

דרישה DRISHA

Winter Week of Learning 2015
Hokhma and Sophia: Extremes Meet? - Hindy Najman

Some questions to think about:

- How is Wisdom depicted in these texts?
- What is the relationship between God and Wisdom?
- What is the relationship between Torah and Wisdom?
- What is the relationship between Wisdom and Prophecy?
- How do you see female characterization of Wisdom?
- What role does pedagogy and exemplarity play in Wisdom literature?

Texts for Chavruta time:

Text 1: Proverbs chapter 8:

Prov. 8:1 It is Wisdom calling, Understanding raising her voice.

Prov. 8:2 She takes her stand at the topmost heights, By the wayside, at the crossroads,

Prov. 8:3 Near the gates at the city entrance; At the entryways, she shouts,

Prov. 8:4 "O men, I call to you; My cry is to all mankind.

Prov. 8:5 O simple ones, learn shrewdness; O dullards, instruct your minds.

Prov. 8:6 Listen, for I speak noble things; Uprightness comes from my lips;

Prov. 8:7 My mouth utters truth; Wickedness is abhorrent to my lips.

Prov. 8:8 All my words are just, None of them perverse or crooked;

Prov. 8:9 All are straightforward to the intelligent man, And right to those who have attained knowledge.

Prov. 8:10 Accept my discipline rather than silver, Knowledge rather than choice gold.

Prov. 8:11 For wisdom is better than rubies; No goods can equal her.

Prov. 8:12 "I, Wisdom, live with Prudence; I attain knowledge and foresight.

Prov. 8:13 To fear the LORD is to hate evil; I hate pride, arrogance, the evil way, And duplicity in speech.

Prov. 8:14 Mine are counsel and resourcefulness; I am understanding; courage is mine.

Prov. 8:15 Through me kings reign And rulers decree just laws;

Prov. 8:16 Through me princes rule, Great men and all the righteous judges.

Prov. 8:17 Those who love me I love, And those who seek me will find me.

Prov. 8:18 Riches and honor belong to me, Enduring wealth and success.

Prov. 8:19 My fruit is better than gold, fine gold, And my produce better than choice silver.

Prov. 8:20 I walk on the way of righteousness, On the paths of justice.

Prov. 8:21 I endow those who love me with substance; I will fill their treasuries.

Prov. 8:22 "The LORD created me at the beginning of His course As the first of His works of old.

Prov. 8:23 In the distant past I was fashioned, At the beginning, at the origin of earth.

Prov. 8:24 There was still no deep when I was brought forth, No springs rich in water;

Prov. 8:25 Before [the foundation of] the mountains were sunk, Before the hills I was born.

Prov. 8:26 He had not yet made earth and fields, Or the world's first clumps of clay.

Prov. 8:27 I was there when He set the heavens into place; When He fixed the horizon upon the deep;

Prov. 8:28 When He made the heavens above firm, And the fountains of the deep gushed forth;

Prov. 8:29 When He assigned the sea its limits, So that its waters never transgress His command;
When He fixed the foundations of the earth,

Prov. 8:30 I was with Him as a confidant, A source of delight every day, Rejoicing before Him at all times,

Prov. 8:31 Rejoicing in His inhabited world, Finding delight with mankind.

Prov. 8:32 Now, sons, listen to me; Happy are they who keep my ways.

Prov. 8:33 Heed discipline and become wise; Do not spurn it.

Prov. 8:34 Happy is the man who listens to me, Coming early to my gates each day, Waiting outside my doors.

Prov. 8:35 For he who finds me finds life And obtains favor from the LORD.

Prov. 8:36 But he who misses me destroys himself; All who hate me love death.”

Text 2: Proverbs 31

Prov. 31:1 The words of Lemuel, king of Massa, with which his mother admonished him:

Prov. 31:2 No, my son! No, O son of my womb! No, O son of my vows!

Prov. 31:3 Do not give your strength to women, Your vigor, to those who destroy kings.

Prov. 31:4 Wine is not for kings, O Lemuel; Not for kings to drink, Nor any strong drink for princes,

Prov. 31:5 Lest they drink and forget what has been ordained, And infringe on the rights of the poor.

Prov. 31:6 Give strong drink to the hapless And wine to the embittered.

Prov. 31:7 Let them drink and forget their poverty, And put their troubles out of mind.

Prov. 31:8 Speak up for the dumb, For the rights of all the unfortunate.

Prov. 31:9 Speak up, judge righteously, Champion the poor and the needy.

Prov. 31:10 What a rare find is a capable wife! Her worth is far beyond that of rubies.

Prov. 31:11 Her husband puts his confidence in her, And lacks no good thing.

Prov. 31:12 She is good to him, never bad, All the days of her life.

Prov. 31:13 She looks for wool and flax, And sets her hand to them with a will.

Prov. 31:14 She is like a merchant fleet, Bringing her food from afar.

Prov. 31:15 She rises while it is still night, And supplies provisions for her household, The daily fare of her maids.

Prov. 31:16 She sets her mind on an estate and acquires it; She plants a vineyard by her own labors.

Prov. 31:17 She girds herself with strength, And performs her tasks with vigor.

Prov. 31:18 She sees that her business thrives; Her lamp never goes out at night.

Prov. 31:19 She sets her hand to the distaff; Her fingers work the spindle.

Prov. 31:20 She gives generously to the poor; Her hands are stretched out to the needy.

Prov. 31:21 She is not worried for her household because of snow, For her whole household is dressed in crimson.

Prov. 31:22 She makes covers for herself; Her clothing is linen and purple.

Prov. 31:23 Her husband is prominent in the gates, As he sits among the elders of the land.

Prov. 31:24 She makes cloth and sells it, And offers a girdle to the merchant.

Prov. 31:25 She is clothed with strength and splendor; She looks to the future cheerfully.

Prov. 31:26 Her mouth is full of wisdom, Her tongue with kindly teaching.

Prov. 31:27 She oversees the activities of her household And never eats the bread of idleness.

Prov. 31:28 Her children declare her happy; Her husband praises her,

Prov. 31:29 “Many women have done well, But you surpass them all.”

Prov. 31:30 Grace is deceptive, Beauty is illusory; It is for her fear of the LORD That a woman is to be praised.

Prov. 31:31 Extol her for the fruit of her hand, And let her works praise her in the gates.

Text 3: Wisdom of Solomon 7

- Wis. 7:1 I myself also am mortal like everyone,
and a descendant of the first-formed individual born on earth,
and in the womb of a mother I was molded into flesh,
- Wis. 7:2 within the period of ten months being compacted of blood,
from the seed of man and the pleasure that accompanies intercourse.
- Wis. 7:3 And I myself, when I was born, drew in the common air
and fell upon the kindred earth,
with the same first sound crying like everyone.
- Wis. 7:4 In swaddling clothes I was nursed, and with care.
- Wis. 7:5 For no king has had a different beginning of existence,
- Wis. 7:6 but there is for all one entrance into life and the same way out.
- Wis. 7:7 Therefore I prayed, and understanding was given to me;
I called on God, and a spirit of wisdom came to me.
- Wis. 7:8 I preferred her to scepters and thrones,
and wealth I considered nothing in comparison with her.
- Wis. 7:9 Neither did I compare any priceless gem to her,
because all gold in her sight is a little sand,
and silver will be counted as clay before her.
- Wis. 7:10 I loved her more than health and beauty
and chose to have her rather than light,
because the radiance from her never rests.
- Wis. 7:11 But all good things came to me together with her
and in her hands uncounted wealth.
- Wis. 7:12 I rejoiced in them all because wisdom leads them,
but I did not know that she was their mother.
- Wis. 7:13 I learned without guile, and I impart without grudging;
I do not hide her wealth,
- Wis. 7:14 for it is an unfailing treasure for human beings;
those who get it obtain friendship with God,
commended for the gifts that come from instruction.
- Wis. 7:15 May God grant to me to speak with judgment
and to think thoughts worthy of what has been given to me,
because he himself is the guide even of wisdom
and the corrector of the wise.
- Wis. 7:16 For both we and our words are in his hand,
both all understanding and skill in crafts.
- Wis. 7:17 For he himself gave me an unerring knowledge of the things that exist,
to know the constitution of the world and the activity of the elements,
- Wis. 7:18 the beginning and end and middle of times,
the alterations of the solstices and the changes of the seasons,
- Wis. 7:19 the cycles of the year and the constellations of the stars,
- Wis. 7:20 the natures of animals and the tempers of wild animals,
the violent forces of spirits and the thoughts of human beings,
the varieties of plants and the powers of roots,
- Wis. 7:21 and all things, both what is secret and what is manifest, I learned,
- Wis. 7:22 for she that is the fashioner of all things taught me, namely^b wisdom.
For there is in her a spirit that is intelligent, holy,
unique, of many parts, subtle,
free-moving, lucid, unpolluted,
distinct, invulnerable, loving the good, sharp,

Wis. 7:23 unhindered, beneficent, loving towards humanity,
firm, unfailing, free from care,
all-powerful, all-surveying
and penetrating all spirits
that are intelligent, pure, most subtle.

Wis. 7:24 For wisdom moves more freely than any movement;
she pervades and penetrates all things because of her pureness.

Wis. 7:25 For she is a breath of the power of God
and an emanation of the pure glory of the Almighty;
therefore nothing defiled gains entrance into her.

Wis. 7:26 For she is a reflection of eternal light
and a spotless mirror of the activity of God
and an image of his goodness.

Wis. 7:27 Although she is one, she can do all things,
and while remaining in herself, she renews all things,
and in every generation she passes into holy souls
and makes them friends of God and prophets;

Wis. 7:28 for God loves nothing except the person who lives with wisdom,

Wis. 7:29 for she is more beautiful than the sun
and above every constellation of stars.

Compared with the light, she is found to be more radiant;

Wis. 7:30 for this is succeeded by the night,
but against wisdom wickedness does not prevail.

Text 4: Job 38

Job 38:1 Then the LORD replied to Job out of the tempest and said:

Job 38:2 Who is this who darkens counsel, Speaking without knowledge?

Job 38:3 Gird your loins like a man; I will ask and you will inform Me.

Job 38:4 Where were you when I laid the earth's foundations? Speak if you have understanding.

Job 38:5 Do you know who fixed its dimensions Or who measured it with a line?

Job 38:6 Onto what were its bases sunk? Who set its cornerstone

Job 38:7 When the morning stars sang together And all the divine beings shouted for joy?

Job 38:8 Who closed the sea behind doors When it gushed forth out of the womb,

Job 38:9 When I clothed it in clouds, Swaddled it in dense clouds,

Job 38:10 When I made breakers My limit for it, And set up its bar and doors,

Job 38:11 And said, "You may come so far and no farther; Here your surging waves will stop"?

Job 38:12 Have you ever commanded the day to break, Assigned the dawn its place,

Job 38:13 So that it seizes the corners of the earth And shakes the wicked out of it?

Job 38:14 It changes like clay under the seal Till its hues are fixed like those of a garment.

Job 38:15 Their light is withheld from the wicked, And the upraised arm is broken.

Job 38:16 Have you penetrated to the sources of the sea, Or walked in the recesses of the deep?

Job 38:17 Have the gates of death been disclosed to you? Have you seen the gates of deep darkness?

Job 38:18 Have you surveyed the expanses of the earth? If you know of these — tell Me.

Job 38:19 Which path leads to where light dwells, And where is the place of darkness,

Job 38:20 That you may take it to its domain And know the way to its home?

Job 38:21 Surely you know, for you were born then, And the number of your years is many!

Job 38:22 Have you penetrated the vaults of snow, Seen the vaults of hail,

Job 38:23 Which I have put aside for a time of adversity, For a day of war and battle?

Job 38:24 By what path is the west wind dispersed, The east wind scattered over the earth?

Job 38:25 Who cut a channel for the torrents And a path for the thunderstorms,

Job 38:26 To rain down on uninhabited land, On the wilderness where no man is,
Job 38:27 To saturate the desolate wasteland, And make the crop of grass sprout forth?
Job 38:28 Does the rain have a father? Who begot the dewdrops?
Job 38:29 From whose belly came forth the ice? Who gave birth to the frost of heaven?
Job 38:30 Water congeals like stone, And the surface of the deep compacts.
Job 38:31 Can you tie cords to Pleiades Or undo the reins of Orion?
Job 38:32 Can you lead out Mazzaroth in its season, Conduct the Bear with her sons?
Job 38:33 Do you know the laws of heaven Or impose its authority on earth?
Job 38:34 Can you send up an order to the clouds For an abundance of water to cover you?
Job 38:35 Can you dispatch the lightning on a mission And have it answer you, "I am ready"?
Job 38:36 Who put wisdom in the hidden parts? Who gave understanding to the mind?
Job 38:37 Who is wise enough to give an account of the heavens? Who can tilt the bottles of the sky,
Job 38:38 Whereupon the earth melts into a mass, And its clods stick together.
Job 38:39 Can you hunt prey for the lion, And satisfy the appetite of the king of beasts?
Job 38:40 They crouch in their dens, Lie in ambush in their lairs.
Job 38:41 Who provides food for the raven When his young cry out to God And wander about without food?

Text 5: Sirach 3

Sir. 3:1 Listen to a father's reproof, children,
 and act accordingly so that you may be safe.
Sir. 3:2 For the Lord has glorified father over children,
 and he has confirmed a mother's judgment over sons.
Sir. 3:3 He who honors father will atone for sins,
Sir. 3:4 and like one who lays up treasure is he who glorifies his mother.
Sir. 3:5 He who honors father will be gladdened by children,
 and in the day of his prayer he will be heard.
Sir. 3:6 He who glorifies father will prolong his days,
 and he who listens to the Lord will give rest to his mother.
Sir. 3:7 [*He who fears the Lord will honor his father,*]
 and ^bamong those who begot him he will act as a slave to masters^b.
Sir. 3:8 By deed and word honor your father
 so that a blessing from him might come upon you.
Sir. 3:9 For a father's blessing supports children's houses,
 but a mother's curse uproots foundations.
Sir. 3:10 Do not glorify yourself by your father's disgrace,
 for you have no glory in a father's disgrace.
Sir. 3:11 For a person's repute comes from his father's honor,
 and a mother in ill repute is a reproach to children.
Sir. 3:12 Child, support your father in old age,
 and do not grieve him during his life.
Sir. 3:13 But if he fails in comprehension, excuse him,
 and do not dishonor him in the fullness of your strength.
Sir. 3:14 For charity for a father will not be forgotten,
 and it will be credited to you against sins.
Sir. 3:15 In a day of affliction it will be remembered of you;
 as fair weather upon frost, so will your sins be dissolved.
Sir. 3:16 Like a blasphemer is the one who neglects a father,
 and cursed by the Lord is the one who angers his mother.
Sir. 3:17 Child, in gentleness conduct your affairs,

- and you will be loved more than a person who gives.
- Sir. 3:18 The greater you are, the more you should humble yourself,
and before the Lord you will find favor.
- [19 *Many are lofty and of repute,*
[but to the meek he reveals his mysteries,]
- Sir. 3:20 because great is the dominance of the Lord
and by the humble he is glorified.
- Sir. 3:21 Things too difficult for you do not seek,
and things too strong for you do not scrutinize.
- Sir. 3:22 The things that have been prescribed for you, think about these,
for you have no need of hidden matters.
- Sir. 3:23 With matters greater than your affairs do not meddle,
for things beyond human understanding have been shown to you.
- Sir. 3:24 For their presumption has led many astray,
and their evil fancy has diminished their understanding.
- [25 *If you have no pupils, you will be at a loss for light,*
[and when you want for knowledge, do not profess it.]
- Sir. 3:26 A hard heart will fare badly at the end,
and he who loves danger will perish in it.
- Sir. 3:27 A hard heart will be weighed down by troubles,
and the sinner will add sin to sins.
- Sir. 3:28 For the misery of the arrogant there is no healing,
because a plant of wickedness has taken root in him.
- Sir. 3:29 The heart of the intelligent will think of an illustration,
and a hearer's ear is the desire of the wise.
- Sir. 3:30 A blazing fire water will extinguish,
and charity will atone for sins.
- Sir. 3:31 He who repays favors gives thought to what comes after,
and at the moment of a fall he will find support.

Text 6: Sirach 24

- Sir. 24:1 Wisdom will praise her soul,
and in the midst of her people she will boast.
- Sir. 24:2 In an assembly of the Most High she will open her mouth,
and before his power she will boast.
- Sir. 24:3 "I came forth from the mouth of the Most High,
and like a mist I covered earth.
- Sir. 24:4 I encamped in the heights,
and my throne was in a pillar of cloud.
- Sir. 24:5 A circle of sky I encircled alone,
and in the deep of abysses I walked.
- Sir. 24:6 In the waves of the sea and in all the earth
and in every people and nation I led.
- Sir. 24:7 With all these I sought repose,
and in whose inheritance I would settle.
- Sir. 24:8 "Then the creator of all commanded me,
and he who created me put down my tent
and said, 'Encamp in Iakob,
and in Israel let your inheritance be.'
- Sir. 24:9 Before the age, from the beginning, he created me,
and until the age I will never fail.

Sir. 24:10 In a holy tent I ministered before him,
and thus in Sion I was firmly set.

Sir. 24:11 In a beloved city as well he put me down,
and in Ierousalem was my authority.

Sir. 24:12 And I took root among a glorified people,
in the portion of the Lord is my inheritance.

Sir. 24:13 “Like a cedar I was raised up in Lebanon,
and like a cypress in the mountains of Aermom.

Sir. 24:14 Like a palm I was raised up in Aiggada,
and like rosebushes in Iericho,
like a good-looking olive tree in a plain,
and I was raised up like a plane tree.

Sir. 24:15 Like cinnamon and camel’s thorn for spices,
and like choice myrrh I gave forth a fragrance,
like galbanum and onycha and stacte
and like the vapor of frankincense in a tent.

Sir. 24:16 I, like a terebinth, spread out my branches,
and my branches were branches of glory and grace.

Sir. 24:17 I, like a vine, budded forth favor,
and my blossoms were the fruit of glory and wealth.

[18 *I am a mother of love that is beautiful, and of reverence*
[*and of knowledge and of devout hope,*
[*and I give it together with all my children;*
[*they are ever-generating, to those who are being picked by him.*]

Sir. 24:19 “Come to me, you who desire me,
and from my produce be filled.

Sir. 24:20 For the memory of me is sweet beyond honey,
and the inheritance of me beyond a honeycomb of honey.

Sir. 24:21 Those who eat me will hunger for more,
and those who drink me will thirst for more.

Sir. 24:22 He who obeys me will not be ashamed,
and those who work with me will not sin.”

Sir. 24:23 All these things are the book of the covenant of the Most High God,
a law that Moyses commanded us,
an inheritance for the gatherings of Iakob.

[24 *Do not cease to be strong in the Lord,*
[*and cling to him so that he might strengthen you.*
[*The Lord Almighty alone is God,*
[*and there is no savior beside him.*]

Sir. 24:25 It fills wisdom like Phison
and like Tigris in days of new things.

Sir. 24:26 It supplies understanding like Euphrates
and like Jordan in days of harvest,

Sir. 24:27 It shines forth education like light,
like Geon in days of vintage.

Sir. 24:28 The first man did not complete knowing her,
and so the last one did not track her out;

Sir. 24:29 for her thought was filled from the sea,
and her counsel from the great abyss.

Sir. 24:30 And I, like a canal from a river
and a water channel, issued forth into an orchard.

- Sir. 24:31 I said, “I will water my garden,
and I will drench my flower bed.”
And look! The canal turned into a river for me,
and my river turned into a sea.
- Sir. 24:32 Still I will again make education enlighten like dawn,
and I will shine them forth to far off.
- Sir. 24:33 Still I will again pour out teaching like prophecy,
and I will leave it behind for generations of eternity.
- Sir. 24:34 See that I have not toiled for myself alone
but for all who seek it out.

Text 7: Instruction to the Meivin (4QInstruction)

4Q417 1 i (cf. Qimron, 2:148)

1 [... and] you, understanding one [...] 2 [...] to the wonderful mysteries of the God of awe you shall give attention. The principle [...] 3 [...] consider [the mystery of existence and the things] of old, why something exists, and what exists, 4 how [...] why 5 something existed, and what is to be, how [...] in all [...] deed and de[ed ...] 6 [... day] and night meditate on the mystery of existence (and) seek continuously. And then you will know truth and injustice, wisdom 7 [and folly] [...] the deed [...] in all their paths with their tasks for all eternal periods, and eternal task. 8 And then you will know the difference between good and evil according to their works [...] for the God of knowledge is the foundation of truth, and through the mystery of existence 9 he expounded its basis. And its deeds [he prepared with all w]isdom, and with all intelligence he formed it. And the dominion of its deeds 10 according to all [...] all [...] he expounded for their understanding for all its creatures, so that one would walk 11 in the nature of one understanding. And he expounded to m[an ...] and through correct understanding the secrets 12 of his plan will become known, together with how one should walk [per]fectly [in all] one’s deeds. Search these things continually, and understand [all] 13 their consequences. Then you will know of [His] glorious st[rength toge]ther with His wonderful mysteries and His mighty deeds. And you, 14 understanding one, study your actions in the history of t[ime, for] therein has the decree been engraved, and all the task decreed. 15 For engraved is that what God has decreed against all the sons of damnation, but “a Book of History has been written in his presence,” (Mal. 3:16) 16 for those who keep His word. That refers to the faculty of insight into the Book of History which He granted to mankind together with the spirit, for 17 He created him in the image of the holy ones. But he has not given it to the physical spirit, since it cannot distinguish between 18 good and evil, because of the nature of its spirit. And you, understanding son, consider the mystery of existence, and know 19 the [path] of every living being, and the way of walking that is appointed for [His] creatures. [...] 20 [Disc]ern between the great and the small. And in your counsel [...] 21 [...] your [tas]ks through the mystery of existence [...] 22 [...] of every insight [...] know. And in all [...] 23 and be continuously resolute. Do not get infected by evildoing, [... for all who get infected] 24 by it, will not be considered innocent. According to his share in it, he will be considered ev[il ... And you,] 25 wise son, understand all the mysteries concerning you, and the foundation[s ...] 26 founded on you are a[ll] their [deeds] together with the actions of [...] 27 do not go astray after your heart and after your eyes [...]