

⁴He brought me to the banquet room
b And his banner of love was over me.^b
⁵"Sustain me with raisin cakes,
 Refresh me with apples,
 For I am faint with love."^a
⁶His left hand was under my head,
 His right arm embraced me.

⁷I adjure you, O maidens of Jerusalem,
 By gazelles or by hinds of the field:
 Do not wake or rouse
 Love until it please!

⁸Hark! My beloved!

There he comes,
 Leaping over mountains,
 Bounding over hills.

⁹My beloved is like a gazelle

Or like a young stag.

There he stands behind our wall,
 Gazing through the window,
 Peering through the lattice.

¹⁰My beloved spoke thus to me,

"Arise, my darling;

My fair one, come away!

¹¹For now the winter is past,

The rains are over and gone.

¹²The blossoms have appeared in the land,

The time of prunings has come;

The song of the turtle dove

Is heard in our land.

¹³The green figs form on the fig tree,
 The vines in blossom give off fragrance.
 Arise, my darling;
 My fair one, come away!

¹⁴"O my dove, in the cranny of the rocks,
 Hidden by the cliff,
 Let me see your face,

Let me hear your voice;
 For your voice is sweet
 And your face is comely."^c
¹⁵Catch us the foxes,
 The little foxes
 That ruin the vineyards—
 For our vineyard is in blossom.

¹⁶My beloved is mine
 And I am his
 Who browses among the lilies.^c
¹⁷When the day ^dblows gently^d
 And the shadows flee,^e
 Set out, my beloved,
 Swift as a gazelle
 Or a young stag,
 For the hills of spices!^f

3

Upon my couch at night^a
 I sought the one I love—
 I sought, but found him not.
²"I must rise and roam the town,
 Through the streets and through the squares;
 I must seek the one I love."^a
 I sought but found him not.
^{3b}I met the watchmen^b
 Who patrol the town.
 "Have you seen the one I love?"
⁴Scarcely had I passed them
 When I found the one I love.
 I held him fast, I would not let him go
 Till I brought him to my mother's house,
 To the chamber of her who conceived me
⁵I adjure you, O maidens of Jerusalem,
 By gazelles or by hinds of the field:
 Do not wake or rouse
 Love until it please!

^{a-d}Emendation yields "declines"; cf. *Jer. 6.4*.
^c Septuagint reads "lengthen"; ^d *Jer. 6.4*.
^e *Heb.* bather of uncertain meaning; ^f *14* reads besamim, "spices."

^a *I.e., in a dream.*

^{b-c} Meaning of *Heb. uncertain*.

^c Or "Springing."

⁶Who is she that comes up from the desert
Like columns of smoke,
In clouds of myrrh and frankincense,
Of all the powders of the merchant?
⁷There is Solomon's couch,
Encircled by sixty warriors
Of the warriors of Israel,
⁸All of them trained^c in warfare,
Skilled in battle,
Each with sword on thigh
Because of terror by night.

⁹King Solomon made him a palanquin
Of wood from Lebanon.
¹⁰He made its posts of silver,
Its back^d of gold,
Its seat of purple wool.
Within, it was decked with e-love
By the maidens of Jerusalem.
¹¹O maidens of Zion, go forth
And gaze upon King Solomon
Wearing the crown that his mother
Gave him on his wedding day,
On his day of bliss.

Your brow behind your veil
[Gleams] like a pomegranate split open.
⁴Your neck is like the Tower of David,
Built b-to hold weapons,^b
Hung with a thousand shields—
All the quivers of warriors.
⁵Your breasts are like two fawns,
Twins of a gazelle,
Browsing among the lilies.
⁶When the day blows gently
And the shadows flee,
I will betake me to the mount of myrrh,
To the hill of frankincense.
⁷Every part of you is fair, my darling,
There is no blemish in you
⁸From Lebanon come with me;
From Lebanon, my bride, with me!
Trip down from Amana's peak,
From the peak of Senir^d and Hermon,
From the dens of lions,
From the hills^e of leopards.

⁹You have captured my heart,
My own, f my bride,
You have captured my heart
With one [glance] of your eyes,
With one coil of your necklace.
¹⁰How sweet is your love,
My own, my bride!
How much more delightful your love than wine,
Your ointments more fragrant
Than any spice!
¹¹Sweetness drops
From your lips, O bride;
Honey and milk
Are under your tongue;
And the scent of your robes
Is like the scent of Lebanon.

Ah, you are fair, my darling,
Ah, you are fair.
Your eyes are like doves
Behind your veil.
Your hair is like a flock of goats
Streaming down Mount Gilead.
²Your teeth are like a flock of ewes^a
Climbing up from the washing pool;
All of them bear twins,
And not one loses her young.
³Your lips are like a crimson thread,
Your mouth is lovely.

^a Cf. Akkadian ahāzu, "to learn."^b Meaning of Heb. uncertain.^c Cf. Deut. 3.9.^d Apparently a poetic figure for jewelry; meaning of Heb. uncertain.^e See notes at 2.17.^f Cf. Deut. 3.9.^a Cf. 6.6; exact nuance of gesuboth uncertain, perhaps "storn ones."^b Cf. Emendation yields "thorns"; / O maidens of Jerusalem?"

¹²A garden locked
Is my own, my bride,
A fountain locked,
A sealed-up spring.
¹³Your limbs are an orchard of pomegranates
And of all luscious fruits,
Of henna and of nard—
¹⁴Nard and saffron,
With all aromatic woods,
Myrrh and aloes—
All the choice perfumes.
^{15g}[You are] a garden spring,
A well of fresh water,^g
A rill of Lebanon.

¹⁶Awake, O north wind,
Come, O south wind!
Blow upon my garden,
That its perfume may spread.
Let my beloved come to his garden
And enjoy its luscious fruits!

I have come to my garden,
My own, my bride;
I have plucked my myrrh and spice,
Eaten my honey and honeycomb,
Drunk my wine and my milk.

Eat, lovers, and drink,
Drink deep of love!

^{2a}I was asleep,
But my heart was wakeful.
Hark, my beloved knocks!

“Let me in, my own,
My darling, my faultless dove!

For my head is drenched with dew,
My locks with the damp of night.”
³I had taken off my robe—
Was I to don it again?
I had bathed my feet—

Was I to soil them again?

⁴My beloved took his hand off the larch,^b
And my heart was stirred ^cfor him.^c
⁵I rose to let in my beloved;
My hands dripped myrrh—
My fingers, flowing myrrh—
Upon the handles of the bolt.
⁶I opened the door for my beloved,
But my beloved had turned and gone.
⁷I was faint ^dbecause of what he said.^d
I sought, but found him not;
I called, but he did not answer.

⁷I met the watchmen^e
Who patrol the town;
They struck me, they bruised me.
The guards of the walls
Stripped me of my mantle.
⁸I adjure you, O maidens of Jerusalem!
If you meet my beloved, tell him this:
That I am faint with love.

⁹How is your beloved better than another,^f
O fairest of women?
How is your beloved better than another^f
That you adjure us so?

¹⁰My beloved is clear-skinned and ruddy,
Preeminent among ten thousand.
¹¹His head is finest gold,
His locks are curled
And black as a raven.
¹²His eyes are like doves
By watercourses,

^{b-b} Meaning of Heb. *untartum*.

^{cc} Many manuscripts and editions read “within me” (*alai*).

^{dd} Change of vocalization yields “because of him.”

^e See note at 3.3.

^f Or “What sort of beloved is your beloved?”

^{gg} *Emendation* yields “The spring in my garden / Is a well of fresh water.”

^a In vv. 2-8 the maiden relates a dream.

Bathed in milk,
 b-Set by a brimming pool.^b
^cHis cheeks are like beds of spices,
 g-Banks of^g perfume
 His lips are like lilies;
^dThey drip flowing myrrh.
^eHis hands are rods of gold,
 Studded with beryl;
 His belly a tablet of ivory,
 Adorned with sapphires.
^fHis legs are like marble pillars
 Set in sockets of fine gold.
 He is majestic as Lebanon,
 Stately as the cedars.
^gHis mouth is delicious
 And all of him is delightful.
 Such is my beloved,
 Such is my darling,
 O maidens of Jerusalem!

6

"Whither has your beloved gone,
 O fairest of women?

Whither has your beloved turned?
 Let us seek him with you."

²My beloved has gone down to his garden,
 To the beds of spices,
 To browse in the gardens
 And to pick lilies.

³I am my beloved's
 And my beloved is mine;
 He browses among the lilies.

Your hair is like a flock of goats
 Streaming down from Gilead.
⁶Your teeth are like a flock of ewes
 Climbing up from the washing pool;
 All of them bear twins,

And not one loses her young.

⁷Your brow behind your veil
 [Gleams] like a pomegranate split open.

⁸There are sixty queens,
 And eighty concubines,

⁹And damsels without number.

⁹Only one is my dove,

My perfect one,

The only one of her mother,
 The delight of her who bore her.

¹⁰Who is she that shines through like the dawn,
 Beautiful as the moon,
 Radiant as the sun
^aAwesome as bannered hosts;^a

¹¹I went down to the nut grove
 To see the budding of the vale;
¹²To see if the vines had blossomed,
 If the pomegranates were in bloom.

^{12a}Before I knew it,

My desire set me
 Mid the chariots of Ammi-nadib.^a

7

Turn back, turn back,
 O maid of Shulem!

Turn back, turn back,

That we may gaze upon you.

"Why will you gaze at the Shulammite
 In^b the Mahanaim dance?"

^bg Spraggant vocalizes as participle, "productivity."

^{a-a} Meaning of Heb. uncertain.

^a With many manuscripts and editions; others read "like." Meaning of entire line uncertain.

²How lovely are your feet in sandals,
O daughter of nobles!
Your rounded thighs are like jewels,
The work of a master's hand.
³Your navel is like a round goblet—
Let mixed wine not be lacking!—
Your belly like a heap of wheat
Hedged about with lilies.

⁴Your breasts are like two fawns,
Twins of a gazelle.

⁵Your neck is like a tower of ivory,
Your eyes like pools in Heshbon
By the gate of Bath-rabbim,
Your nose like the Lebanon tower
That faces toward Damascus.
⁶The head upon you is like ^bcrimson wool,
The locks of your head are like purple—
^cA king is held captive in the tresses.
^cHow fair you are, how beautiful!

O Love, with all its rapture!

⁸Your stately form is like the palm,
Your breasts are like clusters.

I say: Let me climb the palm,
Let me take hold of its branches;

Let your breasts be like clusters of grapes,
Your breath like the fragrance of apples,

¹⁰And your mouth like choicest wine.
“Let it flow to my beloved as new wine^d

^eGilding over the lips of sleepers.”^{c-e}

¹¹I am my beloved's,
And his desire is for me.

¹²Come, my beloved,
Let us go into the open;

Let us lodge ^camong the henna shrubs.”^{c-e}

¹³Let us go early to the vineyards;
Let us see if the vine has flowered,

If its blossoms have opened,
^{b-b} So Ibn Janah and Ibn Ezra, taking karmel as a by-form of karmil: cf. 2 Chron. 2.6, 13; 3.14.
^{c-c} Meaning of Heb. uncertain.
^d See note at 1.4 end.
^{e-e} Or “in the villages.”

8

If only it could be as with a brother,

As if you had nursed at my mother's breast:

^{Then I could kiss you}
When I met you in the street,

And no one would despise me.

²I would lead you, I would bring you
To the house of my mother,
Of her who taught^a me—

<sup>I would let you drink of the spiced wine,
Of my pomegranate juice.</sup>

³His left hand was under my head,
His right hand caressed me.

⁴I adjure you, O maidens of Jerusalem:
Do not wake or rouse
Love until it please!

⁵Who is she that comes up from the desert,
Leaning upon her beloved?

Under the apple tree I roused you;
It was there your mother conceived you,
There she who bore you conceived you.

⁶Let me be a seal upon your heart,
Like the seal upon your hand.^b
For love is fierce as death,
Passion is mighty as Sheol;
Its darts are darts of fire,
A blazing flame.

^a Emendation yields “teach”; cf. 6.9; 8.5.
^b Lit. “arm.”

⁷Vast floods cannot quench love,
Nor rivers drown it.
If a man offered all his wealth for love,
He would be laughed to scorn.

⁸"We have a little sister,
Whose breasts are not yet formed.
What shall we do for our sister
When she is spoken for?
⁹If she be a wall,
We will build upon it a silver battlement;
If she be a door,
We will panel it in cedar."
¹⁰I am a wall,
My breasts are like towers.
So I became in his eyes
As one who finds favor.

¹¹Solomon had a vineyard
In Baal-hamon.
He had to post guards in the vineyard:
A man would give for its fruit
A thousand pieces of silver.
¹²I have my very own vineyard:
You may have the thousand, O Solomon,
And the guards of the fruit two hundred!

¹³O you who linger in the garden,^c
A 'lover' is listening;
Let me hear your voice.
¹⁴Hurry, my beloved,
Swift as a gazelle or a young stag,
To the hills of spices!"

TANAKH
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^c Heb. plural. Meaning of verse uncertain.