

SONG OF SONGS 6:11 - 8:4

¹¹I went down to the nut orchard, to look at the blossoms of the valley, to see whether the vines had budded, whether the pomegranates were in bloom.

¹²Before I knew it, my fancy set me in a chariot beside my prince.

^{7:1}Turn, turn, O Shulammitte! Turn, turn, that we may look upon you.

Why should you look upon the Shulammitte, as upon a dance between two camps?

²How graceful are your sandaled feet, O queenly maiden! Your rounded thighs are like jewels, the work of a master hand. ³Your navel is a rounded bowl that never lacks mixed wine. Your belly is a heap of wheat, encircled with lilies.

⁴Your breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle. ⁵Your neck is like an ivory tower. Your eyes, pools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim. Your nose, like a tower of Lebanon, overlooking Damascus.

⁶Your head crowns you like Carmel, and your flowing locks, like purple;

a king is held captive in the tresses.

The woman speaks (6:11-12)

In ancient Near Eastern mythology the walnut was thought to be an aphrodisiac and to have magical qualities. She is ready to seize the moment for love. She is not disappointed. She finds herself being transported in the majestic chariot of her lover (compare 3:7).

The Chorus (7:1-6)

I am following the verse numbering of the Hebrew and Greek Versions. Part of the chorus calls to her, using the feminine form of 'Solomon', thus reinforcing her regal status. They want her to face them so that they can gaze upon her beauty.

Others object. Her beauty is for her lover, not for the general populace.

They sing of her beauty. Captivated by her dancing, they draw attention first to her sandalled feet, then to her exquisitely formed thighs undulating in a sensuous dance. They marvel at her navel and her belly with its 'heap of wheat'.

Their description of her breasts repeats 4:5. The description of her neck recalls 4:4. Heshbon was a royal city of the Amorites. The water from the city's reservoirs, was carried through the gate to the villages that depended on the mother city. Hence the gate is called 'Bath-rabbim'(many daughters). Her regal demeanour is emphasised by comparing her nose to a tower, with reference to Lebanon and Damascus.

Her 'king' (her lover) is held captive by her beauty.

Her lover joins in the praise (7:7-10)

He speaks of the delights of her body.

He likens her elegance and grace to that of the date palm. Its clusters of dates high up the tree resemble her maturing and enticing breasts. He will 'climb the palm' thus penetrating to where he can harvest the fruit of love.

He is intoxicated by the taste and smell of her breasts, her breath and her lips as they kiss.

She responds (7:10b-14)

She knows he is right and delights in the pleasure her kisses ('wine') give him. They belong together (see 2:16; 6:13). Genesis 6:13 speaks of a woman's desire for her lover. Verse 11 speaks of his desire for her.

She invites him to hasten away with her and to spend the night surrounded by the perfume of the henna bushes. The Hebrew consonants kpr can stand for 'villages'. They can also, as in 1:14 and 4:13, stand for henna bushes. The signs of Spring invite them to express their awakening love.

The mandrakes (dûdâ'îm) resemble in sound 'my lover'(dōday). They were also considered an aphrodisiac and were associated with fertility. She invites him to enjoy the pleasures that she has stored up for him in the arbour leading into the place where they will enjoy their lovemaking.

⁷How fair and pleasant you are, O loved one, delectable maiden!

⁸You are stately as a palm tree, and your breasts are like its clusters. ⁹I said I will climb the palm tree and take hold of its branches. Let your breasts be like the clusters of the vine, and the scent of your breath like apples, ¹⁰and your mouth like the best wine.

Flowing smoothly for my lover, gliding over lips and teeth. ¹¹I am my lover's, and his desire is for me.

¹²Come, my lover, let us go forth into the fields, and lodge in the villages; ¹³let us go out early to the vineyards, and see whether the vines have budded, whether the grape blossoms have opened and the pomegranates are in bloom. There I will give you my love.

¹⁴The mandrakes give forth fragrance, and at our door are all choice fruits, new as well as old, which I have kept up for you, O my lover.

**¹O that you were my brother,
nursed at my mother's breasts!**

**If I met you outside, I would
kiss you, and no one would
despise me.**

**²I would lead you, bring you
into the house of my mother,
and into the chamber of the
one who bore me. I would give
you spiced wine to drink, the
juice of my pomegranates.**

**³His left hand is under my
head, his right hand embraces
me!**

**⁴I adjure you, O Daughters of
Jerusalem, do not disturb or
interrupt our love until it is
spent!**

She continues to her lover (8:1-2)

She yearns for him. She wants to live with him continuously, the way a sister lives with her brother. As her brother once suckled her mother's breasts, she yearns for him to kiss hers.

A brother and sister could kiss freely in public without shame or embarrassment. She wants to be able to kiss him, and have him kiss her, anywhere, at any time.

The Hebrew for 'I would give you to drink' is 'ašqekā, echoing the sound of 'I will kiss you' - 'eššāqekā, see 8:1).

She addresses the chorus (8:3-4)

Verse 3 repeats 2:6. She yearns for his embrace.

Verse 4 echoes 2:7 and 3:5. They must be left to consummate their love.