

Chapter 1

1. "Moses received the Torah from Sinai and transmitted it Joshua. Joshua transmitted it to the Elders, the Elders to the Prophets, and the Prophets transmitted it to the Men of the Great Assembly. They [the Men of the Great Assembly] said three things: Be deliberate in judgment, raise many students, and make a protective fence for the Torah."
2. "Shimon the Righteous was of the last survivors of the Men of the Great Assembly. He used to say, the world is based upon three things: on Torah, on service [of G-d], and on acts of kindness."
3. "Antignos of Socho received the transmission from Shimon the Righteous. He used to say, do not be as servants who serve the Master to receive reward. Rather, be as servants who serve the Master not to receive reward. And let the fear of heaven be upon you."
4. "Yossi ben (son of) Yo'ezer of Ts'raidah and Yossi ben Yochanan of Jerusalem received the transmission from them. Yossi ben Yo'ezer used to say, let your house be a meeting place for the sages, cleave to the dust of their feet, and drink thirstily their words."
5. "Yossi the son of Yochanan of Jerusalem said: Let your house be open wide, and let the poor be members of your household, and do not talk excessively with women. This was said regarding one's own wife, certainly with another's wife. Based on this the Sages have said, one who talks excessively with women causes evil to himself, wastes time from Torah study, and will eventually inherit Gehinnom (Hell)."
6. "Yehoshua the son of Perachia and Nittai of Arbel received the transmission from them (the Rabbis mentioned in Mishna 4). Yehoshua the son of Perachia said, make for yourself a Rabbi, acquire for yourself a friend, and judge everyone favorably."
7. "Nittai of Arbel said, distance yourself from a bad neighbor, do not befriend a wicked person, and do not despair of punishment."
8. "Yehuda the son of Tabbai and Shimon the son of Shatach received the transmission from them (the scholars mentioned in Mishna 6). Yehuda the son of Tabbai said, do not act as an adviser to judges. When the litigants are standing before you they should be in your eyes as guilty. When they are dismissed from before you they should be in your eyes as innocent, provided they have accepted the judgment."
9. "Shimon the son of Shatach said, examine witnesses thoroughly, and be careful with your words, lest through them they learn to lie."
10. "Shemaya and Avtalyon received the tradition from them (the scholars mentioned in mishna 8). Shemaya said, love work, despise high position, and do not become too close to the authorities."
11. "Avtalyon said: 'Sages, be careful with your words lest you deserve to be exiled and are exiled to a place of bad waters. The students who come after you will drink of these waters and die and God's Name will be desecrated.'"
12. "Hillel and Shammai received the transmission from them (the scholars mentioned in Mishna 10). Hillel said, be of the students of Aharon, loving peace and pursuing peace, loving people and bringing them closer to Torah."
13. "He (Hillel) used to say, one who seeks a name loses his name, one who does not increase decreases, one who does not learn deserves death, and one who makes use of the crown [of Torah] will pass away."
14. "He (Hillel) used to say, if I am not for me who is for me, if I am for myself what am I, and if not now when."
15. "Shammai said, make your Torah study fixed, say little and do much, and receive everyone with a cheerful countenance."
16. "Rabban Gamliel said, make for yourself a Rabbi, remove yourself from doubt, and do not give extra tithes due to estimation."
17. "Shimon his [Rabban Gamliel's] son said, all my life I have been raised among the Sages, and I have not found anything better for oneself than silence. Study is not the main thing but action. All who talk excessively bring about sin."
18. "Rabbi Shimon the son of Gamliel said, on three things does the world endure - justice, truth and peace, as the verse says (Zechariah 8:16), 'Truth and judgments of peace judge in your gates.'"

Chapter 2

1. "Rabbi said, What is the proper path that one should choose for himself? Whatever is glorious / praiseworthy for himself, and honors him before others. Be careful with a minor mitzvah (commandment) like a severe one, for you do not know the reward for the mitzvos. Consider the loss incurred for performing a mitzvah compared to its reward, and the pleasure received for sinning compared to the punishment. Consider three things and you will not come to sin. Know what is above you - an eye that sees, an ear that hears, and all your deeds are written in a book."
2. "Rabban Gamliel the son of Rabbi Yehuda the Prince said, Torah study is good with a worldly occupation, because the exertion put into both of them makes one forget sin. All Torah without work will in the end result in waste and will cause sinfulness. All who work for the community should work for the sake of Heaven, for the merit of the community's forefathers will help them, and their righteousness endures forever. And as for you, God will reward you greatly as if you accomplished it on your own."
3. "Be careful with authorities, for they do not befriend a person except for their own sake. They appear as friends when they benefit from it, but they do not stand by a person in his time of need."
4. "He used to say, make His will your will, so that He will make your will His will. Annul your will before His will, so that He will annul the will of others before your will."
5. "Hillel said, do not separate from the community, do not trust yourself until the day you die, do not judge your friend until you reach his place, do not make a statement which cannot be understood which will (only) later be understood, and do not say when I have free time I will learn, lest you do not have free time."
6. "He (Hillel) used to say, a boor cannot fear sin, nor can an unlearned person be pious. A bashful person cannot learn, nor can an impatient one teach. Those who are involved excessively in business will not become a scholar. In a place where there are no men, endeavor to be a man."
7. "He (Hillel) also saw a skull floating on the water. He said to it: 'Because you drowned you were drowned, and in the end those who drowned you will be drowned.'"
8. "He (Hillel) used to say, the more flesh the more worms, the more property the more worry, the more wives the more witchcraft, the more maidservants the more lewdness, the more slaves the more thievery. The more Torah the more life, the more study the more wisdom, the more advice the more understanding, the more charity the more peace. One who acquires a good name acquires it for himself; one who acquires words of Torah acquires a share in the World to Come."
9. "Rabban Yochanan ben (the son of) Zakkai received [the transmission] from Hillel and Shammai. He used to say, if you have studied much Torah do not take credit for yourself because you were created for this."
10. "Rabban Yochanan ben (the son of) Zakkai had five [primary] students. They were: Rabbi Eliezer ben Hurkenos, Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananya, Rabbi Yossi the Priest, Rabbi Shimon ben Nesanel, and Rabbi Elazar ben Arach."
11. "He (Rabban Yochanan ben (son of) Zakkai) used to list their praises (the praises of his five primary students). Rabbi Eliezer ben Hurkenos is a cemented pit which never loses a drop; Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananya fortunate is she who bore him; Rabbi Yossi the Priest is pious; Rabbi Shimon ben Nesanel fears sin; and Rabbi Elazar ben Arach is as an increasing river."
12. "He used to say, if all the sages of Israel would be on one side of a scale and Eliezer ben Hurkenos on the second side, he would outweigh them all. Abba Shaul said in his name, if all the Sages of Israel would be on one side of a scale with even Rabbi Eliezer ben Hurkenos among them, and Rabbi Elazar ben Arach on the second side, he would outweigh them all."
13. "He (Rabban Yochanan) said to them (his students) go out and see which is a good way to which someone should cleave. Rabbi Eliezer said a good eye; Rabbi Yehoshua said a good friend; Rabbi Yossi said a good neighbor; Rabbi Shimon said one who considers consequences. Rabbi Elazar said a good heart. He said to them, I prefer the words of Elazar ben Arach over your words, for included in his words are your words."
14. "He (Rabban Yochanan) said to them (his students) go out and see which is a bad way which a person should avoid. Rabbi Eliezer said a bad eye. Rabbi Yehoshua said a bad friend. Rabbi Yossi said a bad neighbor. Rabbi Shimon said one who borrows and does not pay back. One who borrows from a person is as one who borrows from G-d, as it says, "A wicked person borrows and does not repay, but the Righteous One is gracious and gives" (Psalms 37:21). Rabbi Elazar said a bad heart. He said to them, I prefer the words of Elazar ben Arach over your words, for included in his words are your words."
15. "They (the five students of Rabban Yochanan - see above Mishna 10) each said three things. Rabbi Eliezer said: The honor of your fellow should be as dear to you as your own. Do not get angry easily. Repent one day before you die. Warm yourself before the fire of the Sages. But be wary with their coals that you do not get burnt, for their bite is the bite of a fox, their sting is the sting of a scorpion, their hiss is the hiss of a serpent, and all their words are like fiery coals."
16. "Rabbi Yehoshua said, an evil eye, the evil inclination, and hatred of another person remove a person from this world."
17. "Rabbi Yossi said, let your fellow's property be as dear to you as your own, prepare yourself to study Torah because it is not an inheritance to you, and all of your deeds should be for the sake of heaven."
18. "Rabbi Shimon said, be careful in reading the Shema and the prayers. When you pray, do not regard your prayers as a fixed obligation, rather they should be [the asking for] mercy and supplication before G-d, as the verse says, "For gracious and merciful is He, slow to anger, great in kindness, and relenting of the evil decree" (Joel 2:13). Do not consider yourself a wicked person."
19. "Rabbi Elazar said, be diligent in the study of Torah. Know what to answer a heretic. Know before Whom you toil. And faithful is your Employer that He will pay you the reward for your labor."
20. "Rabbi Tarfon said, the day is short, the work is great, the workers are lazy, the reward is great, and the Master of the house presses."
21. "He (Rabbi Tarfon) used to say, it is not upon you to complete the task, but you are not free to idle from it. If you have learned much Torah, you will be given much reward, and faithful is your Employer that He will reward you for your labor. And know that the reward of the righteous will be given in the World to Come."

Translation by Rabbi Dovid Rosenfeld from his commentary at <http://torah.org/learning/pirkei-avos>

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Chapter 3

1. "Akavia the son of Mehalalel said, consider three things and you will not come to sin. Know from where you have come, to where you are heading, and before Whom you will give justification and accounting. From where have you come - from a putrid drop; to where are you heading - to a place of dirt, worms and maggots; and before Whom will you give justification and accounting - before the King of kings, the Holy One blessed be He."
2. "Rabbi Chanina the deputy High Priest said, pray for the welfare of the government (lit., monarchy), for if not for its fear, a person would swallow his fellow live."
3. "Rabbi Chanina the son of Tradyon said, if two people sit together and do not share words of Torah between them, it is a company of scorners, as the verse says, 'in the company of scorners he (the righteous man) did not sit [rather in G-d's Torah was his desire...]' (Psalms 1:1-2). But if two people sit and share words of Torah between them the Divine Presence rests between them, as the verse says, 'Then spoke those who fear G-d to one another, and G-d listened and heard, and it was written in a book of remembrance before Him, for those who fear G-d and regard His Name' (Malachi 3:16). From here we may learn about two. How do we know that even one who sits and studies Torah G-d designates a reward for him? The verse says, 'Let him sit alone and be silent, for it (a reward) will be placed upon him' (Lamentations 3:28)."
4. "Rabbi Shimon said, three people who have eaten at the same table and did not speak words of Torah are as if they had eaten from the sacrifices of dead [idols], as the verse states 'For all such tables are full of vomit and filth without room' (Isaiah 28:8). But three who have eaten at the same table and did speak words of Torah are as if they had eaten from the Lord's table, as it states 'And he (the angel) said to me, this is the table that is before the Lord' (Ezekiel 41:22)."
5. "Rabbi Chanina the son of Chachiniye said, one who stays awake at night or one who travels on the road alone and leaves his heart open to idleness - behold, he bears the guilt for his own soul."
6. "Rabbi Nechunia the son of Hakanah said, anyone who accepts upon himself the yoke of Torah, the yoke of government and the yoke of earning a livelihood will be removed from him. Anyone who casts off of himself the yoke of Torah, the yokes of government and earning a livelihood will be placed upon him."
7. "Rabbi Chalafta the son of Dosa of K'far Chananya said, if ten people sit together and study Torah, the Divine Presence dwells among them, as the verse states 'The L-rd stands in the assembly of G-d' (Psalms 82:1). How do we know this even for five? As it states 'He has established his bundle on the land' (Amos 9:6). How do we know even three? As it states 'In the midst of judges He judges' (Psalms 82:1). How do we know even two? As it states 'Then those who feared the L-rd spoke one to the other, and G-d listened and heard' (Malachi 3:16). How do we know even one? As it states 'In every place where My Name is mentioned I will come to you and bless you' (Exodus 20:21)."
8. "Rabbi Elazar of Bartosa said, give Him from His own, for you and your possessions are His. And so does the verse say regarding King David, 'For everything is from You, and from Your hands we have given to You.'"
9. "Rabbi Yaakov said, one who is walking along the road and is studying [Torah], and then interrupts his studies and says 'How beautiful is this tree! How beautiful is this plowed field!' - Scriptures considers it as if he himself bears the guilt for his soul."
10. "Rabbi Dostai the son of Yannai said in the name of Rabbi Meir, whoever forgets anything from his Torah learning, Scripture considers it as if he bears the guilt for his own soul, as the verse says, 'Only take heed and guard yourself well, lest you forget the things which your eyes saw' (Deuteronomy 4:9). One might think this applies even if his studies were too difficult for him? The verse therefore continues, 'and lest they be removed from your heart all the days of your life.' Thus, one does not bear the guilt for his soul unless he sits and removes them from his heart."
11. "Rabbi Chanina the son of Dosa said, anyone whose fear of sin precedes his wisdom, his wisdom will endure. And anyone whose wisdom precedes his fear of sin, his wisdom will not endure."
12. "He (Rabbi Chanina) used to say, anyone whose good deeds are greater than his wisdom, his wisdom will endure. Anyone whose wisdom is greater than his good deeds, his wisdom will not endure."
13. "He (Rabbi Chanina) used to say, anyone who is pleasing to his fellows is pleasing to G-d. Anyone who is not pleasing to his fellows is not pleasing to G-d."
14. "Rabbi Dosa the son of Horkinos said, sleep in the morning, wine in the afternoon, the chatter of the youth, and sitting in the gatherings of the ignorant drive a person out of the world."
15. "Rabbi Elazar of Modin said, one who desecrates sacred objects, one who disgraces the festivals, one who shames his fellow in public, one who annuls the covenant of our forefather Abraham, or one who interprets the Torah not according to Jewish law - even if he has Torah [study] and good deeds, he has no share in the World to Come."
16. "Rabbi Yishmael said, be yielding to a superior, gentle to the young, and receive every person with happiness."
17. "Rabbi Akiva said, jesting and lightheadedness accustom a person to immorality. The oral transmission is a protective fence around the Torah. Tithes are a protective fence for wealth. Vows are a protective fence for abstinence. A protective fence for wisdom is silence."
18. "He (Rabbi Akiva) used to say, beloved is man for he was created in G-d's image. It is a greater love that it was made known to him that he was created in G-d's image, as it is said, 'For in the image of G-d did He make man' (Genesis 9:6). Beloved is Israel for they are called the children of the L-rd. It is a greater love that it was made known to them that they are the children of the L-rd, as it is said, 'You are children to the L-rd your G-d' (Deuteronomy 14:1). Beloved is Israel that they were given a precious utensil (the Torah). It is an greater love that it was made known to them that they were given a precious utensil, as it is said 'For I have given you a good possession; do not forsake My Torah' (Proverbs 4:2)."
19. "Everything is foreseen, yet free will is given. The world is judged with goodness, and all is according to the majority of deeds."
20. "He (Rabbi Akiva) used to say, everything is given on collateral, and a net is spread over all the living. The store is open, the Storekeeper extends credit, the ledger is open, the hand writes, and whoever wants to borrow may come borrow. The collectors make their rounds constantly every day, and they collect from a person whether he realizes it or not, and they have what to rely upon. The judgment is true, and everything is prepared for the banquet (of Leviathan)."
21. "Rabbi Elazar ben (son of) Azariah said: If there is no Torah there is no proper conduct; if there is no proper conduct there is no Torah. If there is no wisdom there is no fear of G-d; if there is no fear of G-d there is no wisdom. If there is no knowledge there is no understanding; if there is no understanding there is no knowledge. If there is no flour (sustenance) there is no Torah; if there is no Torah there is no flour."
22. "He (Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah) used to say, anyone whose wisdom is greater than his deeds to what is he comparable? To a tree whose branches are many and whose roots are few, and the wind comes and turns it over. As it is said 'And he will be like a lonely tree in a wasteland, and it will not see when good comes. It will dwell on parched soil in the desert, a salted land, uninhabited' (Jeremiah 17:6). But one whose deeds are greater than his wisdom to what is he comparable? To a tree whose branches are few and whose roots are many, that even if all the winds in the world blow against it, they do not move it from its place. As it is said 'And he shall be like a tree planted on the water, and towards the stream it spreads its roots, and it will not see when heat comes. Its leaves will be fresh, in a year of drought it will not worry, and it shall not cease yielding fruit' (ibid. 17:8)."
23. "Rabbi Elazar ben (son of) Chisma said, The laws of the offerings of pairs of birds and the beginning of menstrual periods - these are essential laws. Astronomy and the numeric values [of the Hebrew letters] are the spices to wisdom."

Chapter 4

1. "Ben (the son of) Zoma said, who is wise? He who learns from all people, as it is said: 'From all my teachers I gained understanding' (Psalms 119:99). Who is strong? He who conquers his evil inclination, as it is said: 'Better is one slow to anger than a strong man, and one who rules over his spirit than a conqueror of a city' (Proverbs 16:32). Who is rich? He who is satisfied with his lot, as it is said: 'When you eat the toil of your hands you are fortunate and it is good for you' (Psalms 128:2). 'You are fortunate' - in this world; 'and it is good for you' - in the World to Come. Who is honored? He who honors others, as it is said: 'For those who honor Me I will honor, and those who scorn Me will be degraded' (I Samuel 2:30)."
2. "Ben (the son of) Azzai said, run to perform [even] a minor mitzvah (commandment) and flee from sin, for one mitzvah leads to another mitzvah, and one sin leads to another sin; for the reward of a mitzvah is a mitzvah and the 'reward' of a sin is a sin."
3. "He (the son of Azzai) used to say, do not be disrespectful of any person and do not be dismissing of any thing, for there is no person who does not have his hour, and there is no thing that does not have its place."
4. "Rabbi Levitas of Yavneh said, be extremely lowly of spirit, for the end of man is worms."
5. "Rabbi Yochanan ben (son of) Beroka said, whoever desecrates the Name of Heaven in secret will be paid back in public. Whether unintentional or intentional acts (i.e., both are comparable) regarding desecration of the Name."
6. "Rabbi Yishmael bar (son of) Rabbi Yossi said, one who studies Torah in order to teach is granted the ability to study and to teach. One who studies in order to 'do' is granted the ability to study, to teach, to observe, and to do."
7. "Rabbi Tzaddok said, do not separate yourself from the community. Do not act as a lawyer (in judgment). Do not make the Torah into a crown with which to aggrandize yourself or a spade with which to dig. So too did Hillel state: 'He who uses the crown [of Torah] will pass on' (above, 1:13). From this you may learn that anyone who derives benefit from words of Torah takes his life from the world."
8. "Rabbi Yossi said, whoever honors the Torah will himself be honored before others. But whoever disgraces the Torah will himself be disgraced before others."
9. "Rabbi Yishmael his (Rabbi Yossi's) son said, one who withdraws himself from serving as judge spares himself of hatred, robbery and unnecessary oaths. One who is arrogant in rendering decisions is foolish, evil and conceited."
10. "He (Rabbi Yishmael) used to say, do not judge alone because there is no solitary judge except One. Do not say 'accept my view,' for they are permitted and not you."
11. "Rabbi Yonasan said, whoever fulfills the Torah out of poverty, will ultimately fulfill it in wealth. But whoever neglects the Torah out of wealth, will ultimately neglect it out of poverty."
12. "Rabbi Meir (mai-eer) said, lessen your business activities and engage in Torah study. Be humble of spirit before every person. If you have wasted time from Torah study, you will be given many causes to neglect it. And if you have exerted yourself in Torah study, G-d has much reward to give you."
13. "Rabbi Eliezer ben (son of) Yaakov said, one who fulfills one mitzvah (commandment) acquires himself a single defending angel. One who commits one transgression acquires one accusing angel. Repentance and good deeds serve as a shield before retribution."
"Rabbi Yochanan the sandal maker said, every assembly which is for the sake of heaven which eventually endure. And one which is not for the sake of heaven will not endure."
14. "Rabbi Elazar ben (son of) Shamua said, the honor of your student should be as dear to you as your own; the honor of your colleague should be as the fear of your [Torah] teacher; and the fear of your teacher should be as the fear of Heaven."
15. "Rabbi Yehuda said, be cautious in Torah study, for inadvertent errors in study are considered as willful transgressions."
16. "Rabbi Shimon said, there are three crowns - the crown of Torah, the crown of priesthood, and the crown of kingship. And the crown of a good name is superior to them all."
17. "Rabbi Nehorai said, exile yourself to a place of Torah and do not say it will come after you or that your colleagues will preserve it for you. 'And do not rely on your own understanding' (Proverbs 3:5)."
18. "Rabbi Yannai said, it is not in our power to explain neither the tranquility of the wicked nor the suffering of the righteous."
19. "Rabbi Masya ben (son of) Charash said, be first to greet every person, and be a tail to the lions rather than head of the foxes."
20. "Rabbi Yaakov said, this world is like an entrance chamber before the World to Come. Prepare yourself in the entrance chamber so that you may enter the banquet hall."
21. "He (Rabbi Yaakov) used to say, one hour of repentance and good deeds in this world is better than the entire life of the World to Come. And one hour of spiritual enjoyment of the World to Come is better than the entire life of this world."
22. "Rabbi Shimon ben (son of) Elazar said, do not appease your fellow at the time of his anger, do not console him at the time his dead lies before him, do not ask him [to regret his oath] at the time of his oath, and do not attempt to see him at the time of his downfall."
23. "Shmuel (Sh-moo-ail) the Small said, 'At your enemy's fall do not rejoice, and when he stumbles let your heart not be joyous, lest the L-rd see and be displeased and turn back His anger from him [to you]' (Proverbs 24:17-18)."
24. "Elisha ben (son of) Avuya said, one who studies Torah as a child, to what is he compared? To ink written on fresh paper. And one who studies Torah as an old man, to what is he compared? To ink written on blotted paper."
25. "Rabbi Yossi bar (son of) Yehuda of K'far HaBavli said, one who learns from the young, to what is he compared? To one who eats unripe grapes and drinks wine from the press. And one who learns from the old, to what is he compared? To one who eats ripened grapes and drinks aged wine."
26. "Rabbi Meir (mai-eer) said, do not look at the flask but what is in it. There are new flasks filled with old wine and old flasks which do not even contain new wine."
27. "Rabbi Elazar HaKappar said, jealousy, lust and the [pursuit of] honor remove a person from the world."
28. "He (Rabbi Elazar HaKappar) used to say, The born will die, the dead will come to life, and the living will be judged - so that they know, make known, and become aware that He is G-d, He is the Fashioner, He is the Creator, He is the One who understands, He is the Judge, He is the Witness, He is the Litigant, and He will eventually judge. Blessed be He, for there is not before Him wrongdoing, forgetfulness, favoritism, or the acceptance of bribes - for all is His. And know that everything is according to a reckoning. And do not let your evil inclination assure you that the grave is a refuge for you - for against your will were you created, against your will were you born, against your will do you live, against your will do you die, and against your will will you stand in judgment before the King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He."

Chapter 5

1. "The world was created in ten utterances. What does this come to teach us? Could not the world have been created in a single utterance? It was in order to exact punishment from the wicked who destroy the world which was created in ten utterances, and to give reward to the righteous who sustain the world which was created in ten utterances."
2. "There were ten generations from Adam until Noah. This shows us how slow to anger G-d is, for all those generations increasingly angered Him until He brought upon them the waters of the Flood."
3. "There were ten generations from Noah until Abraham. This shows how slow to anger G-d is, for all those generations increasingly angered Him until our forefather Abraham came and received the reward of all of them."
4. "Our forefather Abraham was tested with ten trials and withstood all of them. This shows the love our forefather Abraham had [for G-d]."
5. "Ten miracles were performed on for our fathers in Egypt and ten at the [Red] Sea. Ten plagues did the Holy One, blessed be He, bring upon the Egyptians in Egypt and ten at the sea."
6. "With ten trials did our ancestors test the Holy One, blessed be He, in the desert, as it is said, 'They have tested Me these ten times and did not hearken My voice' (Numbers 14:22)."
7. "Ten miracles were performed for our fathers in the Temple: (1) A woman never miscarried because of the aroma of the sacrificial meat. (2) Sacrificial meat never became spoiled. (3) A fly was never seen in the slaughter house. (4) The High Priest never had a seminal emission on Yom Kippur. (5) Rain never put out the fire of the arranged wood [on the altar]. (6) Wind never prevailed over the pillar of smoke [that rose from the altar]. (7) The Omer offering, the Two Loaves, and the Showbread were never found to be invalid. (8) [The supplicants at the Temple] would stand crowded together but would bow with ample space. (9) Snakes and scorpions never did harm in Jerusalem. (10) A person never said to his fellow 'it is too crowded for me to lodge overnight in Jerusalem.'"
8. "Ten things were created on Sabbath eve, at twilight. They are: the mouth of the earth [which swallowed Korach and his co-conspirators] (Numbers 16:32), the mouth of the well [which accompanied Israel in the desert], the mouth of the donkey [which rebuked Bil'am] (ibid., 22:28), the rainbow, the Manna, the staff [of Moses], the shamir worm, the script [of the Torah], the inscription [on the Tablets of the Ten Commandments], and the Tablets. Some say: also destructive spirits, the burial place of Moses, and the ram of our father Abraham [which he slaughtered in place of Isaac] (Genesis 22:13). And some say, also tongs - which are made with tongs."
9. "Seven things apply to an uncultured person (Heb. 'golem'), and seven to a wise person. A wise person does not speak before one who is greater than he in wisdom or years; he does not interrupt his fellow; he is not rushed to respond; he asks relevant questions; he answers accurately; he discusses first things first and last things last; on what he did not hear, he says 'I did not hear;' and he admits to the truth. The opposite of these is true of the golem."
10. "Seven types of punishments come to the world on account of seven basic transgressions. If some people tithe and some do not, a famine caused by [partial] drought will come. Some will be hungry and some will be sated. If people have determined not to tithe, a famine resulting from both unrest and drought will come. [If people have also determined] not to separate challah from dough, a fully destructive famine will come."
11. "Pestilence comes to the world for death penalties mentioned in the Torah which are not in the hands of the courts to administer and for [the forbidden use of] Sabbatical year produce. The sword comes to the world for the delay of justice, the perversion of justice, and for those who expound the Torah not in accordance with Jewish Law. Wild beasts come to the world for false oaths and the desecration of G-d's Name. Exile comes to the world for idolatry, adultery, murder, and the working of the earth on the Sabbatical year."
12. "During four periods (of the seven year agricultural cycle) pestilence increases: on the fourth year, on the seventh year, on the year after the seventh year, and following Sukkos (Tabernacles) of every year. On the first year because of [the neglect of] the tithe for the poor of the third year; on the seventh year because of [the neglect of] the tithe for the poor of the sixth year; on the year after the seventh year because of [the misuse of] seventh year produce; following Sukkos every year because of stealing the gifts for the poor."
13. "There are four character types among people. One who says 'what's mine is mine and what's yours is yours' is of average character, and some say - this is the character of Sodom. [One who says] 'what's mine is yours and what's yours is mine' - is unlearned (lit., [of] the people of the land). [One who says] 'what's mine is yours and what's yours is yours' - is pious. [One who says] 'what's yours is mine and what's mine is mine' - is wicked."
14. "There are four types of temperaments. One who is quick to become angry and quick to calm down - his gain is outweighed by his loss. One who is slow to become angry and slow to calm down - his loss is outweighed by his gain. One who is slow to become angry and quick to calm down is pious. One who is quick to become angry and slow to calm down is wicked."
15. "There are four types of students. One who is quick to understand and quick to forget - his gain is outweighed by his loss. One who is slow to understand and slow to forget - his loss is outweighed by his gain. One who is quick to understand and slow to forget - this is a good portion. One who is slow to understand and quick to forget - this is a bad portion."
16. "There are four types of givers of charity. One who wants to give but that others not give - has a bad eye towards others. One who wants others to give but not to give himself - has a bad eye towards himself. One who gives and wants others to give is pious. One who does not give and does not want others to give is wicked."
17. "There are four types among those who go to the study hall. One who goes but does not do receives reward for the going. One who does but does not go receives reward for the doing. One who goes and does is pious. One who does not go and does not do is wicked."
18. "There are four types of students (lit., among those who sit before the Sages) - a sponge, a funnel, a strainer, and a sifter. The sponge absorbs everything. The funnel brings in on this side and brings out on the other. The strainer lets out the wine and retains the lees. The sieve lets out the flour dust and retains the fine flour."
19. "Any love which is dependent on something, when the 'something' ceases, the love ceases. Any love which is not dependent on anything will never cease. What is a love which is dependent? The love of Amnon for Tamar. What is a love which is not dependent? The love of David and Yehonasan."
20. "Any dispute which is for the sake of Heaven will ultimately endure, and one which is not for the sake of Heaven will not ultimately endure. What is a dispute for the sake of Heaven? This is a debate between Hillel and Shammai. What is a dispute not for the sake of Heaven? This is the dispute of Korach and his assembly."
21. "Anyone who influences the many towards merit - a sin will not come about through him. And anyone who brings the many to sin will not be given the opportunity to repent. Moses merited and brought merit to the many. The merit of the many was dependent upon him, as it is said, 'He did G-d's righteousness and G-d's justice with Israel' (Deuteronomy 33:21). Jeroboam son of Nevat sinned and brought the masses to sin. The sin of the many was dependent upon him, as it is said, '...for the sins of Jeroboam which he sinned and caused Israel to sin' (I Kings 15:30)."
22. "Whoever possesses the following three traits is of the students of our father Abraham, and [whoever possesses] a different three traits is of the students of the wicked Bilaam. [Those who have] a good eye, a humble spirit and a 'lowly' soul [are] of the students of our father Abraham. [Those who have] an evil eye, an arrogant spirit and a desirous soul [are] of the students of the wicked Bilaam. What is the difference between the students of our father Abraham and the wicked Bilaam? The students of

our father Abraham enjoy this world and inherit the World to Come, as it is said, 'There is for those who love Me to inherit (in the World to Come), and their storehouses (in this world) I will fill' (Proverbs 8:21). But the students of the wicked Bilaam inherit Gehinnom and descend into the pit of destruction, as it is said, 'And You, G-d, will bring them down to the pit of destruction, men of blood and deceit [who] will not live half their days. But I will trust in You' (Psalms 55:24)."

23. "Yehuda ben (son of) Taima said, be bold as a leopard, light as an eagle, swift as a deer, and strong as a lion to do the will of your Father in Heaven."
24. "He (Yehuda ben Taima) used to say, the boldfaced are destined to Gehinnom (Hell), and the shamefaced are destined to the World to Come. May it be Your will, L-rd our G-d and G-d of our fathers, that the Temple be built speedily in our days, and You grant us our share in Your Torah."
25. "He (Yehuda ben Taima) used to say, at five [one should begin the study of] Scriptures; at ten, Mishna; at thirteen [one becomes obligated in] the commandments; at fifteen [the study of] the Talmud; at eighteen the wedding canopy; at twenty to pursue; at thirty strength; at forty understanding; at fifty counsel; at sixty old age; at seventy fullness of years; at eighty spiritual strength; at ninety bending over; at one hundred it is as if he has died and passed on from this world."
26. "Ben (son of) Bag Bag said, turn the Torah over and over for everything is in it. Look into it, grow old and gray over it, and never move away from it, for you will find no better portion than it."
27. "Ben (son of) Hai Hai said, according to the effort is the reward."

Chapter 6

1. "Rabbi Meir (Mai-eer) said, anyone who engages in Torah study for its own sake ('lishma') merits many things. Not only that, but the entire world is worthwhile for him alone. He is called 'friend' and 'beloved,' he loves G-d, he loves man, he brings joy to G-d, he brings joy to man. It (the Torah) clothes him in humility and fear. It enables him to be righteous, pious, upright, and faithful. It distances him from sin and brings him to merit. People gain from him advice and wisdom, understanding and strength, as it says, 'To me is advice and wisdom, I am understanding, and strength is mine' (Proverbs 8:14). It gives him kingship, dominion and analytical judgment. It reveals to him the secrets of the Torah. He becomes like a waxing stream and an unceasing river. He becomes modest, slow to anger, and forgiving of the wrongs done to him. It makes him great and exalted above all of creation."
2. "Rabbi Yehoshua ben (son of) Levi said, on every day a heavenly voice emanates from Mount Horeb, announcing: 'Woe to them, the people, because of the affront to the Torah.' For anyone who does not study is called 'rebuked,' as the verse says 'As a golden ring in a swine's snout, so too is a beautiful woman who has turned from sound reason' (Proverbs 11:22). It also says, 'And the tablets were the handiwork of G-d, and the writing was G-d's writing engraved on the tablets' (Exodus 32:16). Do not read 'charoos' ('engraved'), rather 'chairoos' ('free'). For you will not find a freer person than one who is involved in Torah study. For all those who study Torah are uplifted, as it states, 'From Matanah [the Israelites traveled to] Nachaliel, and from Nachaliel to Bamos' (Numbers 21:19)."
3. "One who learns from his fellow a single chapter [of Torah], a single law, a single verse, a single statement, or even a single letter, must treat him with honor. For so we find with David, King of Israel, who learned from Achitofel two things alone, and he called him his teacher, his guide, and his intimate, as it is said: 'And you are a man of my worth, my guide and intimate' (Psalms 55:14). And does not this matter allow for logical deduction: If David, King of Israel, who learned from Achitofel two things alone, called him his teacher, guide and intimate, one who learns from his fellow one chapter, one law, one verse, one statement, or even one letter, all the more so must he treat him with honor. And honor is [only due for] Torah, as it says: 'Honor - the wise shall inherit' (Proverbs 3:35); 'And perfect ones will inherit good' (ibid., 28:10). And there is no good other than Torah, as it says, 'For a good possession have I given you; do not forsake My Torah' (ibid., 4:2)."
4. "This is the way of the Torah: Bread and salt will you eat, measured water will you drink, on the ground will you sleep, a life of suffering will you live, and in the Torah will you labor. If you do this, 'You are fortunate and it is good for you' (Psalms 128:2). 'You are fortunate' - in this world; 'and it is good for you' - in the World to Come."
5. "Do not seek greatness for yourself and do not crave honor. Do more than you have studied and do not desire the 'table' of kings. For your table is greater than their table, and your crown is greater than their crown. And your Employer can be trusted to pay you the reward for your efforts."
6. "Torah is greater than priesthood and kingship, for kingship is acquired with 30 qualities, priesthood is acquired with 24, whereas the Torah is acquired with 48 ways. These are: (1) study, (2) attentive listening, (3) articulate expression, (4) understanding of the heart and perception of the heart, (5) awe, (6) fear, (7) modesty, (8) joy, (9) service of the sages, (10) careful discussion with colleagues, (11) sharp discussion with students, (12) composure, (13) Scriptures and Mishna, (14) limited business activity, (15) limited involvement with the world (some translate: sexual activity), (16) limited enjoyment, (17) limited sleep, (18) limited light conversation, (19) limited laughter, (20) slowness to anger, (21) a good heart, (22) trust in the Sages, (23) acceptance of suffering, (24) knowing one's place, (25) being happy with one's lot, (26) making a fence for one's words, (27) not taking credit for oneself, (28) being loved, (29) loving G-d, (30) loving mankind, (31) loving righteousness, (32) loving justice, (33) loving reproof, (34) keeping far from honor, (35) not being arrogant with decision-making, (36) sharing his fellow's yoke, (37) judging him favorably, (38) setting him on a peaceful course, (39) thinking deliberately in his study, (40) asking and answering, listening and contributing, (41) learning in order to teach, (42) learning in order to practice, (43) making his teacher wiser, (44) pondering over what he has learned, (45) repeating a saying in the name of the one who said it"
7. "Great is Torah, for it gives life to its doers in this world and in the next world, as it is written: 'For they (the teachings of the Torah) give life to those who find them and healing to all flesh' (Proverbs 4:22). It also says: 'Healing will it be for your flesh and marrow for your bones' (ibid., 3:8). It also says: 'It is a tree of life to those who take hold of it, and those who support it are fortunate' (3:18). And it says: 'They are a graceful garland for your head and necklaces for your throat' (1:9). And it says: 'It will give your head a graceful garland; it will provide you a crown of glory' (4:9). And it says: 'For in me (the Torah) will you lengthen days, and years of life will be added to you' (9:11). And it says: 'Length of days in its right hand; in its left are wealth and honor' (3:16). And it is written: 'For length of days, years of life, and peace will they (the Torah's teachings) increase for you' (3:2)."
8. "Rabbi Shimon ben (son of) Yehuda said in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai: Beauty, strength, wealth, honor, wisdom, old age, fullness of years, and children are fitting for the righteous and fitting for the world, as it is written: 'A crown of majesty is old age; it will be found along the path of righteousness' (Proverbs 16:31). And it says: 'The crown of the aged is grandchildren, and the glory of children is their fathers' (17:6). And it says: 'The glory of young men is their strength, and the majesty of old men is age' (20:29). And it is written: 'And the moon will be darkened and the sun will grow ashamed for the L-rd of Hosts rules in Mount Zion and Jerusalem, and before his elders will be honor' (Isaiah 24:23). Rabbi Shimon ben Menasya said: These seven qualities which the Sages listed regarding the righteous were all fulfilled in Rabbi [Yehuda the Prince] and his sons."
9. "Rabbi Yossi ben (son of) Kisma said: One time I was walking along the way and a certain man met me. He greeted me and I returned the greeting. He said to me: 'Rabbi, where are you from?' I responded: 'I am from a large city of scholars and scribes.' He said to me: 'Rabbi, would you be willing to dwell among us in our place, and I will give you hundreds of thousands of gold coins, precious stones and pearls?' I said to him: 'Even if you would give me all the silver, gold, precious stones, and pearls in the world, I would not dwell anywhere other than a place of Torah.' So too it was written in the Book of Psalms by David, King of Israel: 'The Torah of Your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver [coins]' (119:72). And further, when a person departs this world neither his silver, gold, precious stones, or pearls accompany him, but only his Torah study and good deeds, as it is written: 'When you walk it will guide you, when you lie down it will protect you, and when you arise it will speak for you' (Proverbs 6:22). 'When you walk it will guide you' - in this world; 'when you lie down it will protect you' - in the grave; 'and when you arise it will speak for you' - in the World to Come. And it says: 'To Me is silver and gold says the L-rd of hosts' (Chagga'i 2:8)."