter

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to be noticeable. Among weaklings a man with little strength is feared as an athlete. Among beggars one having something in his purse is envied for his wealth. Among the utterly uninstructed a man having the ability to read and write is admired for his scholarship.

Then again, our saying may be taken in the sense of the Latin proverb: "Empty vessels give out the loudest sound."

איסתרא בלנינא קיש קיש קריא (ב"מ פ"ה)

"Vasa vacua plurimum sonant."

LXVII.

"Woman spins while she speaks."—*Tal.*

Literally, it means that she is loquacious. Figuratively, it implies that there is method in her talkativeness. She aims at something.

"It is easy for you women to counterfeit your words and your actions."—*Propertius.*

איתתא בהדי שותא פילכא (מגילה י"ד)

"Sed vobis facile est verba et componere fraudes."—ii, 5.

LXVIII.

"Thy wife is short, bow down and consult her."—*Tal.*

How do you like that sentiment, my dear female reader? Believe it, that the Talmudic sages had the

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highest regard for your sex. Consider the following Talmudic expression: "He who lives without a wife lives without joy, without light, without peace." Again: "He who has no wife is no complete man." And again: "A husband should love his wife like himself, and honor her more than himself." And again: "Let every husband be solicitous about the honor of his wife, for it is through her that a household is blessed."

Plutarch quotes Cato to have said: "Men generally govern women, but we command all men, and women command us."

איתתך נוצא נחין ותלחוש לה (ב"מ נט)

"Omnes homines mulierebus imperant nos omnibus hominibus, nobis mulieres."—Cat. Ma.

LXIX.

"The wife of Korah, said to her husband: 'Behold what Moses is doing! He is king. His brother he made high priest, the sons of his brother he made priests.'"

"There are few disputes in life which do not originate with a woman."—*Juvenal.*

איתתיה דקרח א"ל חזי מאי קעביד משה (סנהדרין ק"י)

"Nulla fere causa est in qua non foemina litem moverit."
—Sat. iv.

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LXX.

"To eat vegetables with a tranquil mind is preferable to eating poultry and have palpitation of heart in consequence thereof."—*Tal.*

The Midrash tells of a fox who fasted three days in order to enter an orchard through a small opening of the fence. Having banquetted therein for three days he became so fat that he could not make his exit through the same loop-hole. Remembering, that he will be severely punished if discovered, he fasted again three days to make his escape possible.

"Now learn what, and how great benefits a temperate diet will bring with it."—*Hor.*

אכול בצל ושב בצל (פסחים קיד)

"Quae virtus et quanta boni sit vivere parvo discite."

LXXI.

"Let no one distribute more than one-fifth of his income among the poor, that he should not become an object of charity himself."

According to a tradition, Moses introduced the system of tithes, not only for the benefit of the poor, but the protection of the rich. When he enunciated to the children of Israel the divine lesson of brotherly love, it kindled in them an enthusiasm which caused many of them to give away all they had. He saw the danger which such an utter disregard for self

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brings with it, and counteracted it. "It is enough if one gives the tenth part of his income." But to spend more than one-fifth of his income is to wrong one-self.

"Our purse should neither be so closed that our generosity cannot open it, nor so unfastened that it lies open to all, a bound should be set and bear reference to our means."—*Cicero.*

אל יבזבז אדם יותר מחומש (כתובות נ')

"Nec ita claudenda res est familiaris ut team benignitas aperire non possit, nec ita reseranda, ut pateat omnibus."
—De off. ii, 15.

LXXII.

"Do not trust thyself until the day of death."—*Tal.*

Epaminondas being asked which of the three he held in greatest esteem, Chabrias, Iphicrates or himself. "You must see us die before that question can be settled," was his reply.

Solon, too said, being asked by Croesus to pronounce him the happiest man: "No one is to be regarded happy before his death."—*Ovid.*

אל תאמין בעצמך עד יום מותך (אבות ב')

"Dicique beatus ante obitum nemo."—Met.

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LXXIII.

"Do not live in a city the governors of which are philosophers."—*Tal.*

Frederick the Great is reported to have said: "If I wanted to ruin one of my provinces, I would make over its government to the philosophers." —*Buckl.*

"The state of philosophers is such as the learned man imagine but cannot be established."—*Lev.*

אל תדור בעיר שראשיה תלמידי חכמים (פסח' קי"ג)

"Sapientium civitas, quam docti fingunt magis quam norunt."—**xxvi, 22.**

LXXIV.

"Despise no man and disparage no thing, for there is no man who has not his hour, and no thing which has not its place."

We do not know ourselves, how can we sit in judgment over others? The man whom we condemn for his misdemeanor, may in the next hour rise superior to us. "The breadth of two fingers only separates the abode of the faithful from the place of the wicked."

Socially, too, that despised man may live to see a change for the better. We landed in this world with less than the poorest man has. We did not bring even a rag with us. His turn will be yet. He may

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become our benefactor, our biographer, the sculptor of our monument, or the digger of our grave.

Things, too, have their great possibilities. The diamond which glitters on the bosom of our love was originally a vegetable. The mountain which lifts up its proud summit as if in support of the firmament, may be the growth and outcome of a little stone which a playful lad threw to catch a bird.

What is more insignificant than the death of an animal! No priest chants mass, no Rabbi recites the Kadish, and no relative sheds a tear. Yet, it is with bones of extinct species that long established creeds are being stormed.

Ye gods of Egypt! You are avenged. Your rotten bones have become a menace to the theology that demolished your temples.

The mastadon rises and altars tremble; a petrified butterfly is unearthed and there is joy among scientists, and consternation in the camp of orthodoxy.

"There are more things in Heaven and Earth, Horatio, than are dreamed of in our philosophy."

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"It would be quite advantageous to examine those things which appear trifles at first sight, but out of which develop great events."—*Tacitus.*

אל תהי בז לכל אדם ואל תהי מפליג לכל דבר (אבות ד׳)

"Non sine usu fuerit introspicere illa primo aspectu levia, ex quibus magnarum saepe rerum motus oriuntur."

—An. iv, 32.

LXXV.

"Let the curse of an ordinary person not be light in thine eyes."—*Tal.*

"Nothing is so strong, but may be endangered, even by the weakest."—Quint. Cur.

אל תהי קללת הדיום קלה בעיניך (ב״ק צ״ד)

"Nihil tam firmum, cui periculum non sit etiam ab invalido."—vii, 8.

LXXVI.

"Do not attempt to console your woe-stricken friend while the dead is still before him."—*Tal.*

"As a fresh wound shrinks from the hand of the surgeon, then gradually submits to it and even calls for it; so the mind under the first impression of mis-

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fortune shuns and rejects all comfort, but at length if touched with tenderness, calmly and willingly resigns."—Pliny Minor.

אל תנחמהו בשעה שמתו מוטל לפניו (אבות ד')

"Ut enim crudum adhuc vulnus medentium manus reformidat, deinde patitur, atque ultro requirit etc."
—Hist. v, 16.

LXXVII.

"Do not maim yourself."

A sensible person will not cut off his nose or any part of his body. Hence, the saying cannot be taken literally. Nor does it refer to moral disfigurement. Plainer language would have been used in that case. It is an advice, according to the Talmud, given by a father to his son, not to weaken his position in business. For instance, if one goes in partnership with three persons, he will have to sacrifice his interest to their interest for fear they might conspire against him, one of them will appear as his accuser and the other two as witnesses against him.

Emerson, however, might take our saying to mean what he expressed in the following words: "Why should we make it a point with our modesty to disparage that man we are, and that form of being assigned to us? A good man is contented."

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Yet to Martialis, we would have to give the credit of originality in this point. For he said long before Emerson: "Be satisfied with what you are, and have no desire to be anything else."

אל תעש טום בעצמך (פסחים קי"ב)

"Quod sis, esse velis, nihilque malis."—x, 47.

LXXVIII.

"Do not worry over the possible mishaps of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."
—*Tal.*

"Such," says Montaign, "as accuse mankind of the folly of gaping and panting after future things, and advise us to make our benefits of those which are present, and to set up and rest upon them as having too short a reach to lay hold upon that which is to come—have hit upon the most universal of human errors. For we are never present with, but always beyond ourselves. Fear, desire and hope are still pushing us on towards the future, depriving us in the meantime of the sum and consideration of that which is to amuse us, with the thought of what shall be, even when we are no more."

"Do not seek to know what will happen to-morrow."—*Hor.*

אל תצר צרת מחר כי לא תדע מה יולד יום שמא מחר בא ואיננו (יבמות סג)

"Quid sit futurum cras fuge quaerere."—i, 9.

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LXXIX.

"Do not sit, do not stand, do not walk excessively."
—*Tal.*

"There is a mean in all things."—*Hor.*

אל תרבה בישיבה (כתוב' קי"א)

"Est modus in rebus."—Sat. i, 1.

LXXX.

"Do not seek to reooncile your friend while he is in a state of anger."—*Tal.*

"Anger is a passing madness."—*Hor.*

אל תרצה את חברך בשעת כעסו (אבות ד')

"Ira furor brevis est."—Ep. i, 2.

LXXXI.

"Do not engage in scholarly discussion on the road."
—*Tal.*

You might lose your way. Thales was looking up to the stars while walking along a river, and fell into it. Satire observed: "Had Thales looked into the river, he could have seen the stars."

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"No one sees what is before him. They scrutinize the starry region."—*Cicero.*

אל תתעסקו ברבר הלכה (תענית י')

"Qod est ante pedes nemo spectat, coeli plagas scrutantur."—Divin. ii, 13.

LXXXII.

"These as well as these are words spoken in the religious spirit, yet those of the school of Hillel shall prevail."—*Tal.*

Hillel and Shamai were contemporaneous teachers of great renown in Israel. Their names are closely united like those of Shmayah and Abtalion. Yet in disposition and method they were no more like one another than Democritus and Heraclitus.

Hillel was cheerful and patient; Shamai austere and irritable. The people whom Shamai drove away were cordially received by Hillel. Hillel enjoyed the present making at the same time provision for the future; Shamai sacrificed the present to the future.

Their teachings exhibited the same differences. Those of Hillel were liberal, progressive and in touch with the conditions of the times. Those of Shamai were rigorous and restrictively uncompromising.

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Both founded schools which vied with one another in carrying out the instruction, upholding the method and absorbing the spirit and individuality of their respective masters.

For several years the Beth Hillel and Beth Shamai, (so those schools were called), had disputed about a question, when a voice from above, (Bath Kol) proclaimed that the arguments of both schools were equally pleasing and acceptable, yet the decision is in favor of the school of Hillel.

The Talmud properly asks: "Why has it been decided in favor of the school of Hillel, since the school of Shamai did equally as well?" And the answer is: "Because the school of Hillel was patient, submissive and honored its opponent, the school of Shamai."

It is to be regretted that there should be controversy. Those who rejoice in the existence of difference of opinion ignore the fact that we are not all philosophically built. The remark which Malebranche made: "If I held truth captive in my hand, I should open my hand and let it fly, in order that I might pursue and capture it," is, at best a pretty extemporization. Malebranche, perhaps, could capture truth, could "let it fly" and capture it again. But we simpletons do not understand that kind of game.

Controversy is always more or less mischievous. The storm which purifies the air and assists growth

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works destruction at the same time. So controversy. While it promotes the interest of truth, creates doubt somewhere, and while it seeks to establish certainty, proves that there is no certainty.

But since there is no other method for the extension of the government of truth, the manner in which the school of Hillel disputed is worthy of consideration and emulation.

"Yield to thy opponent, by yielding, thou shalt come out victor."—Ovid.

אלו ואלו דברי א"ח הן (עירוב י"נ)

"Cedo repugnanti; cedendo victor abibis."—Art. Am. ii.

LXXXIII.

"If it is truth, why then should it be called parable?"

The object of the parable is to bring truth nearer home.

"Art is the agency of the inexpressible."—*Schiller*.

Our higher mental efforts are in the service of the majesty of truth. We flatter fiction if we take it for truth, but there is no grosser insult than when we let truth pass for fiction.

Truth is self-supporting; when established, it takes care of itself. Mathematical truth, for instance, is not in need of the lordly hexameter of a Homer for its immortalization.

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"A good understanding and right sense can well dispense with the flowers of art."—*Gocthe.*

"I lay aside both, verses and all other sportive matter; my study and inquiry is often what is true and fitting."—*Horace.*

אם אמת למה משל (סנהדרין צ"ב)

"Nunc itaque et versus et cetera ludicra pono, quid verum atque decens curo et rogo."—Ep. i.

LXXXIV.

"If I am here all are; if I am not here, who is?"—*Tal.*

No person is irreplaceable to the extent that things should come to a stand-still without him. Parents breath their last, and their children continue to live and prosped. Great leaders pass away, and are quickly succeeded by others. The world moves on no matter who steps out of it. Perhaps there are such as think that Atlas-like they carry our globe, and if they go down it must go with them. Hillel, the author of our saying, certainly did not belong to that class.

What he meant to say is, that if good was to be done, and he could do it, he did not acquiesce in the supposition that it will be done by others, but did it himself on the principle that if he did not perform his function properly, he had no right to expect others to be more anxious to do their duty.

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"The people expect of those greater than they, greater things."—*Seneca.*

אם אני כאן הכל כאן ואם אין אני כאן מי כאן (סוכה ל"נ)

"Majora populus semper a summo exigit."—Oct.

LXXXV.

"If you desire to strangle, let it be on a high tree."—*Tal.*

Rashi takes it in the sense,if you would overcome your opponent in argument cite a great authority. Indeed, we find in the Talmud that Hillel put an end to a very heated debate when he said: "I heard it from Shemayah and Abtalion."

Quotation is both the jewelry and weapon of composition. It is a sign of respect for the work and opinion of others, elevation of authority by which the quoter, too, is raised.

"It is generally supposed," says Disraeli, "that where there is no quotation, there will be found most originality . . . The greater part of our writers in consquence, have become so original, that no one cares to imitate them; and those who never quote are in return never quoted."

Another reading of the saying is: "If you desire to be strangled hang yourself on a large tree." This version may be taken in the sense,if you have to ignore your own opinion and to act according to

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that of another one let it be according to the opinion of a great and acknowledged authority.

It might also be understood to mean,if you have a particular wish to be vanquished in argument, begin one with a great man. But Rabbi Akiba, the father of the saying, would not be guilty of such a sarcasm.

The Romans had a proverb:

"Do not take a blind guide or a weak adviser."

אם בקשת ליחנק התלה באילן גדול (פסחים קי"ב)

"Neque caecum ducem neque amentem consultorem."

LXXXVI.

"Though thou art a high state official, remember that thy pedigree is well-known here."—*Tal.*

"Though thou art proud of thy wealth, thou art the man thou hast been, fortune does not change birth."—*Horace.*

אם זיינך עלך ספרך כאן (ב"ב ד')

"Licet superbus ambules pecunia, fortuna non mutat genus."—Od. v, 4.

LXXXVII.

"If it is as clear as morning, say it."—*Tal.*

"If the good," says the friar in Nathan the Wise, "that I propose to do is somewhat twined with mischief, then I let the good alone."

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"Those direct us properly who advise us not to do anything which we doubt whether it is right or wrong."—*Ciccro.*

אם ברור לך הדבר כבקר אמרהו ואם לאו אל תאמרהו (סנהד' ז')

"Quocirca bene praecipiunt, qui vetant quicquam agere, quod dubites, aequum sit an iniquum."—De off. i, 9.

LXXXVIII.

"If one says: "I have exerted myself and yet accomplished nothing," do not believe him; "I have taken no pains and yet I reached the object," do not believe; "I have worked and succeeded," believe him. —*Tal.*

Hillel was altogether without the means of a subsistence when he came from Babylon to Jerusalem, to quench his burning thirst for knowledge. During the day he chopped wood for a living, and studied in the evening at the school of Shemayah and Abtalion, where he divided with the porter of the same his scanty earnings in order to obtain admission. Once, it happened that he was not able to gratify the porter, and could not or would not seek free admission. But in order not to loose the benefit of the lecture, he climbed to the window-sill of the school and listened there.

About Rabbi Akiba the Talmud tells us that every day during his period of learning, he was in the

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habit of cutting bundles of straw, half of which he would sell for his needs and the other half use for light. His neighbors were not at all pleased with his manner, and said: "Akiba, the smoke greatly annoys us. Sell us the straw and buy oil." But Rabbi Akiba answered: "The straw serves me in three ways, I study by its light, warm myself by its fire and make my bed on it at night."

Moses Mendelson became deformed as a boy, in consequence of the persistent studies he made of the philosophical writings of Maimonides. When pursuing a course of studies in Berlin, he lived for a while on bread, and that, too, he used sparingly. In order not to overeat himself at one meal and then be left without food, he made cuts in the loaf of bread by which he knew how many meals he could make of it and how far he could go at each meal.

Cleanthes was so poor, that "he was forced to undertake mercenary employments, and he used to draw water in the gardens at night, and by day he exercised himself in philosophical discussions; on which account he was called Phrenaulles. They also say that he was on one occasion brought before a court of police to be compelled to give an account of what his sources of income were; and that then he was acquitted, having produced as his witness the gardener, in whose garden he drew the water, and a woman who was a meal-seller in whose establishment he used to prepare the meal."—Yonge's Diog. Leart.

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"The heights by great men reached and kept,
Were not attained by sudden flight;
But they, while their companions slept,
Were toiling upward in the night."—*Longfellow.*

"Labor overcomes all things."—*Virgil.*

אם יאמר לך אדם יגעתי ולא מצאתי אל תאמין וכ' (מגילה ו')

"Labor omnia vincit."—G. i.

LXXXIX.

"If the young tell you to build and the old tell you to destroy, listen to the latter; for the building of youth is destruction and the destruction of the old is building."—*Tal.*

That is the young build in order to destroy, and the old destroy in order to build.

"Rashness, beyond a doubt, belongs to life when in its bloom, wisdom to it in old age."—*Cicero.*

אם יאמרו לך ילדים בנה וזקנים סתור שמע לזקנים ואל תשמע לילדים (נדרים מ')

"Temeritas est videlicet florentis aetatis, prudentia senescentis."—De Sen. 5.

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XC.

"If thou hast the means, enjoy thyself, for there is no pleasure in the grave, and no postponement of death . . . Human beings are like the grass of the field, while some flourish, others wither."—*Tal.*

The enjoyment alluded to is that kind which the noble consciousness of an upright and good life affords.

Seneca has a similar thought: "Few have the pleasures of safe repose who bear in mind how swiftly never returning time passes. While the fates allow, enjoy yourselves and be merry."

אם יש לך היטב לך וכ' (עירובין נ"ד)

"Novit paucos secura quies . . . Dum fata sinunt vivite laeti."—Her. Fur.

XCI.

"If you will work for the earth like a slave you will have plenty, ignore her claim, and you will not have enough bread."—*Tal.*

So Seneca: "If you live according to nature you will never be poor, if according to the opinion of others, you will never be rich."

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אם עושה אדם עצמו כעבד לאדמה ישבע לחם (סנהדרין נ״ח)

"Si ad naturam vivas, nunquam eris pauper, si ad opinionem, nunquam eris dives."—Ep. 16.

XCII.

"If an ignorant person is extremely pious, do not live in his neighborhood."—*Tal.*

The ignorant person (am aretz), referred to in the Talmud; scorned knowledge and despised authority. He was more embittered against the Jewish scholar than was the heathen against the Jew. Rabbi Akiba, who began to study at an advanced age frankly admits that at the time he was ignorant (am aretz) he had such an animosity against the learned classes that many a time he wished he could get hold of a scholar and break his bones. The more airs of piety those lovers of ignorance put on the more intolerable they were.

"Nothing is more disagreeable than a man of mean origin raised into power."—*Clodian.*

אם עם הארץ הוא חסיד אל תדור בשכונתו (פסחים מ״ט)

"Asperius nihil est humili, cum surgit in altum."—In Eutrop. I.

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XCIII.

"If our ancestors were like angels, we are only like human beings; if our ancestors were like human beings, we are like donkies."—*Tal.*

Diction is one thing and thought another. The idea may be transcendent, and the expression commonplace. The word may be high sounding, and the thought objectionable. It does not follow that, because the cup is golden, the liquid therein is acceptable, nor is the refreshing drink less so, because the pitcher is not of exquisite make.

The wording of the above apophthegm is not free from extravagence but the idea it expresses, which is, that we are greatly inferior to our ancestors, commands respect.

Israel always believed that in the past was the refulgent east and window of divine revelation, and glorified the lives of his ancestors as patterns and their words as oracles. If King Solomon exhorts us not to say that the former ages were better, he does not mean to weaken and abrogate the authority of the inspired teachers of ages gone by. It was tradition that lent force to his sceptre. King Solomon contends against palliating religious relaxation by the groundless assertion that in former times circumstances were more favorable to high religious pursuits.

Many of us to-day are wont to look back to

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antiquity with the smile and exaltation of a prosperous man looking back to the child that he once was. Is it really so sure a thing that knowledge increases and the human mind becomes stronger in proportion to the succession of generations? History does not show it. It does not exemplify such a constant process of higher development of the intellect; such a continuous improvement and perfecting of man.

There is no such a period as the childhood of the human race in history. It begins with existing organizations, with the admirable work of men of amazing mental power. History is biography—fragmentary biography. The history of a nation is the narrative of the signal virtues and vices, victories and defeats of its rulers and leaders. The history of the human race is the record of the struggles and creations of comparatively few men who instructed and awakened the masses and impressed their own image upon them. A comparison between the mind of to-day and that of ages gone by, does not justify that pride and self-aggrandizement of which we have an abundant supply. We are still under the sway and influence of antiquity.

Religion is an old institution. Our ethics are the amaranths of antiquity. Our governments, the best and noblest, are either continuations or reproductions of old principles. The poetry of to-day is imitation,

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the philosophy repetition, the theatres and museums are copies.

Our whole civilization must be attributed to the genius of two peoples, the old Jews and the Greeks. Other nations of antiquity have contributed their share, but those two peoples have bequeathed the most wonderful legacies.

There is a difference in the kind of work they have done and in the ideas which led them to it. The Jews had a firm religious conviction, the Greeks lacked a criterion. The Jews had the rule of life, the Greeks were in search of such a rule. The Jews spiritualized the material; the Greeks materialized the spiritual. The aim of the Jew was holiness, the aim of the Greek was the beautiful. Hence, the one raised a saintly life above all attainments, while the other ran into extasy over a pleasing poem, a sharp syllogism, a beautiful statue and an heroic performance in the battlefield. Heine contrasts the two peoples with prophectic force when he says: "I see now, that the Greeks were beautiful youths, while the Jews impress me as having been men mature and strong, fearless and invincible."

Yet it is very difficult to duly estimate the influence of the Greeks and to tell exactly where it ceases. A man of no less acumen than Schlegel deemed it proper to say: "The Greeks are the second chosen people of God."

But can we think of Jews and Greeks without

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thinking of Moses and Homer? Moses is not only the proem, the incipiency of the brilliant career of his people, but the holy ark which moves with them, giving them direction and inspriation. His spirit breathes in our immortal prophecies, those fearless admonitions, stirring exhortations, piercing complaints, soothing consolatories, and fiery religious discourses which are the majestic utterances of the divine in man. His wisdom enables the Talmudic sages to open a realm where the sky is radiant with certainty, the air balmy with faith and the soil blossoming with hope. His genius endows Israel with that valor of endurance which has rendered our history unique and unparalleled.

The words in the Bible: "And no man knows his (Moses) grave" has a deeper meaning than the letter conveys. Who can imagine that mysterious personage dead and buried? His institutions are sacred. His writings are written miracles, to be instructed in them is a religious duty, to interpret them a privilege, to live in them a blessing, and to die for them an honor. The history of Israel is the history of the exegesis and embodiment of Mosaism, the paragon of intellectual achievement, the panacea of the world.

What Moses is in Israel, Homer was in Greece, the law-giver, the scientist, the artist. He is not the dawn, but the constant co-worker of a great history. Under the influence of his genius, a band of poets flourish whose words are sweet music, giving wings

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to imagination and delight to the ear. Philosophers build a labyrinth of thought so tempting, that to be lost in it seems a pleasure. Sculptors chisel the cold marbel into forms that seem to breath. Historians describe the past with a magic skill as to make it a part of our own experience. Heroes rise who attain distinction for superiority of sentiment no less than that of strategy and courage. Homer is the sweet dream of the Greeks, or rather as Hegel puts it: "The element in which the Greek world lives as man lives in the air."

"Those who have lived before us have done much, but have not finished the work, yet they are to be esteemed and reverenced like gods.—*Seneca.*

אם ראשונים בני מלאכים אנו בני אנשים וכ' (שבת קי"ב)

Multum egerunt qui ante nos fuerunt, sed non peregerunt; sus pic iendi tamen sunt et ritudeorme colendi.—Ep. 64.

XCIV.

"If thou art free from slanderous utterances thou shalt live in peace."—*Tal.*

" 'Tis slander;
Whose edge is sharper than the sword; whose tongue
Outvenoms all the worms of the Nile; whose breath
Rides on posting winds, and does belie
All corners of the world; kings, queens and states,
Maids, matrons, nay the secrets of the grave
This viperous slander enters." —*Shakespeare.*

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"Why do you wound," the serpent is asked, "without any benefit?" "Go to man," the serpent replies, "and ask him what benefit he derives from slander."—*Midrash.*

"Nothing is so swift as evil speech."—*Cicero.*

אם שמרת פיך מלה"ר תהא כל ימיך לשלום (ר"א זומא פ"ט)

"Nihil est auten tam volucre quam maledictum."
Cn. Planc.

XCV.

"Sighing impairs health."—*Tal.*

"Care to our coffin adds nail."—*Walcott.*

"Care is at times beyond the reach of art."
—Ovid.

אנחה שוברת חצי גופו של אדם (ברכות נ"ח)

"Cura quoque interdum nulla medicabilis arte."—Ep. ex Pont, i, 3.

XCVI.

"I speak to you common sense," and you say: "Heaven will have mercy!"—*Tal.*

So Rabbi Jose observed. He saw that Rabbi Chananyah continued to teach in spite of the prohibi-

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tory ordinance of the Romans and anxious to save him from the impending punishment, said to him: "Brother! do you not see what a mighty power the Romans are? They destroyed the city of God, burnt his temple and slew so many of his servants, yet they rule and succeed, and you dare to oppose and defy them?" To this Rabbi Chananyah replied: "Heaven will have mercy."

It reminds of Cicero: "You oppose me . . . with stories, but I demand reasons of you."

אני אומר לך דברים של טעם ואתה אומר מן שמים ירחמו (ע"ז י"ח)

"Rumoribus mecum pugnas, ego autem a te rationes requiro."—D. N. D. iii, 5.

XCVII.

"The myrtle though standing among thorns is nevertheless a myrtle."—*Tal.*

It is not safe to judge always a man's character by those with whom he associates. Antisthenes was once approached for being intimate with wicked people and said: "Physicians also live with those who are sick and yet they do not catch fevers."—Diog. Leart.

"The rose is often found to be near the nettle."—Ovid.

אסא דקאי ביני חילפא אסא שמיה ואסא קרו ליה (סנהד' מ"ד)

"Urticae proxima saepe rosa est."—Remed. Am. 45.

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XCVIII.

"It is forbidden to steal the good will even of a heathen."
—*Tal.*

"Steal" is a strong word. Our sages put him down as a thief, who obtains the good wishes of anybody on a false pretence.

That they have given the same consideration to the heathen would itself prove that they did not nourish that apathy against him which is maliciously attributed to them. But there are numerous passages in the Talmud which indicate that our sages stood upon the platform of universal love. For instance: "The heathen who is engaged in the study of the Law is like a high priest." "Also the pious of the heathens has a portion in the world to come." "Who steals of a heathen will also steal of an Israelite, and who commits perjury against a heathen will be guilty of the same sin against a Jew." "We should feed the poor of the heathens, attend to their sick, bury their dead and save their property for the sake of peace."

Our saying is the most forcible expression of the duty of fair dealing with all men compared with which Cicero: "No one should take advantage of the ignorance of others," is weak.

אסור לגנוב דעת הבריות וכ' (הולין נ"ד)

"Neminem ita agere ut ex ulterius praedetur inscientia."
—*Cicero.*

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XCIX.

"A physician for nothing is worth nothing."—*Tal.*

He may not take enough interest in the patient if his services are not remunerated. In the Talmud, the physician is spoken of as a material necessity. Although the Talmud is not in favor of giving over to him the leadership of a city, it cautions against living in a city which has no physician. If it says: "The best of physicians is doomed to h—l," we are to take it as a stricture upon the conceited physician, who thinks himself the best of his profession, and refuses to consult a colleague though seeing that his patient sinks under his treatment.

Yet at first sight, the saying which heads this chapter, seems to convey the idea which Arbiter expressed when he said: "The physician is nothing else but a consolation of the mind."

אסיא דמנן במנן מנן שויא (ב"ק פ"ד)

"Medicus nihil aliud est quam animi consolatio."—Sat.

C.

"The physician who comes from a distance makes blind."
—*Tal.*

Having his practice and reputation elsewhere, he may treat the patient as an object of experiment with

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serious results. Other commentators take the saying in the sense that his skill is greatly over-rated. "Distance lends enchantment." The stars would, perhaps, not be half so glorified were they nearer our globe. "The prophet has greater fascination abroad than at home."

"Everything unknown is taken for magnificent." —*Tacit.*

אסיא רחיקא עינא עירא (ש"ם)

"Omne ignotum pro magnifico."—Agr. 30.

CI.

"Though he sinned, he is still an Israelite."—*Tal.*

"A man's a man for a' that.—*Burns.*

"I am human, consequently, nothing human is a stranger to me."—*Terence.*

אע"פ שחטא ישראל הוא (סנהד' מ' ד)

"Homo sum: humani nihil a me alienum puto."

—Heaut, 1.

CII.

"Even father and son, teacher and pupil studying in the same place will disagree."—*Tal.*

"As many persons there are so many opinions." —*Cicero.*

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אפילו האב ובנו... שעוסקין בתורה וכ' (קדושין ל')

"Tot homines tot sententiae."

CIII.

"Even in peril a man should assert his dignity."

"If a man must fall, let him meet the danger courageously.—*Tacitus.*

אפילו בשעת הסכנה לא ישנה אדם את עצמו וכ' (סנהד' צ"ב)

"Si cadere necesse est occurrendum discrimine."

—Hist. i, 33.

CIV.

"Even if the sword is on his neck he should pray."—*Tal.*

"The sick should hope as long as there is life."—*Cicero.*

אפילו חרב חדה מונחת על צוארו אל ימנע מן הרחמים (ברכות י')

"Aegroto, dum anima, spes est."—Ep. ad At. ix, 10.

CV.

"Even among the rabble there are men who are as imbued with virtues as is the pomegranate full of seeds."—*Tal.*

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This fruit has no very inviting exterior, but its inside testifies to the bounty, beauty and harmony of nature. Thus, there are people who carry within wealth of noble feeling.

How much more encouraging this sentiment is than that of the pessimists who claim there is no virtue!

No virtue? The desire to be better is universal, so is the admiration for virtue. Is not that admiration a virtue in itself? Has it a motive? It comes we do not know how, and brings reproach with it that we are not on a higher level. Moreover, we could not admire good traits in character if we were utterly void of them. To appreciate a good poem, one must have some poetry in him. To find pleasure in a philosophical treatise, one must be a philosopher to some extent. Does not this hold good of religion and morality?

It is not far fetched to say that virtue as a mere fancy could not have asserted itself. The most of our ideas are transcripts of what is, the impressions of things real. No science has ever preceeded experience; no history the men and events it describes. It may be asserted with impunity, that the first virtuous man was not one who sighed for virtue, but practiced it.

There is a difference in the degree and practice of virtue as there is a difference in the quality of the work men do, but there are people of integrity and

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higher cravings among all classes, even the humblest.

"Virtue is withheld from no one. She can be reached by all, accepts all, invites all, gentlemen, freed men, slaves, kings and exiles; she selects neither house nor fortune, she is satisfied with human beings, with man as man."—*Seneca.*

אפילו ריקנין שבך מלאין מצות כרמון (סנהד' ל"ז)

"Nulli preaclusa virtus est, omnibus patet, omnes admitted omnes invitat, etc."—De Benef. iii, 18.

CVI.

"Four kinds of people are disgusting: a poor man who is proud; a rich man who pleads poverty; an old man who is licentious; a leader who is insolent."

It reminds of Cicero: "Who does not hate the mean, the vain, the fickle and trifling?"

ארבעה אין הרעת סובלתן אלו הן דל נאה ועשיר מכחש וקן מנאף
ופרנס המתנאה (פסחי' קי"ג)

"Quis non odit sordidos, vanos, leves, futiles."
—Fin. iii, 2.

CVII.

"Her womanhood is her protection."—*Tal.*

"There is no memorable name in female punishment, nor has that victory any glory."—*Vir.*

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אשה כלי זיינה עליה (ע"ז כ"ה)

"Nullum memorabile nomen in foeminea poena nec ita victoria habet laudem."—Aen. ii.

CVIII.

"A woman reads the people coming to her house better than man."

Had Buckle been familiar with this apophthegm he might have quoted it with some show of Talmudic knowledge in his lecture on "Woman's influence on the progress of knowledge."

"Another circumstance," says Buckle, "which makes women more deductive,is that they possess more of what is called intuition. They cannot see as far as man can, but what they do see they see quicker. Hence, they are constantly tempted to grasp at once at an idea, and seek to solve a problem suddenly in contradistinction to the slower and more laborious ascent of the inductive investigator. That women are more deductive than men, because they think quicker is a proposition which some persons will not relish, and yet it may be proved in a variety of ways."

"To this, I may add another observation which many travellers have made, and which anyone can testify; namely, "that when you are in a foreign country and speaking a foreign language, women will understand you quicker than men will."

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אשה מכרת באורחים יותר מאיש (פסחי' נ')

"Parvis mobilis rebus animus muliebris."—Levy vi, 34.

CIX.

"The man is well off who does not go to theatres."—*Tal.*

That is the man upon whom time does not hang heavily and who finds amusement and diversion in pursuits the legitimacy of which can not be questioned. And our sages are not without support in this respect.

Boswell has the following item about Samuel Johnson: "He for a considerable time used to frequent the green-room, and seemed to take delight in dissipating his gloom by mixing in the sprightly chit-chat of the motley circle then to be found there. Mr. David Hume related to me from Garrick that Johnson at last denied himself that amusement from a consideration of rigid virtue, saying: "I come no more behind the green scenes, David; for the silk stockings and white bosoms of your actresses excite my amorous propensities."—Little's Hist. Lights.

"Ovid employs two hundred lines in the research of places the most favorable to love. Above all, he considers the theatres as the best adapted to collect the beauties of Rome and to melt them with tenderness and sensuality."—Ibid.

Solon, the lawgiver of Athens, "forbade Thespis

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to perform and represent his tragedies, on the ground of falsehood being unprofitable; and when Pisistratos wounded himself, he said it all came of Thespis tragedies."—Yonge's Diog. Leart.

Seneca advises his young friend to stay away from public shows, saying: "Nothing is so hurtful to good morals as to while away the time at some public show."

אשרי האיש שלא הלך בתרטיות (ע"ז י"ח)

"Nihil vero tam damnosum bonis moribus, quam in aliquo spectaculo desidere."—Ep. vii.

CX.

"The generation is to be congratulated which has Rabbi Elazar, son of Azariah."—*Tal.*

When the position of Nassi was made vacant by the abdication of Rabbi Gamliel, Rabbi Elazar was declared the best equipped man for the office. He was learned, influential and of a family which traced its genealogy to Ezrah. His wife, however, did not care for the promotion, and said to him: "They will depose you as they did Rabbi Gamliel." "This," he said, "does not trouble me." "We use costly glass-ware knowing that it may break." She then referred to his extremely useful appearance. He was then only eighteen years old.

At any rate, he was elected, and having been in

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the exalted office a short time, a reconciliation was effected between Rabbi Gamliel and his opponents, whose rehabilitation was desired. Cheerfully and readily Rabbi Elazar resigned, and headed a party to congratulate the reinstated Nassi.

"There are Clodii at all times, but the Catos are rare."—*Seneca.*

אשרי הדור שר' אב 'ע שרוי בתוכו וכו (חגינה נ')

"Omne tempes Clodii, non omne Catones feret."—Ep. 97

CXI.

"Happy are the martyrs."—*Tal.*

Rabbi Joseph recovered from his sickness, and his father, Rabbi Joshua, asked him, what vision he had when he was in a state of apparent unconsciousness. Rabbi Joseph answered: "I have seen a world with a reversed order of things. The high-stationed were down and the lowly were up." And the father said: "Thou hast seen a well ordered world. But what hast thou seen of us scholars?" And he answered: "As we are here, so we are there. And I heard say: "Happy who comes here with learning in his hand, (that is, whose learning caused good action). And I also heard say: "Happy are the martyrs." Commenting on this last utterance the Talmud says: "It does not refer to Rabbi Akiba and

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his associates who had other great merits, but to the martyrs in Lydda. It happened that a king's daughter was murdered, and, as the murderer was not found, the whole Jewish colony was charged with the crime. But in order to remove all suspicion from, and thus save their brethren, two brave young men sacrificed themselves. They gave themselves up to the thoughtless government as the assassins of the king's daughter, and were innocently put to death.

"It is sweet and glorious to die for the father-land."—*Hor.*

אשרי הרוגי מלכות (פסחים נ')

"Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori."—Od. iii, 2.

CXII.

"Happy the man who repents while he is yet a man."
—*Tal.*

That is when one's better nature has still that warmth and impressionability to become victor of the base passions.

It reminds of Juvenal: "When armed and helmeted it is too late to repent of the fight."

אשרי מי שעושה תשובה כשהוא איש (ע"ז י"ט)

"Galeatum sero duelli poenitet."—Sat. 1.

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CXIII.

"Thou art hailed, O Rabbi Akiba! that thy soul has departed while "echod" was on thy lips."—*Tal.*

Rabbi Akiba is the most amazing personality in the Talmud. Of obscure descent and beginning to study at an advanced age, he acquired phenomenal sway over the leading men in Israel as a scholarly genius and religious hero. He may be said to have been both, the Jewish Aristotle and Epaminondas of that period. He had the intellectual brilliancy of the former and the devotion and self-abnegation of the latter.

About his death, the Talmud gives the following information: "Disregarding the Roman edict to quit all Jewish study and instruction, he continued to lecture to large gatherings. Warned by Pappus, he told him that fishes once chided a fox who invited them to follow him on land, because they were in danger in the river." They said: "Thou, oh fox, art sly, but nevertheless a fool. If we are not safe in the water, we are less so on land." About the study of the law it is written: "For it is thy life and the length of thy days," and if we are not safe in it, it is useless to look for safety elsewhere."

In a few days, however, Rabbi Akiba was seized and tortured to death, but, to the very last, he asserted his spiritual independence and invincibility. While his skin was being torn from him with a curry-comb,

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he recited passages from the Scriptures. His disciples, seeing that the executioner was determined to break the constancy of his victim, and therefore prolonged his agonies, cried out: "Master, it is enough." But the mutilated master calmed them, saying: "It is written: "And thou shalt love the Eternal, thy God, with all thy soul." It means even at the cost of thy life. Many a time I wondered whether I will have an opportunity to manifest such a love for my God. And now that I have it shall I not use it? Again he said: "Hear, O Israel, the Eternal is our God, the Eternal is One," and kept up the sound of the last word "One" until his body sank, and the glory that tenanted it rose heavenward." A voice from above (Bath Kol) exclaimed "Happy art thou, Rabbi Akiba, that thy soul departed with "echod" on thy lips."

"Who falls for the love of God shall rise a star."

Ben Jonson.

אשריך ר"ע שיצתה נשמתך באחד (ברכות ס"א)

CXIV.

"It is written: 'Thou shalt fear the Eternal thy God,' this teaches at the same time that the sages must be respected.'"—*Tal.*

Our wise men revered the Bible as an emanation of divine Intelligence in which the solution of life's

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problem could be found, if properly studied. There was no superfluity and no platitude in it. Every sentence was a constellation, every word a glittering star.

The word "eth" stood for more than a grammatical form, namely, for an intimation that an additional lesson was intended which, though not expressed, could be guessed by the student. And we are told that a sage by the name of Simon, satisfactorily explained the special meaning of that word in all its relations except in that to fear of God. He was afraid to say that this denoted a plus. Whom is man to fear besides God? What other fear then could that include? His disciples said to him: "Master, thy disinclination to elucidate the word here, will weaken all your efforts in that direction. For if it is here only a grammatical form, why should it not be taken as such in all its connections?" The master replied: "As I hope to be rewarded for explanation elsewhere, so I hope to be rewarded for my departure in this case." Rabbi Akiba, however, said: "The word 'eth' has even in this connection a special suggestion, namely, that next to God we owe reverence to the sage who benefits us by his inspiring word and glorious example."

"I say great men are still admirable, I say there is, at bottom, nothing else admirable! No nobler feeling than this of admiration for one higher than himself dwells in the breast of man. It is to this hour,

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and at all hours, the vivifying influence in man's life. Religion I find stand upon it."—*Carlyle*.

"Next and immediately after the gods men are most useful to men..... It is by the wisdom and virtues of excellent men that we are urged and excited to study and improve our conditions."—*Cicero*.

את ד' א' תירא לרבות ת"ח (פסח' כ"ב)

"Proxime autem et secundum deos homines... Hominum studia virorum praestantium sapientia excitantur."—De Off. ii, 3, 5.

CXV.

"The donkey came and kicked the candelabrum."—*Tal*.

There was a philosopher who used to brag of his deep sense of justice and utter abhorrence for bribery, but whom Rabbi Gamliel and his sister knew to lead a double life. In order to expose him, they pretended to have a disagreement about their father's estate, and appointed him judge in the matter. Both bribed him, she with a golden candelabrum, and Rabbi Gamliel with an imported donkey. During the trial she said to the judge: "May thy judgment be as bright as the candelabrum," and Rabbi Gamliel, in order to remind him of his gift said: "The donkey came and kicked the candelabrum."

Whether Rabbi Gamliel and his sister actually played such unbecoming parts may reasonably be

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questioned. It is more likely that some disappointed scholar gave birth to the above saying, and means that nonsense is often more appreciated by the people than substantial thought

It reminds of the story of the shadow of an ass. Demosthenes pleaded a very important case, and observing that the judges paid him no attention, told them that once a man hired a donkey to ride on its back to some city. On the road the man sat down under the donkey to rest. The owner of the same then demanded extra pay for the use of the shadow of his animal, which the other party refused. They went to court. At this point of the story the famous orator turned to leave the room, but the judges anxious to hear how the court disposed of the shadow of the ass bade him stay and continue.

"Comedy carries the day."

אתא חמרא ובטש לשרגא (שבת קמ"ו)

"Vocem comoedia tollit."—L. Prov.

CXVI.

"You have, I have not said it."—*Tal.*

Bar Kappara was sent by the Rabbies to inquire about Rabbi Jehudah Hanassi, whose sickness had taken an alarming turn and for whose recovery a fast was ordained and prayers were said. Coming

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back to the Rabbies he said "Angels and righteous men combatted about the possession of the holy ark and the angels succeeded to carry it off." "Is he dead?" the Rabbies asked, and he replied: "You have, I have not said it."

The same is related about Rabbi Joshua. He was requested by the Rabbies to go and see how Rabbi Kahanah was, and finding him dead, he tore his garment and wept. When he returned, the Rabbies asked: "Is he dead?" And he answered: "You have, I have not said it. He who utters offensive speech is a fool."

There was a feeling that the expression: "He died" or "He is dead" could not well be applied to a man so honored and cherished. Death and immortality, what a contradiction! Can we consistently speak of the death of anyone whom we believe immortal? What those sages meant by saying: "You have, I have not said it," is, to use a Ciceronian expression: "I am not so absurd as to say that."

אתן קאמריתו, ואנא לא קאמינא וכ' (עירובין נ"ג)

"Non sum ita hebes, ut istud dicam."—Tuscul. i, 6.

CXVII.

"You have come to see one who cannot see, may it be your prerogative to see Him who sees, but is not seen."—*Tal.*

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Rabbi Jehudah and Rabbi Chiya came into a city and inquired whether a learned man dwelled there. They were informed that a learned man lived there, but he was blind. They paid him a visit. What the conversation of these scholars was is not repeated. But when the distinguished visitors were about to leave him he blessed them in the above words.

There is a passage in Cicero which deserves to be cited in this connection. It is this: "Pompejus used to relate that when he came to Rhodus, he had a great desire to hear Posidonius lecture. But he was informed that the philosopher was a great sufferer, and though he gave up all hope of hearing him, he paid him a visit. Pompeius after greeting the philosopher expressed his regrets that he could not hear him lecture. But Posidonius said: "I shall not permit any illness to cause such a distinguished visitor to leave me without hearing me." And he discussed earnestly and fluently the proposition: "Nothing was good but what was honest." But as often as his malady gave him severe pain so that he had to interrupt himself, he said: "Pain, thou accomplishest nothing. Thou art annoying, but I will never admit that thou art an evil."

אתם הקבלתם פנים הנראים ואינן רואין תזכו וכ' (חגינה ה')

"Nihil agis dolor: quamvis sis molestus, nunquam te esse confitebor malum."—Tuscul. ii, 25.

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CXVIII.

"The thief may escape two or three times, but will pay the penalty in the end."—*Tal.*

Punishment though late comes on with **silent** step.—*Tibullus.*

אתרתי ותלת ננבי לא מיקטל (סנהד' ז')

"Sera tamen tacitis poena venit pedibus."

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Typographical errors corrected.

HEBREW

Page 1, line 2, אבוב
" 18, " 16, בנתין
" 36, " 14, איזהו

LATIN

Page 61, line 13, mulieribus
" 63, " 10, eam
" 85, " 16, suspiciendi
" " " " ritu deorum

ENGLISH

Page 23, line 1, Pumbaditha
" 50, " 20, omit "to"
" 51, " 8, become

Page 64, line 6, Buckle
" 73, " 13, prosper
" 76, " 20, lose,

Page 77, line 13, Phreantles.

Page 5, line 6, propere

Page 65, line 17, mastodon

Page 70, line 4 Quod
" 96, " 23, youthful

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Echoes of Wisdom

OR

Talmudic Sayings with Classic, especially Latin, Parallelisms,

BY

G. TAUBENHAUS,

Minister Cong. Beth Elohim, Brooklyn.

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