

Part Two continues here from Part One of Expansion on the Book of Proverbs.

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 the 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 after 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. *Chibuaq* 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 *nephesh* ('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 *nephesh* 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.

Chapter Seven

Vs. 1: My son, keep my words and treasure up my commandments with you;

Chapter Six begins with “my son,” a familiar address which Solomon employs time and again to retain the attention of his son, Rehoboam. While reading these instances of this fatherly concern, we know, unlike Solomon, that Rehoboam turned out to be the exact opposite of all that has been contained in Proverbs. Not even Solomon, renowned for his wisdom, could prevent this, and that is a hidden lesson of the book.

Note the two terms *'emer* and *mitsvah* 6.24 and 6.23 respectively), “words” and “commandments,” the latter being stronger compared with the general use of the former.

Shamar is the verb for “keep” last noted in 6.24 and here pertains to Solomon’s *'emer* last noted whereas “treasure up” or *tsaphan* pertains to his *mitsvah*, this verb last noted in 2.7. Such treasuring-up is to be kept close, that is, “with you” compared with the lack of this “with-ness” regarding “words.”

Vs. 2: keep my commandments and live, keep my teachings as the apple of your eye;

Solomon shifts his use of *shamar* in vs. 1 with regard to “words” to “commandments” or *mitsvah* which in that verse are to be treasured up. In other words, he recognizes the importance of *shamar*, more than his words. If this is carried out, his son will live, *chayah* (cf. 4.4). The RSV has “keep” twice but occurs once in the Hebrew text.

Torah (‘teachings’) is the second object of *shamar*, and mention of these two terms together is reminiscent of Ps 119 where they are mentioned frequently, the Psalm where *Torah* is preeminent. The *torah* at hand is a *'yshon* or “apple” of one’s eye, a noun with four other biblical references, two of which are in Proverbs with 20.20 being cited here: “If one curses his father or his mother, his lamp will be put out in utter darkness.” Here *'ysthon* is “utter” or closer to the Hebrew, the pupil of darkness. As for the noun, literally it means a little man as a reflection in the pupil of one’s eye.

Vs. 3: bind them on your fingers, write them on the tablet of your heart.

Qashar is the verb for “bind” is noted last in 6.21 where a close parallel is made with Dt 6.8 as in the case at hand. Binding refers to the commandments and teachings of vs. 2 where they are to be put “on” (*hal-*) one’s fingers, that is, instruments of what one does.

The second half of this verse is the same as the second half of 3.3 with *katav* being the verb and *luach* as “tablet” with respect to one’s *lev* (‘heart,’ cf. 6.32).

Vs. 4: Say to wisdom, “You are my sister;” and call insight your intimate friend;

This verse is unique in that King Solomon bids his son to address “wisdom or “*chakmah* (cf. 5.1) as his sister which means that both have Solomon as their father. Perhaps Solomon is thinking of the *chakmah* attributed to him which later he squandered.

Modah is the noun for “intimate friend” and has one other biblical reference, Rt 2.1: “Now Naomi had a kinsman of her husband’s, a man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz.” *Modah* derives from the verbal root *yadah*, to know in an intimate fashion. It is this *modah* that King Solomon wishes his son to call (*qara'*, cf. 2.3) “insight” or *bynah* noted last in 4.7.

Vs. 5: to preserve you from the loose woman, from the adventuress with her smooth words.

Shamar is the verb for “preserve” noted last in vs. 2 with regard to Solomon’s commandments but here concerns two types of women: one who is “loose” or *zarah* noted last in 5.3 and another who is an “adventuress” or *nakry* (cf. 6.24). Also in 6.24 is the tongue which is “smooth” of the adventuress where as here it is her “words” or *'amar*. In the verse at hand, *chalaq* is a verb for “smooth” compared with the noun in 6.24 and noted last in 5.3.

Vs. 6: For at the window of my house I have looked out through my lattice,

King Solomon shifts the tone of his address to Rehoboam by recalling past experiences which he hopes will have a greater impact than his earlier words. “House” in this instance can refer to the palace of his father,

King David, when he was growing up and was the same age as Rehoboam.

Chalon is the noun for “window,” the only use in Proverbs and refers to anything perforated as from the verbal root *chalal* (to pierce). “Behold, there he stands behind our wall, looking through the lattice” [Sg 2.9]. Compare *chalon* with *eshnav* (‘lattice’) which has one other biblical reference, Jdg 5.28: “Out of the window (*chalon*) she peered, the mother of Sisera gazed through the lattice.”

Shaqaph is the verb for “have looked out,” the only use in Proverbs and means literally to cover with planks as well as to look down as from a window. “Michal, the daughter of Saul, looked out of the window and saw King David dancing and making merry” [1Chron 15.29]. Most likely King Solomon had that memory implanted in him when citing the verse at hand.

Vs. 7: and I have seen among the simple, I have perceived among the youths, a young man without sense,

Rahah is the common verb for “have seen” which flows from Solomon’s act of *shaqaph* in vs. 6, that is, what he beholds upon looking down from above as in his royal court, possibly the young associates of Rehoboam who gave him ill advise.

This *shaqaph/raha* has three objects:

- 1) “Simple” or *pety*, last noted in 1.32.
- 2) “Youths” or *ben*, also as son which is mentioned frequently in Proverbs.
- 3) “Young man” or *nahar* noted last in 1.4 to which the preposition *b-* (‘in’) is prefaced.

Note that *shaqaph/raha* takes the form of perception with regard to #2, *byn*, noted last in 2.9. What stands out to Solomon is a young man “without sense” or *chaser* (cf. 6.32), an adjective modifying *lev* (cf. vs. 3) or “heart.”

Vs. 8: passing along the street near her corner, taking the road to her house

Havar and *tsahad*: “passing along” and “taking,” noted in 4.15 and 5.5 respectively. King Solomon has to stretch out (again, *shaqaph* of vs. 6) his window to see the young man without sense of vs. 7.

Shoq and *derek*: “street” and “road.” The former derives from a verbal root meaning to run after, to desire and is the only use of this noun in Proverbs with 3 other biblical references, one of which being Sg 3.2: “I will rise now and go about the city in the streets and in the squares; I will seek him whom my soul loves.” The later was noted last in 6.23.

Pinah is the noun for corner with two other references in Proverbs, the first being 21.9: “It is better to live in a corner of the housetop than in a house shared with a contentious woman.”

Vs. 9: in the twilight, in the evening, at the time of night and darkness.

Three times associated with night or near night when one can do less than desirable things:

- 1) *Nesheph*: the only use of this term in Proverbs and can refer to both evening and morning twilight. “I rise before dawn and cry for help; I hope in your words” [119.147].
- 2) *Herev*: the only use of this term in Proverbs and applicable to the time of sunset only. “You make the outgoings of the morning and the evening to shout for joy” [Ps 65.8].
- 3) *Laylah*: the common noun for “darkness” used with *yshon* last noted in 7.2 as “apple of eye.” Another word is added here, not in the English: *aphelah* which was noted last in 4.19 and is suggestive of thickness, the thick of night.

Vs. 10: And lo, a woman meets him dressed as a harlot, wily of heart.

Hineh is the word for “lo” noted last in 1.23 and intimates a sense of wonder and surprise or even change in the narrative at hand. In the verse at hand *hineh* applies to a “harlot” or *zanah* (cf. 6.26) or better, a woman “dressed” as one, *shyith* being a noun with one other biblical reference, Ps 73.6: “Therefore pride is their necklace; violence covers them as a garment.” Being so attired does not make the woman fully a harlot; perhaps she is playing that role to entice Solomon’s son. *Qara’* is the verb for “meets” noted last in vs. 4 with the common meaning of to call.

Natsar is a verb (participle) meaning “wily” noted last in 6.20 with its more familiar meaning to keep. In the verse at hand, *natsar* modifies “heart” or *lev* (cf. vs. 8).

Vs. 11: She is loud and wayward, her feet do not stay at home;

Hamah and *sasar*: “loud” and “wayward:” the former is noted last in 1.21 and has the fundamental meaning of to hum and the latter is the only use of this verb in Proverbs which means to be stubborn or rebellious. “Let not the rebellious exalt themselves” [Ps 66.7].

Shakan is the verb for “do (not) stay” at “home” or literally, “in her house.” It is noted last in 2.21.

Vs. 12: now in the street, now in the market, and at every corner she lies in wait.

Paham is used twice as “now” with the other Proverbs use being 29.5 with the alternate meaning of “feet:” A man who flatters his neighbor spreads a net for his feet.” The fundamental meaning of the verbal root for *paham* is to strike or to beat.

In the verse at hand, *paham* refers to “street” and “market” or *chuts* and *rechov*. Both are noted in 5.16 with the latter applicable to a market, literally meaning a broad, open space. At the corner (*pinah*: cf. vs. 8) both places the woman dressed as a harlot (cf. vs. 10) “lies in wait” or *arav* noted last in 1.18. *Pinah* is used with *etsel* or beside, intimating closeness.

Vs. 13: She seizes him and kisses him, and with impudent face she says to him:

This verse serves as an introduction to the woman who speaks from vs. 14 through vs. 20.

The two verbs here are *chazaq* and *nashaq*, “seizes” and “kisses.” The former is noted last in 2.14 whereas the latter has one other reference in Proverbs: “He who gives a right answer kisses the lips” [24.26]. The sense of *nashaq* is to arrange, to put in order as well as to arm oneself. The preposition *l-* is prefaced to “him” and reads literally, “to him.”

Hazaz is a verb for “impudent” which means to be strong as intimated in 21.29: “A wicked man puts on a bold face, but an upright man considers his ways.”

Vs. 14: “I had to offer sacrifices, and to day I have paid my vows;

The woman speaks now through vs. 20. Given the attitude of this seductress, the sacrifice and vows she makes could be to pagan gods, not the God of Israel.

The Hebrew text has no verb for “offer sacrifices” but two nouns: *zevach* and *shelem*. A reference to the former is 21.3: “To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice” [21.3]. The latter is derived from the verbal root *shalam* (hence *shalom*) which means to restore, to recompense, and is the only use of this noun in Proverbs. *Shalam* occurs in the verse at hand as “have paid” and was noted last in 6.31.

Neder is the word for “vows” and is noted next in 20.25: “It is a snare for a man to say rashly, ‘It is holy, and to reflect only after making his vows.’”

Vs. 15: so now I have come out to meet you, to seek you eagerly, and I have found you.

Yatsa’ is the verb for “have come out” noted last in 5.16 and here has two intents:

1) To “meet” the “young man without sense” of vs. 7 around whom this encounter centers. *Qara’* is the verb “to meet” noted last in vs. 10.

2) To “seek eagerly” or *shachar* noted last in 1.28 and here with respect to the youth’s “face” as the Hebrew text has it.

As a result of both coming out and seeking eagerly, the woman claims to “have found” him, the verb being *matsa’* noted last in 6.33.

Vs. 16: I have decked my couch with coverings, colored spreads of Egyptian linen;

Ravad is the verb for “have spread” and refers to a couch or bed, the only occurrence of the word in the Bible, and is used with *heres*, the only use of this noun in Proverbs. “Behold, you are beautiful, my beloved; truly lovely. Our couch is green” [St 1.5]. The “couch” at hand is not exposed but covered, the noun (feminine plural) *marvadym* being used with 31.22 being the only other biblical reference: “She makes herself coverings; her clothing is fine linen and purple.”

Catuvoth is the only term (feminine plural) in the Bible for “spreads” and derives from a verbal root meaning to cut, to hew and used with *’etun*, also the only use of this noun in the Bible.

The verse at hand has the only occurrence of “Egyptian” in Proverbs.

Vs. 17: I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes and cinnamon.

Nuph is the verb for “have perfumed,” the only use of this term in Proverbs and fundamentally means to wave, to shake.” With this in mind, we have an idea of the manner the woman dressed as a harlot (cf. Vs. 10) went about this. She applies *nuph* to her “bed” or *mishkav* which is similar to a *marvadym* (‘couch,’ vs. 16) but more properly used for sleeping. The other reference in Proverbs is 22.27: “If you have nothing with which to pay, why should your bed be taken from under you?”

The three items or objects of *nuph*: *mor*, *’ahalym* and *qinamon* (‘myrrh, aloes and cinnamon’):

1) *Mor* is the only reference in Proverbs and connotes bitterness or sadness. “My beloved is to me a bag of myrrh that lies between my breasts” [Sg 1.14].

2) *’Ahalym* is one of four biblical references, one of which is Sg 4.14: “Nard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense, myrrh and aloes with all chief spices.”

3) *Qinamon* has two other biblical references, one of which is Sg 4.14 in #2 with the third being Ex 30.23: “Take the finest spices: of liquid myrrh five hundred shekels and of sweet-smelling cinnamon half as much, that is, two hundred and fifty, and of aromatic cane two hundred and fifty.”

Vs. 18: Come, let us take our fill of love until morning; let us delight ourselves with love.

Lakah is the common verb for “come” and here is a kind of exhortation with regard to two things in the verse at hand.

Ravah is the verb for “let us take our fill” with one other mention in Proverbs: “When the tempest passes, the wicked is no more, but the righteous is established forever” [10.25]. *Ravah* is to continue throughout the night

or until “morning” (*boqer*). Proverbs has one other mention: “He who blesses his neighbor with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, will be counted as cursing” [27.14].

Halas is the verb for “let us delight,” the only use in the Bible and connotes a sense of rejoicing, here with “love” or *’ohavym* (masculine plural), also the only use of this term in the Bible whereas the common *’ahavah* occurs several times, last noted in 5.19.

Vs. 19: For my husband is not at home; he has gone on a long journey;

Note use of “husband” where the common noun *’ysh* (‘man’) is used which must come as a surprise to the son of Solomon, for the same woman who says this is the woman “dressed as a harlot” in vs. 10. However, the fact that she is dressed such does not mean she is one by profession, just acting this way to entice Solomon’s son.

Derek is the noun for “journey” and was noted last in vs. 8. It is modified by the adjective *rachoq*, “long.”

Vs. 20: he took a bag of money with him; at full moon he will come home.”

This verse brings to conclusion the words of the woman “dressed as a harlot” begun in vs. 14. Note that Solomon had observed her “from the window of (my) house” and “through (my) lattice” (vs. 6) in the twilight, the time in between day and night when people of the night begin to come out.

Tsrer is the noun for “bag” with one other reference in Proverbs: “Like one who binds the stone in the sling is he who gives honor to a fool” [26/8]. Here the noun *tsrer* is used as the verb “binds.” It derives from a verbal root meaning to press, to be distressed. In the verse at hand, *tsrer* is with the noun *keseph* (‘money’) noted last in 2.4 as “silver” which is its fundamental meaning. Perhaps the husband is going off on a business deal or engaging in a practice similar to his wife. That is left to the reader’s imagination.

“Full moon” reads literally “to the day appointed” where *kese’* is the only use of this term in the Bible which means “appointed.” Technically, the time of full moon is not mentioned.

Vs. 21: With much seductive speech she persuades him; with her smooth talk she compels him.

Note the two pairs with similar verbs and similar phrases: “persuades” and “compels” vis-a-vis “seductive speech” and “smooth talk.”

Natah is the verb for “persuades” and was noted last noted in 5.15 with the sense of inclining. In the verse at hand, the object of *natah* is *leqach* or “seductive speech) noted last in 4.2 as “precepts.” *Leqach* derives from the common verbal root *laqach* meaning to take which is the idea behind the meaning in the verse at hand.

Cheleq is a noun for “smooth” which means a portion and is the only use of this term in Proverbs. “The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot” [Ps 16.5]. In the verse at hand, *cheleq* is used with the noun “talk” or *saphah* which means literally “lips” and found (but not noted) last in 5.3.

Nadaq is the verb for “compels” and is the only use of this word in Proverbs. It has the sense of impelling, thrusting or sending into exile. “You have scattered my flock and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them” [Jer 23.2].

Vs. 22: All at once he follows her as an ox goes to the slaughter or as a stag is caught fast

Pit’om is the word for “all at once” noted last in 6.15 with the verb *halak* (‘follows’ as in 6.28) and *’achar* (‘after’).

The *halak* at hand resembles two animals to be slain, an “ox” and “stag:” *shur* as in 14.4, “Where there are no oxen, there is no grain; but abundant crops come by the strength of the ox.” The *shur* of the ox is to the “slaughter” or *tevach* with one other reference in Proverbs: “She (wisdom) has slaughtered her beasts, she has mixed her wine, she has also set her table” [9.2].

As for “stag,” the word is *hekes* which fundamentally means an anklet or fetter with one other biblical reference: “In that day the Lord will take away the finery of the anklets, the headbands and the crescents” [Is 3.18].

The RSV notes that the last words are uncertain and consist of the adjective *‘evyl* and the noun *musar*. The former is noted last in 1.7 as “fools” and the latter in 6.23 as “discipline.”

Vs. 23: till an arrow pierces its entrails; as a bird rushes into a snare; he does not know that it will cost him his life.

Here an “arrow” and “snare” are more or less equivalent to the unsuspecting “young man without sense” [vs. 7], *chets* and *tsipor*: “A man who bears false witness against his neighbor is like a war club or a sword or a sharp arrow” [25.18]. “Like a sparrow in its flitting, like a swallow in its flying a curse that is causeless does not alight” [26.2].

As for an arrow, it “pierces” or *palach*, the only use of this verb in Proverbs which means to cleave or to furrow. “He slashes open my kidneys and does not spare; he pours out my gall on the ground” [Job 16.13]. *Kaved* is the word for “entrails,” the only use of this noun in Proverbs and derives from the verbal root *kavad* (to be heavy), indicative of that organ’s weight. “My heart (i.e., liver) is poured out in grief because of the destruction of my people” [Lam 2.11].

As for a “snare” (*tsipor*), it was noted last in 6.5.

The verse at hand lacks “will cost him” and has the verb *yadah* (vs. 7) with *nephesh* or more literally, “soul” (cf. 6.32).

Vs. 24: And now, O sons, listen to me and be attentive to the words of my mouth.

5.7 is the last time the plural “sons” was noted where as suggested there, King Solomon may have had in mind not just his only son Rehoboam but those with whom he associated and turned his heart against the nation.

In the verse at hand “listen” and “be attentive” or *shamah* and *qashav* are similar. The former (cf. 5.13) is more common whereas the latter (cf. 5.1) is more direct. *Shamah* is with respect to Solomon himself and *qashav* with respect to his “words” (*amar*, cf. 7.5): not just words but those from his mouth or from Solomon in the act of speaking.

Vs. 25: Let not your heart turn aside to her ways, do not stray into her paths;

Mention of *lev* (‘heart,’ cf. 7.10) is the essence of a person which here Solomon bids not to “turn aside” or *satah* and was noted last in 4.15 only here with respect to the *derek* (cf. vs. 19) of the lewd woman of vs. 10 in the guise of a harlot.

Tahah is the verb for “stray” and also means to wander. “Do they not err that devise evil? Those devise good meet loyalty and faithfulness” [14.22]. In the verse at hand, such *tahah* is with respect to “paths” or *natyv* last noted in 3.17 which applies more to those trodden on foot.

Vs. 26: for many a victim has she laid low; yea, all her slain are a mighty host.

Chalal is an adjective for “laid low,” the only use of this term in Proverbs and not unlike its root (same spelling, vs. 6) which means to pierce. “Like one forsaken among the dead, like the slain lying in the grave” [Ps 88.5]. The Hebrew text lacks “victim.”

Harag is the verb for “slain” last noted in 1.32 and in the verse at hand is used with the verb *naphal* (to throw). Such dead form a “mighty host” or *hatsum* (adjective) which derives from a verb meaning to bind, to tie. “The lot puts an end to disputes and decides between powerful contenders” [18.18].

Vs. 27: Her house is the way to Sheol, going down to the chambers of death.

Derek is the noun for “way” noted last in vs. 25 and here is used with regard to Sheol noted last in 5.5 with regard to a “loose woman” [vs. 3] who is not unlike the woman Solomon speaks about here.

Yarad is the verb for “going down” noted last in 5.5 with respect to Sheol just noted. Such a descent under the earth leads to the “chambers” or *cheder* proper to death. This term refers usually to an inner room either belonging to a house or to a tent. “The words of a whisperer are like delicious morsels; they go down into the inner parts of the body” [18.8].

Chapter Eight

Vs. 1: Does not wisdom call, does not understanding raise her voice?

After a lengthy discourse on the dangers of associating with a loose woman, King Solomon gets to the heart of Proverbs here as well as in the next chapter, that is, before presenting the extended list of proverbs themselves. Solomon steps aside, as it were, giving way to “wisdom” or *chakmah* (cf. 7.4) who is personified in both chapters.

Qara’ and *natan* are the verbs for “call” and “raise:” the first is noted last in 7.15 and the latter in 4.9. Thus it is better to comprehend understanding giving her voice instead of raising it. Comparable to *chakmah* is *tevunah* (‘understanding’) noted last in 5.1 where it is associated with the person of Solomon himself.

Vs. 2: On the heights beside the way, in the paths she takes her stand;

Compare the places where wisdom calls, first in vss. 2 & 3 (#1), and compare with 1.20 (#2) & 21:

- 1) Heights beside the way, paths, gates in front of town, entrance of portals.
- 2) Street, markets, top of walls, entrance of city gates.

Ro’sh is the noun for “heights” and is noted last in 1.21, and in the verse at hand is used with the noun *marom*, “heights.” To put it literally, a head lifted up which is “beside” (*hal-*, ‘on’) the “way” or *derek*, noted last in 7.27.

Natyv is the noun for “paths” noted last in 7.25. In the verse at hand, the third person feminine (‘she’) is used which means that wisdom and understanding of vs. 1 can be as one person. The verb here is *natsav*, the only use in Proverbs, and means a putting in place. “Daughters of kings are among your ladies of honor; at your right hand stands the queen in gold of Ophir” [Ps 45.9].

Vs. 3: beside the gates in front of the town, at the entrance of the portals she cries aloud:

Ranah is the verb for “cries aloud” noted last in 1.24 under similar circumstances. In the verse at hand, such *ranah* occurs in two places:

- 1) “Besides” the gates or literally “to the hand (*yad* prefaced with the preposition *l-*) attached to *shahar* or “gates” found last in 1.21 though not noted there. The evil bow down before the good, the wicked at the

gates of the righteous" [14.8]. Such gates belong to the "town" or *qereth* which has four other biblical references, three of which are in Proverbs as 11.11: "By the blessings of the upright a city is exalted, but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked."

2) "At the entrance" of portals or literally "to the mouth of" (*peh* prefaced again with the preposition *l-*) attached to *petach* or "portals" found last in 5.8 though not noted there. "He who loves transgression loves strife; he who makes his door high seeks destruction" [17.19].

Vs. 4: "To you, O men, I call, and my cry is to the sons of men."

The crying of vs. 3 continues through the remainder of Chapter Eight, alternating between the city gates and its portals. The former seem to belong to outside entrances whereas the latter to those within the city itself, presumably Jerusalem of which Solomon is king.

Wisdom reiterates her "call" or *qara'* and puts it in the form of a "cry" or *qol* ('voice,' cf. 2.3). The cry is more urgent and can apply to those entering and exiting the city gates whereas the voice can apply to a more one-on-one dialogue between wisdom and the city inhabitants as at the portals to their houses, etc. or where they congregate.

"Men" and "sons of men:" the former is a more general category of city dwellers and non-inhabitants whereas the latter can apply to those native to the city.

Vs. 5: O simple ones, learn prudence; O foolish men, pay attention.

Pety and *kesyl*: the adjective for "simple ones." The former is noted last in 7.7 and the latter (noun) in 3.35.

To those who are simple, wisdom bids them to "learn" or *byn* (cf. 7.7) "prudence" or *harmah* noted last in 1.4 where it applies to *pety*. To those who are foolish, wisdom bids them to "pay attention" with *byn* again and includes *lev* ('heart,' 7.25).

Vs. 6: Hear, for I will speak noble things, and from my lips will come what is right;

Shamah is the verb for "hear" noted last in 7.24 and here concerning "noble things" or *nagyd*, the only use of this noun in Proverbs which means a prince or leader. "Behold, I made him a witness to the peoples, a leader and commander for the peoples" [Is 55.4]. In the verse at hand, *davar* is used for "will speak."

Meysarym is a noun used in the plural noted last in 1.4. The verse at hand lacks "will come" and reads literally "from the opening (*petach*, cf. vs. 3) of my lips." The speaking is active whereas *meysarym* is passive.

Vs. 7: for my mouth will utter truth; wickedness is an abomination to my lips.

Emeth is the noun for "truth" in 3.3 which wisdom "will utter" or *hagah* which fundamentally means to murmur or to utter in a low voice. Thus wisdom does not speak truth openly and clearly but in a low, somewhat subdued fashion. She adds "mouth" to emphasize the oral nature of the communication in order to attract people to her.

Tohevah as "abomination" is noted last in 6.16 and here is considered by wisdom as equivalent to "wickedness" or *reshah* noted last in 4.17. "Lips" is similar to the use of "mouth" as just stated.

Vs. 8: All the words of my mouth are righteous; there is nothing twisted or crooked in them.

Wisdom continues with specific mention of "mouth" to emphasize the importance of oral communication here, that is, as her "words" or *emer* (cf. 7.2) are uttered (*hagah* in the previous verse). Here her words are "righteous" or literally, "in" (*b-*) righteousness, the noun being *tsedeq* and noted last in 2.9.

“Crooked” is the verb *patal*, the only use in Proverbs and means to be perverse, deceitful. There are four other biblical references, one of which is Ps 18.26: “And with the crooked you show yourself perverse.” *Haqash* (‘crooked’) is found in the same verse and was noted last in 4.24.

Vs. 9: They are all straight to him who understands and right to those who find knowledge.

Two adjectives describe the *‘emer* (‘words’) of wisdom: “straight” and “right” or *nakoach* and *yashar*. The former implies uprightness and has 24.26 the other Proverbs reference: “He who gives a right answer kisses the lips.” The latter is noted last in 3.32.

Two verbs: “understands” and “find” or *byn* (cf. vs. 5) and *matsa’* (cf. 7.15). The latter is used with the adjective *yashar* as well as the noun *dahath* or “knowledge” noted last in 5.2.

Vs. 10: Take my instruction instead of silver and knowledge rather than choice gold;

Wisdom offers a choice through the verb *laqach* (‘take’) noted last in 7.21 with regard to both “instruction” and “knowledge” or *musar* (cf. 7.22) and *dahath* (cf. vs. 9).

Musar is to be preferred over “silver” (*kaseph*: cf. 3.14) and *dahath* over “choice gold” or *charuts*, noted last in 3.14. It is used with the verb *bachar* (cf. 3.21), “choice.”

Vs. 11: for wisdom is better than jewels, and all that you may desire cannot compare with her.

Proverbs 3.15 contains several words found in the verse at hand.

Tov is the common adjective for “better” noted last in 3.28 and modifies *chakmah* (‘wisdom,’ vs. 1). It is similar to “(cannot) compare” or *shavah* noted last in 3.15. The former is associated here with “jewels” or *penynym* which more specifically refers to rubies noted last in 3.15.

Chephets is a noun for “may desire” noted last in 3.15 and in the verse at hand is used with the preposition *b-* or literally “in (her).”

Vs. 12: I, Wisdom, dwell in prudence, and I find knowledge and discretion.

Here wisdom speaks and uses the first person singular in order to make clear that she is speaking.

Shakan is the verb for “dwell” and noted last in 7.11. This dwelling or taking rest is in “prudence” or *harmah* noted last in vs. 5.

Once this dwelling or resting in prudence is established, wisdom finds (*matsa’*, cf. vs. 9) both “knowledge” (*dahath*, cf. vs. 10) and “discretion” (*mizmah*, last noted in 5.3). The act of finding the two naturally follow the act of *shakan*, and that within prudence.

Vs. 13: The fear of the Lord is hatred of evil. Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate.

The phrase “fear (*yir’ah*) of the Lord” is noted last in 2.5, and in the verse at hand it is equivalent to “hatred” or *sane’* (verb, 6.16) with regard to “evil” or *rah* (cf. 6.24).

Rah is noted a second time with regard to a *derek* (‘way,’ cf. vs. 2) which is equivalent to “pride” and

“arrogance,” *ge’ah* and *ga’on*. The former is the only use of this term in the Bible and closely related to the latter, both applicable to anything that is raised up. As for *ga’on*, “Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall” [16.18].

Added to the two just mentioned is “perverted speech” or *tahpukoth* noted last in 6.14. All three are the objects of wisdom’s hatred, the verb being *sane’* as in the first sentence of this verse.

Vs. 14: I have counsel and sound wisdom, I have insight, I have strength.

“I have” reads literally “to me” or the preposition *l-* prefaced to the first person singular and signifies four desirable qualities in the possession of wisdom:

- 1) *Hetsah* or “counsel:” last noted in 1.31.
- 2) *Tushyah* or “sound wisdom:” last noted in 3.21.
- 3) *Bynah* or “insight:” last noted in 7.4.
- 4) *Gevurah* or “strength:” the only use of this noun in Proverbs and usually applies to military situations. “Who by your strength has established the mountains, being girded with might (*gevurah*)” [Ps 65.6].

Vs. 15: By me kings reign and rulers decree what is just;

“By me” reads literally “in me” or the preposition *b-* prefaced to the first person plural. Given the context, literally we could take both kings and rulers are *b-* wisdom by which they derive their authority to “reign” and “decree” or *malak* (verbal root for *melek*, ‘king’) and *chaqaq*. As for the former, “A slave when he becomes king, and a fool when he is filled with food” [30.22]. As for the latter (next use is in vs. 29), “lest they drink and forget what has been decreed and pervert the rights of all the afflicted” [31.5].

Razan is a verb (the general meaning is to be weighty) used for “rulers” with one other reference in Proverbs (there are four other biblical ones): “It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine or for rulers to desire strong drink” [31.4]. In the verse at hand, their task concerns “what is just” or *tsedeq*, noted last in 8.8.

Vs. 16: by me princes rule and nobles govern the earth.

A second example of the preposition *b-* as noted in the previous verse, “in me.” Here wisdom identifies herself with those in political authority which is in accord with King Solomon, author of Proverbs.

Sar is the noun for “princes” and refers to any type of noble and even a military commander. “It is not fitting for a fool to live in luxury, much less for a slave to rule over princes” [18.10]. The verb *sarar* is the root for *sar* and is the only occurrence in Proverbs. “Behold, a king will reign in righteousness, and princes will rule in justice” [Is 32.1].

Nadyv is an adjective for “nobles” where emphasis is upon the high-minded character of the person in office as determined by the verbal root *nadav* (to be generous). “Fine speech is not becoming to a fool; still less is false speech to a prince” [17.7]. The second half of the verse at hand reads “all the governors” with the verb *shaphat* being used which means to judge. “If a king judges the poor with equity his throne will be established forever” [29.14].

Vs. 17: I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently find me.

Ahav is the common verb “love” noted last in 5.19 with regard to the “wife of your youth” who is not dissimilar to wisdom.

Shachar is the verb for “seek diligently” found last in 7.15 from which the noun “dawn” is derived and thus intimating that such seeking is done at that time. Such *shachar* results in finding (*matsa*, vs. 12) wisdom.

Vs. 18: Riches and honor are with me, enduring wealth and prosperity.

“With me” or with wisdom are four gifts:

- 1) *Hosher* or “riches:” noted last in 3.16.
- 2) *Kavod* or “honor:” noted last in 3.35.
- 3) *Hon* or “wealth:” last noted in 6.31 and in the verse at hand, with *hateq*, the adjective “enduring” which is the only biblical reference derived from the verbal root meaning to be set free, to take away.
- 4) *Tsedaqah* or “prosperity.” The fundamental meaning is righteousness: “Treasures gained by wickedness do not profit, but righteousness delivers from death” [10.2].

Vs. 19: My fruit is better than gold, even fine gold, and my yield than choice silver.

Pry is the noun for “fruit” as in 1.31 but not noted there. In the verse at hand, *pry* is equal to “yield” or *tevu’ah* noted last in 3.14.

Pry is “better” (*tov*, cf. vs. 11) than both “gold,” “fine gold” or *charuts* (cf. vs. 10) and *paz* or gold that has been purified, the only use of this noun in Proverbs. “His head is the finest gold; his locks are wavy, black as a raven” [Sg 5.11].

Wisdom’s “yield” is better than “silver” or *keseeph* (cf. 7.20) which is “choice” or *bachar* (cf. vs. 10).

Vs. 20: I walk in the way of righteousness, in the paths of justice.

Halak is the verb for “walk” noted last in 7.22 which has two roads, “way” and “paths” or *orach* (cf. 5.6) and *natyv* noted last in 7.25. The former is singular and associated with “righteousness” or *tsedaqah* (cf. vs. 18) and “justice” (*mishpat*, cf. 2.9). As for the *natyv*, it is in the plural and *betok* or literally in the midst of (cf. 5.15).

Vs. 21: endowing with wealth those who love me and filling their treasuries.

The action of this verse is effected in the context of the previous verse or with wisdom in motion, both on the way and paths (of righteousness and of justice).

Nachal is the verb for “endowing” and noted last in 3.35, having the notion of creating an inheritance which in the verse at hand is *yesh* noted last as “when.” Such wealth is given to those who “love” (*’ahav*, cf. vs. 17) wisdom.

In addition to giving wealth, wisdom fills (*mala*, cf. 6.30) “treasuries” or *’otsar* which also can refer to a store of grain, etc (cf. 2Chron 11.11). “Treasures gained by wickedness do not profit, but righteousness delivers from death” [10.2].

Vs. 22: The Lord created me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of old.

Starting here and going through vs. 31 wisdom shifts direction, if you will, by speaking of her origins or with God before creation came into being. This is brought out by “at the beginning” or *re’shyth* noted last in 4.7. The verse at hand automatically makes one think of the *re’shyth* of Gen 1.1. That *re’shyth* is unspecified, if you will (‘in the beginning’) whereas the one at hand is with respect to the Lord’s “work” or *derek* (cf. vs. 13) which specifically means a road or way and hence reads “at the beginning of his way.” This *derek* enhances the difference between when wisdom was created and the beginning of creation in Genesis.

As for the verb “created,” it is *qanah*, it is noted last in 4.7 and means to possess, to acquire. In other words, wisdom was already in existence but acquired by the Lord later on, “at the beginning of his *derek*” or way.

A contrast between “first” and “of old” or *qedem* and *me’az*, the latter literally meaning “from then” which refers to the beginning at hand in this verse with regard to “acts” or *miphhah*, the only use of this noun in the Bible. It derives from the verbal root *pahal* (to make, to fabricate). Thus the making of wisdom which took place at the beginning of his work was immediately prior to it.

This protracted interlude through vs. 31 is intended to set the stage for wisdom to address her sons in vs. 32, to make them listen to her through the remainder of Chapter Eight. One can only imagine Solomon sitting on the sidelines, as it were, the most eager listener to wisdom.

Vs. 23: Ages ago I was set up at the first before the beginning of the earth.

Three modes of time stretching back to before human life:

- 1) “Ages ago” or *hulam* prefaced with the preposition *min* or “from:” “from ages” “When the tempest passes, the wicked is no more, but the righteous is established forever” [19.25].
- 2) “At the first” or *r’osh* noted last in 1.21 and here also prefaced with the preposition *min* or “from the first (head).”
- 3) “Before the beginning” or *qedem* (cf. vs. 22) prefaced with *min* or “from the beginning” or literally as “from that which was before,” *qedem* differing from *re’shyth* of vs. 22 as being more temporal whereas the latter, a noun, is suggestive almost as a place-where. In the verse at hand, *qedem* is associated with *’erets* or “earth” (cf. 3.19). This earth is more localized than the Lord’s “work” of vs. 22 and the beginning of Genesis.

Nasak is the verb “set up,” the only instance in Proverbs and refers to pouring out as a libation or the anointing of a king. “For the Lord has poured out upon you a spirit of deep sleep and has closed your eyes, the prophets” [1s 29.10]. Because *nasak* is fluid, the idea in Proverbs is that wisdom “was set up” with regard to the just mentioned three time frames but continues to be set up...poured forth.

Vs. 24: When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no springs abounding with water.

Chul is the verb from “brought forth” as in the next verse, a way to emphasize the birth of wisdom prior to creation. “The north wind brings forth rain; and a backbiting tongue, angry looks” [25.23].

Tehom and *mahyan* are the nouns for “depths” and “springs,” noted earlier in 3.20 and 5.16 respectively. The former are mentioned prior to creation in Gn .12 and the latter for the first time with regard to Noah’s flood (cf. Gn 7.11). In the verse at hand *mahyan* are “abounding” or *kavad* with water, that is, heavy with water (cf. 7.23). Because the flood associated with Noah take place after creation, the *mahyan* are manifestations within creation of the *tehom* which caused the earth to become flooded.

Vs. 25: Before the mountains had been shaped, before the hills, I was brought forth;

The verb *chul* is used again, this time with regard to both mountains and hills. *Chul* with regard to wisdom is contrasted with these two which “had been shaped” or *tavah*, the only use of this verb in Proverbs which means to seal as well as to be plunged. “Now that your feet are sunk in the mire, they turn away from you” [Jer 38.22]. One gets the impression that the mountains and hills were sunk deeply, if you will, within the earth, an image of an incredibly long period of time.

Vs. 26: before he has made the earth with its fields or the first of the dust of the world.

Had-lo’: “before” or literally “still not” or “not yet” which differs from *qedem* of vs. 23, “before.” While both

refer to wisdom's pre-existence to creation, the former intimates a kind of distance between God thinking about creation and their coming into being whereas the latter intimates a time just prior to their coming into being.

Hasah is the verb for "made" noted last in 6.3 and of all the verbs between vss.22 and 31 is the only one pertaining to actual making. The other verbs apply to creation as already fashioned, of being arranged in one way or another.

Chuts is translated here as "with its fields" which the RSV says is "uncertain" and can be rendered something as "nor the fields." *Chuts* is noted last in 7.12.

R'osh is the noun for "first" as in vs. 23 and suggests the beginning or first principle of something. In the verse at hand, *r'osh* pertains to "dust" or *haphar*, the only mention of this noun in Proverbs. "Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground" [Gn 2.7].

Tevel pertains more to the inhabited world compared with *'erets* ('earth,' cf. vs. 23) which often refers to a country belonging to a particular group of people. Is 14.21 contains both: "Lest they (sons of evildoers) rise and possess the earth and fill the face of the world with cities."

Vs. 27: When he established the heavens, I was there, when he drew a circle on the face of the deep,

Kun is the verb for "established" and used with respect to the "heavens" (*shamaym*) noted last in 3.19 and reminiscent of Gn 1.7-8 which there is also called "firmament" or *raqyah* meaning that which is spread out. And so wisdom is not unlike the *Ruach* of God "hovering over the face of the waters" [Gn 1.2]. The verse at hand doesn't intimate that wisdom had a hand in creation but was an observer of all that was transpiring.

Chaqaq is the verb for "drew" noted last in 8.15 as "decree" and here is with regard to a "circle" or *chug*, one of three biblical references and refers to the vault of the sky as well as the horizon. "Thick clouds enwrap him so that he does not see, and he walks on the vault of heaven" [Job 22.14] (the other reference is Is 40.22).

The drawing at hand is done "on the face of the deep" or *tehom* (cf. vs. 24) which means that wisdom was present when the Lord brought order from the chaos of *tehom*, again hearkening back to the first verses of Genesis.

Vs. 28: when he made firm the skies above, when he established the fountains of the deep,

'Amats is the verb for "made firm" and suggests that the skies required being strong enough so as not to dissipate. "She girds her loins with strength and makes her arms strong" [31.17]. In the verse at hand, *'amats* concerns the "skies" or *shachaq* more specifically, clouds as noted last in 3.20.

At the other extreme of creation, if you will, are the "fountains" or *hayin* which also means eye and found last in 7.2 but not mentioned there. Note the difference from *mahyan* ('springs') in vs. 24, but both are from the same verbal root. In the verse at hand, *hayin* are associated with *tehom* (cf. vs. 27). They are "established" or *kun* as with the heavens in the previous verse.

Vs. 29: when he assigned to the sea its limit so that the waters might not transgress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth,

Sum is the verb for "assigned" and means more a placing or setting, almost on a pre-arranged site or spot. It has the preposition *b-* ('in') prefaced to it reading literally "in setting." The other Proverbs reference is 30.26: "The badgers are a people not mighty, yet they make their homes in the rocks." In the verse at hand, this setting is with regard to the "limit" or *choq* which means an appointed time or portion. "Remove far from me

falsehood and lying; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with the food that is needful (*choq*) for me” [30.8].

Choq serves to prevent the waters of the deep mentioned in the last verse from transgressing or *havar*, that is to go over or go past (cf. 7.8) the Lord’s “command” or *peh* mentioned last in vs. 3 and fundamentally means mouth. Thus the *choq* at hand is not allow primeval waters to pass over the Lord’s mouth, putting it literally but awkwardly.

Chaqaq is the verb for “marked out” noted last in vs. 27 as “established.” In the verse at hand, *chaqaq* is used with regard to *mosadoth* (feminine plural), the only use of this noun in Proverbs. In virtually all the other references *mosadoth* refers to basic elements of creation such as the earth: “All the foundations of the earth are shaken” [Ps 82.5].

Vs. 30: then I was beside him like a master workman; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always.

Etsel or “then” was noted last in 7.12 which in the verse at hand refers to the various uses of “when” (*b-*) prior to creation. However, nothing in those verses is said of wisdom being a “master workman” or *’amon*, the only biblical use of this term which derives from the verbal root *’aman* (to believe, to trust) and is not unlike the noun *’emun* found in 13.17 (and 14.5, 20.6): “A bad messenger plunges men into trouble, but a faithful envoy brings healing.” In the verse at hand, the word “like” is not used; wisdom is the *’amon*.

Shahshuhym is the noun (masculine plural) for “delight” which is found in the next verse and derives from the verbal root *shahah* (to stroke, to delight). “Your testimonies are my delight, they are my counselors” [Ps 119.24].

“Daily” is expressed by *yom yom* or literally “day day.” It is used with “delighting” or *sachaq* fundamentally meaning to laugh and noted last in 1.26. The Hebrew text lacks both “his” and “rejoicing.”

“Always” is expressed by “in all times” or *heth* noted last in 6.14.

Vs. 31: rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the sons of men.

With this verse wisdom completes her statement begun in vs. 22 as a special companion of the Lord, and his name has not been mentioned specifically since that verse.

Sachaq is the verb for “rejoicing” used in the previous verse and stated again for emphasis with regard to wisdom “laughing” or enjoying herself as an *’aman* (cf. vs. 30). It is used with regard to the Lord’s “world” or *tevel* (cf. vs. 26) which here is joined with “world” or *’erets* (cf. vs. 26).

Compare *sachaq* with *shahshuhym* (‘delighting’) as used in the previous verse as well which refers to the “sons of men” (*’adam*). While wisdom may so delight in men, there is no reference here as to men rejoicing in wisdom.

Vs. 32: And now, my sons, listen to me: happy are those who keep my ways.

After having digressed on her own relationship with the Lord, wisdom “now” speaks to her sons through the remainder of Chapter Eight. She makes a request (*shamah*, ‘hear,’ cf. vs. 6) presupposing that these multiple, unspecified sons had been paying close attention to her words since vs. 22.

Wisdom equates her experience of pre-existing before creation with those (sons) who are “happy” or *’ashry*, last noted in 3.13 where she spoke of the “man who finds wisdom” and “who gets understanding.”

Being *'ashry* is with respect to the sons who “keep” or *shamar* (cf. 7.5) her “ways” or *derek* (cf. vs. 22). *Derek* here is multiple, not specified, but presumed to be many and tied into viewing creation from before it had come into existence.

Vs. 33: Hear instruction and be wise, and do not neglect it.

Shamah is the verb for “hear” noted in the previous verse as “listen.” It is repeated due to the importance of what wisdom wishes to communicate. *Shamah* is equivalent to “do (not) neglect” or *parah* noted last in 4.15 as letting go.

Musar and *chakam* are essentially the same, “instruction” and “be wise,” vs. 10 and 6.6.

Vs. 34: Happy is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting beside my doors.

It seems wisdom cannot stress enough the importance of paying attention to her by the sons which is why she repeats the verb *shamah* for the third time and coupled with being “happy” or *'ashry* (cf. vs. 32). *'Adam* is the noun for “man” as in vs. 31, singular compared with the plural “sons” of vs. 32.

Wisdom shifts the *shamah* or hearing to keeping guard visually: “watching” and “waiting” or *shaqad* and *shamar*. The former means to be sleepless, to lay in wait for, almost with the connotation of doing this at night. It is the only use of the verb in Proverbs. “Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain” [Ps 127.1]. The latter verb is noted last in vs. 32.

“Daily” is *yom yom* as in vs. 30, “day day.”

Shaqad is with reference to wisdom’s “gates” or *deleth* which more properly refers to a door as a house. “As a door turns on its hinges, so does a sluggard on his bed” [26.14]. *Shamar* is used with respect to her “doors” or *mezuzah*, more specifically as doorpost, the only use of this noun in Proverbs. “Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts” [Ex 12.7].

Vs. 35: For he who finds me finds life and obtains favor from the Lord;

Matsa' (last noted in 8.17) is the verb for “finds” and used twice in this verse with respect to first wisdom and her equivalent, “life” or *chayym* (cf. 4.22).

Compare *matsa'* with *puq* 3.13 as to furnish, to succeed. The former seems to pertain to coming across wisdom or life whereas the latter is more assertive in achieving what it wants and that is divine “favor” or *ratson* which also means delight or satisfaction. “A false balance is an abomination to the Lord but a just balance is his delight” [11.1].

Vs. 36: but he who misses me injures himself; all who hate me love death.”

The last words of wisdom in this chapter end on a somewhat threatening not to her sons mentioned in vs. 32. Chapter Nine begins not with wisdom but with her maidens speaking.

Missing and injuring are comparable. The first verb is *chata'* which means to miss the mark as in target practice with a bow and arrow. “If the righteous is requited on earth, how much more the wicked and the sinner” [11.31, used as participle]. *Chamas* is the verb for “injures,” the only use of this verb in Proverbs and pertains to violence. “And do no wrong or violence to the alien, the fatherless and the widow” [Jer 22.3]

Two opposite verbs: “hate” and “love” or *sane'* and *'ahav*; cf. vs. 13 and vs. 21 respectively.

Chapter Nine

Vs. 1: Wisdom has built her house, she has set up her seven pillars.

We don't have the speaker identified at the beginning of this new chapter after wisdom herself had held forth, but presumably it is King Solomon reflecting back upon the role of wisdom in his life and for which he is famous.

The verbal root for "has built" is *banah* from which "house" is derived, *beyth* (cf. 3.33). For the former, cf. 14.1: "Wisdom builds her house, but folly with her own hands tears it down" (NB: the Hebrew of this verse opens with 'wisdom of women').

Chatsav is the verb for "has set up" which fundamentally means to cut, to hew and is the only use of the term in Proverbs. "That you have hewn here a tomb for yourself, you who hew a tomb on the height" [Is 22.16]? Thus *chatsav* with reference to the seven pillars means they are carved out as from stone. In the verse at hand, this verb pertains to the seven "pillars" or *hamud*, the only reference in Proverbs. "His legs are pillars of marble" [Sg 5.15]. The number seven can refer to the seven days of creation which in wisdom's house, is representative of these days. Nothing is said as to the house's shape but can be taken as a round structure with the seventh pillars representing the day on which the Lord had rested from his creation.

Vs. 2: She has slaughtered her beasts, she has mixed her wine, she has also set her table.

Here wisdom prepares a feast to be held in her house of seven pillars consisting of three parts:

1) "Slaughtered" or *tavach*, the only use of this verb in Proverbs which can apply to the offering of a sacrifice. "In the day of your anger you have slain them, slaughtering without mercy" [Jer 2.21]. "Beasts" or *tevach* is a noun derived from this verbal root and noted last in 7.22.

2) "Mixed" or *masak* occurs next in vs. 5, "Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed." There are three other biblical references to this noun. In the two verses, such mixing or mingling concerns "wine" or *yayn* found last in 4.17 but not noted there.

3) "Set" or *harak* which means to put in order or to place together, the only use of this verb in Proverbs. "I have prepared a lamp for my anointed" [Ps 132.17]. In the verse at hand, *harak* pertains to wisdom's "table" or *shulchan*, the only use of this noun in Proverbs and suggests something spread out as food, implements to eat it as well as any decorations. "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies" [Ps 23.5].

Vs. 3: She has sent out her maids to call from the highest places in the town,

Wisdom remains in her house of seven pillars and sends out representatives instead of herself going out as at the beginning of Chapter Eight.

Shalach is the verb for "has sent out" noted last in 6.19 and here refers to wisdom's "maids" or *naharah*. "There will be enough goats' milk for your food, for the food of your household and maintenance for your maidens" [27.27].

Like wisdom had done at the beginning of Chapter Eight, her maiden representatives *qara'* or "call" (cf. 8.4) on the highest "places" or *gaph*, this word having two other biblical references, both in Exodus (21.3 & 4) with the former being cited: "If he comes in single, he shall go out single." Here *gaph* is "himself" which means the back or body, hence one's self. Since the maids sought out these highest places—and wisdom picked them out beforehand—they had to cry out much more loudly than wisdom had done at the gates and portals. Surely their presence on such heights (presumably the Jerusalem temple fit that condition) would draw attention.

Qereth is the noun for “town” and has three other references in Proverbs plus another in Job. “By the blessing of the upright a city is exalted, but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked” [11.11]. Chances are *qereth* is derived from the verbal root *qara’* noted in the verse at hand.

Vs. 4: “Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!” To him who is without sense she says,

Apparently these are the only words the maids shout out from the *gaph* of vs. 3, for this verse refers to “she” who does the talking through vs. 6.

Pety is the adjective for “simple” as in 8.5 when wisdom was out and about in the city, and the maids are simply echoing her original summons. It is used here with the verb *sur* (‘turn in’) noted last in 5.7 with “here” being not the high places of the town but wisdom’s house with its seven pillars.

Wisdom commences her address after the brief summons by her maids addressing the person “without sense” or literally “lacking heart.” The verb is *chasar* and the noun is *lev* (6.11 and 8.5, respectively). Wisdom speaks without fanfare or without that *qara’* or calling done by her maids.

Vs. 5: “Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed.

Lakah is the common verb for “come” with the invitation to “eat” wisdom’s bread. The verb *lacham* (cf. 4.17) is the verbal root for *lechem* (cf. 6.8) or “bread.”

Shatah is the verb for “drink” noted last in 4.17. In the verse at hand, such drinking is that “wine” (*yayn*, cf. vs. 2) that wisdom had “mixed” or *masak* (cf. vs. 2). *Yayn* is prefaced with the preposition *b-* or “in” reading “drink in the wine.”

Vs. 6: Leave simpleness and live and walk in the way of insight.”

This verse completes the short address by wisdom begun in the previous verse. *Hazav* is the verb for “leave” noted last in 4.6 and used here with “simpleness” or *peta’ym*, the alternate form of *pety* noted last in vs. 4.

Living and walking (*chayah* and *’ashar*, 7.2 and 4.14) here are equivalent with respect to the “way” or *derek* (cf. 8.32) of “insight,” *bynah* (cf. 8.14). Association of *derek* with *bynah* intimates that insight is ongoing or continuous.

Vs. 7: He who corrects a scoffer gets himself abuse, and he who reproves a wicked man incurs injury.

After wisdom had spoken briefly, that is, after she had sent out her maids in vs. 3, most likely the remaining words of Chapter Nine are from wisdom herself which becomes evident in vs. 11, “by me.”

Yasar is the verb for “corrects” (cf. 1.2) with respect to a “scoffer” or *luts*, a verb noted last in 3.34. Such giving of correction “gets” (*laqach*, cf. 8.10) “abuse” or *qalon* (cf. 6.33).

Equivalent to *yasar* is *yakach* or “reproves” noted last in 3.12 and includes the English “incur.” Such a person will receive “injury” or *mum*, the only use of this noun in Proverbs which means a blemish or blot. “You are all fair, my love; there is no flaw in you” [Sg. 4.7]. The object of *yakach* is a “wicked man” or *rashah* noted last in 5.22.

Vs. 8: Do not reprove a scoffer or he will hate you; reprove a wise man, and he will love you.

The verb *yakach* “reprove” is used with the noun “scoffer” or *luts*, both noted in the previous verse. There this noun is used with the verb *yasar* (‘corrects’). If such reproof is given, the scoffer will “hate” or *sane’* you (cf.

8.36).

Yakach is used a second time with a “wise man” or one who is *chakam* noted last in 8.33. Such a person, instead of showing hatred, will “love” (*’ahav*, cf. 8.36) you. The preposition *l-* (‘to’) is prefaced to *chakam* whereas it is not with regard to *luts*.

Vs. 9: Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; teach a righteous man, and he will increase in learning.

The Hebrew text lacks “instruction” and reads “give to a wise man” or *chakam* (cf. vs. 8). Thus what is given is left unspecified, but it makes this person “wiser” or the verb *chakam*.

Yadah is the verb for “teach” noted last in 7.23 and fundamentally means to know. The result of imparting this knowing is that a man who is “righteous” or *tsadyq* (cf. 4.18) will, literally speaking, “will increase in taking.” The verb is *yasaph* noted last in 3.1 with the noun *leqach* noted last in 7.21 as that which is taken.

Vs. 10: The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.

“Beginning of wisdom” is noted last in 4.7. In the verse at hand, it is associated with “fear of the Lord” which occurs several times in Proverbs. Compare 1.7 where this “fear or *yir’ah*: is associated with the “beginning” or *re’shyth* of knowledge. *Re’shyth* differs from *techilah*, the only use of this noun in Proverbs (‘beginning’). The former connotes the head or origin of something whereas the latter, generally more an opening. “Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning” [Gen 13.3]. So in the verse at hand, *yir’ah* is an opening of sorts to wisdom.

Dahath is the word for “knowledge” noted last in 8.12 and here is associated with “insight” or *bynah* (cf. vs. 6). In the verse at hand, such *dahath* is of the “Holy One” or *Qodesh* which has one other reference in Proverbs: “It is a snare for a man to say rashly, ‘It is holy,’ and to reflect only after making his vows” [20.25].

Vs. 11: For by me your days will be multiplied, and years will be added to your life.

“By me” reads literally “in (*b-*) me” with the verb *ravah* noted last in 7.18.

The words “days” and “years” are equivalent here, signifying long life. The verb *yasaph* means “will be added” noted last in vs. 9.

Vs. 12: If you are wise, you are wise for yourself; if you scoff, you alone will bear it.

Chakam is the verb for “are wise” noted last in 30.9 but here refers to a person attributing wisdom to himself, not the Lord. It is used with the preposition *l-* or literally “to yourself.”

Luts is the verb for “scoff” noted last in 30.8. In the verse at hand, the person so scoffing must “bear” it alone, *nasa’* noted last in 6.35.

Vs. 13: A foolish woman is noisy; she is wanton and knows no shame.

Kesyloth is the only reference in the Bible (feminine plural) and related to the noun *kesyl* noted last in 8.5 and here equivalent to being “noisy” or *hamah* (participle) as in 7.11. The noun means more than being noisy; it implies being clamorous or roaring.

Petayuth is a noun for “wanton,” the only use of this word in the Bible, the meaning of which the RSV calls

“uncertain.” Most likely it is related to the adjective *pety* noted last in vs. 6 as “simple.”

The **RSV** applies the same uncertainty to “knows no shame” which reads literally “does not know (*yadah*, cf. 30.9) what.”

Vs. 14: She sits at the door of her house, she takes a seat on the high places of the town,

Compare *beyth* or “house” with that of wisdom in 9.1 where the *kesyloth* or foolish woman sits (cf. vs. 13). At the “door” of this house or *petach* and noted last in 8.6, this noun meaning the opening of the house. Such sitting or *yashav* suggests idleness. “It is better to live in a corner of the housetop than in a house shared with a contentious woman” [21.9].

The Hebrew text lacks the verb “takes” and has the noun *kise’* which also means a throne. “It is an abomination to kings to do evil, for the throne is established by righteousness” [16.12]. Such a seat/throne the *kesyloth* has on the “high places” or *marom* and noted last in 8.2. The *marom* are located in the “town” or *qereth* noted last in vs. 3. The *kesyloth* does this in imitation of wisdom as depicted earlier in this chapter.

Vs. 15: calling to those who pass by, who are going straight on their way,

The verb “calling” (*qara’*, cf. vs. 4) is prefaced with the preposition *l* (‘to’).

The foolish woman of vs. 13 does this to two types of people:

1) Those “who pass by” or literally “going over or passing over (*havar*, cf. 8.29) the way” or *derek* (cf. vs. 6).

2) Those who “are going straight” or *yashar*, (cf. 8.9) on the “way” or *’orach* (cf. vs. 8.19). In other words, both groups of people are going about their own business.

Vs. 16: “Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!” And to him who is without sense she says,

This verse contains the first of two exhortations by the foolish woman, who, being noisy (i.e., boisterous or *hamah* as in vs. 13) is calling out such. *Pety* is noted last in vs. 6 whom the woman urges loudly to “turn in” or *sur* (cf. vs. 4), “here” being into the door of her house of vs. 14.

Next the foolish woman noisily cries out to the person “without sense” or *chasar* used with *lev* (‘heart’), the same words as in vs. 4.

The Hebrew text has “she says to him (*lo*).”

Vs. 17: “Stolen water is sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant.”

Ganav is the verb for “stolen” with one other reference in Proverbs: “Lest I be full and deny you and say, ‘Who is the Lord?’ Or lest I be poor and steal and profane the name of my God” [30.9]. It is used with another verb, *mataq*, the only one in Proverbs. “And the Lord showed him (Moses) a tree, and he threw it into the water, and the water became sweet” [Ex 15.25].

Nahem is the verb for “is pleasant” and connotes beauty as well as brightness. It is noted last in 2.10. Such bread is consumed in “secret” or *seter* and derives from the verbal root *satar*, to hide. “A gift in secret averts anger; and a bride in the bosom, strong wrath” [21.14]. This secret place is, of course, the house of the foolish woman.

Vs. 18: But he does not know that the dead are there, that her guests are in the depths of Sheol.

Yadah is the verb for “know” noted last in vs. 13 and used with respect to the “dead” or *repha’ym* which more accurately means shades. It is noted last in 2.18.

Equivalent to the “shades” are the foolish woman’s “guests” or the verb *qara’* noted last in vs. 15 which there as well as here refers to those passing by and those going straight on their own way.

Hameq is an adjective meaning deep with three other biblical references. “The people of an obscure speech which you cannot comprehend” [Is 33.19]. This adjective fits in well with the notion of Sheol as beneath the earth and whose entrance is in the foolish woman’s house (cf. 7.27).

Chapter Thirty-One

As stated in the Introduction, this document deals with the first nine chapters of Proverbs. Chapters Ten through Thirty consists of proverbs themselves. By reason of its fine bit of wisdom, Chapter Thirty-One (the final chapter) is included, which describes the ideal housewife. However, the first nine verses present the counsel of a queen mother to her son.

Vs. 1: The words of Lemuel, king of Massa, which his mother taught him:

As for Lemuel and Massa, consider the footnote of the **RSV**: “King Lemuel is unidentified; the text is possibly corrupt. Massa, a kingdom in N.W. Arabia, known from recently discovered inscriptions and Gen 25.14.”

The “words” or *davar* (noted last in 4.20) come from the mother of Lemuel; that is to say, he is “taught,” the verb being *yasar* noted last in 9.8 and applies more to correction or reproof.

Vs. 2: What, my son? What, son of my womb? What, son of my vows?

Three questions by the anonymous mother of King Lemuel who is not unlike wisdom; all three begin with “what” or *mah*. She calls him by two names: “womb” and “vows” (*beten* and *neder*). “The righteous has enough to satisfy his appetite, but the belly of the wicked suffers want” [13.25]. The latter can also apply to a sacrifice as noted in 7.14.

Vs. 3: Give not your strength to women, your ways to those who destroy kings.

Chyl is the noun for “strength” and can also mean wealth. “A good (*chyl*) wife is the crown of her husband, but she who brings shame is like rottenness in his bones” [12.4]. Most likely the mother of Lemuel had in mind the earlier warnings by both King Solomon and wisdom with regard to loose women.

Derek is the noun for “ways” noted last in 9.15. Such ways, if followed, would “destroy” or *machah* kings noted last in 6.33. In other words, Lemuel’s mother does not wish her son, a king, to destroy other kings which naturally involve nations.

Vs. 4: It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine or for rulers to desire strong drink;

Shatah is the verb for “drink” noted last in 9.5 and here with regard to “wine” or *yayn* noted last in 9.5. Compare *yayn* or regular wine with “strong drink” or *shekar* which usually is made from barley and includes honey and dried grapes. “Wine is a mocker, strong drink is a brawler; and whoever is led astray by it is not wise” [20.1].

Razan is a verb (participle) used for “rulers” noted last in 8.15.

Vs. 5: lest they drink and forget what has been decreed and pervert the rights of all the

afflicted.

Shatah is the verb for drink (cf. vs. 4) which here results in forgetfulness and perversion. The verb *shakach* ('forget') is noted last in 4.5 and the verb *shanah* ('pervert') means to change, to repeat. "He who forgives an offense seeks love, but he who repeats a matter alienates a friend" [17.9].

Shakach is with respect to "what has been decreed" or *chaqqaq* noted last in 8.29 and *shanah* is with respect to "rights" or *dyn*, a verb which is the only used of this term in Proverbs and means to judge. "He calls to the heavens above and to the earth, that he may judge his people" [Ps 50.4]. The judgment at hand concerns literally the "sons of the afflicted" or the noun *hony*, the only use of this noun in Proverbs. "Consider my affliction and my trouble, and forgive all my sins" [Ps 25.18].

Vs. 6: Give strong drink to him who is perishing and wine to those in bitter distress.

Shekar and *yayn*: "strong drink" and "wine," both mentioned in vs. 4. The former is for the person who is "perishing" and the latter to those "in bitter distress," *avad* and *marah*; the former noted last in 1.32 and the latter in 5.4. The noun *nepshesh* ('soul,' cf. 7.23) is used with *marah*, literally as "to a bitter soul."

Vs. 7: let them drink and forget their poverty and remember their misery no more.

"Them" refers to those mentioned in vs. 6, that their *shatah* or drinking will make them "forget" (*shakach*, cf. vs. 5) their "poverty" or *rysh*. Note the similar sound of both verbs. This noun has one other biblical reference, 28.19: "He who tills his land will have plenty of bread, but he who follows worthless pursuits will have plenty of poverty."

Zakar is the verb for "remember," the only mention in Proverbs. From it derives the noun (same spelling) for "male" indicating that through a man remembrance of one's family and heritage is passed on. "What is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him" [Ps 8.4]?

Hamal is the noun for "misery" and derives from a verbal root meaning to labor, to be weary. "For their minds devise violence, and their lips talk of mischief" [24.2].

Vs. 8: Open your mouth for the dumb, for the rights of all who are left desolate.

Patach is the verb for "open" and often refers to the act of speaking. "Wisdom is too high for a fool; in the gate he does not open his mouth" [24.7]. In the verse at hand it refers to the "dumb" or *ilem*, the only use of this adjective in Proverbs. "And the tongue of the dumb sing for joy" [Is 35.6].

Patach or the act of speaking also is to be used for persons "left desolate" literally "sons passing away" or *chaloph*, the only use of this noun in the Bible derived from the verbal root *chalaph* meaning to pass by, to transgress, to be changed. To such persons belong "rights" or *dyn* noted last in vs. 5.

Vs. 9: Open your mouth, judge righteously, maintain the rights of the poor and needy.

This verse concludes the words of King Lemuel's mother with regard ruling with emphasis upon restraint in drinking wine.

She concludes this section with three counsels:

- 1) *Patach* is noted in the previous verse and here has no special point of reference but as king, anything Lemuel may utter publically is recorded and of consequence.
- 2) *Shaphat* or "judge" noted last in 8.16 and here to be carried out "righteously" or *tsedeq*, the noun being used (justice, righteousness) and noted last in 8.15.

3) *Dyn* or “maintain the rights,” noted last in the previous verse. Here *dyn* is with respect to both the “poor” and “needy,” *hany* (cf. 3.34) and *’evyon*. For the latter, “He who oppresses a poor man insults his Maker, but he who is kind to the needy honors him” [14.31].

Vs. 10: A good wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels.

When the anonymous mother of King Lemuel speaks like this, perhaps she is thinking of King Solomon’s mother, Bathsheba who is similar to wisdom. The rest of Chapter Thirty-One contain acrostic verses, that is, each verse begins with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

Chyl is a noun for “good” and noted last in vs. 3.

Meker is a noun for “precious” with two other biblical references and means price or wares. “I will pay for it” [Num 20.19]. *Rachog* is the adjective for “far more” and alternately means far off and is noted last in 7.19. It modifies “jewels” or *penynym* noted last and commonly applies to rubies.

Vs. 11: The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain.

Batach is the verb for “trusts” and noted last in 3.5 and *lev* is the noun for “heart” as in 9.16 which belongs to the wife’s “husband” or *bahal* noted last in 3.27 as “possessors.”

Chasar is the verb for “have (no) lack” noted last in 9.16 and in the verse at hand refers to “gain” or *shalal* noted last in 1.13 as “spoil.”

Vs. 12: She does him good and not harm all the days of her life.

Gamal is the verb for “has done” and suggests a repaying and even weaning of a child as noted in 3.30. In the verse at hand, *tov* (cf. 8.19) or “good” is contrasted with *rah* or “harm” (cf. 8.13).

Chayym is the noun for “life” noted last in 8.35.

Vs. 13: She seeks wool and flax and works with willing hands.

Darash is the verb for “seeks” and connotes a trampling by reason of eagerness in one’s search. It has one other reference in Proverbs, 11.27: “He who diligently seeks good seeks favor, but evil comes to him who searches for it.”

The object of *darash* is “wool” and “flax” or *tsemer* and *pishteh*, both being the only uses of these terms in Proverbs. For the former, “He gives snow like wool; he scatters hoarfrost like ashes” [Ps 147.16]. For the latter, “The workers in combed flax will be in despair and the weavers of white cotton” [Is 19.9].

Hasah is the verb for “works” noted last in 8.26 and in the verse at hand, is done with hands that are “willing” or *chephets*, a noun and noted last in 8.11. Here *chephets* is prefaced with the preposition *b-* or literally “in willing” or “in desire.”

Vs. 14: She is like the ships of the merchant, she brings her food from afar.

’Onyah is the noun for ships with one other reference in Proverbs, 30.19: “The way of an eagle in the sky, the way of a serpent on a rock, the way of a ship on the high seas and the way of a man with a maiden.” In the verse at hand, such a ship is associated with a “merchant” or *sachar* (participle) noted last in 3.14.

Lechem is the noun for “food” noted last in 9.5 and basically means bread. The good wife brings this from “afar” or *merchaq* with one other reference in Proverbs, 25.25: “Like cold water to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country.”

Vs. 15: She rises while it is yet night and provides food for her household and tasks for her maidens.

Qum is the verb for “rises” noted last in 6.9. In the verse at hand, she does so at night in order to provide two services through use of the verb *natan* (‘provides,’ cf. 8.1):

1) “Food” or *tereph* which fundamentally means prey and is the only use of this noun in Proverbs. “The young lions roar for their prey, seeking their food from God” [Ps 104.21]. Such food is for the woman’s “household” or *bayth*.

2) “Tasks” or *choq* noted last in 8.29 as a limit. In the verse at hand, *choq* applies to the woman’s “maidens” or *naharah* noted last in 9.3.

Vs. 16: She considers a field and buys it; with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard.

Zamam is the verb for “considers” mentioned in 1.4 with the other Proverbs reference being 30.32: “If you have been foolish, exalting yourself, or if you have been devising evil, put your hand on your mouth.” The object of *zamam*: buying (*laqach*, cf. 9.7) a “field” or *sadeh* as in 23.10: “Do not remove an ancient landmark or enter the fields of the fatherless.”

Natah is the verb for “plants,” the only use in Proverbs. “The stock which your right hand planted” [Ps 80.15]. The object of this planting is a “vineyard” or *kerem*, the other Proverbs reference being 24.30: “I passed by the field of a sluggard, by the vineyard of a man without sense.” Mention of “fruit” or *pery* is noted last in 1.31, and in the verse at hand suggests that the woman’s hand is fertile.

Vs. 17: She girds her loins with strength and makes her arms strong.

Chagar is the verb for “girds,” the only use of this verb in Proverbs. “And you shall gird them with girdles and bind caps on them” [Ex 29.9]. The object of *chagar* is “loins” or *matnaym* with the other Proverbs reference being 30.31: “The strutting cock, the he-goat and a king striding before his people.” The RSV designates “strutting” as obscure yet has this term.

Hoz is the noun for “strength” as in 10.15: “A rich man’s wealth is his strong city; the poverty of the poor is their ruin.”

Amats is the verb for “makes strong” noted last in 8.28 and here applies to the woman’s arms.

Vs. 18: She perceives that her merchandise is profitable. Her lamp does not go out at night.

Taham is the verb for “perceives” and fundamentally means to taste, the only use in Proverbs. “So none of the people tasted food” [1Sam 14.24]. The object of *taham* is the woman’s “merchandise” or *sachar* noted last in 3.14 but the verbal form (participle) in vs. 14. The adjective *tov* (‘good,’ vs. 12) modifies it.

Ner is the noun for “lamp” noted last in 6.23 and used with the verb *kavah* with one other Proverbs verse being 26.20: “For lack of wood the fire goes out; and where there is no whisperer, quarreling ceases.”

Vs. 19: She puts her hands to the distaff, and her hands hold the spindle.

The two parts of this sentence are reversed in the Hebrew text.

Shalach is the verb for “puts” noted last in 9.3 and here pertains to the “distaff” or *kyskor*, the only use of this term in the Bible. Note the use of *yad* and *kaph* for “hands.” The latter is noted last in 6.3 and refers more to the palm of the hand.

Tamak is the verb for “hold” noted last in 5.22 and suggests a holding fast with regard to the “spindle” or *pelek*, the only use of this noun in Proverbs. Fundamentally *pelek* means a circle or environs as with the seven references in Nehemiah. “Next to them Rephaiah, the son of Hur, ruler of half the district of Jerusalem, repaired” [Neh 3.9].

Vs. 20: She opens her hand to the poor, and reaches out her hands to the needy.

Kaph is the noun for “hand” noted in the previous verse which here the woman “opens” or *paras*, a verb meaning to break, to cleave. “A man who flatters his neighbor spreads a net for his feet” [29.5]. The woman does this to the “poor” or the *hany* noted last in vs. 9.

Compare *hany* with *‘evyon* where both are mentioned in vs. 9. The former applies more to those who are afflicted (the verbal root *hanah*) and the latter, to those who are oppressed. In the verse at hand, the woman “reaches out” or *shalach* her hand, a verb found in the previous verse.

Vs. 21: She is not afraid of snow for her household, for all her household are clothed in scarlet.

Yare’ is the verb for “is (not) afraid” noted last in 3.25 and here applies to “snow” or *sheleg* as in 25.13: “Like the cold of snow in the time of harvest is a faithful messenger to those who send him, he refreshes the spirit of his masters.” In the verse at hand, *bayth* is the noun for “household” noted last in vs. 15, the common noun for “house” as a physical building but can apply to those living within it.

Shany is the noun for “scarlet,” the only use of this noun in Proverbs. “Your lips are like a scarlet thread, and your mouth is lovely” [Sg 4.3].

Vs. 22: She makes herself coverings; her clothing is fine linen and purple.

The verb *hasah* is used for “makes” noted last in vs. 13 and reads literally “to herself” or *lah*. The object of this making is “coverings” or *marvadym* last noted in 7.17 as “bed.”

Levush is the noun for “clothing” as in 27.26: “The lambs will provide your clothing and the goats the price of a field.” Such clothing is made of “fine linen” and “purple,” *shesh* and *‘argaman*. The former is the only use of the term in Proverbs and can mean marble due to its white color. “His legs are as pillars of marble” [Sg 5.15]. The latter also the only use of this term in Proverbs and made from a species of shell fish. “He made its (palanquin) posts of silver, its back of gold, its seat of purple” [Sg 3.10].

Vs. 23: Her husband is known in the gates when he sits among the elders of the land.

Bahal is the noun for “husband” noted last in vs. 11 who here is “known” (*yadah*, cf. 9.19) in the “gates” or *shahar* noted last in 8.3 where wisdom cries out.

The act of sitting or *yashav* (cf. 9.14) suggests that the man is a judge “among” (*him*, ‘with’) the “elders” or *zaqen*, an adjective meaning old. “Grandchildren are the crown of the aged, and the glory of sons is their fathers” [17.6]. Such elders come from the “land” or *‘erets* noted last in 8.31.

Vs. 24: She makes linen garments and sells them; she delivers girdles to the merchant.

Hasah is the verb for “makes” as in vs. 22 and applies to “linen garments” or *sadya*, the only use of this noun in Proverbs with three other biblical references, one of which is Is 3.23: “The garments of gauze, the linen garments, the turbans and the veils.” Such garments are worn next to the skin over which are other clothes.

Makar is the verb for “sells” with one other reference in Proverbs: “Buy truth, and do not sell it; buy wisdom, instruction and understanding” [23.23].

Presumably the “girdles” are made of linen, the word being *chagor*, the only use of this noun in Proverbs with three other biblical references. “Girded with belts on their loins, with flowing turbans on their heads, all of them looking like officers” [Ezk 23.15]. These the woman “delivers” (*natan*, cf. vs. 15) to the “merchant” or *knahany* which has two other biblical references and is related to the proper name Canaan. “And there shall no longer be a trader in the house of the Lord of hosts on that day” [Zech 14.21].

Vs. 25: Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come.

Levush is the noun for “clothing” as in vs. 22 which here comprises “strength” and “dignity” or *hoz* (cf. vs. 17) and *hadar*. The latter can also mean a decoration or ornament. “The glory of young men is their strength, but the beauty of old men is their gray hair” [20.29].

Sachaq is the verb for “laughs” noted last in 8.31 and connotes making a mockery of literally “to the day after.” This time is left unspecified but can be intimated as one of deprivation from the previous verses, either from famine or war.

Vs. 26: She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.

Patach is the verb for “opens” noted last in vs. 9 and here concerns “wisdom” or *chakmah* noted last in 8.11. It is prefaced with the preposition *b-*, “in wisdom.”

Torah or “teaching” is noted last in 7.2, here one of “kindness” or *chesed* (cf. 3.3) which is difficult to translate into any language. *Chesed* is on (*hal-*) the woman’s tongue compared meaning she is prepared to speak if necessary compared to opening her mouth with wisdom or beginning to speak.

Vs. 27: She looks well to the ways of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness.

Tsaphah is the verb for “looks well” which fundamentally means to shine, to observe accurately. “The eyes of the Lord are in every place keeping watch on the evil and the good” [15.3]. The object of *tsaphah* is *heylikah* or “ways,” the only use of this noun in the Bible and is derived from the common verb *halak* (to go). Such “goings,” if you will belong to the woman’s *bayth* or “household” noted last in vs. 21.

For *lechem* or “bread, cf. vs. 14 which here is one of “idleness” or *hatsloth*, the only use of this noun in the Bible and related to *hatsel* or “sluggard” of 6.9.

Vs. 28: Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her;

Qum is the verb for “rise up” noted last in vs. 15 and here most likely applies to morning. At that time the children “call (her) blessed” or *’ashar* noted last in 9.6, this verb suggestive of happiness as well as advancement in it.

Bahal is the noun for “husband” as in vs. 23 who “praises” his wife, *halal* being the verb which fundamentally means to be clear, to be brilliant. “Let another praise you and not your own mouth; a stranger and not your own lips” [27.2].

Vs. 29: “Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all.”

This quote can come from either the children, husband or both mentioned in the previous verse.

Chyl is the noun for “excellently” noted last in vs. 10 and used with the verb *hasah* (cf. vs. 24).

Halal is the verb for “surpass” which fundamentally means to go or to come up. “A wise man scales the city of the mighty and brings down the stronghold in which they trust” [21.22].

Vs. 30: Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.

Two pairs:

1) “Charm” and “deceitful” or *chen* and *sheqer*. The first word is noted in 5.19 and the second is a noun as in 6.16.

2) “Beauty” and “vain” or *yophy* and *hevel*. The first is noted last in 6.25 and the second is a noun as in 13.11: “Wealth hastily gotten (‘from vanity’) will dwindle, but he who gathers little by little will increase it.”

The phrase “fears (*yare’*, cf. vs. 21) the Lord” is noted last in 3.7 and is used here with *halal* (‘to be praised’) as in vs. 28.

Vs. 31: Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates.

Pery is the noun for “fruit” noted last in vs. 16.

Halal is the verb for “praise” as in the previous verse. Such praise is to be done not by the woman herself but by the reputation of her “works” or *mahseh* which is derived from the verbal root *hasah* (cf. vs. 29). “Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established” [16.3].

Shahar is the noun for “gates” noted last in vs. 23. Note that in this place of comings and goings the woman’s works will be praised compared with her husband actually sitting there with the elders.

The End +