



# **ANCIENT JEWISH PROVERBS**

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COMPILED AND CLASSIFIED BY  
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This (acacia) wood is excellent as timber, but the tree is not fruit-bearing. Everything has its use and should be utilised for that purpose.

\*341. According to the garden is the gardener (Gen. R. ch. lxxx. § 1; D. 456).

"Cut the coat according to the cloth."

342. According to the ox is the slaughterer (Gen. R. ch. lxxv. § 11; D. 459).

Same as preceding proverb.

\*343. Hast shaven the gentile and he is pleased, set fire to his beard also, and thou wilt never be finished laughing at him (Sanh. 96<sup>a</sup>; D. 201).

He who submits to indignities will have to suffer worse insults in future.

\*344. One says, "I will buy that poor man a garment," but does not buy it, or "I will buy him a mantle," but does not buy it (B. M. 78<sup>b</sup>).

Said of a man who promises much but does not keep his word. So also it is stated: "Better is it that thou shouldst not vow, than that thou shouldst vow and not pay" (Eccles. v. 5); "The righteous promise little and perform much, whereas the wicked promise much and do not perform even a little" (B. M. 87<sup>a</sup>); "Promise little and do much" (Aboth. i. 15).

345. Thy goodness is taken and thrown over the thorny hedge (Shab. 63<sup>b</sup> and often; D. 640).

Acts of kindness or good advice which come too late are valueless.

346. Fever is more severe in winter than in summer (Jom. 29<sup>a</sup>).

In Shab. 66<sup>b</sup> we are given a long and elaborate account of remedies for the cure of fever.

\*347. As the day raises itself so the sick man raises himself (B. B. 16<sup>b</sup>; D. 39).

An invalid feels easier during the day than during the night. The proverb is quoted in connection with the legend that the patriarch Abraham wore a precious stone suspended from his neck, and everybody suffering from an illness obtained relief by looking at it. When Abraham died, God placed this virtue in the course of the sun.

348. A dream which has not been interpreted is like a letter unread (Ber. 55<sup>b</sup>).

Other sayings on this subject are: "Dreams are a sixtieth part of prophecy" (*ibid.* 57<sup>b</sup>); "Three kinds of dreams are fulfilled: one experienced in the morning; one dreamt by a friend concerning him; and a dream interpreted in the midst of a dream" (*ibid.* 55<sup>b</sup>). There is a good deal in the Talmud about the omens which are to be drawn from dreams: *e.g.* "Whoever sees a serpent in a dream is assured of his sustenance; if bitten by it, it is doubled; if killed, it is lost" (*ibid.* 57<sup>a</sup>), "All sorts of liquids seen in a dream are a good omen, with the exception of wine" (*ibid.*). An attempt seems to have been made to break the people from their belief in dreams, as may be seen from such statements as: "A man should not despair of mercy, even when the master of dreams tells him that he will die on the morrow; for it is said (Eccles. v. 7), "In the multitude of dreams and vanities and many words [fear not], but fear thou God!" (Ber. 10<sup>b</sup>), "Neither a good dream nor a bad dream is wholly fulfilled" (*ibid.* 55<sup>a</sup>), "The interpretation of the dream, not the dream itself, is fulfilled" (*ibid.* 55<sup>b</sup>), "Dreams cause neither prosperity nor ill-fortune" (Git. 52<sup>a</sup>).

\*349. Sixty iron weapons they hung on the sting of the gnat (Hul. 58<sup>b</sup>; D. 647).

Insignificant objects can cause great harm.

\*350. Every man carries his worth in his basket (j. Peah. i. 1, about the middle; D. 364).

Introduced with the words "Well do the millers say." Each man has his own way of displaying his merit.

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