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Song of Solomon

1 Solomon's
Most Wonderful Song

The Woman to the Man She Loves

2 Cover me with kisses.
For your love is better than wine.
3 Your perfume smells wonderful,
but your name* is sweeter
than the best perfume.
That is why the young women love you.
4 Take me with you!
Let's run away!

The king took me into his room.

The Women of Jerusalem to the Man

We will rejoice
and be happy for you.
Remember, your love is better than wine.
With good reason the young
women love you.

She Speaks to the Women

5 Daughters of Jerusalem,
I am dark and beautiful,
as black as the tents of
Kedar and Salma.*
6 Don't look at how dark I am,
at how dark the sun has made me.
My brothers were angry at me.
They forced me to take care
of their vineyards.
So I could not take care of myself.*

name In Hebrew this word sounds like the word "perfume."
Kedar and Salma Arabian tribes. For "Salma" the Hebrew has
"Solomon," but compare "Salma, Salmon" in Ruth 4:20–21.
myself Literally, "my own vineyard."

She Speaks to Him

7 I love you with all my soul!
Tell me;
Where do you feed [your sheep]?
Where do you lay [them] down at noon?
[I should come to be with you]
or I will be like a hired woman*
caring for the sheep of your friends!

He Speaks to Her

8 You are such a beautiful woman!
Surely you know what to do.
Go, follow the sheep.
Feed your young goats
near the shepherds' tents.
9 My darling, you are more exciting to me
than any mare among the stallions*
pulling Pharaoh's chariots.*
[Those horses have beautiful decorations
at the side of their faces
and around their necks.]
10–11 Here are the decorations made for you,
a golden headband*
and a silver necklace.
Your cheeks are so beautiful
decorated with gold.
Your neck is so beautiful
laced with silver.

hired woman Or, "a woman wearing a veil." This might mean a prostitute.

mare ... stallions Female and male horses. Only male horses were used to pull chariots.

My darling ... chariots Literally, "To a mare among Pharaoh's chariots I compare you, my darling."

headband We don't know the exact meaning of this Hebrew word. It might be a headband with decorations dangling at the cheeks.

She Speaks

- 12 The smell of my perfume reaches out
to the king lying on his couch.
- 13 My lover is like
a small bag of myrrh* [around my neck],
lying all night between my breasts.
- 14 My lover is like
a cluster of henna* flowers
near the vineyards of En-gedi.

He Speaks

- 15 My darling, you are so beautiful!
Oh, you are beautiful!
Your eyes are like doves.

She Speaks

- 16 You are so handsome, my lover!
Yes, and so charming!
Our bed is so fresh and pleasant!*
- 17 The beams of our house are cedar.
The rafters are fir.

2 I am a crocus on the plain,*
a lily in the valleys.

He Speaks

- 2 My darling, among other women,
you are like a lily among thorns!

She Speaks

- 3 My lover, among other men,
you are an apple tree among the wild
trees in the forest!

She Speaks to the Women

- I enjoy sitting in my lover's shadow;
his fruit is so sweet to my taste.
- 4 My lover took me to the wine house;
His intent toward me was love.
- 5 Strengthen me with raisins;*
refresh me with apples,
because I am weak with love.*

myrrh A perfume made from the gum of certain plants.

henna A plant with sweet smelling, blue-yellow flowers that
grow in clusters (*groups*) like grapes.

fresh and pleasant Or, "lush and green" like a fresh field of grass.

crocus on the plain Or, "a rose of Sharon."

raisins Or, "raisin cakes."

I am weak with love Or, "I am lovesick."

- 6 My lover's left arm is under my head,
and his right arm holds me.
- 7 Women of Jerusalem, promise me,
by the gazelles and wild deer,
don't wake love,
don't arouse love,
until I am ready.*

She Speaks Again

- 8 I hear my lover's voice.
Here it comes,
jumping over the mountains,
skipping over the hills.
- 9 My lover is like a gazelle
or a young deer.
- Look at him standing behind our wall,
staring out the window,
looking through the lattice.*
- 10 My lover speaks to me,
"Get up, my darling, my beautiful one,
Let's go away!"
- 11 Look, winter is past,
the rains have come and gone.
- 12 The flowers are blooming in the fields.
It's time to sing!*
- Listen, the doves have returned.
- 13 Young figs are growing on the fig trees.
Smell the vines in bloom.
Get up, my darling, my beautiful one,
Let's go away!"
- 14 My dove,
hiding in the caves high on the cliff,
hidden here on the mountain,
let me see you,
let me hear your voice.
Your voice is so pleasant,
and you are so beautiful!

She Speaks to the Women

- 15 Catch the foxes for us—
the little foxes that spoil the vineyard!
Our vineyard is now in bloom.

until I am ready Literally, "until it desires."

lattice A wooden screen over a window.

sing Or, "prune."

- 16 My lover is mine,
and I am his!
My lover feeds among the lilies,
17 while the day breathes its last breath
and the shadows run away.
Turn, my lover,
be like a gazelle or a young deer
on the cleft mountains!*

She Speaks

- 3 At night on my bed,
I look for the man I love.
I looked for him,
but I could not find him!
- 2 I will get up now!
I will go around the city.
In the streets and squares,
I will look for the man I love.
I looked for him,
but I could not find him!
- 3 The guards patrolling the city found me.
┌I asked them,┐
“Have you seen the man I love?”
- 4 I had just left the guards
when I found the man I love!
I held him.
I would not let him go,
while I took him to my mother’s house,
to the room of she who bore* me.

She Speaks to the Women

- 5 Women of Jerusalem, promise me,
by the gazelles and wild deer,
don’t wake love,
don’t arouse love,
until I am ready.*

He and His Bride

- 6 Who is this woman
coming from the desert*
┌with this large group of people┐?

the cleft mountains Or, “the mountains of Bether” or “the mountains of spice.”

bore Or, “taught.” See 8:2.

until I am ready Literally, “until it desires.”

woman coming from the desert See 8:5.

┌The dust rises behind them,┐
like clouds of smoke
from burning myrrh and frankincense*
and other spices.*

- 7 Look, Solomon’s traveling chair!*
There are 60 soldiers guarding it.
Strong soldiers of Israel!
- 8 All of them are trained fighting men;
their swords at their side,
ready for any danger of the night!
- 9 King Solomon made a traveling chair*
for himself.
The wood came from Lebanon.
- 10 The poles were made from silver,
the supports were made from gold.
The seat was covered with purple cloth.
It was inlaid with love
by the women of Jerusalem.
- 11 Women of Zion, come out
and see King Solomon
See the crown* his mother put on him
the day he was married,
the day he was so happy!

He Speaks to Her

- 4 My darling, you are so beautiful!
Oh, you are beautiful!
Your eyes are like doves
under your veil.
Your hair ┌is long and flowing,┐
like little goats dancing
down the slopes of Mount Gilead.
- 2 Your teeth are white like ewes*
just coming from their bath.
They all give birth to twins;
Not one of them has lost a baby.

myrrh and frankincense Expensive spices that smell sweet when burned.

spices Literally, “powders of the trader.” These were imported spices and incense.

traveling chair A kind of chair that rich people traveled in. These chairs were covered and had poles that slaves used to carry them.

crown This might be a wreath of flowers he wore on his head at his wedding.

ewes Female goats.

- 3 Your lips are like a red silk thread.
Your mouth is beautiful.
Your temples* under your veil
are like two slices of pomegranate.*
- 4 Your neck is long and thin
like David's tower.
That tower was built to be decorated*
with a thousand shields on its walls,
with the shields of powerful soldiers.
- 5 Your breasts are
like twin fawns,*
like twins of a gazelle,*
feeding among the lilies.
- 6 I will go to that mountain of myrrh*
and to that hill of frankincense*
while the day breathes its last breath,
and the shadows run away.
- 7 My darling, you are beautiful all over.
You have no blemishes* anywhere!
- 8 Come with me, my bride, from Lebanon.
Come with me from Lebanon.
Come from the peak of Amana,*
from the top of Senir* and Hermon,
from the lion's caves,
from the mountain of the leopards!
- 9 My darling,* my bride, you excite me!
You have stolen my heart
with just one of your eyes,
with just one of the jewels
from your necklace.
- 10 Your love is so beautiful, my darling,*
my bride!
Your love is better than wine;
The smell of your perfume
is better than any kind of spice!

temples The sides of the head.

pomegranate A red fruit with many tiny seeds inside it. Each seed is covered with a soft, tasty part of the fruit.

Your neck ... decorated Or "Your neck is like David's tower, built with rows of stone." This would mean she wore many necklaces, one above the other, which looked like rows of stone in a tower.

fawns Baby deer.

gazelle An animal like a deer or antelope.

myrrh A kind of perfume made from the sap of plants.

frankincense An expensive perfume from Arabia.

blemishes Ugly marks.

Amana The name of a mountain in Lebanon.

Senir The Amorite word for "Snow Mountain." This means Mount Hermon.

darling Literally, "sister."

- 11 My bride, your lips drip honey.
Honey and milk are under your tongue.
Your clothes smell as sweet as perfume.*
- 12 My darling,* my bride, [you are pure]
like a locked garden,
You are like a locked pool,
a closed fountain.
- 13 Your limbs are like a garden
filled with pomegranates*
and other pleasant fruit;
with all the best spices:
henna,* ¹⁴nard,* saffron,* calamus,*
and cinnamon.*
- [Your limbs are like a garden]
filled with trees of frankincense,*
myrrh* and aloes.*
- 15 You are like a garden fountain,
a well of fresh water,
flowing down from the mountains
of Lebanon.

She Speaks

- 16 Wake up, north wind!
Come, south wind!
Blow on my garden.
Spread its sweet smell.
Let my lover enter his garden,
and eat its pleasant fruit.

He Speaks

- 5 My darling* my bride,
I have entered my garden.
I have gathered my myrrh* and spice.
I have eaten my honey and honeycomb.
I have drunk my wine and milk.

The Women Speak to the Lovers

Dearest friends, eat, drink!
Be drunk with love!

perfume Or, "Lebanon."

henna A plant with sweet smelling, blue-yellow flowers that grow in clusters (*groups*) like grapes.

nard A very expensive oil from the root from the nard plant. It was used as a perfume.

saffron A kind of yellow flower used in making perfume.

calamus A kind of reed plant used in making perfume.

cinnamon A kind of plant used as a spice and in making perfume.

aloes Perfume made from a special kind of tree.

She Speaks

- 2 I am asleep,
but my heart is awake.
I hear my lover knocking.
“Open to me, my darling,* my love,
my dove, my perfect one!
My head is soaked with dew.
My hair is wet with the mist
of the night.”
- 3 “I have taken off my robe.
I don’t want to put it on again.
I have washed my feet,
I don’t want to get them dirty again.”
- 4 But my lover put his hand
through the opening,*
and I felt sorry for him.*
- 5 I got up to open for my lover,
myrrh dripping from my hands,
myrrh* scented lotion dripped from my
fingers onto the handles of the lock.
- 6 I opened for my lover,
but my lover had turned away
and was gone!
I nearly died
when he came and went.*
I looked for him,
but I couldn’t find him;
I called for him,
but he didn’t answer me.
- 7 The guards patrolling the city found me.
They hit me.
They hurt me.
The guards on the wall
took my robe* from me.

darling Literally, “sister.”

put his hand through the opening Or “pulled his hand from the opening.” In one sense, this might refer to a lock and key. Some ancient keys were shaped like a hand. The key was inserted through a hole in the door, and the “fingers” fit into special holes that allowed the bolt to slide, locking and unlocking the door.

I felt sorry for him Literally, “My insides stirred for him.”

myrrh A kind of perfume made from the sap of plants. Here this is probably a reminder the lover left to show he had come by her house.

I nearly died ... went Or, “My soul left when he spoke.”

robe Or, “veil, a piece of cloth used to cover a person’s face.”

- 8 I tell you, women of Jerusalem,
if you find my lover,
tell him I am weak with love.*

The Women of Jerusalem Answer Her

- 9 Beautiful woman, how is your lover
different from other lovers?
Is your lover better than other lovers?
Is that why you ask us
to make this promise?

She Answers the Women of Jerusalem

- 10 My lover is tanned and radiant (*shining*).
He would stand out among 10,000 men.
- 11 His head is like the purest gold.
His hair is curly
and as black as a raven.
- 12 His eyes are like doves by a stream,
like doves in a pool of milk,
like a jewel in its setting.
- 13 His cheeks are like a garden of spices,
like flowers used for perfume.
His lips are like lilies,*
dripping with liquid myrrh*
- 14 His arms are like gold rods,
filled with jewels.
His body is like smooth ivory
with sapphires* set in it.
- 15 His legs are like marble pillars,
on bases of fine gold.
He stands tall
like the finest cedar tree in Lebanon!
- 16 Yes, women of Jerusalem,
my lover is the most desirable.
His mouth is the sweetest of all.
That is my lover,
that is my darling.

The Women of Jerusalem Speak to Her

- 6 Beautiful woman,
Where has your lover gone?
Which way did your lover go?
Tell us so we can help you look for him.

I am weak with love Literally, “I am lovesick.”

lily Kind of flower. Here it is probably a red flower.

myrrh A kind of perfume made from the sap of plants.

sapphires Blue stones.

She Answers the Women of Jerusalem

- 2 My lover has gone down to his garden,
to the flower beds of spices.
He went to feed in the gardens,
and gather the lilies.
- 3 I belong to my lover,
and my lover belongs to me.
He is the one feeding among the lilies.

He Speaks to Her

- 4 My darling,
you are as beautiful as Tirzah,*
as pleasant as Jerusalem;
as awesome as those fortified cities.*
- 5 Don't look at me!
Your eyes excite me too much!
And your hair [is long and flowing],
like little goats dancing
down the slopes of Mount Gilead.
- 6 Your teeth are white like ewes*
just coming from their bath.
They all give birth to twins.
Not one of them has lost a baby.
- 7 Your temples* under your veil*
are like slices of pomegranate.*
- 8 There might be 60 queens
and 80 women servants,*
and young women too many to count,
- 9 but there is only one [woman for me],
my dove,
my perfect one.
She is the favorite of her mother,
Her mother's favorite child!
The young women see her and praise her.
Even the queens and women servants*
praise her.

Tirzah One of the capitals of northern Israel.

fortified cities We are not sure of the exact meaning of the Hebrew word here and in verse 10.

ewes Female goats.

temples The sides of the head.

veil A piece of cloth used to cover a person's face.

pomegranate A red fruit with many tiny seeds inside it. Each seed is covered with a soft, tasty part of the fruit.

women servants Or, "concubines," slave women who were like wives to a man.

The Women Praise Her

- 10 Who is that young woman?
She shines out like the dawn.
She is as pretty as the moon,
She is as radiant as the sun,
She is as awesome as those
armies in the sky.*

She Speaks

- 11 I went down to the grove of walnut trees,
to see the fruit of the valley,
to see if the vines were in bloom,
to see if the pomegranates* had budded.
- 12 Before I realized it,*
my soul had placed me in the chariots*
of the king's people.*

The Women of Jerusalem Call to Her

- 13 Come back, come back, Shulamith!*
Come back, come back,
so we may look at you.

Why are you staring at Shulamith,
as she dances the Mahanaim dance?*

He Praises Her Beauty

- 7 Princess,* your feet are beautiful
in those sandals.
The curves of your thighs are like jewelry
made by an artist.
- 2 Your navel is like a round cup,*
may it never be without wine.

those armies in the sky We are not sure of the exact meaning of the Hebrew word here and in verse 4.

Before I realized it In Hebrew this verse is very hard to understand.

chariot(s) A small wagon used in war. But here this might mean one of the traveling chairs, as in 3:7.

the king's people Or, "Amminadib," or "my kingly people."

Shulamith Or, "Shulamite." The word might be the feminine form of the name "Solomon." This could mean she was or would become the bride of Solomon. This name might also mean, "perfect, at peace" or "woman from Shunem."

Mahanaim dance Or, "the victory dance," or "the dance of the two camps."

Princess Literally, "Bath Nadib: Daughter of a prince." This is like the word "Amminadib" in 6:12.

round cup Or "turned bowl," a stone bowl made on a lathe and used for mixing wine before it is poured into cups. This might also mean a bowl shaped like a crescent or half-moon.

- Your belly is like a pile of wheat
bordered with lilies.
- 3 Your breasts are like twin fawns*
of a young gazelle.*
- 4 Your neck is like an ivory tower.
Your eyes are like the pools in Heshbon
near the gate of Bath Rabbim.
Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon
which looks toward Damascus.
- 5 Your head is like Carmel,
and the hair on your head is like silk.
Your long flowing hair
captures even a king!
- 6 You are so beautiful!
And so pleasant!
A lovely, delightful young woman!
- 7 You are tall,
as tall as a palm tree.
And your breasts are like
the clusters of fruit on that tree.
- 8 I would love to climb that tree,
and take hold of its branches.

May your breasts be like
clusters of grapes
and your fragrance* like apples.

9 May your mouth be like the best wine,
flowing straight to my love,
flowing gently to the sleepers' lips.

She Speaks to Him

- 10 I belong to my lover,
and he wants me!
- 11 Come, my lover,
let's go out into the field,
let's spend the night in the villages.
- 12 Let's get up early and go to the vineyards.
Let's see if the vines are in bloom.
Let's see if the blossoms have opened
and if the pomegranates* are in bloom.
There I will give you my love.

fawns Baby deer.

gazelle An animal like a deer or antelope.

fragrance Literally, "breath of your nose."

pomegranates A red fruit with many tiny seeds inside it. Each seed is covered with a soft, tasty part of the fruit.

- 13 Smell the mandrakes*
and all the pleasant flowers
by our door!
Yes, I have saved many pleasant things
for you, my lover.
Pleasant things, new and old!

8 **[If]** you were a baby, like my little brother nursing at his mother's breasts, then if I found you outside, I could kiss you, and no one would say it was wrong! ²I would lead you into my mother's house, to the room of she who taught me. I would give you spiced wine squeezed from my pomegranate.*

She Speaks to the Women

- 3 His left arm is under my head,
and his right hand holds me.
- 4 Women of Jerusalem, promise me,
don't wake love,
don't arouse love,
until I am ready.*

The Women of Jerusalem Speak

- 5 Who is this woman
coming from the desert,
leaning on her lover?

She Speaks to Him

- I woke you under the apple tree,
where your mother bore you,
where you were born.
- 6 Keep me **[near you]** like a seal
you wear over your heart,
like a signet ring*
you wear on your hand.
Love is as strong as death.
Passion is as strong as the grave.*
Its sparks become a flame
and it grows to become a great fire!*

mandrakes Plants with roots that look like people. People thought these plants had the power to make people fall in love.

until I am ready Literally, "until it desires."

seal ... signet ring Things that were pressed into clay or hot wax to leave a special mark. This mark was like a person's signature, so it was very important not to lose these things.

the grave Or, "Sheol," the place where dead people go.

great fire Or, "the flame of the Lord."

- 7 A flood cannot put out love.
Rivers cannot drown love.
Would people despise a man for giving
everything he owns for love!

Her Brothers Speak

- 8 We have a little sister,
and her breasts are not yet grown.
What should we do for our sister
when a man comes asking to marry her.

- 9 If she were a wall,
we would put silver trim* around her.
If she were a door,
we would put a cedar board around her.

She Answers Her Brothers

- 10 I am a wall,
and my breasts are my towers.
And he is satisfied with me!*

He Speaks

- 11 Solomon had a vineyard at Baal Hamon.
He put men in charge of that
field of grapes.
And each man brought in grapes
worth 1,000 shekels* of silver.
- 12 Solomon, you can keep your 1,000 shekels.
Give 200 shekels to each man
for the grapes he brought.
But I will keep my own field of grapes!

He Speaks to Her

- 13 There you sit, in the garden,
friends are listening to your voice.
Let me hear it too!

She Speaks to Him

- 14 Hurry, my lover.
Be like a gazelle* or a young deer
on the mountains of spice!

trim Or "supports." Often horizontal beams and towers were built into walls to strengthen and support them. But here this seems to be a decoration.

he is satisfied with me Literally, "In his eyes I find peace." In Hebrew this is also like the names "Solomon" and "Shulamith."

1,000 shekels About 25 pounds.

gazelle An animal like a deer or antelope.