

Shalom Aleikhem! My name is Hakhmah.

Hey! Are you listening to me? I'm calling you!

Maybe if I just talk louder! OK--I'm raising my voice!

Now can you hear me?

I'm right here! You can't miss me!

I'm in the most public places--

where you do business, where you go shopping,

where you go to school, where you meet your friends

and your co-workers.

I'm standing on the heights, and at the crossroads,

and at the city gates!

I'm calling you, my people!

I'm crying out to all humanity!

You who are simple, learn good sense!

You who are foolish, let your hearts understand!

Listen! This is important! It's worthy! It's true!

From my mouth you will never hear wickedness --

or bitterness--or hatred.

Only truth. Only righteousness.

Because evil speech of any kind--

gossip, meanness, lies--

to me they're all an abomination--you know, like the

way I feel about idols and false gods and meaningless

sacrifices.

I don't want to hear that from you--

so you certainly won't hear it from me!

My words--all of them--are righteous.

**They're never twisted or crooked or abusive or
manipulative or deceptive!**

Everything I say is simple, uncomplicated.

Plain and easy to understand--that is if you want to!

**Take my instruction instead of silver and gold and
money and jewels and fine furniture and clothes and
phones and prestige and oh so many things you crave
and covet and think you gotta have!**

You know--the "must haves"!

**I'm worth so much more than the things you want--
because nothing you want can possibly compare with
me!**

So let me tell you about myself:

The thing that's most important to me is that you understand what it means to revere God.

That is wisdom, you know!

So, one important way to revere God is to feel quite the opposite about evil, about pride, about arrogance!

Hatred of these--moving in the opposite direction of these--moves you toward reverence for God!

I taught you that in the book of Job, remember? (28:28)

“Reverence for God--that is wisdom. And to turn aside from evil is understanding.”

That's good advice. And you can trust me to give that to you.

**Whenever you're facing tough decisions, seek me, look
to me for guidance, listen to me--
my voice will always straighten your paths
and show you the way to go.**

What else about me? Well, how about insight?

**Insight is a gift I give to all of you who seek me and love
me.**

**When you quiet yourselves and listen to me, and let me
teach you, you can see what's inside.**

You have a deep understanding--

the sort of knowledge you can use for your life--

so you can discern what is good and what is evil,

who you can trust and who deceives,

the difference between truth and lies.

I help you see through that veneer of perfection to the violence that's simmering underneath.

What else? I'm strong--stronger than any outward weapons.

My strength is truth and righteousness, faith and peace, mercy and love--everything you need to fight for justice in this world!

And what about rulers? They rule by me.

And by rulers I mean righteous rulers, rulers who govern with justice and who lead with love and with integrity--who give of themselves for others, for the common good!

They don't oppress or dominate or cheat or lie or use violence.

They're mature in mind and spirit--they use reason, intelligence, and compassion.

Any other so-called rulers or governors or judges or leaders have no authority, because they lead without Wisdom--without me!

I hope you know by now that I am the voice of love.

I love those who love me. And those who don't?

To them my invitation stands: come, seek me.

For those who seek me find me, and become my own, my beloved children.

My fruit is the sweetest. My wealth is the most enduring. My harvest is the most abundant!

If you want what I have, look for me--

and you will find me--

walking along the roads of righteousness and the paths of justice.

Come, walk with me and discover the riches that await you!

You who love me are my children, and you will inherit more than you can imagine.

I will fill your storehouses with treasures beyond belief!

Ohh--you're listening now, aren't you? Treasures!

Inheritance! You like the sound of that!

What do you think I mean by it?

Look, I know you have needs.

Some of you are really struggling. You're in debt.

You have big bills to pay just to be healthy, or educate your kids, or pay the rent or the mortgage, or put food on the table.

I get it, and I will help you. I will provide for you.

But when I speak of your inheritance, your treasure, do you think I'm talking about wealth?

About status? About having more stuff?

Then you're not listening carefully.

You want stuff? Well, I offer a different kind of stuff!

**I offer the very stuff of life--_the substance of existence,
of being, of what is!**

**You're Bible translation might say you'll inherit
"wealth," but that doesn't begin to describe what you'll
inherit.**

**I already told you that I'm better than silver and gold
and all your worldly desires!**

**Don't you know I'm talking about a different kind of
treasure?**

**Keep on listening, my dear ones, and you will learn and
you will understand what I mean by "substance."**

**But first I want to tell you more about who I really am--
how I came to be!**

I was God's very first deed, at the very beginning.

I'm from way, way back--from time everlasting!

**You see, I was brought forth before the earth even
existed--before the deep waters--before the mountains
or hills or fields or seas, or any creatures.**

When God established the heavens--I was there!

When God assigned limits to the sea--I was there!

**When God drew the circle of the horizon upon the
deep-- I was there!**

**And when God marked out the foundations of the
earth-- I was there!**

**I know you can't even wrap your minds around it,
but this is who I am--**

All the time that God was creating the universe,

I was there--with God--like a master worker--

God's faithful advisor!

**I wasn't just watching--I was pitching right in and
you betcha, I was working hard!**

**God and me--we were getting pretty exhausted,
and loving it! Every minute!**

And--oh!--how we rejoiced! How we celebrated!

**Every day we'd create something new, and it was all so
beautiful and wonderful and miraculous!**

Every day we'd dance and delight in this amazing creation!

And, on that last day, oh how I took such a special delight in you--you human beings!

I remember it so well: when God created the universe, God looked at me--twinkle in the eye--and said,

"Let's make humankind in our image."

Right? It's all right there in your Bibles--

Genesis, chapter 1, verse 26!

God said, "Let us make humankind in our image."

And that's just what happened!

Each and every one of you is created in our image.

And we love you so!!!

Now will you listen to me, my children?

**Do my words have authority for you, now that you
know who I really am?**

Now that you know that I'm the Real Deal?

**Do you understand now that I, Wisdom, am not some
passing fancy--like a genie in a lamp or some toy
for you to play with and then cast aside when
something else looks shinier, or more attractive,
or more interesting, or more fun,
as if you can have me back just like that (snap fingers)--
at your beck and call? It doesn't work that way.**

When I speak, my voice matters, because I am the voice of God in your ear, in your mind, and in your heart.

And happy are you who keep my ways.

Happy are you who listen to me, who watch for me every day, who wait for me at my door--like my kids all excited for me to come home!

Because you got my invitation and, unlike those who were too busy or had “better” things to do, you ran eagerly to my house!

And I hope you’re glad you did!

So--pay attention, and become wise.

It takes practice. It takes perseverance.

It takes discipline. Don’t neglect it.

**Don't let yourselves get lazy,
or get discouraged and give up.**

**Keep at it, because, you know--I'm always with you--
guiding you, helping you.**

I'm your cheerleader, and your biggest fan!

Kinda like your mom--

or the mom you wished you'd had!

Trust me, you will be happy.

**Remember earlier I said you'll inherit the very
"substance" of life, of your being, of all Being?**

I know that's hard to understand. But trust me--

if you listen to me, if you heed my counsel,

if you pay attention,

**if you discipline yourselves in pursuit of wisdom,
if you seek me with your whole heart you will find me,
and when you find me, you find life--**

which means you find what is best of all--

the favor of God! And that's as good as it gets!

But I have to warn you:

If you miss me--and, like I said, you really can't miss me--

-I'm in the public square, at the heights, at the

crossroads, and I'm calling--I'm crying out to you!

But if somehow you still miss me, you do violence to

your own souls. You destroy your very selves.

I'm right here and you can't miss me.

And yet so many of you do. And I'm telling you--

when you miss me, you miss your selves.

You lose yourselves-- your souls.

**Now my children, I don't want to leave you feeling
forlorn. All of my instruction comes to you with love.**

**It's because I love you that I teach you these things--
for your good--that all will be well with you.**

For all is well. Trust me. Learn from me.

Love me as I love you.