

Expansions on the Book of Proverbs

Introduction

A few other biblically related documents on this home page begin with the word “expansions,” and the same applies here. However, those documents—on the Books of Genesis, Exodus and Jonah—contain some historical elements which give more material and therefore greater leeway to present different angles on the text, the reason why that term was chosen. However, this does not apply to Proverbs, a compilation of moral and religious instructions attributed to King Solomon, son of King David. They are more abstract in the sense of containing advice with only a vague historical context and have less maneuverability to flesh out the text as with the other three books. Nevertheless, the title stands because the intent is the same, to examine the Hebrew text with consideration of the verbal root system, very important in that language, and so to give a non-Hebrew reader a broader insight. The reason, as has been stated in the Introductions of the other biblical books, is to enable a person to use these insights in the spirit of *lectio divina*. That is the only reason for this document. Any information as to the composition of Proverbs, etc., may be found elsewhere.

Proverbs is divided into three main “books.” Only the first “book” will be laid out here, that is, Chapter One through Chapter Nine. Chapter Ten onwards consists in a collection of maxims which can be read once the “introduction” of the first nine chapters are understood more fully. One exception is made, the inclusion of Chapter Thirty-One, which is famous for describing the ideal housewife.

An interesting point to consider as one goes through Proverbs: frequently King Solomon addresses his son which historically means Rehoboam as we find in First Kings, Chapter Twelve. Rehoboam attempted to set himself up in opposition to his father and had listened to the wicked counsel of those who had been brought up with him. That wicked counsel is summed up in Kg 12.10-11: “And the young men who had grown up with him said to him, ‘Thus shall you speak to this people who said to you, ‘Your father made our yoke heavy, but do you lighten it for us;’ thus shall you say to them, ‘My little finger is thicker than my father’s loins. And now, whereas my father laid upon you a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke. My father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions.’” Thus Proverbs may be seen as an attempt to counter that wicked advice and to save Rehoboam.

The Hebrew Bible used is **Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia** (Stuttgart, 2001). The English translation is from the **New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha** (the RSV).

As much as possible, references to the words at hand are taken from Proverbs itself (usually the next verse in sequence) but only after Chapter Ten in order to show how they are used within a single composition. The references will be under the same verbal form as much as possible. In that way a better cross reference in the same book can emerge.

This document is divided into two parts (Chapters 1-5 and Chapter 6-9 & 31) chiefly for easier downloading. Perhaps at a future date notations will be made on the proverbs themselves.

Chapter One

Vs. 1: The proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel.

Mashal is the noun for “proverb” which means a similitude, opinion or saying as well as a song or poem. Thus what is expressed in a proverb is intended to make a resemblance in order to obtain a religious or moral lesson. By attributing the Book of Proverbs to King Solomon, the reader is to keep in mind his prayer which pleased the Lord: “Give your servant, therefore, an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil” [1Kg 3.9]. An “understanding mind” is *lev shomehah* and “discern” is *beyn*. That is to say, a heart endowed with the capacity to hear or to listen (*shamah*) whose result is *beyn* or to discern or to perceive. So this capacity of the heart both to listen and to perceive comprises Solomon’s ability

to compose proverbs. Although Solomon has made this prayer at the beginning of his reign, vs. 1 is careful to mention his father as being Israel's first king, David. For another reference to *mashal*: "I will incline my ear to a proverb; I will solve my riddle to the music of the lyre" [Ps 49.5].

Vs. 2: That men may know wisdom and instruction, understand words of insight,

This verse forms part of a lengthy sentence which continues all the way through vs. 6 where each of these verses with the exception of vs. 5 begins with the preposition *l-* ('to') prefaced to the verb.

The verb *yadah* ('to know') suggests intimate knowledge, even of the sexual kind, as in Gn 4.1: "Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain." *Yadah* has two objects: "wisdom" (*chakmah*) and "instruction" (*musar*). The former suggests skillfulness as well as intelligence and thus has a practical air about it. "And with you in all the work will be every willing man who has skill for any kind of service" [1Chron 28.21]. The latter involves chastisement as from its verbal root *yasar*: "Therefore do not despise the chastening of the Almighty" [Job 5.17].

"Understand" is noted above in vs. 1 as *beyn* which involves discerning and perception. The preposition *byn* ('between') is derived from it implying that understanding involves the ability to see, if you will, in between various things and situations in order to attain a correct perception. The object of *beyn* in the verse at hand is "words of insight" or *bynah* which also comes from *byn*. "All biblical references are from Proverbs with the exception of Job 34.35: "Job speaks without knowledge, his words are without insight."

Vs. 3: receive instruction in wise dealing, righteousness, justice and equity;

Laqach: the common verb for "to take," "to receive" and used with regard to four qualities:

1) *Musar* ('instruction') as used in vs. 2 and implies some type of chastisement. There is was the object of *yadah*, to know in the intimate sense, whereas here *musar* is to be received...to be taken...not just in and by itself but in *sekel* or "wise dealing." The verbal root *sakal* means to be prudent, to attend to and thus involves careful consideration with regard to *musar*. *Sakal* occurs five other times in Proverbs. "Wisdom is a fountain of life to him who has it, but folly is the chastisement (*musar*) of fools" [16.22].

2) *Tsedeq*: "He who speaks the truth gives honest evidence, but a false witness utters deceit" [12.17].

3) *Mishpat*: essentially as judgment and also as custom. "The thoughts of the righteous are just; the counsels of the wicked are treacherous" [12.5].

4) *Meysarym*: masculine plural and connotes straightness (*yashar*) as well as justice. "My soul will rejoice when your lips speak what is right" [23.16].

Vs. 4: that prudence may be given to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the youth—

Harmah is the noun for "prudence" and derives from the verbal root *haram*, to uncover, to be crafty. Thus *harmah* intimates some deception or not fully disclosing the truth of a matter. There are four other biblical references one of which being Ex 21.14 which captures this notion of deceit: "But if a man willfully attacks another to kill him treacherously, you shall take him from my altar that he may die." Such prudence, with a touch of deceit, seems dangerous to bestow upon the "simple" or *pety* but is a means for getting along in the world. *Pety* comes from the root *patah* ('to be spacious, wide') and suggests some naivete as well as being open-minded. "When a scoffer is punished, the simple become wise; when a wise man is instructed, he gains knowledge" [21.11].

A "youth" (*nahar*) is not unlike someone who is *pety*, and Solomon wishes him to be given both "knowledge" and "discretion" or *dahath* (from *yadah* as in vs. 3) and *mezmah*, from the root *zamam* (to lie in wait, to plot, to purpose). And so *mezmah* is not entirely unlike *harmah* or "prudence," only it seems more active. "He who plans to do evil will be called a mischief-maker" [24.12].

Vs. 5: the wise man also may hear and increase in learning, and the man of understanding

acquire skill,

Chakam: “wise man,” from *chakmah* or “wisdom” in vs. 2, that is, a person endowed with skill which means someone to whom knowledge has been absorbed completely and flows naturally to the situation at hand. Hearing or the common verb *shamah* is crucial for such “skill” which serves to “increase” or *yasaph* “learning” or *leqach*. This noun has five other references in Proverbs and three from other books. *Leqach* derives from the common verb *laqach* (to take, to receive) and thus connotes that which had been obtained and absorbed by the person who is wise. It also applies to arts. “The mind of the wise makes his speech judicious and adds persuasiveness to his lips” [16.23].

Navon: “man of understanding” or a person endowed with *byn* as in vs. 2 and found in 14.6: “A scoffer seeks wisdom in vain, but knowledge is easy for a man of understanding.” Such a person acquires skill, the verb being *qanah* as in 23.23: “But truth and do not sell it; buy wisdom, instruction and understanding.” The object of such acquiring is “skill” or *tachbuloth* which has four other references in Proverbs and one in Jeremiah. This noun derives from the verbal root *chaval* meaning “to bind, to take a pledge.” “For by wise guidance you can wage your war, and in abundance of counselors there is victory” [24.6].

Vs. 6: to understand a proverb and a figure, the words of the wise and their riddles.

Thus ends the lengthy sentence begun in vs. 2.

Another use of the verb *byn* (‘to understand’) which here is divided into two sections, if you will. The first concerns “proverb” or *mashal* first noted in vs. 1 and the second concerns a “figure” or *melytsah* which is more a mocking song or something that is obscure. For the second, one other biblical reference exists, Hab 2.6: “Shall not all these take up their taunt against him, in scoffing derision of him?”

The second section object of *byn* is first “words of the wise” or a person endowed with *chakmah* (cf. vs. 5) with its implications of skill. The second comprises “riddles” or *chydah* which suggests being tied up in knots. Thus *chydah* applies to something involved and difficult to understand (i.e., difficult to *byn*). “A king of bold countenance, one who understands riddles, shall arise” [Dn 8.23].

Vs. 7: The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Yir’ah: “fear” which is derived from the verbal root *yare’* and connotes reverence. “The fear of the Lord prolongs life, but the years of the wicked will be short” [10.27]. In the verse at hand, *yir’ah* is situated at the “beginning” or *re’shyth* of “knowledge” (*dahath*) and with vs. 4 in mind, can be associated with those who are young (‘youth’). As Gn 1.1 shows (‘In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth’), *re’shyth* is the first principle of divine creativity from which, as vs. 7 intimates, fear has its origins and from which it never departs. Thus for a youth (as in vs. 4) or for a person at the *re’shyth* of life, to establish knowledge is essential to carry it into adulthood.

Evy’l is the noun for “fool” is a person not accepting divine *yir’ah* (‘fear’) and suggests an impious attitude. “Wisdom is too high for a fool; in the gate he does not open his mouth” [24.7]. *Bazah* is the verb for “despise” and connotes trampling something under foot. “He who walks in uprightness fears the Lord, but he who is devious in his ways despises him” [14.2]. The object of *bazah* is twofold: “wisdom (*chakmah*, vs. 6) and “instruction,” the latter being *musar* as in vs. 3 (‘instruction’).

Vs. 8: Hear, my son, your father’s instruction and reject not your mother’s teaching;

The hearing (*shamah*; cf. vs. 5) involved is first from a father to his son and then from a mother to the same son and is reminiscent of the hearing in Dt 6.4: “Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord.” *Musar* is noted last in vs. 7 and implies chastisement whereas the “teaching” proper to a mother is *torath* or the plural of

torah which automatically brings to mind the Torah of God. Both *musar* and *torath* alternate throughout the son's life while he is still with his parents. "The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life that one may avoid the snares of death" [13.14]. Instead of hearing (*shamah*) with respect to a father, the son is encouraged not to "reject" this *torath*, *natash* being the verb which means to send away, to desert or to spread abroad. "The beginning of strife is like letting out water; so quit before the quarrel breaks out" [17.14]. In the verse at hand, *natash* would take the form of not hearing (*shamah*) first the mother and then the father.

Vs. 9: for they are a fair garland for your head and pendants for your neck.

We could say the father's instruction or *musar* of vs. 8 is the "garland" or *liwyah* (plural) for the son which has one other biblical reference, 4.9: "She (wisdom) will place on your head a fair garland; she will bestow on you're a beautiful crown." Such a garland or wreath is "fair" or *chen*, a noun meaning favor or grace; i.e., a "garland of grace or fairness." "A gracious woman gets honor, and violent men get riches" [11.16].

Similarly we could say that the mother's *torath* ('teaching') form "pendants" or *hanaq* which applies to any collar or decorative necklace, in this case for a man (son). *Hanaq* has two other biblical references, one of which is Sg 4.9: "You have ravished my heart with a glance of your eyes, with one jewel of your necklace." *Gargroth* (plural) is the noun for "neck" and has three biblical references, all in Proverbs. "Bind them upon your heart always; tie them about your neck" [6.21]. Reference here is to the father's "commandment" and the mother's "teaching" of the previous verse.

Although both the garland and pendants are external ornaments as well as indicative of the inner man, they are for the benefit of persons whom the son will come into contact, most likely young men of his same age. This is reminiscent of Dt 6.8 ('the words which I command you this day,' vs. 6): "And you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes."

Vs. 10: My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent.

"Sinners" or *chata'* derives from a verbal root meaning to miss a mark as an archer misses his shot. "Misfortune pursues sinners, but prosperity rewards the righteous" [13.21]. Since the Book of Proverbs was written by King Solomon, perhaps here he had in mind as the son in vs. 8 his own son, Rehoboam, who had plotted against him. And so the verse at hand is reminiscent of 1Kg 12.8: "But he (Rehoboam) forsook the counsel which the old men gave him and took counsel with the young men who had grown up with him and stood before him."

These young men who counseled Rehoboam may be said to have enticed him, *patah* being the verb which means to spread out, to open. The idea is that someone is gullible enough...leaves oneself wide open...in order to be deceived. "A man of violence entices his neighbor and leads him in a way that is not good" [16.29].

'Avah is the verb for "consent" and means to breathe after, to long for; also found in 6.35. "Then if you walk contrary to me and will not hearken to me, I will bring more plagues upon you" [Lev 26.21].

Vs. 11: If they say, "Come with us, let us lie in wait for blood, let us wantonly ambush the innocent;

This verse continues all the way through vs. 16. Those who entice the young man speak convincingly to him through vs. 14.

'Arav is the verb for "lie in wait" much as an animal and connotes being cunning. "She lies in wait like a robber and increases the faithless among men" [23.28]. The preposition *l-* ('for') also means "to" and is more direct with regard to this springing into action, literally as "to blood."

Tsaphan is the verb for "ambush" and means to hide, to lay up in store. Thus *tsaphan* is similar to *'arav* but

seems to be more calculating. “Wise men lay up knowledge, but the babbling of a fool brings ruin near” [10.14]. The intent to murder (‘blood’) is aggravated by the adverb “wantonly” or *chinam* which also means in vain, without cause. Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes” [23.29]? The object at hand is those who are “innocent” or *naqy* which also means pure or clear, usually in the moral or religious sense. “He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully” [Ps 23.4].

Vs. 12: like Sheol let us swallow them alive and whole, like those who go down to the Pit;

Sheol: originally a hollow, subterranean place where the dead abide. “Sheol, the barren womb, the earth ever thirsty for water, and the fire which never says “Enough [30.16].” Those making this statement can be the young men associated with Rehoboam, King Solomon’s son, who liken their laying in wait and ambush of vs. 11 to a swallowing of the innocent. The verb here is *balah* which also means to devour, to destroy. “A worthless witness mocks at justice, and the mouth of the wicked devours iniquity” [19.28]. *Tamym* is the adjective for “whole” and can mean without blemish or complete. The righteousness of the blameless keeps his way straight, but the wicked falls by his own wickedness” [11.5].

The “Pit” or *bur* is similar to Sheol and is more a cistern and can refer to a sepulcher. “I am reckoned among those who go down to the Pit; I am a man who has no strength” [Ps 88.4].

Vs. 13: we shall find all precious goods, we shall fill our houses with spoil;

Hon: the noun for “goods” which applies to riches or substance and is mentioned frequently in Proverbs. “One man pretends to be rich yet has nothing; another pretends to be poor yet has great wealth” [13.7]. In the verse at hand, *hon* is “precious” or *yaqar* and is derived from a verbal root meaning to be heavy. “By knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches” [24.4].

Shalal is the word for “spoil” meaning that which has been stripped off. “It is better to be of a lowly spirit with the poor than to divide the spoil with the proud” [16.19].

Vs. 14: throw in your lot among us, we will all have one purse”–

The conclusion of what the sinners (cf. vs. 10) say to the young man in order to entice him to join in their ill-doing. The quote begins in vs. 11.

Goral is the noun for “lot” and usually refers to a small stone used to reach a decision. “The lot puts an end to disputes and decides between powerful contenders” [18.18].

Naphal is the verb for “throw in” fundamentally means to fall and here intimates that if the young man concurs with the “sinners” of vs. 10, he will fall down with them into ruin. “Slothfulness casts into a deep sleep, and an idle person will suffer hunger” [19.15]. *Tok* as “among” means in the middle or in the midst of anything which means that the “sinners” want the youth to be associated fully with their plans.

Kyes is the word for “purse” which also refers to a cooking pot or vessel. “Do not look at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup and goes down smoothly” [23.31].

Vs. 15: my son, do not walk in the way with them, hold back your food from their paths;

Now Solomon resumes his advice (vs. 15 being one sentence going back to vs. 11) after the interlude of the “sinners” attempting to sway the young man. He employs the words “my son,” last found in vs. 10, as a phrase of endearment.

Derek is the noun for “way” which commonly refers to any type of road or path. Compare with *natyv* or “paths” which more specifically refers to a road or track trodden on foot and therefore is generally smaller and

narrower. “In the path of righteousness is life, but the way (*derek*) of error leads to death” [12.28].

As for the verb *manah* (‘hold back’), cf. 23.12: “Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you beat him with a rod, he will not die” [23.12].

Vs. 16: for their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed blood.

Ruts is the verb for “run” and obviously suggests making haste. “The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous man runs into it and is safe” [18.10]. *Rah* or the common noun for “evil” is prefaced with the preposition *l-* (‘to’). Compare *ruts* with *mahar*; the former applies to the act of running whereas the latter is more representative of an attitude as being impetuous or hasty. “Be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God” [Ecc 5.2].

Shaphak: “to shed” blood: “Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood” [59.7].

Vs. 17: For in vain is a net spread in the sight of any bird;

Chinam: last noted in vs. 11 as “wantonly.”

Bahal is used for “in the sight of” and literally means “owner of a wing.”

Resheth or “net” as in 29.5: “A man who flatters his neighbor spreads a net for his feet.”

Vs. 18: but these men lie in wait for their own blood, they set an ambush for their own lives.

‘Arav and *tsphan*: both are noted in vs. 11 with the same meaning. *Nephesh* is the noun for “lives” and more fundamentally refers to a soul. “The highway of the upright turns aside from evil; he who guards his way preserves his life” [16.17].

Vs. 19: Such are the ways of all who get gain by violence; it takes away the life of its possessors.

‘Orach is the noun for “ways” which derives from a verbal root meaning to walk. Compare *‘orach* with “way” and “paths” (*derek* and *natyv*) of vs. 15. “Lest you can learn his ways and entangle yourself in a snare” [22.25].

The verb for “get gain” is comprised of two words, the verb *batsah* and the noun *betsah* derived from it which fundamentally means to cut off into pieces, so the verb suggests force. “He who is greedy for unjust gain makes trouble for his household” [15.27].

As in vs. 18, *nephesh* is used for “life.” *Nephesh* belongs to “possessors” or *bahal* as found in vs. 17 (‘in the sight of’). *Bahal* applies to an owner or person in charge as well as to a husband. “The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain” [31.11].

Vs. 20: Wisdom cries aloud in the street; in the market she raises her voice;

Now the text shifts from King Solomon addressing his son (and that son we can assume as Rehoboam as will be the case in other instances) who is in danger of falling in with wicked companions of his own age to the person of wisdom, *chakmoth*. Here the noun is in the plural compared with the singular *chakmah* as in vs. 7. Three other biblical references exist, two of which are in Proverbs: “Wisdom is too high for a fool; in the gate he does not open his mouth” [24.7].

Wisdom, in response to the possibility of the young man’s temptation recounted in vss. 11-19, does not confine herself (feminine noun) but “cries aloud” or *ranah*, a verb which can apply to loud shouts of joy or

lamentation. “An evil man is ensnared in his transgression, but a righteous man sings and rejoices” [29.6]. The public forum in which this *ranah* takes place is in the “street” or *chuts*, a noun which can be taken adverbially. “Prepare your work outside, get everything ready for you in the field; and after that build your house” [24.27].

In addition to this crying in the street, wisdom “raises her voice” or literally “gives her voice” in the “market” or *rechoy* (*rachav*: the adjective meaning ‘broad, wide’) which also can apply to a street. “The sluggard says, ‘There is a lion outside! I shall be slain in the streets’” [22.13]! By necessity wisdom must raise her voice...give her voice...in order to be heard over the din of people moving about and various stalls selling items.

Vs. 21: on the top of the walls she cries out; at the entrance of the city gates she speaks;

In the previous verse *chakmah* has cried aloud and has raised her voice, wisdom, but no results are given for her efforts. So now she goes to the “top of the walls,” *ro’sh* being the noun for “top” or more precisely, the very summit of the walls, *r’osh* implying this as the “head.” “For you will heap coals of fire on his head, and the Lord will reward you” [25.22]. The word *homyoth* is given for “walls” which, as the **RSV** notes, is uncertain though the verbal root seems to be *hamah*, “to hum,” as from the sound of a harp. Thus this term could refer to the collective noises below the walls which from that position blend together forming a general, indistinct sound.

Next, wisdom descends to the entrance of the city gates to try her luck where she speaks or literally “utters her saying,” the common verb *amar* being used and the noun derived from it. Perhaps this is the best of all places wisdom has opted for: too loud in the market and too distant on the walls. The city gates are narrow which means people had to crowd together in order to enter and exit, thereby making it easier to address them. In addition to city natives (presumably Solomon has Jerusalem in mind), quite a few foreigners were coming and going, and they might be receptive to wisdom’s words.

Vs. 22: “How long, O simple ones, will you love being simple? How long will scoffers delight in their scoffing and fools hate knowledge?”

Wisdom speaks from here until the end of Chapter One, that is, vs. 33. She has tried out speaking in all three locations, street, top of walls and now at the entrance to the city gates, the last being the best option. She calls the groups of people who are at all three locations “simple ones” or *pety* which was noted last in vs. 4 (‘that prudence may be given to the simple’) and has thirteen uses in Proverbs, so it is an issue of importance. It’s one thing being *pety* but loving it is another; i.e., this is the heart of wisdom’s appeal. *Ahav* is the common verb “to love” and just by its sound, suggests a longing or breathing after. “Righteous lips are the delight of a king, and he loves him who speaks what is right” [16.13].

While wisdom addresses the simple ones directly, the second question does not necessarily apply in the same instance. *Luts* is the verbal root for “scoffers” (participle) and has a total of fourteen references in Proverbs, so it is just as important as the “simple ones” (*pety*) noted above. “Drive out a scoffer, and strife will go out and quarreling and abuse will cease” [22.10]. To engage in scoffing is one thing but to “delight” in it is another, the verb being *chamad* and suggests covetousness. “The strong tower of the wicked comes to run, but the root of the righteous stands firm” [12.12]. The Hebrew text has *chamad* for “strong,” and the **RSV** has the notation that this verse is obscure. Along with scoffers wisdom includes “fools” or *kesyl*, a term suggestive of folly and noted some forty-eight times in Proverbs. “In everything a prudent man acts with knowledge, but a fool flaunts his folly” [13.16]. In the verse at hand, those who are *kesyl* hate “knowledge” or *dahath*, first mentioned in vs. 4.

Vs. 23: Give heed to my reproof; behold, I will pour out my thoughts to you; I will make my words known to you.

Shuv is the verb for “give heed” and means more a turning back or around. “He who digs a pit will fall into it,

and a stone will come back upon him who starts its rolling” 26.27]. In the verse at hand, this turning around/back is with respect to wisdom’s own “reproof” or *tokachath* which occurs sixteen times in Proverbs. *Tokachath* applies to a correction or arguing down. “Better is open rebuke than hidden love” [27.5]. So the verb *shuv* relative to wisdom’s reproof means that the person she is addressing must turn around or turn back from his evil way.

Hineh: “behold,” a way of gaining attention after a person has turned (back), *shuv*. It serves to introduce wisdom pouring out her “thoughts,” the verb being *navah* meaning to bubble forth, to cause to boil up. “The tongue of the wise dispenses knowledge, but the mouths of fools pour out folly” [15.2]. That which bubbles forth, if you will, is *ruach* or “spirit” and here translates as “thoughts.” So from the mouth of wisdom (source of speech as well as taste) comes that which is associated with breath. “A man’s pride will bring him low, but he who is lowly in spirit will obtain honor” [29.23]. The verb “pour out” is in the future tense and conditioned upon *shuv* or giving heed. And so wisdom breathes forth her spirit by way of her mouth.

Yadah is the verb for “will make known” as noted in vs. 2 and involves the common noun *devar* or “words.” How wisdom imparts this is not stated, but in the verse at hand it is distinct from transmission of her *ruach*. The verb is in the present tense as *navah*. In the meanwhile, wisdom is engaged in speaking but not in the fashion she proposes.

Vs. 24: Because I have called and you refused to listen, have stretched out my hand and no one has heeded,

Between this verse and vs. 25 wisdom presents her reasons why she will not come to the assistance of the “simple ones” of vs. 22.

This verse has two pairs of verbs, *qara’* and *ma’en* (‘called’ and ‘refused’). *Qara’* is a summoning compared with *ranah* of vs. 20, “cries aloud.” The first verb is used in a similar circumstance in 9.3: “She has sent out her maids to call from the highest places in the town.” As for *ma’en*, it involves a deliberate, reflective unwillingness. “The violence of the wicked will sweep them away because they refuse to do what is just” [21.7].

The second pair of verbs consists of *natah* and *qashav* (‘stretched out’ and ‘has heeded,’ negative). “Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise and apply your mind to my knowledge” [22.17]. *Qashav* connotes attending to anything, usually through hearing. “An evildoer listens to wicked lips, and a liar gives heed to a mischievous tongue” [17.4]. “No one” seems to involve more persons than the “simple ones” whom wisdom is addressing.

Vs. 25: and you have ignored all my counsel and would have none of my reproof,

Parah is the verb for “have ignored” and means to let go, to begin or to leave off; in sum, *parah* involves a loosening. It is as though the “simple one” to whom wisdom is speaking were in the process of untying her words which they perceive as knots. “He who ignores instruction despises himself, but he who heeds admonition gains understanding” [15.32]. In the verse at hand, “counsel” or *hetsah* is plural. This noun implies strength as the adjective *hatsum* indicates. “The purpose in a man’s mind is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out” [20.5].

Avah is the verb for “have (none) of” and means to breathe, to desire, to long after and is a suitable word to use with the loosening of *parah*, also used in 1.10. As for “reproof” (*tokachath*) it is found in vs. 23 where wisdom urges the “simple” ones to “give heed,” *shuv* meaning to turn back. Thus the desire and longing of *avah* is more intense than *shuv*.

Vs. 26: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when panic strikes you,

Sachaq is the verb for “will laugh” which often is used contemptuously as it is here though it can apply to

dancing or playing a musical instrument. “Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come” [31.25]. *Eyd* is the noun for “calamity” which connotes destruction. “For disaster from them will rise suddenly, and who knows the ruin that will come from them both” [24.22]? This would be difficult for the “simple ones” in vs. 22 to grasp by reason of their condition. However, it would be more serious for the “scoffers” and “fools” mentioned in that same verse.

Lahag is the verb for “will mock” which connotes stammering as well as to speak in a foreign (barbarous) language. “The eye that mocks a father and scorns to obey a mother will be picked out by the ravens of the valley and eaten by the vultures” [30.17].

Pachad is the noun for “panic” which refers to fear and terror and derives from a verbal root meaning to tremble and occurs in the next verse. “All girt with swords and expert in war, each with his sword at his thigh against alarms by night” [Sg 3.8]. The common word for “come” or *bo’* is used for “strikes” both here and in the next verse.

Vs. 27: when panic strikes you like a storm, and your calamity comes like a whirlwind when distress and anguish come upon you.

This verse concludes a lengthy sentence by wisdom begun in vs. 24.

Pachad as mentioned in the previous verse “strikes” (the common verb *bo’*) as a “storm” or *sho’ah* which means ruin or desolation. This is the only use of the term in the Bible though a similar term with slightly different spelling is found in Ezk 39.9: “You will advance, coming on like a storm,, you will be like a cloud covering the land.”

The verb for “comes” is not *bo’* but the more poetic *’atah* which means the same. “I stirred up one from the north, and he has come” [Is 41.25]. The “calamity” (*’eyd*, vs. 26) is likened to a “whirlwind” or *suphah* which seems to be like a tornado. “When the tempest passes, the wicked is no more, but the righteous is established forever” [20.25].

Tsarah and *tsuqah* are used with *bo’* (‘come’): “distress” and “anguish.” For the first noun, see 11.8: “The righteous is delivered from trouble, and the wicked get into it instead.” The second derives from a verbal root meaning to pour out, and so *tsuqah* is a more dramatic, descriptive noun. There are two other biblical references, both Isaiah, one of which is 8.22: “And they will look to the earth, but behold, distress and darkness.”

Vs. 28: Then they will call upon me, but I will not answer; they will seek me diligently but will not find me.

Another instance of *qara’* (‘call’), the last being in vs. 24, here with wisdom not receiving an answer, the verb being *hanah* which connotes pronouncing. “The poor use entreaties, but the rich answer roughly” [18.23].

Shachar is the verb for “seek diligently” which fundamentally means to break forth. “He who diligently seeks good seeks favor, but a blessing is on the head of him who sells it” [11.27]. Despite the intensity of the search for wisdom, it will not be found (*matsa’*; cf. 1.13). “Many a man proclaims his own loyalty, but a faithful man who can find” [20.6]?

Vs. 29: Because they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord,

Now wisdom gives her response to why she turns her back on those mentioned in vs. 22, their hatred (*sane*) of “knowledge” or *dahath* (cf. vs. 4). “All a poor man’s brothers hate him; how much more do his friends go far from him” [18.7]!

As noted in vs. 7, “fear” (*yir’ah*) of the Lord” is derived from the verbal root *yare’* and connotes reverence. Solomon considers such *yir’ah* the beginning of knowledge (again, *dahath*) or an intimate relationship with the Lord and not to choose that is to reject him.

Bachar is the verb for “choose” as in 10.20: “The tongue of the righteous is choice silver; the mind of the wicked is of little worth.”

Vs. 30: would have none of my counsel and despised all my reproof,

’Avah was noted last in vs. 25, and given that context as well as the verse at hand, indicates frustration, disappointment and some sadness on the part of wisdom. It is used here in conjunction with “counsel” or *hetsah*, plural here as noted last in vs. 25.

Na’ats is the verb for “despised” which involves having contempt for a person. “For they had rebelled against the words of God and spurned the counsel (*hetsah*) of the Most High” [Ps 107.11]. The object of this contempt is wisdom’s “reproof” or *tokachath* applies to a correction or arguing down as noted last in vs. 23.

Vs. 31: therefore they shall eat the fruit of their way and be sated with their own devices.

Derek is the noun for “way” last noted in vs. 19. To eat of it means looking back upon one’s past history (again, the three types of persons in vs. 22, the simple, scoffers and fools) and having memory of it catch up. The eating of this memory means that it is absorbed completed.

Comparable to *derek* and eating its “fruit” (*pery*) is being “sated” or *savah* as in 27.10: “Sheol and Abaddon are never satisfied, and never satisfied are the eyes of man.” *Savah* is used with the noun “devices” or *mohetsoth* which is similar to *hetsah* as found in vs. 20. There are six other uses of *mohetsoth* including 22.20: “Have I not written for you thirty sayings of admonition and knowledge” [22.20]?

Vs. 32: For the simple are killed by their turning away, and the complacency of fools destroys them;

The last time the “simple” or *pety* is noted is vs.22 along with scoffers and fools. At the same time Solomon wishes the *pety* not to slide into destruction which is why he takes pains to mention them at the beginning of Proverbs (cf. vs. 4). For them, “turning away” or *meshuvah* is their destruction, that is, from not paying attention to the cries of wisdom. “Your wickedness will chasten you, and your apostasy will reprove you” [Jer 2.19].

In addition to mentioning the simple, vs. 32 speaks of “fools” or *kesyl* last noted in vs. 22 and different from *’evyl* in vs. 7 which implies being impious as well. To those who are *kesyl* belongs “complacency” or *shalvah* which has seven biblical references and suggests being secure or safe. “Peace be within your walls and security within your towers” [Ps 122.7]!

Two verbs relative to destruction are noted in vs. 32, *harag* and *’avad*, that is, applicable to the simple and to the fools. The former is pertains to slaughter. “The anger of God rose against them, and he slew the strongest of them” [Ps 78.31]. The latter pertains more to perishing and destroying: “The hope of the righteous ends in gladness, but the expectation of the wicked comes to nought” [10.28].

Vs. 33: but he who listens to me will dwell secure and will be at ease, without dread of evil.”

In contrast to what wisdom has said since vs. 22, the bulk of Chapter One, she concludes on a positive note; also this verse brings to a close wisdom’s words begun in vs. 22. Paying attention to her (*shamah*, to listen) has a threefold result:

1) "Dwell secure" which consists of the verb *shakan* ('to dwell') and the noun *betach* (trust, security). *Shakan* obviously has a permanent quality about it which means that the person listening to wisdom will have absorbed thoroughly her words in contrast to the eating and being sated of vs. 31 which leads to destruction. "The righteous will never be removed, but the wicked will not dwell in the land" [10.30]. As for *betach*: "He who walks in integrity walks securely, but he who perverts his ways will be found out."

2) "Will be at ease" or *sha'an* which means being quiet and has four biblical references one of which is Job 3.18: "The prisoners are at ease together; they do not hear the voice of the taskmaster."

3) "Without dread of evil" or literally "from (*min-*) evil." *Pachad* is the noun for evil and is noted last in vs. 26 as "panic." *Rah* is the common noun for "evil" and is noted last in vs. 16.

Chapter Two

Vs. 1: My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you,

Chapter Two opens after wisdom has threatened the simple, scoffers and foolish and apparently has King Solomon once again addressing his son (Rehoboam). This seems to be the situation, for in vs. 2 he speaks objectively of wisdom. This sentence begins in vs. 1 and continues through vs. 5.

The common verb *laqach* is used for "receive" (cf. 1.5) with respect to Solomon's "words" or '*emer* which are noted in 1.2 and 22 (from understanding and from wisdom). Such words are different but not distinct from Solomon's "commandments" or *mitsvah* which can be either divine or human. It seems that *mitsvah* follow '*emer* and form part of them but not necessarily all '*emer*. "He who despises the word brings destruction on himself, but he who respects the commandment will be rewarded" [13.13]. *Mitsvah* are to be treasured up or *tsaphan* last noted in 1.11 as "ambush." Thus *tsaphan* involves a lying in wait for something or someone.

Vs. 2: making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding;

Qashav is the verb for "making attentive" and last noted in 1.24 as "heeded." Here *qashav* pertains to a desire by Solomon for his son's ear to be such as well as "inclining" his heart, *natah* also in 1.24 as "stretched out." In the verse at hand, such *natah* implies that the heart (*lev*) is to be extended, almost physically so, to "understanding" or *tevunah* which derives from the verbal root *beyn* (cf. 1.2). "It is like sport to a fool to do wrong, but wise conduct is pleasure to a man of understanding" [10.23]. And so both ears and heart involve a reaching out beyond their normal sphere to one which is receptive to things divine.

Vs. 3: yes, if you cry out for insight and raise your voice for understanding,

The Hebrew text has *ky* (relative conjunction) for "yes."

Qara' is the verb for "cry out" last noted in 1.18 and here is used with respect to "insight" or *bynah* as noted in 1.2 and derives from the verb *byn*, "to understand." In light of the so-called inclining verbs in vs. 2 (*qashav* and *natah*), *qara'* may be said to follow suite.

The same idea of inclining applies to the verb *natan* ('raise') which basically means "to give" with respect to "voice" (*qol*) in a reach for "understanding or *tevunah* as noted in the last verse and derives from the same verbal root as *bynah* in the verse at hand. Thus two shades of *bynah* are at issue here.

Vs. 4: if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures;

"It" refers to insight and understanding taken as one by reason of their common verbal root, *byn*. That which is compared is likened to "silver" or *keseph*. "The tongue of the righteous is choice silver; the mind of the wicked is of little worth" [10.20]. *Baqash* is the verb for "seek," a root whose primary power belongs to touching or feeling. "An intelligent mind acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge" [8.15].

Chaphas is the verb for "search" and implies devising compared with the more hands-on sense of *baqash*. "The

spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord, searching all his innermost parts" [20.27]. The object of *chaphas* is "hidden treasures" or *matmon* which has four other biblical references, one of which is Is 45.3: "I will give you the treasures of darkness and the hoards in secret places." *Matmon* usually refers a place located underground.

Vs. 5: then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God.

'Az ('then') is important in that it brings to successful conclusion the words spoken from the beginning of this lengthy sentence in vs. 1.

Byn is the verb for "understand" as in vss. 3 and 4, here with respect to "fear (*yir'ah*) of the Lord" last mentioned in 1.29. In conjunction with this particular use of *byn* is divine "knowledge" or *dahath* (cf. 1.29). Both qualities (fear and knowledge) are not contradictory but complimentary and are meant to balance each other.

Vs. 6: For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding;

In 1.20 wisdom begins to proclaim her message publically though without disclosing the source of her message nor gender though presumably it is female, given the gender of *chakmoth*. Here the source of *chakmoth* is the Lord. As for the giving (*natan*, cf. vs. 3), nothing is said of how this is effected.

The Lord's "mouth" is more specific than the just mentioned *natan*. From it comes "knowledge" and "understanding" (*dahath* and *tevunah*, vss. 5 and 3 respectively).

Vs. 7: he stores up sound wisdom for the upright; he is a shield to those who walk in integrity,

Tsaphan: "stores up" as in vs. 1, "treasure up." Here *tsaphan* differs from the giving or *natan* of wisdom, protecting it for whom it is intended as a kind of safe keeping. With this *natan* and *tsaphan* in mind, we could take it as two forms of divine dispensation of wisdom: giving wisdom or *chakmoth* and keeping *tushyah* ('sound wisdom'). The latter suggests aid and counsel, functions of *chakmoth*. "He who is estranged seeks pretexts to break out against all sound judgment" [18.1]. Those for whom this *tushyah* is kept are the "upright" or those who are *yashar* (cf. 1.3).

Magen is the noun for "shield" as in 30.5: "Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him." When Solomon speaks of walking as in this verse, he implies advancing as a soldier, hence the use of a shield for protection.

Tom is the noun for "integrity" which suggests fulness and prosperity. "Better is a poor man who walks in his integrity than a rich man who is perverse in his ways" [28.6].

Vs. 8: guarding the paths of justice and preserving the way of his saints.

Two verbs relative to protection:

1) *Natsar* is the verb for "guarding" which also meanings to watch or to keep as well as to observe and usually applies to something as a watchman. "My son, give me your heart, and let your eyes observe my ways" [28.26]. One can assume that the shield mentioned in the previous verse forms part of this *natsar*.

2) *Shamar* is the verb for "preserving" which is similar to *natsar* but emphasizes more the act of observing or abstaining oneself. It is used often with respect to the divine Torah. "For it will be pleasant if you keep them ('words of the wise') within you, if all of them are ready on your lips" [22.18].

Two nouns relative to a road, *'orach* and *derek* ('paths' and 'way'). See 1.19 where both are used and compared; the former seems to apply more to a path for walking whereas *derek*, for walking as well as for carts and

animals. An *'orach* is for "justice" or *mishpat* (cf. 1.3) and a *derek* is for "saints" or *chasyd*, and adjective derived from the root *chesed* or divine mercy. Thus a *chasyd* is a person who embodies this special characteristic. "He will guard the feet of his faithful ones; but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness" [1Sam 2.9].

Vs. 9: Then you will understand righteousness and justice and equity, every good path;

This verse continues through vs. 15.

"Then" (*'az*) can be seen as contingent upon three instances of "if," that is, in vss. 1, 3 and 4 even though vs. 5 begins with *'az*: "if you receive my words," "if you cry out for insight" and "if you seek it like silver." In the verse at hand, *'az* indicates the fruit of understanding or *byn* (cf. vs. 5) in four ways:

- 1) "Righteousness" or *tsedeq* (cf. 1.3).
- 2) "Justice" or *mishpat* (cf. vs. 8).
- 3) "Equity" or *mesharym* which is masculine plural from *yashar* as in vs. 7. "My soul will rejoice when your lips speak what is right" [23.16].
- 4) "Path" or *mahgal*. Compare with *'orach* and *derek* of vs. 8 ('paths' and 'way'). A *mahgal* is a track or rut and thus more applicable to wagons and carts. "He leads me in the paths of righteousness" [Ps 23.3] which could be taken as being lead along a *mahgal* for carts or being carried in one.

Vs. 10: for wisdom will come into your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul;

This verse presents a distinction between "heart" and "soul" or *lev* (cf. vs. 2) and *nephesh* (cf. 1.19), the latter often referring to one's life. To both the future tense is applied, something like a promise, which involves "wisdom" and "knowledge" or *chakmah* and *dahath*.

Nothing is said as to the effect of wisdom, but knowledge is to be "pleasant" or *nahem*, a verb which connotes brightness and beauty. "Stolen water is sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant" [9.17].

Vs. 11: discretion will watch over you; understanding will guard you;

Another pair of words belonging to the future tense, "discretion" and "understanding" or *mizmah* and *tevunah* (cf. vs. 6). The former also means counsel and prudence as well as craftiness; it occurs frequently in Proverbs. "A good man obtains favor from the Lord, but a man of evil devices he condemns" [12.2].

The two verbs involved are "will watch over" and "will guard" or *shamar* (cf. vs. 8 as 'preserving') and *natsar* (cf. vs. 8 as 'guarding'). As for the former, the preposition *hal* is used, "upon."

Vs. 12: delivering you from the way of evil, from men of perverted speech,

Natsal is the verb for "delivering" and means to pull out or to snatch. It belongs to discretion and understanding of the previous verse. "Rescue those who are being taken away to death; hold back those who are stumbling to the slaughter" [22.11]. *Natsal* has two intents: the "way" or *derek* (cf. vs. 9) of "evil" (*rah*; cf. 1.33) and from those "of perverted speech" or literally, from speaking things that are perverse.

The common verb *davar* is used with the noun (feminine plural) *tahpukoth* which has a number of references in Proverbs and just one from Deuteronomy. This noun derives from the verbal root *haphak* which means to turn, to overthrow. "The mouth of the righteous brings forth wisdom, but the perverse tongue will be cut off."

Vs. 13: who forsake the paths of uprightness to walk in the ways of darkness,

The action of *natsal* of vs. 12 continues here, that is, with respect to those who "forsake" or *hazav* the "paths of

uprightness.” *Hazav* connotes leaving off or ceasing as in 15:10: “There is severe discipline for him who forsakes the way; he who hates reproof will die.” In the verse at hand, *hazav* pertains to ‘*orach*’ as in vs. 9 only here it is plural implying that there are multiple ways of “uprightness” or *yosher*, the adjective being *yashar* as in vs. 9. “He who walks in uprightness fears the Lord, but he who is devious in his ways despises him” [14.2].

The opposite of *yosher* is walking in the *derek* (‘ways’) of “darkness” (*choshek*). See vs. 8 where these two words (‘*orach* and *derek*) are compared. “If one curses his father or his mother, his lamp will be put out in utter darkness” [20.20]. Thus uprightness is intimated as being light for walking.

Vs. 14: who rejoice in doing evil and delight in the perverseness of evil;

Sameach is an adjective for “rejoice” and suggests an overall feeling of gladness. “He who mocks the poor insults his Maker; he who is glad at calamity will not go unpunished” [17.5]. Emphasis is upon the verb “doing” (*hasah*) with respect to “evil” or *rah* as in vs. 12.

In addition to this *sameach*, there are people who take delight (*gyl*) not just in evil or *rah* but in its “perverseness” (*tahpukoth*) which was noted last in vs. 12 as “perverted.” The verb *gyl* means to go in a circle as if to dance in that way. “The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice; he who begets a wise son will be glad in him” [23.24].

Vs. 15: men whose paths are crooked, and who are devious in their ways.

This verse is the conclusion of a lengthy sentence begun in vs. 9.

In this instance, ‘*orach*’ (‘paths’) and *mahgal* (‘ways’) are negative compared to the positive ones as in vss. 13 and 9. The former is “crooked” or *hiqash* which also means perverse and deceitful. “Men of perverse mind are an abomination to the Lord” [10.20]. The latter is “devious” or *luz* (verb) which means to bend, to turn away. “He who walks in uprightness fears the Lord, but he who is devious in his ways despises him” [14.2].

Vs. 16: You will be saved from the loose woman, from the adventuress with her smooth words,

Natsal is the verb for “will be saved” last noted in vs. 12 as “delivering” and thus connotes a snatching away which here is from a woman who is “loose” or *zur* which is a verb used as a participle. *Zur* means to turn aside, to depart and thus suggests a woman who has turned aside. “He who gives surety for a stranger (*zur*) will smart for it, but he who hates surety-ship is secure” [11.15].

In addition to being *natsal* from a woman who is *zur*, there is the “adventuress” or *nakry* (adjective) or woman who is similar, this word applied to someone who is foreign as from the verbal root *nakar* (to estrange, to alienate). “Take a man’s garment when he has given surety for a stranger and hold him in pledge when he gives surety for foreigners” [20.16]. Such a woman is expected to speak a different language, and here they consist of words which are “smooth” or *chalaq*. This is a verb which in addition to being smooth means to divide, to despoil, and thus has a certain violence about it. “He who rebukes a man will afterward find more favor than he who flatters with his tongue” [28.23].

Vs. 17: who forsakes the companion of her youth and forgets the covenant of her God;

The verb “forsakes” or *hazav* was noted last in vs. 13 and is in the singular which means it applies either to the “loose woman” or the “adventuress.” ‘*Aluph*’ is the noun for “companion” and often applies to the leader of a family or a tribe. “A perverse man spreads strife, and a whisperer separates close friends” [16.28].

The verb *shakach* (‘forgets’) is not unlike *hazav* in the context of this verse but suggests more a forgetting than an abandoning. “Let them drink and forget their poverty and remember their misery no more” [31.5]. Here

shkach applies to the extreme case of forgetting the divine “covenant” or *beryth* and is not mentioned again in Proverbs. *Beryth* is first used in Gn 6.18 relative to the rainbow: “But I will establish my covenant with you; and you shall come into the ark, you, your sons, your wife and your sons’ wives with you.”

Vs. 18: for her house sinks down to death and her paths to the shades;

Shuach is the verb for “sinks down” and has two other biblical references, Lam 3.20 and Ps 44.25, the latter being quoted here: “For our soul is bowed down to the dust; our body cleaves to the ground.” This verb has two objects: the “house” of either one of the two women noted in vs. 16 and commented upon in vs. 17 and “paths” or *mahgal* (cf. vs. 15).

“Death” and “the shades” are the respective destinations, the latter being *repha’ym* and has seven other biblical references, two of which are in Proverbs with the first one being noted here, 9.18: “But he does not know that the dead (*repha’ym*) are there, that her guests are in the depths of Sheol.”

Vs. 19: none who go to her come back nor do they regain the paths of life.

Another mention of *’orach* as in the previous verse which here are one-way. The preposition *b-* (‘in’) is used for “to” as in “to her.”

Nasag is the verb for “regain” which means to move, to attain in the sense of overtaking, not necessarily to regain as in the verse at hand. “Therefore justice is far from us, and righteousness does not overtake us” [Is 59.9].

Vs. 20: So you will walk in the way of good men and keep to the paths of righteous.

“Way” and “paths” or *’orach* and *derek*, the latter noted last in vs. 13. The first is singular whereas the second is plural. It is easier to walk in a singular *’orach* compared to keeping (*shamar*) the multiple paths of the “righteous.” *Shamar* is noted last in vs. 11 as “guard.” *Tsadyq* is an adjective for “righteous” and has many references in Proverbs such as 9.9: “Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; teach a righteous man, and he will increase in learning.”

Vs. 21: For the upright will inhabit the land, and men of integrity will remain in it;

Those who are “upright” or *yashar* was noted last in 2.7 and are similar to those who are “righteous” as in vs. 20. Here they “will inhabit” the land or *shakan* last noted in 1.33 as “will dwell secure.” Note that the verb is in the future as is “walk” in vs. 20.

The same applies to “will remain” or *yatar* which means to beyond measure, to be prominent and is the only use of this verb in Proverbs. “There remained among the people of Israel seven tribes whose inheritance had not yet been apportioned” [Jos 18.2]. The verb *yatar* applies to “men of integrity” or to those who are *tamym* (adjective) last noted in 1.12 as “whole.”

Vs. 22: but the wicked will be cut off from the land, and the treacherous will be rooted out of it.

Rashah is the adjective for “wicked” which derives from a verbal root meaning to make a noise or tumult. Thus *rashah* suggests people who make an uproar as well as being wicked. “The Lord does not let the righteous go hungry, but he thwarts the craving of the wicked” [10.3].

’Erets or “land” is more than a physical place but is more like a homeland in which a given people is rooted. “By justice a king gives stability to the land, but one who exacts gifts ruins it” [29.4]. Thus to be “cut off” from this *’erets* is more than exile; it is a kind of death sentence. *Karath* is the verb for “will be cut off” and

frequently is used for making (i.e., cutting) a covenant. “Know that wisdom is such to your soul; if you find it, there will be a future, and your hope will not be cut off” [24.14].

Bagad or “treacherous” is a verb implying to act fraudulently as well as to afflict. “The integrity of the upright guides them, but the crookedness of the treacherous destroys them” [11.3]. The verb “will be rooted out” is *nasach* and has three other biblical references, one of which is 15.25: “The Lord tears down the house of the proud but maintains the widow’s boundaries.” Thus *karath* and *nasach* are more than verbs of removal; related to *‘erets*, they are of extreme punishment.

Chapter Three

Vs. 1: My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments;

The last time King Solomon used the words “my son” was to introduce Chapter Two. Again, we can presume he has in mind his son Rehoboam who had fallen in with a bad crowd of men his own age.

Shakach is the verb for “forget” as last noted in 2.17 with regard to the divine covenant. Here *shakach* pertains to Solomon’s “teaching” or *torah* which also means law and was noted last in 1.8 with regard to a mother’s teaching.

Lev or “heart” (cf. 2.2) is considered the place when the soul and one’s very life resides and here is to “keep” (*natsar*: cf. 2.11) the “commandments” or *mitsvah* (cf. 2.1) of Solomon, the father. It should be noted that while Solomon addresses his son (Rehoboam), we do not hear him respond.

Vs. 2: for length of days and years of life and abundant welfare will they give you.

Orek is the noun for “length” which can apply to longevity and well as physical extension. With patience [*‘orek*] a ruler may be persuaded, and a soft tongue will break a bone” [25.15]. In the verse at hand, *‘orek* pertains to “days” or a twenty-four hour period as well as a (lunar) year with respect to “life” (*chayym*).

Shalom is the noun for “abundant welfare” and is the familiar term for peace which has two other references in Proverbs, vs. 17 and 12.20, the latter being quoted here: “Deceit is in the heart of those who devise evil, but those who plan good have joy.” As for the adjective “abundant,” it is not in the Hebrew text but part of *shalom*. *Yasaph* is the verb for “will give” and is found in 1.5. This verb suggests more an ongoing impartation, of continuous giving.

Vs. 3: Let not loyalty and faithfulness forsake you; bind them about your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.

Chesed and *‘emeth* or “loyalty” and “faithfulness.” The former applies to divine mercy and is considered untranslatable. “A man who is kind benefits himself, but a cruel man hurts himself” [11.17]. *‘Emeth* connotes stability and constancy: “A wicked man earns deceptive wages, but one who sows righteousness gets a sure reward” [11.18]. Solomon counsels (his son, Rehoboam) that these two qualities do not “forsake” him, *hazav* being the verb last noted in 2.17. However, it turned out otherwise.

The second half of vs. 3 is reminiscent of the “Shemah” of Dt 6.4: “Hear, O Israel. The Lord our God is one Lord.” The verses which follow command that this injunction be “upon your heart” [vs. 6] and a “sign upon your hand” and “as frontlets between your eyes” [vs. 8]. The verb *qashar* is used in the Deuteronomy verses for “bind” as well as the verse at hand. It also means to conspire, intimating that the participants are bound together regardless of what comes of their plans. “Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline drives it far from him” [22.15].

Gargroth (feminine plural) is the noun for “neck” and was noted last in 1.9; it has two other references in

Proverbs. The two qualities of *chesed* and *'emeth* are to be bound there compared with writing them on the heart's "tablet" or *luach* which usually refers to one used for writing. "And he (the Lord) wrote them upon two tables of stone and gave them to me (Moses)" [Dt 5.22]. Thus *chesed* and *'emeth* are to be visible and invisible, on the neck and in (*hal-*, 'on') the heart. The former is bound whereas the latter is etched in through writing (*katav*). "Have I not written for you thirty sayings of admonition and knowledge" [22.20]?

Vs. 4: So you will find favor and good repute in the sight of God and man.

Chen and *sekel* are the nouns for "favor" and "repute." The former was noted last in 1.9 as the adjective "fair" and the latter in 1.3 as "wise dealings. As noted there, the verbal root *sakal* means to be prudent, to attend to and thus involves careful consideration.

"In the sight of" reads literally as "in the eyes of" which pertains to God and man, and they correspond to the hidden heart and manifest neck of vs. 3.

Vs. 5: Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not rely on your own insight.

As with vs. 3, this verse is reminiscent of the "Shemah:" "and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might" [Dt 6.5].

Batach is the verb for "trust" and implies confidence. "The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain" [31.11]. In the verse at hand, *batach* is used with the preposition *'el-* or literally, "to the Lord." Notice the use of *'el* with that of another preposition, *b-* or literally "in all your heart" (*lev*) last noted in vs. 1.

'El is used a second time as "on" with regard to "insight" or *bynah* last noted in 2.3. *Shahan* is the verb for "rely" which fundamentally means to lean upon. "Yet trusts in the name of the Lord and relies upon his God" [Is 50.10].

Vs. 6: In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

Derek is the noun for "ways" last noted in 2.20 and is used here with the verb *yadah* ('acknowledge') commonly taken as to know (cf. 1.23). Here *derek* is in the plural meaning that the intimate knowledge of *yadah* must apply to them all even though their number is unspecified. Once this knowledge is implemented regarding the indefinite number of ways, the Lord "will make straight" or *yashar* one's paths. The adjective (same spelling) is noted several times earlier in this document. "The righteousness of the blameless keeps his way straight, but the wicked falls by his own wickedness" [11.5]. *Yashar* is used with regard to "paths" or *'orach* last noted in 2.20.

As noted in 2.8, *'orach* and *derek* are compared; the former seems to apply more to a path for walking whereas the latter is used for walking as well as for carts and animals. In the verse at hand, *'orach* is plural (an indefinite number) as with *derek*.

Vs. 7: Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and turn away from evil.

Chakam is the adjective for "wise" last noted in 1.5. In place of being *chakam* with respect to oneself, Solomon advises to "fear" or *yare'* with respect to the Lord. "She is not afraid of snow for her household, for all her household are clothed in scarlet" [31.21]. Such fear or reverence has the effect of turning one away from evil, *sur* being the verb as in 13.14: "The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life that one may avoid the snares of death." *Rah* is the word for "evil," an adjective, as in 2.14.

Vs. 8: It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones.

Riph'oth is the noun (feminine plural) for "healing," the only instance of this word in the Bible derived from

the verbal root *rapha'* which connotes a type of mending. “Lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their hearts and turn and be healed” [Is 6.10]. Such healing is with respect to one’s “flesh” or in Hebrew, *shor* (‘navel’), which has one other biblical reference, Ezk 16.4: “Your navel string was not cut nor were you washed with water to cleanse you” [Ezk 16.4].

Shiquv is the noun for “refreshment” which has one other biblical reference, Hos 2.5: “I will go after my lovers who give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, my oil and my drink (*shiquv*).” Such drink is more a kind of moistening which, in the verse at hand, is inward as it pertains to bones, one’s skeletal structure.

Vs. 9: Honor the Lord with your substance and with the first fruit of all your produce;

Kavad is the verb for “honor” and fundamentally means to be heavy or weighty. “He who oppresses a poor man insults his Maker, but he who is kind to the needy honors him” [14.31]. In the verse at hand, *kavad* has two objects:

1) It directs one’s “substance” to the Lord, *hon* being the word which occurs frequently in Proverbs and last noted in 1.13 as “goods.” The preposition *min* (*m*—) is prefaced to *hon*, literally reading “from your substance.”

2) “First fruit” or *re’shyth* last noted in 1.7 as “beginning” but here pertains to one’s “produce” or *tevu’ah* which means produce of the earth as well as profit. “From the fruit of his mouth a man is satisfied; he is satisfied by the yield of his lips” [18.20]. As with *hon*, *tevu’ah* is prefaced with the preposition *min*, “from one’s produce.”

Vs. 10: then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine.

Asamym is the masculine plural for “barns” which has one other biblical reference, Dt 28.8: “The Lord will command the blessing upon you in your barns and in all that you undertake.” This noun fundamentally means storehouses which are kept underground as cellars. *Savah* is the noun for “plenty,” the verbal root being noted last in 1.31 as “sated.” “Seven years of great plenty” [Gn 41.29].

Yegev is the noun for “vats” which also means winepress. “And your offering shall be reckoned to you as though it were the grain of the threshing floor and as the fulness of the winepress” [Num 18.27]. *Parats* is the verb for “bursting” which means to spread abroad, to increase, to press. “Then Phinehas stood up and interposed, and the plague was stayed” [Ps 106.29]. *Tyrosah* is the noun for “wine” and usually refers to newly made wine. “So Israel dwelt in safety, the fountain of Jacob alone, in a land of grain and wine; yes, his heavens drop down dew” [Dt 33.28].

Vs. 11: My son, do not despise the Lord’s discipline or be weary of his reproof.

Ma’as is the verb for “despise” which connotes a sense of rejection. “He who ignores instruction despises himself, but he who heeds admonition gains understanding” [15.32]. The object of *ma’as* or what should not be rejected is the “discipline” of the Lord or *musar* last noted in 1.8 as “instruction.”

Tokachath was noted last in 1.30 and here is the object of the verb “be (not) weary” or *quts*, the only use in Proverbs. *Quts* also means to fear and to be aroused. “But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad” [Ex 1.12].

Vs. 12: for the Lord reproves him whom he loves, as a father the son in whom he delights.

Yakach is the verb for “reproves” which means to argue down, to convict, and the object of *yakach* is the person who the Lord “loves” or *ahav*, last noted in 1.22. Both verbs are found in 9.8: “Do not reprove a scoffer or he will hate you; reprove a wise man, and he will love you.”

This divine-to-human reproof is mirrored in the father-to-son one where the father “delights” in his offspring. The verb here *ratsah* which especially involves delight in social relationships. “My son, give me your heart, and let your eyes delight in my ways” [23.26].

Vs. 13: Happy is the man who finds wisdom and the man who gets understanding,

Ashry is the masculine plural adjective for “happy” and derives from a verbal root meaning to be of good fortune. Related to it is the relative pronoun (‘who,’ ‘which,’ ‘that’) or *’ashar*. The idea of happiness is transitional, hard to nail down with accuracy and therefore is indicative of a fluid state of mind. “He who despises his neighbor is a sinner, but happy is he who is kind to the poor” [14.21].

Note the used of two verbs, “finds” and “gets.” The former is *matsa’* as last noted in 1.28 and the latter is *puq* which means to furnish, to succeed. “A good man obtains favor from the Lord, but a man of evil devices he condemns” [12.2].

Matsa’ relates to *chakmah* (cf. 2.10) and *puq* relates to *tevunah* (cf. 2.11).

Vs. 14: for the gain from it is better than gain from silver and its profit better than gold.

Sachar is the noun for “gain” and has two other biblical references, 31.18 and Is 23.18, the former being quoted here: “She perceives that her medicine is profitable. Her lamp does not go out at night.” *Sakar* applies to wisdom and understanding (*chakmah* and *tevunah*) of the previous verse.

Tevu’ah was noted last in vs. 9 as “produce” which in the verse at hand excels “gold,” *charuts* being the noun which means something that has been sharpened or dug into. *Charuts* therefore is a poetic term for “gold” either because of its “sharp” color or eagerly desired by people. “To get wisdom is better than gold; to get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver” [16.16]. It is compared with *kaseph* (‘silver’).

Vs. 15: She is more precious than jewels, and nothing you desire can compare with her.

Wisdom or *chakmah* is compared with jewels, being “more precious” or *yaqar* as noted last in 1.13. The comparison is with “jewels” or *penynym* (masculine plural) which has five other biblical references, most in Proverbs. *Penynym* seem to apply to red gems or coral as in Job 28.18: “No mention shall be made of coral or of crystal; the price of wisdom is above pearls.” For a verse from Proverbs as is the normal case in the document: “There is gold and abundance of costly stones; but the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel” [20.15].

Chephets is a noun for the English “desire” and derives from a verbal root which fundamentally means to bend, to incline. “She seeks wool and flax and works with willing hands” [31.13]. The verb which *chephets* governs is *shavah* which means to be equivalent, to be equal and thus involves putting two or more objects out there for comparison. “Answer not a fool according to his folly lest he be wise in his own eyes” [26.4].

Vs. 16: Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor.

Orek is a noun for “long” as in 3.2, “length of days” which is located in the right hand of wisdom whereas her left contains “riches and honor” or *hoshar* and *kavod*. *Hoshar* derives from a verbal root meaning to enrich, to be happy. “A gracious woman gets honor, and violent men get riches” [11.16]. *Kavod* derives from the verbal root *kavad* as in vs. 9 which fundamentally means to be heavy. *Kavod* is found in 11.16 as well as 20.3: “It is an honor for a man to keep aloof from strife; but every fool will be quarreling.”

Vs. 17: Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

Derek is the noun for “ways” last noted in vs. 6 whereas here they are “of pleasantness” or *noham*. This

noun has six other biblical references, two of which are in Proverbs, one being 15.26: “The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord; the words of the pure are pleasing to him.”

Natyv is the word for “paths” last noted in 1.15 which as pointed out there, more specifically refers to a road or track trodden on foot and therefore is generally smaller and narrower. Such paths consist of “peace” or *shalom* last noted in 3.2 as “abundant welfare.”

Vs. 18: She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her; those who hold her fast are called happy.

Hets-chayym: “tree of life” which invites comparison with the “tree in the midst of the garden” [Gn 3.3] and later in vs. 22 is called *hets-chayym*. Unlike the one of Genesis, the tree here belongs to wisdom and can be grasped, the verb being *chazaq* which applies to a tying fast or binding as well as to become strong. “For I, the Lord your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, ‘Fear not, I will help you’” [Is 41.13]. In the verse at hand, *chazaq* is used with the preposition *b-*, literally as “lay hold in her.”

The verb *tamak* is similar in meaning to *chazaq* yet implies more a holding onto someone or something. “A gracious woman gets honor, and violent men get riches” [11.16]. To *tamak* is attributed being “happy” or *’ashar* whose verbal root is noted in vs. 13. The notion of advancement as tied up with blessedness is found in 23.19: Hear, my son, and be wise, and direct your mind in the way.” In the verse at hand, “are called” is not in the Hebrew text.

Vs. 19: The Lord by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding he established the heavens;

Chakmah or “wisdom” is prefaced with the preposition *b-* (‘in’) rendering it literally as “in wisdom.” Such was the means by which the Lord “founded” or *yasad* the earth, this verb meaning to constitute, to sit together in council. “My hand laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand spread out the heavens” [Is 48.13]. As for “earth,” the noun is *’erets* last noted in 2.22 which means more than a physical place, more a homeland.

Tevunah or “understanding” was noted last in vs. 13 which here has “established” *kun* the heavens, this verb suggestive of founding, of standing upright or constituting. “Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established” [13.3]. *Kun* differs from *yasad* in that the latter implies more cooperative planning and effort, that is, for the “heavens” or *shamaym*.

Vs. 20: by his knowledge the deeps broke forth, and the clouds drop down the dew.

Dahath or “knowledge” was noted last in 2.10 and suggests knowing (*yadah*) of an intimate kind. Here it applies not so much to the “deeps” or *tehom* but to their having broken forth. This noun suggests a great quantity of water such as the ocean as in Gn 1.2: “and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters.” The verse at hand is suggestive of Genesis when the waters “broke forth” or *baqah*, a verb which means to seek with the primary power of touching or feeling and thus a hands-on approach. “On that day all the fountains of the great deep (*tehom*) burst forth” [Gn 7.11], a verse referring to the great flood of Noah’s time.

Tal is the noun for “dew” which is opposite the *tehom* by reason of its gentleness. “A foolish son is ruin to his father, and a wife’s quarreling is a continual dripping of rain” [19.12]. *Shachaq* is the source for such dew which also means dust and can be used for the firmament of heaven. “Behold, he takes up the isles like fine dust” [Is 40.15]. The dew from such clouds “drop down” or *rahaph*, a gentle verb applied to an equally gentle fall of dew. Four other biblical references exist, one of which is Ps 65.11: “The tracks of your chariot drip with fatness.”

Vs. 21: My son, keep sound wisdom and discretion; let them not escape from your sight,

“My son:” the third mention of these words in Chapter Three by King Solomon to his reprobate son, Rehoboam. The Hebrew text has the second part of this verse coming first.

Natsar: last noted in vs. 1 with respect to “commandments.” Here it pertains to first “sound wisdom” or *tushyah* which also means aid and counsel and derived from a verbal root meaning to lift up. “He who is estranged seeks pretexts to break out against all sound wisdom” [18.1]. The second object of the verb *natsar* is “discretion” or *mezmah* last noted in 1.4.

Luz is the verb for “escape” and has five other biblical references, the last being noted in 2.14. “Sight” in Hebrew reads “from (*min-*) your eyes.”

Vs. 22: and they will be life for your soul and adornment for your neck.

Reference is to “sound wisdom” and “discretion” of the previous verse which are *chayym* or “life” (cf. vs. 2) for the “soul” of Solomon’s son, *nephesh* (cf. 2.10). The preposition *l-* (‘to’) is prefaced to *nephesh*, literally as “to your soul,” signifying direction towards-which.

Chen is the noun for “adornment” last noted in vs. 4 as “favor” with regard to the “neck” or *gargroth* last noted in vs. 3.

Vs. 23: Then you will walk on your way securely and your foot will not stumble.

Halak is the common verb for “walk” as in 10.9: “He who walks in integrity walks securely, but he who perverts his ways will be found out.” Such walking is done on the *derek* (‘way’) of Solomon’s son, a word for life and last noted in vs. 17. Such walking is to be done “securely” or *betach* last noted in 1.33 and used here with the preposition *l-* (‘to’) prefaced to it, “to trust” as though the walking involved is headed in that direction and not yet attained fully.

Such walking or *halak* not fully attained prevents the son’s foot from stumbling or *nagaph*. This verb fundamentally means to smite, to be smitten. “On their hands they will bear you up lest you dash your foot against a stone” [Ps 91.12].

Vs. 24: If you sit down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet.

Such sitting down can be taken as rest along the “way” of vs. 23. The verb is *shakav* which fundamentally means to lie down as to sleep or to take rest. “You will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea, like one who lies on the top of a mast” [23.34]. *Pachad* is the verb for “will (not) be afraid,” the noun last noted in 1.33. “Blessed is the man who fears the Lord always; but he who hardens his heart will fall into calamity” [28.14].

Shakav is used a second time in the verse at hand, “lie down” which here refers to “sleep” (*shenah*) being “sweet” or *harav*, a verb meaning to mix, to interchange, to pledge. “Take a man’s garment when he has given surety for a stranger, and hold him in pledge when he gives surety for foreigners” [20.16]. As for “sleep,” see 10.5: “A soon who gathers in summer is prudent, but a son who sleeps in harvest brings shame.”

Vs. 25: Do not be afraid of sudden panic or of the ruin of the wicked when it comes;

Yare’ is the verb for “do (not) be afraid” last noted in vs. 7 and here with regard to a “panic” or *pachad* (last noted in 1.33 and the verb in vs. 24) which is “sudden” or *pit’om*. The latter word is an adverb also found in 24.22: “for disaster from them will rise suddenly, and who knows the ruin that will come from them both?” The verb *pachad* of the previous verse (same meaning) connotes more a trembling compared with the reverence of *yare’*.

Sho'ah is the noun for "ruin" last noted in 1.27 as storm and here is proper to those who are "wicked" or *rashah* (cf. 2.22).

Vs. 26: for the Lord will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being caught.

"The Lord will be" is rendered *Yevah yihyeh* or two similar sound words.

Kesel is the noun for "confidence," the only use in Proverbs which fundamentally means flanks and derived from a verbal root meaning to fleshly. Here it basically has a meaning opposite of this root. "And to know the wickedness of folly and the foolishness which is madness" [Ecc 7.25]. In the verse at hand, *kesel* is prefaced by the preposition *b-* ('in') and reads literally as "in your confidence."

Shamar is the verb for "will keep" and was noted last in 2.20. Here it pertains to the foot of Solomon's son not "being caught" or *leked*, the only use of this noun in the Bible and is derived from the verbal root *lakad*, "to catch, to take" and often refers to the taking of booty, captives, etc.

Vs. 27: Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due when it is in your power to do it.

Manah is the verb for "withhold" and was noted last in 1.15 and here applies to the "good" or *tov*. Such good is to be given to persons deserving it, the noun *bahal* being used and noted last in 1.19 as "possessors."

Yad or "power" fundamentally means "hand" used with the common verb *hasah*, "to do."

Vs. 28: Do not say to your neighbor, "Go, and come again, tomorrow I will give it"—when you have it with you.

Reah is the noun for "neighbor" which derives from the verbal root *raha* ('to pasture, to feed') and thus suggests a *reah* functioning as a kind of pasture. "A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity" [17.17]. Reference to "it" in the verse at hand is the "good" or *tov* of vs. 27.

Yesh is the word for "when" and also means that which is present or ready. "One man (i.e., 'there is' or *yesh*) gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give and only suffers want" [11.24].

Vs. 29: Do not plan evil against your neighbor who dwells trustingly beside you.

Charash is the verb for "plan" which connotes fabrication and can have a somewhat sinister tone about it. "Deceit is in the heart of those who devise evil, but those who plan good have joy" [12.20]. In the verse at hand, *charash* goes well with "evil" or *rah* last noted in vs. 7. Such *rah* is directed against one's "neighbor" or *reah* as in the last verse. Note the similarity of sound with respect to the two verbs: *rah* and *reah*. Also note that *charash* is used with the preposition *hal* ('upon'): "do not plan evil upon your neighbor."

Betach was noted last in vs. 23 as "securely and runs here as in vs. 23 literally as "in trust."

Vs. 30: Do not contend with a man for no reason when he has done you no harm.

Ryv is the verb for "contend" and often is used in a legal sense as to plead a cause. "For the Lord will plead their cause and despoil of life those who despoil them" [22.23]. *Chinam* is an adverb which means "no reason" last noted in 1.17 as "in vain."

Gamal is the verb for "has done" and suggests a repaying and even weaning of a child. "She does him good and not harm all the days of her life" [31.12]. In the verse at hand it is used with the noun *raha*. Note that this is the same verbal root from which "neighbor" is derived in vs. 29. Its alternate spelling is *rah* as in vs. 29.

Vs. 31: Do not envy a man of violence, and do not choose any of his ways;

Qana' is the verb for "envy" which fundamentally means to acquire or to buy. "Let not your heart envy sinners, but continue in the fear of the Lord all the day" [23.17]. In the verb at hand this verb is used with the preposition *b-* prefaced to "man" and reads literally as "do not envy in a man of violence." *Chamas* is the noun for "violence" and alternately means oppression or that which is wrong. "Blessings are on the head of the righteous, but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence" [10.23].

Bachar is the verb for "choose" and noted last in 1.29 but here used with respect to *derek* or "ways." This noun was noted last in vs. 23.

Vs. 32: for the perverse man is an abomination to the Lord, but the upright are in his confidence.

Luz is a verb for "perverse man" which fundamentally means to bend, to depart from and can apply to bending in the negative moral sense. It was noted last in vs. 21. Such propensity to turn aside, if you will, is an "abomination" or *tohevah* to God, this word occurring frequently in Proverbs. "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but those who act faithfully are his delight" [12.22]. There is no preposition ('to') relative to the Lord.

Yashar is the adjective for "upright" was noted last in 2.21 and in the verse at hand pertains to divine "confidence" or *sod*, a noun which fundamentally means a sitting together or counsel and also implies familiar conversation. "Argue your case with your neighbor himself, and do not disclose another's secret" [25.9].

Vs. 33: The Lord's curse is on the house of the wicked, but he blesses the abode of the righteous.

Me'erah is the noun for "curse" which occurs three other times in the Bible, the fourth being 28.27: "He who gives to the poor will not want, but he who hides his eyes will get many a curse." This word derives from the verbal root *'arar*, to curse. The preposition *b-* ('in') is prefaced to the word "house" literally reading, "in the house" which makes the *me'erah* all the more penetrating. Thus the "wicked" or *rashah* last noted in vs. 25 will not be able to escape it.

Barak is the verb for "blesses," the opposite of the *me'erah* just mentioned. "There are those who curse their fathers and do not bless their mothers" [30.11].

Note the difference between "house" and abode" (*beyth* and *naveh*: the former is the common term for a dwelling whereas the latter which derives from the verbal root *navah* ('to sit,' 'to rest') can apply to a pasture as in 1Ch 17.7: "I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you (David) should be prince over my people Israel." As for Proverbs, cf. 21.20: "Precious treasure remains in a wise man's dwelling, but a foolish man devours it." In the verse at hand, *naveh* applies to those who are "righteous" or *tsadyq* last noted in 2.20.

Vs. 34: Toward the scorners he is scornful, but to the humble he shows favor.

Luts is the same verbal root for "scorners" and "scornful" which fundamentally means to stammer, to speak barbarously. It occurs frequently in Proverbs and was noted last in 1.22.

Hanav is the adjective for "humble" and connotes being afflicted or miserable. "He who despises his neighbor is a sinner, but happy is he who is kind to the poor" [14.21]. To those who are *hany* the Lord "shows" (the common verb *natan*, 'to give,' last noted in 2.7) "favor" or *chen* which was noted last in vs. 22.

Vs. 35: The wise will inherit honor, but fools get disgrace.

Chakam is the adjective for “wise” which was noted last in vs. 7. It is they who will receive an inheritance or the verb *nachal* which involves receiving a possession. “He who troubles his household will inherit wind, and the fool will be servant to the wise” [11.29]. *Kavod* (‘honor’) is this inheritance which also means “glory” last noted in vs. 16.

Kesyl is the noun for “fools” which was noted last in 1.32. *Rum* is the verb for “get” which fundamentally means to rise, to confirm and often is used in a negative sense. “He who is slow to anger has great understanding, but he who has a hasty temper exalts folly” [14.29]. The object of *rum* is *qalon* or “disgrace” and is mentioned frequently in Proverbs. “He who corrects a scoffer gets himself abuse, and he who reproves a wicked man incurs injury” [9.7].

Chapter Four

Vs. 1: Hear, O sons, a father’s instruction and be attentive that you may gain insight;

Here King Solomon uses the plural “sons” although Rehoboam is recorded as being his only child, this despite the king’s legendary number of concubines. He extends an twofold invitation to them:

- 1) To “hear” (*shamah*, last noted in 1.33) his “instruction” or *musar* last noted in 3.11.
- 2) To “be attentive” or *qashav* last noted in 2.3.

The aim of *shamah* and *qashav*: that the indefinite number of sons “may gain insight.” They are comprised of two words: *yadath* and *bynah*, knowledge and understanding. The former derives from *yadah* (knowledge in the intimate sense) was noted last in 3.20 and the latter (noun) in vs. 6.

Vs. 2: for I give you good precepts; do not forsake my teaching.

Leqach is the noun for “precepts” which is derived from the common verb *laqach* (to take, to receive) thereby intimating that such precepts are given and thus taken. “The wise of heart is called a man of discernment, and pleasant speech increases persuasiveness” [16.21].

Once such precepts are taken, Solomon advises...even threatens...that the sons do not “forsake” his teaching, the verb being *hazav* last noted in 3.3. The noun for “teaching” is *torah* last noted in 3.1, and that *torah* of Solomon has been spelled out in Proverbs to date.

Vs. 3: When I was a son with my father, tender, the only one in the sight of my mother,

For the first time in Proverbs Solomon speaks of his own experience with his father, King David, and his mother, Bathsheba. As Chapter Eleven of Second Samuel recounts, Bathsheba was the wife of Uriah; David had this faithful warrior slain to take Bathsheba to himself which later caused him countless worries. Surely Solomon must have known that he was an illegitimate son as well as his brother Absalom who never is alluded to in Proverbs. “Only one” suggests that Solomon was Bathsheba’s favorite which turned out to be true as Chapter one of First Kings recounts.

Rak is the adjective for “tender” which also can apply to someone who is weak or infirm as well as overly delicate. “A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger” [15.1].

“In the sight of” is rendered as *liphney* or literally “to the face of.”

Vs. 4: he taught me and said to me, “Let your heart hold fast my words; keep my commandments and live;

King Solomon quotes verbatim what he had heard from his father which is not noted elsewhere and continues

through vs. 9. Thus it shows continuity from father to son or from the first king of Israel to its second king.

Yarah is the verb for “taught” which alternately means to sprinkle, to cast, to tremble as well as to lay a foundation. Thus it implies a vigorous, direction action as when applied to teaching as in the verse at hand. “Like a madman who throws firebrands, arrows and death” [26.18].

The *arah* by David to Solomon begins with an appeal for his son’s heart to “hold fast” to his words, the verb being *tamak* last noted in 3.18. *Davar* is the common noun for “words” as in 2.12.

Shamar is the verb for “keep” last noted in 3.26, here with respect to David’s “commandments” or *mitsvah* as in 3.2, only here such *mitsvah* are intended for Solomon to “live” (*chayah*) or in the situation in which he finds himself, namely, to protect himself against his rebellious son, Rehoboam.

Vs. 5: do not forget and do not turn away from the words of my mouth. Get wisdom; get insight.

The Hebrew text has the last sentence first.

Here David’s command to Solomon not to “forget” nor to “turn away” are one and the same, *shakach* and *natah*, both last noted in 3.1. Both verbs here pertain to David’s “words” or *emer* last noted in 2.1. Use of “mouth” is obvious but can intimate words uttered instead of written down in one form or another.

The verb *qanah* translates as “get” last noted in 1.5 and means a permanent acquisition of both “wisdom” and “insight” which are *chakmah* and *bynah* last noted respectively in 3.19 and 4.1. David stresses this acquisition by two short commands where *qanah* is used twice.

Vs. 6: Do not forsake her, and she will keep you; love her, and she will guard you.

An interaction between “forsake” and “will keep” or *hazav* and *shamar*, the verbs last noted respectively in vs. 2 and vs. 4. David is speaking of either *chakmah* or *bynah*, both nouns of the feminine gender in vs. 5. Since that verse has two short sentences with the verb *qanah* (‘get’), perhaps he has in mind both acting as one.

Ahav is the verb for “love” last noted in 3.12 which results in *chakmah/bynah* guarding Solomon, the verb being *natsar* last noted in 3.21.

Vs. 7: The beginning of wisdom is this: Get wisdom, and whatever you get, get insight.

Compare “beginning of wisdom” (*chakmah*, cf. vs. 6) with “beginning of knowledge” of 1.7, *re’shyth* of “knowledge” (*dahath*). The former suggests skillfulness whereas the latter, knowing in an intimate fashion. David lays it out directly using the verb *qanah* again as in the previous verse and includes *bynah* (‘insight’) which indicates the similarity or even unity with *chakmah* as intimated in vs. 5.

Vs. 8: Prize her highly, and she will exalt you; she will honor you if you embrace her.

Salal is the verb for “prize highly” which fundamentally means to lift up as well as to move to and fro. “The way of a sluggard is overgrown with thorns, but the path of the upright is a level highway” [15.19]. Similar to *salal* is the verb *rum* last noted in 3.35. The former involves not only lifting up but moving (wisdom) once it has been so raised whereas the latter puts emphasis upon height, as high as one can go.

Kavad is the verb for “will honor” and last noted in 3.9. Such bestowing of *kavad* is dependent upon Solomon embracing wisdom/insight, the verb being *chavaq* which also can apply to the folding of hands (cf. 6.10 and 24.33). “O that his left hand were under my head, and that his right hand embraced me” [Sg 2.6]!

Vs. 9: She will place on your head a fair garland; she will bestow on you a beautiful crown."

This verse brings to conclusion the words uttered by King David, father of King Solomon, begun in vs. 4.

Natan is the verb for "will place" last noted in 3,34 with wisdom/insight being the agent and here refers to a "fair garland" last noted in 1.9. It is comprised of *liwyah* and *chen*, the latter being a noun meaning favor or grace; i.e., a "garland of grace or fairness."

Magan is the verb for "bestow" and suggests delivering into one's power or hands and therefore is more direct than the verb *natan*. Only two other biblical references exist, Gn 14.20 and Hos 11.8, the former being cited here: "Blessed be God Most High who has delivered your enemies into your hands!"

Hatereth is the noun for "crown" and implies royal dignity which applies to both David and Solomon, first and second kings of Israel. "A virtuous woman is a crown for her husband" [12.4]. In the verse at hand, this crown is one of beauty, *tiph'ereth* being a noun which applies to splendor or glory. "A hoary head is a crown of glory; it is gained in a righteous life" [16.31].

Vs. 10: Hear, my son, and accept my words, that the years of your life may be many.

Now Solomon resumes addressing his son, Rehoboam. Compare this singular son with the plural "sons" which opens Chapter Four; both that verse and the one at hand begin with *shamah* ('hear'). After having recounted advice given by his father, David, Solomon wishes to transmit it to Rehoboam and therefore pass on to him what King David had initiated. However, historically it did not turn out this way.

Laqach is the common verb for "accept" last noted in vs. 2 with respect to 'emer or "words," last noted in vs. 5. Such words by Solomon consist in his wish that Rehoboam's years may be many which turned out to be true though he had caused considerable trouble, something obviously unseen by his father.

Vs. 11: I have taught you the way of wisdom; I have led you in the paths of uprightness.

As noted frequently in earlier verses, the son whom Solomon addresses is Rehoboam, and that should be kept in mind throughout the words Solomon puts forth in Proverbs. The text can be repetitious and at times boring, but keeping in mind this wicked son and his failure to follow his father make the text all the more interesting. Perhaps this repetition has something to do with an insight Solomon had into his son, that he would neither turn out to be a good person nor a good king. At the time when Solomon was addressing Rehoboam nothing of the future was known though Solomon must have been uncomfortable with the curse put on his father David's house and lineage. Such a curse prompted Solomon to write Proverbs and counter the terrible words of 2Sam 12.10: "Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house because you have despised me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife."

Yarah is the verb for "taught" last noted in vs. 4 with respect to *derek* which refers to any type of road or path: i.e., either for walking or carts pulled by animals. Note that Solomon has not taught *chakmah* ('wisdom,' cf. vs. 7) proper but the *derek* of *chakmah* which requires Rehoboam or anyone else to take the initiative and actually set out upon it.

Mahgal is the noun for "paths" last noted in 2.18 and derives from a verbal root meaning to roll (*hagal*), thus suggestive of a wheel in a rut applicable to a path for the transport of cargo or people in carriages. In the verse at hand, *mahgal* is associated with "righteousness" or *yosher* last noted in 2.13.

Solomon himself says that he has "led" his son in these paths, *darak* being the verb, the root for *derek*, and the only occurrence in Proverbs. "And smite it ('sea of Egypt') into seven channels that men may cross dry-shod" [Is 11.15].

Vs. 12: When you walk, your step will not be hampered; and if you run, you will not stumble.

Halak is the common verb for “walk” last noted in vs. 23 which refers to the future passage of Solomon’s son on the way and paths of the previous verse or better, what they are associated with (wisdom and uprightness). There Solomon had done the leading whereas here his son must do it himself.

Tsahad is the noun for “step” and deliberately used as singular which implies fuller concentration and focus upon the way and paths than if the plural had been used. It implies a going slowly and carefully as well as a step upwards. “A man’s mind plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps” [16.9]. *Tsarar* is the verb for “hampered” which fundamentally means to press, to be distressed. “Like one who binds the stone in the sling is he who gives honor to a fool” [26.8].

A contrast between *ruts* and *kashal* (‘run’ and ‘stumble’): the former was noted last in 1.16 and the latter more specifically means to fall down. “For a righteous man falls seven times and rises again; but the wicked are overthrown by calamity” [24.16].

Vs. 13: Keep hold of instruction, do not let go; guard her, for she is your life.

Chazaq is the verb for “keep hold” last noted in 3.18 and here pertains to “instruction” or *musar* last noted in 4.1. Such *musar* is to be kept tightly, *raphah*

Vs. 14: Do not enter the path of the wicked, and do not walk in the way of evil men.

Orach is the word for “path” last noted in 3.6 along with *derek* (‘ways’) and here associated with the “wicked” or those who are *rashah* last noted in 3.33.

Compare the common verb *bo’* (‘enter’) with that of *ashar* which means to lead straight, to be successful or to prosper. The latter verb is the root for the relative pronoun who, which, that as well as the adjective *asher*. “Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her” [31.28].

Compare the just mentioned *rashah* (‘wicked’) with those who are “evil men” or *rah* last noted in 3.30 with the alternate spelling *raha*, a noun. The former applies more to wicked in the sense of being unjust and the latter to evil in the sense of harmful or noxious.

Vs. 15: Avoid it; do not go on it; turn away from it and pass on.

In this short verse Solomon presents equally short commands: “avoid,” “do not go,” “turn away” and “pass on” (*parah*, *havar*, *satah* and *havar*). They are outlined as follows:

- 1) *Parah* means a letting go, making a beginning or even to be naked. It was noted last in 1.25.
- 2) *Havar*: to pass on or by. In the verse at hand *havar* is used twice. “When the tempest passes, the wicked is no more, but the righteous is established forever” [20.25].
- 3) *Satah*: implies the act of declining and has five other biblical references, one of which is Num 5.19: “If you have not turned aside to uncleanness.”
- 4) Note that *havar* is used twice in this verse: first as “do (not) go” and secondly as “pass on,” the latter closer to the transitional sense it conveys.

Vs. 16: For they cannot sleep unless they have done wrong; they are robbed of sleep unless they have made someone stumble.

Shenah as “sleep” was noted last in 3.24, here with respect lack of it due to wrong-doing or *raha* which fundamentally means to make a loud noise, to tremble. “He who plans to do evil will be called a mischief-maker” [24.8].

Gazal is the verb for “have done wrong” to pluck away, to take to oneself. “He who robs his father or his mother and says ‘That is no transgression,’ is the companion of a man who destroys” [28.24]. In the verse at hand, it relates to the verb *kashal* or “stumble” last noted in vs. 3 with respect to sleep.

Vs. 17: For they eat the bread of wickedness and drink the wine of violence.

The verb “eat” and the noun “bread” have the same root, *lacham*. This pair is also found in 9.5: “Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed.”

The verb *lacham* pertains to “wickedness” or *reshah* also found in 10.2: “Treasure gained by wickedness do not profit, but righteousness delivers from death.”

The verb *shatah* (‘drink’) connotes the holding of a banquet. “For he is like one who is inwardly reckoning. ‘Eat and drink!’ he says to you, but his heart is not with you” [23.7]. It pertains to the wine of “violence” or *chamas* last noted in 3.31. Thus wickedness is to be chewed whereas violence is to be drunk, resulting in becoming drunk.

Vs. 18: But the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn which shines brighter and brighter until full day.

Orach is the noun for path noted last in vs. 14. Compare with “paths of righteous” in 2.20 where *derek* is used. *Tsadyq* is used for “righteous” both in the verse at hand and in 2.20. *Orach* here is associated with an eastward path or one associated with sunrise or “dawn,” *nogah*, which means brightness, splendor. “Out of the brightness before him there broke through his clouds hailstones and coals of fire” [Ps 18.12].

The common verb *halak* (‘to go,’ ‘to walk’) last noted in vs. 12 is used with *or* (‘shines’) as fits in well with the idea of a path on which the righteous are walking. “The poor man and the oppressor meet together; the Lord gives light to the eyes of both” [29.13].

This shining increases until “full day” or until the day is established, the verb *kun* being used and last noted in 3.19.

Vs. 19: The way of the wicked is like deep darkness; they do not know over what they stumble.

Derek is the word for “way” and pertains to the “wicked” compared with the *orach* of the righteous in the previous verse; see 1.19 where both are compared. *Rashah* is the adjective for “wicked” as in vs. 14.

The *derek* at hand resembles “deep darkness” or *aphelah* and is symbolic of misery. “So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days” [Ex 10.22].

Kashal is the verb for “stumble” last noted in vs. 16 and used with the verb *yadah* last noted in 3.20 and implies knowing in an intimate fashion. For “over what” the Hebrew text literally reads “in (*b-*) what.”

Vs. 20: My son, be attentive to my words; incline your ear to my sayings.

The more Solomon employs “my son” it seems the heavier the behavior of Rehoboam weighs on his shoulders. In the back of his mind Solomon could not help but think of his equally reprobate brother, Absalom. Despite such appeals throughout Proverbs, never do we hear from the son.

Davar is the noun for “words” last noted in vs. 4 and here used with the verb *qashav* (cf. vs. 2). The verb *natah* is used for “incline” and last noted in vs. 5. The latter verb is stronger than the first; whereas the former

employs words, the latter employs “sayings” or *‘emer* last noted in vs. 10, the other term for “word.”

Vs. 21: Let them not escape from your sight; keep them within your heart.

The first part of this verse deals with seeing or “sight” or literally in the Hebrew, “from your eyes.” Note the transition from being attentive and inclining one’s ear in the previous verse...verbs related to the sense of hearing...to the sense of seeing in the verse at hand. *Luz* is the verb for “escape” last noted in 3.32.

Shamar is the verb for “keep” and was last noted in 4.6 and here with regard to “heart” (*lev*) last noted in 3.5. *Tok* is the preposition for “within” last noted in 1.14 and can refer to the center of anything; often it is used with preposition *b-* prefaced to it, literally as “in the midst.”

Vs. 22: For they are life to him who finds them and healing to all his flesh.

Chayym or “life” last noted in 3.22 but mentioned several times after that reference point. Here it pertains to the person who finds either Solomon’s “words” or “sayings” (*davar* or *‘emer*) in vs. 20, and they, in turn, imply being attentive and inclining. *Matsa’* is the verb for “finds” as in 3.13, and finding suggests the possibility of the opposite, of not finding both *davar* and *‘emer*, a fact which increases the tension and the possibility of failure.

Marpe’ is the noun for “healing” and is similar to 3.8 where a term of the same verbal root *rapha’* is found, *riph’oth*. “There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing” [12.18]. “All” as applied to “flesh” (*basar*) means a person’s entire physical condition. *Basar* is found in 3.8 with regard to *riph’oth* though the Hebrew term there is not given.

Vs. 23: Keep your heart with all vigilance; for from it flow the springs of life.

Shamar is the verb for “keep,” last noted in vs. 21, also with regard to one’s “heart” (*lev*). In the verse at hand, the necessity of “vigilance” is added, *mismar*. This is the only use of the noun in Proverbs and derives from *shamar*.

Totsa’oth is the noun for “springs,” the only use of this word in Proverbs and is derived from the verbal root *yatsa’* (‘to go out’). “Our God is a God of salvation; and to God, the Lord, belongs escape from death” [Ps 68.20]. The verse at hand lacks the verb “flow” in the Hebrew text.

Vs. 24: Put away from you crooked speech, and put devious talk far from you.

Compare the two verbs, “put away” and “put far from:” *sur* and *rashaq*. The former was noted in 3.7 and implies a turning aside whereas the latter involves the placing of distance. “Remove far from me falsehood and lying; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful for me” [30.8].

Sur pertains to *hiqshuth* which has one other biblical reference, 6.12: “A worthless person, a wicked man, goes about with crooked speech.” The verbal root of this noun (*haqash*) means to twist, to pervert. *Lezuth* is the only biblical reference and derives from an unused verbal root meaning to pervert though does not appear to involve the twisting of *haqash*, emphasizing more perversity.

“Speech” and “talk:” in the Hebrew text, mouth and lips.

Vs. 25: Let your eyes look directly forward, and your gaze be straight before you.

Two verbs relative to sight: *navat* and *yashar*, the latter last noted in 3.6. The former means more a beholding where one takes in something in its entirety. This is the only use of the verb in Proverbs. “Open my eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of your law” [Ps 119.18]. The latter, as pointed out in 3.6, does not refer to

sight strictly speaking but serves to direct one's gaze (*haphphapym*) in a straight, unbending direction, "before." *Navat* applies to "eyes" whereas *yashar* applies to *haphphapym* which is found in 30.13: "There are those—how lofty are their eyes, how high their eyelids lift!"

Note the two prepositions, *nakach* and *neged* or "forward" and "before." The former implies that which over against or opposite as well as in a forward direction and the latter, to simply in front of.

Vs. 26: Take heed to the path of your feet, then all your ways will be sure.

Palas in the verb for "take heed" which applies to preparing a way as well as weighing out and has five other biblical references, two in Proverbs Five. "He made a path for his anger; he did not spare them from death, but gave their lives over to the plague" [Ps 78.50]. In the verse at hand, *palas* pertains to a path. The verb "will be sure" is *kun* and last noted in vs. 18.

Two words pertaining to a road: *mahgal* last noted in vs.11 and *derek* last noted in vs. 19. The former is suggestive of a wheel in a rut applicable to a path for the transport of cargo or people in carriages whereas the latter to any road or path.

Vs. 27: Do not swerve to the right or to the left; turn your foot away from evil.

Note the two verbs, "swerve" and "turn away" or *natah* and *sur*. The former was noted last in vs. 20 and is suggestive of inclining whereas the latter in vs. 24 is suggestive of turning aside. Inclining refers to one's feet, to either side of the path of vs. 26 and turning refers to "evil" or *rah*, last noted in vs. 14. No specific direction (right or left) applies to *rah*, hence it differs from swerving or inclining.

Chapter Five

Vs. 1: My son, be attentive to my wisdom, incline your ear to my understanding;

The last time Solomon used the word "son" was 4.20 with the same verb *qashav* which here ties in with his personal take on *chakmah* or "wisdom" noted last in 4.11. The verb *natah* is used in that same verse with regard to his "sayings" but here relates to his "understanding" or *tevunah* noted last in 3.19. Such *tevunah* is reminiscent of the gift Solomon besought the Lord when he became king: "Give your servant therefore an understanding mind to govern your people" [1Kg 2.9]. There the phrase "understanding mind" translates literally as "a hearing heart." The verse at hand has the first instance of *tevunah* applied to King Solomon whereas earlier it applied to the Lord. In other words, Solomon is getting personal as he does in 4.3 when he speaks of his father David's legacy.

As Chapter Five develops, Solomon speaks of dissolute women in order to warn his son, Rehoboam. Given Solomon's innumerable concubines, he knew what he talking about or more specifically, how these women weakened his ability to govern Israel. As 2Chron 11.21 says, Rehoboam "took eighteen wives and sixty concubines and had twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters."

Vs. 2: that you may keep discretion, and your lips may guard knowledge.

The result of being attentive and inclining of one's ear hopefully will result first in keeping discretion or *shamar* which was noted last in 4.23. The object of this *shamar* is "discretion" or *mizmah* noted last in 2.11.

The second result hopefully will be with regard to correct speech as it pertains to "knowledge" or *dahath* noted last in 4.7, this noun pertinent to intimate knowledge. In the verse at hand, the verb *natsar* is used as in 4.6. *Natsar* is an activity not unlike a watchman whereas *shamar* applies to observing or abstaining oneself.

Vs. 3: for the lips of a loose woman drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil;

Here “lips” apply to a “loose woman” in contrast to those of Solomon’s son in vs. 2 as they pertain to “knowledge.” *Zarah* is a verb (participle) for such a person which means to turn aside, to press. “He who gives surety for a stranger (*zarah*) will smart for it, but he who hates surety-ship is secure” [11.15]. In place of “knowledge” relative to the lips of Solomon’s son, those of a *zarah* “drip” honey, the verb being *nataph* which connotes a pleasant image of dripping as in irrigation. It is the only use of this verb in Proverbs. “Your lips distill nectar, my bride; honey and milk are under your tongue” [Sg 4.11]. As for the word “honey,” it is *nopheth* with four other biblical references, two of which are in Proverbs and the former being cited here (My son, eat honey, for it is good, and the drippings of the honeycomb are sweet to your taste” [24.13].

Both the lips of this woman may be not engaged in speech and her “speech,” the word being *chek* which more specifically means palate or taste. It seems that Solomon is drawing attention to the sensual mouth of the woman whom he hopes his son will avoid. In addition to 24.13 just cited regarding “honey,” another reference to *chek* is Sg 2.3: “With great delight I sat in his shadow, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.”

As for “oil” (*shemen*), another verse from Proverbs is 21.17: He who loves pleasure will be a poor man; he who loves wine and oil will not be rich.” The adjective “smoother” modifies this oil, *chalaq*, whose verbal root is found in 2.16 and has four other biblical references, one of which is 26.28: “A lying tongue hates its victims, and a flattering mouth works ruin.”

Vs. 4: but in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword.

While the last verse spoke of the “loose woman’s” lips and speech, it appears that the current verse speaks of her as a whole. *Acharyth* is the noun for “end” which in Proverbs is next found in vs. 11 and then in 14.12: “There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.” In the verse at hand, this end is “wormwood” or *lahanah*, the only reference in Proverbs, and alternately as any kind of bitter poison. “Behold, I will feed them with wormwood and give them poisoned water to drink” [Jer 23.15]. As for the adjective “bitter” (*marah*) and in Exodus: “They could not drink the water of Marah because it was bitter” [15.23].

This idea of bitterness is carried over to the image of a sword which is “two-edged” or *pyoth*, a word which derives from *panym*, “face” or “in the sight of.” It appears that *pyoth* is the only word in the Bible. Obviously such a sword is “sharp” on both faces, as it were, the adjective being *chad* which has three other biblical references, one of which is Ps 57.4: “Their teeth are spears and arrows, their tongues sharp swords.”

Vs. 5: Her feet go down to death; her steps follow the path to Sheol;

“Death” and “Sheol” are presented as equivalent, the latter noted last in 1.12. Note the distinction between “feet” and “steps,” the latter being *tsahad* noted last in 4.12 and connotes a going up and represents the action of the former, what they do naturally but in the wrong direction.

Also note the distinction between “go down” and “follow.” The former (*yarad*) is a simple descent whereas the latter (*tamak*) includes the English words “the path” applies to holding onto something firmly and was noted last in 4.4. This is the first mention of *yarad* in Proverbs. “Who has ascended to heaven and come down? Who has gathered the wind in his fists” [30.4]?

Vs. 6: she does not take heed to the path of life; her ways wander, and she does not know it. *Palas* is the verb for “take heed” and was noted last in 4.26 with regard to a “path” or *mahgal* whereas here the term is *orach* (cf. 4.19) for the first time associated with “life.”

Nuah is the verb for “wander” which also can mean to vacillate, be unsteady. “They shall wander from sea to sea and from north to east” [Am 8.12]. In the verse at hand, *nuah* applies to the “ways” of the loose woman or *mahgal* noted last in 4.26.

This woman not knowing (*yadah*: cf. 4.19) about her wandering results directly from her lack of *palas*.

Vs. 7: And now, O sons, listen to me, and do not depart from the words of my mouth.

The last time Solomon uses the plural “sons” is 4.1. Another meaning of this usage is a fond way of addressing those corrupt youths with whom Rehoboam had been raised and now pays attention. It matters not whether they are present; Solomon will have his words addressed to them through Rehoboam whether he likes it or not.

Sur is the verb for “depart” noted last in 4.27 and here applies not just to Solomon’s words (*emer*; cf. 4.20) but to those belonging to his mouth, and that suggests his being physically present to these sons.

Vs. 8: Keep your way far from her, and do not go near the door of her house;

Rachaq is the verb for “keep far from” noted last in 4.24 and in the verse at hand applies to the “way” or *derek* (cf. 4.26) of Solomon’s sons.

Qarav is the verb for “do (not) go near” and also can apply to the offering of a sacrifice. This is the only use of the verb in Proverbs. “Let the purpose of the Holy One of Israel draw near” [Is 5.19]. In the verse at hand, Solomon prohibits his sons not even to approach the door of the loose woman who seems to have an uncanny ability to detect who is outside.

Vs. 9: lest you give your honor to others and your years to the merciless;

Hod is the noun for “honor,” the only mention of this term in Proverbs, and also applies to the divine majesty. “You whose glory above the heavens is chanted by the mouth of babes and infants” [Ps 8.1-2]. The “others” as well as the “merciless” can refer to Rehoboam’s young associates whom Solomon knew were evil minded, the latter term being *akzary* applicable to those who are cruel and fierce. “A man who is kind benefits himself, but a cruel man hurts himself” [11.17].

Vs. 10: lest strangers take their fill of your strength, and your labors go to the house of an alien;

Two similar words: “strangers” and “alien,” the former being *zur* noted last in 2.16 as a participle (‘loose’) modifying “woman” and the latter being *nakry*, an adjective also in 2.16 as “adventuress” (cf. 5.10 being *nakry*, an adjective also in 2.16 as “adventuress.”

Savah is the verb for “take (their) fill” noted last in 3.10 and here with respect to the implied Rehoboam’s “strength” or *koach* which also can apply to wealth or riches. “Where there are no oxen, there is no grain; but abundant crops come by the strength of the ox” [14.4].

Hetsev is the noun for “labors” and also can mean grief or anger. “The blessing of the Lord makes rich, and he adds no sorrow with it” [10.22].

Vs. 11: and at the end of your life you groan when your flesh and body are consumed,

As for summing up the reign of Rehoboam at the end of his life, 2Chron 12.14 says, “And he did evil, for he did not set his heart to seek the Lord.” Similar words are said of other kings who disobeyed the Lord. While somewhat formulaic, they reflect the collective experience of the people.

Naham is the verb for “groan” which has four other biblical references and also means to growl. “Like a roaring lion or a charging bear is a wicked ruler over a poor people” [28.15].

Kalah is verb for “consumed” and often refers to the completion or finishing of something. “He who winks his

eyes plans perverse things; he who compresses his lips brings evil to pass" [16.30]. In the verse at hand, *kalah* refers to both "flesh" and "body," the latter (*she'er*) usually being associated with a relation by blood. "A man who is kind benefits himself, but a cruel man hurts himself" [11.17].

Vs. 12: and you say, "How I hated discipline, and my heart despised reproof!"

The response attributed from Rehoboam to his father, King Solomon, continues through vs. 14 and reflects the truth about his behavior. Despite acknowledgment of his failings, history proves that Rehoboam, although he may have entertained thoughts of repentance, did not follow through.

Two similar verbs: "hated" and "despised" or *sane'* and *na'ats*. The former was noted last in 1.29 and the latter in 1.30. Mention of the "heart" (*lev*: cf. 4.23) with *na'ats* suggests a more intense dislike, much more than *sane'*.

Vs. 13: I did not listen to the voice of my teachers or incline my ear to my instructors.

Obviously a true statement in light of Rehoboam's consultation and then rejection of the elders' advice in 1Kg 12.6-8.

Note the preposition *b-* ('in') prefaced to the word "voice, literally as "in the voice" which makes the listening all the more effective, provided it were acted upon. The voice at hand belongs to Rehoboam's "teachers" or *yarah*, the participle being used and noted last in 4.11. Compare those who *yarah* which fundamentally means to cast with "instructors" or *lamad*. Again the participle is used and is one of two instances of this word in Proverbs, the other being in 30.3: "I have not learned wisdom, nor have I knowledge of the Holy One."

Note the use of the two verbs, "listen" (*shamah*) and incline" (*natah*) where the former was noted last in 4.10 and the latter in vs. 1. *Natah* is an interiorization of the external hearing and thus is more important.

Vs. 14: I was at the point of utter ruin in the assembled congregation."

The conclusion of Rehoboam's admission of having rejected his father's advice which, as noted above, did not take affect in his life.

"Utter ruin" is rendered literally as "in all evil" (*rah*: cf. 4.27). In the verse at hand, such evil was present to everyone, and the preposition *tok* as in 4.21 with the preposition *b-* prefaced to it (*betok*) suggests that Rehoboam was placed directly in the center of this group.

The nouns *qahal* and *hedah* are used to express "assembled congregation." The former applies more to the entire nation of Israel whereas the latter can as well but pertains to smaller groups such as families or other domestic gatherings. "Though his hatred be covered with guile, his wickedness will be exposed in the assembly (*qahal*)" [26.26]. Proverb has no other instance of *hedah*. "Let the assembly of the people be gathered about you" [Ps 7.7].

Vs. 15: Drink water from your own cistern, flowing water from your own well.

Solomon must have in mind his earlier words of 4.17, "For they eat the bread of wickedness and drink the wine of violence." Thus he wishes Rehoboam not to partake of such "bread" and "wine" but take water from his own "cistern" or *bor*, a noun which also can apply to a prison or sepulcher. *Bor* is next found in 5.15 and in 28.18 where the RSV has "pit" for the Hebrew "one:" "He who walks in integrity will be delivered, but he who is perverse in his ways will fall into a pit."

Compare *bor* with *be'er* or "well" which is more as a fountain, that is, on the surface although it can refer to something akin to a pit. "For a harlot is a deep pit; an adventuress is a narrow well" [23.27]. A *be'er* has

“flowing water” or *nazal*, a verb (participle), the only use of this term in Proverbs. “A garden fountain [*be’er*], a well of living water, and flowing streams from Lebanon” [Sg 4.15]. The verse at hand has *betok* or “from the midst of” indicative of the well’s very center (cf. vs. 14).

Vs. 16: Should your springs be scattered abroad, streams of water in the streets?

In this verse King Solomon asks his son a question, more a rhetorical one, from which he does not expect an answer but desires that Rehoboam question himself instead.

Mahyan is the noun for “springs” and suggests a place irrigated with fountains. “Like a muddied spring or a polluted fountain is a righteous man who gives way before the wicked” [25.26]. Compare with *totsa’oth* in 4.23 which is derived from the verbal root *yatsa’* (‘to go out’).

Puts is the verb for “scattered,” the only use of this verb in Proverbs, and can also mean to break into pieces. “Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered; let those who hate him flee before him” [Ps 68.1]! The sense of *puts* is heightened by use of the noun *chuts* which is used as an adverb and last noted in 1.20 as “in the streets.”

Compare *chuts* with *rechov* which here is rendered as “in the streets” or also as in 1.20 as “in the market” or something like a broad, open area. Within this open area are “streams” of water which more properly are channels of water, *peleg*. “The king’s heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord; he turns it wherever he will” [21.1].

Vs. 17: Let them be for yourself alone and not for strangers with you.

Zur is a verb for “strangers” last noted in 5.10 and again can refer to those young men in 2Kg 12.10-11 who corrupted Rehoboam.

Vs. 18: Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth,

Maqor is the noun for “fountain” which differs from the cistern, well, springs and streams of waters in vss. 15 and 16 and is noted frequently in Proverbs from this point on as a general type of source of water. The next reference is 10.11: “The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life, but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.” In the verse at hand, Solomon wishes his son’s *maqor* to be “blessed,” *barak* being noted last in 3.33.

As for the “wife” at hand (again, keeping in mind Rehoboam), the first mention of one is Mahalath in 2Chron 11.18 though Maacah (the daughter of Absalom, Solomon’s slain brother) is mentioned in vs. 21.

Vs. 19: a lovely hind, a graceful doe. Let her affection fill you at all times with delight, be infatuated always with her love.

Ayalah is the word for “hind,” the only mention in Proverbs and possibly can refer to a wild she-goat. “I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or the hinds of the field” [Sg 2.7]. In the verse at hand, such an animal is “lovely” or *’ahavym*, one of two uses of this noun in the Bible and is derived from the common verbal root *’hav* last noted in 4.6. The other reference to *’ahavym* is Hos 8.9: “Ephraim has hired lovers” [Hos 8.9].

Yahlah is the noun for “doe,” the only use of this term in the Bible which also refers to a female ibex. *Chen* is a noun for “graceful” and last noted in 4.9.

The noun for “affection” is *dad* and has three other biblical references (the basic meaning of *dad* is breast or pap), all in Ezekiel, one of which is 23.3: “there their breasts were pressed and their virgin bosoms handled.” Such breasts, if you will, are intended to “fill” Solomon’s son, the verb being *ravah* which means to drink to

satisfaction, to irrigate. “A liberal man will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered” [11.25].

Such *ravah* is continuous or “at all times,” *heth* connoting a specific time and not unlike the Greek *kairos*. “To make an apt answer is a joy to a man, and a word in season, how good it is” [15.23]! Compared *heth* with *tamyd* (‘at all times’). “All the days of the afflicted are evil, but a cheerful heart has a continual feast” [15.15].

Shagah is the verb for “infatuated” and occurs in the next sentence with regard to a “loose woman” compared with the wife at hand. The fundamental sense is to wander, to go astray as in 20.1: “Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler; and whoever is led astray by it is not wise.” *Shagah* has as its object the bride’s “love” or *‘ahavah*. “Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses” [10.12].

Vs. 20: Why should you be infatuated, my son, with a loose woman and embrace the bosom of an adventuress?

Shagah occurs in vs. 19, also as “infatuated” but with respect to a lawful wife. Here the verb pertains to both a “loose woman” and an “adventuress,” the two nouns being found together in 2.16. To the latter, Solomon asks rhetorically why his son should prefer such women over his wife.

Cheq (or *cheyq*) is the noun for “bosom” which also means lap. “The lot is cast in to the lap, but the decision is wholly from the Lord” [15.33]. It is similar in sound to the verb *chavaq* (‘embrace’) noted last in 4.8.

Vs. 21: For a man’s ways are before the eyes of the Lord, and he watches all his paths.

“Ways” and “paths” or *derek* and *mahgal*; the former last noted in vs. 8 and the latter in 2.18 which derives from a verbal root meaning to roll (*hagal*). The Lord himself has the *derek* of Solomon’s son before *nakach* his eyes, a preposition which implies that which is over against or opposite as well as in a forward direction, a passive, stationary position. As for watching (*palas*; cf. 5.6) his *mahgal*, action is not passive but active.

Vs. 22: The iniquities of the wicked ensnare him, and he is caught in the toils of his sin.

Havon is the word for “iniquities” and refers to guilt contracted by sin, often against the Lord. It occurs one other time in Proverbs, 16.6: “By loyalty and faithfulness iniquity is atoned for, and by the fear of the Lord a man avoids evil.” In the verse at hand they belong to the “wicked” or those who are *rashah* last noted in 4.19.

Compare two similar verbs, “ensnare” and “caught” or *lakad* (cf. 3.26) and *tamak* (cf. 4.4).

Chevel is the noun for “toils,” the only use in Proverbs and often refers to a measuring line or even a possession. “The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; yes, I have a goodly heritage” [Ps 16.6]. In the verse at hand, such *chevel* pertain to “sin” or *chata’th*, first mention of this word in Proverbs. “The wages of the righteous leads to life, the gain of the wicked to sin” [10.16].

Vs. 23: He dies for lack of discipline, and because of his great folly he is lost.

Solomon concludes this chapter on the dire note of the possibility of death for his son which results from both “lack” of discipline and great “folly.” *Eyn* (‘it is not’) is prefaced with the preposition *b-* or “in” and *‘iveleth* is the noun for the latter which occurs frequently in Proverbs from this point on. *‘iveleth* also pertains to impiety. “A prudent man conceals his knowledge, but fools proclaim their folly” [12.23].

Shagah is the verb for “lost” and is noted last in vs. 20.

Chapter Six

Vs. 1: My son, if you have become surety for your neighbor, have given your pledge for a

stranger;

“My son” is mentioned last in 5.20 with respect to a “loose woman” and an “adventuress,” a phrase which serves to orient Rehoboam’s intention as Proverbs continues with exhortations from his father, King Solomon.

Harav is the verb for “have become surety” mentioned last in 3.24 with the different meaning of “will be sweet.” In the verse at hand, *harav* is used with respect to “neighbor” or *reah* noted last in 3.29, a verb with the meaning in 5.20 which suggests a pleasant relationship.

Taqah is the verb for “have given (your) pledge” and is the first use of it in Proverbs. *Taqah* means to strike as well as to blow such as a trumpet. “He who gives surety for a stranger will smart for it, but he who hates surety-ship is secure” [11.15]. In the verse at hand, *taqah* is with respect to a “stranger” or *zur*, a verb which is noted last in 4.17. Also, this verb is used with the noun *kaph* or “hand” which is not in the English translation.

Vs. 2: if you are snared in the utterance of your lips, caught in the words of your mouth;

Yaqash is the verb for “snared,” the only occurrence in Proverbs, which usually applies to the trapping of a bird. “And many shall stumble thereon (‘stone of offense’); they shall fall and be broken; they shall be snared and taken” [Is 8.15]. In the verse at hand, *yaqash* is not a physical trap but yielding to one’s own mistakes put as an “utterance of lips” or literally as “in (*b-*) the words (*‘emer*) of your mouth.”

Note the verb *lakad* (cf. 5.22) which is similar to yet more general than *yaqash* which has the word “mouth.”

Vs. 3: then do this, my son, and save yourself, for you have come into your neighbor’s power; go, hasten and importune your neighbor.

The common verb “do” (*hasah*: noted last in 3.27) has the particle *‘epho* or “then,” the only use of this word in Proverbs. “Oh now that my words were written” [Job 19.23]! Solomon concludes his extended sentence, more a warning, to his son (Rehoboam) with wanting him to “save” himself, the verb being *natsal* (it connotes snatching) noted last in 2.16.

Kaph is the noun for “power” noted above in vs. 1 and as there, has *reah* for “neighbor.”

The three commands (they can be called urgings as well) which are reminiscent of Jesus’ words in Mt 5.23-4: “So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before th altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother.” The three verbs are “go,” “hasten” and “importune” or *halak* (cf. 4.19), *raphas* and *rahav*. The second means to tread down with one’s feet and suggests being in a rush. It has one other biblical reference, Ps 68.30: “Trample under foot those who lust aft er tribute; scatter the peoples who delight in war.” The third also means to tremble with fear and has three other biblical references, one of which is Sg 6.5: “Turn away your eyes from me, for they disturb (*rahav*) me.”

Vs. 4: Give your eyes no sleep and your eyelids no slumber;

Shenah and *tenumah* or “sleep” and “slumber.” The first was noted last in 4.16 whereas the latter has four other biblical references, two of which are in Proverbs, 6.10 and 24.33. The two Proverbs verses are the same: “A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest.” *Shenah* is the common verb for sleep whereas *tenumah* equates sleep with idleness.

Haphphapym or “eyelids” was noted last in 4.25.

Vs. 5: save yourself like a gazelle from the hunter, like a bird from the hand of the fowler.

Natsal is the verb for “save” and noted last in vs. 3, but here it is more in terms of both a “gazelle” and “bird.” The former is *tsevy*, the only use of this term in Proverbs and also can mean glory or beauty. *Tsevy* is mentioned frequently in the Song of Songs as in 2.7: “I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or the hinds of the field, that you stir not up nor awaken love until it please.” In the verse at hand, “hunter” is not in the Hebrew text; instead it reads “from the hand.”

Tsipor is the generic word for “bird,” usually referring to small ones. “Like a sparrow in its flitting, like a swallow in its flying, a curse that is causeless does not alight” [26.2]. As for “fowler,” the noun is *yaqosh*, the only biblical reference. It derives from the verbal root *yaqash* as in vs. 2.

Vs. 6: Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways and be wise.

Halak is the common verb for “go” noted last in vs. 3 and here pertains to the “ant” or *nemalah* whose only other biblical reference is in 30.35: “The ants are a people not strong, yet they provide their food in the summer.” In contrast to this insect, Solomon calls his son a “sluggard” or *hatsel* which is used frequently in Proverbs, the next reference after vs. 9 being 10.26: “Like vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes, so is the sluggard to those who send him.” *Hatsel* is an adjective suggestive of slothfulness as in 10.26.

Ra’ah is the common verb “to see” as in the command “consider” as in 22.3: “A prudent man sees danger and hides himself; but the simple go on and suffer for it.” The object of this seeing is the ant’s “ways” or *derek* (cf. 5.21) with the result, hopefully, that Solomon’s son will “be wise” or *chakam*. “Hear, my son, and be wise, and direct your mind in the way” [23.19].

Vs. 7: Without having any chief, officer or ruler,

The ant lacks leadership such as *qatsyn*, *shoter* or *moshel*. The first also refers to a judge or magistrate, and the other Proverbs use is in 25.15: “With patience a ruler may be persuaded, and a soft tongue will break a bone.” The second is the only used of the term in Proverbs and derives from a verbal root to write, applying to a magistrate. “And the Levites will serve you as offers” [2Chron 19.11]. The third is a verb (*mashal*) next found in 16.32: He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.”

Vs. 8: she prepares her food in summer and gathers her sustenance in harvest.

Kun is the verb for “prepare” and noted last in 4.26 and is used with respect to the ant’s “food” or literally “bread” (*lechem*). Compare *lechem* with *ma’kal* (‘sustenance’), the only use of this noun in Proverbs which derives from the verbal root to eat. “They have given the bodies of your servants to the birds of the air for food” [Ps 79.2].

‘*Agar* is the verb for “gathers” with two other biblical references one of which is 10.5: “A son who gathers in summer is prudent, but a son who sleeps in harvest brings shame.”

Two seasons pertinent to growing crops: “summer” and “harvest” (autumn) or *qayts* and *qatsar* where both are found in 10.5 just cited.

Vs. 9: How long will you lie there, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep?

Throughout these verses one gets the growing impression that King Solomon was quite familiar early on with his son’s (Rehoboam) disturbing association with less than desirable youths and that it bode ill for his future and more importantly, for the nation of Israel. The verse at hand consists of two short questions which reveal Solomon’s growing distrust and loss of faith.

Shakav is the verb for “lie” noted last in 3.24. For the second time he addresses his son as a “sluggard” or

hatsel as in vs. 6. It is not unlike *shenah* or “sleep” last noted in vs. 4.

Qum is the verb for “arise.”

Vs. 10: A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest,

This verse is repeated verbatim in 24.33. For the previous use of “slumber” (*tenumah*), see vs 4. *Chibuq* is the noun for “folding,” the only biblical reference which derives from the verbal root *chavaq* as in 5.20 (to embrace). *Shakav* (‘rest’) was noted last in vs. 9.

Vs. 11: and poverty will come upon you like a vagabond and want like an armed man.

Rysh is the noun for “poverty” with five other biblical references, all in Proverbs. “A rich man’s wealth is his strong city; the poverty of the poor is their ruin” [10.15]. In the verse at hand, *rysh* is used with the common verb *bo’* last noted in 4.14 and the verb *halak* (cf. vs. 6) used as a noun, “vagabond.”

Machsor is the noun for “want” which has a number of references in Proverbs such as 11.24: “One man gives freely yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give and only suffers want.” *Machsor* derives from the verbal root *chasar* which means to be devoid, to be without. *Magen* is the noun for “armed man” last noted in 2.7 as “shield.”

Vs. 12: A worthless person, a wicked man, goes about with crooked speech,

“Worthless” is a noun (*belyahal*) used with another noun or “man” which connotes destruction and vileness. “A worthless man plots evil, and his speech is like a scorching fire” [16.27]. Even worse is a man who is “wicked” or *aven*, a noun which also means iniquity and implies nothingness.

Compare the use of “person” and “man” or *adam* and *ysh*. The former suggests human origins as from the earth (*adamah*) whereas the latter refers to both man and woman.

The common verb “goes” or *halak* (cf. vs. 11) applies to both these individuals with “speech” (*peh*: more commonly as ‘mouth’) which is “crooked” or *hiqshuth* which is a noun with one other biblical reference in 4.24. If one’s speech is crooked, so is one’s manner of walking which is the implication here.

Vs. 13: winks with his eyes, scrapes with his feet, points with his finger,

In the act of going about of vs. 12 this man engages in three despicable activities involving eyes, feet and finger:

- 1) “Winks” or *qarash* as in 10.10: “He who winks the eye causes trouble, but he who boldly reproves makes peace” [10.20].
- 2) “Scrapes” or *malal*, a verb with four other biblical references and which alternately means to speak, to cut off. “Who can utter the mighty doings of the Lord or show forth all his praise” [Ps 106.2]?
- 3) “Points” or *yarah* last noted in 5.13 and fundamentally means to cast. In the verse at hand, *marah* thus intimates a vigorous, repetitive pointing of the finger in a condemnatory fashion.

Vs. 14: with perverted heart devises evil, continually sowing discord;

This verse moves to the interior of a person compared with exterior gestures noted to date, for example, the “heart” or *lev* last noted in 5.12. In the verse at hand, such a *lev* is “perverted” or *tahpukoth*, a noun last noted in 2.14. From this emerges “evil” or *rah* (cf. 5.14) which one “devises” or *charash* last noted in 3.28 and connotes fabrication.

Heth is the noun for “continually” last noted in 5.19 and with its suggestion of continuance, means that one sows “discord” without ceasing, the noun being *midyanym* with two other biblical references, all in Proverbs,

vs. 19 and 10.12. The latter is given here: "Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offences." In the verse at hand, such *midyanym* is sown where the common verb *shalach* is used, to send. Thus such discord is sent meaning it has a wider application than just being cast into the ground before oneself.

Vs. 15: therefore calamity will come upon him suddenly; in a moment he will be broken beyond healing.

Eyd is the noun for "calamity" last noted in 1.27 which here comes (rather, future tense, *bo'* as in vs. 11) "suddenly" or *pit'om* noted last in 3.25. Compare *pit'om* with "in a moment" or *petah* which connotes something unexpected as in 29.1: "He who is often reprov'd yet stiffens his neck will suddenly be broken beyond healing."

In both verses the verb *shavar* is used with the sense of utter destruction which in the verse at hand is beyond "healing" or *marpe'* noted last in 4.22. "Beyond" here is *'eyn* or "there is not."

Vs. 16: There are six things which the Lord hates, seven which are an abomination to him:

In this verse through vs. 19 King Solomon speaks of six things but does not mention them, instead giving seven. The six are those which the Lord "hates" or *sane'* last noted in 5.12 and which he does not reveal but prefers keeping for himself or for between him and King Solomon, not Rehoboam. As for the seven things, they are an "abomination" or *tohevah* last noted in 3.32 and which the Lord proceeds to make know.

Nephesh is the noun for "him" and commonly is rendered as "soul." It was noted last in 3.22.

Vs. 17: haughty eyes, a lying tongue and hands that shed innocent blood,

Three which consist of the (revealed) abomination just mentioned pertain to eyes, tongue and hands:

1) "Haughty" or *rom* (verb) which means to be high. "Wisdom is too high for a fool; in the gate he does not open his mouth" [24.7].

2) "Lying" or the noun *sheqer* as in 10.18: "He who conceals hatred has lying lips, and he who utters slander is a fool."

3) "Shed" or *shaphak* noted last in 1.16, here with respect to blood which is "innocent" or *naqy* noted last in 1.11.

Vs. 18: a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil,

This verse continues the seven things that comprise an abomination to the Lord in vs. 16 and pertain to the heart and feet:

4) "Plans" or *machasheveth* which derives from the verbal root *chashav*, to think, to meditate, to devise. "The thoughts of the righteous are just; the counsels of the wicked are treacherous" [12.5]. *'Aven* is the noun for "wicked plans last noted in vs. 12.

5) "Evil" or *rahah* last noted in 4.16 to which one "makes haste" or *mahar* last noted in 1.6 and here applied to running or *ruts* (cf. 4.12).

Vs. 19: a false witness who breathes out lies, and a man who sows discord among brothers.

6) "Lies" or *kazav* which is found next in 14.5: "A faithful witness does not lie, but a false witness breathes out lies." Such a person "breathes" them out or *puach* which connotes a blowing through and the uttering of a statement. "He who speaks [*puach*] the truth gives honest evidence, but a false witness utters deceit" [12.17].

7) "Discord" or *medanyim* which is related closely to the more common *midyan* (strife, contention) and

has two other biblical references, both in Proverbs (vs. 19 and 10.12) with the latter being cited here: Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses.” The common verb *shalach* (to send; cf. vs. 14) is used for “sows” which takes place “among” or literally “between” (*byn*) brothers which makes it all the more insidious.

Such is the sum of “seven things” begun in vs. 17 after which Solomon changes the tone of his address to his son, Rehoboam. Unfortunately, most of what Solomon had warned about came true with regard to Rehoboam though he died a natural death.

Vs. 20: My son, keep your father’s commandment and forsake not your mother’s teaching.

The last time “my son” occurred was vs. 3.

Natsar is the verb for “keep” and noted last in 5.2 and here with regard to the “commandment” or *mitsvah* (cf. 4.4) of the father. Here Solomon of himself as a third person; the same applies to the mother, presumably Bathsheba mentioned in 4.3. “Teaching” or *torah* belongs to her (cf. 4.2) and should not be forsaken, *natash*, last noted in 1.8. If the son won’t listen to his father, there’s a chance he may be moved to listen to his mother.

Vs. 21: Bind them upon your heart always; tie them about your neck.

This verse is similar to 3.3 where Dt 6.8 is quoted to situate the verse at hand: “Hear, O Israel. The Lord our God is one Lord.” The verses which follow command that this injunction be “upon your heart” [vs. 6] and a “sign upon your hand” and “as frontlets between your eyes.” In the verse at hand, the binding or *qashar* as in 3.3 where it applies to the neck whereas here it applies to the “heart” (*lev*: cf. vs. 14). *Qashar* is used here with the preposition *hal* or “upon” which means that the father’s commandment and mother’s teaching are to be situated upon their son’s heart as a kind of weight.

The same preposition *hal* is used with regard to “neck” or *gargroth* (cf. 3.23) where the same commandment and teaching are to act as weights. *Hanad* is the verb for “tie” and has one other biblical reference: “Surely I would carry it on my shoulder; I would bind it on me as a crown” [Job 31.36].

Vs. 22: when you walk, they will lead you; when you lie down, they will watch over you; and when you awake, they will talk with you.

This verse has “they” three times whereas the Hebrew has “it,” intimating that what the parents gave their son in vs. 20, despite being a kind of weight on his heart and neck, are to guide him as spelled out here.

The three pairs of vs. 22 are as follows:

1) “Walk-lead” or *halak-nachah*. The former is noted last in vs. 12 whereas the latter usually applies to governing people. “The integrity of the upright guides them, but the crookedness of the treacherous destroys them” [11.3].

2) “Lie down-watch” or *shakav-shamar*. The former is noted last in vs. 10 whereas the latter in 5.2. In the verse at hand, the preposition *hal* (‘upon’) is used for “over.”

3) “Awake-talk” or *quts-sych*. *Quts* is the only use of this term in Proverbs and has the same spelling as *quts* as to be weary in 3.11. “I lie down and sleep; I wake up again, for the Lord sustains me” [Ps 3.5]. *Sych* is the only use of the term in Proverbs and means to sing, to mediate. “And on your wondrous works I will meditate” [Ps 145.5].

Vs. 23: For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching a light, and the reproofs of discipline are the way of life,

Three pairs in this verse which run as follows:

1) "Commandment" equals "lamp" or *mitsvah* (cf. vs. 21) and *ner* which usually applies to a candle. "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" [Ps 119.105].

2) "Teaching" equals light" or *torah* (cf. vs. 20) and *'or* (cf. 4.18).

3) "Reproofs" equal "way of life" or *tokachath* (cf. 3.11) and *derek* (cf. vs. 6) with regard to life. *Musar* or "discipline" is noted last in 4.13.

Vs. 24: to preserve you from the evil woman, from the smooth tongue of the adventuress.

Shamar is the verb for "preserve" noted last in 5.2 and here pertains to two types of women: one who is "evil" or *rah* (cf. 6.14) and another who is an "adventuress" (*nakry* cf. 5.10). The latter has a tongue which is "smooth" or *chelqah*, a noun which also means a portion and the only reference in Proverbs. "Truly you set them in slipper places; you make them fall to ruin" [Ps 83.18].

Vs. 25: Do not desire her beauty in your heart, and do not let her capture you with her eyelashes;

Chamad is the verb for "desire" last noted in 1.22 and here pertains to either the evil woman or adventuress (perceived as one and the same) of the previous verse. *Yophy* is the noun for "beauty with the other reference being 31.30: "Charm is deceitful, and beauty if vain, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised." Solomon cautions his son about interiorizing this beauty, that is, placing it within his "heart" or *lev* (cf. vs. 21).

Laqach is the verb for "capture" noted last in 4.10 and here is used with "eyelashes" or *haphphaym* last noted in vs. 4.

Vs. 26: for a harlot may be hired for a loaf of bread, but an adulteress stalks a man's very life.

The verb (participle) *zanah* is used for "harlot" and is noted 23.27: "For a harlot is a deep pit; and adventuress is a narrow well." In the verse at hand, the verb "hired" is not in the Hebrew text.

Esheth 'ysh is the phrase for "adulteress" which is rendered literally as a "a man's wife" who here "stalks" or *tsod* a man (the only reference in Proverbs), a verb also meaning to lay a trap. "Let evil hunt down the violent man speedily" [140.11]! The object of such hunting is a man's "life" or *nephesh* ('soul,' vs. 16).

Vs. 27: Can a man carry fire in his bosom and his clothes not be burned?

Note the similarity of words: *'ysh* and *'esh* ('man' and 'fire'). *Chatah* is the verb for "carry" and means taking hold of in the sense of seizing. There are three other biblical references, one being 25.22: "For you will heap coals of fire on his head, and the Lord will reward you."

Cheq is the noun for "bosom" noted last in 5.20. *Beqed* is the common noun for "clothes." "Take a man's garment when he has given surety for a stranger, and hold him in pledge when he gives surety for foreigners" [20.16].

Vs. 28: Or can one walk upon hot coals and his feet not be scorched?

Halak is the verb for "walk" noted last in vs. 12, here with regard to "hot coals" or *gacheleth*. "For you will heap coals of fire on his head, and the Lord will reward you" [25.22].

Kavah is the verb for "scorched" and has one other biblical reference: "When you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you" [Is 43.2].

Vs. 29: So is he who goes in to his neighbor's wife; not who touches her will go unpunished.

Bo' is the verb for "goes" (cf. vs. 15) with the preposition *'el* ('to') prefaced to "wife" who belongs to a "neighbor" or *reah* which was noted last in vs. 3.

Nagah ('touches') is the only use of this verb in Proverbs and also means to smite. "Take heed that you do not go up into the mountain or touch the border of it" [Ex 19.12]. In the verse at hand, *nagah* is used with the preposition *b-* (literally, 'in') with respect to "her," i.e., "in her."

Naqah is the verb for "goes unpunished." and also means to be pure. "Be assured, an evil man will not go unpunished, but those who are righteous will be delivered" [11.21].

Vs. 30: Do not men despise a thief if he steals to satisfy his appetite when he is hungry?

The Hebrew for "Do not men despise" reads literally "Men do not despise."

Boz is the verb for "despise" as in 23.9: "Do not speak in the hearing of a fool, for he will despise the wisdom of your words." In the verse at hand, the object of *boz* is *ganav* ('thief') with the only other reference in Proverbs being 29.24: "The partner of a thief hates his own life; he hears the curse but discloses nothing." The verbal root "steals" (same spelling) is used with the other Proverbs reference being 9.17: "Stolen water is sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant."

Mala' is the verb for "satisfy" which fundamentally means to fill. "Bread gained by deceit is sweet to a man, but afterward his mouth will be full of gravel" [20.17]. Its object is a man's "appetite" or *nepshesh* ('soul') noted last in vs. 26 or when he is "hungry" (*rahav*). "Slothfulness casts into a deep sleep, and an idle person will suffer hunger" [19.15].

Vs. 31: And if he is caught, he will pay sevenfold; he will give all the goods of his house.

Matsa' is the verb for "caught" which fundamentally means to find and is noted last in 4.22.

Shalam ('will pay') is the verbal root for the noun *shalom* and fundamentally means to make peace. "Misfortune pursues sinners, but prosperity rewards the righteous" [13.21]. To pay or restore anyone "sevenfold" is similar to making full satisfaction or peace, the number seven being considered as representative of that which is full or perfect. The word is *shivhatym*, the only use of this term in Proverbs. "Return sevenfold into the bosom of our neighbors the taunts with which they have taunted you, O Lord" [Ps 79.12]!

Hon is the noun for "goods" noted last in 3.9 and in the verse at hand suggests all that is stored up within one's house.

Vs. 32: He who commits adultery has no sense; he who does it destroys himself.

Na'aph is the verb for "commits adultery" and is used with the noun *'ishah* ('woman'). Often it is used when Israelites worship false gods. "I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely...and do not fear me, says the Lord of hosts" [Mal 3.5].

Chaser is the adjective for "lacks" with regard to "sense" or *lev*, the common noun for "heart," noted last in vs. 25. The verbal root suggests diminishment which, in turn, suggests gradual lessening. It is mentioned frequently in Proverbs as in 10.13: "On the lips of him who has understanding wisdom is found, but a rod is for the back of him who lacks sense (*lev*)."

Shachat is the verb for "destroys" and also means to act wickedly. "He who is slack in his work is a brother to him who destroys" [18.9]. *Shachat* is used with "himself" or *nepshesh* noted last in vs. 30.

Vs. 33: Wounds and dishonor will he get, and his disgrace will not be wiped away.

Negah is the noun for “wounds” (the only use of this term in Proverbs) and also refers to a plague which can be suggested here. It derives from the verbal root *nagah* as in vs. 29. “Yet one more plague more I will bring upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt” [Ex 11.1]. In the verse at hand, *negah* is equivalent to “dishonor” or *qalon* noted last in 3.35. Both are used with the verb “will get” or *matsa’* (‘to find’) noted last in vs. 31.

Cherpah is the noun for “disgrace” and suggests contempt. It has one other reference in Proverbs, 18.3: “When wickedness comes, contempt comes also; and with dishonor comes disgrace.” In the verse at hand, such disgrace is permanent, the verb *machah* being used for “will (not) be wiped away” and has the stronger sense of blotting out completely. “This is the way of an adulteress; she eats and wipes (*machah*) her mouth and says, ‘I have done no wrong’” [30.20].

Vs. 34: For jealousy makes a man furious, and he will not spare when he takes revenge.

Qin’ah is the noun for “jealousy” as in 14.30: “A tranquil mind gives life to the flesh, but passion makes the bones rot.” In the verse at hand, such jealousy/passion “makes furious” or *chemah*, a noun which also means heat and poison. “A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger” [15.1]. *Gever* is the word for “man” commonly used as opposed to a woman. “A man’s steps are ordered by the Lord; how then can man understand his way” [20.24]?

Chamal is the verb “spare,” the only use in Proverbs which means to be mild, to be gentle. “When she (Pharaoh’s daughter) opened it she saw the child; and lo, the babe was crying. She took pity on him” [Ex 2.6]. *Chamal* is the exact opposite of *naqam* which is a noun, the only use of this term in Proverbs. “The righteous will rejoice when he sees the vengeance” [Ps 58.10]. As for when this *naqam* will take place, the Hebrew text has “day” which is not specified but known only by the person intending to take out this retribution.

Vs. 35: He will accept no compensation, nor be appeased though you multiply gifts.

Nasa’ is the verb for “will accept” which fundamentally means to raise up as in 30.13: “There are those—how lofty are their eyes, how high their eyelids lift!” In the verse at hand, the verb pertains to “compensation” or *kopher*, a word with multiple means but with the basic one of covering. “The ransom (*kopher*) of a man’s life is his wealth, but a poor man has no means of redemption” [13.8].

In the verse at hand, comparable to *nasa’* is the verb *ava*, “(nor) be appeased” and fundamentally means to breathe, to desire after. It is used in 1.25 as “would” but not noted there. The withholding of *ava* pertains here to the multiplication of “gifts” or *shochad* and can apply to the freedom from punishment. “A bribe is like a magic stone in the eyes of him who gives it; wherever he turns he prospers” [17.8]. As for the verb “multiple,” it is *ravah* and last noted in 5.19.

-End of Part One and continued with Part Two