

Wisdom in the *Agora* Commercial Integrity & Social Stability¹

[I]t is a laborious madness and an impoverishing one, the madness of composing vast books—setting out in five hundred pages an idea that can be perfectly related in five minutes (Borges 1998, 67).

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

I suspect that most people read the book referred to as the “Proverbs of Solomon ben David” (1.1) as a set of rules or principles to obey to our blessing or disobey to our peril. We read individual proverbs and apply them primarily to ourselves, or—if they condemn some sin—to someone who really deserves it.

When we study the book of Proverbs as a book, i.e., as a literary work, and ask what it was written to accomplish, however, we see that its original audience was not society in general, nor was its purpose mere personal morality and happiness or success, but rather that it was addressed to a certain segment of the Israelite population for a purpose particular to that group.

Proverbs was addressed to men (no verse addresses women), more specifically to unmarried younger men (hence the vv. about choosing the right kind of woman to become one’s wife (e.g., 11.22; 21.9, 19; 25.24; 31.10-31), avoiding prostitutes (23.26-28)), and most particularly, to unmarried young men who belonged to what we might call the “upper” class of Israelite society, those who would become the next generation of Israel’s leaders. This helps us understand the contents of the “preface” (Pr 1-9), specifically their warnings against temptations that would attract well-to-do young men.

Young men² are interested in sex, and so the preface strongly condemns extra-marital or adulterous sexual activity (2.16-19; 5.1-23; 6.20-35; 7.1-27); young men like money and a feeling of power, and are often drawn to companions who promise the excitement of both, and so these chapters begin by warning them against using group violence to get “easy” money (1.10-19), and present wisdom as a source of wealth, power, and long life (3.13-16; 1-21, 32-36); the young are prone to self-centered arrogance, and so Solomon warns that this puts them at enmity with God himself (3.27-35; 6.12-19); the young are often lazy, and so they are sent to consider the wisdom of the ant’s diligence and hard work (6.6-11). The young enjoy feeling that they have secret knowledge; Wisdom describes herself as knowing the secrets of creation (8.22-31).

This intended audience also helps us understand why the book addresses matters that would pertain only or primarily to members of a fairly rarified stratus of Israelite life, such as one’s conduct in the presence of a king (25.2-7)³ or “ruler” (23.1-3), and why it warns against revolt (24.21-22).⁴ It also explains the warnings against bribery (17.23), the teachings about the character of witnesses (6.19; 12.17; 14.5,⁵ 25; 19.5, 9, 28; 21.28; 24.28; 25.18), about justice (16.10; 18.5; 24.23-26; 28.17, 21, 24; 29.14, 16)⁶ and leadership (25.15; 27.23-27; 28.2, 15, 16, 28; 29.2, 4, 5, 12), and about the planning and waging of war (Pr 11.14; 15.22; 20.18; 24.5-6)—all issues that would hardly involve the common citizenry and farmers who made up the bulk of the population.

For example, since these men were destined for positions of leadership, they would be responsible for the administration of justice, among their other duties. In a small country, with limited reason and means for

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²A less than helpful translation of a word for which English has no convenient one-word equivalent—the word refers as much to social standing as to one’s general age. The words “youth” and “child”, which appear in the standard translations of some vv. in Proverbs, are even more misleading.

³All references are to the book of Proverbs unless otherwise noted.

⁴It is those closest to the king who are the greatest threat to his power (e.g., Absalom, Adonijah, or even—as Saul thought—David, after he appointed him to lead his army; 1 Sam 18.6-15, 29). Farmers—the bulk of Israel’s population—were no such threat.

⁵“Commonsense”, “obvious”, or “tautologous” proverbs such Pr 14.5 (“A faithful witness does not lie, / But a false witness breathes lies”) remind future judges that they will need to know (or uncover) the true character of each witness.

⁶References to the “righteous” and “wicked” in these verses (and others) probably refer to the “innocent” and “guilty”; they are forensic (judicial), not theological or ontological, categories.

movement and travel, a court case would necessarily be heard by a judge who knew everyone involved. The idea that a jury of one's "peers" is a group of people who represent the demographic of the community in which the trial is held (even if it be across the country), and who know as little about the case as possible so that they are disinterestedly "neutral" or "not predisposed" toward the defendant's innocence or guilt, would have been completely foreign to their mode of life and thought.

The accused would instead have stood before people who had known them from birth, had seen them grow up, had watched them work in the fields, or at their father's trade, or shepherd sheep, and perhaps even themselves have hired them. They would have *known* them in a way that is (again) foreign to our way of thought, and almost impossible in our highly mobile culture, where neighbours rarely bother to get to know each other, since (the expectation is) one or the other will be moving soon.

Furthermore, a number of verses warn against neglecting, oppressing, or looking down on "the poor", as though they were a separate class from the readers of the book (13.23; 14.21, 31; 17.5; 18.23; 21.13; 22.2, 7, 9, 16, 22-23; 23.10-12; 28.8), and encourage generosity and an "open hand" toward those in need (11.24-26; 28.27; 29.7; 31.20).

Finally, in order to profit from this book one would need both the ability to read⁷ and the time and leisure to study and reflect on it, again, something that those engaged in largely subsistence farming most probably lacked.⁸

All of this suggests that the book of Proverbs was originally compiled in order to ensure the stability of the kingdom of Israel by fostering generations of future leaders who would be quiet, humble, concerned for the welfare of their fellow Israelites (of whatever social stratus), ready to listen and learn, and who had both the desire and ability to discern truth from falsehood, judge rightly, and administer justice fairly and impartially.

Such a leadership would lead to government "by counsel", an administration that was staffed—military, judicially, governmentally (&c.)—by men who exemplified a particular set of values, and who saw the opportunity to rule, govern, and lead, as divinely mandated responsibility to promote justice and righteousness, and the peace, harmony, and well-being of those whose welfare had been entrusted to them.

The book's focus on right behaviour, in other words, was not merely for personal well-being (although obedience would certainly yield their individual good), but also for the good of the entire nation as a nation. If "a king gives stability to a land by justice, / But a man who takes bribes tears it down" (29.4), and if "all the ministers of a ruler who listens to lies are wicked" (29.12), then the first governmental commitment of a king and his ministers must be the dual commitment to truth and justice, without regard for one's personal welfare (cf. 15.16-17; 16.8, 19; 17.1; 19.1; 22; 22.1; 28.6).

(This latter point helps us understand the "better-than" sayings that assert that poverty with righteousness is (always) better than wealth with wickedness (e.g., 15.16-17; 16.8; 17.1; 19.1, 22; 28.6). The path that leads a judge to wickedness can begin with a simple "gift" from someone who turns up in the dock a few weeks or months later.

Wanting to see his kingdom endure, Solomon composed the document that we know as Proverbs 1-24, and perhaps chapters 30-31.⁹ He compiled his "textbook" not merely as a guide to personal morality, but in order to motivate young men to what was right, so that they would become leaders whose lives and reputations would encourage those under their care to live in a way that promoted what was right and just and good.

You are no doubt wondering when this paper will come to its point—commerce—but in fact the topic of this introduction is one of its main points, viz.: a civilization depends for its stability on a general atmosphere of trust among its members. Citizens must feel that they can trust the government to watch out for their interests by protecting them from those who would harm them, whether domestic (their fellow Israelites) or international (foreign invasion or oppression). They must feel that their rulers, national and regional, will not be "driving rain that leaves no food" (28.3b) or a "roaring lion and rushing bear" (28.15a). They must also be able to trust the judiciary to accomplish justice—real justice, that exonerates the innocent and punishes the guilty.¹⁰

⁷The level of literacy in ancient Israel is highly debated, although biblical and epigraphic evidence suggests that it was not low.

⁸On the importance of leisure in culture, see Pieper 2009.

⁹Pr 25-29 was added to the scroll in the days of Hezekiah, about two centuries after his death; we do not know how they knew that these chapters were his work (Pr 25.1a).

¹⁰In many of their occurrences in the proverbial sayings, the words translated "righteous[ness]" and "wicked[ness]" refer to an individual's innocence or guilt with regard to a particular charge. (And not, in other words, the person's nature or character, or standing before God.)

COMMERCE IN PROVERBS

Included in this collection of guides for “right rule” are sayings that address of commercial life—four that discuss weights and measures and one that describes the process of bargaining or “haggling”.¹¹

Weights & Measures

Four verses address a natural problem in a culture that values things by weight, that has no “currency” as we know it¹², but rather bought and sold by the “weight” (*shekel*) of a mass of silver¹³, namely, how are buyer and seller to know that their transactions are fair, that they are not being cheated when the silver is being weighed in the balance?

Archaeologists have discovered a great variety of weights from the ANE, ranging from the *gera* (about one-half gram) to the “talent” (*kikkar*, 75-80 pounds). Some of these have their name (*pim*, *shekel*, &c.) inscribed into the stone or metal, and so scholars have been able to determine how much each of these units weighed in biblical times.¹⁴ Let us look briefly at the vv. that address this subject.

Proverbs 20.10

אֶבֶן וְאֶבֶן אֵיפָה וְאֵיפָה A stone and a stone, an ephah and an ephah -
 תּוֹעֵבַת יְהוָה גַּם־שְׁנֵיהֶם: An abomination of YHWH, even both of them. (Pr 20.10)

Or, more colloquially,

Differing weights and measures -
 Both are abominations of YHWH. (20.10)

Proverbs 20.10 says that using two sets of stones or two sets of measures is a divine abomination. Stones were used in balance scales (more familiar to us from statues of Justice than from the market) in weighing relatively small amounts of materials, presumably precious metals or the like. An *ephah* was a measure of volume (a woman could fit inside one, according to Zc 5.6-10), used to measure solids; only foodstuffs are mentioned in the Bible—flour, barley, meal, roasted corn.

The verse describes the practice of having and using two sets of measures—smaller ones for selling, larger ones for buying—so that the dealer always came out head. If, for example, his “buying” stone weighed twenty percent over the standard, and his “selling” stone weighed twenty percent under, he could—using modern terminology—make a gross profit of fifty percent (50%) on every purchase and sale, even selling the item “for what he paid”.

¹¹A number of vv. condemn the practice that is generally translated as “pledging”, “striking hands”, “standing surety”, &c. The force of the Hebrew verbs used in these passages being not entirely clear, this paper does not address this topic.

¹²The invention of coinage as we know it is generally credited to the kingdom of Lydia, in Anatolia (Asia Minor), in the reign of Croesus (560-546 BCE), although there are slightly earlier examples (Zincirli Huyuk and Sardis) from the mid-7th century BCE (King & Stager 2001, 199).

¹³This raises the further question of value and purity; assaying was well-known in the ANE, as suggested by biblical references to the metallurgy of refining precious metals, which are both literal (1 Kgs 10.18; 1 Chr 28.18; 29.4; Jb 28.1), and metaphorical (Is 48.10; Jr 9.7; Zc 13.9; Mal 3.2-3; Ps 12.6; 66.10).

¹⁴These weights are, incidentally, the basis for tables of “Weights & Measures” found in many modern editions of the Bible, as well as for the modern equivalents given in footnotes or (occasionally) in the translated text in place of the transliterated Hebrew term.

Illicit Profit				
Actual Weight Purchased	Purchase Weight	“Lbs” Purchased	Price per “lb.”	Price Paid
6 lbs	@1.2 lbs/”lb”	5 lbs	5 shekels	25.00 shekels
Actual Weight Sold	Selling Weight	“Lbs” Sold	Price per “lb.”	Gross Sales
6 lbs	@0.8 lbs/”lb”	7.5	5 shekels	37.50 shekels
Profit: 12.50 shekels				

This does not sound like much (a shekel is slightly more than one-half of an ounce), but a merchant responsible to provide grain for Solomon’s thousands of chariot horses,¹⁵ or food for their trainers, grooms, drivers, &c., or the food, ointments, and oils for his “harem” would stand to become wealthy indeed. The temptation to skim “a little off the top” must have been tremendous—there were fortunes to be made. And even merchant who merely sold cloth, vegetables, or spices (&c.) in the market could increase his profit margin simply by using slightly heavier and lighter weights for buying and selling.

Proverbs 11.1

מֵאֲזֵנֵי מִרְמָה תִּזְעֶבֶת יְהוָה A deceitful scale is an abomination of YHWH
וְאֶבֶן שְׁלֵמָה רְצוֹנוֹ: But an accurate stone is his delight. (Pr 11.1)

This v. describes the scales themselves—two pans suspended from a crossbeam—as “deceitful”. One pan might be heavier than the other, or one set of chains or cords, or the beam itself might be slightly biased. As we saw (above), the difference does not have to be great, just enough to swing the measure in the vendor’s favour whether buying or selling. Again, this could be tested by checking for consistency, using weights from some other source to see if items came out at the same value (weight).

Proverbs 20.23

תִּזְעֶבֶת יְהוָה אֶבֶן וְאֶבֶן Different stones are an abomination of YHWH;
וּמֵאֲזֵנֵי מִרְמָה לֹא־טוֹב: And a deceitful scale is not good. (Pr 20.23)

Apart from the extremely laconic “not good”(!)—which is more than offset by the phrase “abomination of YHWH” (to which we shall turn shortly)—this repeats the observations of the two vv. already discussed.

Proverbs 16.11

פָּלֶס וּמֵאֲזֵנֵי מִשְׁפָּט לַיהוָה The balance and the scales of justice are YHWH’s;
מַעֲשֵׂהוּ כָּל־אֲבָנֵי־כִּיס: All the stones of the bag are his work. (Pr 16.11)

This saying seems to have a dual focus: 11a suggests either that the tools used in the work of justice itself belong to YHWH, or that he gave or established them (the preposition is ambiguous), 11b reminds readers that the stones—the weights that are carried in the bag in order to be used on the scale—were created by him, and are therefore known to him; there can be no deceiving this Judge, no matter how similar in appearance the “differing stones” are.¹⁶ The

¹⁵A modern horse eats about two percent (2%) of its own weight per day. Each of Solomon’s thousands of horses might have eaten 10-15 pounds of feed per day.

¹⁶I have two cobblestones. One, discarded at a work site, is a 4” cube of granite which I hand to people so that they can see just how heavy stone is (about 100 lbs. per cubic foot); I then offer to toss them the other, of about the same appearance and size. When they catch it, they realize that it is lightweight foam—a movie prop “stone” that weighs perhaps two ounces. From a distance of a few feet they are indistinguishable.

Judge who himself created all things knows even the stones under our feet and those that we use for buying and selling—he knows not merely what they are, but (as we would say today) their composition, molecular structure, volume, and mass, and can distinguish one from another at any distance, without effort or “guess”.

All four proverbs say that using two sets of measures—smaller ones for selling, larger ones for buying—is wrong. Just how wrong is a merely “white collar” crime?

Further Considerations

Historical Considerations. These vv. encourage us to infer the existence in Israel of an Iron Age bureaucracy devoted to “licenses, weights, and measures”, but we have no information about such an administration in Israel, nor would they have had the means by which to ensure the degree(s) of precision that we know today—mass production of identical, interchangeable parts would not become possible until the Industrial Revolution.

Without absolute or “official” standards there would, of course, be no way to know that someone was cheating ... unless two different sets of stones were found in his bag, or two sets of baskets at his home or place of business. (And, of course, witnesses would be required to identify the stone(s) used in specific transactions, since carrying stones broke no law.)

Given the vast amount of trade in which Solomon was involved (cf. 1 Kgs 10.14-15, 26-29), he must have had administrators and clerks who were involved with taxes, with import and export duties, with buying and selling grain, silver, gold, iron, bronze, copper, materials for chariots, for the upkeep of the royal palace and “harem” of 1000 women, &c. It is nearly inconceivable that there would not have been some system for ensuring the relative fairness of individual trade—within Israel, at least—but this is logical inference for which we have no evidence.

Proverbial Considerations. As mentioned in the “Introduction” (above), Proverbs is not merely a book of personal morality (although it is that), but a work concerned with the well-being of the nation, designed to teach future leaders what sort of men they needed to be in order for Israel—or any nation—to endure. How is commercial activity related to social stability?

In a word: trust.

If neighbours cannot trust each other to be honest, to be men and women of their word, they will not feel safe, inter-personal relationships will begin to crumble, and the fabric of society—relationships from the casual to the most intensely practical (e.g., business and other legal contracts), from the broadly social to the personal (e.g., marriage), deteriorate, and society itself begins to collapse from the weight of suspicion.

If a man or woman is suspected of being unfaithful, it is very difficult for others to trust him or her in the company of their own spouse.

If a person is suspected of having passed a bad check, he or she may find it difficult to establish a line of credit, or to make other payments via check.¹⁷

If citizens come to believe that the government is concerned only with its own aggrandizement, if they cannot trust the government’s policies and decisions, if they believe that “Look out for Number One” and “Every man for himself” are the rule of the day, then they will begin to act dishonestly toward their fellows and neighbours, because there is no incentive to act otherwise, other than the fear of getting caught. And in a nation as small as Israel at the time of Solomon’s death (slightly larger than the modern State of New Jersey but with a much smaller population) those relationships could very well be what makes the difference between an effective army and an ineffective “force” when it came to repelling an invader. If soldiers cannot trust their commanders, or the government that has conscripted them for war, they are much less likely to fight wholeheartedly, except to save their own lives and homes.

Without genuine, mutual trust between members of any covenant—marital partners, children and parents, citizenry in general, citizens and government (in both directions), even between nation and nation—they have already begun to veer toward either anarchy or totalitarianism, and will find it increasingly difficult to correct that course, since no one is looking out for the things of his neighbour, but rather only for that which concerns him or herself.

¹⁷When I was a boy, I occasionally mowed lawns for a neighbour. The first time that I went, my mother said, “Be sure that he pays you in cash.” When I asked why, she said, “He bounced a check once.”

Future leaders of Israel needed to know that even “crass commerce” was under the eye of YHWH, and that honesty in business was an integral aspect of the justice that they were to oversee and administrate on YHWH’s behalf—as Jehoshaphat would remind the judges in his day (2 Chr 19.4-11)—and that one way to approach a case of dishonest weights and measures was to check for evidence, such as duplicate weights and containers.

Covenantal Considerations. These extremely practical vv. in Proverbs are not original to Solomon. The covenant, as given at Sinai (Ex 20-23; Lv 1-27) and reiterated on the plains of Moab (Dt 1-33) addresses precisely this same issue, suggesting that dishonest trade was already a problem among the Israelites, even before they entered Canaan.¹⁸

When a foreigner settles among you in your land, you shall not mistreat him. The foreigner who settles among you shall be like a native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were foreigners in the land of Egypt. I am YHWH, your God.

You shall do no wrong in justice, in measurement, in weight, or in capacity. You shall have just balances, just weights, a just *ephah*, and a just *hin*.

I am YHWH, your God, who brought you out from the land of Egypt. You shall thus observe all my statutes and all my judgments and you shall do them. I am YHWH. (Lv 19.33-37)

This rather general law becomes even more specific in the Deuteronomic renewal of the covenant in the plains of Moab, shortly before the death of Moses and the crossing of the Jordan.

You shall not have in your bag two stones, a large and a small. You shall not have in your house two *ephahs*, a large and a small. You shall have a full and just stone; you shall have a full and just *ephah*, that your days may be long in the land which YHWH your God is giving you. For everyone who does these things—everyone who acts unjustly—is an abomination to YHWH your God. (Dt 25.13-16)

And now we begin to suspect that upright business dealings are not merely an aspect of wise living, imparted as counsel from “the wise”, but are instead commanded by God himself, and have to do with his very nature, as the statement “I am YHWH” suggests.

Nor is commerce merely the province of the merchant and supplier, of buyer and seller; it is rather an aspect of life with which God intimately concerns himself because there is some sense in which that relationship—as every human relationship—grows out of our creation in the image and likeness of God, and is therefore the concern of God himself. To cheat another human being is in some way to misrepresent the God in whose image we are made.

This is perhaps the reason for the curious statement of Pr 16.11b that “all the stones of the bag are *his work*” (italics added), which implies that no one can cheat and hope to escape the judgment and justice of God, because he himself created all things, including even the stones that the merchant hopes to use in cheating the buyer or seller. And this, like all forms of cheating, entails telling a lie, even though—should the customer (buyer or seller) not ask about the weights—the lie is implicit. The claim of the one using the weights or measures is that he or she is giving “honest weight”¹⁹; this is also the reasonable assumption of the one on the other side of the transaction.

Within the bounds of the covenant, the further motivation—as if such were needed—includes also the reminder of YHWH’s historical work of redeeming Israel out of Egypt (Lv 19.34, 36). The Israelites must not cheat the alien²⁰ because their ancestors had been aliens.

¹⁸And why should it not have been? They too were human beings, with normal human thoughts, desires, motivations, and imaginations.

¹⁹This theme is reiterated by Jesus, who said, “Give, and it will be given to you. They will put into your lap a good measure—pressed down, shaken, overflowing. For by the measure you (use) it will be measured back to you.” (Lk 6:38)

²⁰The Hebrew term generally rendered “alien” or “sojourner” has the sense of “foreign-born” or “someone who has moved into a territory other than that in which he or she was born”.

This bit of “commercial” law is thus a call for fundamental social and administrative justice, since every covenantal reference to “aliens, fatherless,²¹ and widows” is within the context of commands that the Israelites see that members of these three groups receive genuine justice (Ex 22.21-24; Dt 10.17-19; 27.19) and what they need in order to live (Dt 14.29; 16.11-14; 24.17-22; 26.10-13). Those who had no member of the “congregation/assembly of Israel”²² in their immediate family apparently had no one who could stand up in court on their behalf²³; they could be mistreated and cheated without fear of reprisal (cf. Pr 23.10-11). The way that a culture treats its most helpless members shows its true values, especially the degree to which it is concerned for justice and well-being (Hebrew *shalom*).²⁴

Theological Considerations. Perhaps the most surprising aspect of these vv. is the strength with which this practice is condemned: it is called an “abomination of YHWH”, a phrase that occurs only nineteen times in Scripture, only in Deuteronomy (eight times) and Proverbs (eleven times). It refers to idolatrous acts (Dt 7.25; 27.15), including burning one’s children to the gods (Dt 12.31) and passing them through the fire (Dt 18.10); to divination, sorcery, necromancy, &c. (Dt 18.11). It also refers to sacrificing a blemished animal (Dt 17.1), to using income gained by female or male prostitution to pay vows to YHWH (Dt 23.19), even to the “sacrifice of the wicked” (Pr 15.8).

“Abomination of YHWH” also refers to the perversion of justice (Pr 17.15) and to various types of depravity and turpitude (Pr 3.32), including arrogance (Pr 16.5), crookedness (Pr 11.20), wicked plans and deeds (Pr 15.26, 9), to lying (Pr 12.22), and wearing the clothing of the other sex (Dt 22.5).²⁵

Three of four vv. in Proverbs use this phrase to describe the use of false weights and measures; YHWH condemns what appears to be a mere “white-collar” crime as the equivalent of child sacrifice.

Prophetic Considerations. Finally, this same theme occurs at least three times in the prophetic books. Speaking through his servant Amos, YHWH warned the nation that manipulating prices in order to cheat the poor will lead to the destruction of the land (Am 5.5-8). Through Micah, immediately after the famous passage reminding Israel to “do justice by loving kindness and walking humbly with [their] god”, YHWH warned Israel that their unjust marketing had condemned and would destroy them (Mi 6.6-15). Through Ezekiel, YHWH described the new land and temple to the exiles in Babylon, and called on the leaders to replace “violence and destruction” with “justice and righteousness” by using “just balances, a just *ephah*, and a just bath” (Ezk 45.9-12).

CONCLUSION

The authors of the canon of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures consistently present YHWH, Israel’s god, the creator of heaven and earth, as concerned with commercial honesty and integrity. The congruence of these three streams of canonical evidence—covenant, wisdom, and prophecy—demonstrates (as if further proof were needed) that this is a matter of import to the LORD God himself, the god whom we claim to love and worship and adore, and whose nature our lives are to imitate and reflect and thus reveal to the watching world.²⁶

By addressing an aspect of everyday life, these vv. remind us of the fundamental nature of reality itself. Justice is one half of the twofold foundation of the throne of God,²⁷ that dual foundation of justice and

²¹The Hebrew term generally rendered “orphan” should most likely not be understood in our modern sense of “parentless”, but is rather a technical term referring to one who has no father. Hence “widows and orphans” are those who survive the death of the head of their household.

²²The “congregation of Israel” consisted of all males twenty years and older.

²³As Boaz did for Naomi and Ruth (Ru 4.1-11).

²⁴Thus the constant expression of concern for the well-being of widows, fatherless, and aliens in both the Hebrew Bible and Greek New Testament (Ex 22.22-24; Dt 10.18; 14.29; 16.11, 14; 24.17-22; 26.12-13; 27.19; Jb 24.14; Pr 15.25; Is 1.16-17, 23; 10.1-2; Jr 3.3-7; 22.2-4; Ezk 22.6-7; Zc 7.8-10; Mal 3.1-6; Mt 23.14 (≈ Mk 12.40; Lk 20.47); Lk 18.1-6; Ac 6.1; Jas 1.27); perhaps attempts to manipulate this concern for personal gain led to Paul’s detailed instructions to Timothy (1 Tim 5.3-16).

²⁵The latter may be related to the wages of prostitution (cf. Dt 23.19).

²⁶I addressed this three-fold congruence in an earlier paper, “Congruent Visions: Community in Covenant, Wisdom, Prophets”.

²⁷Cf., e.g., Pss 9.8-9; 89.15; 97.2 (contrast Ps 94.20).

righteousness upon which a king establishes his throne,²⁸ and which is to be the touchstone for the life and ministry of every leader.

Every person who involves him or herself in commerce or trade—whether buying or selling or re-selling—is obligated to pursue that business honestly and with integrity, giving fair value and true measure. Fulfilling this expectation by doing one’s best to meet the standard of honesty and fairness is one means by which every individual or corporation contributes to the preservation of his or her (or its) society. (The obligation to do what is right in this area also encourages us to support government’s involvement in examining and testing weights and measures used in public commerce.²⁹)

This obligation also suggests that the welfare of those around us is and ought to be our primary concern, not the margin of our profit. It is our concern because we are societally engaged with one another, even if only through buying and selling “stuff” to and from each other. Failure to recognize this disrupts the social order by injecting doubt or distrust into our relationships, because how can we respond positively to someone whom we meet in one private or public arena whom we suspect has cheated us or others in another situation?

And Christian businesses and businessmen, because of their profession of faith, are to be models of honesty, probity, integrity, righteousness, and justice. They are to model for their neighbours what it means to do good work, and to do it well and at a fair price or for a fair wage. They are to pay their employees justly. They are to treat them well, as brothers and sisters for whom Christ died, or—if they do not profess or confess Christ—at least as men and women worthy of respect by virtue of their creation in the image of God. Nor are they only to model these things; they are also to work for them, using the voice given them by their position in society. They are to be a source of goodness and well-doing, and thus model the person of the God whom they profess.

THOUGHTS ON FINITUDE (ending without a finish)

This paper (and its author) face all of the problems of finitude, and so have left unaddressed a number of questions, some of which further the discussion, some of which are new or different issues. Here is a partial list.

1. This paper does not address Pr 20.14, which describes the process that we think of as “bargaining”, or may call “haggling”. See the appendix.
2. Nor does it address a question that both C. S. Lewis and Dorothy L. Sayers raise in their essays on work (see the bibliography), namely, the question of doing work that is worth doing—making things that are good because they are necessary and worth having. This question raises that of the entire process of invention, production, sale, use, and (eventual) disposal.
3. This paper also seems to raise the issue of advertising, which is both culturally ubiquitous and very nearly inescapable, but which is essentially false, in that it promises what it cannot deliver. Is advertising necessarily a lie? Is it in essence a “false weight”, since it says (or, more commonly, implies) that we are buying something that cannot be bought, or that cannot be provided by a(ny) material thing.
4. We could also explore the significance of the proverbs as revelations of the person and character of God himself, especially the nature of the relationship between the members of the Trinity. As the pattern of our lives is to reflect the nature of God, cheating is excluded.

Leaving them unaddressed must not imply that these questions are less important, or less necessary for the good of society, for the good of the Kingdom of God, or (even) for our individual good.

fcj
All Souls’ MMX

²⁸Cf., e.g., Pr 16.12; 20.8, 28; 25.5; 29.14; Is 9.6; 16.5 (also 1 Kgs 3.9).

²⁹On the other hand, a few types of business, such as diamond buying, selling, cutting (&c.) in certain cities, seem able to operate on an internal standard of trust, without governmental involvement.

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APPENDIX

I. THE GAME CALLED “HAGGLE”

The book of Proverbs addresses another aspect of commerce: “bargaining” (or “haggling”), in the market.

PROVERBS 20.14

רַע רַע יֹאמֵר הַקּוֹנֵה Bad, bad, says the buyer,
וְאָזַל לוֹ אִזּוֹ יִתְהַלֵּל: But [when he] goes his way, then he boasts. (Pr 20.14)

At first glance this saying appears to warn the seller against being cheated. Part of the buyer’s rhetoric is to complain that merchandise is less than perfect, but once the bargain has been struck and he is on his way, goods in hand, he brags about the “deal” he has just made.

This practice may strike us in the West as deceitful, even dishonest, so that we are tempted to read it in light of Pr 20.17: “Bread gotten by lies is sweet to a man, but afterward his mouth is filled with gravel”.

Middle Eastern culture, however, has a quite different perspective on buying and selling than in the States, where bargaining is only permitted at yard sales, or when buying a house or car.³⁰ Here both buyer and seller know the real rule: the seller is trying to get as much money as possible, and so has both an “asking” price and a “real” price, below which he will not sell, just as the buyer, who is trying to spend as little as possible, has an “offer” as well as a “real” price above which he will not buy. The goal of “bargaining” in the USA is to discover each other’s “real” price “without revealing one’s own” (Hall 1969, 151).

In the modern Middle East (at least), “bargaining is not only a means of passing a day but actually a technique of interpersonal relations” (Hall 1969, 129).³¹

In the Middle Eastern market there is only one “real” price, which is “determined ... by the market or the situation” that is “known to both parties” (Hall 1969, 151). This means that the price “asked” or “offered” is not a percentage of the “real” price, but a statement about the attitudes of the parties. This table (adapted from Hall (1969, 151), is based on the price of a squash in the Damascus bazaar, and illustrates the point.

The Game of Haggling		
	<i>Piasters</i>	Meaning
Seller’s asking prices	12 or more	seller is ignorant of real value; no sale
	10	seller doesn’t want to sell; an insult, ³² leading to arguments and fights
	8	will sell; let’s bargaining
	7	seller is willing to sell under market price
Market Price	6	(the “pivot”)
Buyer’s offering prices	5	buyer is willing to pay over market price
	4	will buy; let’s bargain
	2	buyer doesn’t want to buy; an insult, leading to arguments & fighting
	1	buyer is ignorant of real value; no sale

³⁰Today’s practice of playing off scholarship offers from different colleges against each other is not that far removed.

³¹This discussion owes much to Hall (1969), as well as to informal conversations with friends who lived in Jordan and Lebanon for many years. I must also note, however, that there were well-established prices for certain items (e.g., slaves) that are remarkably consistent across the ANE over time (Kitchen 2001, 344-45 and 639), which suggests that other items (perhaps those of greater value) may have had more or less “fixed” or “recognized” values.

³²After hearing this paper, Mr Scott Hampton said that in Tanzania sellers normally quoted him a price in the “insult” range, to which he would smile and reply, “You’re just saying that because I’m white, right?”, and then offer a bid. This would lead to a bargaining session that usually ended with him paying slightly above the “pivot”. (Private communication 30 October 2010.)

According to Pr 20.14b, the buyer purchased the merchandise, which means that he knew enough of the rules of the market to bargain in an acceptable manner. His boasting further suggests that he paid what he considered a “good” price. This does not necessarily mean that he paid less than its market price. If he wanted or needed it badly, or even if he knew that he was bargaining with a shrewd salesman, he could walk away feeling quite pleased. And if he bought it for less than its “market value” (in the true sense of the term), then he may have been even more pleased. On the other hand, if he boasts to his household or friends, he may be putting on the best possible face, and promoting his skill at bargaining.

A biblical example of this practice may be Hiram’s conversation with Solomon concerning payment for the materials and workers supplied by Hiram to build the Temple and royal palace in Jerusalem. Solomon offered Hiram “twenty cities”, but when Hiram saw them, “the offer, it pleased him not”:

And Hiram came from Tyre to see the cities which Solomon had given him, but they did not please him. He said, “What are these cities which you are giving me, my brother?” And he called them the Land of Cabul to this day. And Hiram sent the king one hundred-twenty talents of gold. (1 Kgs 9.12-14)

Was Hiram bargaining for more cities, or for a greater payment by some other means? Or was this merely the buyer’s usual “Bad, bad”? It seems unlikely that Hiram felt genuinely insulted by the cities with which Solomon “paid” him, since he then sent him one hundred-twenty talents of gold (more than four tons!).³³

To return to Pr 20.14, what is its purpose? What new information does it contain (especially in a culture in which bargaining was ubiquitous)? What advice does it offer for wise living or just rule? Or was it perhaps merely a humorous mini-parable, saying “This is the way things are.”

We need first to realize that this bit of wisdom can only come from the perspective of the buyer. The seller will claim that his merchandise is “good, good”; why would he then boast of having sold something (unless it was in fact “bad, bad”)? Nor is he forced to sell, at any price (apart from the threat of violence or due to some dire necessity).

Perhaps this v. was intended specifically for those who will be buying or selling on behalf of the government—forced labour, chariotry, army, international relations—in which case remembering that a buyer’s complaint is merely part of his strategy might save the national government a great deal of silver. Unlike the vv. about weights and measures, which would encourage an official buyer to check carefully what was being used to weigh or measure out, e.g., grain, this one seems merely to reflect human nature, and to remind the reader that the buyer will always boast that he made a good deal, but this does not necessarily mean that he is guilty of anything other than pride.

³³A talent weighed 50-75 pounds.

II. COMPARATIVE WEIGHTS IN IRON AGE ISRAEL & THE ANE

		English	shekels	lbs.	kg	
כִּכָּר	<i>kikkar</i>	“talent”	3000	75-80 lb.	34-36kg	
מָנֶה	<i>maneh</i>	“mina”	50-60	1.26 lb.	571.2g	Babylonian: 60 shekels = 2 lbs/982.2g Ezekiel: 50 shekels = 1.67 lbs/818.6g
שֶׁקֶל	<i>shekel</i> (light)	“shekel”		0.403 oz.	11.4g	
	<i>shekel</i> (heavy)				12.5g	
פִּים	<i>pim</i>	“pim”	.667	0.268 oz.	7.5g	1 Sam 13.21 (only)
בֶּקָע	<i>beqa</i>	“beka”	.5	0.201 oz.	5.7g	
גֵּרָה	<i>gera</i>	“gera”	.05	8.71 grains	0.57g	Ex 30.13; Lv 27.25; Nu 3.47; 18.16; Ezk 45.12

1. The Hebrew word *kikkar*, translated “talent” (which comes from Greek *talanton*, “scale, balance” via Latin *talentum*) is also translated “round”, “loaf”, or “environs/region”, perhaps because a “talent-worth” of metal would be cast in this shape, or because the weight used to measure a talent was itself round.
2. There is no evidence that the “shekel of the sanctuary” (Ex 30.13, 24; 38.24-26) was an official national measure.
3. The *gera* is mentioned in BH only in order to define the *shekel*.

This table, based on two biblical passages from the beginning and end of Israel’s history, shows that values were not static (adapted from de Vaux 1965, 204-05).

Relative Values of Weights									
Based on Exodus 38.25-26					Based on Ezekiel 45.11				
talent	1				talent	1			
<i>mina</i>	60	1			<i>mina</i>	60	1		
<i>shekel</i>	3000	50	1		<i>shekel</i>	3600	60	1	
<i>beqa</i>	6000	100	2	1					
					<i>gerah</i>	72000	1200	20	1

A Greek talent was the equivalent of a mass of water that would fill an amphora (Humphrey, et al., 487). The weight of a talent varied across the ancient world:

Comparative Weight of “Talent” ³⁴				
Region of Use	lbs.	kg		
Egypt	60	27.0	<i>Jewish Encyclopedia</i>	
Babylon	67	30.3		“royal talent” doubled all values
Attic Greece	57	26.0	Herodotus	salary for 9 years of skilled work 1 months’ wages of a trireme crew (c. 200) 1 day’s salary for 6000 mercenaries
Rome	71	32.3		
“heavy common”	130	58.9	1 st century CE	

The History of the Word “Talent”

Talent. (F. – L. – Gk.) The sense of ‘ability’ is from the parable; Matt. xxv. F. *talent*, ‘a talent in money; also will, desire;’ Cot. – L. *talentum*. – Gk. τάλαντον, a balance, weight, sum of money, talent. Named from being lifted and

³⁴This table is extracted from the article “Talent (measurement)”, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talent_%28measurement%29 (accessed 1.xi.MMX).

weighed; cf. Skt. *tul*, L. *tollere*, to lift, Gk. *τάλας*, sustaining. (√TAL.) Allied to Tolerate. Der. *talented*, in use before A. D. 1700.³⁵

talent (n.)

late 13c., “inclination, disposition, will, desire,” from O.Fr. *talent*, from M.L. *talenta*, pl. of *talentum* “inclination, leaning, will, desire” (1098), in classical L. “balance, weight, sum of money,” from Gk. *talanton* “balance, weight, sum,” from PIE **tel*, **tol* “to bear, carry” (see *extol*).

Originally an ancient unit of weight or money (varying greatly and attested in O.E. as *talente*), the M.L. and common Romanic sense developed from figurative use of the word in the sense of “money.” Meaning “special natural ability, aptitude,” developed mid-14c., from the parable of the talents in Matt. xxv:14-30. Related: *Talented*.³⁶

The Parable of the Talents

Jesus’ parable of the talents thus concerns large-scale investment (Mt 25.14-30). If a talent represented a month’s salary for a 200-man crew of a trireme, and a month’s salary was the equivalent of \$2000 (in AD 2010), a single talent of silver was worth c. \$400,000. The first servant thus received roughly four million dollars to invest, the second two million, and the third one million. These were not minor amounts (in drastic contrast to the common depiction of one, five, or ten coins) and their master was, by implication, fabulously wealthy to be able to entrust this amount—seven millions—to their care.

The Parable of the Minas

The mina being worth 1/60 of a talent, on the other hand, Jesus’ parable of the minas (Lk 19.11-27) deals with much more “normal” amounts. Ten minas (one-sixth of a talent) would be “worth” about \$333, so the nobleman’s “deposit” would have been comparable to a modern “micro-loan”, and thus more in keeping with what we might consider a reasonable amount to lend to a servant.

³⁵Walter W. Skeat, *A concise etymological dictionary of the English language*, p. 489.

http://books.google.com/books?id=k2FHAAAAYAAJ&dq=reverend+skeat+etymology&source=gbs_navlinks_s
(accessed 1.xi.MMX).

³⁶Douglas Harper, *Online Etymological Dictionary*. <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=talent> (accessed 1.xi.MMX).

III: A SAMPLING OF PROPHETIC STATEMENTS REGARDING WEIGHTS & MEASURES

AMOS (early-mid 8th century BC)

When will the new moon be over, that we may sell grain,
And the sabbath, that we may open the wheat,
To *shrink the bushel* and *swell the shekel*,
And to *cheat with dishonest scales*
In order to buy the helpless for money
And the needy for a pair of sandals,
And we may sell *the refuse of the wheat*?
YHWH has sworn by the pride of Jacob,
Indeed, I will never forget any of their deeds.
Because of this will not the land quake
And everyone who dwells in it mourn?
Indeed, all of it will rise up like the Nile,
And it will be tossed about
And it will subside like the Nile of Egypt. (Am 5.5-8; italics added)

MICAH (late 8th century BC)

With what shall I come before YHWH,
Shall I bow before the God on high?
Shall I come to him with burnt offerings,
With yearling calves?
Does YHWH delight in thousands of rams,
In ten thousand rivers of oil?
Shall I present my firstborn for my rebellious acts,
The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?
He has told you, man, what is good;
And what does YHWH require of you
But to do justice, to love kindness,
And to walk humbly with your God?
YHWH's voice calls to the city
(And it is sound wisdom to fear your name):
Hear, O tribe!
Who has appointed its time?
Is there yet a man in the wicked house, treasures of wickedness, and a short, cursed measure?
Can I justify *wicked scales*
And *a bag of deceptive weights*?
For the city's rich men are full of violence,
Her residents speak lies,
And their tongue is deceitful in their mouth. (Mi 6.6-12; italics added)

EZEKIEL (early 6th century BC)

Thus says the god YHWH: Enough, you leaders of Israel; put away violence and destruction, and practice justice and righteousness. Stop your *expropriations* from My people, declares the god YHWH. You shall have *just balances, a just ephah and a just bath*.

The *ephah* and the *bath* shall be the same quantity,

so that the *bath* will contain a tenth of a *homer*
 and the *ephah* a tenth of a *homer*;
 their standard shall be according to the *homer*.

The *shekel* shall be twenty *gerahs*;

Twenty *shekels*, twenty-five *shekels*, [and] fifteen *shekels* shall be your *maneh*. (Ezk 45.9-12; italics added)

1. The repetition of essentially the same call to just weights and measures over a period of nearly two centuries (depending on the precise dates of the oracles in Amos and Ezekiel) shows that commercial dishonesty was an ongoing problem in Israel.
2. Its connection to idolatrous wickedness and thus its susceptibility to judgment—to the extent of national destruction and exile—shows how serious a matter it is in YHWH’s eyes.
3. Its link to justice shows that its essential function in the covenantal and wisdom materials was to remind Israel that the divine call for justice pervades all of life, including the “merely” commercial business of buying and selling.
4. Its presence in the “utopian” section of Ezekiel (40-48) suggests how strong a temptation it was; that it specifically addressed “leaders” further connects this warning to the purpose of the book of Proverbs.

IV: "YHWH'S ABOMINATION"

The construct chain *tô^bbat YHWH* (תועבת יהוה) occurs only in the books of Dt (8x) and Pr (11x).³⁷

פְּסִילֵי אֱלֹהֵיהֶם תִּשְׂרֹפוּן בְּאֵשׁ לֹא־תַחַמְדוּ כֶסֶף וְזָהָב עֲלֵיהֶם וְלָקַחְתָּ לָךְ פֶּן תִּנְקַשׁ בּוֹ כִּי תוֹעֵבַת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ הוּא:	Dt 7.25	images-of their-gods you-burn/mp in-the-fire not you- desire silver &-gold upon-them &-you-took to-you lest you-be-ensnared in-him for abomination-of YHWH your- god he/it
לֹא־תַעֲשֶׂה כֵן לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ כִּי כָל־תוֹעֵבַת יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר שָׂנֵא עָשׂוּ לְאֱלֹהֵיהֶם כִּי גַם אֶת־בְּנֵיהֶם וְאֶת־בָּנוֹתֵיהֶם יִשְׂרְפוּ בְּאֵשׁ לְאֱלֹהֵיהֶם:	Dt 12.31	not you-do/ms thus to-YHWH your-god for all-of abomination-of YHWH which he-hated they-did to-their-gods for also O their-sons &-O their-daughters they-burn in-the-fire to-their-gods
לֹא־תֹזְבַח לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ שׂוֹר וְשֵׂה אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה בּוֹ מוֹם כָּל דְּבַר רָע כִּי תוֹעֵבַת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ הוּא:	Dt 17.1	not you-sacrifice to-YHWH your god bull &-lamb which he/it-is in-him/it blemish all word bad for abomination-of YHWH your god he/it
כִּי־תוֹעֵבַת יְהוָה כָּל־עֲשֵׂה אֱלֹהִים וּבְגִלְלֵי תוֹעֵבַת הָאֱלֹהִים יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מִזֵּרֵי אֲוָתָם מִפְּנֵיךָ:	Dt 18.12	for abomination-of YHWH all-of doing-one/m these [below] &-on-account-of the-abominations the-these [below] YHWH your god dispossessing-one/m O-them from-your-face
לֹא־יְהִיָּה כְּלִי־גִבֹר עַל־אִשָּׁה וְלֹא־יִלְבַּשׁ גִּבֹר שִׁמְלַת אִשָּׁה כִּי תוֹעֵבַת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ כָּל־עֲשֵׂה אֱלֹהִים:	Dt 22.5	not he/it-is vessel-of man upon woman &-not he/it-wears man garment-of woman for abomination-of YHWH all-of doing-one these
לֹא־תָבִיא אֶתְנָן זֹנָה וּמַחִיר כְּלָב בֵּית יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְכָל־נֶדֶר כִּי תוֹעֵבַת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ גַּם־שְׁנֵיהֶם:	Dt 23.19	not you-bring/ms hire-of prostitute &-wage-of dog house-of YHWH your god to-all-of vow for abomination-of YHWH your god also two-of-them
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ כָּל־עֲשֵׂה אֱלֹהִים כָּל עֲשֵׂה עֲוֹל: כִּי תוֹעֵבַת	Dt 25.16	for abomination-of YHWH your-god all-of doing-one these [below] all-of doing-one/m injustice
אָרוּר הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה פֶסֶל וּמַסַּכָּה תוֹעֵבַת יְהוָה מַעֲשֵׂה יָדָיו חֲרָשׁ וְשֵׁם בְּסֹתֵר וְעָנּוּ כָל־הָעָם וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:	Dt 27.15	cursed-one/m the-man who he/makes image &-molten- image abomination-of YHWH work-of hands-of engraver &-placing-one/m in-the-secret and-they-answered all-of the-people &-they-said amen
כִּי תוֹעֵבַת יְהוָה נָלוּז וְאֶת־יְשָׁרִים סוּדוֹ:	Pr 3.32	for abomination-of YHWH turning-aside-one &-with upright-ones his-counsel
מֵאֲזֵנֵי מִרְמָה תוֹעֵבַת יְהוָה וְאֶבֶן שְׁלֵמָה רְצוֹנוֹ:	Pr 11.1	scales-of deceit abomination-of YHWH &-stone whole-one his-delight
תוֹעֵבַת יְהוָה עֲקָשֵׁי־לֵב וּרְצוֹנוֹ תְּמִימֵי דֶרֶךְ:	Pr 11.20	abomination-of YHWH crooked-ones-of heart &-his-delight complete-ones-of way
תוֹעֵבַת יְהוָה שִׁפְתֵי־שָׁקֶר וְעֵשִׂי אֲמוֹנָה רְצוֹנוֹ:	Pr 12.22	abomination-of YHWH lips-of lie &-making-ones-of truth his-delight
זֶבַח רָשָׁעִים תוֹעֵבַת יְהוָה וּתְפִלַּת יְשָׁרִים רְצוֹנוֹ:	Pr 15.8	sacrifice-of bad-ones abomination-of YHWH &-prayer-of upright-ones his-delight
תוֹעֵבַת יְהוָה דֶּרֶךְ רָשָׁע וּמְרַדֵּף צְדָקָה יֶאֱהָב:	Pr 15.9	abomination-of YHWH way-of wicked &-pursuer-of righteousness he-loves
תוֹעֵבַת יְהוָה מַחֲשָׁבוֹת רָע וּטְהָרִים אֲמָרֵי־נֶעֱמָ:	Pr 15.26	abomination-of YHWH reckonings-of evil &-clean-ones words-of pleasantness
תוֹעֵבַת יְהוָה כָּל־גְּבוּה־לֵב יָד לְיָד לֹא יִנְקָה:	Pr 16.5	abomination-of YHWH all-of high-of heart hand to-hand not he-is-innocent
מִצְדִּיק רָשָׁע וּמִרְשִׁיעַ צְדִיק תוֹעֵבַת יְהוָה גַּם־שְׁנֵיהֶם:	Pr 17.15	justifying-one-of bad-one & condemning-one-of right-one abomination-of YHWH two-of-them

³⁷Statistics according to searches conducted using GramCORD and checked against concordances (Lisowsky, Even-Shoshan).

אֶבֶן וְאֶבֶן אֵיפָה וְאֵיפָה תּוֹעֵבַת יְהוָה גַּם־שְׁנֵיהֶם:	Pr 20.10	stone &-stone ephah &-ephah abomination-of YHWH even two-of-them
תּוֹעֵבַת יְהוָה אֶבֶן וְאֶבֶן וּמֵאֲזַנֵי מִרְמָה לֹא־טוֹב:	Pr 20.23	abomination-of YHWH stone &-stone &-scales-of deceit not good-one

Dt 18.9-13

כִּי אַתָּה בָּא אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לָךְ לֹא־תִלְמַד לַעֲשׂוֹת כְּתוֹעֵבַת הַגּוֹיִם הָהֵם:	9	for you/ms going-one unto the-land which YHWH your god giving-one/m to-you/ms not you-learn/ms to-do like-abominations-of the-nations the-them
לֹא־יִמָּצָא בְךָ מַעֲבִיר בְּנוֹ וּבִתּוֹ בְּאֵשׁ קֶסֶם קְסָמִים מְעוֹנֵן וּמְנַחֵשׁ וּמְכַשֵּׁף:	10	not he-is-found in-you/ms passing-through-one/m his-son &-his-daughter in-the-fire divining-one/m divinations soothsaying-one/m &-omen-reading-one/m &-sorcery- doing-one/m
וְחָכֵר חֶבֶר וְשָׂאֵל אוֹב וַיִּדְעֵנִי וְדָרַשׁ אֶל־הַמֵּתִים:	11	&-casting-spell-one/m spell &-asking-one necromancer &-intimate-one &-seeking-one unto the-dead-ones/m
כִּי־תוֹעֵבַת יְהוָה כָּל־עֲשֵׂה אֵלֶּה וּבְגַלְלַת הַתּוֹעֵבַת הָאֵלֶּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ מוֹרִישׁ אוֹתָם מִפְּנֵיךָ:	12	for abomination-of YHWH all-of doing-one these &-on-account-of the-abominations the-these YHWH your- god dispossessing-one O-them/m from-your-face
תָּמִים תְּהִיָּה עִם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ:	13	complete-ones/m you-are/ms with YHWH your-god

Dt 25.13-15

לֹא־יְהִיָּה לָךְ בְּכִיסֶּךָ אֶבֶן וְאֶבֶן גְּדוֹלָה וְקִטְנָה:	13	not he-is to-you/ms in-your-bag stone &-stone large-one &-small-one
לֹא־יְהִיָּה לָךְ בְּבֵיתֶךָ אֵיפָה וְאֵיפָה גְּדוֹלָה וְקִטְנָה:	14	not he-is to-you in-your-house ephah &-ephah large-one &-small-one
אֶבֶן שְׁלֵמָה וְצֹדֵק יְהוָה לָךְ אֵיפָה שְׁלֵמָה וְצֹדֵק יְהוָה לָךְ לְמַעַן יֵאָרְכוּ יָמֶיךָ עַל הָאָרֶמֶה אֲשֶׁר־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לָךְ:	15	stone whole-one &-just-one he-is to-you/ms ephah whole-one &-just-one he-is to-you/ms in-order-that they-may-lengthen/m your-days upon the-ground which YHWH your-god giving-one to-you/ms

Idolatry, Paganism, Divination, &c.

Dt 7.25	images-of their-gods you-burn/mp in-the-fire not you-desire silver &-gold upon-them &-you-took to-you lest you-be-ensnared in-him for abomination-of YHWH your-god he	idols silver/gold associated with idols
Dt 27.15	cursed-one/m the-man who he-makes image &-molten-image abomination-of YHWH work-of hands-of engraver &-placing-one/m in-the-secret and-they-answered all-of the-people &-they-said amen	idolatry
Dt 12.31	not you-do/ms thus to-YHWH your-god for all-of abomination-of YHWH which he-hated they-did to-their-gods for also O their-sons &- O their-daughters they-burn in-the-fire to-their-gods	learning Canaanite worship burning children to god(s)
Dt 18.12	for abomination-of YHWH all-of doing-one/m these [below] &-on-account-of the-abominations the-these [below] YHWH your god dispossessing-one/m O-them from-your-face	passing children through fire divination soothsaying, omen-reading, sorcery, spells, necromancer, familiars (18.9-11)
Dt 17.1	not you-sacrifice to-YHWH your god bull &-lamb which he-is in-him blemish all word bad for abomination-of YHWH your god he	blemished sacrificial animal
Pr 15.8	sacrifice-of bad-ones abomination-of YHWH &-prayer-of upright-ones his-delight	sacrifice of the wicked
Dt 23.19	not you-bring/ms hire-of prostitute &-wage-of dog house-of YHWH your god to-all-of vow for abomination-of YHWH your god also two-of-them	using wages of prostitution (female, male) to pay vows to YHWH

Dishonest Commerce

Dt 25.16	for abomination-of YHWH your-god all-of doing-one these [below] all-of doing-one/m injustice	differing weights and measures (25.13-15)
Pr 11.1	scales-of deceit abomination-of YHWH &-stone whole-one his-delight	deceitful measures
Pr 20.10	stone &-stone ephah &-ephah abomination-of YHWH even two-of-them	deceitful measures
Pr 20.23	abomination-of YHWH stone &-stone &-scales-of deceit not good-one	deceitful measures

Injustice

Pr 17.15	justifying-one-of bad-one & condemning-one-of right-one abomination-of YHWH two-of-them	deliberate miscarriage of justice
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Moral Turpitude (*varia*)

Pr 3.32	for abomination-of YHWH turning-aside-one &-with upright-ones his-counsel	turning aside (opp. "upright")
Pr 16.5	abomination-of YHWH all-of high-of heart hand to-hand not he-is-innocent	arrogance ("high-hearted")
Pr 11.20	abomination-of YHWH crooked-ones-of heart &-his-delight complete-ones-of way	crooked heart
Pr 15.26	abomination-of YHWH reckonings-of evil &-clean-ones words-of pleasantness	plans of the wicked
Pr 15.9	abomination-of YHWH way-of wicked &-pursuer-of righteousness he-loves	way of the wicked
Pr 12.22	abomination-of YHWH lips-of lie &-making-ones-of truth his-delight	lying lips
Dt 22.5	not he-is vessel-of man upon woman &-not he-wears man garment-of woman for abomination-of YHWH all-of doing-one these	wearing clothes of other sex

Referent	Dt	Pr	Total
Idolatry, Pagan Practices	4		4
Dishonest Commerce	1	3	4
Dishonest/Immoral Worship	2	1	3
"Various" immoralities	1	6	7
Injustice		1	1
	8	11	19