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A Soothing Tongue is a Tree of Life

14:33 to 15:4

A proverb is a short and memorable saying designed to be our blueprint for living in the world that ADONAI has created. It is important to note that proverbs are not promises; they are generally true principles, all other things being equal.

Lady Wisdom (to see link click [Am](#) - Lady Wisdom's Rebuke of the Foolish) comes to rest in the heart of one who has discernment. Wisdom is an inner quality. Those who are wise are wise from the core of their being and choose life. And in the midst of fools she reveals herself (14:33 Hebrew). However, fools contrast their response to her. They choose Madam Folly and death (see [Bo](#) - Madam Folly's Invitation to Death). Even though Lady Wisdom has revealed herself among the masses of fools at the city gate, they have no heart for her. The teaching point of this proverb instructs young men to move beyond Solomon's mere revelation of Lady Wisdom, to giving her a final resting place in their hearts.²⁸⁹

Righteousness makes a nation great, but sin is a disgrace to any people (14:34 Hebrew). A characteristic doctrine in the Bible is that true greatness of a nation rests upon the exercise of justice and the pursuit of worthy aims, not merely upon military strength or imperial expansion. Righteousness, the behavior associated with wisdom, helps a nation. The proverb is ambiguous and could be applied equally to the righteous acts of an individual or to societal righteousness. As defined throughout Proverbs, this quality entails promoting the interests of others, particularly the vulnerable, and so one can naturally see how it would help the broader society. On the other hand, sin harms others and causes disgrace. Thus, it is easy to see how it could cause the downfall of a nation.

The king delights in a wise servant, but a shameful servant arouses his fury (14:35 NIV). This proverb promotes wisdom over folly. Prudence (1:4a) is a quality of the wise, and shame is the consequence of being a fool. To say that

the king finds the former acceptable indicates **his** favorable attitude toward **wisdom**. After all, a person with **wisdom** will be helpful to **the king** as **he** tries to resolve complex issues. **A servant** who is **a fool**, and therefore **shameful**, will be the object of **his wrath** since **the servant** will not be able to help resolve the problems of the realm, and indeed might even make them worse. This **proverb** implies **a righteous king**. There are plenty of examples from biblical history where kings have, to their own detriment, listened and acted upon to **shameful** advice, such as **King Ahab** listening to **his wife Jezebel (First Kings 16:29-33)**.²⁹⁰

A gentile answer turns away wrath, but a harsh, sarcastic word, stirs up anger (15:1 NIV). We can use words both to build up or tear down. We can never fix a problem if we are consumed with fixing the blame. We must choose between the two. We will never get our point across by being **angry**, so we need to choose our words **wisely**.²⁹¹ A gentle answer, which comes from a heart of love, can stop a war before it even begins. **Yeshua** said: **agree with your adversary quickly (Matthew 5:25)**. When we do this, it can defuse any anger that exists. But harsh words can actually create anger where none existed before.

In **Proverbs** we see a few other principles for avoiding conflict. **He who conceals an offense promotes love (17:9a)**. Another way to say this is, "Don't be so sensitive." Let trivial insults slide. Understand that other people make mistakes and have anger problems - we all do. Another principle is stated this way: **Starting a quarrel is like opening a floodgate, so stop before a dispute breaks out (17:14)**. If a potential **argument** looms on the horizon, don't let **it** get started. Emotions can be like water held behind a dam. If you let **the quarrel** start, then it can be very difficult to stop.

The principle to self-control is to control **the tongue**. **The tongue of the wise makes knowledge appealing, but the mouth of a fool only belches out foolishness (15:2 NLT)**. And **a knowledgeable person controls his tongue; a discerning person controls his temper (17:27 CJB)**. We don't have to speak the first words that come to mind. We need a filter. Thus, controlling **the tongue** will help in many areas. **James**, the half-brother of **Yeshua**, has much to say about this. **If we put a bit into a horse's mouth to make it obey us, we control its whole body as well. And think of a ship - although it is huge and is driven by strong winds, yet the pilot can steer it wherever he wants with just a small rudder. So too the tongue is a tiny part of the body, yet it boasts great things. See how a little fire sets a whole forest ablaze! Yes, the tongue is a fire, a world of wickedness. The tongue is so placed in our**

body that it defiles every part of it, setting ablaze the whole of our life; and it is set on fire by Gei-Hinnom itself. For people have tamed and continue to tame all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures; but no one can tame the tongue - it is an unstable and evil thing, full of death-dealing poison (James 3:3-8 CJB)!

Finally, stay out of other people's disagreements. **Interfering in someone else's argument is as foolish as yanking a dog's ears (26:17 NLT).** Why get involved in someone else's fight? If you get involved, one or both of the combatants will, at best, resent you, and, at worst, attack you, one, for taking his opponent's side, and the other for implying that he cannot handle the fight on his own. These few principles can save you a lot of stress. But knowing the truth about **Messiah** can also help. Remember that we must **bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you (Colossians 3:12 NIV).**²⁹²

It is important to know there is a right way and a wrong way to use **knowledge**. **ADONAI** gives us **knowledge**, understanding, and **wisdom** so we may become more like **Messiah** and help others become more like **Him** as well. The right way to use **knowledge**, therefore, is to apply it to ourselves first and then gently help others move toward godliness. It is wrong to use **knowledge** for self-aggrandizement or for browbeating others. The temptation to use **knowledge** wrongly is perhaps why **Paul** said that **knowledge puffs us, but love edifies (First Corinthians 8:1).**

The eyes of ADONAI are everywhere (Second Chronicles 16:9a), watching the evil and the good (15:3 CJB). This **proverb** supports the idea that **God** is omnipresent and omniscient. It is clear enough, but perhaps somewhat unexpected in a **wisdom** context. There are other religious **proverbs (16:1-7, 9, and 33)**, but this one implies **the LORD's** moral governance. Many other **proverbs** that mention consequences don't specify who does the ultimate judgment or how that judgment is assured. However, this **proverb** helps us to understand that **YHVH** is in control. The idea that **God** watches good and evil implies that He is the One who distinguishes between them. **ADONAI looks out from heaven; He sees every human being; from the place where He lives He watches everyone living on earth, He who fashioned the hearts of them all and understands all they do (Psalm 33:13-15).**²⁹³



A soothing tongue is a tree of life in that it speaks words that nurture and bring healing. **ADONAI-God** planted **the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden** to bring eternal life to whoever would eat from it (see the commentary on **Genesis Av - God Planted a Garden in the East, in Eden**), and **He** will use our **wise words** to lead people toward **eternal life** (see **The Life of Christ Ms - The Eternal Security of the Believer**). **But a wicked tongue crushes the spirit (15:4 NIV)**. When we speak as **fools**, we bring as much deceit into our conversation, as **the serpent** did when **he** lied to **Adam** and **Eve** leading them both astray. Our words can either lead people toward **Messiah** or away from **Him** - there's no middle ground.²⁹⁴

Dear heavenly **Father**, praise **You** that **Your** words are always **wise** and perfect. Feeding on **Your Word** is like feeding on fruit from **the Tree of Life (Rev 22:2)**! Bearing good **fruit** is crucial for every believer. **Yeshua** likens those who follow **Him** to be like **trees** bearing **good fruit**. **Every tree that does not produce good fruit is chopped down and thrown into the fire. So then, you will recognize them by their fruit (Mt 7:19-20)**. Only by abiding **in Messiah** can good **fruit** be produced. **I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for apart from Me, you can do nothing (John 15:5)**. Refreshment for the soul comes by meditating on **Your Word** and on **Your Godly** attributes. That is similar to a tree being nourished by its roots which go down deep into the stream it is planted by. **On His Torah he meditates day and night. He will be like a planted tree over streams of water, producing its fruit during its season. Its leaf never droops - but in**



all he does, he succeeds (Ps 1:2b-3). Thank **You** for being such a great example of how to use **words** wisely. May I follow **Your** example and speak with **wise** and loving words as though the words were fruit from **the Tree of Life**. In **the Name of Him** who sits at **Your** right hand. Amen