

Solomon the Wise A Rabbinic View

A Rabbinic teaching asserts that Solomon wrote Song of Songs in his youth, Proverbs in middle age, and Ecclesiastes towards the end of his life (Midrash Shir ha-Shirim, i. I, § 10)

(From Legends of the Jews by Louis Ginzburg)

HIS WISDOM

But Solomon's wealth and pomp were as naught in comparison with his wisdom. When God appeared to him in Gibeon, in a dream by night, and gave him leave to ask what he would, a grace accorded to none beside except King Ahaz of Judah, and promised only to the Messiah in time to come, (17) Solomon chose wisdom, knowing that wisdom once in his possession, all else would come of itself. (18) His wisdom, the Scriptures testify, was greater than the wisdom of Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Calcol, and Darda, the three sons of Mahol. This means that he was wiser than Abraham, (19) Moses, (20) Joseph, (21) and the generation of the desert. (22) He excelled even Adam. (23) His proverbs which have come down to us are barely eight hundred in number. Nevertheless the Scripture counts them equal to three thousand, for the reason that each verse in his book admits of a double and a triple interpretation. In his wisdom he analyzed the laws revealed to Moses, and he assigned reasons for the ritual and ceremonial ordinances of the Torah, which without his explanation had seemed strange. (24) The "forty-nine gates of wisdom" were open to Solomon as they had been to Moses, but the wise king sought to outdo even the wise legislator. He had such confidence in himself that he would have dispensed judgment without resort to witnesses, had he not been prevented by a heavenly voice. (25)

The first proof of his wisdom was given in his verdict in the case of the child claimed by two mothers as their own. When the women presented their difficulty, the king said that God in His wisdom had foreseen that such a quarrel would arise, and therefore had created the organs of man in pairs, so that neither of the two parties to the dispute might be wronged. On hearing these words from the king, Solomon's counsellors lamented: "Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a youth." In a little while they realized the wisdom of the king, and then they exclaimed: "Happy art thou, O land, when thy king is a free man." The quarrel had of set purpose been brought on by God to the end that Solomon's wisdom might be made known. In reality the two litigants were not women at all, but spirits. That all doubt about the fairness of the verdict might be dispelled, a

heavenly voice proclaimed: "This is the mother of the child." (26) During the lifetime of David, when Solomon was still a lad, he had settled another difficult case in an equally brilliant way. A wealthy man had sent his son on a protracted business trip to Africa. On his return he found that his father had died in the meantime, and his treasures had passed into the possession of a crafty slave, who had succeeded in ridding himself of all the other slaves, or intimidating them. In vain the rightful heir urged his claim before King David. As he could not bring witnesses to testify for him, there was no way of dispossessing the slave, who likewise called himself the son of the deceased. The child Solomon heard the case, and he devised a method of arriving at the truth. He had the father's corpse exhumed, and he dyed one of the bones with the blood first of one of the claimants, and then of the other. The blood of the slave showed no affinity with the bone, while the blood of the true heir permeated it. So the real son secured his inheritance. (27)

After his accession to the throne, a peculiar quarrel among heirs was brought before Solomon for adjudication. Asmodeus, the king of demons, once said to Solomon: "Thou art the wisest of men, yet I shall show thee something thou hast never seen." Thereupon Asmodeus stuck his finger in the ground, and up came a double-headed man. He was one of the Cainites, who live underground, and are altogether different in nature and habit from the denizens of the upper world. (28) When the Cainite wanted to descend to his dwelling-place again, it appeared that he could not return thither. Not even Asmodeus could bring the thing about. So he remained on earth, took unto himself a wife, and begot seven sons, one of whom resembled his father in having two heads. When the Cainite died, a dispute broke out among his descendants as to how the property was to be divided. The double-headed son claimed two portions. Both Solomon and the Sanhedrin were at a loss; they could not discover a precedent to guide them. Then Solomon prayed to God: "O Lord of all, when Thou didst appear to me in Gibeon, and didst give me leave to ask a gift of Thee, I desired neither silver nor gold, but only wisdom, that I might be able to judge men in justice." God heard his prayer. When the sons of the Cainite again came before Solomon, he poured hot water on one of the heads of the double-headed monster, whereupon both heads flinched, and both mouths cried out: "We are dying, we are dying! We are but one, not two." Solomon decided that the double-headed son was after all only a single being. (29)

On another occasion Solomon invented a lawsuit in order to elicit the truth in an involved case. Three men appeared before him, each of whom accused the others of theft. They had been travelling together, and, when the Sabbath approached, they halted and prepared to rest and sought a safe hiding-place for their money, for it is not allowed to carry money on one's person on the Sabbath. They all three together secreted what they had in the same spot, and, when the Sabbath was over, they hastened thither, only to find that it had been stolen. It was clear one of the three must have been the thief, but which one? Solomon said to them: "I know you to be experienced and thorough business men. I

should like you to help me decide a suit which the king of Rome has submitted to me. In the Roman kingdom there lived a maiden and a youth, who promised each other under oath never to enter into a marriage without obtaining each other's permission. The parents of the girl betrothed their daughter to a man whom she loved, but she refused to become his wife until the companion of her youth gave his consent. She took much gold and silver, and sought him out to bribe him. Setting aside his own love for the girl, he offered her and her lover his congratulations, and refused to accept the slightest return for the permission granted. On their homeward way the happy couple were surprised by an old highwayman, who was about to rob the young man of his bride and his money. The girl told the brigand the story of her life, closing with these words: 'If a youth controlled his passion for me, how much more shouldst thou, an old man, be filled with fear of God, and let me go my way.' Her words took effect. The aged highwaymen laid hands neither on the girl nor on the money. "Now," Solomon continued to the three litigants, "I was asked to decide which of the three persons concerned acted most nobly, the girl, the youth, or the highwayman, and I should like to have your views upon the question." The first of the three said: "My praise is for the girl, who kept her oath so faithfully." The second: "I should award the palm to the youth, who kept himself in check, and did not permit his passion to prevail." The third said: "Commend me to the brigand, who kept his hands off the money, more especially as he would have been doing all that could be expected of him if he had surrendered the woman he might have taken the money." The last answer sufficed to put Solomon on the right track. The man who was inspired with admiration of the virtues of the robber, probably was himself filled with greed of money. He had him cross-examined, and finally extorted a confession. He had committed the theft, and he designated the spot where he had hidden the money. (30)

Even animals submitted their controversies to Solomon's wise judgment. A man with a jug of milk came upon a serpent wailing pitifully in a field. To the man's question, the serpent replied that it was tortured with thirst. "And what art thou carrying in the jug?" asked the serpent. When it heard what it was, it begged for the milk, and promised to reward the man by showing him a hidden treasure. The man gave the milk to the serpent, and was then led to a great rock. "Under this rock," said the serpent, "lies the treasure." The man rolled the rock aside, and was about to take the treasure, when suddenly the serpent made a lunge at him, and coiled itself about his neck. "What meanest thou by such conduct?" exclaimed the man. "I am going to kill thee," replied the serpent, "because thou art robbing me of all my money." The man proposed that they put their case to King Solomon, and obtain his decision as to who was in the wrong. So they did. Solomon asked the serpent to state what it demanded of the man. "I want to kill him," answered the serpent, "because the Scriptures command it, saying: 'Thou shalt bruise the heel of man.'" Solomon said: "First release thy hold upon the man's neck and descend; in court neither party to a lawsuit may enjoy an advantage over the other." The serpent glided to the floor, and Solomon repeated his question, and received the same answer as before from the serpent. Then

Solomon turned to the man and said: "To thee God's command was to bruise the head of the serpent do it!" And the man crushed the serpent's head. (31)

Sometimes Solomon's assertions and views, though they sprang from profound wisdom, seemed strange to the common run of men. In such cases, the wise king did not disdain to illustrate the correctness of his opinions. For instance, both the learned and the ignorant were stung into opposition by Solomon's saying: "One man among a thousand have I found; but a virtuous woman among all those have I not found." Solomon unhesitatingly pledged himself to prove that he was right. He had his attendants seek out a married couple enjoying a reputation for uprightness and virtue. The husband was cited before him, and Solomon told him that he had decided to appoint him to an exalted office. The king demanded only, as an earnest of his loyalty, that he murder his wife, so that he might be free to marry the king's daughter, a spouse comporting with the dignity of his new station. With a heavy heart the man went home. His despair grew at sight of his fair wife and his little children. Though determined to do the king's bidding, he still lacked courage to kill his wife while she was awake. He waited until she was tight asleep, but then the child enfolded in the mother's arms rekindled his parental and conjugal affection, and he replaced his sword in its sheath, saying to himself: "And if the king were to offer me his whole realm, I would not murder my wife." Thereupon he went to Solomon, and told him his final decision. A month later Solomon sent for the wife, and declared his love for her. He told her that their happiness could be consummated if she would but do away with her husband. Then she should be made the first wife in his harem. Solomon gave her a leaden sword which glittered as though fashioned of steel. The woman returned home resolved to put the sword to its appointed use. Not a quiver of her eyelids betrayed her sinister purpose. On the contrary, by caresses and tender words she sought to disarm any suspicion that might attack to her. In the night she arose, drew forth the sword, and proceeded to kill her husband. The leaden instrument naturally did no harm, except to awaken her husband, to whom she had to confess her evil intent. The next day both man and wife were summoned before the king, who thus convinced his counsellors of the truth of his conviction, that no dependence can be placed on woman. (32)

The fame of Solomon's wisdom spread far and wide. Many entered the service of the king, in the hope of profiting by his wisdom. Three brothers had served under him for thirteen years, and, disappointed at not having learnt anything, they made up their minds to quit his service. Solomon gave them the alternative of receiving one hundred coins each, or being taught three wise saws. They decided to take the money. They had scarcely left the town when the youngest of the three, regardless of the protests of his two brothers, hastened back to Solomon and said to him: "My lord, I did not take service under thee to make money; I wanted to acquire wisdom. Pray, take back thy money, and teach me wisdom instead." Solomon thereupon imparted the following three rules of conduct to him: "When thou travellest abroad, set out on thy journey with the dawn and turn in for the night before darkness falls; do not cross a river that is swollen; and never betray

a secret to a woman." The man quickly overtook his brothers, but he confided nothing to them of what he had learned from Solomon. They journeyed on together. At the approach of the ninth hour three hours after noon they reached a suitable spot in which to spend the night. The youngest brother, mindful of Solomon's advice, proposed that they stop there. The others taunted him with his stupidity, which, they said, he had begun to display when he carried his money back to Solomon. The two proceeded on their way, but the youngest arranged his quarters for the night. When darkness came on, and with it nipping cold, he was snug and comfortable, while his brothers were surprised by a snow storm, in which they perished. The following day he continued his journey, and on the road he found the dead bodies of his brothers. Having appropriated their money, he buried them, and went on. When he reached a river that was very much swollen, he bore Solomon's advice in mind, and delayed to cross until the flood subsided. While standing on the bank, he observed how some of the king's servants were attempting to ford the stream with beasts laden with gold, and how they were borne down by the flood. After the waters had abated, he crossed and appropriated the gold strapped to the drowned animals. When he returned home, wealthy and wise, he told nothing of what he had experienced even to his wife, who was very curious to find out where her husband had obtained his wealth. Finally, she plied him so closely with questions that Solomon's advice about confiding a secret to a woman was quite forgotten. Once, when his wife was quarrelling with him, she cried out: "Not enough that thou didst murder thy brothers, thou desirest to kill me, too." Thereupon he was charged with the murder of their husbands by his two sisters-in-law. He was tried, condemned to death, and escaped the hangman only when he told the king the story of his life, and was recognized as his former retainer. It was with reference to this man's adventures that Solomon said: "Acquire wisdom; she is better than gold and much fine gold." (33)

Another of his disciples had a similar experience. Annually a man came from a great distance to pay a visit to the wise king, and when he departed Solomon was in the habit of bestowing a gift upon him. Once the guest refused the gift, and asked the king to teach him the language of the birds and the animals instead. The king was ready to grant his request, but he did not fail to warn him first of the great danger connected with such knowledge. "If thou tellest others a word of what thou hearest from an animal," he said, "thou wilt surely suffer death; thy destruction is inevitable." Nothing daunted, the visitor persisted in his wish, and the king instructed him in the secret art. Returned home, he overheard a conversation between his ox and his ass. The ass said: "Brother, how farest thou with these people?" The ox: "As thou livest, brother, I pass day and night in hard and painful toil." The ass: "I can give thee relief, brother. If thou wilt follow my advice, thou shalt live in comfort, and shalt rid thyself of all hard work." The ox: "O brother, may thy heart be inclined toward me, to take pity on me and help me. I promise not to depart from thy advice to the right or the left." The ass: "God knows, I am speaking to thee in the uprightness of my heart and the purity of my thoughts. My advice to thee is not to eat either straw or fodder this night. When

our master notices it, he will suppose that thou art sick. He will put no burdensome work upon thee, and thou canst take a good rest. That is the way I did to-day." The ox followed the advice of his companion. He touched none of the food thrown to him. The master, suspecting a ruse on the part of the ass, arose during the night, went to the stable, and watched the ass eat his fill from the manger belonging to the ox. He could not help laughing out loud, which greatly amazed his wife, who, of course, had noticed nothing out of the way. The master evaded her questions. Something ludicrous had just occurred to him, he said by way of explanation. For the sly trick played upon the ox, he determined to punish the ass. He ordered the servant to let the ox rest for the day, and make the ass do the work of both animals. At evening the ass trudged into the stable tired and exhausted. The ox greeted him with the words: "Brother, hast thou heard aught of what our heartless masters purpose?" "Yes," replied the ass, "I heard them speak of having thee slaughtered, if thou shouldst refuse to eat this night, too. They want to make sure of thy flesh at least." Scarcely had the ox heard the words of the ass when he threw himself upon his food like a ravenous lion upon his prey. Not a speck did he leave behind, and the master was suddenly moved to uproarious laughter. This time his wife insisted upon knowing the cause. In vain she entreated and supplicated. She swore not to live with him any more if he did not tell her why he laughed. The man loved her so devotedly that he was ready to sacrifice his life to satisfy her whim, but before taking leave of this world he desired to see his friends and relations once more, and he invited them all to his house. Meantime his dog was made aware of the master's approaching end, and such sadness took possession of the faithful beast that he touched neither food nor drink. The cock, on the other hand, gaily appropriated the food intended for the dog, and he and his wives enjoyed a banquet. Outraged by such unfeeling behavior, the dog said to the cock: "How great is thy impudence, and how insignificant thy modesty! Thy master is but a step from the grave, and thou eatest and makest merry." The cock's reply was: "Is it my fault if our master is a fool and an idiot? I have ten wives, and I rule them as I will. Not one dares oppose me and my commands. Our master has a single wife, and this one he cannot control and manage." "What ought our master to do?" asked the dog. "Let him take a heavy stick and belabor his wife's back thoroughly," advised the cock, "and I warrant thee, she won't plague him any more to reveal his secrets." The husband had overheard this conversation, too, and the cock's advice seemed good. He followed it, and death was averted. (34)

On many occasions, Solomon brought his acumen and wisdom to bear upon foreign rulers who attempted to concoct mischief against him. Solomon needed help in building the Temple, and he wrote to Pharaoh, asking him to send artists to Jerusalem. Pharaoh complied with his request, but not honestly. He had his astrologers determine which of his men were destined to die within the year. These candidates for the grave he passed over to Solomon. The Jewish king was not slow to discover the trick played upon him. He immediately returned the men to Egypt, each provided with his grave clothes, and wrote: "To Pharaoh! I

suppose thou hadst no shrouds for these people. Herewith I send thee the men, and what they were in need of." (35)

Hiram, king of Tyre, the steadfast friend of the dynasty of David, who had done Solomon such valuable services in connection with the building of the Temple, was desirous of testing his wisdom. He was in the habit of sending catch-questions and riddles to Solomon with the request that he solve them and help him out of his embarrassment about them. Solomon, of course, succeeded in answering them all. Later on he made an agreement with Hiram, that they were to exchange conundrums and riddles, and a money fine was to be exacted from the one of them who failed to find the proper answer to a question propounded by the other. Naturally it was Hiram who was always the loser. The Tyrians maintain that finally Solomon found more than his match in one of Hiram's subjects, one Abdamon, who put many a riddle to Solomon that baffled his wit. (36) Of Solomon's subtlety in riddle guessing only a few instances have come down to us, all of them connected with riddles put to him by the Queen of Sheba. (37) The story of this queen, of her relation to Solomon, and what induced her to leave her distant home and journey to the court at Jerusalem forms an interesting chapter in the eventful life of the wise king.

ASMODEUS

When Solomon in his wealth and prosperity grew unmindful of his God, and, contrary to the injunctions laid down for kings in the Torah, multiplied wives unto himself, and craved the possession of many horses and much gold, the Book of Deuteronomy stepped before God and said: "Lo, O Lord of the world, Solomon is seeking to remove a Yod from out of me, (80) for Thou didst write: 'The king shall not multiply horses unto himself, nor shall he multiply wives to himself, neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold'; but Solomon has acquired many horses, many wives, and much silver and gold." Hereupon God said: "As thou livest, Solomon and a hundred of his kind shall be annihilated ere a single one of thy letters shall be obliterated." (81) The charge made against Solomon was soon followed by consequences. He had to pay heavily for his sins. It came about in this way: While Solomon was occupied with the Temple, he had great difficulty in devising ways of fitting the stone from the quarry into the building, for the Torah explicitly prohibits the use of iron tools in erecting an altar. The scholars told him that Moses had used the *shamir*, (82) the stone that splits rocks, to engrave the names of the tribes on the precious stones of the ephod worn by the high priest. Solomon's demons could give him no information as to where the *shamir* could be found. They surmised, however, that Asmodeus, (83) king of demons, was in possession of the secret, and they told Solomon the name of the mountain on which Asmodeus dwelt, and described also his manner of life. On this mountain there was a well from which Asmodeus obtained his drinking water. He closed it up daily with a large rock, and sealed it before going to heaven, whither he went every day, to take part in the discussions in the

heavenly academy. Thence he would descend again to earth in order to be present, though invisible, (84) at the debates in the earthly houses of learning. Then, after investigating the seal on the well to ascertain if it had been tampered with, he drank of the water. Solomon sent his chief man, Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, to capture Asmodeus. For this purpose he provided him with a chain, the ring on which the Name of God was engraved, a bundle of wool, and a skin of wine. Benaiah drew the water from the well through a hole bored from below, and, after having stopped up the hole with the wool, he filled the well with wine from above. When Asmodeus descended from heaven, to his astonishment he found wine instead of water in the well, although everything seemed untouched. At first he would not drink of it, and cited the Bible verses that inveigh against wine, to inspire himself with moral courage. At length Asmodeus succumbed to his consuming thirst, and drank till his senses were overpowered, and he fell into a deep sleep. Benaiah, watching him from a tree, then came, and drew the chain about Asmodeus' neck. The demon, on awakening, tried to free himself, but Benaiah called to him: "The Name of thy Lord is upon thee." Though Asmodeus now permitted himself to be led off unresistingly, he acted most peculiarly on the way to Solomon. He brushed against a palm-tree and uprooted it; he knocked against a house and overturned it; and when, at the request of a poor woman, he was turned aside from her hut, he broke a bone. He asked with grim humor: "Is it not written, 'A soft tongue breaketh the bone?'" A blind man going astray he set in the right path, and to a drunkard he did a similar kindness. He wept when a wedding party passed them, and laughed at a man who asked his shoemaker to make him shoes to last for seven years, and at a magician who was publicly showing his skill. Having finally arrived at the end of the journey, Asmodeus, after several days of waiting, was led before Solomon, who questioned him about his strange conduct on the journey. Asmodeus answered that he judged persons and things according to their real character, and not according to their appearance in the eyes of human beings. He cried when he saw the wedding company, because he knew the bridegroom had not a month to live, and he laughed at him who wanted shoes to last seven years, because the man would not own them for seven days, also at the magician who pretended to disclose secrets, because he did not know that a buried treasure lay under his very feet; the blind man whom he set in the right path was one of the "perfect pious," and he wanted to be kind to him; on the other hand, the drunkard to whom he did a similar kindness was known in heaven as a very wicked man, but he happened to have done a good deed once, and he was rewarded accordingly. Asmodeus told Solomon that the *shamir* was given by God to the Angel of the Sea, and that Angel entrusted none with the *shamir* except the moor-hen, (85) which had taken an oath to watch the *shamir* carefully. The moor-hen takes the *shamir* with her to mountains which are not inhabited by men, splits them by means of the *shamir*, and injects seeds, which grow and cover the naked rocks, and then they can be inhabited. Solomon sent one of his servants to seek the nest of the bird and lay a piece of glass over it. When the moor-hen came and could not reach her young, she flew away and fetched the *shamir* and placed it on the glass. Then the man shouted, and so terrified the bird that she dropped the *shamir* and flew away. By

this means the man obtained possession of the coveted *shamir*, and bore it to Solomon. But the moor-hen was so distressed at having broken her oath to the Angel of the Sea that she committed suicide. Although Asmodeus was captured only for the purpose of getting the *shamir*, Solomon nevertheless kept him after the completion of the Temple. One day the king told Asmodeus that he did not understand wherein the greatness of the demons lay, if their king could be kept in bonds by a mortal. Asmodeus replied, that if Solomon would remove his chains and lend him the magic ring, he would prove his own greatness. Solomon agreed. The demon stood before him with one wing touching heaven and the other reaching to the earth. Snatching up Solomon, who had parted with his protecting ring, he flung him four hundred parasangs away from Jerusalem, and then palmed himself off as the king.

Solomon the Wise
Wisdom in Love from by the Queen of Sheba

The words of *Song of Songs* combined with sections from Kings I. (Narration and imagination by Meryll).

When Tamrin, my adviser, returned to Sheba from his mission to Jerusalem to secure trade routes with the ruler of Judah and Israel—Solomon-- he overflowed with praise of Solomon's wisdom. I knew I had to make the journey myself and pose some hard questions to him to discover the source of his wisdom. I am renowned for my intuitive wisdom. Perhaps you've heard one of my proverbs: "Through wisdom I have dived down into the great sea, and have seized in the place of her depths a pearl whereby I am rich."

A king whose reputation rested on his wisdom and not his military might drew me to him. I ordered camels packed with spices, gold, and precious stones and with my large retinue we headed north to Solomon's kingdom. (I Kings 10:1-2)

After my audience with the king, I was left breathless. I wrote a brief note to Solomon to let him know my reactions to hearing the depth of his wisdom. **The report I heard in my own land about you and your wisdom was true. But I did not believe the reports until I came and saw with my own eyes that not even the half had been told me; your wisdom and wealth surpass the reports I have heard. How fortunate are your men and how fortunate are these your courtiers, who are always in attendance on you and can hear your wisdom! Praised be the Lord your God, who delighted in you and set you on the throne of Israel. It is because of the Lords' everlasting love for Israel that He made you king to administer justice and righteousness.** (I Kings 10:6-9)

Indeed, it was the riddles, the judgments Solomon rendered that had reached my ears all the way in Sheba. And I did not prevaricate when I told Solomon that his wisdom proved to me God's special connection to him and to his people. What I did not tell Solomon and what was not reported at the time, was my profound reaction when I read his extended love poem, *Song of Songs*, which he wrote in his youth. Solomon was wise even in love. Most men besotted by love in their youth can only think of satisfying their desire. Solomon's wisdom lies in his understanding that love is more than a physical act. Love is poetry. I was most touched by his first chapter when he wrote as if he were a woman:

**I am dark, but comely,
O daughters of Jerusalem—
Like the tents of Kedar,
Like the pavilions of Solomon.
Don't stare at me because I am swarthy,
Because the sun has gazed upon me,
They made me guard the vineyards;**

My own vineyard I did not guard.

Song of Songs 1:5-6

What a beautiful image Solomon paints of us darker women. And how beautifully Solomon captures the grace of women and his lovely land.

When the day blows gently

And the shadows flee

Det out my beloved,

Swift as a gazelle

Or a young stag,

For the hills of spices.

(Song of Songs 2:17)

With all his wives and concubines, Solomon had no need of poetry to woo his women. And yet, he understands and knows the power of words to women. A king writing love poems—has there ever been such a king in the history of the world?

And wouldn't you like to know the meaning of the account of our visit when the court scribe wrote, **King Solomon, in turn, gave the queen of Sheba everything she wanted and asked for, in addition to what King Solomon gave her out of his royal bounty.** (I Kings 10:13).

I left King Solomon's presence and returned to my kingdom of Sheba



Sheba was a wealthy nation in Solomon's day.

with the closing from *Song of Songs*, ringing in my ears.

O you who linger in the garden,

A lover is listening;

Let me hear your voice,

“Hurry my beloved,

**Swift as a gazelle or a young stag.
To the hills of spices.**

(Song of Songs 8:13-14)

On the long journey back, Solomon's proverbs reverberated in my head,

Desire realized is sweet to the soul (Proverbs 13:19a) and

He who keeps company with the wise becomes wise. (Proverbs 13: 20)

The magnificence of Solomon's kingdom astonished me but, even more, Solomon's wisdom dazzled me. And Menelik, my son? Silence can also show wisdom.

King Solomon's Wisdom through Architecture and Construction

<http://www.kingsolomonlegend.com/King-Solomon-Great-Construction-Achievements.html>

King Solomon, son of King David and second king of the Kingdom of Israel, reigned over the tribes of Israel for forty years ca. 950 CE. It was during his reign that the kingdom gained its highest splendor. Solomon was renowned throughout the ancient world of his time for his wisdom, his wealth and his extensive political and commercial alliances with the nations in the region. It was he who built the First **Temple of Jerusalem**, thus establishing the city not only as the political capital of the kingdom but also as the religious center of the People of Israel.

Solomon's strong alliance with **Hiram I**, King of **Tyre**, greatly assisted him in his numerous undertakings. Many of the materials and professional craftsmen for the construction of the Temple, were brought from Tyre, including the chief architect, also named Hiram, who was sent especially to Jerusalem to assist in the construction.

"I have now built for You a stately House, a place where You may dwell forever. (Solomon in I Kings 8:13)

Solomon's unsurpassed wisdom in building the Temple is recounted in I Kings 5:16-7:51.

5:5 And, behold, I purpose to build an house unto the name of the LORD my God, as the LORD spoke unto David my father, saying, thy son, whom I will set upon thy throne in thy room, he shall build an house unto my name.

5:6 Now therefore command that they hew me cedar trees out of Lebanon; and my servants shall be with thy servants: and unto thee will I give hire for thy servants according to all that thou shalt appoint: for thou knows that there is not among us any that can skill to hew timber like unto the Sidonians.

5:7 And it came to pass, when Hiram heard the words of Solomon, that he rejoiced greatly, and said, Blessed be the LORD this day, who hath given unto David a wise son over this great people.

5:8 And Hiram sent to Solomon, saying, I have considered the things which thou sent to me for: and I will do all thy desire concerning timber of cedar, and concerning timber of fir.

5:9 My servants shall bring them down from Lebanon unto the sea: and I will convey them by sea in floats unto the place that thou shalt appoint me, and will cause them to be discharged there, and thou shalt receive them: and thou shalt accomplish my desire, in giving food for my household.

5:10 So Hiram gave Solomon cedar trees and fir trees according to all his desire.

5:11 And Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand measures of wheat for food to his household, and twenty measures of pure oil: thus gave Solomon to Hiram year by year.

5:12 The LORD gave Solomon wisdom, as he promised him: and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon; and they two made a league together.

5:13 King Solomon raised a levy out of all Israel; and the levy was thirty thousand men.

5:14 And he sent them to Lebanon, ten thousand a month by courses: a month they were in Lebanon, and two months at home: and Adoniram was over the levy.

5:15 Solomon had threescore and ten thousand that bare burdens, and fourscore thousand hewers in the mountains; 5:16 Beside the chief of Solomon's officers which were over the work, three thousand and three hundred, which ruled over the people that wrought in the work.

5:31 And the king commanded, and they brought great stones, costly stones, and hewed stones, to lay the foundation of the house.

5:32 And Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders hewed them, and the stonesquarers: so they prepared timber and stones to build the house.

6:1 It came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Ziv, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the LORD.

6:2 And the house which king Solomon built for the LORD, the length thereof was 60 cubits, and the breadth thereof 20 cubits, and the height 30 cubits.

6:3 And the porch before the temple of the house, 20 cubits was the length, according to the breadth of the house; and 10 cubits was the breadth thereof before the house.

6:4 For the house he made windows of narrow lights.

6:5 And against the wall of the house he built chambers round about, against the walls of the house round about, both of the temple and of the oracle: and he made chambers round about: 6:6 The nethermost chamber was 5 cubits broad, and the middle was 6 cubits broad, and the third was 7 cubits broad: for without in the wall of the house he made narrowed rests round about, that the beams should not be fastened in the walls of the house.

6:7 And the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building.

6:8 The door for the middle chamber was in the right side of the house: and they went up with winding stairs into the middle chamber, and out of the middle into the third.

6:9 So he built the house, and finished it; and covered the house with beams and boards of cedar.

6:10 And then he built chambers against all the house, 5 cubits high: and they rested on the house with timber of cedar.

6:11 And the word of the LORD came to Solomon, saying, 6:12 Concerning this house which thou art in building, if thou wilt walk in my statutes, and execute my judgments, and keep all my commandments to walk in them; then will I perform my word with thee, which I spoke unto David thy father: 6:13 And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake my people Israel.

6:14 So Solomon built the house, and finished it.

6:15 And he built the walls of the house within with boards of cedar, both the floor of the house, and the walls of the ceiling: and he covered them on the inside with wood, and covered the floor of the house with planks of fir.

6:16 And he built 20 cubits on the sides of the house, both the floor and the walls with boards of cedar: he even built them for it within, even for the oracle, even for the most holy place.

6:17 And the house, that is, the temple before it, was 40 cubits long.

6:18 And the cedar of the house within was carved with knops and open flowers: all was cedar; there was no stone seen.

6:19 And the shrine he prepared in the house within, to set there the ark of the covenant of the LORD.

6:20 And the shrine in the forepart was 20 cubits in length, and 20 cubits in breadth, and 20 cubits in the height thereof: and he overlaid it with pure gold; and so covered the altar which was of cedar.

6:21 So Solomon overlaid the house within with pure gold: and he made a partition by the chains of gold before the shrine; and he overlaid it with gold.

6:22 And the whole house he overlaid with gold, until he had finished all the house: also the whole altar that was by the shrine he overlaid with gold.

6:23 Within the shrine he made two cherubim of olive tree, each 10 cubits high.

6:24 And 5 cubits was the one wing of the cherub, and 5 cubits the other wing of the cherub: from the uttermost part of the one wing unto the uttermost part of the other were 10 cubits.

6:25 And the other cherub was 10 cubits: both the cherubim were of one measure and one size.

6:26 The height of the one cherub was 10 cubits, and so was the other cherub.

6:27 And he set the cherubim within the inner house: and they stretched forth the wings of the cherubim, so that the wing of the one touched the one wall, and the wing of the other cherub touched the other wall; and their wings touched one another in the midst of the house.

6:28 And he overlaid the cherubim with gold.

6:29 And he carved all the walls of the house round about with carved figures of cherubim and palm trees and open flowers, within and without.

6:30 And the floors of the house he overlaid with gold, within and without.

6:31 And for the entering of the shrine he made doors of olive tree: the lintel and side posts were a fifth part of the wall.

6:32 The two doors also were of olive tree; and he carved upon them carvings of cherubim and palm trees and open flowers, and overlaid them with gold, and spread gold upon the cherubim, and upon the palm trees.

6:33 So also made he for the door of the temple posts of olive tree, a fourth part of the wall.

6:34 And the two doors were of fir tree: the two leaves of the one door were folding, and the two leaves of the other door were folding.

6:35 And he carved thereon cherubim and palm trees and open flowers: and covered them with gold fitted upon the carved work.

6:36 And he built the inner court with three rows of hewed stone, and a row of cedar beams.

6:37 In the fourth year was the foundation of the house of the LORD laid, in the month Ziv: 6:38 And in the eleventh year, in the month Bul, which is the eighth month, was the house finished throughout all the parts thereof, and according to all the fashion of it. So was he seven years in building it.

***** (description of Solomon's palace building here) *****

7:12 And the great court round about was with three rows of hewed stones, and a row of cedar beams, both for the inner court of the house of the LORD, and for the porch of Solomon's house.

7:13 And king Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre.

7:14 He was a widow's son of the tribe of Naphtali, and his father was a man of Tyre, a worker in bronze: and he was filled with wisdom, and understanding, and cunning to work all works in bronze. And he came to king Solomon, and wrought all his work.

7:15 He cast two pillars of bronze, of 18 cubits high apiece: and a line of 12 cubits did compass either of them about.

7:16 And he made two capitals of molten brass, to set upon the tops of the pillars: the height of the one capital was 5 cubits, and the height of the other capital was 5 cubits: 7:17 And nets of checker work, and wreaths of chain work, for the capitals which were on the top of the pillars; 7 for the one capital, and 7 for the other capital.

7:18 And he made the pillars, and two rows round about upon the one network, to cover the capitals that were upon the top, with pomegranates: and so did he for the other capital.

7:19 And the capitals that were upon the top of the pillars were of lily work in the porch, four cubits.

7:20 And the capitals upon the two pillars had pomegranates also above, over against the belly which was by the network: and the pomegranates were 200 in rows round about upon the other capital.

7:21 And he set up the pillars in the porch of the temple: and he set up the right pillar, and called the name thereof Jachin: and he set up the left pillar, and called the name thereof Boaz.

7:22 And upon the top of the pillars was lily work: so was the work of the pillars finished.

7:23 He made a molten sea, 10 cubits from the one brim to the other: round all about, and its height was 5 cubits: and a line of 30 cubits compassed it.

7:24 And under the brim of it round about there were knops compassing it, ten in a cubit, compassing the sea round about: the knops were cast in two rows, when it was cast.

7:25 It stood upon twelve oxen, three looking toward the north, and three looking toward the west, and three looking toward the south, and three looking toward the east: and the sea was set above upon them, and all their hinder parts were inward.

7:26 And it was an hand breadth thick, and the brim thereof was wrought like the brim of a cup, with flowers of lilies: it contained 2000 baths.

7:27 And he made ten bases of bronze; four cubits was the length of one base, and four cubits the breadth thereof, and three cubits the height of it.

7:28 And the work of the bases was on this manner: they had borders, and the borders were between the ledges: 7:29 And on the borders that were between the ledges were lions, oxen, and cherubim: and upon the ledges there was a base above: and beneath the lions and oxen were certain additions made of thin work.

7:30 And every base had four bronze wheels, and plates of bronze: and the four corners thereof had brackets: under the laver were brackets molten, at the side of every addition.

7:31 And the mouth of it within the capital and above was a cubit: but the mouth was round after the work of the base, a cubit and an half: and also upon the mouth of it were carvings. Their borders were square, not round.

7:32 And under the borders were four wheels; and the axletrees of the wheels were joined to the base: and the height of a wheel was a 1.5 cubit.

7:33 And the work of the wheels was like the work of a chariot wheel: their axletrees, and their rims, and their spokes, and their hubs, were all molten.

7:34 And there were four brackets to the four corners of one base: and the brackets were of the very base itself.

7:35 And in the top of the base was there a round compass of half a cubit high: and on the top of the base the ledges thereof and the borders thereof were of the same.

7:36 For on the plates of the ledges thereof, and on the borders thereof, he engraved cherubim, lions, and palm trees, according to the proportion of every one, and additions round about.

7:37 After this manner he made the 10 bases: all of them had one casting, one measure, and one size.

7:38 Then made he 10 lavers of brass: one laver on each of the 10 laver stands: and every laver was 4 cubits: and each laver contained 40 baths.

7:39 And he put five bases on the right side of the house, and five on the left side of the house: and he set the sea on the right side of the house eastward over against the south.

7:40 And Hiram made the lavers, and the shovels, and the bowls. Hiram made an end of doing all the work that he made king Solomon for the house of the LORD: 7:41 The two pillars, and the two bowls of the capitals that were on the top of the two pillars; and the two networks, to cover the two bowls of the capitals which were upon the top of the pillars; 7:42 And 400 pomegranates for the two networks, two rows of pomegranates for one network, to cover the two bowls of the capitals that were upon the pillars; 7:43 And the 10 bases, and 10 lavers on the bases; 7:44 And 1 sea, and 12 oxen under the sea; 7:45 And the pots, and the shovels, and the bowls: and all these vessels, which

Hiram made to king Solomon for the house of the LORD, were of burnished bronze.

7:46 In the plain of Jordan did the king cast them, in the clay ground between Succoth and Zarthan.

7:47 And Solomon left all the vessels unweighed, because they were exceeding many: neither was the weight of the brass found out.

7:48 And Solomon made all the vessels that pertained unto the house of the LORD: the altar of gold, and the table of gold, whereupon the shewbread was,

7:49 And the candlesticks of pure gold, five on the right side, and five on the left, before the shrine, with the flowers, and the lamps, and the tongs of gold,

7:50 And the bowls, and the snuffers, and the bowls, and the spoons, and the censers of pure gold; and the hinges of gold, both for the doors of the inner house, the most holy place, and for the doors of the house, to wit, of the temple.

7:51 So was ended all the work that king Solomon made for the house of the LORD. And Solomon brought in the things which David his father had dedicated; even the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, did he put among the treasures of the house of the LORD.

For a Visual...

<http://www.bible-architecture.info/Jerusalem.htm>

Other building projects...

The Temple was not the only edifice Solomon built. It is described that he also built many other buildings of importance in Jerusalem. He spent some thirteen years constructing his royal palace on **Ophel**, a hilly promontory in central Jerusalem, adjacent to the Temple. He also constructed a water system of pools for the purpose of securing a plentiful supply of water for the city, as well as the **Millo**, which was part of the fortifications of the city.

The Bible attributes to Solomon the rebuilding of major cities and ports. He is said to have created the port of **Ezion Gever**, which was the main port of commerce with the countries bordering the Red Sea and the Indian Sea. Solomon's ships and Hiram's fleets took off from Ezion Gever to Ophir, which was a port famous for its wealth.

Solomon, according to the Bible, received from Ophir tributes of cargo

consisting of gold, silver, sandalwood, precious stones, ivory, apes and peacocks, every three years.

King Solomon is also said to have built **Tadmor**, an important desert city in the center of Syria, which was located along the caravan routes linking Persia and the Mediterranean ports. It served both as a commercial depot and military outpost. Other major cities which the Bible mentions as having been strengthened or rebuilt by Solomon, include **Hazor**, **Megiddo** and **Gezer**.

Solomon the Wise Why I Am the Wisest of Kings

The words of Kings I and Proverbs with narration by King Solomon (ghost written by Meryll)

You Israelites had high hopes for my father, King David's kingdom. It was great, but my kingdom is the greatest. God withheld from my father King David the crowning glory of our kingdom—a magnificent Temple in Jerusalem. Not only did I build the Temple according to God's word, but I have enlarged our kingdom – it will never be greater. Our land extends from the Euphrates to the land of the Philistines and the boundary of Egypt. We receive tribute from across the known world, we have an army, a navy, and 40,000 horses for the chariots. And we have peace. Each of you lives in safety under your vine and fig tree. (Kings I 5:1-6)

How did I do achieve this? Early in my reign when I went to Gibeon to sacrifice, God appeared to me in a dream and said to me, **"Ask, what shall I grant you?"** (Kings I 3:5) Without hesitation, I responded: **...I am a young lad with no experience in leadership. Your servant finds himself in the midst of the people You have chosen, a people too numerous to be numbered or counted. Grant the, Your servant an understanding mind to judge Your people, to distinguish between good and bad; for who can judge this vast people of Yours?"** (Kings I 3:4-9) All of you know God's response to me...**"I grant you a wise and discerning mind; there has never been anyone like you before, nor will anyone like you arise again."** (I Kings 3:12) God's words, not mine.

Let me review how I put that wisdom into action to create the greatest era in our history.

1. **Sons, heed the discipline of a father; listen and learn discernment.** (Proverbs 4:1). I followed my father's deathbed instructions to the letter regarding his court. I eliminated the traitor Joab and used a strong hand against those who were perfidious with my father. I dealt kindly with his supporters like Barzillai's sons. (I Kings 2:5-9) *Reward loyalty—punish treachery.*

2. **For want of strategy an army fails, but victory comes with much planning.** (Proverbs 11:14) This country is great because our military is strong and great. I added to my father's vision by building **"a fleet of ships at Etzion Geber"** (I Kings 9:26) with the counsel of the strongest navy in the world—the Phoenicians. I ensured that our charioteers were always at the ready. I stationed 1400 chariots and 12,000 horses in the chariot towns—the envy of all the nations. (I Kings 10:26) *The best insurance for peace is a strong army.*

3. **A wise man captivates people.** (Proverbs 11:30b). Only use your military when you must. The best way to secure peace is through alliances. The best way to make an alliance is through marriage. I had **"700 royal wives and**

300 concubines.” (I Kings 11: 3) My first marriage to Pharaoh’s daughter before I built the palace and the Temple paved the way for this policy. *Make love not war.*

4. **Hold on to resourcefulness and foresight.** (Proverbs 3:21b) Balance the budget. I grew up in the palace of King David but even I learned that generous spending has to be balanced by economies. Building the Temple left a great legacy for Israel, but no debt. How did I do that—judicious use of the forced labor (sounds better in the not-yet available French—*corvée*), tax, and payment in kind to foreigners. Our import-export vastly expanded our economic reach. A dazzling Temple with very little debt. That’s wisdom.

5. **There is magic on the lips of the king; he cannot err in judgment.** (Proverbs 16:10). I judge all the people from great to small and I know how to get the word out about my wisdom. The greatest encounter I had was with the Queen of Sheba who “came to test [me] with hard questions.” Of course, I passed the test. Early in my kingship two prostitutes came to me bickering about who was the real mother of a baby. I ended that argument by lifting my sword. (I Kings 3:16-27) You have to get the word out, **“When all Israel heard the decision that the king had rendered, they stood in awe of the king for they saw that he possessed divine wisdom to execute justice.”** (I Kings 3:28)

6. **Wisdom belongs to those who seek advice.** (Proverbs 13:10b). *Hire good people and pay them well.* Whether it’s to build the Temple or judge the people, a wise king can’t do it all, but he has to know how to hire the best. Hiram’s son was the best in the building business—the cedars of Lebanon were the best. The Temple had to be the best. (I Kings 5:25) I hired tax collectors, scribes, 12 new prefects—all the best people.

7. If you make a mistake, own up to it. I once said **“[Wisdom] will save you from the forbidden woman, from the alien woman whose talk is smooth.** (Proverbs 2: 16). I ignored the wise words of my middle years and now, in my old age, I can tell you 1000 wives from multiple nations can turn a guy’s heart away—even a wise guy. Yes, I worshipped Ashtoreth and Milcom and built a shrine for Chemosh(I kings 11:1-9 but, like I said in my sincere prayer for the dedication of the Temple, **“When they[the Israelites] sin against You—for there is no man who does not sin—and You are angry with them and deliver them to the enemy, and their captors carry them off to an enemy land, near or far, and they take to heart in the land to which they have been carried off, and they repent and make supplication to You in the land of their captors, saying, ‘We have sinned, we have acted perversely....give heed in Your heavenly abode to their prayer and supplication and heed their cause, and pardon Your people...”**(I Kings 8:46-50)

After 40 year of reigning, I know this. Wisdom, my fellow Israelites is not perfection. Wisdom does not mean I, your King, have not swerved from my promise to my father David and to God to follow in God's ways. We'll t pray that God sees the wisdom in maintaining the kingdom I have built with His help and secure the line of David through my son Rehoboam. (I Kings 11:42)

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. (I Kings 1:7a)

Solomon the Wise
Reflections from the Philosopher-King
Based on *Koheleth (Ecclesiastes)* and narrated by Meryll

It is 2826 since the year of Creation (934 CE in your timekeeping mode). I feel I am close to death and have reigned in Jerusalem over my people Judah and Israel for close to 40 years. Soon I will be buried here in Jerusalem alongside my father.

Recently I have begun to philosophically address the issue of wisdom. When I became king, God asked me in a dream, what quality I most desired. Watching the struggles of my father David and hearing of the madness of King Saul, wisdom seemed the key to ruling my people and building up my nation to its greatest extent. I was extolled by all who met me for my wisdom and now it is time for me to reflect on my choice as a young king. What is wisdom? Forgive me if I sound cynical.

For those of you who will read this in the future when my name has slipped from the bonds of memory, let me tell you a bit about myself.

I...was king in Jerusalem over Israel. I set my mind to study and to probe with wisdom all that happens under the sun.—An unhappy business, that, which God gave men to be concerned with! I observed all the happenings beneath the sun, and I found that all is futile and pursuit of wind: A twisted thing cannot be made straight, a lack that cannot be made good. I said to myself: “here I have grown richer and wiser than any that ruled before me over Jerusalem, and my mind has zealously absorbed wisdom and learning.’ And so I set my mind to appraise wisdom and to appraise madness and folly. And I learned—that this, too, was pursuit of wind. For as wisdom grows, vexation grows; to increase learning is to increase heartache. (Eccles. 1:12-18)

*Hevel havalim, hakol hevel.** Can you hear the breath of wind, the emptiness in the very words? I know I will soon hear that wind across my grave.

My body is weakening, but my mind is still strong. I cannot hide from myself the truth of the end of days for myself, Even a powerful king will be reduced to dust in the end. I will write my musings but for now, I leave you with the truth that abides with me even as I make my philosophical journey through the nature of wisdom.

Go, eat your bread in gladness, and drink your wine in joy; for your action was long ago approved by God. Let your clothes always be freshly washed, and your head never lack ointment. Enjoy happiness with a woman you love all the fleeting days of life that have been granted to you under the sun—all your fleeting days. For that alone is what you can get

out of life and out of the means you acquire under the sun. Whatever it is in your power to do, do with all your might. For there is not action, no reasoning, no learning, no wisdom in Sheol where you are going.

(Eccles. 9:7-10)

I am under no illusions—should the *kohanim* or scribes find my thoughts, they will not approve. When I draw my last breath, when I disappear into the ground, these words undoubtedly will disappear with me. But what would it matter if you read them—*hevel havalim, hakol havel*.

**hevel havalim, hakol havel*. The most common translation is Vanity of vanities, all is vanity. In the JPS translation that I use, the translator has gone in a different direction. He translates it: Utter futility! Utter futility! All is futile. The word *hevel* can also mean emptiness, steam, vapor. *Alah b'hevel* means to evaporate or disappear. Try reading the words aloud—they require a lot of breath.

Solomon the Wise? A Shunned Prophet's View

(imagined by Meryll. Solomon's actions and words are from the Tanakh)

Give ear O Israel, Listen O Judah, to the words of a prophet who was silenced.
Righteous words can never be erased
Truth cannot be censored.

A gift must be treasured
The giver thanked and shown recompense.

Solomon the King asked God for wisdom and God granted his request adding even greater gifts of riches and glory to Solomon's petition for wisdom.

God warned Solomon just as he warned our ancestors in *Midbar Sinai*

And I will further grant you long life, if you will walk in My ways and observe My laws and commandments, as did your father David. (I Kings 3:14)

God is a God of justice. God long ago told us what he expects of a ruler.

Moreover he [the king] shall not keep many horses or send people back to Egypt to add to his horses, since the Lord has warned you, 'You must not go back that way again.' And he shall not have many wives, lest his heart go astray; nor shall he amass silver and gold to excess. When he is seated on his royal throne, he shall have a copy of this Teaching written for him on a scroll by the levitical priests. Let it remain with him and let him read in it all his life, so that he may learn to revere the Lord his God, to observe faithfully every word of this Teaching as well as these laws. This he will not act haughtily toward his fellow or deviate from the Instruction to the right or to the left, to the end that he and his descendants may reign long in the midst of Israel.
(Deuteronomy 17:16-20)

And what of these laws did Solomon not transgress?

- Did Solomon not have **40,000 stalls of horses for his chariotry**? (I Kings 5:5) Did Solomon not send back to Egypt for more horses @ 150 shekels per horse? (I Kings 10:28-29)
- Did Solomon not send back to Egypt for a wife? (I Kings 3:1) And what about the wives from Moab, Ammon, Edom, Phoenicia, Hittites? (I Kings 11:1)
- Did Solomon not amass silver and gold? **666 talents every year***! (I Kings 10:14)
- Did Solomon not enslave his own people as it is said, **King Solomon imposed forced labor on all Israel; the levy came to 30,000 men.** (I Kings 5:27)
- And did Solomon not worship foreign gods? (I Kings 3:3) **In his old age, his wives turned away Solomon's heart after other gods. And he was not as wholeheartedly devoted to the Lord his God as his father David had**

been. Solomon followed Ashtoreth the goddess of the Phoenicians, and Milcom, the abomination of the Ammonites. (I Kings 11:4-5) Solomon built a shrine to Chemosh, the abomination of Moab on the hill near Jerusalem and one for Molech the abomination of the Ammonites. And he did the same for all his foreign wives...(I Kings 11:7-8)

Solomon himself before the convocation of the elders of Israel in Jerusalem stated, **“O Lord God of Israel, in the heavens above and on the earth below there is no god like You who keep Your gracious covenant with Your servants when they walk before You in wholehearted devotion...”** (I Kings 8:23)

Where is Solomon’s wholehearted devotion? Has he kept the covenant?

God warned Solomon after his eloquent words of prayer,

[But] if you and your descendants turn away from Me and do not keep the commandments [and] the laws which I have set before you, and go and serve other gods and worship them, then I will sweep Israel off the land which I gave them; I will reject the House which I have consecrated to My name; and Israel shall become a proverb and a bywords among all peoples. And as for this House, once so exalted, when everyone passing nu it shall be appalled and shall hiss. And when they ask, ‘Why did the Lord do thus to the land to this House?’ they shall be told, “It is because they forsook the Lord their God who freed them from the land of Egypt, and they embraced other gods and worshiped them, and served them; therefore the Lord has brought all this calamity upon them.’ (I Kings 9:6-9)

It was not enough for God to raise enemies up against Solomon (I Kings 11:14, 23). God will surely keep His covenant and further punish Solomon for his deviation from the Instruction. The kingdom will be torn asunder, Solomon’s sons will contend with one another, and the kingdom will pass from the house of David. How will Solomon’s wisdom profit him now?

So says the shunned prophet.

*As a prophet, I can tell you that in January 25, 2015 *Practical Business* will report the following: “Today, Solomon's net worth should be something around \$100 billion.”

