

# *PIRKE AVOT*

## *The Wisdom of the Fathers*

Chapter 1 1. Moses received the Torah from Sinai and transmitted it to Joshua; Joshua to the elders; the elders to the prophets; and the prophets handed it down to the men of the Great Assembly. They said three things: Be deliberate in judgment, raise up many disciples, and make a fence around the Torah.

2. Shimon the Righteous was one of the last survivors of the Great Assembly. He used to say: On three things the world is sustained: on the Torah, on the (Temple) service, and on deeds of loving kindness.

3. Antigonus of Socho received the Torah from Shimon the Righteous. He used to say: Be not like servants who minister unto their master for the sake of receiving a reward, but be like servants who serve their master not upon the condition of receiving a reward; and let the fear of Heaven be upon you.

4. Yosi ben Yoezer of Tzeredah and Yosi ben Yochanan of Jerusalem received the Torah from them. Yosi ben Yoezer of Tzeredah said: Let your house be a meetinghouse for the sages and sit amid the dust of their feet and drink in their words with thirst.

5. Yosi ben Yochanan of Jerusalem said: Let your house be wide open and let the poor be members of thy household; and do not talk much with women. This was said about one's own wife; how much more so about the wife of one's

neighbor. Therefore the sages have said: He who talks too much with women brings evil upon himself and neglects the study of the Torah and will in the end inherit Gehenna.

6. Joshua ben Perachyah and Nittai the Arbelite received the Torah from them. Joshua ben Perachyah said: Provide for yourself a teacher and get yourself a friend; and judge every man towards merit.

7. Nittai the Arbelite said: Keep far from an evil neighbor and do not associate with the wicked; and do not abandon belief in retribution.

8. Judah ben Tabbai and Shimon ben Shetach received the Torah from them. Judah ben Tabbai said: Do not make yourself like those that present before judges. When parties to a Torah suit are standing before you they should be in your eyes as wicked men, but when they have departed from they should be in your eyes as innocent, if they have accepted the verdict.

9. Shimon ben Shetach said: Examine the witnesses diligently and be cautious in your words lest through them they learn to falsify.

10. Shemayah and Avtalion received the Torah from them. Shemayah said: Love work; hate domination; and seek not undue intimacy with the government.

11. Avtalion said: Sages, be careful with your words lest you incur the penalty of exile and are called to a place where the waters of learning are impure and the disciples

that come after you drink of them and die; and the Heavenly Name is consequently profaned.

12. Hillel and Shammai received the Torah from them. Hillel said: Be of the disciples of Aaron, loving peace and pursuing peace, loving your fellow creatures and bringing them close to the Torah.

13. Hillel used to say: He who aggrandizes his name, loses his name. He who does not increase his knowledge, decreases it. He who learns not, forfeits his life. He who makes unworthy use of the crown (of the Torah) shall pass away.

14. Hillel used to say: If I am not for myself who will be for me? Yet, if I am for myself only, what am I? And if not now, when?

15. Shammai said: Make your study of the Torah a fixed habit. Say little and do much, and receive all men with a cheerful face.

16. Rabban Gamaliel said: Provide yourself with a teacher and remove yourself from doubt, and do not accustom yourself to give tithes by estimation.

17. Shimon his son said: All my days have I grown up among the wise and I have not found anything better for a man than silence. Studying Torah is not the most important thing rather fulfilling it. Whoever multiplies words causes sin.

**18. Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel said: On three things the world is sustained: on truth, on judgment, and on peace, as it is it says (Zechariah 8:16): "Speak the truth to one another, render in your gates judgments that are true and make for peace."**

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**Chapter 2 1. Rabbi Judah the Prince said: Which is the proper course that a man should choose for himself? That which is an honor to him and elicits honor from his fellow men. Be as scrupulous about a light precept as of a weighty one, for you do not know the reward allotted for each precept. Balance the loss incurred by the fulfillment of a precept against the gain and the accruing from a transgression against the loss it involves. Reflect on three things and you will never come to sin: Know what is above you --a seeing eye, a hearing ear, and all your**

**deeds recorded in a book**

**2. Rabban Gamaliel the son of Rabbi Judah the Prince said: Great is study of the Torah when combined with a worldly occupation, for toil in them both puts sin out of mind. All study of the Torah which is not supplemented by work is destined to prove futile and causes sin. Let all who occupy themselves with communal affairs do so for Heaven's sake, for then the merit of their fathers sustains them and their righteousness endures forever. And as for you, G-d will**

then say: I count you worthy of great reward as if you had done it all yourselves.

3. Be careful in your relations with the government; for they draw no man close to themselves except for their own interests. They appear as friends when it is to their advantage, but they do not stand by a man in his time of stress.

4. He used to say: Do His will as if it was your will that He may do your will as if it was His will. Make your will of no effect

before His will that He may make the will of others of no effect before your will.

5. Hillel said: Do not separate yourself from the community; and do not trust in yourself until the day of your death. Do not judge your fellow until you are in his place. Do not say something that cannot be understood but will be understood in the end. Say not: When I have time I will study because you may never have the time.

6. Hillel used to say: A brutish man cannot fear sin; an ignorant man cannot be pious, nor can the shy man learn, or the impatient man teach. He who engages excessively in business cannot become wise. In a place where there are no men strive to be a man.

7. Moreover he saw a skull floating on the surface of the water and he said unto it: Because you drowned others they drowned you; and those that drowned you will eventually be drowned.

8. He used to say: The more flesh the more worms; the more possessions the more anxiety; the more women the more witchcraft; the more maidservants the more lewdness, the more manservants the more theft. But the more Torah the more life, the more schooling the more wisdom; the more counsel the more understanding; the more righteousness the more peace. If a man has acquired a good name he has gained something which enriches himself; but if he has acquired words of the Torah he has attained afterlife.

9. Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai received the Torah from Hillel and from Shammai. He used to say: If you have learnt much Torah do not claim for yourself moral excellence, for to this end you were created.

10. Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai had five disciples and these

are they: Eliezer ben Hyrcanus, Joshua ben Chananiah, Yosi the Priest, Shimon ben Natanel, and Elazar ben Arach.

11. He used to say their praise: Eliezer ben Hyrcanus is a plastered cistern which does not lose a drop; Joshua ben Chananiah -- happy is she that gave birth to him; Yosi the Priest is a saintly man; Shimon ben Natanel is fearful of sin; Elazar ben Arach is an ever-flowing spring.

12. He used to say: If all the sages of Israel were in one scale of the balance and Eliezer ben Hyrcanus in the other, he would outweigh them all. Abba Shaul, however, said in his name: If all the sages of Israel, together with Eliezer

ben Hyrcanus were in one scale of the balance, Elazar ben Arach would outweigh them.

13. Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai said to them: Go and see which is the good a man shall cherish most. Rabbi Eliezer said, a good eye. Rabbi Joshua said, a good companion. Rabbi Yosi said, a good neighbor. Rabbi Shimon said, foresight. Rabbi Elazar said, a good heart. He said to them: I prefer the words of Elazar ben Arach to your words, for in his words yours are included.

14. He said to them: Go and see which is the evil way which a man should avoid. Rabbi Eliezer said, an evil eye. Rabbi Joshua said, an evil companion. Rabbi Yosi said, an evil neighbor. Rabbi Shimon said, he that borrows and does not repay. He that borrows from a man is as one that borrows from God, for it is written (Psalm 37:21) "The wicked borrow, and do not pay back, but the righteous are generous and keep giving." Rabbi Elazar said, an evil heart. He said to them: I prefer the words of Elazar ben Arach to your words, for in his words your yours are included.

15. They each said three things. Rabbi Eliezer said: Let the honor of your fellow be as dear to you as your own. Be not easily moved to anger. Repent one day before your death. Warm yourself before the fire of the sages, but be heedful of their glowing coals for fear that you be burned, for their bite is the bite of a jackal and their sting the sting of a scorpion and their hiss the hiss of a serpent, and all their words are like coals of fire.

**16. Rabbi Joshua said: The evil eye, the evil desire and hatred of his fellow creatures put a man out of the world.**

**17. Rabbi Yosi said: Let the property of your fellow man be as dear to you as your own. Prepare yourself for the study of the Torah, for the knowledge of it is not yours by inheritance. Let all your deeds be done for the sake of Heaven.**

**18. Rabbi Shimon said: Be careful in the reciting of the Shema and in prayer. When you pray do not make your prayer a form of routine but a plea for mercy and supplications**

**before G-d, for it is written (Joel 2:13), "For he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing." Do not be wicked in your own mind.**

**19. Rabbi Elazar said: Be eager to study the Torah. Know what to respond to a heretic. Know before whom you toil and who is your employer who shall pay you the reward of your labor.**

**20. Rabbi Tarfon said: The day is short, the task is great, the laborers are lazy, the wage is abundant and the master is urgent.**

**21. He used to say: It is not incumbent upon you to finish the task. Yet, you are not free to desist from it. If you have studied much in the Torah much reward will be given you, for faithful is your employer who shall pay you the reward**

of your labor. And know that the reward for the righteous shall be in the time to come.

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**Chapter 3 1. Akavya ben Mahalalel said: Reflect upon three things and you will not come to sin. Know from where you came and where you are going and before whom you are destined to give account and reckoning. From where have you come?--from a putrid drop. Wherr are you going?--to the place of dust, worm, and maggot. Before whom are you destined to give account and reckoning?--before the supreme King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be he.**

**2. Rabbi Chanina, an assistant of the high priest said: Pray for the welfare of the government, since but for fear of it men would swallow each other alive.**

**3. Rabbi Chananiah ben Teradion said: If two sit together and no words of Torah are interchanged between them, theirs is the session of the scornful, as it is written (Psalm 1:1) "Nor sit in the seat of scoffers." But when two sit together and words of Torah pass between them, the Divine Presence rests**

**between them, as it is written (Malachi 3:16) "Then those who revered the Lord spoke with one another. The Lord took note and listened, and a book of remembrance was written before him of those who revered the Lord and**

thought on his name." Scripture speaks here of two.

Whence do we learn that if even one sits and occupies himself in the Torah, the Holy One blessed be he, appoints him a reward? Because it is written (Lamentations 3:28) "to sit alone in silence when the Lord has imposed it."

4. Rabbi Shimon said: If three have eaten at one table and have not spoken over it words of Torah, it is as though they had eaten of the sacrifices of the dead, for it is written (Isaiah 28:8) "All tables are covered with filthy vomit; no place is clean." But if three have eaten at one table and have spoken over it words of Torah, it is as if they had eaten from the table of God, for it is written (Ezekiel 41:22) "He said to me, "This is the table that stands before the Lord."

5. Rabbi Chaninah ben Chachinai said: He who stays awake at night and goes on his way alone and turns his heart to idle thoughts is liable for his life.

6. Rabbi Nechunya ben Hakanah said: Whoever takes upon himself the yoke of Torah, from him will be taken away the yoke of government and the yoke of worldly care; but whoever throws off the yoke of Torah, upon him will be laid the yoke of government and the yoke of worldly care.

7. Rabbi Chalafta ben Dosa of Kefar Chanania used to say: If ten men sit together and occupy themselves with the Torah, the Divine Presence rests among them as it is written (Psalm 82:1) "God has taken his place in the divine council." And from where do we learn that this applies even to five? Because it is written (Amos 9:6) "And founds his vault upon the earth." And how do we learn that this

applies even to three? Because it is written (Psalm 82:1) "In the midst of the gods he holds judgment." And from where can it be shown that the same applies even to two?

Because it is written (Malachi 3:16) "Then those who revered the Lord spoke with one another. The Lord took note and listened." And from where even of one? Because it is written (Exodus 20:24) "In every place where I cause my name to be remembered I will come to you and bless you."

8. Rabbi Elazar of Bartota said: Render to Him that which is his, for you and all that you have are His, as David said (I Chronicles 29:14): "For all things come from You, and of Your own have we given you."

9. Rabbi Jacob said: If a man is walking by the way and is studying and then interrupts his study and says: "How fine is this tree?" or "How fine is this ploughed field?" Scripture regards him as though he was liable for his life.

10. Rabbi Dostai ben Yannai said in the name of Rabbi Meir: He who forgets one word of his study, Scripture regards him as though he was liable for his life; for it is written (Deuteronomy 4:9) "But take care and watch yourselves closely, so as not to forget the things that your eyes have seen." Could this apply even if a man's study was too hard for him? Scripture says (ibid.): "Nor to let them slip from your mind all the days of your life." Thus a person is not guilty unless he deliberately puts those lessons away from his heart.

11. Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa said: He in whom the fear of sin takes precedence of wisdom, his wisdom will endure;

but he in whom wisdom takes precedence of his fear of sin,  
his wisdom will not endure.

12. He used to say: He whose works exceed his wisdom, his  
wisdom endures; but he whose wisdom exceeds his works,  
his wisdom will not endure.

13. He used to say: He who in whom fellow people find no  
delight, in him the G-d finds no pleasure.

14. Rabbi Dosa ben Hyrcanus said: Sleeping away the  
morning, drinking at noonday, childish playing and sitting  
in the meetinghouses of the unlearned remove a man from  
this world.

15. Rabbi Elazar of Modiim said: If a man profanes things  
which are sacred, and offends the holidays and puts his  
fellow to shame publicly, and makes void the covenant of  
Abraham our father, and teaches meanings in the Torah  
which are not according to Halachah, even though he has a  
knowledge of the Torah and good works, he has no share  
in the world to come.

16. Rabbi Yishmael says: Be submissive to an elder and  
courteous to the young. Receive every man with good  
cheer.

17. Rabbi Akiva said: Jesting and frivolity lead a man  
towards promiscuity. Tradition is a safeguarding fence  
around the Torah. Tithes are a fence to wealth. Vows a  
fence to abstinence. Silence is a fence to wisdom.

18. Rabbi Akiva used to say: Beloved is the man that he was created in the image of G-d; an extra love is made known to him that he was created in G-d's image, as it says (Genesis 9:6) "for in His own image G-d made humankind". Beloved are the Jews that they are called sons to G-d; an extra love is made known to them that they are called sons to G-d, as it says (Deuteronomy 14:1) "You are children of the Lord your G-d." Beloved are the Jews that there has been given to them the precious instrument; an extra love is made known to them that they were given the precious instrument of the world's creation, as it says (Proverbs 4:2) "For I give you good precepts; do not forsake my teaching."

19. Rabbi Akiva said: All is foreseen, but freedom of choice is given. The world is judged in goodness, yet all is proportioned to one's work.

20. Rabbi Akiva used to say: All is given against a pledge, and

the net is cast over all living; the shop stands open and the shopkeeper gives credit and the account book lies open and the hand writes. Every one that wishes to borrow let him come and borrow; but the collectors go their daily rounds and exact

payment from man with or without his consent; for the collectors have that on which they can rely; and the judgement is a judgement of truth; and all is made ready for a feast.

**21. Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah used to say: Where there is no Torah there is no culture; and where there is no culture there is no Torah. Where there is no wisdom there is no fear of G-d,**

**and where there is no fear of G-d there is no wisdom. Where there is no knowledge there is no discernment; and**

**where there is no discernment there is no knowledge. Where there is no food there is no Torah; and where there is no Torah there is no food.**

**22. He used to say: He whose wisdom is more abundant than his works, to what is he like? To a tree whose branches are abundant but whose roots are few; and the wind comes and uproots it and overturns it, as it is written (Jeremiah 17:6) "They shall be like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see when relief comes. They shall live in the parched places of the wilderness, in an uninhabited salt land." But he whose works are more abundant than his wisdom, to what is he like? To a tree whose branches are few but whose roots are many; so that even if all the winds in the world come and blow against it, it cannot be stirred from its place, as it is written (Jeremiah 17:8) "They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when heat comes, and its leaves shall stay green; in the year of drought it is not anxious, and it does not cease to bear fruit."**

**23. Rabbi Elazar Ben Chisma used to say: The rules about bird offerings and the rules about ritual impurity of women are essentials of the Torah; but astronomy and linguistic numerics are incidentals to religious learning.**

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**Chapter 4 1. Ben Zoma said: Who is wise? He who learns from all men, as it is written (Psalm 119:99) "I have gained understanding from all my teachers."**

**Who is mighty? He who subdues his passions, as it is written (Proverbs 16:32) "One who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and one whose temper is controlled than one who captures a city."**

**Who is rich? He who rejoices in his portion, as it is written (Psalm 128:2) "You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands; you shall be happy, and it shall go well with you." "You shall be" refers to this world; and "it shall be well with you" refers to the world to come.**

**Who is honored? He that honors his fellow men as it is written (I Samuel 2:30) "For those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me shall be treated with contempt."**

**2. Ben Azzai said: Be eager to fulfill the smallest duty and flee from transgression; for one duty induces another and one transgression induces another transgression. The**

**reward of a duty is a duty, the reward of one transgression is another transgression.**

**3. He also used to say: Despise no man and deem nothing impossible; for there is no man who does not have his day and there is no thing that does not have its place.**

**4. Rabbi Levitas of Yavneh used to say: Be exceeding lowly of spirit, for the hope of man is with worms.**

**5. Rabbi Yochanan ben Baroka said: Whoever profanes the name of Heaven in secret will pay the penalty in public, whether it be done accidentally or intentionally.**

**6. Rabbi Yishmael his son used to say: He who learns in order to teach will be enabled both to learn and to teach. But he who learns in order to practice will be enabled to learn, to teach, to observe, and to practice.**

**7. Rabbi Tzadok used to say: Do not make the Torah a crown with which to aggrandize yourself, nor use it as a spade with which to dig. As Hillel used to say: He who makes worldly use of the crown of the Torah shall perish. Thus you may infer that any one who exploits the words of the Torah removes himself from the world of life.**

**8. Rabbi Yosi used to say: He who honors the Torah is himself honored by mankind. He who dishonors the Torah shall himself be dishonored by mankind.**

**9. Rabbi Yishmael his son said: He who shuns the office of judge rids himself of enmity, theft, and false swearing. He**

**who presumptuously rules in Torah matters is foolish, wicked, and arrogant.**

**10. He used to say: Judge not alone, for none may judge alone except One. And say not, "Accept my opinion," for it is for them to decide and not you.**

**11. Rabbi Yonatan said: He who fulfills the Torah in poverty shall in the end fulfill it in wealth. He who disregards the Torah in wealth shall in the end disregard it in poverty.**

**12. Rabbi Meir said: Engage little in business but occupy yourself with Torah. Be humble in spirit before all men. If you neglect Torah many causes for neglecting it will present themselves to you; but if you labor in Torah then G-d has abundant reward to give you.**

**13. Rabbi Eliezer ben Jacob used to say: He who performs one commandment acquires for himself one advocate, while he who commits one transgression has gotten for himself one accuser. Penitence and good deeds are as a shield against punishment.**

**14. Rabbi Yochanan the sandal-maker said: Every assembly that is for a hallowed purpose shall in the end be established. But any assembly that is not for a hallowed purpose shall not ultimately be established.**

**15. Rabbi Elazar ben Shammua used to say: Let the honor of your student be as precious to you as your own; and the honor of your colleague as the respect due your teacher;**

and the respect towards your teacher as your reverence for  
G-d.

**16. Rabbi Judah used to say: Be careful in teaching, for error in teaching amounts to deliberate sin.**

**17. Rabbi Shimon used to say: There are three crowns--the crown of the Torah, the crown of the priesthood, and the crown of kingship, but the crown of a good name surpasses them all.**

**18. Rabbi Nehorai said: Go as a voluntary exile to a place of Torah, and do not say that the Torah will follow you, for it is your companions who will make it your permanent possession. Do not rely upon your own understanding.**

**19. Rabbi Yannai used to say: It is not in our power to explain the well-being of the wicked or the sorrows of the righteous.**

**20. Rabbi Matyah ben Cheresh used to say: Be first in greeting every man. Be a tail among lions rather than a head to foxes.**

**21. Rabbi Jacob used to say: This world is like a hallway to the future world. Prepare yourself in the hallway that you may enter into the banquet hall.**

**22. He also would say: Better is one hour of penitence and good deeds in this world than all the life of the world to come. Better is one hour of spiritual repose in the world to come than all the life of this world.**

**23. Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar used to say: Do not appease your fellow in the time of his anger, nor comfort him while his dead lies before him. Do not question him in the time of his vow. Do not try to see him in the time of his disgrace.**

**24. Samuel the Younger used to say (Proverbs 24:17-18)  
"Do not rejoice when your enemies fall, and do not let your heart be glad when they stumble, or else the Lord will see it and be displeased, and turn away his anger from them."**

**25. Elisha ben Avuyah used to say: He who learns as a child, what is he like? He is like ink written on new paper. He who learns as an old man, what is he like? He is like ink written on blotting paper.**

**26. Rabbi Yosi bar Judah of Kefar ha-Bavli said: He who learns from the young, what is he like? He is like one who eats unripe grapes and drinks wine fresh from his wine press. But he who learns from the aged, what is he like? He is like one who eats ripe grapes and drinks old wine.**

**27. Rabbi Meir used to say: Do not look at the flask but at what is in it; there may be a new flask that is full of old wine and an old flask that does not even have new wine in it.**

**28. Rabbi Eleazar ha-Kappar used to say: Jealousy, lust, and ambition remove man from the world.**

**29. He also used to say: They who have been born are destined to die. They that are dead are destined to be**

made alive. They who live are destined to be judged, that men may know and make known and understand that He is G-d, He is the maker, He is the creator, He is the discerner, He is the judge, He is the witness, He is the complainant, and it is He who will in the future judge, blessed be He, in whose presence is neither guile nor forgetfulness nor respect of persons nor taking of bribes; for all is His. And know that everything is according to the reckoning. And let not your evil nature assure you that the grave will be your refuge: for despite yourself you were fashioned, and despite yourself you were born, and despite yourself you live, and despite yourself you die, and despite yourself shall you are destined to give account and reckoning before the supreme King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He.

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**Chapter 5 1.** By ten divine sayings the world was created. Could it not have been created by one? What does this teach us? In order to emphasize the guilt of the wicked who destroy the world that was created with ten sayings and the merit of the righteous who preserve the world that was created with ten sayings.

**2.** There were ten generations from Adam to Noah, to show how great was His patience, for every one of those

**generations provoked Him continually until he brought upon them the waters of the Flood.**

**3. There were ten generations from Noah to Abraham, to show how great was His patience, for every one of those generations provoked Him continually until Abraham, our father, came and received the reward of them all.**

**4. With ten tests was Abraham, our father, tested and he stood steadfast in them all; [they were] to show how great was His love.**

**5. Ten wonders were performed for our fathers in Egypt and ten at the sea.**

**6. Ten plagues did the Holy One, blessed be He, bring upon the Egyptians in Egypt and ten more at the sea.**

**7. Ten times our ancestors in the wilderness tested the Holy One, blessed be He, as it is written (Numbers 14:22) "Who ... tested me these ten times and have not obeyed my voice."**

**8. Ten miracles were performed for our fathers in the Temple:**

**no woman miscarried from the odor of the flesh of the offerings;**

**the flesh of the offerings never turned putrid;**

**no fly was ever seen in the place of slaughter;**

**the high priest never suffered a pollution on the Day of  
Atonement;**

**rain never quenched the fire of the wood arranged on the  
altar;**

**no wind prevailed over the pillar of smoke;**

**never was a defect found in the omer or in the two loaves  
or in the showbread;**

**though the worshipers stood pressed together, they could  
freely prostrate themselves;**

**never did serpent or scorpion do harm in Jerusalem;**

**and no man said to his fellow, "There is no room for me to  
lodge in Jerusalem."**

**9. Ten things were created at twilight on the eve of the first Sabbath:**

**the mouth of the earth (Numbers 16:32);**

**the mouth of the well (Numbers 21:16);**

**the mouth of the ass (Numbers 22:28);**

**the rainbow;**

**the manna;**

**Aaron's staff;**

**the Shamir, writing;**

**the inscription on the tablets of the Ten Commandments;**

**and the tablets themselves.**

Some also include the evil spirits, the grave of Moses, the ram of Abraham; and others add the original tongs, for tongs must be made with tongs.

10. Seven marks characterize the clod and seven the wise man. The wise man does not speak before one who is greater than he in wisdom and he does not break in upon the speech of his fellow. He is not hasty to answer. He asks what is relevant and answers according to the Halakah. He speaks on the first point first and on the last point last.

Where he has heard no tradition he says, "I have not heard"; and he agrees to what is true. The opposites of these attributes are the marks of the clod.

11. Seven kinds of punishment come upon the world for seven classes of transgression. If some give tithe and some do not give tithe, there comes famine from drought. Some hunger while some have a sufficiency.

When all resolve not to give tithes there comes famine from tumult and drought.

And if they will not set apart dough offerings (Numbers 15:20) there comes an all-consuming famine.

**Pestilence comes upon the world because of crimes deserving the death penalties enjoined in the Torah that are not brought before the court; and because of the transgressions of the Torahs of the seventh year produce (Leviticus 25:1-7).**

**The sword comes upon the world because of the delaying of justice and the perverting of justice; and because of those that teach Torah not according to the Halakah.**

**Evil beasts come upon the world because of false swearing and the profaning of the name.**

**Exile comes upon the world because of idolatry and incest and the shedding of blood; and because of neglect to give release to the soil during the sabbatical year.**

**12. At four periods pestilence increases: In the fourth year and the seventh year and in the year after the seventh year, and at the end of the Feast of Tabernacles every year.**

**"In the fourth year"--because of neglect of the Poorman's Tithe in the third year (Deuteronomy 14:28-30).**

**"In the seventh year"--because of neglect of the Poorman's  
Tithe in the sixth year.**

**"In the year after the seventh year"--because of  
transgressing the Torahs of the seventh year produce.**

**"At the end of the Feast of Tabernacles every year"--  
because of robbing the poor of the harvest gifts that are  
their due.**

**13. There are four types among men:**

**He who says, "What is mine is mine and what is yours is  
yours"--this is the common type, though some say that  
this is the type of Sodom.**

**He who says, "What is mine is yours and what is yours is  
mine"--he is an ignorant man.**

**He who says, "What is mine is yours and what is yours is  
thine own"--he is a saintly man.**

**And he who says, "What is yours is mine, and what is mine  
is mine"--he is a wicked man.**

**14. There are four temperaments among men:**

**Easy to provoke and easy to appease--his loss is canceled  
by his gain.**

**Hard to provoke and hard to appease--his gain is canceled  
by his loss.**

**Hard to provoke and easy to appease--he is a saintly man.**

**Easy to provoke and hard to appease--he is a wicked man.**

**15. Four characteristics are found among students:**

**Quick to learn and quick to forget, his gain is canceled by  
his loss.**

**Slow to learn and slow to forget, his loss is canceled by his  
gain.**

**Quick to learn and slow to forget, his is a happy lot.**

Slow to learn and quick to forget, his is an unhappy lot.

16. There are four types of charity-givers:

He who wants to give but does not wish that others should give--he begrudges what belongs to others.

He who wants that others should give but not that he should give--he begrudges what belongs to himself.

He who wants to give and also that others should give--he is a saintly man.

He who does not want to give himself and does not wish that others should give--he is a wicked man.

17. There are four types among those who attend the house of study:

He who goes and does not practice (study)--he has the reward of his going.

He who practices (studies) but does not go--he has the reward of his practicing (studying).

**He who goes and also practices (studies)--he is a saintly man.**

**He who neither goes nor practices (studies)--he is a wicked man.**

**18. There are four types among those who sit in the presence of the sages: the sponge, the funnel, the strainer, and the sieve.**

**"The sponge," who soaks up everything. "The funnel," who takes in at this end and lets out at the other. "The strainer," who lets out the wine and retains the dregs. "The sieve," who removes the coarse meal and collects the fine flour.**

**19. Whenever love depends upon something and it passes, then the love passes away too. But if love does not depend upon some ulterior interest then the love will never pass away.**

**What is an example of the love which depended upon some material advantage? That of Amnon for Tamar. And what is an example of the love which did not depend upon some ulterior interest? That of David and Jonathan.**

**20. Any controversy waged in the service of God shall in the end be of lasting worth, but any that is not shall in the end lead to no permanent result.**

**Which controversy was an example of being waged in the service of G-d? Such was the controversy of Hillel and Shammai. And which was not for G-d? Such was the controversy of Korah and all his company.**

**21. Whoever leads the masses in the right path will not come to any sin, but whoever leads the masses astray will not be able to repent for all the wrong he commits.**

**Thus Moses was virtuous and he led the masses in the right path, and their merit is ascribed to him, as it is written (Deuteronomy 33:21) "He executed the justice of the Lord, and His ordinances for Israel."**

**But Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, sinned and caused the multitude to sin, and so the sin of the masses is ascribed to him as it is written (I Kings 15:30) "Because of the sins of Jeroboam that he committed and that he caused Israel to commit."**

**22. Whosoever possesses these three qualities belongs to the disciples of Abraham our father: a generous eye, a humble spirit, and a meek soul.**

**But he who possesses the three opposite qualities--an evil eye, a proud spirit, and a haughty soul--is of the disciples of Balaam the wicked.**

**How do the disciples of Abraham differ from the disciples of Balaam? The disciples of Abraham enjoy this world and inherit the world to come, as it is written (Proverbs 8:21)**

**"Endowing with wealth those who love me, and filling their treasuries." The disciples of Balaam inherit Gehenna and go down to the pit of destruction, as it is written (Psalm 55:23) "But you, O G-d, will cast them down into the lowest pit; the bloodthirsty and treacherous shall not live out half their days. But I will trust in you."**

**23. Judah ben Teima used to say: Be strong as the leopard, swift as the eagle, fleet as the gazelle, and brave as the lion to do the will of your Father in Heaven. He also used to say: The impudent are for Gehenna and the affable for Paradise. (He used to pray ): May it be thy will, O Lord our G-d and G-d of our fathers, that the Temple be rebuilt speedily in our days, and grant our portion in your Torah.**

**24. He used to say: At five years old a person should study the Scriptures, at ten years for the Mishnah, at thirteen for the commandments, at fifteen for the Talmud, at eighteen for the bridechamber, at twenty for one's life pursuit, at thirty for authority, at forty for discernment, at fifty for counsel, at sixty to be an elder, at seventy for gray hairs, at eighty for special strength (Psalm 90:10), at ninety for**

decrepitude, and at a hundred a man is as one who has already died and has ceased from the affairs of this world.

**25. Ben Bag-Bag used to say of the Torah: Turn it and turn it again, for everything is in it. Pore over it, and wax gray and old over it. Stir not from it for you can have no better rule than it.**

**26. Ben Heh-Heh used to say: According to the effort is the reward.**