

## Introduction

### 1. Prof. Yaakov Klein, *Olam haTanach: Megillot* pp. 162-163

בכל ספרויות עמי המזרח הקדום וכן במקרא אפשר להבחין בשני סוגי חוכמה: מצד אחד קיימת החוכמה הדידאקטית-המעשית, המלמדת את האדם כיצד להתנהג בחיי היומיום, למען יצליח במעשיו ויחיה חיי אושר. לעומתה – קיימת החוכמה העיונית, ה"פילוסופית", העוסקת בשאלות שברומו של עולם, כגון בעיית הצדק האלוקי, גורל האדם ומעמדו לפני הקל, משמעות החיים והמוות וכדומה.

החוכמה המעשית, המיוצגת במקרא בעיקר על-ידי ספר משלי, לובשת בדרך כלל צורת פתגם קצר ושנון, הנישא בפי העם או החכמים. פתגם החוכמה מאפשר לאדם ללמוד מניסיונם של אחרים, ומעניק לו את הידע הדרוש לכלכל את מעשיו באופן כזה, שיימנע מטעויות ויצליח בדרכיו. צורתו הטבעית של הפתגם הוא החיווי הסתמי, האמרה, למשל: "מרשעים יצא רשע" (שמואל-א כד, יג), אך יש והוא מנוסח בצורת עצה של חכם: "אל יתהלל חגר כמפתח" (מלכים-א כ, יא)...

החוכמה המעשית דוגלת בהשקפת עולם שמרנית, חינוכית ואופטימיסטית. היא מאמינה בתורת הגמול ומבטיחה שכר טוב וחיי אושר ארוכים לצדיק ירא השמים ההולך בדרך הישרה; ולעומת זאת – היא מבטיחה עונש וגורל רע לרשע, המורד באלוקים ובוחר ללכת בדרכי הרשע. חוכמה זו מניחה סדר עולם קבוע וצודק, שנקבע על-ידי הקל, ושומה על האדם להתאים עצמו אל חוקיו כדי להבטיח את הצלחתו בחיים.

החוכמה העיונית, ה"פילוסופית", המיוצגת במקרא בעיקר על-ידי ספר איוב, עוסקת, לעומת החוכמה המעשית, בשאלות שברומו של עולם: מה משמעות חיי האדם עלי אדמות, ומה מעמדו לפני אלוקים? האם קיים סדר עולם צודק, שבו מקבל הצדיק את שכרו והרשע – את עונשו? ... ספרות החוכמה העיונית היא ביקורתית וראדיקאלית ביחס לאמונות המסורתיות...

ספרות החוכמה העיונית שונה מספרות החוכמה המעשית גם בצורותיה הספרותיות. לעומת הפתגמים הבודדים ועצות החוכמה הקצרות של החוכמה המעשית, מכילים ספר איוב ומקבילותיו המסופוטאמיות נאומים ארוכים, בעלי מבנה הגיוני ומחושב, מונולוגים ודיאלוגים...

In all of the literatures of the ancient eastern nations, as well as Tanach, one can discern two types of wisdom: On one hand is didactic-practical wisdom which teaches a person how to live daily life so that his deeds succeed and he lives a life of *osher*. Opposite that is analytic, "philosophical" wisdom, which deals with questions at the height of the world, like the problem of Divine justice, a person's lot and his position before Gd, the meaning of life and death, and the like. Practical wisdom, which is represented in Tanach primarily by the book of Mishlei, generally wears the form of a short, pithy saying, borne in the mouth of the nation or the sages. Wise sayings enable a person to learn from the experience of others, and grant him the knowledge necessary to guide his actions in such ways that will prevent error and bring success. The natural form of the saying is a general declaration like Shemuel I 24:13 "From the wicked emerges wickedness," but sometimes it is expressed as a sage's advice, like Melachim I 20:11, "The one who girds his sword should not be praised like the one who has wielded it."...

Practical wisdom champions a worldview that is conservative, educational and optimistic. It believes in the doctrine of reward and promises good reward and a long life of *osher* to the righteous person who reveres Heaven and walks a straight path. On the other hand, it promises punishment and a bad lot for the wicked, who rebels against Gd and chooses to walk a wicked path. This wisdom assumes a fixed and just order to the world, established by Gd, and it is placed upon a person to align himself with those rules in order to earn success in life.

Analytic, "philosophical" wisdom, represented in Tanach primarily by the book of Iyov, deals – in contrast to practical wisdom – with questions at the height of the world: What is the meaning of a person's life on earth? What is his position before Gd? Is there a just order to the world, such that the righteous receives his reward and the wicked his punishment?... The literature of analytic wisdom is critical and radical when compared with traditional beliefs...

The literature of analytic wisdom is different from the literature of practical wisdom in its literary forms, too. As opposed to the individual sayings and brief wise advice of practical wisdom, the book of Iyov and its Mesopotamian analogues include long speeches, with philosophical, planned structure, monologues and dialogues...

### 2. Prof. Avigdor Hurvitz, *Mikra l'Yisrael: Mishlei* pg. 51

לפי ההגדרה הרחבה של גרהרד פון-ראד, ספרות החכמה מתאפיינת בידע מעשי של חוקי החיים והעולם המתבסס על הניסיון, הווי אומר, סמכות החכם וסמכות ספרות החכמה נובעות לא מהתגלות אלוקית אלא מניסיוני האישי של החכם או מניסיון קיבוצי של כלל העם שהחכם מייצג ומוסר.

In the broad definition of Gerhard von Rad, Wisdom Literature is characterized by practical knowledge of the laws of life and the world, based on experience. Meaning, the authority of the sage and the authority of Wisdom Literature springs not from Divine revelation but from the sage's personal experience or the collective experience of the community which the sage presents and transmits.

3. The style of Mishlei
  - Advice on how to live life
  - Optimistic about human nature (Mishlei 13:20-21)
  - Good behaviour is rewarded, bad behaviour leads to suffering (ibid.)
  - Pithy statements that are observation or instruction (Mishlei 13:13, 3:1)
4. Kohelet's subversion of Mishlei's style
  - Different Content
    - Pessimistic about human nature – 7:20
    - Wisdom isn't so wonderful – 2:15
    - Human injustice – 3:16
    - Apparent Divine injustice – 7:15
  - Similar Structure
    - Observations – 9:2
    - Practical instructions – 7:16
    - Collections of individual statements – Chapter 7
5. Iyov's narratives
  - Eliphaz – Reward and punishment – Iyov 22:23-28
  - Bildad – It's actually good for you – Iyov 8:6-7
  - Tzophar – The Divine plan – Iyov 11:7-9

6. Prof. Carol Newsom, *The Book of Job: A Contest of Moral Imaginations*, pp. 118-125

The persuasive power of an iconic narrative does not derive from a simple empiricism. Although it cannot be wholly disconfirmed by experience and remain plausible, the story remains surprisingly resilient in the face of a mixture of conforming and nonconforming experience...

Consider popular business literature in which the story is told, over and over, of the individual who turns a creative idea into a flourishing business. This is the iconic narrative of entrepreneurial capitalism. Everyone knows that the large majority of new businesses fail, yet the story does not lose its power... That story is seen as expressing the nature and essence of an entrepreneurial society with all the static cleared away...

An anecdote about the success of the wicked cannot explain the reality of this world of values, which is experienced as such every day. Such things may happen, but they are perceived as anomalies, lacking explanatory power. But the story of the wicked overtaken by calamity, like the story of the restoration of the good person, rings true because it is consonant with the foundational values of the society.

7. Kohelet: The anti-narrative

- Joy                    2:2 and 8:15 vs 7:3
- Wisdom             2:13 and 7:12 vs 6:8

### Authorship

8. Prof. Robert Gordis, *Koheleth: the man and his world*, pp. 71-73

At the end of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth, critical students of the book by and large tended to regard the work as consisting of an original nucleus of heterodox, skeptical material, which had then been extensively glossed by readers in an effort to make it palatable to the orthodox and thus find a place for it in the canon. Even this more moderate approach, however, bristles with difficulties that have been generally ignored. In the entire book, which consists of only 222 verses, Jastrow assumes 120 interpolations...

None of these scholars seeks to explain why the book was deemed worthy of this effort to "legitimize" it when it could so easily have been suppressed. There were many other works written in this period, now known as the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, all attributed to ancient worthies, which were far less objectionable to the alleged orthodox sentiment of the time. If it was clear that a given book had been compiled after prophecy had ceased in Israel, or if it contradicted

traditional Halachah, or if it contained apocalyptic visions of "last things" or other doctrines upon which normative Judaism frowned, no elaborate effort was undertaken to counteract its heterodox features by glosses and interpolations as is assumed for *Koheleth*. Instead, such works were withdrawn by the authorities from public use by being stored away in the *genizah* and thus consigned to oblivion and ultimate destruction...

Moreover the theory of tendentious additions to *Koheleth* raises extensive problems of chronology. It is difficult to believe that in the ancient Orient, where time moved slowly and changes were few, so many steps in the process could have been consummated in a comparatively short time...

Problems such as these impelled so consistent an advocate of the source analysis school as Keunin to confess in the heyday of the Documentary Hypothesis: "It may be hard to demonstrate the unity of *Koheleth*; but it is even harder to deny it." Twentieth century Biblical scholarship is increasingly motivated by a general reaction against the extremes of nineteenth century Higher Criticism in general. In growing measure it is being recognized that the atomization of biblical books is an unnecessary hypothesis, and by that token untrue. For though unconscionably neglected in biblical studies, William of Ockham's principle remains fundamental to the scientific method: *entia non sunt multiplicanda praeter necessitatum* [entities must not be multiplied more than necessary - MT]. In the study of *Koheleth*, the last few decades have introduced a growing recognition among scholars of its basic unity...

#### 9. Talmud, Megillah 7a (citing Tosefta Yadayim 2:14)

רבי שמעון בן מנסיא אומר: קהלת אינו מטמא את הידים מפני שהכמתו של שלמה היא...

Rabbi Shimon ben Menasya said: *Kohelet* does not render hands *tamei*, for it is [merely] Solomon's wisdom...

#### 10. Talmud, Bava Batra 14b

סידרן של כתובים רות וספר תהלים ואיוב ומשלי קהלת שיר השירים וקנינות דניאל ומגילת אסתר עזרא ודברי הימים

The order of Ketuvim is: Ruth, Tehillim, Iyov, Mishlei, *Kohelet*, Shir haShirim, Kinot, Daniel, Esther, Ezra, Divrei haYamim.

#### 11. Talmud, Bava Batra 15a

חזקיה וסיעתו כתבו (ימש"ק סימן) ישעיה משלי שיר השירים וקהלת

Chizkiyah and his associates wrote Yeshayah, Mishlei, Shir haShirim and *Kohelet*.

#### 12. Shlomo?

- *Kohelet* 1:1
- Wisdom *Kohelet* 1:16 and *Melachim* I 3:12, *Melachim* I 5:9-11
- Women *Kohelet* 7:28 and *Melachim* I 11:3
- Wealth *Kohelet* 2:4-9 and *Melachim* I 5, *Melachim* I 10
- Writing *Kohelet* 12:9-10 and *Melachim* I 5:12-14

#### 13. An interesting question

*Kohelet* 1:16, 2:9