

May 28, 1953

Report on "The Book of Proverbs in the Light of the Wisdom Literature of the Ancient Near East" by Irving J. Block

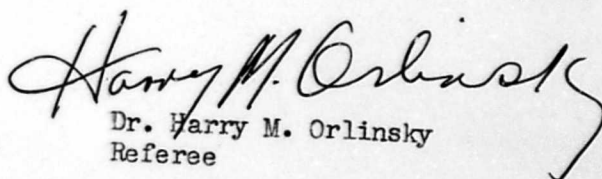
Scholarly opinion has long had it that various parts of the Hebrew Bible derive directly from Egyptian sources. Thus, for example, it has been generally believed that if Moses was really the founder of Israeli monotheism, he must have gotten it from the royal circle of the Egyptian Pharaoh Ikhnaton of the 14th Century B.C.E. Again, it has long been believed that the biblical book of Proverbs derives to a considerable extent from Egyptian wisdom literature.

Thanks to the recent book by Professor Wilson of the University of Chicago, The Burden of Egypt, it is becoming apparent that monotheism was not a concept in Ikhnaton's circle, and that moreover, the Hebrews had no access to this circle.

During the course in the book of Proverbs which I gave in the Spring of 1951, I devoted a considerable amount of attention to the problem of alleged Egyptian-Biblical parallels. It was my own experience in class that these parallels were more apparent than real. At my suggestion, Irving Block undertook to delve into the problem more deeply with the view of writing a dissertation on the subject for the M.H.L. degree.

Mr. Block carefully culled all the pertinent material which was to be found in the recently published volume entitled, "Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament" which scholars had associated with various passages in the biblical book of Proverbs. His own analysis led me to conclude that the alleged parallels between Egyptian wisdom literature and the book of Proverbs were scarcely of the kind that indicated any direct or indirect point of contact between the two groups. He found that what Israel had in common with the Egyptians, or the Assyrians, or the Babylonians, or the various peoples of the Far East and Africa and other areas, was merely the common literary expression of groups of human beings the world over, and that the book of Proverbs was a product of Israel's creativity and genius. Mr. Block feels that it is quite uncertain that even the "Instruction of Amen-em-Opet", in Egyptian literature was a prototype for some scattered passages in the book of Proverbs.

I have no doubt that much more comparative material could have been brought to bear upon the subject, and the dissertation could have benefited from more intensive study. If Mr. Block should acquire an additional language such as German, I believe that the present dissertation could be worked up to the standard required for the D.H.L. degree. In its present form, the thesis is acceptable for the M.H.L. degree.


Dr. Harry M. Orlinsky
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June 4, 1953

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I full agree with Dr. Orlinsky; I also agree that if the writer was more fluent with more Commentaries than the thesis evinces, the dissertation would be better. However, as it is, it is a very satisfactory thesis.

Aaron Giat
Co-referee

THE BOOK OF PROVERBS
IN THE LIGHT OF THE WISDOM LITERATURE
OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

by
Irving J. Block

EE843

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Rabbi and Master of Hebrew Letters

HEBREW UNION COLLEGE - JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION
NEW YORK SCHOOL

1953

Dedicated
to the Beloved Memory
of

My Dear Mother

MAE LENA SLOTNICK BLOCK

The work of this thesis has consisted of examining, comparing and analyzing the proverbial sayings of the Book of Proverbs with the wisdom literature primarily of Egypt, Babylonia and Assyria. This assignment was undertaken as a result of discussions arising out of a course of study of the Book of Proverbs given by Professor Harry M. Orlinsky in the spring of 1951.

Anyone who is introduced to the subject of wisdom literature soon becomes aware of the wealth of proverbial sayings to be found throughout the world. Many of these sayings bear a resemblance in content and phraseology. Scholars have called particular attention to the similarities existing between some of the biblical Proverbs and the extra-biblical literature of the Near East, and have contended that they are due to a borrowing or adaptation of material.

In the light of this contention, and on the basis of class discussions, I began to investigate several of the alleged parallels which had been cited. The results of this investigation have prompted me to study these similarities more thoroughly and to undertake as my thesis the refutation of the widely accepted theory of parallelism.

I have also included within the scope of this work proverbs belonging to the wisdom literature of other religions, such as the Far East, as well as ancient Greek aphorisms and sayings of African tribes.

For the purpose of comparison, I have made use of the Jewish Publication Society translation of the Holy Scriptures. The Revised Standard Version, published in October, 1952, was not available to me when I began my work. The translations of the extra-biblical literature of the Near East are to be found in the volume entitled Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament, edited by James B. Pritchard. The remarks of the editor to the effect that neither he nor the translator is committed to any scientific opinion regarding the listing of alleged parallels in that book further stimulated my interest.

It is my earnest hope that this study will serve also, even in a small measure, to bring about a better appreciation of the beauty and power of Proverbs to convey the message of "wisdom." Those who use proverbial sayings will find their thoughts enhanced and their speech enriched.

I should like to express my deepest thanks to Dr. Harry M. Orlinsky, Professor of Bible at the Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion, who suggested the subject of this thesis to me, and whose many valuable suggestions are included in this study.

My appreciation is extended to Aron Giat, Instructor in Hebrew Language at the same school, for his helpful assistance. To Babette Hertz for the aid she rendered me, I offer my gratitude.

My special thanks go to Bess and Jack Slotnick for their words of encouragement and tokens of kindness during the years of my rabbinical training.

I thank God for all my teachers and friends who have instructed me in the paths and words of wisdom, and

"I walk in the way of righteousness,
In the midst of the paths of justice;
That I may cause those that love me to
inherit substance,
And that I may fill their treasuries."

Irving J. Block

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OF REFERENCES TO THE BOOK
OF PROVERBS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A. AUTHORSHIP

B. CHARACTERISTICS

A. AUTHORSHIP

The opening sentence of the Book of Proverbs declares the author to be "Solomon, the son of David, king of Israel."

That King Solomon was renowned for his proverbial sayings, as well as for his wisdom, is attested by a statement in the Bible that "he spoke three thousand proverbs" (I Kings 5:12). That his wisdom and his understanding of human nature were so exceedingly great, and that his reputation spread far beyond the confines of Israel is likewise indicated in the Bible: "And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east, and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men: than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Calcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol; and his fame was in all the nations round about" (I Kings 5:10-12).

However, there is considerable uncertainty as to the authorship of Proverbs. Jewish tradition regards King Solomon as the author of the Book of Proverbs, as well as of Canticles and Ecclesiastes (Midrash Shir ha-Shirim I, 1, 10). A statement by Rabbi Jonathan, in this midrash, asserts that Solomon wrote Song of Songs in his youth, Proverbs in middle age, and Ecclesiastes in his old age.¹

1. Rabbi Jonathan said: "He (Solomon) first wrote the Song of Songs, then Proverbs, then Ecclesiastes." Rabbi Jonathan argues from the way of the world. When a man is young he composes songs; when he grows old, he makes sententious remarks; when he becomes an old man, he speaks of the vanity of things.

While the superscription of the Book and midrashic statements regard King Solomon as the author, there are other rabbinic views that the Book of Proverbs, in its present form, is the product of a later date. The Talmud contains the statement, "Hezekiah and his colleagues wrote Isaiah, Proverbs, the Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes" (Baba Batra 15a). The term "wrote" may be understood to mean "compiled" or "edited."¹

The mention of Hezekiah in Prov. 25:1 supports the opinion that the Book began to take shape during that king's reign. "These also," says the introductory note of that section, "are proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out." And it is no less clear from other superscriptions that Solomon was not the sole author of this composite work. "These also are sayings of the wise" (24:23), "The words of Agur, the son of Jakeh" (30:1), "The words of King Lemuel" (31:1) are the titles of minor sections of the Book expressly assigned to authors other than Solomon.

Even contemporary conservative scholars, like W. O. E. Oesterley² and J. Greenstone, contend that it is not possible to assume that the Book, as we now have it, emanated directly from Solomon. "The superscriptions of the various

1. Margolis, Max L., The Hebrew Scriptures in the Making (Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia, 1948), p. 20.

2. Oesterley, W. O. E., The Book of Proverbs (Methuen & Co. Ltd., London, 1929).

divisions plainly establish the fact that there existed collections of proverbs which an editor at some later time put together in one book."¹

Regardless of which opinion is held, the title of the Book need not necessarily be considered a misnomer. It is reasonable to assume that the impetus for the collection of proverbs may well have emanated from Solomon and be attributed to him, even as all the 150 Psalms were attached to those specifically associated with King David, when, in fact, individual psalms are expressly ascribed to Moses, the Sons of Korah, Asaph and Solomon.

1. Greenstone, Julius H., Proverbs with Commentary (Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia, 1950), p. xx.

B. CHARACTERISTICS

Just what might one expect to find in the Book of Proverbs?

If such a book was, according to Toy, "reflective and academic in tone,"¹ we would find several wise sayings of a king, a number of maxims of counselors, and some of the popular phrases of the prophets.

But amazingly enough, we find here hundreds of proverbs gathered together in one book of the Bible, often with an astonishing disregard for consecutive thought in the groupings. Careful scrutiny reveals that the Book is not a deliberate, systematic attempt to collect the Hebrew proverbs. Many proverbs occur more than once in the Book with only slightly varying phraseology:

Remove not the ancient landmark,
Which thy fathers have set (22:28).

Remove not the ancient landmark;
And enter not into the fields of the
fatherless (23:10).

And yet, in spite of all this, there is a subtle unity pervading the Book, and the confusion is somewhat held within bounds. Independent as the proverbs are, they nevertheless form a unity, the underlying theme of which is "wisdom."

1. Toy, Crawford H., The Book of Proverbs (Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1899), p. xi.

Among all the books of the Bible, none illustrates the characteristic of Wisdom Literature as does the Book of Proverbs. Its chapters are filled with rules of practical ethics, and contain discourses on moral philosophy. Honesty in business, charity to the poor and oppressed, the establishment of justice, matters in relation to the home, and good advice for daily conduct make up the bulk of its maxims. The religious motive for ethical conduct --namely, that the good life is the proper life because it is in harmony with the will of God--is constantly kept in the foreground. "Get wisdom, get understanding" (4:5) is strongly proposed, but the motto of the Book is almost identical with Job 28:28, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (1:7).

"The sages who impart their doctrines in this Book do not stand on a lofty height and preach impracticable ideals.... They urge the fundamental thesis that the morally defective and willfully perverted stand in their own light, deny themselves the real joys of living, bring avoidable troubles upon their head and, though they may at times have a momentary triumph, ultimately fall. On the other hand, to conduct oneself in the light of wisdom means to get the best out of life, discover sources of strength which assure final victory over calamity and evil, and become a blessing to oneself and society. Such,

reduced to its simplest

reduced to its simplest terms, is the message of these wise men of Israel."¹

1. Cohen, Rev. Dr. A., Proverbs (The Soncino Press, 1945), pp. xiii, xiv.

CHAPTER 2

THE GENERAL NATURE OF PROVERBS

The statement of I Kings 5:10-12, comparing the wisdom of Solomon to the other great sages of neighboring countries, clearly indicates to us that apothegms and proverbs were widespread as early as the Davidic-Solomonic period. It should come as no surprise that scholars today are pointing to the many parallels that exist in the proverbial literature of all ancient Near Eastern peoples. With the archeological discoveries of ancient Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Hurrian, Canaanite, and other texts, Bible students have been quick to indicate the extraordinary parallels of thought and style to many of the sayings in the Book of Proverbs. The volume entitled Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament, edited by James B. Pritchard, includes hundreds of passages which scholars have cited as being parallel to biblical verses. Under the Book of Proverbs, there are listed 126 parallel references.

If we understand the nature of proverbs, there will be little difficulty to comprehend the reason for the seemingly large number of similar expressions used.

Lord John Russell once described a proverb as "One Man's Wit, and All Men's Wisdom."¹ In other words, a saying becomes proverbial only when it has undergone the process of winning wide acceptance. Perhaps thousands

1. Mackintosh, R. J., ed., Memoirs of the Life of Sir James Mackintosh (Edward Moxon, London, 1836), Vol. II, p. 473.

of expressions have been lost as against one that survived the test of being passed from mouth to mouth, repeated and transmitted until it was recorded for posterity. General recognition is accorded to any saying which expresses the beliefs, or appeals to the conscience and emotions of many men, regardless of whether it was designed by the mind of a man of genius or literary talent, or whether it was derived from usage by ordinary folk.

No class or group of men has had a monopoly on the words of wisdom. Even if the original thought of a proverb were to be attributed to one keen mind, it would of necessity have to undergo a process of testing and acceptance by a multitude of men. We can well imagine, from our own experience, how certain proverbs supply the words to fit adequately one's thoughts. For instance:

Go to the ant, thou sluggard;
Consider her ways, and be wise. (6:6)

Train up a child in the way he should go,
And even when he is old, he will not
depart from it. (22:6)

Many proverbs have likely achieved popularity, not because of the thought they express, but because of their phraseology and manner of expression. The secret of their success may be laid to the cleverness, originality or humor of their composition. Therefore, the proverbs attributed to Solomon's authorship may be those which he himself framed

or, having heard them before, incorporated them into his speech because of their moral lesson. "He may have taken the liberty with some of them to give them a more literary form or even to change them in content so as to give a different nuance which they may not have had originally. He may also have been induced to borrow from other peoples proverbs which appeared to him appropriate and gave them a Hebrew translation and even a Jewish significance."¹

As will be shown later, proverbial literature in general reveals certain basic ethical and practical sentiments which guide the lives of people everywhere. This applies not only to the Book of Proverbs, but to the wisdom literature of the Near East and to the writings of other early religions.

All over the world, proverbial literature is rich in sayings which reflect religion, philosophy, ethics, and morality, each showing striking similarities and revealing amazing resemblances. Although they appear in different forms of expression, these proverbs all preach the lessons of prudence, brotherhood, charity and the golden rule of humanity. They stress over and over again a dependence on and absolute faith and trust in God. For example:

1. Greenstone, Proverbs, p. xxi.

Better is little with the fear of the Lord
Than great treasure and turmoil therewith. (15:16)

Better is poverty in the hand of the god
Than riches in a storehouse. (The Instruction
of Amen-em-Opet, Egyptian Proverbial Literature.)

Better it is to chant one verse of the Law,
that brings the hearer peace,
Than to chant a hundred empty songs.
(Dhammapada 102, Religious Literature of Buddhism.)

Poverty which is through honesty is better
than opulence which is from the treasure of
others. (Menog-i Khrad, 15, 4, Religious
Literature of Zoroastrianism.)

We can see from the foregoing the obvious resemblances and parallels in the wisdom literature of different peoples and religions. Greenstone likewise calls attention to this: "Extraordinary parallels to many of the sayings in our book are presented by the proverbs found in ancient Babylonian and Assyrian texts, especially those included in the famous story of Ahikar."¹

Similarly, Elmslie questions: "Do not many of these proverbs state the merest a b c of ethical sentiment, for which any civilized nation could produce a parallel in its proverbs?"²

Perowne says, "It is of the very nature of proverbial philosophy to belong rather to mankind than to any particular time or people."³

1. Greenstone, Proverbs, p. xxvii.
2. Elmslie, W. A. L., Studies in Life from Jewish Proverbs (James Clark & Co., London, 1917), p. 166.
3. Perowne, T. T., The Proverbs (University Press, Cambridge, 1916).

However, Professor Dixon presents two possible alternative reasons for cultural parallelism which can well apply to our discussion of proverbial literature. "... Either the similarity is due to diffusion which has carried the trait in some unknown way from one area to the others, or the similarity is due merely to chance and the basic unity of the human mind, which confronted with similar conditions, has reacted to them in a similar way."¹

It remains now to examine critically the references which are cited in the volume, Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament, and to determine if they be exclusively Hebraic, or of a universal nature.

The following pages contain almost all of the parallels from Egyptian, Akkadian, and Aramaic sources to which the various contributors allude as resembling in form and sentiment any of the Jewish proverbs. In addition, there is included the proverbial writings of other world religions whenever their moral aphorisms indicate similar parallel thoughts.

1. Dixon, Roland B., Building of Cultures (New York, 1928), p. 182.

CHAPTER 3

AN ANALYSIS OF ALLEGED
AND ASSUMED PARALLELS
BETWEEN THE BOOK OF PROVERBS
AND
THE OTHER ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN LITERATURES

The proverbs which are listed in this chapter for our examination are arranged under ten general headings. This grouping was made solely for the purpose of presenting the material clearly, although many of the proverbs fall naturally into one of these ten classifications:

- I. Charitableness and Kindliness toward the Poor.
- II. Family Relations.
- III. The Folly of Man's Ways.
- IV. Between God and Man.
- V. Some Good Advice.
- VI. Honesty and Justice.
- VII. Industry and Idleness.
- VIII. The Righteous and the Wicked.
- IX. The Quest for Wisdom.
- X. Woman as the Bane or Blessing of Man.

The proverbial sayings found in the Egyptian collection of Amen-em-Opet, which are listed as parallels to verses in Proverbs 22:17--24:34, are treated in a separate chapter. This is done because many biblical scholars have called attention to several exceptionally striking instances of parallelism between the Hebrew and Egyptian materials.

Under the separate classifications, each of the verses of Proverbs will be followed by the extra-biblical parallels which scholars have adduced. Occasional references will be

made to other religious literature, not from among Near Eastern countries, which includes similar expressions.

In examining these verses, we must keep in mind such questions as: Does the Book of Proverbs indicate considerable foreign influence, especially of Egyptian, Akkadian and Aramaic literature? Are the passages referred to in the religious writings of Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism, Jainism, Shinto, Taoism and Zoroastrianism illustrative of the universal character of proverbial sayings?

Among the documents and texts of the Egyptian, Akkadian and Aramaic literatures, to which reference will be made, are:

I. EGYPTIAN INSTRUCTIONS

(a) The Instruction of the Vizier Ptah-hotep. He was the Vizier of King Izezi of the Fifth Dynasty (about 2450 B. C. E.). Ptah-hotep is supposedly instructing his son, who is a likely successor to his position, on how to be a successful official.

(b) The Instruction for King Meri-ka-Re. This manuscript presents the advice which one of several rulers about the end of the 22nd century B. C. E. gave to his son and successor.

(c) The Instruction of King Amen-em-het. He is considered to be the first pharaoh of the Twelfth Dynasty who

ruled about the turn of the second millennium B. C. E. In this text, he offers advice to his son and successor.

(d) The Instruction of Ani. This document contains only extracts of a set of instructions by a father, who was a scribe of the royal temple, to his son toward the end of the Egyptian Empire. Scholars have not been able to identify the king from the extracts.

(e) The Instruction of Amen-em-Opet. He appears as a Superintendent of the Land, who wrote this particular teaching for his son. There is difficulty in dating this manuscript, but scholars place the period between the 10th and 6th centuries B. C. E.

(f) The Divine Attributes of Pharaoh. This is a poem which enumerates some of the divine elements possessed by the King of Egypt. It also serves as a father's instruction to his children, pointing out that faithful service to Pharaoh, the son of Re, will be rewarded.

(g) The Satire on the Trades. This is one of the classics which Egyptian schoolboys, learning the profession of the scribe, had to copy. Scholars place the original document as being written about 2150 to 1750 B. C. E.

(h) A Prayer to Thoth. This prayer, which dates from the latter part of the 13th century B. C. E., is directed to the god of wisdom, who is likewise the patron of the

scribe.

scribes. It served as a model exercise for schoolboys.¹

II. AKKADIAN PROVERBS AND COUNSELS

The texts of the Akkadian proverbs, to which reference shall be made, are the cuneiform tablets which bear on the religion of Babylonia and Assyria. Only fragments of these documents of instruction and counsel are, however, available.²

III. ARAMAIC PROVERBS AND PRECEPTS

The Words of Ahigar. This text reveals that Ahigar was a priest who officiated during the reign of the Assyrian kings Sennacherib (704-681 B. C. E.) and Esarhaddon (680-669 B. C. E.). Ahigar, being without a son of his own, instructs his sister's son in this text.³

In the translations of the above documents, which shall be cited, the use of parentheses about a word or phrase indicates that certain interpolations were made by the translator for a better understanding of the text. Square brackets are used for restorations. Where the text is wholly damaged or missing, a lacuna indicated by three dots appears. Capital Roman numerals indicate the number of the tablet, or a well-recognized division; lower-case Roman numerals, the columns; and Arabic numbers, the lines.

1. Translation of the above Egyptian documents is the work of John A. Wilson, in the volume edited by Pritchard.
2. Translation of these texts was done by Robert H. Pfeiffer in the Pritchard volume.
3. Translation of this work was done by Harold L. Ginsberg in the Pritchard volume.

I. CHARITABLENESS AND KINDLINESS TOWARD THE POOR

קָדַח - לִי יַעֲקֹב מוֹלֵךְ (1)

וְאֵם חוֹנֵן עַל עֲוֹנוֹתָיו

He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth;
But he that is gracious unto the humble,
happy is he. (14:21)

עֹשֶׂה דָל חֶרֶף עֲשֵׂהוּ
וְאֵם בְּדוֹ חוֹן אֶבְיוֹן (2)

He that oppresseth the poor blasphemeth his
Maker;
But he that is gracious unto the needy
honoureth Him. (14:31)

מִלֵּוָּה יִהְיֶה חוֹנֵן דָּל (3)
וְגִמְלוֹ יִשְׁלֶם-לוֹ

He that is gracious unto the poor lendeth
unto the Lord,
And his good deed will He repay unto him.
(19:17)

טוֹב-עֵין הוּא יְבָרֵךְ (4)
כִּי-נָתַן מִלֶּחֶמוֹ לְדָל

He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed;
For he giveth of his bread to the poor. (22:9)

נֹתֵן לְדָשׁ אֵין מִחְסוֹר (5)
וְאֵעֲלִים עֵינָיו כֶּבֶד-מְאֹדוֹת

He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack;
But he that hideth his eyes shall have many
a curse. (28:27)

(6) מֶלֶךְ שׁוֹפֵט בְּצִדְקָה
 כִּסְאוֹ יִסָּד לְעוֹלָם
 יְבוּל!

The King that faithfully judgeth the poor,
 His throne shall be established for ever. (29:14)

(7) כַּפָּה פָּרַשְׁהָ לְעָנִי
 יָדֶיהָ שָׁלְחָה לְאַבְיּוֹן!

She stretched out her hand to the poor;
 Yea, she reached forth her hands to the needy.
 (31:20)

As an illustration of similarity between the Hebrew and Akkadian proverbs, Pfeiffer cites the following lines as a parallel to Proverbs, numbered 1 to 7.

Give food to eat, give date wine to drink;
 The one begging for alms honor, clothe:
 Over this his god rejoices,
 This is pleasing unto the god Shamash, he
 rewards it with good.
 Be helpful, do good.
 (Akkadian Proverbs, Counsels of Wisdom ii.)

It is obvious that in both sets of proverbs, helping the poor and the unfortunate is considered a pleasing act to God, which He rewards. Charitableness is expected of all. Even the king and the housewife must care for the poor and the needy.

The one Akkadian reference, applied as a parallel for each of the Hebrew proverbs, 1 to 7, in no wise indicates that it is similar in style or phraseology, other than dealing with the general theme of charity. Certainly it is difficult to contend on the basis of this material that the

literature of one group was influenced by the other.

That the subject of charitableness is widespread, and is part of the philosophy of other early religions may be seen as follows:

To bestow alms, and live righteously. To give help to kindred, deeds which cannot be blamed, these are a supreme blessing. (Sutta-Nipata 262; 18 Buddhism.)

He that gives alms goes to the highest heaven, goes to the Gods. (Rig-Veda I, 125; 8 Hinduism.)¹

1. The references to the literature and sacred writings of other world religions are taken from a comparative study by Selwyn Gurney Champion, entitled The Eleven Religions and Their Proverbial Lore, E. P. Dutton & Co., New York, 1945.

In order to identify the verse quoted, I have listed the name of the work first; this is followed by a reference number to the particular section. Thus, "8 Hinduism" refers to eighth quotation under the chapter of Hinduism in the above book.

A brief listing of the religions, whose proverbs and sayings will be referred to, is as follows:

<u>Religion</u>	<u>Date of Origin</u>	<u>Distribution</u>
Buddhism	6th Century B. C. E.	Widespread over Far East
Confucianism	6th Century B. C. E.	China, Korea, Manchuria
Hinduism	About 3000 B. C. E.	India, Ceylon, Bali, Siam, South Africa
Jainism	Revised 6th Century B. C. E.	India
Shinto	Considered as Pre-historic	Japan
Taoism	6th Century B. C. E.	China, Korea, and Manchuria
Zoroastrianism	6th Century B. C. E.	India, Persia

He who, seeing one thirsty, hungry or pained, is pained in mind and through pity assists him, shows compassion. (Pravacana-sara p. 203; 14 Jainism.)

Give to others and do not regret or begrudge your liberality. Those who are thus are good. (T'ai Shang Kan Ying P'ien; 52 Taoism.)

Worshippers! Be full of pity and mercy for beggars and lepers and even for ants and crickets. Those whose pity and charity are wide will have their life extended immeasurably. (Oracle of the Deity Hachiman; 11 Shinto.)

II. FAMILY RELATIONS, dealing with training of children, and obedience and respect to parents.

שְׁמַע בְּנִי אִמְרֵי אָבִיךָ (8)
 וְאַל-תִּשְׁכַּח מִצְוַת אִמְךָ!
 כִּי בְּלִילִית יֵן יְהוָה לְרֹאשְׁךָ
 וְלַעֲרֻקִים לְבִדְדֻתֶיךָ!

Hear, my son, the instruction of thy father,
 And forsake not the teaching of thy mother;
 For they shall be a chaplet of grace unto
 thy head,
 And chains about thy neck. (1:8, 9)

The following is cited by Wilson as a parallel:

To hear is of advantage for a son who hearkens. If hearing enters into a hearkener, the hearkener becomes a hearer. (When) hearing is good, speaking is good. Every hearkener (is) an advantage, and hearing is of advantage to the hearkener. To hear is better than anything that is, (and thus) comes the goodly love (of a man). How good it is when a son accepts what his father says! Thereby maturity comes to him. (Instruction of Vizier Ptah-hotep, 535ff.)

The statement in Proverbs emphasizes that blessings will accrue to the obedient child. Love and respect of parents are fundamental in Judaism as set forth in the Fifth Commandment.

The Egyptian instructions indicate that obedience is looked upon as a prescribed part of training if one is to become a "hearer" or magistrate who hears cases.

A quotation from Shinto sacred writings:

Attend strictly to the commands of your parents and to the instructions of your teachers. (An oracle of the Deity Temmangu; 89 Shinto.)

(9) מְשִׁילִי שְׂלֵמָה

בֶּן חָכָם שֶׁמֶח-אָב
וּבֶן כְּסִיל תּוֹגֵת אִמּוֹ!

The proverbs of Solomon.

A wise son maketh a glad father;

But a foolish son is the grief of his mother.

(10:1)

(10) בֶּן חָכָם מְוָסֵר אָב
וְלֹץ לֹא-שָׁמַע בְּעִנְיָה!

A wise son is instructed of his father;
But a scorner heareth not rebuke. (13:1)

(11) בֶּן חָכָם שֶׁמֶח-אָב
וְכִסִּיל אָדָם בּוֹגֵה אִמּוֹ!

A wise son maketh a glad father;
But a foolish man despiseth his mother. (15:20)

(12)

יְסֵר בְּנֶךָ וְיָנִיחַ לְךָ
וְיָנִיחַ אֶת-נַפְשְׁךָ לְפָנָיו!

Correct thy son, and he will give thee rest;
Yea, he will give delight unto thy soul. (29:17)

The following passage is cited by Wilson in the Pritchard volume as a parallel to a group of Hebrew proverbs (numbers 9-12).

If thou art a man of standing and foundest a household and producest a son who is pleasing to god, if he is correct and inclines toward thy ways and listens to thy instruction, while his manners in thy house are fitting, and if he takes care of thy property as it should be, seek out for him every useful action. He is thy son, whom thy ka engendered for thee. Thou shouldst not cut thy heart off from him.¹

(But a man's) seed (often) creates enmity. If he goes astray and transgresses thy plans and does not carry out thy instruction, (so that) his manners in thy household are wretched, and he rebels against all that thou sayest, while his mouth runs on in the (most) wretched talk, (quite) apart from his experience, while he possesses nothing, thou shouldst cast him off; he is not thy son at all. He was not really born to thee. (Thus) thou enslavest him entirely according to his (own) speech.... He is one whom god has condemned in the (very) womb.

(The Instruction of the Vizier Ptah-hotep, 185ff.)

Both the Hebrew and Egyptian sayings advise parents to give their children the necessary instruction and training. The reward for this early training will be in the delight and happiness that the wise and obedient child will bring to his parents. He will be their joy when he is young; their benefactor when they are old.

While the subject of training of children is common to both the Hebrew and Egyptian sayings, there is little evidence of any borrowing of phrases of style one from the other.

1. The "ka" was the protecting and guiding vital force of a man, and thus his social mentor. See John A. Wilson, in Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament, edited by J. B. Pritchard.

Compare with:

He who disobeys his mother is a fool. (Jabo Proverbs from Liberia, no. 266.)¹

If you wish your child to have manners, teach him while he is still a child. (Jabo Proverbs from Liberia, no. 266.)

A son disgraces his father by bad conduct. (Proverbs in the Efiki or old Calabar Language, no. 278, Wit and Wisdom from West Africa.)²

Conduct yourself toward your parents as you would have your children conduct themselves toward you. (Isocrates, Vol. I, p. 11, Address to Demonicus.)³

(13)

שְׁמַע בְּקוֹל אֲבִיךָ
וְאַל תִּבְזֶה אֶת אִמְךָ כִּי
זָקֵנָה הִיא (23:22)

Hearken unto thy father that begot thee,
And despise not thy mother when she is old. (23:22)

The following is cited by Wilson as a parallel:

Double the food which thou givest to thy mother, and carry her as she carried (thee). She had a heavy load in thee, but she did not leave it to me. Thou wert born after thy months, (but) she was still yoked (with thee, for) her breast was in thy mouth for three years continuously. Though thy filth was disgusting,

1. Jabo Proverbs from Liberia, Maxims in the Life of a Native Tribe, by George Herzog. Published for the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures, Oxford University Press, London, 1936.
2. Wit and Wisdom from West Africa--or, A Book of Proverbial Philosophy, Idioms, Enigmas and Laconisms, compiled by Richard F. Burton, Tinsley Brothers, London, 1865.
3. Isocrates, translated by George Norlin, Loeb Classical Series (William Heinemann Ltd., London, 1928).

(her) heart was not disgusted, saying: "What can I do?" She put thee into school when thou wert taught to write, and she continued on thy behalf every day, with bread and beer in her house. (The Instruction of Ani, vii.)

Examine also the writings of others:

Whosoever being rich does not support mother or father when old and past their youth, let one know him as an outcast. (Sutta-Nipata 123; 221 Buddhism.)

Honor thy father and mother. (Avaliyar; 332 Hinduism.)

(14)

מקל שחצוהו
באש חצוהו
באש חצוהו
באש חצוהו

Whoso curseth his father or his mother,
His lamp shall be put out in the blackest
darkness. (20:20)

The following is cited as a parallel by Ginsberg:

Extinguished be (the lamp of your son whom you brought) up, whom you set up at the gate of the palace. He has ruined you, and an (evil) return (it is). (The words of Ahikar, 111.)¹

Also, the statement in Ahikar,

(Whosoever) takes no pride in the names of his father and mother, may the s(un) not shine (upon him); for he is a wicked man. (The Words of Ahikar, ix.)

Here the parallel thought is that dishonor to parents will result in punishment for the disrespectful child.

1. The reading and restoration of bracket portions is much in doubt. See footnote, *ibid.*, p. 428.

An examination of the proverbs and sayings under this section of FAMILY RELATIONS reveals that the subject of child training, of obedience and respect to parents, is as old and universal as man's history. The reference to the Instruction of the Vizier Ptah-hotep, as a parallel to the Hebrew Proverbs (no. 9-12), does not show any specific parallelism. With regard to the proverb (no. 14), the words "lamp" or "sun" in the Hebrew and Aramaic texts may be presumed to be allegorical expressions common to early civilizations, and do not provide us with any valid and clear example of parallelism in style and phraseology. Surely, there is no indication of borrowing.

We must conclude that any thought of parallelism in this section, as regards the influence of one writing upon another, does not exist at all; the evidence in favor of that assumption is glaringly meager.

III. THE FOLLY OF MAN'S WAYS, as manifest in his
speech, deeds and conduct.

(15)

וְהַכֹּזֵב הוּא שֶׁיֵּשׁ לוֹ שִׁנְיָה שֶׁפִּתִּי-שֶׁקֶר
וְאִלּוּ אֵין לוֹ דָּבָר הַנֶּאֱמָר כִּדְמִי!

He that hideth hatred is of lying lips;
And he that uttereth a slander is a fool. (10:18)

Pfeiffer cites as a parallel:

Do not slander, speak what is fine.
Speak no evil, tell what is good.
Whoever slanders (or) speaks evil,
As a retribution the god Shamash will
pursue after his head.
Open not wide your mouth, guard your lips;
The words of your inner self do not speak
(even) when alone.
What you now speak hastily you will later
take back,
And you should cause your mind to refrain by
its efforts from speech.
(Akkadian Proverbs, Counsels of Wisdom 11.)

The meaning of the Hebrew proverb is dependent upon
the translation used. The Authorized Version of the
English Bible treats the proverb as a single clause:
"He that hideth hatred with lying lips and he that
uttereth a slander is a fool." Greenstone understands
the term "hideth hatred" to mean showing friendliness
while harboring hate.

The Akkadian passage is a warning against slander,
as subject to punishment by God, and it cautions against
the dangers of hasty speech.

While both proverbs deal with the subject of slander, the Akkadian is an admonitory passage, while the Hebrew is a characterization of a foolish deceiver and babbler.

(16)

אָדָם עָלִים כִּסֵּה דָעַת
 לֵב בִּסְסִים יִקְרָא אִשְׁמָתָה

A prudent man concealeth knowledge;
 But the heart of fools proclaimeth foolishness.
 (12:23)

The following is cited by Wilson as a parallel:

Better is a man whose talk (remains) in his
 belly
 Than he who speaks it out injuriously.
 (The Instruction of Amen-em-Opet, XXI.)

Oesterley prefers the following translation of
 the Egyptian text:¹

He that (concealeth) his speech within himself
 Is better than he who uttereth it to (his) hurt.

In both the Hebrew and Egyptian proverbs, the wisdom
 of silence and cautious talk is brought out clearly.
 Whereas fools are careless about their speech, wise men
 know the value and force of words.

The ways of the fool are surely known to wise men
 everywhere. For example:

1. Oesterley, W. O. E., The Wisdom of Egypt and the Old Testament (The Macmillan Co., 1927), p. 59.

The fool who knows his folly is so far wise; but the fool who reckons himself wise is called a fool indeed. (Dhammapada 63; 147 Buddhism.)

For one word a man is often deemed to be wise, and for one word he is often deemed to be foolish. (Analects 19, 25; 501 Confucianism.)

Even a wise man does not know it all. (Proverbs of West Africa, p. 63.)

אִם יִשְׁמַח אִישׁ בְּכֹחַ יָדָיו
וְלֹא בְּכֹחַ חָכְמָתוֹ
לֹא יִשְׁתָּבַח
וְלֹא יִשְׁתָּבַח
וְלֹא יִשְׁתָּבַח
(17)

A fool despiseth his father's correction; But he that regardeth reproof is prudent. (15:5)

The following is cited by Wilson as being analogous to the above Proverb:

If a son accepts what his father says, no project of his miscarries. He whom thou instructest as thy obedient son, who will stand well in the heart of the official, his speech is guided with respect to what has been said to him, one regarded as obedient.... (But) the induction of him who does not hearken miscarries. (The Instruction of the Vizier Ptah-hotep, 565ff.)

The subject of obedience to a father's instruction is again discussed, as it was under the section of FAMILY RELATIONS. The Hebrew Proverb contrasts the action of the foolish son and the prudent son, pointing out that the wise child hearkens to his parents who has had more experience. In the Egyptian proverb, stress is laid upon training an obedient son, for only such a person can be successful at court.

(18)
 מַקְצֵה בְּלִי יָם תַּמִּים שִׁתָּה
 שִׁלָּה דְּבָרִים בִּיד - דְּסִיל!

He that sendeth a message by the hand of a fool
 Cutteth off his own feet, and drinketh damage.
 (26:6)

It has been compared with:

If an official sends thee on an errand, say it
 (just) as he said it; do not take away or add to it.
 (The Satire on the Trades, x.)

The Hebrew Proverb warns against sending a fool on
 an errand. Not only might he deliver a wrong message,
 but his manner might be so irritating as to misrepresent
 the feelings of the sender and cause considerable harm.
 (Comp. case no. 64.)

The Egyptian instruction, which is directed to
 schoolboys learning how to serve officials, calls atten-
 tion to the need of exact delivery.

Compare with:

When you are placed in authority, do not employ
 any unworthy person in your administration; for people
 will blame you for any mistakes which he may make.
 (Isocrates, Vol. I, p. 27.)

(19)
 כִּבְדִּי אֶבְדִּי וְנִלְכַּדְתִּי
 כִּבְדִּי אֶבְדִּי וְנִלְכַּדְתִּי

A stone is heavy, and the sand weighty;
 But a fool's vexation is heavier than they
 both. (27:3)

Compare with the observation of Ahiqar:

I have lifted sand, and I have carried salt;
but there is naught which is heavier than [rage].
(The Words of Ahiqar, viii, 8.)

The observations of men everywhere toward anger are the same. Rage and vexation are particularly heavy to bear.

In the literature of Buddhism, there are similar expressions.

There is no fire like passion, there is no shark like hatred, there is no snare like folly, there is no torrent like greed. (Dhammapada 251; 248 Buddhism.)

An examination of the Proverbs in this section, with the extra-biblical literature cited as parallels, shows only a poor or fair similarity in style and phraseology. Though the themes may be similar, no direct borrowing of literary material is evident here.

IV. BETWEEN GOD AND MAN: the relationship of divine control to human conduct and activity.

(20)

בְּכָל - צִדְּקוֹת עֵינֵי יְהוָה
צִדְּקוֹת לְעֵינֵי וְלִטְוָה יָדָיו:

The eyes of the Lord are in every place,
Keeping watch upon the evil and the good. (15:3)

The following has been cited as a parallel statement:

Worship King Ni-maat-Re, living forever, within
your bodies
And associate with his majesty in your hearts.
He is Perception which is in (men's) hearts,
And his eyes search out every body.
(The Divine Attributes of Pharaoh, 10ff.)

In the Proverb, as elsewhere in Scriptures, man's actions are observed by God. This is fundamental biblical theology as evidenced by the following examples:

The eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it (the land), from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year. (Deut. 11:12)

For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord. (Prov. 5:21)

In the Egyptian statement, divine power is attributed to the king who, as a deity, is considered to possess wide intelligence and perception.

Compare with:

Man's arithmetic is small; Heaven deals in large figures. (Chinese proverb; 10 Confucianism.)

Cast thy bread upon the waters; God will know of it if the fishes do not. (Indian Proverb; 49 Hinduism.)

Heaven has eyes to see. (Japanese Proverb; 83 Shinto.)

(21)
לֵב אָדָם אֶעֱלֶיךָ - לֵב
וְאֵי הַיָּם אֶעֱלֶיךָ - לֵב

The preparations of the heart are man's,
But the answer of the tongue is from the
Lord. (16:1)

Compare with:

If a man be small and grow great, his words soar above him. For the opening of his mouth is an utterance of gods, and if he be beloved of gods they will put something good in his mouth to say. (The Words of Ahikar, viii.)

Both verses touch on God's control over man's activities and his speech. The utterances of the tongue are seen as a special gift from God.

(22)
לֵב אָדָם יִתְשַׁבּ דְּרוֹכֵי
וְאֵי הַיָּם יִתְשַׁבּ דְּרוֹכֵי

A man's heart deviseth his way;
But the Lord directeth his steps. (16:9)

(23)
רַבּוֹת מִתְשַׁבּוֹת בְּלֵב - אִישׁ
וְעֵצַת יְהוָה תִּי אֶתְקוּם

There are many devices in a man's heart;
But the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand.
(19:21)

The following statement of Amen-em-Opet is cited
by Wilson as a parallel to the above two proverbs:

God is (always) in his success,
Whereas man is in his failure;
One thing are the words which men say,
Another is that which the god does.
(Instruction of Amen-em-Opet, XVIII.)

While the Egyptian statement contrasts the power of
God and man, the Hebrew gives more of the connotation of
God directing man's steps toward sanctified living.

(24)

ל'עג ל'גש ח'ק ע'שהו
ש'מח ל'גיד ל'תקה

Whoso mocketh the poor, blasphemeth his Maker;
And he that is glad at calamity shall not be
unpunished. (17:5)

Compare with:

Do not laugh at a blind man nor tease a dwarf
Nor injure the affairs of the lame.
Do not tease a man who is in the hand of the god,
Nor be fierce of face against him if he errs.
For man is clay and straw,
And the god is his builder.
He is tearing down and building up every day.
He makes a thousand poor men as he wishes,
(Or) he makes a thousand men as overseers,
When he is in his hour of life.
(The Instruction of Amen-em-Opet, XXV.)

In both, one is admonished not to mock another's
misfortune, nor to rejoice at it, since all things are
in God's hands.

(25)

אֶל-אֲנֹכִי אֶשְׁלַח-רָע
קוֹלָה לַיהוָה וְיִשַׁע לִי!

Say not thou: "I will requite evil";
Wait for the Lord, and He will save thee. (20:22)

Compare with:

Do not say: "I have found a strong superior,
For a man in thy city has injured me."
Do not say: "I have found a patron,
For one who hates me has injured me."
For surely thou knowest not the plans of god,
Lest thou be ashamed on the morrow.
Sit thou down at the hands of the god,
And thy silence will cast them down.
(The Instruction of Amen-em-Opet, XXI.)

(26)

בְּנִפְלָא אֶזְכִּיד, אֶל-תַּשְׁמַח
וּבְפִשְׁלוֹ אֶל-יִגַּל לִבִּי:
פֶּן-יִדְּאֶה יְהוָה! רָע בְּעֵינַי
יִהְיֶה בְּמַעַלְלֵי אֲפִסִּי!

Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth,
And let not thy heart be glad when he
stumbleth;

Lest the Lord see it, and it displease Him,
And He turn away His wrath from him. (24:17, 18)

The following Akkadian statement is cited by Pfeiffer
as a parallel to Prov. 20:22 and 24:17, 18:

Unto your opponent do no evil;
Your evildoer recompense with good;
Unto your enemy let justice [be done]
Unto your oppressor....
Let him rejoice over you, ... return to him.
(Akkadian Proverbs, Counsels of Wisdom, i.)

The Hebrew proverb warns us not to rejoice over a vanquished enemy. According to one midrash, when the Egyptians were drowning at the Red Sea and the ministering angels began to sing, the Lord was exceedingly displeased: "The works of My hand are drowning in the sea, and you wish to sing in My presence!" (Midrash Avikar.) The Akkadian verse expresses an entirely different thought. It advises rendering good for evil in the same manner as does the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:38-45).

Compare with:

Be hospitable to thine enemy when he comes to thy door: the tree withdraws not its shade even from the wood-cutter. (Hitopadesa 1, 52-A; 263 Hinduism.)

See also God's words to Jonah:

Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow, which came up in a night, and perished in a night; and should not I have pity on Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand, and also much cattle? (Jonah 4:10, 11.)

(27)

כִּבֵּד אֶת-יְהוָה מִהוֹנֶה
אֶמְרָאִישׁ כָּל-תְּבוּאָתָךְ:
אִשָּׁה! אִשָּׁה! אִשָּׁה!
אִשָּׁה! אִשָּׁה! אִשָּׁה!

Honor the Lord with thy substance,
And with the first-fruits of all thine increase;

So shall thy barns be filled with plenty,
And thy vats shall overflow with new wine. (3:9, 10)

(28)
 רחב-לפני יורה ידיו
 וביטח על-הנה ידו

He that is of a greedy spirit stirreth up strife;
 But he that putteth his trust in the Lord shall
 be abundantly gratified. (28:25)

The following Akkadian proverbs are cited as
 parallels to Proverbs 3:9, 10 and 28:25:

Pay homage daily to your god
 With sacrifice, prayer, and appropriate incense-
 offering.
 Toward your god you should feel solicitude of
 heart:
 That is what is appropriate to the deity.
 Prayer, supplication and prostration to the
 ground
 Shall you offer in the morning: then your might
 will be great,
 And in abundance, through god's help, you will
 prosper.
 (Akkadian Proverbs, Counsels of Wisdom, 35-41.)

The Akkadian verse illustrates the benefits that
 accrue from daily homage to one's god. In the Hebrew
 proverbs, greediness is frowned upon, but charitableness
 is greatly rewarded.

Compare with:

Do honour to the divine power at all times,
 but especially on occasions of public worship; for
 thus you will have the reputation both of sacrificing
 to the gods and of abiding by the laws. (Isocrates,
 Vol. I, p. 11.)

As to the matter of parallelism in the proverbial
 literature of this section, we must again conclude that

there is not a single illustration of direct borrowing. Even where the theme seems to be the same, as in the case of number 24, there is no evidence that one copied from the other.

V. SOME GOOD ADVICE on daily living.

(29)
עֵבֶר בֵּיתוֹ בּוֹצֵעַ בָּצֵעַ
!שֹׂנֵא חֲמִילתָּ יְהִי־הִי!

He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own
house;
But he that hateth gifts shall live. (15:27)

Wilson cites the following as a parallel statement:

Do not be covetous at a division. Do not be
greedy, unless (it be) for thy (own) portion. Do not
be covetous against thy (own) kindred.
(Instruction of Vizier Ptah-hotep, 300ff.)

Both the Hebrew and Egyptian proverbs emphasize that
greed and covetousness are to be despised. The Hebrew,
however, in being opposed to greed of all forms, is on
a much higher level than the Egyptian. Whereas the
latter only condemns covetousness when it is against
one's kindred, the Hebrew proverb reflects the principle
of the Tenth Commandment, "Thou shalt not covet."

Compare the above with:

Misery is gone in the case of a man who has no
delusion, while delusion is gone in the case of him who
has no desire, desire is gone in the case of him who
has no greed, while greed is gone in the case of him who
possesses nothing. (Nirgrantha-Pravachana, 2, 28; 89
Jainism.)

Form no covetous desire, so that the demon of
greediness may not deceive thee, and the treasure of
the world may not be tasteless to thee, and that of
the spirit, unperceived. (Menog-i Khrad 2, 13-15;
30 Zoroastrianism.)

(30) חַיִּי-יִצְחָר זָכִירִי לְבִי
טְהִירִי מִמַּטְאֲצִי :

Who can say: "I have made my heart clean,
I am pure from my sin"? (20:9)

The following has been cited as parallel:

Say not: "I have no wrongdoing,"
Nor (yet) strain to seek quarreling.
As for wrongdoing, it belongs to the god;
It is sealed with his finger.
(The Instruction of Amen-em-Opet, XVIII.)

Both proverbs point out that no mortal is ever known to have been without fault or sin. But while the underlying thought is similar, we find many identical references in religious literature.

Solomon, praying to the Lord in the presence of the people, includes in his supplications: "If they sin against Thee, for there is no man that sinneth not...."

Psalms 143:2: "And enter not into judgment with Thy servant; for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified."

Zophar the Naamathite answers Job:

"Thy boastings have made men hold their peace,
And thou hast mocked, with none to make thee ashamed;
And thou hast said: 'My doctrine is pure,
And I am clean in Thine eyes.'" (Job 11:3, 4)

There is the well-known remark of Jesus quoted in the Book of John, 8:7: "He that is without sin among you, let him cast a stone at her." Thus did Jesus intercede and save the adulteress woman from stoning.

Compare with:

Never hope to conceal any shameful thing which you have done; for even if you do conceal it from others, your own heart will know. (Isocrates, Vol. I, p. 13.)

גוֹלֵה סוֹד הוֹלֵךְ בְּכִי
וְלִפְתֵּי שִׁפְתָּיו לֹא תִתְעַד (31)

He that goeth about as a tale-bearer revealeth secrets;
Therefore meddle not with him that openeth wide his lips. (20:19)

The following has been cited as a parallel:

Empty not thy belly to everybody,
Nor damage (thus) the regard for thee.
Spread not thy words to the common people,
Nor associate to thyself one (too) outgoing of heart.
Better is a man whose talk (remains) in his belly
Than he who speaks it out injuriously.
(The Instruction of Amen-em-Opet, XXI.)

In both proverbs, tale-bearing and uncontrolled talk are frowned upon. This is a theme common to other proverbial literature.

We fear a talkative person; we do not fear a fighter. (Jabo Proverbs from Liberia, no. 355.)

A whisperer watches the bush (if he hears a noise); a bush never tells secrets; he to whom one speaks is a traitor. (Meaning, if a man wishes his secrets to be kept, he should not confide them in others.) (Proverbs in the Yoruba Language, no. 102; Wit and Wisdom from West Africa.)

On matters which you would keep secret, speak to no one save when it is equally expedient for you who speak and for those who hear that the facts should not be published. (Isocrates, Vol. I, p. 17.)

(32)
 ? ב'ך ? יב אַת-י'עך
 ! ד'ס ד'ח'ר אַח'ר-ל'ך-ת'ג'ל

Debate thy cause with thy neighbour,
 But reveal not the secret of another. (25:9)

The following is cited as a parallel:

My friend, my secret knowledge is not safeguarded
 by an enemy; on the contrary, by a son or a daughter,
 my friend, is my secret knowledge safeguarded.
 (Akkadian Proverbs, Proverbs I.)

The Hebrew proverb advises one against revealing the
 confidences of another. The Egyptian proverb merely sug-
 gests that secrets cannot be entrusted to persons other
 than to members of a family.

Compare with:

Who trusts too many often ends
 By losing trust in all,
 Lend not your pillars to your friends,
 Or else your roof may fall.
 (Chips of Jade, Chinese Proverbs, p. 17.)

(33)
 ? ב'ך ? יב אַת-י'עך
 ! ד'ס ד'ח'ר אַח'ר-ל'ך-ת'ג'ל
 ! ד'ס ד'ח'ר אַח'ר-ל'ך-ת'ג'ל
 ! ד'ס ד'ח'ר אַח'ר-ל'ך-ת'ג'ל

Debate thy cause with thy neighbour,
 But reveal not the secret of another;

Lest he that heareth it revile thee,
 And thine infamy turn not away. (25:9, 10)

Ginsberg cites the following as a parallel:

The son of my body has spied out my house: wh/at can I say to strangers? My son has been a false witness against me: who, then, has justified me? From my house has gone forth wrath: with whom shall I strive? Reveal not thy secrets before thy fri/ends, lest thy name become despised of them. (The Words of Ahiqar, ix.)

These two proverbs have no parallel whatsoever. The Hebrew, as in case no. 32, warns against tale-bearing, whereas the Aramaic is concerned with the problem of family betrayal.

Compare with:

Guard more faithfully the secret which is confided to you than the money which is entrusted to your care; for good men ought to show that they hold their honour more trustworthy than an oath. (Isocrates, Vol. I, p. 17.)

אֵלֶּם אֲנִי חֲסִידֵיךָ (34)
גַּם-הוּא יִקְדָּח! לֹא יַעֲנֶה!

Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor,
He also shall cry himself, but shall not be
answered. (21:13)

The following has been cited as a parallel:

Satisfy thy clients with what has accrued to thee, what accrues to one whom god favors. As for him who evades satisfying his clients, men say: "He is a ka of robbery." A proper ka is a ka with which one is satisfied. One does not know what may happen, so that he may understand the morrow. If misfortunes occur among those (now) favored, it is the clients who (still) say: "Welcome!" One does not secure satisfaction from a stranger; one has recourse to a client when there is trouble.... (The Instruction of the Vizier Ptah-hotep, 340ff.)¹

1. The word "satisfy" sometimes means "pay off." The word "clients," literally "those who enter," may here apply to the entourage of a high official. See footnote, Ancient Near Eastern Texts, p. 413.

In comparing these proverbs, we see a noticeable difference in their moral overtones. The Hebrew speaks of charity for its own sake, drawing upon the tradition of the Torah that no man should withhold his hand from helping the poor. The Egyptian verse suggests the concept of "giving" only for what one can benefit from it.

Compare with:

He who, provided with food, hardens his heart against the poor, meets with none to cheer him... his house is no home. (Riga-Veda 10, 117; 323 Hinduism.)

Every good deed will bear its fruit to men; there is no escape from the effect of one's actions. (Uttaradhyayana-sutra 13, 10; 42 Jainism.)

If you are stingy, your bad reputation will spread. (Jabo Proverbs from Liberia, no. 372.)

(35) כִּי-תֵשֵׁב לִלְחֹם אֶת-מוֹשֵׁל
בְּן־מִלְּחָמָה אֶת-אִישׁ לְפָנָיו:
! שִׂמְתָּ שֶׁבִין בְּלֶעֶד
אִם-בָּעַל לִפְנֵי אֶתְּהָ!
אֶל-תִּתֵּן לְמַבְעַמֹּתָיו
! הוֹנָא לָהֶם בְּרָב יָם:

When thou sittest to eat with a ruler,
Consider well him that is before thee;

And put a knife to thy throat,
If thou be a man given to appetite.

Be not desirous of his dainties;
Seeing they are deceitful food. (23:1-3)

The following is cited as a parallel:

If thou art one of those sitting at the table of one greater than thyself, take what he may give, when it is set before thy nose. Thou shouldst gaze at what is before thee. Do not pierce him with many stares, (for such) an aggression against him is an abomination to the ka. Let thy face be cast down until he addresses thee, and thou shouldst speak (only) when he addresses thee. Laugh after he laughs, and it will be very pleasing to his heart and what thou mayest do will be pleasing to the heart. No one can know what is in his heart. (The Instruction of Vizier Ptah-hotep, 120ff.)

The subject of behavior at the dinner table with those of authority is discussed. The Hebrew cautions against too free an acceptance of the favors of a ruler. The Egyptian suggests the manners for ingratiating oneself into the favor of a person of greater position. Here, the idea of subservience is diametrically opposed to the Hebrew concept of independence of thought and action.

Compare with:

The stranger eats with care. (Explanation: A stranger should eat what is offered to him to show his appreciation of the food, but he must not eat too much; this will show ill-breeding.) (Jabo Proverbs from Liberia, no. 332.)

!שׁוּבָה לְפָנַי שְׂפֵן בְּלִעַד (36)
!שׁוּבָה לְפָנַי שְׂפֵן בְּלִעַד

And put a knife to thy throat,
If thou be a man given to appetite. (23:2)

The following is cited by Wilson as a parallel:

How wretched it is, the belly which thou heedest!
 If three loaves should satisfy thee, and the swallowing
 of two hin of beer, (but) there is (still) no limit
 /to/ the belly, fight against it.
 (The Satire on the Trades, x.)

The Hebrew proverb here is out of context. In its
 entirety, it speaks against accepting the favors of a
 ruler (see Case 35), and is completely unrelated to this
 Egyptian verse which merely warns against gluttony.

Compare with:

Restraint in the eye is good, good is restraint
 in the ear, in the nose restraint is good, good is re-
 straint in the tongue. In the body restraint is good,
 good is restraint in speech, in thought restraint is
 good, good is restraint in all things. (Dhammapada 360-1;
 266 Buddhism.)

(37)

הַיָּד הַזֹּאת הַזֹּאת הַזֹּאת
 הַזֹּאת הַזֹּאת הַזֹּאת

Let thy foot be seldom in thy neighbour's house;
 Lest he be sated with thee, and hate thee. (25:17)

The following is cited as a parallel:

If thou goest to the rear of officials, approach
 (only) at a distance after a (decent interval). If
 thou enterest in, while a householder is in his house
 and his activity is for someone else before thee, as
 thou sittest with thy hand to thy mouth, do not ask
 for something beside him.

(The Satire on the Trades, ix.)

While the Egyptian text is concerned with manners
 toward nobility, the Hebrew proverb speaks of relations

between neighbors, and cautions against "wearing out one's welcome." There is no parallel thought between the two.¹

Compare with:

If you visit your fellow too often he will not respect you. But if you will make yourself scarce, he will pine for your company. (Jabo Proverbs from Liberia, no. 272.)

(38)
 יִרְאֶה אֶת-יְהוָה בֶּן־אָדָם
 עִם-שׂוֹנִים אֶל מִתְעַרְבִּי
 כִּי-פִתְאֻם יָקֻם אִיָּדָם
 וְיָפִיד שְׂנֵיהֶם כִּי יִנְדָּע:

My son, fear thou the Lord and the king,
 And meddle not with them that are given to
 change;

For their calamity shall rise suddenly;
 And who knoweth the ruin from them both?
 (24:21, 22)

The following is cited by Pfeiffer as a parallel:

"Servant, obey me." Yes, my lord, yes. "I intend to start a rebellion." Do (it), my lord, do (it). If you do not start a rebellion what becomes of your clay? Who will give you (something) to fill your stomach? "No, servant, I shall not do something violent." Do (it) not, my lord, do (it) not. The man doing something violent is killed or ill-treated, or he is maimed, or captured and cast into prison. (Akkadian Observations on Life and the World Order, A Pessimistic Dialogue between Master and Servant, VI.)

The Hebrew proverbs are an admonition of a father to his son, to love the Lord, obey the king and avoid

1. The following Yiddish proverb may be noted as a close parallel to the Hebrew: "Go rarely where you are loved, and never where you are hated." See Ayalti, Hanan J., ed., Yiddish Proverbs (Shocken Books, New York, 1949), p. 65.

involvement with rebellious elements. This, however, has no relation to the theme in the Akkadian dialogue, which merely illustrates the blind acceptance on the part of the servant to the wishes of his master.

Compare with:

Obedience is better than reverence. (Chinese Proverb; 315 Confucianism.)

May obedience conquer disobedience within this house, and may peace triumph over discord here... (Yasna 60, 5; 79 Zoroastrianism.)

Preserve the present order and do not desire any change, knowing that revolutions inevitably destroy states and lay waste the homes of the people. (Isocrates, Vol. I, p. 109.)

: דָּבָר - רַחֵם נְפִשׁוֹתָם לְשׁוֹן (39)

And a soft tongue breaketh the bone. (25:15b)

Ginsberg cites the following as parallel:

Soft is the tongue of a k/ing, but it breaks a dragon's ribs; like a plague, which is not seen. (The Words of Ahiqar, vii.)

The Hebrew speaks of the effect of pleasant and gentle speech as a power to avert danger and to overcome opposition. The Aramaic warns that the soft-spoken words of a king may conceal deadly thoughts.

Compare the following with the Hebrew:

When high words confuse the talk, low words will untangle it. (Jabo Proverbs from Liberia, no. 214.)

(40) אִם-רָעַב שֶׁנֶּאֱדָה תֹּאכֶלְהוּ לָהֶם
 אִם-צָמָא תִשְׁקֶהוּ מַיִם;
 כִּי גִתְלֶם אֶתְהָ חֵתָה עַל-רֵעֵיוֹ
 יִהְיוּ יִשְׁלֶם-לָךְ;

If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat,
 And if he be thirsty, give him water to drink;

For thou wilt heap coals of fire upon his head,
 And the Lord will reward thee. (25:21, 22)

Wilson points to the following as parallel:

O moon, establish his crime (against him)!
 So steer that we may bring the wicked man across,
 For we shall not act like him--
 Lift him up, give him thy hand;
 Leave him (in) the arms of the god;
 Fill his belly with bread of thine,
 So that he may be sated and may be ashamed.
 (The Instruction of Amen-em-Opet, II.)

And Pfeiffer cites the following as parallel:

Unto your opponent do no evil;
 Your evildoer recompense with good;
 Unto your enemy let justice [be done].
 Unto your oppressor....
 Let him rejoice over you, ... return to him.
 Let not your heart be induced to do evil.
 (Akkadian Proverbs, Counsels of Wisdom, 1, 35-40.)

The Egyptian and Akkadian passages suggest that friendly gestures towards an enemy might induce him to repent. The Hebrew proverbs, on the other hand, stress that a compassionate act towards an enemy is a fulfillment of the word of God. This concept, which forbids the repaying of evil with evil, is found in the Torah, "Thou

shalt not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of the people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am the Lord." (Leviticus 19:18.)

Compare with:

And he (Saul) said to David: "Thou art more righteous than I; for thou hast rendered unto me good, whereas I have rendered unto thee evil. And thou hast declared this day how that thou hast dealt well with me; forasmuch as when the Lord had delivered me up into thy hand, thou didst not kill me. For if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away?" ... (I Samuel 24:18-20.)

As cited before (see Case 26), the literature of Hinduism includes:

Be hospitable to thine enemy when he comes to thy door: the tree withdraws not its shade even from the wood-cutter. (Hitopadesa 1, 52-A; 263 Hinduism.)

מִי־יֵשֶׁב בְּעֵץ וְלֹא יִשְׁלַח שָׁדוֹ
לְעֵץ אֲחֵרָה (41)
:יֵשֶׁב בְּעֵץ וְלֹא יִשְׁלַח שָׁדוֹ

He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife
not his own,
Is like one that taketh a dog by the ears. (26:17)

The following is cited by Pfeiffer as a parallel:

Hasten not to stand in a public assembly,
Seek not the place of quarrel;
For in a quarrel you must give a decision,
And you will be forced to be their witness.
They will fetch you to testify in a lawsuit
that does not concern you.
When you see a quarrel, go away without
noticing it.

(Akkadian Proverbs, Counsels of Wisdom,
1, 25-30.)

Both proverbs indicate the advisability of avoiding the quarrels of others. The Hebrew illustrates the result of interference by using the simile of a dog snapping at a person who pulls its ears. The Akkadian verse speaks of the unnecessary involvement and inconvenience brought on by meddling in the affairs of others.

Compare with:

If you benefit bad men, you will have the same reward as those who feed stray dogs; for these snarl alike at those who give them food and at the passing stranger; and just so base men wrong alike those who help and those who harm them. (Isocrates, Vol. I, p. 21.)

וְאִם יִשְׁמַע אֶת הַדֹּבֶר הַזֶּה (42)
 וְאִם יִשְׁמַע אֶת הַדֹּבֶר הַזֶּה
 וְאִם יִשְׁמַע אֶת הַדֹּבֶר הַזֶּה

Where no wood is, the fire goeth out;
 And where there is no whisperer, contention
 ceaseth. (26:20)

The following is cited by Pfeiffer as a parallel:

But if it is really your own quarrel, extinguish
 the flame;
 For a quarrel is a neglect of what is right,
 A protecting wall... (for) the nakedness of
 one's adversary;
 Whoever stops it is thinking about the interests
 of a friend.
 (Akkadian Proverbs, Counsels of Wisdom,
 1, 30-35.)

The Hebrew proverb makes the point that when the fuel of talebearing is removed, the flame of contention will go out. The Akkadian verse speaks not of talebearing

but of quarrels, and stresses the advisability of resolving the differences quickly.

Compare with:

By controlling the anger of a moment, you may avoid the remorse of a lifetime. (Chinese Proverb; 8 Confucianism.)

פְּתָם לְהַחֲלִים וְעַיִם לְאֵשׁ (43)
אִישׁ מְדַוֵּן לְהַחֲרִיב - רִיב!

As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire;
So is a contentious man to kindle strife. (26:21)

The following is cited by Wilson as a parallel:

The contentious man is a disturbance to citizens: he produces two factions among the youth. If thou findest that the citizens adhere to him..., denounce him in the presence of the court, and remove him. He also is a traitor. A talker is an exciter of a city. Divert the multitude and suppress its heat... (The Instruction for King Meri-ka-Re, 25.)

The Hebrew proverb utilizes similes in pointing out that anger increases the friction of quarrels. The Egyptian indicates the wisdom of suppressing any speech which leads to divisiveness.

Note that the phrase "burning coals" appears in other religious literature.

Thou art entreated for charity by the whole of the living world, and she is ever standing at thy door in the person of thy brethren in the faith: beggars are ever standing at the door of the stranger, amongst those who beg for bread. Ever will that bread be burning coal upon thy head. (Vishtasp Yasht 36; 17 Zoroastrianism.)

(44)

חֲכָמִים לֹא יִתְּנוּ עֵצָה לַיּוֹם
 כִּי לֹא יָדָע מָחָר - יֵדָד יוֹם

Boast not thyself of to-morrow;
For thou knowest not what a day may bring
forth. (27:1)

The following three passages are cited by Wilson
as parallels:

Prepare not for the morrow before it arrives;
one knows not what mischance may be in it.
(Egyptian, The Protests of the Eloquent Peasant,
177ff.)

And--

Do not spend the night fearful of the morrow.
At daybreak what is the morrow like?
Man knows not what the morrow is like.
(The Instruction of Amen-em-Opet, XVIII.)

And--

Do not say: "I have found a strong superior,
For a man in the city has injured me."
Do not say: "I have found a patron
For one who hates me has injured me."
For surely thou knowest not the plans of god,
Lest thou be ashamed on the morrow.
(The Instruction of Amen-em-Opet, XXI.)

Each of the preceding three proverbs is different.
The Protests of the Eloquent Peasant advises against
planning for the morrow; the selections from Amen-em-
Opet advise against worrying over what the morrow may
bring; and the Hebrew calls upon man to avoid making
rash promises for the future.

Compare with:

And the King of Israel (Ahab) answered and said: Tell him: Let not him that girdeth on his armor boast himself as he that putteth it off. (I Kings 20:11.)

The heart that thinks there is a to-morrow is as transient as the cherry-blossom, for is there not the midnight wind? (Shinran Shonin; 174 Buddhism.)

Taunt no man with his misfortune; for fate is common to all and the future is a thing unseen. (Isocrates, Vol. I, p. 21.)

(45)
 נֶפֶשׁ שְׂבִיעָה מְבֹרָכָה נֶפֶשׁ
 !נֶפֶשׁ רַעֲבָה כָּל-עַר מְתוּק:

The full soul loatheth a honeycomb;
 But to the hungry soul every bitter thing
 is sweet. (27:7)

Ginsberg cites the following as parallel:

Hunger makes bitterness sweet, and thirst [sour-
 ness]. (The Words of Ahiqar, xii, 188.)

The Hebrew speaks of emotional needs, while the Aramaic lays stress on physical needs. Although there is a similarity in phraseology, there is no parallel in thought.

Compare with:

Hunger makes hard bones sweet beans. (Chinese Proverb; 248 Confucianism.)

The person who is really thirsty is the one who, if he drinks, feels refreshed. (Jabo Proverbs from Liberia, no. 402.)

Famine compels one to eat the fruit of all kinds of trees. (Proverbs in the Yoruba Language, no. 210, Wit and Wisdom from West Africa.)

כִּי לֹא עוֹלָם הֵוָה (46)
וְלֹא עוֹלָם הֵוָה
וְלֹא עוֹלָם הֵוָה

For riches are not for ever;
And doth the crown endure unto all generations?
(27:24)

The following is cited by Wilson as a parallel:

A man is nothing. The one is rich; another is poor, while bread continues--can he pass it by? The man rich in the time of last year is a vagabond this year. (The Instruction of Ani, viii, 5.)

The Hebrew proverb indicates the transiency of material possessions, while the Egyptian places its emphasis upon the uncertainty of life and the insignificance of man.

Compare with:

A man may give--he may enjoy--he may lose: these are the three ends for which wealth is destined. The third awaits the man who neither gives nor enjoys. (Hitopadesa I, 172; 448 Hinduism.)

Wealth is short-lived. (Jabo Proverbs from Liberia, no. 276.)

(This time the short one has got it, but) another time the long one will get it and the short one will not get it. (Meaning, that fortune is fickle.) (Proverbs in the Oji Tongue, no. 15; Wit and Wisdom from West Africa.)

The king shall beg, the beggar mount the throne;
Earth laughs at him who calls a place his own.
(Chips of Jade, Chinese Proverbs, p. 39.)

Believe that many precepts are better than much wealth; for wealth quickly fails us, but precepts abide through all time; for wisdom alone of all possessions is imperishable. (Isocrates, Vol. I, p. 15.)

An examination of the eighteen cases in this section shows that there are no direct parallels. While in some cases the wording, upon cursory examination, might appear similar, the intent in nearly all cases is different, and no relationship can or need be assumed.

VI. HONESTY, JUSTICE and TRUTH in business, in the court and among men.

(47)
מֵאֲזָנִי מִדְּמָה תוֹעֵבֶת יְהוָה
אֶבֶן שִׁלְמָה רִצּוֹנוֹ!

A false balance is an abomination to the Lord;
But a perfect weight is His delight. (11:1)

(48)
כִּפְסִים וּמֵאֲזָנִי מִשְׁפָּט לֹא הוּא
מַעֲשֵׂהוּ כָּל-אֲבָנֵי-כִּיס:

A just balance and scales are the Lord's;
All the weights of the bag are His work. (16:11)

(49)
תוֹעֵבֶת יְהוָה אֶבֶן / אֶבֶן
וּמֵאֲזָנִי מִדְּמָה לֹא-טוֹב:

Diverse weights are an abomination to the Lord;
And a false balance is not good. (20:23)

The following reference to Akkadian literature is
cited as a parallel to the foregoing Hebrew proverbs:

He who handles the scales in falsehood,
 He who deliberately changes the stone weights
 (and) lowers their weight,
 Will make himself lie for the profit and then
 lose his bag of weights.
 He who handles the scales in truth, much...
 As much as possible...

(iii)

[six broken lines omitted]
 He is well-pleasing to Shamash (and) enriches
 his life.

(Sumero-Akkadian Hymns, Hymn to the Sun-
 God, ii, 50ff.)

The preceding proverbs, nos. 47 to 49, caution
 against dishonesty in business. Interestingly, both the
 Hebrew and the extra-biblical source use weights and
 balances to illustrate their point. While the thought is
 parallel, the wording, however, is not, and it is dif-
 ficult to ascertain what may have been omitted in the six
 broken lines.

The admonition for honesty and just weights is
 found in other religious literature. Compare with:

Honesty is the true heart of the gods. (Japanese
 Proverb, 93 Shinto.)

Don't use a short foot, or an unfair measure, a
 light balance, or a small pint. (T'ai Shang Kan Ying
 P'ien; 175 Taoism.)

(50) כִּפְיָם צִמְנוּהָ יָדִיד אֶדֶן
 וְעַד שִׁקְרִים מִדְּמָה:
 יֵשׁ בּוֹקֶה פִּמְדִּקְרוֹת מִיָּב
 וְלִשְׁאֵן מִדְּמִים מִרְפָּא:
 שִׁפְתָּ אֶמֶת תִּפּוֹן לְעַד
 לְעַד-אֶרְגִּיעָה לִּשְׁאֵן שִׁקְרָה:

He that breatheth forth truth uttereth
righteousness,
But a false witness deceit.

There is that speaketh like the piercings
of a sword;
But the tongue of the wise is health.

The lip of truth shall be established for ever;
But a lying tongue is but for a moment. (12:17-19)

The following is cited as a parallel:

If thou hearest this which I have said to thee, thy every project will be (better) than (those of) the ancestors. As for what is left over of their truth, it is their treasure--(though) the memory of them may escape from the mouth of men--because of the goodness of their sayings. Every word is carried on, without perishing in this land forever. It makes for expressing well, the speech of the very officials. It is what teaches a man to speak to the future, so that it may hear it, what produces a craftsman, who has heard what is good and who speaks to the future--and it hears it....
(Egyptian Instructions, The Instruction of the Vizier Ptah-hotep, 500ff.)

While both proverbs touch upon the subject of truth, they are not at all similar. In a series of three couplets, the Hebrew contrasts the beneficial and lasting values of truth and kind words with the evil and transiency of deception and harsh speech. The Egyptian passage, however, is an exhortation for one to hearken to the truths proclaimed by sages of the past and present and to use them advantageously.

There are numerous parallels to be found in other religious literature dealing with the force of speech.

Beware of the anger of the tongue, and control thy tongue! Leave the sins of the tongue, and practice virtue with thy tongue! (Dhammapada 232; 303 Buddhism.)

Four horses cannot overtake the tongue. (Analects 12, 8; 433 Confucianism.)

There is no higher virtue than veracity nor heavier crime than falsehood. (Narada Smriti I, 226; 433 Hinduism.)

Commit no slander; so that infamy and wickedness may not happen unto thee. For it is said that slander is more grievous than witchcraft. (Menog-i Khrad 2, 8; 107 Zoroastrianism.)

One truthful man is better than the whole world speaking falsehood. (Sad Dar 62, 5; 116 Zoroastrianism.)

A word has stolen in and bred a doubt; ten thousand oxen cannot drag it out. (Chips of Jade, Chinese Proverbs, p. 21.)

לשון שקר - יהיה שפתי - (51)
לשון אמת - יצונו

Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord;
But they that deal truly are His delight. (12:22)

The following is cited as a parallel:

Do not talk with a man falsely--
The abomination of the god.
Do not cut off thy heart from thy tongue,
That all thy affairs may be successful.
Be sincere in the presence of the common people,
For one is safe in the hand of the god.
God hates him who falsifies words;
His great abomination is the contentious of belly.
(The Instruction of Amen-em-Opet, X.)

In both cases, lying and deceit are viewed as an abomination to God. The Egyptian instruction, however, deals only with the first part of the Hebrew proverb, and is surely not parallel in phraseology.

The theme of truth and falsehood is well treated in other religious literature, as for example:

O good man if thou shouldest speak falsely, all thy pure deeds would go for nought. (Manu 8, 90; 390 Hinduism.)

A man who recognizes the truth delights in nothing else. He who delights only in the truth recognizes nothing else. (Acharanga Sutra 1, 2, 6, 5; 130 Jainism.)

If falsehood takes the road; truth hides. (Japanese Proverb; 43 Shinto.)

To speak the truth cannot be wrong. (Proverbs of West Africa, Bender, p. 19.)

יְהוָה יִשְׁמַר לָנוּ
לְכָל עֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ
לְכָל עֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ
לְכָל עֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ (52)

A faithful witness will not lie;
But a false witness breatheth forth lies. (14:5)

The following has been cited as a parallel:

Do not bear witness with false words,
Nor support another person (thus) with thy
tongue. (The Instruction of Amen-em-Opet, XI.)

While both proverbs enunciate the same principle as the Ninth Commandment, "Thou shalt not bear false witness," they are not similar in phraseology, and none of the Ten Commandments is related to any Egyptian source.

Compare with:

Truth alone conquers, not falsehood. (Mundaka-Upanishad 3, 1, 6; 420 Hinduism.)

Truth all religion comprehends, in truth alone is
justice placed, in truth the words of God as based.
(Ramayana 2, 14; 421 Hinduism.)

Do not receive a slander against anyone to accuse
him falsely. (Proverbs in the Yoruba Language, no. 183;
Wit and Wisdom from West Africa, Burton.)

(53)
פֶּן-יִשְׁתָּה יִשְׁכַּח חֵן עָדֶיךָ
וְיִשְׁתָּה עָדֶיךָ כִּלְכִּיל-עֵינַי :

Lest they drink, and forget that which is decreed,
And pervert the justice due to any that is
afflicted. (31:5)

(54)
פֶּתַח-פִּי לֹא אֶסָּם
אֶל-עַד עָדֶיךָ כִּלְכִּיל-חַיִּים
פֶּתַח-פִּי לֹא אֶסָּם שֶׁפֶסַח-אֶדְיָךְ
אֶדֶיךָ עָדֶיךָ אֶגְבִּי'וֹן :

Open thy mouth for the dumb,
In the cause of all such as are appointed
to destruction.

Open thy mouth, judge righteously,
And plead the cause of the poor and needy.
(31:8, 9)

The Hebrew proverbs, nos. 53 and 54, are a plea
for justice for the underling and the defenseless.
Pr. 31:5 is an exhortation to avoid debauchery and
strong drink, inasmuch as these lead to the perversion
of justice.

The following Akkadian proverb has been cited as a parallel to the above:

Unto your opponent do not evil;
 Your evildoer recompense with good;
 Unto your enemy let justice [be done].
 Unto your oppressor...
 Let him rejoice over you, ... return to him.
 Let not your heart be induced to do evil.
 (Akkadian Proverbs, Counsels of Wisdom, i, 35ff.)

Unlike the Hebrew proverbs that emphasize just rule, the Akkadian is more interested in the problem of reconciliation with one's enemy. Therefore, these are not parallel.

Other religious literature touches upon the subject of justice. For example:

The only friend who follows man even after death is justice. (Manu 8, 17; 277 Hinduism.)

These four habits are the principles of the religion of Zaratust; to exercise liberality in connection with the worthy; to do justice; to be friendly unto everyone; to be sincere and true and to keep falsehood far from themselves. (Sad Dar 65, 7; 97 Zoroastrianism.)

As in the previous chapters, a comparison of Hebrew proverbs with other Near Eastern literature does not reveal any close parallelism, nor any borrowing. While the underlying theme may, from time to time, be similar, we find that the literature of Far Eastern religions and African tribes contains equally similar expressions.

VII. INDUSTRY and IDLENESS, dealing with the benefits which accrue to the worker, and the losses which accumulate for the sluggard.

(55)
 קָאָשׁ עֲשֵׂה בֶּן-לִמְדָה
 וְיֵד תִּרְוִצִּים תַּעֲשִׂיר:

He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand;
 But the hand of the diligent maketh rich. (10:4)

(56)
 עֶבֶד צִדְמָתוֹ יִשְׂבֹּעַ-לָּהֶם
 וְיִמְרִצֵּף לִיקִים יָסֵר-לֵב:

He that tilleth his ground shall have plenty of bread;
 But he that followeth after vain things is void of understanding. (12:11)

(57)
 מִתְצַנֶּה אֶצֶן נֶפֶשׁוֹ עֲצֵל
 וְנֶפֶשׁ חַרְצִים תִּדְשֵׁן:

The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing;
 But the soul of the diligent shall be abundantly gratified. (13:4)

(58) בְּכֹל - עֵצָב יִהְיֶה מוֹתָר
וּדְבַר שִׁפְתָּיִם אֶדָּ: לְמַחְסוֹר:

In all labour there is profit;
But the talk of the lips tendeth only
to penury. (14:23)

(59) דֶּרֶךְ עֵצָל כִּמְשִׁכֶת הַדָּק
וְאַרְחַ יִשְׁרִיִם סֵלֶה:

The way of the sluggard is as though hedged
by thorns;
But the path of the upright is even. (15:19)

(60) גַּם מְתַרְפֶּה בְּמַלְאֲכָתוֹ
אֵחָ הוּא לְבַעַל מַשְׁחִית:

Even one that is slack in his work
Is brother to him that is a destroyer. (18:9)

(61) עַל-שִׂידָה אִישׁ-עֵצָל עֲבַדְתִּי
וְעַל-קָרָם אָדָם חָסֵר-לֵב:
וְהִנֵּה עָלָה כָּלֹ קַמְשָׁנִים
קָסוּ קָנָיו חֲזָלִים:
וְגָדִי אֶבְנָיו נִהְרָסָה:
וְאַחֲזָה אֲנֹכִי אִשְׁתִּי לְבִי
רָאִיתִי לְעֻמָּתִי מוֹסֵר:
מֵעַט שָׁלוֹת מֵעַט תְּנוּמָה
מֵעַט חֶבֶק יָדַיִם לְשֹׁקֵב:

וְיָבֹא - מִתְּחֵלָה רִישׁוֹ
וְיִחַסְרֵהוּ כְּאִישׁ שֶׁאֵין לוֹ

I went by the field of the slothful,
And by the vineyard of the man void of
understanding;

And, lo, it was all grown over with thistles,
The face thereof was covered with nettles,
And the stone wall thereof was broken down.

Then I beheld, and considered well;
I saw, and received instruction.

"Yet a little sleep, a little slumber,
A little folding of the hands to sleep."

So shall thy poverty come as a runner,
And thy want as an armed man. (24:30-34)

צָמַר עָצֵל שָׁחַל בְּדִדְךָ (62)
אֲרִי בֵּין תְּרַחֲבוֹת:
תִּקְלָת תַּסְוֵב עַל-צִירָה
וְעָצֵל עַל-מַטָּו:
סָמֹן עָצֵל יָדוֹ בַּצֶּלֶת
נִלְאָה לַהֲשִׁיבָה אֶל-קִיּוֹ:
תִּקְלָם עָצֵל בְּעֵינָיו
מִשִּׁבְעָה מִשִּׁבְעֵי בָּלַעַם:

The sluggard saith: "There is a lion in the
way;

Yea, a lion is in the streets."

The door is turning upon its hinges,
And the sluggard is still upon the bed.

The sluggard burieth his hand in the dish;
It wearieth him to bring it back to his mouth.

The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes
Than seven men that give wise answer. (26:13-16)

Pfeiffer cites the following one verse as a parallel
to the above proverbs, nos. 55 to 62:

As long as a man does not exert himself, he will
gain nothing. (Akkadian Proverbs and Counsels, II.)

In general, the Hebrew proverbs stress that rewards are reaped only through the work of the hands. Although in Prov. 12:11, the advantages of agriculture are pointed out, the thought is that all work and labor profit. On the other hand, the life of indolence and idleness is frowned upon, for it bears no fruit.

The Akkadian proverb, cited as a parallel to the above eight cases, merely warns that nothing can be achieved without labor or exertion. As a parallel to the Hebrew proverbs, it is different in both content and style.

Numerous examples of this theme can be found in other religious literature.

Not for sleep is the star-spangled night, but for work to him who is wise. (Psalms of the Sisters, 192; 289 Buddhism.)

No working, no eating. (Motto of the Zen Buddhist Monasteries; 326 Buddhism.)

He who will not work shall not eat. (Chinese Proverb; 508 Confucianism.)

Be up and doing and God will bless you. (Kasmiri Proverb; 225 Hinduism.)

Two only sources of success are known--wisdom and effort; make them both thine own if thou would'st rise and haply gain a throne. (Magha's Sisupalavadha 2, 76; 398 Hinduism.)

A work prospers through endeavours, not through vows: the fawn runs not into the mouth of the sleeping lion. (Hitopadesa Introduction, 35-A; 466 Hinduism.)

Every good work which thou art able to do today do not postpone for tomorrow, and accomplish with thine own hand the counsel of thine own soul... (Sad Dar 81, 10-12; 88 Zoroastrianism.)

A man who does not leave his hut will bring nothing in. (Proverbs of West Africa, Bender, p. 12.)

Do not put your work off till tomorrow and the day after; for a sluggish worker does not fill his barn, nor one who puts off his work: industry makes work go well, but a man who puts off work is always at hand-grips with ruin. (Hesiod, Works and Days, p. 33.)¹

(63)
 כִּחְקֵךְ שְׂכָרְךָ לֹא יִשְׁלֹם
 וְכִשְׁכָּרְךָ לֹא יִשְׁלֹם
 כִּי הָעֵצָה לֹא תִשְׁלֹם
 וְכִשְׁכָּרְךָ לֹא יִשְׁלֹם

As vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes,
 So is the sluggard to them that send him. (10:26)

Compare with the following Akkadian proverbs:

If I myself had not gone, who would have gone at my side. (Akkadian Proverbs and Counsels, I.)

As long as a man does not exert himself, he will gain nothing. (Akkadian Proverbs and Counsels, II.)

In the Hebrew proverb, the sluggard is seen as a source of irritation to those who delegate work or tasks to him. In the Akkadian, all messengers are looked upon as not being wholly trustworthy. The thought may also be, "If you want a thing done, go; if not, send." However, the two proverbs are not parallel.

1. Evelyn-White, Hugh G., translator, Hesiod (William Heinemann, London).

(64) כְּצֹנֶת - נֶשֶׁךְ בְּיוֹם קָצִיר
צִיר נֶשֶׁךְ לְשֶׁלֶחַ
אֶרֶשׁ אֶדְנִי גִשִּׁיב :

As the cold of snow in the time of harvest,
So is a faithful messenger to him that sendeth
him;
For he refresheth the soul of his master. (25:13)

Compare with the following cited as a parallel:

If thou art a man of intimacy, whom one great man
sends to another, be thoroughly reliable when he sends
thee. Carry out the errand for him as he has spoken.
Do not be reserved about what is said to thee, and
beware of (any) act of forgetfulness.

(The Instruction of Vizier Ptah-hotep, 145ff.)

The Hebrew proverb uses a simile to emphasize that
faithfulness in a messenger is a refreshing and comfort-
ing thought to the sender. The Egyptian, on the other
hand, is a series of instruction to one training for
service in the government. (See Case 18.)

In this chapter, there are definitely no parallels
between the Hebrew proverb and the extra-biblical litera-
ture of the Near East.

VIII. THE RIGHTEOUS and THE WICKED, showing comparisons
in the welfare of the city, in personal happiness
and in justice.

(65)
בְּבִרְכַּת צְדִיקִים תִּרְוֶה עִיר
וּבִפִּי רָשָׁעִים תִּתְּרֶם:

By the blessing of the upright a city is exalted;
But it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked.
(11:11)

The following is cited as a parallel:

The contentious man is a disturbance to citizens:
he produces two factions among the youth. If thou
findest that the citizens adhere to him..., denounce
him in the presence of the court and remove him. He
also is a traitor. A talker is an exciter of a city.
Divert the multitude and suppress its heat....
(The Instruction for King Meri-ka-Re, 25ff.)

Here is shown the effect of the good and the wicked
citizen upon the well-being of a community. The Egyptian
verse speaks of the disturbance caused by the contentious
men who need not necessarily be wicked.

(66)
אוֹר-צַדִּיקִים: שִׁמְחָה
וְרֵר רָשָׁעִים: יִדְעָד:

The light of the righteous rejoiceth;
But the lamp of the wicked shall be put out. (13:9)

Ginsberg cites the following as parallel:

Extinguished be the lamp of your son whom you brought up, whom you set at the gate of the palace. He has ruined you, and an evil return is it.
(The Words of Ahigar, iii.)

Light is seen as the symbol of righteousness, as distinguished from the darkness of evil. The Aramaic verse in context would seemingly refer to the "lamp of your son" as being the wise counselor and scribe whom King Esarhaddon sought to kill.

The only possible similarity between the Hebrew and the Aramaic is in the use of the word "lamp," and here the similes are not at all parallel. Furthermore, a footnote by Ginsberg indicates that the reading and restoration of the lamp... may not be correct.¹

Compare with:

He who applies himself to the doctrine of Buddha brightens this world, like the moon when free from clouds.
(Dhammapada 382; 52 Buddhism.)

(67)
טוב-תעט ב: דעת-יהוה
מאוצר לב ומהומה בו:
טוב צרחת דין! אהבה-שם
משור צבוס! ושבחה-בו:

Better is little with the fear of the Lord,
Than great treasure and turmoil therewith.

Better is a dinner of herbs where love is,
Than a stalled ox and hatred therewith. (15:16, 17)

1. See footnote, ibid., p. 428.

Wilson cites the following as parallel:

Better is poverty in the hand of the god
Than riches in a storehouse;
Better is bread, when the heart is happy,
Than riches with sorrow.

(The Instructions of Amen-em-Opet, Chapter VI.)

There is a surprising similarity between these proverbs in composition and in the use of comparison. However, while the Hebrew emphasizes love--of God and man--as more desirable than material wealth, the Egyptian points out that it is better to be poor and happy than rich and sad. Equally surprising is the fact that other religious literature has comparable statements, as for example:

But he who lives a hundred years, vicious and unrestrained, a life of one day is better if a man is virtuous and reflecting. (Dhammapada 110-15; 242 Buddhism.)

Better than a thousand empty words is one pregnant word, which brings the hearer peace. Better than a thousand idle songs is a single song, which brings the hearer peace. Better it is to chant one verse of the Law, that brings the hearer peace, than to chant a hundred empty songs. (Dhammapada 100-102; 325 Buddhism.)

Poverty which is through honesty is better than opulence which is from the treasure of others. (Menog-i Khrad 15, 4; 89 Zoroastrianism.)

טוב - אֶתְחַתֵּן לְךָ! אֶתְחַתֵּן לְךָ! (68)
מִשּׁוֹר אֶבִּיר! שְׂנֵאָה - בּוֹ!

Better is a dinner of herbs where love is,
Than a stalled ox and hatred therewith. (15:17)

Wilson cites the following as parallel:

More acceptable is the character of one upright
of heart than the ox of the evildoer.
(The Instruction of King Meri-ka-Re, 128.)

There is not a single parallel thought in these two
proverbs. The Hebrew, as seen in case 67, stresses the
importance of love over material things. The Egyptian
claims that righteousness is more preferable to the gods
than the best sacrificial offering.

It is interesting to note that in Isaiah 1:11ff.
we have a similar statement to the Egyptian: "To what
purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto Me?
saith the Lord."

Compare also the statement of I Samuel 15:22:

הֲנֵינִי שֹׂמֵר מִצְוַת ה' לְהִקָּשׁ יָב מִחֶלֶב אֵילִים.

Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice,
And to hearken than the fat of rams.

(69)

טוֹב מִעֵט בְּצִדְקָה
מִרֶב קַבֻּיּוֹת בְּלֹא מִשְׁפָּל:

Better is little with righteousness
Than great revenues with injustice. (16:8)

Wilson cites the following as parallel:

Better is praise as one who loves men
Than riches in a storehouse;
Better is bread, when the heart is happy,
Than riches with sorrow....
(The Instruction of Amen-em-Opet, XIII.)

These proverbs tell us that wealth is not so much to be desired as is righteous and love, whence comes happiness. While this thought is presented in some measure in both proverbs, there is no parallelism of any exactness. The Hebrew sets forth the value of righteousness, whereas the Egyptian is concerned about personal honor and serenity.

Again I refer to a statement found in the religious literature of Zoroastrianism:

Poverty which is through honesty is better than opulence which is from the treasure of others.
(Menog-i Khrad, 15, 4; 89 Zoroastrianism.)

And to:

Better an earth-lined cave from which the stars are visible than a golden pagoda roofed over with iniquity. (Chinese Proverb; 52 Confucianism.)

Prefer honest poverty to unjust wealth; for justice is better than riches in that riches profit us only while we live, while justice provides us glory even after we are dead, and while riches are shared by bad men, justice is a thing in which the wicked can have no part. (Isocrates, Vol. I, p. 29.)

(70)

מִצְדִּיק כְּשֶׁ עָלָה שְׁמִי צְדִיק
תוֹעֵבֵת יְהוָה גַּם - שְׂנֵי הֵם:

He that justifieth the wicked, and he that
condemneth the righteous,
Even they both are an abomination to the
Lord. (17:15)

(71)
גַּם עֲנוּשׁ לַצַּדִּיק לֹא-טוֹב
לְהַכּוֹת נְדִיבִים עָלָי-יִשְׂרָאֵל:

To punish also the righteous is not good,
Nor to strike the noble for their uprightness.
(17:26)

(72)
שִׂאת פָּנַי - רָשָׁע לֹא-טוֹב
לְהִטּוֹת צַדִּיק בַּמִּשְׁפָּט:

It is not good to respect the person of the
wicked,
So as to turn aside the righteous in judgment.
(18:5)

(73)
גַּם-אֵלֶּה לְחֻכְמִים
הִכָּר-פָּנִים בַּמִּשְׁפָּט בֶּל-טוֹב:
אֲמַר לְרָשָׁע צַדִּיק אַתָּה
יִקְרְהוּ עַמִּים יִזְעַמְוּהוּ לְאֻמִּים:
לְמַאֲכִרֵתִים יִנָּעַם
וְעַלֵּיהֶם תִּבּוֹא בְרַכַּת-טוֹב:

These also are sayings of the wise.
To have respect of persons in judgment is not good.

He that saith unto the wicked: "Thou art righteous,"
Peoples shall curse him, nations shall execrate him;

But to them that decide justly shall be delight,
And a good blessing shall come upon them. (24:23-25)

The following passage has been cited as a parallel to the preceding four cases, nos. 70 to 73:

(People) extol the word of a prominent man,
expert in murder,
(But) they abase the humble, who has committed
no violence.
They justify the evildoer, whose iniquity is...,
(But) they drive away the righteous, who gives
[heed] to the god's counsel.
(A Dialogue about Human Misery, XXV.)

These proverbs warn against perverting justice by condemning the righteous or by exalting the wicked. Whereas the Hebrew proverbs are exhortations to judges, the Akkadian verses are merely a characterization of persons who in no wise serve as magistrates.

Compare with others:

He that loveth iniquity beckoneth to misfortune.
(Jitsu-Go-Kiyo; 186 Buddhism.)

When gain is in view, think of righteousness.
(Analects 14, 13; 366 Confucianism.)

For if we are willing to survey human nature as a whole, we shall find that the majority of men do not take pleasure in the food that is the most wholesome, nor in the pursuits that are the most honourable, nor in the actions that are the noblest, nor in the creatures that are the most useful, but that they have tastes which are in every way contrary to their best interests, while they view those who have some regard for their duty as men of austere and laborious lives. (Isocrates, Vol. I, p. 65.)

(74) עקש-לב ל' ח'פ-א-טוב
!נהפך בלשון פול בדיעה:

He that hath a froward heart findeth no good;
And he that hath a perverse tongue falleth
into evil. (17:20)

The following has been cited by Wilson as parallel:

Thou shouldst not express thy (whole) heart to the stranger, to let him discover thy speech against thee. If a passing remark issuing from thy mouth is hasty and it is repeated, thou wilt make enemies. A man may fall to ruin because of his tongue....

(The Instruction of Ani, vii, 7ff.)

The importance of careful speech is emphasized. The Hebrew proverb points out that perverseness of the tongue will eventually bring harm to the liar. In the Egyptian proverb, caution is laid upon hasty and inconsiderate speech which can be ruinous to the career of one in the government. There is surely no parallel in the phrasing of these proverbial sayings, and only the first half of Pr. 17:20 may be considered in a thematic comparison with the Egyptian text.

Compare also with:

A flaw in a mace of white jade may be ground away; but for a flaw in speech nothing can be done. (Shih Ching, 3, 2; 138 Confucianism.)

He who misappropriates, misapplies, and mismanages speech mismanages everything. (Manu. 4, 256; 392 Hinduism.)

Mouth not keeping to mouth, and lip not keeping to lip, bring trouble to the jaws. (Proverbs in the Yoruba Tongue, no. 1; Wit and Wisdom from West Africa, Burton.)

In this chapter, there are no direct parallels between the Hebrew and extra-biblical literature, except possibly in cases 67 and 69, where the style of composition and the use of comparatives resemble one another. However, even here, a careful reading of the verses will indicate that

they are not identical. Furthermore, comparative forms are known to be widespread among the religious writings of the world, and their use in the Hebrew and Egyptian need not in any way be construed as borrowing.

taxing than the search for wealth, yet is something which can be learned from servants as well as the wise.

Prov. 11:2 reflects the effect of false pride on wisdom, whereas the Egyptian verse seems to caution against the overconfidence of one's intelligence.

Compare with:

As some massive rock stands unmoved by the storm-wind, so the wise stand unmoved by praise or blame. (Dhammapada 81; 322 Buddhism.)

He was clever and fond of learning, and he was not ashamed to seek knowledge from his inferiors; that is why he has been styled "uncultured." (Analects 5, 14; 70 Confucianism.)

(77)
כִּי חַיִּים הֵם לְמַצְאֵיהֶם
וְלִכְל-בְּשָׂרוֹ מַרְפֵּא:

For they are life unto those that find them,
And health to all their flesh. (4:22)

(78)

צוּף - דְּבַשׁ אַחֲרֵי-נֶעֱם
מִתּוֹק לִנְפֶשׁ וּמַרְפֵּא לְעַצְמוֹ:

Pleasant words are as honeycomb,
Sweet to thy soul, and health to the bones. (16:24)

Ginsberg cites the following verse as parallel to the foregoing proverbs, nos. 77 and 78:

Treat not lightly the word of a king: let it
be healing for thy flesh.
(The Words of Ahiqar, vii.)¹

The Hebrew proverbs point out that long life and good health attend to those who adhere to wise instruction and follow the precepts of the Lord. Here the moral and physical condition of man are linked together, the one promoting the other.

The Aramaic verse differs in that it exhorts against disobedience to the king's command, which can result in punishment and in loss of life.

The words which are similar to both the Hebrew and Aramaic proverbial sayings are "health" and "healing." In the Hebrew, the fear of the Lord, the acquisition of wisdom and the possession of pleasant speech not only serves to gladden the heart but to enhance the health of the body. In the Aramaic, healing means the "continuation of life."

Compare with:

Much insight and education, self-control and pleasant speech, and whatever word be well-spoken: this is a supreme blessing. (Sutta-Nipata 260; 16 Buddhism.)

Wisdom is as sandals on the feet to him who walks.
(Beal's Dhammapada, sec. 4, v. 2; 320 Buddhism.)

1. Ginsberg cites this verse as a parallel to Prov. 3:8 LXX, where it is alleged that for the Hebrew לִבְךָ בְּרָאֵךְ , the Septuagint reads לִבְךָ בְּרָאֵךְ , your flesh. However, in view of the fact that the reading of "flesh" in Ahiqar is uncertain, and since the Septuagint may be nothing more than a correct interpretation of the Masoretic לִבְךָ בְּרָאֵךְ , it is better not to cite this biblical verse as an alleged parallel. Ibn Ezra also identifies לִבְךָ בְּרָאֵךְ with the entire body.

One kind word will warm three winter months.
(Chinese Proverb; 502 Confucianism.)

(79)
מִפִּי - מִשְׁמַר (צַר לְבָבָךְ)
כִּי - מִפִּי תִּצְאֶה חַיִּים:

Above all that thou guardest keep thy heart;
For out of it are the issues of life. (4:23)

Ginsberg cites the following as parallel:

More than all watchfulness, watch thy mouth, and
[over] what [thou] h/earst/ harden thy heart.
(The Words of Ahikar, vii.)

The Hebrew proverb calls attention to the necessity
of maintaining the purity of the heart, for out of it
can come good or evil actions. The Aramaic verse is
a warning to beware of foolish speech. These two are
not similar.

Compare with:

If the heart is upright, deeds will be good.
(Japanese Proverb; 78 Shinto.)

(80)
בְּרֹב דְּבָרִים לֹא יִחְדַּל פֶּשַׁע
חֹשֶׁךְ שִׁפְתָּיו מִשְׁכִּיל:

In the multitude of words there wanteth not
transgression;
But he that refraineth his lips is wise. (10:19)

(81)

נֶצֶר פִּי שֶׁמֶר נֶפֶשׁוֹ
פֶּשַׁק שִׁפְתָּיו מִחֲתָה-לוֹ

He that guardeth his mouth keepeth his life;
But for him that openeth wide his lips there
shall be ruin. (13:3)

Pfeiffer cites the following as parallel:

As a wise man, let your understanding shine modestly,
Let your speech be restrained, guarded your speech.
Like a man's wealth, let your lips be precious.
(Akkadian Proverbs, Counsels of Wisdom, 20.)

The Hebrew proverbs indicate that silence is often a wise thing, for garrulousness and profuseness of words may lead to sin. The Akkadian lines emphasize restraint of speech as characteristic of the wise and, in this regard, are closer to Prov. 10:19. While there is similarity in content, there is none in phraseology.

Admonitions to the wise on careful speech are also found in other religious literature and are common the world over, as for example:

A man is not wise by much speaking, the comforting, the kindly, the unafraid--such an one is called wise.
(Dhammapada 258; 321 Buddhism.)

Not to enlighten one who can be enlightened is to waste a man; to enlighten one who cannot be enlightened is to waste words. The intelligent man neither wastes his man nor his words.
(Analects, 15, 7; 109 Confucianism.)

A wise person does not keep on talking until he has exhausted conversation. (Jabo Proverbs, no. 348.)

Avoid frequent conversations with the same persons, and long conversations on the same subject; for there is satiety in all things. (Isocrates, Vol. I, p. 15.)

(82)
 יֵשׁ בְּנִיָּה כְּמַדְקָרוֹת חֵיב
 וְלִשָּׁן דְּכַמִּים מְפִיץ:

There is that speaketh like the piercings of
 a sword;
 But the tongue of the wise is health. (12:18)

The following is cited as a parallel:

Be a craftsman in speech, (so that) thou mayest be strong, (for) the tongue is a sword to a man, and speech is more valorous than any fighting.
 (The Instructions for King Meri-ka-Re, 30ff.)

Both the Hebrew and Egyptian proverbs illustrate the force of speech by comparing it to a sword. The wise man, according to the Hebrew, is capable of utilizing speech to regenerate health. In the Egyptian, command of speech is comparable to a strong weapon. These two are not the same.

Better be silent, than speak ill; better give up life than love harsh words; better beggar's fare than luxury at another's board. (Hitopadesa I, 129-A; 369 Hinduism.)

(83)
 יִרְאַת יְהוָה מְקוֹר חַיִּים
 לְסוּר מִמְּקַשֵּׁי מָוֶת:

The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life,
 To depart from the snares of death. (14:27)

The following has been cited as parallel:

Reverence (for the deity) produces well-being,
Sacrifice prolongs life,
And prayer atones for sin.
(Akkadian Proverbs, Counsels of Wisdom, reverse B.)

The Hebrew proverb has reference to the preservation of life through the application of wisdom and the fear of God. The Akkadian text refers only to the power of ritual worship and prayer in prolonging life.

Compare with:

He who desires to know men must first know God.
(Chinese Proverb; 166 Confucianism.)

חַיִּים עֲמִיקִים יַעֲצֶה בְּלֵב-אִישׁ (84)
וְאִישׁ תְּבוּנָה יִדְלֶנָּה:

Counsel in the heart of man is like deep water;
But a man of understanding will draw it out. (20:5)

The following is cited by Wilson as parallel:

O Thoth, thou sweet well for a man thirsting (in) the desert! It is sealed up to him who has discovered his mouth, (but) it is open to the silent. When the silent comes, he finds the well, (but for) the heated (man) thou art choked up.

(A Prayer to Thoth--the god of wisdom.)

In the Hebrew proverb, a person's true intentions are considered as deep and hidden except to a man of understanding. In the Egyptian prayer, a babblers or "heated" person will not be able to find the well of

wisdom, although a silent man can. The parallel thought concerns the "drawing out" of the hidden, but there is no borrowing here of either phraseology or ideas.

Compare with:

Let no man think lightly of good, saying in his heart, it will not come nigh unto me. Even by the falling of water-drops a water-pot is filled; the wise man becomes full of good, even if he gather it little by little. (Dhammapada 22; 161 Buddhism.)

(85)

כִּי-לֵעִים כִּי-תִשְׁמְרֵם בְּבִלְיָךְ
כִּי-לֵעִים יִהְיֶה עַל-שִׁפְתֶּיךָ:

For it is a pleasant thing if thou keep them within thee;
Let them be established altogether upon thy lips. (22:18)

The following is cited as parallel:

The belly of a man is wider than a storehouse, and it is full of every (kind of) response. Thou shouldst choose the good and say them, while the bad are shut up in thy belly.... (The Instruction of Ani, vii.)

The Hebrew proverb emphasizes the importance of retaining knowledge and words of the wise in the heart. In the Egyptian text, the belly is considered as having the function of the heart, to squelch bad speech and allow only the good to issue forth. The parallelism is poor.

Compare with:

Many words invite many defeats... (Inscription on statue in the ancestral temple of Lo; 505 Confucianism.)

He who says, "I know nothing," is the shrewdest of all. He who says, "I am learning," is a mere talker. He who holds his peace is the wisest and best. (Vemana's Padyamulu; 458 Hinduism.)

נָגִיד חֶסֶד תְּבוּנוֹת וְרֵב מַעֲשֵׂקוֹת (86)
שִׁנְיָ בָצַע יֶאֱרִיךְ יָמָיו

The prince that lacketh understanding is also a great oppressor;
But he that hateth covetousness shall prolong his days. (28:16)

Reference is made to sections of the story, The Protests of the Eloquent Peasant, as containing elements of parallelism:

Then this peasant came to appeal to him a second time....¹

Then the Chief Steward, Meru's son Rensi, said: "Is what belongs to thee more important to thy heart than (the fact) that my attendant may carry thee off?" Then this peasant said: "The measurer of piles (of grain) cheats for himself. He who should fill up for another trims his share. He who should lead according to the laws orders robbery. Who then will punish meanness? He who should drive out decay (himself) makes distortions. One man is straightforward in crookedness, another assents to mischance. Dost thou thyself find (a lesson) for thee?..."

Desire to live long, as it is said: "Doing justice is the (very) breath of the nose."...

Now when this peasant made this speech, the Chief Steward, Meru's son Rensi, was at the entrance of the administrative building. Then he had two guardsmen attend to him with whips....

1. In his second appeal the peasant boldly suggests that the expected dispenser of justice is becoming an abuser of justice. See Pritchard, Ancient Near Eastern Texts, footnote no. 15, ibid., p. 409.

The thought in both the Hebrew proverb and the Egyptian story might well be that the ruler who has no understanding of the feelings of his people, can never hope to achieve a happy and long reign. Other than this thought, there is no parallelism between the two.

Compare with:

True goodness is loving your fellow men. True wisdom is knowing your fellow men. (Analects 12, 22; 197 Confucianism.)

The Gods defend not with a club or shield the man they wish to favour, but endow him with wisdom; and the man whom they intend to ruin, they deprive of understanding. (Mahabharata 5, 1122; 232 Hinduism.)

The wise man puts his trust in others: thus he reaches fullness of years without decay, perfection of wisdom without bewilderment. In the government of a State, then, the hardest thing is to recognize the worth of others, and not to rely upon one's own. (Lieh Tzu 8; 190 Taoism.)

You princes, mark well this punishment you also; for the deathless gods are near among men and mark all those who oppress their fellows with crooked judgments. (Hesiod, p. 21.)

There is not a single case in this chapter to indicate direct parallelism, where the contention of borrowing may be justified. Not only is wisdom literature seen as universal, but even the characterizations

of wise men are alike.¹

1. That ancient documents and writings often found acceptance by later kings, who invoked the authority of prior laws to confirm their decisions, is illustrated below:

גם-אלה משיכי שלמה
אשר העתיקו
אשר תתקיה מלך-יהודה:

These also are proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out. (25:1)

Wilson cites a section of a medical papyrus as a parallel to the above:

... which was found among old writings in a box containing documents under the feet of Anubis in Letopolis in the time of (King) Usaphais... It was brought to the majesty of (King) Senedj, because of its efficacy.

(Egyptian Texts, The Authority of Ancient Documents.)

Inasmuch as the Hebrew verse mentions the reign of King Hezekiah, and the Egyptian the rule of King Senedj of the second dynasty (perhaps 29th-27th century B. C. E.), there can be no parallelism between the two.

- X. WOMEN AS THE BANE OR BLESSING OF MAN; warnings against consorting with strange and adulteress women, and words of praise for faithful and industrious wives.

(87) לְהַצִּילֶךָ מֵאִשָּׁה זָרָה
מִנְּכֵדָה זָרָה אֲמִרְיָהּ הֵחֵלֵקָה:
הַעֲנֹבֶת־צֶלֶף וְעוֹלָה:
וְאֶת־בְּרִית אֱלֹהֶיהָ נִשְׁכָּחָה:
כִּי שָׁמָּה אָל־מִוֶּת בֵּיתָהּ
וְאֶל־רִפְצִים מַעֲגֵלֶתִי הִיא:
כֹּל־בָּצִיָּה לֹא יִשְׁלֹב
וְלֹא־יִשְׁגֹּד צִרְחֹת מִיָּאֵם:

To deliver thee from the strange woman,
Even from the alien woman that maketh smooth
her words;

That forsaketh the lord of her youth,
And forgetteth the covenant of her God;

For her house sinketh down unto death,
And her paths unto the shades;

None that go unto her return,
Neither do they attain unto the paths of life.
(2:16-19)

(88) כִּי־שׁוֹתָה עֲחֻקָּה זֹנוּהָ
וּבְיָרֶצֶק צָרָה לִנְדָּה:
אֶף־הִיא כְּהַמָּרָא תִּמְצֹב
וּבְאֲדָמָה בְּצָרָה מְסִיף:

For a harlot is a deep ditch;
And an alien woman is a narrow pit.

She also lieth in wait as a robber,
And increaseth the faithless among men. (23:27, 28)

The following has been cited as parallel to the preceding two cases:

Be on thy guard against a woman from abroad, who is not known in her (own) town. Do not stare at her when she passes by. Do not know her carnally: a deep water, whose windings one knows not, a woman who is far away from her husband. "I am sleek," she says to thee every day. She has no witnesses when she waits to ensnare thee. It is a great crime (worthy) of death, when one hears of it.... (Instruction of Ani, iii.)

The Hebrew proverbs, 2:16-19, warn against associating with a married woman of loose morals who secretly breaks her marriage vows. In 23:27, 28, the term "alien woman" refers to a harlot rather than to a faithless wife. In both cases, lewdness and immorality are strongly frowned upon, inasmuch as they destroy the foundations of family living.

The Instruction of Ani gives warning against fraternization with women who are unknown in the community. The "woman from abroad" is assumed to be a faithless wife, capable of deceiving her husband and other young men. When her crime is discovered, it can evoke the death penalty. This latter point is not in the Hebrew text.

Pfeiffer cites the following parallel to Prov. 2:16-19:

Do not marry a harlot whose husbands are six thousand.
An Ishtar-woman vowed to a god,
A sacred prostitute whose favors are unlimited,
Will not lift you out of your trouble:
In your quarrel she will slander you.
(Akkadian Proverbs, Counsels of Wisdom, ii.)

The Akkadian verse is not a parallel either to the Hebrew or to the Egyptian proverbs. It is concerned only with the problems attending marriage to a prostitute.

Compare with:

The fire of a bad woman always goes out. (That is, she never does things in a satisfactory way; she is always in trouble and causes trouble for others.)
(Jabo Proverbs from Liberia, no. 318.)

(89) שִׁיתָה - מַיִם מְבוֹרָךְ
וְנוֹגְלִים מִתּוֹךְ בְּאֵרְךָ!

Drink waters out of thine own cistern,
And running waters out of thine own well. (5:15)

(90) יִפְרֹצוּ מַעְיָנֶיךָ חוּצָה
בְּרִחְבוֹת פְּלָגֶיךָ - מַיִם :
יִהְיוּ לְךָ לְבָדֶךָ
! אֵין לְגִנֶּיךָ אֶתְךָ !
יִהְיוּ מִקְוֶיךָ בְּיָדְךָ
! שְׂמֵחַ מֵאֲשֶׁר נִעְוָרֶיךָ !

Let thy springs be dispersed abroad,
And courses of water in the streets.

Let them be only thine own,
And not strangers' with thee.

Let thy fountain be blessed;
And have joy of the wife of thy youth. (5:16-18)

Pfeiffer cites the following as parallel:

"Servant, obey me." Yes, my lord, yes. "A woman will I love." Yes, love, my lord, love. The man who loves a woman forgets pain and trouble. "No, servant, a woman I shall not love." [Do not love,] my lord, do not [love]. Woman is a well, woman is an iron dagger--a sharp one!--which cuts a man's neck.

(A Pessimistic Dialogue between Master and Servant, VII, 55.)

The Hebrew proverbs differ considerably from the Akkadian dialogue. The former urges marriage at a young age, fidelity and paternity, and hints of the blessings that come with many children. The latter, by way of conversation between master and servant, strikes a condemnatory note against women.

The only similarity between the two cases is in the reference to woman as a "well." In the Hebrew, the term well or cistern is used figuratively for the relationship between a man and his wife. The Akkadian text indicates by a footnote (p. 438) that "well" means pitfall or ditch.

Compare with:

You do not remove the breech-clout of a woman you have not married. (Jabo Proverbs from Liberia, no. 190.)¹

1. The proverb is contained in a song, setting forth the moral standards of warriors. The breech-clout is worn by women under the robe.

(91) לֹשֶׁן הָרָע
 יִחַלְלֶנָּה לְשׁוֹן לְבָרָהּ:
 אֶל-תִּמְחֵד זִפְרָה בְּלִבָּבָהּ
 אֶל-תִּקְחֶהּ בְּעַפְפִּיהָ:
 כִּי בָעֵד-אִשָּׁה זֹנוֹה עַד-כִּסֵּר לָחֶם
 אִשָּׁת אִישׁ לִפְשׁ יִקְדָּה תְּצוּד:
 הַיִּחַתָּה אִישׁ אִשׁ בְּחִיקָא
 וּבִגְדָיו לֹא תִשְׁכַּח:
 אִם-יִהְיֶה אִישׁ עַל-הַגְּחָלִים
 וְכִגְלוֹ לֹא תִקְאֶנֶה:
 בֵּן הַבַּיִת אֶל-אִשָּׁת לֵיעָה
 לֹא יִנָּקֶה כִּל-יִנְגַע בָּהּ:

To keep thee from the evil woman,
 From the smoothness of the alien tongue.

Lust not after her beauty in thy heart;
 Neither let her captivate thee with her eyelids.

For on account of a harlot a man is brought to
 a loaf of bread,
 But the adulteress hunteth for the precious life.

Can a man take fire in his bosom,
 And his clothes not be burned?

Or can one walk upon hot coals,
 And his feet not be scorched?

So he that goeth in to his neighbour's wife;
 Whosoever toucheth her shall not go unpunished.
 (6:24-29)

Pfeiffer cites the following as parallel:

Do not marry a harlot whose husbands are six thousand.
An Ishtar-woman vowed to a god,
A sacred prostitute whose favors are unlimited,
Will not lift you out of your trouble:
In your quarrel she will slander you.

The force and intent of these two proverbs are different, and only the Akkadian proverb deals with the lustful woman.

The Hebrew proverb warns against the woman who is capable of destroying the purity and sapping the foundations of family life. The Akkadian verse, cited previously, in case no. 90, indicates the consequences of marriage to a harlot.

Compare with:

If thou marry a harlot, thou dost not wax wroth
(at what may happen). (Wit and Wisdom from West Africa,
Proverbs in the Accra Tongue, no. 194.)¹

Concerning the enticement of women, there is the following proverb:

Wood will never satisfy a fire; rivers will never fill the ocean; death is never satiated with living creatures; nor will handsome women ever be tired of the attentions of men. (Hitopadesa 2, 113; 356 Hinduism.)

Note the interesting similarity to the Hebrew Proverb:

There are three things that are never satisfied,
Yea, four that say not: "Enough":
The grave; and the barren womb;
The earth that is not satisfied with water;
And the fire that saith not: "Enough." (30:15b, 16)

1. The Accra tongue is confined to the eastern portion of the Gold Coast.

(92)
 לִשְׂמִיךְ מֵאִשָּׁת זָרָה
 מִחֲלָקֶת לְשׁוֹן נִכְדִּיהָ:

To keep thee from the evil woman,
 From the smoothness of the alien tongue. (6:24)

(93)
 לִשְׂמִיךְ מֵאִשָּׁת זָרָה
 מִנִּכְדִּיהָ אֲמִרִיהָ הֵחָלִיקָהּ:

That they may keep thee from the strange woman,
 From the alien woman that maketh smooth her
 words. (7:5)

(94)
 בְּיֵתָהּ שְׂאוֹל בְּיֵתָהּ
 יִרְדּוֹת אֶל-תַּדְרֵי-מָוֶת:

Her house is the way to the nether-world,
 Going down to the chambers of death. (7:27)

The following is cited as parallel:

One is made a fool by limbs of fayence, as she stands (there), become (all) carnelian. A mere trifle, the likeness of a dream--and one attains death through knowing her.... (The Instruction of Vizier Ptah-hotep, 285ff.)

Again the Hebrew proverbs caution against becoming ensnared by enticing women who are unfaithful to their husbands. The Egyptian verse speaks of the lure and

temptations of women to which men often succumb, and the fatal result which it may bring. When each of the three Hebrew proverbs (nos. 94, 95, 96) is read in context, and compared separately with the Egyptian verse, the similarities do not appear close at all.

Compare with:

Do not let a flaunting woman coax and cozen and deceive you; she is after your barn. (Hesiod, p. 31.)

(95)

חֶבְרָא - שֶׁחֵסֵד הָיָה
 שֶׁחֵסֵד הָיָה - חֶבְרָא

So he that goeth in to his neighbour's wife;
 Whosoever toucheth her shall not go unpunished.
 (6:29)

The following is cited as a parallel:

If thou desirest to make friendship last in a home to which thou hast access as master, as a brother, or as a friend, into any place where thou mightest enter, beware of approaching the women. It does not go well with the place where that is done.

(The Instruction of Vizier Ptah-hotep, 276ff.)

The Hebrew passage warns of the legal and social punishment to one who violates the privacy of another's house. The Egyptian, on the other hand, points out that it is unwise for one who desires to establish friendship, to associate too closely with the women of the other house.

Compare with:

He who regards another's wife as his mother, his wealth as vain, and all creatures as himself is wise. (Hitopadesa 1, 13; 456 Hinduism.)

(96)

יְהִי - חֵק וְלֵךְ בְּרִיךְ
וְשֶׁמֶחַ חַיִּים וְעוֹלָם לְךָ

Let thy fountain be blessed;
And have joy of the wife of thy youth. (5:18)

The following has been cited as parallel:

Take to thyself a wife while thou art (still) a youth, that she may produce a son for thee. Beget him for thyself while thou art (still) young. Teach him to be a man. A man whose people are many is happy; he is saluted (respectfully) with regard to his children. (The Instruction of Ani, iii.)

In Israel, as among other ancient nations, marriage at an early age was the rule. The Hebrew proverb, read in context, calls for marital fidelity and suggests that much happiness will accompany one whose children are many. The Egyptian verse, while it likewise advises an early marriage and progeny, seems motivated by the desire to raise up a son whom the father can train.

Compare with:

He who has no son has no place in the world; in the person of a son a man is reborn, a second self is begotten. (Aitareya Brahmana 7, 13; 380 Hinduism.)

If there be no child for anyone they call him one with a severed bridge, that is, the way for him to that other world is severed. (Sar Dar 18, 5; 19 Zoroastrianism.)

The man who has a wife is far above him who begets no sons; he who keeps a house is far above him who has none; he who has children is far above the childless man... (Vendidad 4, 47-8; 124 Zoroastrianism.)

I arose early, but the dawning day overtook me on the way (meaning, I married a wife in early youth, but had no children by her). (Wit and Wisdom from West Africa, Proverbs in the Kamuri Tongue, no. 43.)

אִשָּׁת חַיִּל עֲבָדָת בְּעַלָּהּ (97)
וְזָרָק בְּעַצְמוֹתַי מִבִּישָׁה:

A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband;
But she that doeth shamefully is as rottenness
in his bones. (12:4)

אִשָּׁת חַיִּל מִי זֶה צֶמֶד (98)
וְזָרָק מִפְּנֵי נֶם מִכָּדָה:
בְּטַח בָּהּ לֵב בְּעַלָּהּ
וְשֵׁשׁ לֹא יִחָקֵר
בְּמִלְתָּהּ לֹא יִלָּצֵה - רָע
כֹּל יָמֵי חַיֵּיהָ:

A woman of valour who can find?
For her price is far above rubies.

The heart of her husband doth safely
trust in her,
And he hath no lack of gain.

She doeth him good and not evil
All the days of her life. (31:10-12)

תַּן לָהּ מִפְּרִי יָדֶיהָ (99)
וְיִהְיֶה שֵׁם ה' בְּשַׁעֲרֶיהָ
מַעֲשֵׂיהָ

Give her of the fruit of her hands;
And let her works praise her in the gates. (31:31)

The following has been cited as parallel to the
preceding three proverbs:

If thou art a man of standing, thou shouldst found thy household and love thy wife as is fitting. Fill her belly; clothe her back. Ointment is the prescription for her body. Make her heart glad as long as thou livest. She is a profitable field for her lord. Thou shouldst not contend with her at law, and keep her far from gaining control.... Her eye is her stormwind. Let her heart be soothed through what may accrue to thee; it means keeping her long in thy house....

(The Instruction of Vizier Ptah-hotep, 325ff.)

The Hebrew and Egyptian verses are not at all parallel. The Hebrew woman is pictured as virtuous in conduct and industrious in the affairs of her family. She is praised for her contribution to the well-being of her husband and her household.

The duties of the Egyptian housewife are seen in a different light. She must spend her time at home beautifying herself for her husband's satisfaction. She is not expected to participate in the affairs of the household, and her absence from the house is not viewed favorably.

While the Hebrew proverbs speak of the ideal wife, the Egyptian verse is concerned with the obligations of

the husband. In all likelihood, the picture of the inactive Egyptian housewife would apply to a home of a man of standing or high social status.

Furthermore, the Hebrew verses here cited are the beginning of an acrostic poem, while the Egyptian proverb is merely a long prose passage.

Compare with:

Where women are honoured, there the gods are pleased; but where they are not honoured, no sacred rite yields rewards. (Manu 3, 56; 463 Hinduism.)

The second place where the earth feels most happy is the place whereon one of the faithful erects a house, with a priest within; with cattle, with a wife, with children, and good herds within; and wherein afterwards, the cattle go on thriving, holiness, fodder, the dog, the wife, the child, the fire and every blessing of life is thriving. (Vendidad 3, 2-3; 37 Zoroastrianism.)

An ugly woman who is well behaved surpasses a beautiful woman who is not well behaved. (Jabo Proverbs from Liberia, no. 311.)

To have a wife means: Buy clothes! (Proverbs of West Africa, page 34.)¹

A woman's clothes are the price of her husband's peace. (Proverbs of West Africa, page 63.)²

For a man wins nothing better than a good wife, and, again, nothing worse than a bad one, a greedy soul who roasts her man without fire, strong though he may be, and brings him to a raw old age. (Hesiod, p. 55.)

Kurnus, of all good things in human life
Nothing can equal goodness in a wife.

(Works of J. H. Frère, Theognis, Fragment 77.)³

1. Bender, C. J., Proverbs of West Africa. (Haldeman-Julius Company, Girard, Kansas).
2. Ibid.
3. Theognis, Works of John Hookham Frère, Memoirs by His Nephews, W. E. and Sir Barth Frère (Basil Montagu Pickering, London, 1872).

קָמִי בְּיָמֶיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל (100)
 בְּעֵלְיָךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל

Her children rise up, and call her blessed;
 Her husband also, and he praiseth her. (31:28)

The following is cited as a parallel:

Thou shouldst not supervise (too closely) -thy wife in her (own) house, when thou knowest that she is efficient. Do not say to her: "Where is it? Fetch (it) for us!" when she has put (it) in the (most) useful place. Let thy eye have regard, while thou art silent, that thou mayest recognize her abilities. How happy it is when thy hand is with her!
 (The Instruction of Ani, ix.)

The Hebrew proverb tells of the appreciation and praise which come to a woman of valor from the members of her family. The Egyptian Instructions of Ani, on the other hand, differing from the Instructions of Vizier Ptah-hotep cited with cases 99-102, advise a man to recognize his wife's capabilities, and enhance family happiness by cooperation.

In the last section of this chapter, it must again be pointed out that the similarities between the Hebrew and extra-biblical literature of other Near Eastern countries cannot be accepted as being identical or parallel in form. Furthermore, there are numerous proverbs from the literature of out-of-the-way countries which reveal equally striking similarities, but are not parallel.

CHAPTER 4

AN ANALYSIS OF
THE INSTRUCTIONS OF
AMEN-EM-OPET
IN THE LIGHT OF
THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

In this chapter we shall deal with the Instruction of Amen-em-Opet, son of Ka-nakht, as it relates to the Book of Proverbs, section 22:17-24:34.

This material is being analyzed separately because many scholars have called attention to the close literary relationship between the two collections. Some biblical scholars say that this entire section of Proverbs (22:17-24:34) is a Hebrew rendering of the Instruction of Amen-em-Opet,¹ while others maintain that Amen-em-Opet wrote his treatise under the influence of the Jewish sages and prophets.²

A word about Amen-em-Opet and his writings. He was a native of Panopolis and Abydos, opposite cities on the Nile. In his writings, he describes himself as an Overseer of the Soil (i, 13). He had several children, and it was for his son, Harmakher, the youngest, that he wrote this instruction (ii, 14). It is uncertain as to the exact date he lived, and scholars have suggested a period anywhere between the 10th and 6th centuries B. C. E.³

1. See F. L. Griffith, "The Teaching of Amenophis the Son of Kanakht," Journal of Egyptian Archeology, Vol. XII, p. 230, for opinions of Prof. Erman and Gressmann.
2. Kevin, Robert Oliver, The Wisdom of Amen-em-Apt and Its Possible Dependence Upon the Hebrew Book of Proverbs, (Reprint from the Journal of the Society of Oriental Research, Vol. XIV, No. 4), p. 155.
3. Wilson, Ancient Near Eastern Texts, p. 421.

The papyrus containing the wisdom and instruction of Amen-em-Opet was presented to the British Museum in 1888 by Sir Ernest Budge upon his return from Egypt. It has "twenty-eight columns of text, including the colophon (consisting of one line standing by itself), which are written in small, clear, though, in places, somewhat cursive, hieratic characters. The twenty-seven columns of text contain a copy of a work entitled 'Teaching Concerning Life,' which was composed by Amen-em-Apt, the son of Ka-Nekht. In places the scribe crowded his words together, and the characters are ill-formed and difficult to transcribe."¹

(101) הַל אֲנִיךָ וְשִׁמְעָה זִבְדִּי תִּכְמִים
 !לִכְךָ תִּשִׁית לְזִבְדִּי
 כִּי-לֵעִים כִּי-תִשְׁמַע בְּבִלְיָךְ

Incline thine ear, and hear the words of the wise,
 And apply thy heart unto my knowledge.
 For it is a pleasant thing if thou keep them
 within thee. (22:17, 18a.)

Wilson cites the following as a parallel:

Give thy ears, hear what is said,
 Give thy heart to understand them.
 To put them in thy heart is worth while. (Chapter I.)

1. Budge, Sir Ernest, Teaching of Amen-em-Apt, Son of Ka-Nekht (Martin Hopkinson and Co., Ltd., London, 1924), p. 93.

These two proverbs are indeed similar. What is striking is that both are the beginning verses to their respective collections. Moreover, the lines run almost consecutively in thought.

It should be noted, however, that the Hebrew word נְחִימָה is understood to mean "pleasantness," whereas the Egyptian passage emphasizes the worthwhileness of instruction. A comparison of the verses which follow these introductory lines would indicate that the similarities soon break off.

Compare with:

Acquaint yourself with the best things in the poets as well, and learn from the other wise men also any useful lessons they have taught. (Isocrates, Vol. I, p. 35.)

He ... is good who listens to a good adviser; but whoever neither thinks for himself nor keeps in mind what another tells him, he is an unprofitable man. (Hesiod, p. 25.)

Keep these sayings in thy heart, having listened to the truths laid down in the scriptures, follow them duly. (Mahabharata 12, 103, 50-51-R; 358 Hinduism.)

(102) כִּי-נְחִימָה כִּי-תְשַׁמְּרֶם בְּבִלְתֵּךְ
 כִּנּוּן יִחַדוּ עַל-שִׁפְתֵיךְ
 לְהִיוֹת בִּיהוּה חֲבִלֶתְךָ
 הוֹדַעְתִּיךָ הַיּוֹם אֶפְ-אֶמְרָה:

For it is a pleasant thing if thou keep them
 within thee;
 Let them be established altogether upon thy lips.

That thy trust may be in the Lord,
 I have made them known to thee this day, even
 to thee. (22:18-19.)

Compare with Amen-em-Opet:

At a time when there is a whirlwind of words,
They shall be a mooring-stake for thy tongue.
If thou spendest thy time while this is in thy
heart,
Thou wilt find it a success;
Thou wilt find my words a treasury of life,
And thy body will prosper upon earth. (Chapter I.)

Both proverbs are an exhortation to follow the words
of the wise. However, the Hebrew makes the aim of in-
struction "trust in the Lord," whereas the Egyptian
passage stresses the reward.

Compare with:

The gift of the Dhamma (Law) exceeds all gifts,
the sweetness of the Law exceeds all sweetness; the
delight of the Law exceeds all delight....
(Dhammapada 354; 113 Buddhism.)

He who does not believe what the elders say will
not believe the sayings of the Book (The Bible). And
he who does not believe the sayings of the Book will
not believe what the Lord says. (Proverbs in the
Kanuri Tongue, Wit and Wisdom from West Africa.)

לְהַיִּיחַ בַּיהוָה מִבְּלִיחַ (103)
הַלְעֵבִיךָ הַיּוֹם אֶף-אַחֶיךָ

That thy trust may be in the Lord,
I have made them known to thee this day,
even to thee. (22:19)

(104)
 הַזֵּי יָבִי קִשְׁלָא אַמְרֵי אַמֶּת
 לְהַשִּׁיב אַמְרֵי אַמֶּת לְשִׁלְהֵיךְ

That I might make thee know the certainty of
 the words of truth,
 That thou mightest bring back words of truth
 to them that send thee? (22:21)

Compare both with Amen-em-Opet:

The beginning of the teaching of life, the testimony
 for prosperity, all precepts for intercourse with elders,
 the rules for courtiers, to know how to return an answer
 to him who said it, and to direct a report to one who
 has sent him, in order to direct him to the ways of
 life. (Introduction.)

Again the purpose of instruction is set forth.

Unlike the Hebrew proverbs, which propose the idea of
 trust in the Lord (22:19) and the lesson of truthfulness
 (22:21), the Egyptian passage is concerned with
 the prescription for prosperity. There is some similarity
 here, but no exact parallelism.

(105)
 הֲלֹא כָתַבְתִּי לְךָ שְׁלִשִּׁים
 בְּמַעְצוֹת יָדַעְתִּי

Have not I written unto thee excellent things
 Of counsels and knowledge. (22:20)

Compare with Amen-em-Opet:

See thou these thirty chapters;
 They entertain; they instruct. (Chapter XXX.)

Compare with Amen-em-Opet:

Guard thyself against robbing the oppressed
And against overbearing the disabled. (Chapter II.)

It is to be noted that the Bible contains numerous references to just attitudes to guard the poor and oppressed. In the Torah, consideration for the poor is made mandatory by such regulations as leaving uncut the corners of the fields (leviticus 19:9). Likewise, the affliction of a widow, orphan, stranger or anyone, unable to resist, because of physical or mental weakness, is a crime against God (Exodus 22:20ff.). In the Book of Proverbs, the oppression of the poor is viewed as a blasphemy against God (14:31), whereas tokens of charity and kindness to the needy are His delight. (19:17)

Although the Hebrew speaks of the weak and the poor while the Egyptian speaks of the oppressed and disabled, these two proverbs would seem to have the same moral overtone.

חַלְשֵׁי-הַגֶּזֶל לֹא-תִשָּׁדֹן (107)
 לֹא-תִשָּׁדֹן חַלְשֵׁי-הַגֶּזֶל
 כִּי-יְהוָה יִבְרַח נְפִשׁוֹ
 וְיִקְבֹּץ אֶת-קִבְצֵיהֶם וְיִשְׂשׁוּ:

Rob not the weak, because he is weak,
Neither crush the poor in the gate;

For the Lord will plead their cause,
And despoil of life those that despoil them.
(22:22-23)

(109)

פן - תכלה גזלתי
ולקחת חלקי שרפיך!

Lest thou learn his ways,
And get a snare to thy soul. (22:25)

Compare with Amen-em-Opet:

Do not associate to thyself the heated man,
Nor visit him for conversation. (line 208)

...

Do not leap to hold to such a one, (line 241)
Lest a terror carry thee off. (Chapter IX.)

Both proverbs exhort one not to associate with
the hot-tempered and quarrelsome. (See above, no. 31.)

A long-omitted passage in the Egyptian text, indicated by a lacuna between the preceding second and third lines, discusses fully the ways of safeguarding one's speech. The last two lines give a warning of the consequences that befall those who associate with "the heated man." Since the Egyptian passage is not quoted in its entirety (32 lines are omitted), the possibility of direct borrowing is to be ruled out.

Compare with:

Stay away from an open toilet, and you'll not be
annoyed by the stench (meaning, shun bad company).
(Proverbs of West Africa, Bender, p. 46.)

Bad company breeds mischief, "Kurnus, you
Can prove that ancient proverb to be true
In your own instance; you yourself were driven
To an unrighteous act, offending Heaven!"
(Theognis, Works of J. H. Frère, Fragment 37.)

(110)

אַל-תְּהִי בְּתוֹקֵעִי - כֶּן
 בְּעֵרְבִים מַשְׁאוֹת;
 אִם-אֵין-לְךָ לְשֹׁלֵם
 לְמַה - יִקַּח מִשְׁכָּבְךָ בְּתוֹמָתִי הִיא:

Be thou not of them that strike hands,
 Or of them that are sureties for debts;

If thou hast not wherewith to pay,
 Why should he take away thy bed from under
 thee? (22:26-27)

Compare with Amen-em-Opet, cited by Wilson as a

parallel:

Do not take an accounting of him who has nothing,
 Nor falsify thy pen.
 If thou findest a large debt against a poor man,
 Make it into three parts,
 Forgive two, and let one stand.
 Thou wilt find it like the ways of life;
 Thou wilt lie down and sleep (soundly); in
 the morning
 Thou wilt find it (again) like good news.
 (Chapter XIII.) -

The Hebrew proverb is a warning against going surety
 for another, references of which are found often in the
 Bible. The striking of the hand was evidently the gesture
 by which the agreement took on the aspects of a legal con-
 tract. (See also 6:1, 11:15, 17:18.)

The Egyptian passage in no wise deals with the problem
 of surety. It urges consideration for the poor on the part
 of the creditor seeking repayment of a debt.

Other scholars have likewise pointed out that there is no parallel in the Amen-em-Opet Sayings with Prov. 22:26, 27.¹

אֲלֹהֵי-אֲבוֹתָם (111)
אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ צְבוּתֵיהֶם!

Remove not the ancient landmark,
Which thy fathers have set. (22:28)

אֲלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתָם (112)
אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ צְבוּתֵיהֶם
אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ צְבוּתֵיהֶם
אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ צְבוּתֵיהֶם

Remove not the ancient landmark;
And enter not into the fields of the fatherless;

For their Redeemer is strong;
He will plead their cause with thee. (23:10, 11)

Compare with Amen-em-Opet:

Do not carry off the landmark at the boundaries
of the arable land,
Nor disturb the position of the measuring-cord;
Be not greedy after a cubit of land,
Nor encroach upon the boundaries of a widow....
Guard against encroaching upon the boundaries
of the fields,
Lest a terror carry thee off. (Chapter VI.)

The Hebrew proverbs strongly exhort against violating
the property of others. These passages are undoubtedly

1. See D. C. Simpson, "The Hebrew Book of Proverbs and the Teaching of Amenophis," Journal of Egyptian Archeology, Vol. XII, p. 237; also, Oesterley, The Wisdom of Egypt, p. 67.

based upon biblical law, "Thou shalt not remove thy neighbour's landmark" (Deut. 19:14), and, "Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmark." (Deut. 27:17.)

In the agricultural societies of Egypt and Israel, encroaching upon the boundary of another's field was considered a transgression. It is therefore not surprising to find the term "landmark" used in both proverbs, even though the contents are not entirely the same.

In Greenstone, the reference to "thy fathers" is also accepted to mean forms of family tradition which ought not be traversed. There is no doubt, however, that 23:10 applies specifically to land.

Compare with:

Keep your hands off the possessions of others in order that you may be more secure in the possession of your own estates. (Isocrates, Vol. I, p. 105, found in the discourse for the monarch Nicocles.)

תְּהִי יָדְךָ מֵעַל הַיְּדֵי הַזֵּה (113)
לְפָנֶיךָ - מֵעַל הַיְּדֵי הַזֵּה
בְּלֹא יָדְךָ מֵעַל הַיְּדֵי הַזֵּה

Seest thou a man diligent in his business?
he shall stand before kings;
He shall not stand before mean men. (22:29)

Compare with Amen-em-Opet:

As for the scribe who is experienced in his office,
He will find himself worthy (to be) a courtier.
(Chapter XXX.)

Both proverbs seek to emphasize that skill earns advancement, and that proficiency receives recognition. In the Egyptian passage, the reference is to a scribe who, if he be skillful, is to be honored by serving the royal court. The Hebrew proverb likewise recognizes that men of outstanding ability are to be called upon to serve the king, although his qualifications need not limit him to scribal duties.

Compare with the following cited by Pfeiffer as a parallel to the Hebrew:

The gift of a king (produces) the good work of the cupbearer. (Akkadian Proverbs, Sumerian 61.)

Brother to a king and fellow to a beggar if he be found worthy. (Indian Proverb; 40 Buddhism.)

(114) כִּי-תֵשֶׁב לְלִחוֹם אֶת-מוֹשֶׁל
בֶּן אֲדִין אֶת-אִשֶּׁר לְפָנָיָהּ
!שִׁמְךָ שֶׁבֶן בְּלִעְךָ
אִם-בִּעַל רֶשֶׁת אֲתָה!
אֶל-תִּתֵּן לְחִטָּעֵמוֹתַי
!וְהוֹא לָהֶם כֶּתֶב יָדָם!

When thou sittest to eat with a ruler,
Consider well him that is before thee;

And put a knife to thy throat,
If thou be a man given to appetite.

Be not desirous of his dainties;
Seeing they are deceitful food. (23:1-3)

Compare with Amen-em-Opet:

Do not eat bread before a noble,
Nor lay on thy mouth at first.
If thou art satisfied with false chewings,
They are a pastime for thy spittle.
Look at the cup which is before thee,
And let it serve thy needs. (Chapter XXIII.)

The subject of behavior at the royal table is again discussed, as in no. 35 above. The Hebrew calls attention to the dangers attendant upon dining with a ruler, whose motive for extending the invitation may be to secure a favor. The Egyptian passage is more concerned with the problem of etiquette and good manners in the presence of nobility. There is little similarity between the two proverbs.

(115) אֲלֹ-תִלְמַם אֶת-לֶחֶם דָּע עֵין
וְאֲלֹ-תִתְּצֵא לִמְבַעַמְתִּי!
כִּי דָמָא-שָׁעַר בְּרִפְשָׁא דְּן-הוּא
אֲכֹל וְנִשְׁתֶּה יַעֲמֵר לֵךְ
וְלִבּוֹ בֶּל-עֲמֵד!

Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil
eye,
Neither desire thou his dainties;

For as one that hath reckoned within himself, so
is he:

"Eat and drink," saith he to thee;
But his heart is not with thee. (23:6-7)

(116)

פֶּתַח - אֲכָלָה תֶּן יֶאֱכֹל
אִשְׁתִּי דַבְּרֵי תֵן עֲלֵי מִי ד:

The morsel which thou hast eaten shalt thou
vomit up,
And lose thy sweet words. (23:8)

Compare with Amen-em-Opet:

Be not greedy for the property of a poor man,
Nor hunger for his bread.
As for the property of a poor man, it (is) a
blocking to the throat,
It makes a vomiting to the gullet.
If he has obtained it by false oaths,
His heart is perverted by his belly....

(And)

The mouthful of bread (too) great thou
swallowest and vomitest up,
And art emptied of thy good.... (Chapter XI.)

The Hebrew proverbs call attention to the ill-effects of accepting the invitation of an ungenerous host. The latter by his niggardliness manifests his true character and reveals that his purpose is to secure some advantage. The whole atmosphere surrounding the meal is likely to be repulsive to the guest.

The Egyptian passage, in contrast, applies specifically to the poor. His invitation should be refused, inasmuch as its acceptance would impose an additional burden upon him. One must be aware that the desire of the poor

to seek favors may also provoke him to dishonest acts in order to provide his guest with an adequate meal.

It should be noted that the word "vomiting" appears in italics in the printed text, thus indicating the uncertainty of translation. Furthermore, the common use of an expression such as "vomit" in separate literatures does not necessarily mean there has been direct contact.

(117)

בְּאַחַד יְמֵי דְּסִילָהּ אֲחַד-תַּחְבֵּיר
 דִּי-זָבוּן לְשֹׁנָהּ חֵלְקִי!

Speak not in the ears of a fool:
For he will despise the wisdom of thy words. (23:9)

Compare with Amen-em-Opet:

Empty not thy belly to everybody,
Nor damage (thus) the regard for thee.
Spread not thy words to the common people,
Nor associate to thyself one (too) outgoing
of heart. (Chapter XXI.)

The Hebrew proverb advises against speaking and arguing with a fool. The latter, being incapable of understanding instruction, will reject it with disdain. The Egyptian proverb, on the other hand, suggests caution against excessive conversation and the disclosure of personal matters. Common knowledge of one's private affairs may be exceedingly harmful to his reputation. The Egyptian passage includes the admonition to be selective in friendship, and to reject those who are

heard to reveal the secrets of others. (See no. 31 above.)

The similarity between the two proverbs is slight indeed.

Compare with:

On matters which you would keep secret, speak to no one save when it is equally expedient for you who speak and for those who hear that the facts should not be published. (Isocrates, Vol. I, p. 17, Address to Demonius.)

Guard yourself against accusations, even if they are false; for the multitude are ignorant of the truth and look only to reputation. (Isocrates, Vol. I, p. 13, Address to Demonius.)

לֹא יִשְׁפָּט אֶת הָאָדָם כְּעֵצוֹ (118)
 כִּי יִשְׁפָּט אֶת הָאָדָם
 כְּעֵצוֹ: לֹא יִשְׁפָּט אֶת הָאָדָם

Say not: "I will do so to him as he hath done to me;
 I will render to the man according to his work."
 (24:29)

Compare with Amen-em-Opet:

O moon, establish his crime (against him)!
 So steer that we may bring the wicked man across,
 For we shall not act like him,
 Lift him up, give him thy hand;
 Leave him (in) the arms of the god;
 Fill his belly with bread of thine,
 So that he may be sated and may be ashamed.
 (Chapter II.)

The Hebrew proverb admonishes one not to be revengeful. If connected with the preceding verse, it would refer specifically to false testimony. Even the law of retaliation--an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a

tooth--was considerably modified to refer to a monetary compensation for the loss suffered.

The Egyptian passage implores the power of the moon god Thoth to turn the wicked from his way and to guard the righteous from evil. There is no similarity here with the Hebrew.

Compare also the following which Pfeiffer cites as a parallel:

Unto your opponent do no evil,
Your evildoer recompense with good;
Unto your enemy let justice be done.
Unto your oppressor....
Let him rejoice over you, ... return to him.
(Counsels of Wisdom, Akkadian Proverbs, 1, 35-40.)

Compare also:

Requite evil with kindness. (Japanese Proverb;
99 Shinto.)

An examination of the eighteen alleged parallels in this chapter reveals a number of close similarities between the Hebrew Proverbs and Amen-em-Opet (see Case nos. 101, 103, 106, 113). While in the other cases, the parallelism is fair or even poor, we cannot escape the fact that, fortuitously or otherwise, the similarities between these two collections are more striking than elsewhere.

That a definite relationship exists is the contention of many scholars. Some maintain that the similarities are due to a borrowing, or an adaptation of the Egyptian

into the Hebrew, while others feel that the Teaching of Amen-em-Opet reveals the influence of the Hebrew Scriptures.¹

Much of the reason for the conflicting opinions lies in the uncertainty on how to date Amen-em-Opet. Scholars seem to place this Egyptian collection between 1000 B. C. E. and 600 B. C. E., although even 300 B. C. E. has been suggested.² This, however, is a question which must be held in abeyance until further proof establishes the time of writing with more exactness.

Nevertheless, there are a number of obvious differences which we might consider. Unlike the Hebrew proverbs in this section which run consecutively, the cited parallels of Amen-em-Opet follow no definite pattern when examined in relation to the Hebrew. They are rather scattered throughout the thirty chapters in unrelated fashion.

It has already been mentioned that the Hebrew collection between 22:17-24:22 contains exactly thirty proverbs, and that of Amen-em-Opet thirty chapters. Assuming a parallel, we are confronted with deciding whether the Hebrew writers condensed the original material, or whether Amen-em-Opet amplified it. A

1. See foregoing footnote, p. 105.

2. See Kevin, The Wisdom of Amen-em-Opet, p. 125, for the opinion of H. O. Lange, former librarian of the Royal Library at Copenhagen.

logical deduction would point to the latter case.

Proverbial sayings, if they are to be meaningful, must be related to the daily existence of many (see foregoing, p. 9). It is obvious that the condensation of sayings, originating in one nation, for their use in another where the values and concepts are different, would render their usefulness nil. On the other hand, the presentation of ideas growing out of one society, but amplified, adapted and related to the specific needs of another, could enhance their meaning.

In comparing the proverbs of these two collections, we need note that Oesterley holds to "the uniqueness of Amen-em-Opet's book among the Egyptian writings."¹ Likewise Budge contends that "the teaching of Amen-em-Apt is different from the teaching of every other Egyptian sage known to us, and reveals an aspect of the religion and morality of the Egyptians that is wanting in all the other Moral Papyri."²

On the other hand, the references which have been made to passages in the Torah indicate whence many of the biblical proverbs sprang. Proverbs dealing with the attitude toward the poor (see above Case 106), and the sanctity of property rights (Case 112), in this chapter,

1. Oesterley, Wisdom of Egypt, p. 105.

2. Budge, Teaching of Amen-em-Apt, p. 100.

appear as such instances of biblical influence. The concept of God in the Hebrew collection, in contrast to the Egyptian wisdom literature, is the same throughout Proverbs and is in the spirit of the entire Bible.

In any event, the question concerning the nature of this relationship need await a more accurate dating of the writing of Amen-em-Opet.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

The material presented in the preceding chapters has, I think, shown clearly how broad and universalistic in nature is the vast majority of proverbial sayings. The Book of Proverbs contains, for instance, sayings which can appeal to men everywhere and at all times, which are neither restrictive nor nationalistic in character. In fact, the word "Israel" is not even mentioned.

A comparison of the Hebrew proverbs with the wisdom literature of Egypt, Babylonia and Assyria also reveals the presence of many sayings which are, in some manner or another, alike. That these sayings are neither identical nor parallel has, I believe, been shown quite conclusively. One hundred and eighteen cases of alleged parallels between the Book of Proverbs and ancient Near Eastern texts have been examined for content and style, in order to ascertain the possibility of literary influence. In most cases, proverbial sayings from other literatures have been introduced for further comparison.

The result of this research has proved that there is absolutely no substantiation to the claim of parallelism or direct borrowing. The only possible exception to this is the Instruction of Amen-em-Opet, where it must again be pointed out that too much uncertainty exists as to correct dating and rendering of text. In any case, the fact that a phrase or a word may have been found common to

the proverbial expressions of several nations does not render an identical meaning to the sayings. Seen in the light of a complete passage, the similarities disappear within totally different contexts.

The possibility of borrowing is to be ruled out, or at least reduced to the general influence which ideas and literature have upon people everywhere. That thoughts and ideas know no boundaries and are transmitted whenever people meet is an accepted theory. Question as we may the resemblance of so many proverbial expressions among nations, the stories of man's earliest travels and development of language are lost to us.

An examination of the divisions within the Book of Proverbs and the texts of the extra-biblical literature reveals the lack of any relationship between them. The latter group consists of fragments of texts or documents with whole sections of lines oftentimes obliterated and lost. The former is a composite work, carefully edited, as the Talmud states, by the men of Hezekiah, and arranged under eight principal divisions, each having "wisdom" for their common theme.

The following is a broad outline of this division of Proverbs:

I. THE APPEAL OF WISDOM, Chapters 1 to 9, which include a series of hortatory addresses by a father or

teacher to his son or pupil, generally introduced by the salutation, "My son," and indicating the blessings which wisdom confers upon its followers.

II. FIRST COLLECTION, 10:1 to 22:16, consisting of 375 verses.¹ It has a separate title, "The Proverbs of Solomon," and is considered the main section of the Book, although no general principle of classification is apparent.

III. SECOND COLLECTION, 22:17 to 24:22, which contains a collection of instructive aphorisms presented in intimate fashion by the teacher to his pupils.

IV. THIRD COLLECTION, 24:23-34, introduced by the title, "These also are sayings of the wise," and in the nature of an appendix to the preceding collection.

V. FOURTH COLLECTION, Chapters 25 to 29, which contain the superscription, "These also are proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied out." The maxims of this section generally teach a truth by comparison with some familiar object as, for example, 25:11:

A word fitly spoken
Is like apples of gold in settings of silver.

VI. THE WORDS OF AGUR THE SON OF JAKEH, Chapter 30.
A short collection including several "numerical" proverbs as, for example, 30:18:

1. It is interesting that the numerical value of the Hebrew letters comprising the name דוד Solomon is also 375.

There are three things which are too
wonderful for me,
Yea, four which I know not...

VII. THE WORDS OF KING LEMUEL, Chapter 31:1-9.

Another short collection of homely proverbs, serving as a guide for the conduct of kings and men in authority.

VIII. THE IDEAL WIFE, Chapter 31:10-31. This section is an acrostic with each verse beginning with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet. It treats of the virtues of the perfect wife and housekeeper.

The above division is different from anything that may be found in the extra-biblical wisdom literature, including Amen-em-Opet. The latter, as was pointed out, contains thirty chapters; these vary in length from a few lines to a column and a half on the papyrus. Budge numbers the lines of the text so that, including the colophon, there are 551.¹ Griffith contends, "The lines run throughout in couplets; the few apparent exceptions seem to be due to the accidental omission of a line or to writing two lines in one or even one in two. The pairs of lines can often be grouped into larger divisions. The commonest of these is the quatrain, but groups of six, eight, or more lines seem also to occur."² It should also

1. Budge, Teaching of Amen-em-Opet, translation of text.

2. Griffith, "The Teaching of Amenophis," p. 227.

be noted that of the thirty chapters, thirteen are omitted by Wilson in his translation in Ancient Near Eastern Texts, indicating that much of Amen-em-Opet is in no way similar to the biblical Proverbs (see, for example, Amen-em-Opet, Chapter XV, dealing with the god Thoth and the Scribe; XXIX, crossing the river by ferryboat).

Concerning the ancient Near Eastern texts, the loss or indiscernibility of many passages precludes an accurate reading. See cases 19, 49, 66 and 109 herein, where this is quite apparent. Very often the translator has had to venture a guess as to the possible meaning of a key word in order to make the sentence comprehensible. This is shown by the large number of italics, brackets and squares used. Many scholars have admitted the difficulty of a correct translation of the texts because of mutilated lines or unknown words. Professor Griffith says the following about the text of Amen-em-Opet: "... the spelling of words is inexact and unetymological to a degree unusual even in such late texts; and, lastly, more than one clear instance of scribal error in this portion of the papyrus, for which there exists the parallel text of the Turin tablet, itself very faulty, shows that the student has to reckon with the probability of many errors elsewhere."¹

1. Griffith, F. L., "The Teaching of Amenophis the Son of Khsakht," Journal of Egyptian Archeology, London, Vol. XII, p. 193.

Furthermore, the passages cited as parallel to Proverbs are not part of any one specific work, but of a considerable number of documents. This method of selectivity of passages very considerably invalidates the comparison. One might likewise gather any number of passages from the religious literature of the Far East and present an effective claim of parallelism. If, on the other hand, the alleged parallels of the Near Eastern texts are the best which could be selected, what then can be said for the remaining passages, which represent the greater part of the literary wealth and which contain no similarities to Proverbs whatsoever?

Whenever independent collections of literature are compared, it is only natural to assume that a number of points of similarity will appear. We find examples of similarities in the laws of the Pentateuch and the Code of Hammurabi, a Babylonian king who lived about 2300 B. C. E. Compare, for example, the principles of retaliation and restitution in both codes:

If a man destroy the eye of another man, they shall destroy his eye. If one break a man's bone, they shall break his bone. If a man knock out a tooth of a man of his own rank, they shall knock out his tooth. (Hammurabi Code, Sections 196, 197, 200.)¹

1. Harper, Robert Francis, The Code of Hammurabi King of Babylon (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1904). See text of translations.

But if any harm follow, then thou shalt give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe. (Exodus 21:23-25.)

T. J. Meek contends, "There must be some connection between the two codes, but the connection is not such as to indicate borrowing. No one today argues that. Whatever borrowing there was came indirectly, either through common inheritance or through Canaanite influence, or much more likely through both ways."¹ Another scholar, S. A. Cook, comparing the similarities in the area of business and trade states, "It is an extremely significant fact that the Hebrew terminology of trade in the Old Testament contains comparatively few words of Babylonian or Assyrian origin, and these, in turn, are to be found chiefly in the exilic and post-exilic writings."²

In collecting the sayings of other religions, I noticed that there were a number of similarities to verses in Proverbs for which the Egyptian, Akkadian and Aramaic texts have no parallels. (See case 91.) Interestingly, there is the opinion of one scholar who claims, "In the biblical tradition, there is no evidence of receiving any values of wisdom from Egypt or Babylonia, and no mention is made of any Egyptian or Babylonian sage. But against this, there are references of the tie with the wisdom

1. Meek, Theophile James, Hebrew Origins (Harper & Brothers, New York, 1936), p. 63.
2. Cook, Stanley A., The Laws of Moses and the Code of Hammurabi (Adam & Charles Black, London, 1903), p. 207.

of 'B'nai Kedem' (the Children of the East)."¹

That there exist among the proverbial expressions of the nations many elements of similarity is obvious. How may this be explained? The answer, I believe, is to be found in the common feeling of men everywhere. The yearning heart and the eloquent tongue have fashioned expressions by which man might more effectively convey his thoughts. Man, searching the universe for the knowledge of God and the fulfillment of life's purpose, developed in time a vocabulary of sayings by which he transmitted and imparted his experiences on how best to live. A comparison of the expressions which contain the central core of all religion, namely, the Golden Rule, shows an amazing degree of similarity, and man's adaptability to nature and to his fellow man. It should be quite evident that from the beginning of his social existence as a group member he had to establish for himself customs and laws as a guide to conduct. These he transmitted to his children in pithy sayings, in apothegms, in hortatory expressions, in whatever form he thought best for instruction and memory. Over and over again, his messages would advise honesty, justice and tolerance, as well as faith and trust in God. Is it not likely, therefore,

1. Kaufman, Ezekiel, Toldoth Ha-Emunah Ha-Yisra-alit, (Dvir Co., Ltd., Tel Aviv, 1945), Vol. II, p. 634.

that independent collections of sayings and proverbs might be developed, which, when compared, would reveal close similarities? Is it not conceivable that the exhortations and instructions of a father to his son, or of a teacher to his pupil, to be honest, industrious and faithful, might be the same whether in Israel, Egypt or China?

It is becoming increasingly clear that the Book of Proverbs is, in addition to being a part of the common literary inheritance of all peoples, a product of Israel's creativity and genius, and that the Israelites found in the proverb a wonderful way to know wisdom and instruction, and to comprehend the words of understanding. (1:2)

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