

Bible Ethics: A Manual of Instruction in the History and Principles of Judaism, According to the Hebrew Scriptures by Henry Berkowitz and Joseph Krauskopf (1884) Quotes

Thus hath said the Lord of Hosts, saying : Execute true justice, and show kindness and mercy every man to his brother. And defraud not the widow or the fatherless, the stranger or the poor; and imagine not evil in your heart, one against the other. (Zachariah vii. 9-10.)

Thus hath said the Lord, Execute ye justice and righteousness, and deliver him that is robbed out of the hand of the oppressor; and the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow shall ye not oppress, and do them no violence, and shed no innocent blood in this place. (Jeremiah xxii. 3.)

We must not take the life or injure the health of others, but must do all we can to save and protect them, to better their condition and add to their comfort. Our own natures are bettered by our trouble in taking care of the welfare of others.¹

Balances of deceit are an abomination of the Lord; but a full weight (obtaineth) his favor. (Proverbs xi. I.)

Most of the troubles that people have come from idle talk, with which they fill up their time, instead of doing their duties. Say nothing about your neighbor unless you can say what is good. Try to put yourself in another's place before you judge him. Never flatter.²

Who is the man that desireth life, loveth (many) days, that he may see happiness? Guard thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking deceit. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it. (Psalms xxxiv. 12-15.)

The most wonderful thing in the world is our own life, No one can explain it. Each one of us is placed here in the world, some are strong, some are weak; but whatever are our powers, they are the gift of God, and may give us great joy if they are rightly used. It is our sacred duty to care for this life which God has lent us. We must be very careful of our bodies, must not go into danger

foolishly, but must exercise freely in the open air and do everything we can to keep in good health and to gain strength. Without good health and strength we can never do those duties which everyone ought to do; we cannot improve our minds as we should, nor can we be of as much good to others as we ought to be. Therefore, we must hold it to be our first duty to ourselves to take care of life and health.³

BE INDUSTRIOUS. Our wise men said: "Love work. Work is great, for it supports man. Work is great, for it honors man. To have learning and not put it to use is wrong. He who fails to have his child learn some useful trade, brings him up to lead a sinful life. It is beautiful to have learning and yet be skillful at a trade; the use of both together will keep one from sin. Every father must have his son learn the law of God and also a trade. Man is born to work." All these sayings are true. Though idleness seems pleasant, yet it surely leads to sin and misery. Only through working can we be truly happy. By working we earn our own living and, so, are kept from begging, or from living upon the means of others. By working we get strong and keep our health, and can do our share in looking after the welfare of the sick and the helpless. But the idler neglects himself, is useless to others and is easily led to sin. To be idle is a shame; to work is an honor. Indeed, work makes us more and more perfect, for, as our teachers have again said: Industry brings purity; purity, cleanness; cleanness, holiness; holiness, humbleness ; humbleness, fear of sin; fear of sin, Godliness."⁴

And the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and to guard it. (Genesis ii. 15.)

In speaking and in answering we should always be calm, patient, peaceful and gentle to our companions and relatives, as, indeed, to every one, high or low, rich or poor. "He who can always do this," said one of our wise teachers, "will be beloved in heaven as well as on earth."⁵

Strive always to be manly and womanly. To be so you must, above all, try to learn for yourself, think for yourself, speak and act for yourself. Do not follow any one blindly. Above all, do nothing and say nothing which is to gain you favor by injuring another. Be no hypocrite. Live up to what you believe and give it up at no cost. Suffer everything rather than the loss of your honor. If you thus strictly keep up your own respect and honor, others will feel bound to pay you honor.⁶

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The great blessings which God has given us in our Sabbaths and holidays must ever be remembered, and their observance will ever be a joy and benefit to us. Men may so fix their attention and their affections on the pleasures and pursuits of the world as to forget every higher and nobler purpose, to forget that at any moment death may come, and all the work, worry and unrest with which we burden ourselves will prove to be vain. To teach this and to prevent our losing ourselves in worldliness our Sabbaths and holidays are given to us. By ceasing from our labors and observing them, especially if it be at some cost and sacrifice, we prove thereby that we are free, that we regard the claims of our spiritual natures over our merely bodily wants, and that the cultivation of our religious and moral nature is the truest and best, as it is the highest aim of life. Each one of these sacred days has many special lessons to teach, which, if we mind them, will surely better us—but in general they all give us a time for reflection and devotion, make us forget our cares and give us new trust and strength to bear them by our communion with God.⁷

The conviction that the good will be rewarded and the bad will be punished is deeply rooted within us. The sense of right and justice which God has implanted in our hearts and minds, and our knowledge of God as a just and a righteous judge, confirm this conviction. Furthermore, along with this conviction goes our firm confidence in the truth of the promise of a future life, which our religion teaches. What this future life is we do not know. Our religion teaches that all good and moral men, no matter what their religion, will share the blessings of the life to come, Judgment comes. Those who have escaped their merited punishment, or have been deprived of their due rewards in this life, must be dealt with in the life that is to come according to their guilt or merits.⁸

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⁷ 69
⁸ 88