

Siddur Tzur Yisrael

Sabbath and Festival Prayers

**Edited and Translated by
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cheeks are so lovely adorned with those doves, your neck so graceful beneath that necklace. Let us—let me!—fashion some new doves for you, ones made of gold and tastefully decorated with silver studs.” The Shulamite turns to her friends to explain to them how the king could possibly know any of this. “When the king lay on his divan,” she mentions, a clear note of pride in her voice, “he was close enough to smell my perfume. But what need have I of spikenard? My lover himself is the bundle of myrrh that rests between my breasts. And he is my bunch of cypress twigs as well, no less fragrant than if he came from Ein Gedi itself.” She then turns to face her king and he, looking back at her, now speaks again, “How beautiful you are, my beloved,” he says. “You are beauty itself, your eyes as graceful as doves.” And the Shulamite’s response is perfect, “It is you who are beautiful, my lover, and comely. Even our bed is luxuriant, and the house in which we meet no less so: it has cedar beams and rafters made of finest cypress.”

Chapter Two

The Shulamite continues, describing herself simply in just a few words, “I am a crocus of the Sharon, a lily of the valleys.” The king listens, then responds to her words warmly: “Exactly so! When I see my beloved among the other maidens, it is like looking at a lily among the brambles.” The Shulamite now rises to the occasion, finding a way to continue the colloquy without abandoning the king’s metaphor. “When I see my lover among the other young men, it is like looking at a luscious apple tree among the other trees of the forest. And he is like an apple tree in other ways as well: I love to sit in his shade and nothing is as sweet to my palate as his fruit.” The king, blushing slightly, looks away now, but the Shulamite turns to the other women to tell them just how she knows how sweet the king’s apples are. “He brought me to a wine-house,” she says, “and the flag he flew over me was called ‘Love.’ They fed me there with raisin cakes and sustained me with apples, for I needed sustenance: I was faint with love. His left hand was beneath my head while he embraced me with his right arm. You must swear to me, O daughters of

א שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים אֲשֶׁר לְשִׁלְמָה: ב וְיִשְׁלַנְגִּי מִנְּשִׁיקוֹת פִּיהוּ כִּי-טוֹבִים דְּדִיךָ מִיָּוִן: ג לְרִיחַ שְׁמֹנֶיךָ טוֹבִים שְׁמֵן תוֹרֵךְ שְׁמֶךָ עַל-פֶּן עֲלָמוֹת אַהֲבוֹךָ: ד מְשַׁכְנִי אַחֲרֶיךָ גְרוּצָה הִבִּיאֲנִי הַמֶּלֶךְ חֲדָרָיו נִגְלֶה וְנִשְׁמַחָה בְּךָ גַּזְפִּירָה דְּדִיךָ מִיָּוִן מִישְׁרִים אַהֲבוֹךָ: ה שְׁחוּרָה אֲנִי וְנֶאֱוָה בְּנוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַיִם פְּאֶהֲלִי קָדָר פִּירִיעוֹת שְׁלָמָה: ו אֶל-תִּרְאוּנִי שְׂאֲנִי שְׁחַרְחַרְתְּ שִׁשְׁזַפְתָּנִי הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ בְּנִי אֲמִי נַחְרוּ-בִי שְׁמַנִּי נִטְרָה אֶת־הַפְּרָמִים פְּרָמֵי שְׁלִי לֹא נִטְרַתִּי: ז הַגִּידָה לִּי שְׂאֵהֲבָה נִפְשִׁי אֵיכָה תִרְעָה אֵיכָה תִרְבִּיץ בַּצְּהָרִים שְׁלָמָה אֶהְיָה פְּעֻטִיָּה עַל עֹדְרֵי חֲבֵרֶיךָ: ח אִם-לֹא תִדְעֵלִי לָךְ הִיפָּה בְּנָשִׁים צְאִי-לָךְ בְּעַקְבֵי הַצֵּאן וְרַעַל אֶת־גְּדִיתֶיךָ עַל מִשְׁפְּנוֹת הָרָעִים: ט לְסִסְתִּי בְּרַכְבֵּי פִרְעָה דְּמִיתֶיךָ רַעִיתִי: י נֶאֱוָו לְחֲלִיךָ בַּתָּרִים צֹאֲרֶךְ בַּחֲרוּזִים: יא תוֹרֵי זָהָב נַעֲשֶׂה-לָךְ עִם נִקְדוֹת הַפָּסֶף: יב עַד־שֶׁהַמֶּלֶךְ בְּמִסְבּוֹ נִרְדֵּי נִתֵּן רִיחוֹ: יג צְרוּר הַמֶּרֶד דוֹדִי לִי בֵּין שְׂדֵי יָלִין: יד אֲשַׁכַּל הַכֶּפֶר א דוֹדִי לִי בְּכַרְמֵי עֵין גִּדִּי: טו הַנֶּף יִפֹּה רַעִיתִי הַנֶּף יִפֹּה עֵינֶיךָ יוֹנִים: טז הַנֶּף יִפֹּה דוֹדִי אֶף נָעִים אֶף-עֲרֻשָׁנִי רַעֲנָנָה: יז קָרוֹת בְּתֵינֹו אֲרָזִים רְהִיטְנוּ בְּרוֹתִים:

ב

א אֲנִי חֲבַצְלֵת הַשָּׁרוֹן שׁוֹשַׁנַּת הָעֲמָקִים: ב כְּשׁוֹשְׁנָה בֵּין הַחוֹחִים פֶּן רַעִיתִי בֵּין הַבְּנוֹת: ג כְּתַפּוּחַ בְּעֵצֵי תִלְעָר פֶּן דוֹדִי בֵּין הַבְּנִים בְּצִלּוֹ חַמְדָּתִי וַיִּשְׁבַּתֵּי וּפְרִיז מִתּוֹךְ לְחֶפְזִי: ד הִבִּיאֲנִי אֶל-בֵּית תֵּינִין וְדָגְלוּ עָלַי אַהֲבָה: ה סִמְכוּנִי בְּאֲשִׁישׁוֹת רַפְדוּנִי בְּתַפּוּחִים כִּי-חֹלֵת אַהֲבָה אָנִי: ו שְׂמֵאלוֹ תַחַת לְרֵאשִׁי וַיִּמְיֵנֵנִי תַחְבִּיקָנִי: ז הַשְּׁבַעְתֵּי אֶתְכֶם בְּנוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַיִם בַּצְּבָאוֹת אוֹ בְּאֵילוֹת הַשָּׂדֶה אִם־תִּעְרִוּוּ א וְאִם־תִּעֲזָרוּ אֶת־הָאֲהָבָה עַד שֶׁתַּחְפֹּץ: ח קוֹל דוֹדִי

Jerusalem, by the gazelles or wild rams of that place, that you will never attempt to provoke or arouse love until the time be perfectly right.”

The scene goes dark. The palanquin vanishes, as do the maidens of Jerusalem. When the lights come up again, it is nighttime and the Shulamite is waiting in her bedchamber for the king to arrive at their predetermined rendezvous spot. The night air is chilly, but she is wholly focused on waiting for her lover and is oblivious to the temperature. As she waits, so do we . . . and then, almost when we have begun to wonder if he will actually come, he arrives. The woman of Shulem looks up and speaks, half to herself and half to us, her audience. “That is the sound of my lover! He must be coming right now, skipping over mountains and leaping over hills. My lover is like a gazelle or a young buck . . . and here he is, standing just behind the wall of our home, peering through the latticework. And I can hear him speaking as well, saying to me these words, ‘Come, my beloved, my beauty . . . and let us be off. For the winter is over and the rains, ended. The buds are visible again in the land. The gardener’s day has come and the voice of the turtledove can again be heard in our land. The green fruit is forming on the branches of the fig tree. The vines in flower are exuding the sweetest of scents. Come, rise up, my beloved, my beauty . . . and let us be gone. My love is like a dove in the crannies of rocks, hidden by the looming rock face. Show yourself to me! Let me hear your voice, for it is so pleasant and your form, so fair. Let us catch us some foxes, some little ones, before they destroy our vineyard . . . while it is in full bloom.’ My lover is wholly mine, as am I his—for he is my shepherd amidst the lilies. Go about and act the gazelle, my gentle lover, before the day wanes and the shadows grow. Or, if you prefer, be my young stag and creep along into the craggy cleft.”

Chapter Three

The stage darkens again, but when the lights come up, the Shulamite is alone. She looks confused, a bit bereft, uncertain. She gazes off into the distance, then becomes aware that we, the readers, are watching.

הַנְּהַיְתָה בָּא מִדְּלֶגַע עַל־הַהָרִים מִקִּפְּץ עַל־הַגְּבָעוֹת: ט דּוֹמָה דּוֹדִי
לְצַבִּי אֹו לְעַפְר הָאֵילִים הַנְּהַיְתָה עוֹמֵד אַחַר פְּתִלְנֹו מִשְׁגִּיחַ מִן־
הַחֲלֹנוֹת יִצְיִן מִן־הַחֲרָכִים: י עֲנֵה דּוֹדִי וְאָמַר לִי קוֹמִי לְךָ
רְעִיתִי יִפְתִּי וּלְכִי־לְךָ: יא פִּי־הִנֵּה הִסְתּוֹ עֲבַר הַגָּשָׁם חָלַף הַלֵּךְ
לֹו: יב הַנְּצַנִּים נִרְאוּ בָאָרֶץ עֵת הַזְּמִיר הַגִּיעַ וְקוֹל הַתּוֹר נִשְׁמַע
בָּאָרְצָנוּ: יג הַתְּאֵנָה חֲנֻטָּה בַּגִּיהַ וְהַגְּפָנִים א סְמַדְר נִתְּנוּ רֵיחַ קוֹמִי
לְךָ רְעִיתִי יִפְתִּי וּלְכִי־לְךָ: יד יוֹנְתִי בַחֲגוּי הַסֶּלַע בְּסִתְרֵי הַמְּדֻרָּה
הָרְאִינִי אֶת־מְרְאִיךָ הַשְּׂמִיעֵינִי אֶת־קוֹלְךָ פִּי־קוֹלְךָ עָרַב וּמְרְאִיךָ
נִאֻוָּה: טו אֲחֻז־לְנֹו שׁוֹעֲלִים שׁוֹעֲלִים קְטַנִּים מִחֲבָלִים פְּרָמִים
וְכַרְמִינוּ סְמַדְר: טז דּוֹדִי לֹו וְאֲנִי לֹו הָרַעַה בְּשׁוֹשָׁנִים: יז עַד
שִׁיבוֹחַ הַיּוֹם וְנִסּוֹ הַצִּלְלִים סֶבֶדִּי מֵה־לְךָ דּוֹדִי לְצַבִּי אֹו לְעַפְר
הָאֵילִים עַל־הָרֵי בְּתָר:

ג

א עַל־מִשְׁכְּבִי בַלֵּילוֹת בְּקִשְׁתִּי אֵת שְׂאֵהְבָה נִפְשִׁי בְּקִשְׁתִּי וְלֹא
מִצְאָתִיו: ב אֶקוֹמָה נָא וְאֶסּוֹבְבָה בְּעִיר בְּשׁוֹקִים וּבְרַחֲבוֹת
אֲבַקֶּשָׁה אֵת שְׂאֵהְבָה נִפְשִׁי בְּקִשְׁתִּי וְלֹא מִצְאָתִיו: ג מִצְאָאוּנִי
הַשְּׂמִרִים הַסֹּבְבִים בְּעִיר אֵת שְׂאֵהְבָה נִפְשִׁי רְאִיתֶם: ד כִּמְעֵט
שֶׁעַבְרָתִי מִהֶם עַד שִׁמְצָאתִי אֵת שְׂאֵהְבָה נִפְשִׁי אֲחֻזְתִּיו
וְלֹא אֶרְפְּנוּ עַד־שֶׁהִבִּיאֲתוּ אֶל־בֵּית אֲמִי וְאֶל־חֶדֶר הוֹרָתִי:
ה הַשִּׁבְעָתִי אֲתַכֶּם בְּנוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַיִם בְּצַבָּאוֹת אֹו בְּאֵילוֹת הַשָּׂדֶה
אֶס־תְּעִירוּ א וְאֶס־תְּעוֹרְרוּ אֶת־הָאֵהְבָה עַד שֶׁתִּחַפְּצוּ: ו מִי זֹאת
עָלָה מִן־הַמְּדַבֵּר פְּתִימָרוֹת עֲשֵׂן מְקַטְרֵת מוֹר וּלְבוֹנָה מִפֶּלַעַל
אֲבַקֵּת רוֹכֵל: ז הִנֵּה מִטְתּוֹ שֶׁלְשִׁלְמָה שְׁשִׁים גְּבָרִים סָבִיב לָהּ
מִגְּבָרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: ח פֶּלֶם אֲחֻזִי חָרַב מְלֻמְדֵי מְלַחְמָה אִישׁ חֲרָבוֹ
עַל־יָרְכוֹ מִפֶּחֶד בַּלֵּילוֹת: ט אֶפְרִיזוֹן עֲשֵׂה לֹו הַמְּלֹךְ שְׁלֹמָה
מִעֲצֵי הַלְּבָנוֹן: י עֲמוּדָיו עֲשֵׂה כֶסֶף רְפִידָתוֹ זָהָב מְרַפְּבוֹ
אֶרְגְּמוֹן תּוֹכוֹ רְצוּף אֵהְבָה מִבְּנוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַיִם: יא צִיֵּינָה א וְרֵאֵינָה

And so, slowly and with great dignity, she rises from her bed, goes to the window and opens it. There, she sees the maidens gathering, waiting for her words. She pauses, thinks carefully about what she must say and how much of her story she can reveal, then finally speaks. “I was already in bed,” she begins almost apologetically, “when I realized I could not bear not to seek out my lover. And so I sought him out . . . but I failed to find him. I got up, left the house, wandered in the city—in the shuk and in the city’s squares—seeking my lover, seeking him endlessly, but not finding him. The men of the night watch found me as they patrolled the city. I asked them the simplest of questions: “Have you seen my lover?”, but they could not help me. But then, just as I was walking away from them, I managed to catch a glimpse of him. I caught him and would not let him go until he agreed to let me bring him to my mother’s house, to her private room. What happened next? Let me just say that you truly must swear by the gazelles or stags of the field, O daughters of Jerusalem, not to provoke or arouse love until the time be perfectly right.”

And now we see the same scene from the other direction, this time through young Solomon’s eyes as his lover is coming towards him. First, he sees her only from a distance. “Who is that?” he asks. “Who is that coming from the desert like a stately pillar of smoke scented with myrrh and frankincense, and with all the best powders of the scent merchant?”

Now, wholly unexpectedly, the poet himself appears on the stage as the audience’s gaze becomes fixed on him. Solomon and the Shulamite vanish and, suddenly, we are in the king’s bedchamber. As the lovers meet elsewhere, we are apparently delicately to be diverted from witnessing a scene too intimate for prying eyes by being taken on a tour of the king’s regal bedchamber. “Here is Solomon’s bed,” the poet notes in the manner of a slightly bored tour guide, waving his hand vaguely towards a huge bed made of ivory and gold, and covered in jaguar skins. “It is habitually encircled by sixty warriors, each one a hero of Israel . . . and each one bearing a mighty sword and well trained in the art of war. They keep their swords strapped to their thighs, as a matter of

בְּנוֹת צִיּוֹן בְּמִלְכָּה שְׁלֵמָה בַּעֲטָרָה שְׁעֵטְרָה־לָּו אָמְלוּ בְּיָוִם חֲתָנָתוֹ
וּבְיָוִם שְׂמִיחַת לְבָבוֹ:

ד

א הַנֶּחֱדָה יָפָה רַעֲיִתִי הַנֶּחֱדָה יָפָה עֵינֶיךָ יוֹגִים מִבַּעַד לְצַמִּיתְךָ שֶׁעָרְךָ
כְּעֵדֶר הָעֵזִים שֶׁגִּלְשׁוּ מִתֵּר גִּלְעָד: ב שִׁנִּיךָ כְּעֵדֶר הַקְּצוּבוֹת שֶׁעָלוּ
מִן־הַרְחֵצָה שֶׁכָּלֶם מִתְאַיְמוֹת וְשִׁפְלָה אֵין בָּהֶם: ג כְּחוֹט הַשָּׁנִי
שְׂפֹתֶיךָ וּמִדְּבָרֶיךָ נֶאֱוָה כְּפֶלַח הָרִמּוֹן רִקְתָּךְ מִבַּעַד לְצַמִּיתְךָ:
ד כְּמִגְדָּל דָּוִד צִוְאַרְךָ בְּנוֹי לְתַלְפִּיּוֹת אֶלֶף הַמִּגֹּן תִּלְוִי עָלָיו כָּל
שְׁלֹטֵי הַגְּבוּרִים: ה שִׁנִּי שְׂדִיךָ כְּשִׁנִּי עֶפְרַיִם תְּאוּמֵי צְבִיָּה
הַרוּעִים בְּשׁוֹשְׁנִים: ו עַד שִׁיפּוּחַ הַיּוֹם וְנָסוּ הַצִּלְלִים אֶלְךָ לִי אֶל־
הַר הַמּוֹר וְאֶל־גְּבַעַת הַלְּבוֹנָה: ז כְּלָךְ יָפָה רַעֲיִתִי וּמָוִם אֵין בָּךְ:
ח אֲתֵי מִלְּבָנוֹן כְּלָה אֲתֵי מִלְּבָנוֹן תְּבוֹאִי תְשׁוּרִי א מִרְאֵשׁ אֲמִנָּה
מִרְאֵשׁ שָׁנִיר וְחֶרְמוֹן מִמַּעַנּוֹת אֲרִיזוֹת מִהַרְרֵי גְמִרִים: ט לִבְבַתְּנִי
אֲחֹתִי כְּלָה לִבְבַתְּנִי בְּאֲחַת מֵעֵינֶיךָ בְּאֲחַד עַנְק מִצִּוְרֵיךָ: י מֵה־
יָפוּ דְדִיךָ אֲחֹתִי כְּלָה מֵה־טָבוּ דְדִיךָ מִלֵּין וְרִיחַ שְׁמָנֶיךָ מִכָּל־
בְּשָׂמִים: יא נָפֶת תִּסְתַּפְּנָה שְׂפֹתֶיךָ כְּלָה דְבֵשׁ וְחֶלֶב תַּחַת
לְשׁוֹנְךָ וְרִיחַ שְׁלֹמֹתֶיךָ כְּרִיחַ לְבָנוֹן: יב גֵּן א גְּעוּל אֲחֹתִי כְּלָה גֵּל
גְּעוּל מֵעֵין חָתוּם: יג שְׁלַחִיךָ פְּרָדִס רְמוֹזִים עִם פְּרֵי מְגֻדִים
כְּפָרִים עִם־גְּרָדִים: יד גֶּרֶד א וְכַרְפֹּם קָנָה וְקַנְמוֹן עִם כָּל־עֵצֵי
לְבוֹנָה מִר וְאֶהֱלוֹת עִם כָּל־דְּאֲשֵׁי בְשָׂמִים: טו מֵעֵין גְּנִים בְּאֶר
מֵים חַיִּים וְנִזְלִים מִן־לְבָנוֹן: טז עוֹרֵי צִפּוֹן וּבּוֹאֵי תִימָן הַפִּיחֵי
גְּנֵי יִזְלוּ בְּשָׂמֵינוּ יָבֵא דוֹדִי לְגַנּוֹ וְיֵאכֵל פְּרֵי מְגֻדָּיו:

ה

א בְּאֲתֵי לְגַנִּי אֲחֹתִי כְּלָה אֲרִיתִי מוֹרִי עִם־בְּשָׂמֵי אֲכַלְתִּי יַעֲרִי
עִם־דְּבָשִׁי שְׂתִיתִי יַיִנִי עִם־חֶלְבִי אֲכָלוּ רֵעִים שְׂתוּ וְשָׁכְרוּ
דוֹדִים: ב אֲנִי יִשְׁנָה וְלִבִּי עַר קוֹל א דוֹדִי דוֹפֵק פְּתַח־יְלִי אֲחֹתִי

fact, for fear of nighttime shenanigans.” And now we are somehow outside, in the courtyard of the palace. “The palanquin, on the other hand, King Solomon had made of wood from the Lebanon. Its posts are made of silver and its upholstery is gold. The seats are all purple, but the inside is festooned from one end to the other with love tokens from the maidens of Jerusalem.” The tour guide looks past us and notes the presence of those very maidens. “Go forth and take a good look, O maidens of Jerusalem,” he continues, now addressing the girls directly, “at the crown that the king’s mother gave him on his wedding day, on the day of his greatest happiness.” So she did marry him!

Chapter Four

When the lights come up on chapter four, the lovers are relaxing in each others company. The crown the king’s mother gave him on his wedding day is hanging on the back of chair. The jaguar bedspread is lying in a heap on the floor. The lovers are listless, spent, exhausted . . . but deeply happy as they declare their love for each other. First, the king speaks, praising his lover in the richest possible language. “How beautiful you are, my beloved. You are beauty itself, your eyes as graceful as doves. Behind your veil, your hair tumbles down like a flock of goats careening down Mount Gilead. Your teeth are like a flock of ewes climbing up out of the washing pond, all of them in pairs and none bereft of her young. Your lips are like scarlet thread, your mouth is loveliness itself . . . and your cheeks behind your veil have the rosy hue of peeled pomegranates. Your neck is as tall and straight as the Tower of David, built in sturdy layers strong enough for every warrior, even a thousand of them, to hang his shield and his buckler on it. Your breasts are like two fawns grazing amidst the lilies, the twin offspring of a single gazelle. While there is still some daylight and the shadows have not yet fled, I will take myself to the mountain of spice, to the hillock of frankincense. You are wholly lovely, my beloved, totally without even the slightest blemish. Come down with me,” the king continues, “come down with me, my bride, from Mount Lebanon. Look down from the

רְעִיתִי יוֹנְתֵי תַמְתֵּי שְׂרָאשִׁי גַמְלָא־טָל קוֹצוֹתַי רְסִיסי לִילָה:
 ג פִּשְׁטֵיטֵי אֶת־כַּתְנֵתִי אֵיכָכָה אֶלְבָּשָׁנָה רְחֻצְתִּי אֶת־דְּגְלֵי אֵיכָכָה
 אֶטְנַפִּם: ד דוֹדֵי שָׁלַח יָדוֹ מִן־הַחֹר וּמַעֲי הָמוּ עָלָיו: ה קַמְתִּי אֲנִי
 לַפֶּתַח לְדוֹדֵי וַיְדִי נְטִפו־מֹזַר וְאַצְבָּעֵתִי מֹזַר עִבֵּר עַל פִּפּוֹת
 הַמִּנְעוּל: ו פֶּתַחְתִּי אֲנִי לְדוֹדֵי וְדוֹדֵי חִמְק עִבֵּר נַפְשִׁי יֵצֵאָה
 בְּדַבְּרוֹ בְּקוֹשְׁתֵיהֶו וְלֹא מִצְאָתִיהוּ קָרָאתִיו וְלֹא עָנְנִי: ז מִצְאָנִי
 הַשְּׂמֵרִים הַסֹּבְבִים בְּעִיר הַכּוֹנֵי פִצְעוּנִי נִשְׂאוּ אֶת־רִדְדִילִי מֵעַלִּי
 שְׂמֵרֵי הַחַמּוֹת: ח הַשְּׂבָעֵתִי אֶתְכֶם בְּנוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַיִם אִם־תִּמְצְאוּ
 אֶת־דוֹדֵי מֵה־תִּגְדּוּ לוֹ שְׁחוֹלֵת אֶהְבֶּה אֲנִי: ט מֵה־דוֹדְךָ מִדּוֹד
 הִיפָּה בְּנָשִׁים מֵה־דוֹדְךָ מִדּוֹד שְׂפָכָה הַשְּׂבָעֵתָנוּ: י דוֹדֵי צַח
 וְאֵדוֹם דָּגוּל מִרְבֵּבָה: יא רֵאשׁוּ פֶתֶם פִּז קוֹצוֹתִיו תִּלְתַּלֵּים
 שְׁחָדוֹת כְּעוֹרֵב: יב עֵינָיו כִּיּוֹנִים עַל־אֶפְיָקִי מִיָּם רְחֻצוֹת בְּחֶלֶב
 וְשִׁבּוֹת עַל־מִלְּאֵת: יג לַחְיוֹ כְּעֵרוּגַת הַבָּשָׂם מַגְדָּלוֹת מִרְקָחִים
 שְׂפֹתוֹתֵיו שׁוֹשְׁנִים נְטִפּוֹת מֹזַר עִבֵּר: יד יָדָיו גְּלִילֵי זָהָב מִמִּלְּאִים
 בִּתְרֵשִׁישׁ מֵעִיו עֵשֶׂת שֵׁן מְעַלְפֶת סַפִּירִים: טו שׁוֹקִיו עֲמוּדֵי שֵׁשׁ
 מִיִּסְדִּים עַל־אֲדִנִּי־פֶז מֵרֵאשׁוֹ כְּלָבָנוֹן כְּחֹר כְּאֲרָזִים: טז חֲפוֹ
 מִמַּתְקִים וְכֹלֹ מִחֲמָדִים זֶה דוֹדִי וְזֶה רְעִי בְנוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַיִם:

1

א אֲנִי הִלֵּךְ דוֹדְךָ הִיפָּה בְּנָשִׁים אָנָּה פָּנָה דוֹדְךָ וַנִּבְקֶשְׁנוּ עִמָּךְ:
 ב דוֹדִי יָרַד לְגִזּוֹ לְעֵרוּגוֹת הַבָּשָׂם לְרֵעוֹת בְּגָנִים וְלִלְקֹט שׁוֹשְׁנִים:
 ג אֲנִי לְדוֹדִי וְדוֹדִי לִי הִרְעָה בְּשׁוֹשְׁנִים: ד יָפָה אֶת רְעִיתִי כְּתֹרֶצָה
 נְאוּה פִירוּשָׁלַיִם אֵימָה כְּנִדְגָלוֹת: ה הַסִּבִּי עֵינֶיךָ מִנְּגִדֵי שֵׁהָם
 הִרְהִיבֵנִי שְׂעָרְךָ כְּעֵדֵר הָעִזִּים שְׂגָלְשׁוֹ מִן־הַגְּלָעַד: ו שְׂנִיךָ כְּעֵדֵר
 הָרְחִלִּים שְׂעָלוּ מִן־הַרְחֻצָה שְׂכָלָם מִתְאַיְמוֹת וְשִׁפְלָה אֵין בָּהֶם:
 ז כְּפֹלַח הַרְמוֹן וְקִתְךָ מִבְּעַד לְצִמְתְּךָ: ח שְׂשִׁים הֵמָּה מְלָכוֹת
 וְשִׂמְנִים פִּילְגָשִׁים וְעֵלְמוֹת אֵין מִסְפָּר: ט אַחַת הִיא יוֹנְתֵי תַמְתֵּי
 אַחַת הִיא לְאֵמָה בְּרָה הִיא לְיוֹלְדָתָהּ רְאוּהָ בְנוֹת וַיֵּאשְׁרוּהָ

peak of the Amarna, from the top of Senir and Mount Hermon, from the lairs of lions, from hills thick with leopards. You have captured my heart totally, my sister, my bride. You have captured my heart totally with just one look of your eyes, with just one bead from your necklace. How lovely are your embraces, my sister, my bride! How much better than wine are your embraces, how much better than any spice, the smell of your scented oils! Your lips drip honey, O my bride, for honey and milk are ever beneath your tongue . . . and the scent of your garments is like the scent of Mount Lebanon. My sister, my bride, is a locked garden, a locked pool, a sealed spring. Your limbs are an orchard of pomegranates, every one of which is ripe, a garden of cypress and spikenard . . . of spikenard and saffron, of reed and cinnamon, of every kind of spice tree, of myrrh and aloes and every one of the most desirable spices. You are a garden spring, a source of living water flowing down Mount Lebanon.” And now the Shulamite responds, not speaking directly to the king but rather choosing to look out the window and to address the wind instead. “Wake up, O north wind, and come to me! O southern wind, blow over my garden and spread its scent! For my lover has come to his garden and he has enjoyed its luscious fruit.”

Chapter Five

The king responds briefly, sharing the bride’s sentiments with the wind she has summoned. “I came to my garden,” he says succinctly, “that is: my sister and my bride. I harvested my myrrh and reaped my spice. I ate my honeycomb and my honey, then drank my wine and my milk.”

The lovers recede from the stage, but the narrator calls them back. “Eat and drink, you lovers,” he says, “Be drunk on love!”

And now the scene changes again as the narrator presents us with a kind of alternate reality, with a slightly different way the lovers could have met. Before, we noted the Shulamite wandering around the city, lovesick and eager to find her lover . . . which she does. But now we learn that there are different possibilities to consider. Just as before, the

מְלָכוֹת וּפְיִלְגָּשִׁים וַיְהַלְלוּהָ: י מִי־זֹאת הַנְּשֻׁקָהּ כְּמו־שֶׁחַר יָפֶה
 כְּלָבְנָה בָּרָה כְּחַמֵּה אֵימָה כְּנֹדְגָלוֹת: יא אֶל־גִּנַּת אֲגוּז יְרֻדְתִּי
 לְרֹאוֹת בְּאֵי הַנַּחַל לְרֹאוֹת הַפְּרָחַה הַגָּפֹן הַנְּצוּ הַרְמוֹנִים: יב לֹא
 יְרַעֲתִי נַפְשִׁי שְׂמֹתַי מִרְפָּבוֹת עַמִּי־נְדִיב:

ז

א שׁוּבִי שׁוּבִי הַשְּׂוֹלְמִית שׁוּבִי שׁוּבִי וְנַחְזֶה־בָּךְ מִה־תַּחֲזוּ
 בַשְּׂוֹלְמִית כְּמַחֲלַת הַמַּחְנִים: ב מֵה־יָפוּ בְּעַמִּיךָ בְּנַעֲלִים בַּת־
 נְדִיב חֲמוּקֵי יְרֻכֶיךָ כְּמו־חֲלָאִים מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵי אָמוֹן: ג שְׂרַרְךָ אֲגֹן
 הַסֶּהַר אֶל־יַחֲסֹר הַמְּזֹג בְּטִיגְךָ עֲרַמַת חֲטִים סוּגָה בְּשׁוֹשְׁנִים:
 ד שְׁנֵי שְׂדֵיךָ כְּשְׁנֵי עֶפְרַיִם תְּאֲמִי צְבִיָּה: ה צִוְּאֶרְךָ כְּמַגְדַּל הַשֶּׁן
 עֵינֶיךָ בִּרְכוֹת כְּחֶשְׁבוֹן עַל־שֵׁעַר בַּת־רַבִּים אִפְךָ כְּמַגְדַּל הַלְּבָנוֹן
 צוּפָה פְּנֵי דְמָשֶׁק: ו רֹאשְׁךָ עַלֶיךָ כְּפַרְמֶל וְדֹלֶת רֹאשְׁךָ כְּאַרְגָּמָן
 מֶלֶךְ אֶסּוּר בְּרֹהֲטִים: ז מֵה־יָפִית וּמֵה־נַעֲמָת אֲהַבָה בַּתְּעַנּוּגִים:
 ח זֹאת קוֹמַתְךָ דְּמַתָּה לְתַמֹּר וְשְׂדֵיךָ לְאַשְׁפְּלוֹת: ט אֲמַרְתִּי אֵיילָה
 בְּתַמֹּר אֲחֻזָּה בְּסִנְסֶגֶן וַיְהִי־נָא שְׂדֵיךָ כְּאַשְׁפְּלוֹת הַגָּפֹן וְרִיחַ
 אִפְךָ כְּתַפּוּחִים: י וְחַפְךָ כְּגִינוֹ הַטּוֹב הוֹלֵךְ לְדוּדֵי לְמִישְׁרִים דוּבָב
 שְׂפָתַי יִשְׁנִים: יא אֲנִי לְדוּדֵי וְעַלִי תִשׁוּקְתוּ: יב לֶכֶה דוּדֵי נִצָּא
 הַשְּׂדֵה גִלְיָה בַּכְּפָרִים: יג גִּשְׁפִימָה לְכַרְמִים נִרְאָה אִם פָּרַחָה
 הַגָּפֹן פִּתַח הַסֶּמֶדֶר הַנְּצוּ הַרְמוֹנִים שֶׁם אֲתֵן אֶת־דְּדֵי לֶךְ:
 יד הַדּוּדָאִים נִתְנוּ־רִיחַ וְעַל־פִּתְחֵינוּ כְּלִמְגָדִים חֲדָשִׁים גַּם־
 יִשְׁנִים דוּדֵי צַפְנֹתֵי לֶךְ:

ח

א מִי יִתְנֶנְךָ כְּאֶח לִי יוֹנֵק שְׂדֵי אֲמִי אֲמַצְיָאָה בַּחוּץ אֲשַׁקֶּךָ גַּם לֹא־
 יְבוּזוּ לִי: ב אֲנִהְיֶה אֲבִיָּאָה אֶל־בֵּית אֲמִי תִלְמַדְנִי אֲשַׁקֶּךָ מִיַּיִן
 הַרְקָח מַעֲסִיס רְמוֹנִי: ג שְׂמֵאלוֹ תַּחַת רֹאשִׁי וַיְמִינֵנוּ תַּחְבֻּקְנִי:
 ד הַשְּׂבַעֲתִי אֲתַכֶּם בְּנוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַיִם מֵה־תַּעֲרִירוּ וּמֵה־תַּעֲרִרוּ אֶת־

הָאֵהָבָה עַד שֶׁתִּחַפֵּץ: הַמִּי זֹאת עָלָה מִן־הַמִּדְבָּר מִתְרַפֶּקֶת עַל־
דוֹדָהּ תַּחַת הַתְּפוּחִים עוֹרְרֵתֶיךָ שָׁמָּה חִבְּלָתְךָ אִמּוֹךְ שָׁמָּה חִבְּלָה
יִלְדָתְךָ: וְשִׁימְנֵי כַחוֹתֶם עַל־לִבְךָ כַחוֹתֶם עַל־זְרוּעֶיךָ כִּי־עָזָה
כַּמּוֹת אֵהָבָה קָשָׁה כְּשֶׁאוֹל קִנְיָהּ רִשְׁפֵיהָ רִשְׁפֵי אִשׁ שִׁלְהִבְתִּיהָ:
זַמַּיִם רַבִּים לֹא יוּכְלוּ לְכַבּוֹת אֶת־הָאֵהָבָה וְגַהֲרוֹת לֹא יִשְׁטַפּוּהָ
אִם־יִתֵּן אִישׁ אֶת־כָּל־הוֹן בֵּיתוֹ בְּאַהֲבָהּ בּוֹז יְבוֹזוּ לוֹ: הַאֲחוֹת לְגוֹ
קִטְנָה וְשֹׁדֵדִים אֵין לָהּ מִה־נַּעֲשֶׂה לְאַחֲתֵנוּ בַיּוֹם שֶׁיִּדְבַר־בָּהּ:
ט אִם־חוֹמָה הִיא גְּבִנָּה עָלֶיהָ טִירַת כֶּסֶף וְאִם־דֶּלֶת הִיא נַצּוֹר
עָלֶיהָ לֹחַ אֲרָז: יֶאֱנִי חוֹמָה וְשֹׁדֵדִי כַּמְגִדְלוֹת אֲזִי הֵייתִי בְּעֵינָיו
כַּמוֹצֵאת שָׁלוֹם: יֵאָכְרוּ הִיא לְשִׁלְמָה בְּבַעַל הַמּוֹן גִּתּוֹ אֶת־
הַכֶּרֶם לְנֹטְרִים אִישׁ יָבֵא בְּכַרְוֹ אֶלְךָ כֶּסֶף: יב כֶּרְמִי שְׁלִי לְפָנַי
הָאֶלְךָ לְךָ שִׁלְמָה וּמֵאֲתָיִם לְנֹטְרִים אֶת־כֶּרְוֹ: יג הַיּוֹשֶׁבֶת בְּגַנְזִים
חִבְרִים מִקְשִׁיבִים לְקוֹלְךָ הַשְּׂמִיעֵנִי: יד בָּרַח אֲדוֹדִי וְדַמְהֵלְךָ
לְצַבִּי אֲזִי לְעַפְרֵי הָאֵילִים עַל הָרֵי בְשָׂמִים:

*Shalom Aleichem**

שָׁלוֹם עֲלֵיכֶם, מְלֹאכֵי הַשָּׂרֵת, מְלֹאכֵי עֲלִיוֹן,
מִמְּלֶךְ מְלֹכֵי הַמְּלָכִים, הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא.
בּוֹאֲכֶם לְשָׁלוֹם, מְלֹאכֵי הַשָּׁלוֹם, מְלֹאכֵי עֲלִיוֹן,
מִמְּלֶךְ מְלֹכֵי הַמְּלָכִים, הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא.
בְּרֹכְנֵי לְשָׁלוֹם, מְלֹאכֵי הַשָּׁלוֹם, מְלֹאכֵי עֲלִיוֹן,
מִמְּלֶךְ מְלֹכֵי הַמְּלָכִים, הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא.
יֵצְאֲתֶכֶם לְשָׁלוֹם, מְלֹאכֵי הַשָּׁלוֹם, מְלֹאכֵי עֲלִיוֹן,
מִמְּלֶךְ מְלֹכֵי הַמְּלָכִים, הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא.

*This hymn appears in transliteration on page 582.

Shulamite wakes up overwhelmed with desire. But this time, she does not have to seek her lover . . . for he comes to her on his own and her job, therefore, is not to seek him out, but to let him in . . . before he loses his nerve and flees. "I was asleep," she begins again, "but my heart was awake when I heard my lover knocking. I heard him calling out, 'Open up for me, my sister, my beloved, my dove, my perfect one . . . for my head is covered with dew, my curls are wet with the damp of night.' I called back, 'I'm already undressed for the night—do you expect me to get dressed again? I've washed my feet—do you expect me to get them dirty again?' My lover thrust his hand into the lock and, when he did, my innards began to tingle with desire for him. I abandoned coquettishness and rose up from bed to open the door for my beloved. My hands were wet with myrrh, my fingers soaked with liquid myrrh as I reached for the latch. I opened for my lover . . . but he had already fled. He was gone! I felt faint at what had happened. I sought him, but I could not find him. I called out to him, but he was not there to answer me. The men of the night watch found me on one of their patrols through the city . . . and they beat me and wounded me. They took my shawl from me, those brave souls who are supposed to be guarding the walls of the city. And so I must make you swear, O daughters of Jerusalem, that, if you find my beloved, you will tell him that I am sick with love."

The scenes now shifts again, as the daughters of Jerusalem appear on the scene after being summoned. "What is so great about your lover, O most lovely among all women?" they ask. "What is so great about your lover that you should adjure us in this way?"

The Shulamite looks at her friends. She forms a mental picture of her missing lover, then, as she contemplates the mental image she has conjured up, she begins to speak. "My lover is radiant and ruddy, finer than ten thousand others. His head is the finest gold, his curly locks as black as a raven. His eyes are twin doves sipping water from a stream, washing themselves in milk, sitting by an overfull pool. His cheeks are beds of spice, two mounds of

powdered perfume; his lips are lilies dripping liquid myrrh. His hands are golden disks studded with tarshish stone; his loins are an ivory tablet decorated with sapphires. His legs are pillars of marble set into golden sockets and, all over, he looks like the finest cedar on Mount Lebanon. His mouth is sweetness and he is altogether lovely . . . and that is what my lover and my beloved friend is like, O daughters of Jerusalem.

Chapter Six

The so-called daughters of Jerusalem, the Shulamite's friends, listen carefully, then, impressed, offer their assistance. "Where has your lover gone, O most lovely among women? Where did he get to? Let us look for him with you!" The Shulamite hears the offer, but declines to accept. "My lover," she says, "has gone down to his garden, to his spice beds, to graze in the gardens and to pluck some lilies. I am my beloved's and my lover is mine . . . even when he is down grazing among the lilies."

The scene darkens. The maidens vanish. The readers cannot know what happened (although they will), but when the lights come back up, the lovers are together. Solomon, presumably back from visiting his garden, now approaches his bride and speaks words of love to her. "You are as beautiful as Tirzah, my beloved," he says. "You are as lovely as Jerusalem itself, as overwhelmingly beautiful as the most stunning women ever could be. Avert your eyes from me, for they make me crazy. Your hair is like a flock of goats careening down the Gilead. Your teeth are like a flock of ewes climbing out of the washing pool, all of them in pairs and none bereft of her young . . . and the cheeks behind your veil have the rosy hue of peeled pomegranates. There are sixty queens and eighty concubines and countless maidens out there . . . but there is only one dove for me, only one perfect woman, only one born to her mother, the beautifully radiant accomplishment of the woman who bore her. The other women see her and laud her, queens and concubines sing her praises: 'Who is this woman who sparkles like the dawn,

*Shalom Aleichem**

Peace to you, O angels divine,
Come be with us at Sabbath eve's time.
Watch over us, guard us from danger untoward,
For this God promised would be our reward.

Arrive here in peace, O angels divine,
Come be with us at Sabbath eve's time.
Watch over us, guard us from danger untoward,
For this God promised would be our reward.

Bless me with peace, O angels divine,
Come be with us at Sabbath eve's time.
Watch over us, guard us from danger untoward,
For this God promised would be our reward.

Depart then in peace, O angels divine,
Come be with us at Sabbath eve's time.
Watch over us, guard us from danger untoward,
For this God promised would be our reward.

**This hymn appears in transliteration on page 582.*

Yedid Nefesh*

יְדִיד נֶפֶשׁ אָב הֶרְחַמֵּן, מִשׁוֹךְ עֲבָדְךָ אֶל רְצוֹנְךָ.
יְרוּץ עֲבָדְךָ כְּמוֹ אֵיל, יִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה אֶל מוֹל הַדָּרֶךְ.
יַעֲרַב לוֹ יְדִידוֹתֶךָ, מִנּוּפֶת צוּף וְכָל־טַעַם.

הַדּוֹר, נָאָה, זִיו הָעוֹלָם, גִּבְשֵׁי חוֹלֶת אֲהַבְתָּךְ.
אָנָּה, אֵל נָא, רַפָּא נָא לָהּ, בְּהִרְאוֹת לָהּ גּוֹעִם
זִיוָךְ. אִז תִּתְחַזֵּק וְתִתְרַפֵּא, וְהִיָּתָה לָךְ שְׂפַחַת
עוֹלָם.

וְתִיקָ, יִהְיֶמוּ רַחֲמֶיךָ, וְחוּס נָא עַל בֶּן אוֹהֲבֶךָ. כִּי
זֶה כַּמָּה גִבְסוֹף גִּבְסָתָ, לְרִאוֹת בְּתַפְאֶרֶת עֲזָךְ.
אָנָּה, אֵלִי, מִחֲמַד לְבָי, חוֹשָׁה נָא וְאֵל תִּתְעַלֵּם.

הַגִּלָּה נָא וּפְרוֹשׁ, חֲבִיב, עָלִי אֶת סִפְת שְׁלוֹמְךָ.
תְּאִיר אֶרֶץ מִכְבוֹדְךָ, גִּגִּילָה וְנִשְׁמָחָה בְּךָ. מִיָּהָר,
אֲהוֹב, כִּי בָא מוֹעֵד, וְחֲנַנִּי כִּימֵי עוֹלָם.

*This hymn appears in transliteration on page 582.

who is as lovely as the moon, as radiant as the sun, as overwhelmingly beautiful as the most stunning women ever could be?" And now the king tells what happened when he fled as the Shulamite opened the door to him. "I went down to the nut garden," he reveals, "to see the wadi in bloom, to see the vines in full blossom, to see the pomegranates in full flower. But then, suddenly, without me understanding what was happening to me . . . I was overwhelmed by desire and I leapt into one of the Aminadav chariots . . . to return to my lover."

Chapter Seven

The king calls out to his beloved now, the story abandoned and the poetry of love all that is left for the readers to savor. "Leap this way and that, O Shulamite! Leap this way and that and let us all see. . . for what, indeed, will they all see when the Shulamite dances the Machanaim? How lovely are your feet in such delicate sandals, O noblewoman. Your gently curved thighs are like fine jewelry, the work of a master craftsman. Your womanhood is a rounded bowl from which the wine never ceases to flow; your belly is like a heap of wheat surrounded by lilies. Your two breasts are like twin fawns of a single gazelle; your neck is like an ivory tower. Your eyes are like the two pools of Cheshbon over by the Bat-Rabbim Gate. Your nose is like the delicate tower of Lebanon that faces towards Damascus. Your head crowns the rest of you like Mount Carmel crowns the coastal plain . . . and the tresses of your head are like the finest purple stuff. Indeed, a king could become ensnared all too easily in that hair! How beautiful you are, and how lovely: you are love itself and all the passion it brings in its wake. Your statuesque body is like a palm tree, your breasts like clusters of grapes. I said I would climb that palm tree and hold fast to its leaves . . . and then I will see for myself that your breasts are just like clusters of grapes, and the scent of your breath, just like apples. Your palate is as sweet as the best wine. May it flow straight into your lover's mouth, stirring to poetry lips that might otherwise sleep."

The Shulamite can now only answer plainly, “I am my beloved’s and all his desire is for me. Come, my lover, and let us go out to the field, let us sleep out in one of the nearby villages. Let us get up early and go to the vineyards to see if the vines have begun to bloom, if the beds of spice have begun to blossom, if the pomegranates are ripe . . . and there I will give my love to you. The mandrakes are fragrant and all the choicest fruits, both fresh and preserved, lie at our door, for I have kept everything stored up for you, O my lover.”

Chapter Eight

In the final chapter, the poet presents snippets of the lovers’ conversation. They have consummated their marriage, proclaimed their love, vowed fidelity. And these were some of the words they spoke.

Once, before the Shulamite and King Solomon had begun their love affair, the king mused about how unfair it was that he could not express his passion for the Shulamite openly. “If you were only my little brother,” he said, just a bit peculiarly, “a boy like myself who had suckled at my mother’s breasts, then, if I ran into you outside, I could kiss you without anyone saying a word of scorn at my effrontery. I would have been able to take you by the hand and bring you to the house of my mother, my teacher . . . and there give you scented wine to drink, and pomegranate juice.”

The Shulamite recalls their first embrace and the lesson she learned from it for her sisters and friends: “His left arm was beneath my head and his right arm embraced me. I have to insist that you swear, O daughters of Jerusalem, not to provoke or arouse love until the moment is precisely right.”

The king and his lover once met outside to enjoy each other’s company away from the view of others. When the king saw the Shulamite coming, he thought she was with another and was moved to utter these words, “Who is this coming towards me from the desert? Is she leaning on her lover’s arm? Listen here—it was I who aroused you to love beneath the apple tree. It was there, after all, that your mother conceived you, that the woman who bore you first conceived you.”

*Yedid Nefesh**

Beloved Friend God, *Av Harachaman*, inspire Your willing servant to do Your sacred will. May Your servant be drawn to run to do Your will with the speed of an antelope and to bow down before Your holy Temple. May Your love be sweeter to me than the honey of the honeycomb or any other delight.

Splendid God, source of all earthly beauty, my soul is sick with the love of You. Grant healing, therefore, to my afflicted soul by graciously providing it a vision of Your indescribable beauty. Then will it recover and become strong and well . . . and thereafter will my soul be Your willing servant for all time.

O ancient One, let Your compassion guide Your governance of us all. Take pity on Israel, Your beloved child, for we have longed for nothing all these years other than a glimpse of Your indescribable splendor. O God, desire of my longing heart, hurry to me and be not absent.

Reveal Yourself to me, Friend God, and spread out over me your *sukkah* of peace. Make the earth around me shimmer with Your resplendent glory. We will rejoice in You and be gladdened by You! Hurry, beloved God, for the appointed time is come for You to grant us everlasting grace.


**This hymn appears in transliteration on page 582.*

Kabbalat Shabbat

(When Shabbat is one of the days of a festival, and on the Shabbatot that fall during Sukkot and Passover, Kabbalat Shabbat begins on page 28. When Shabbat follows a festival, Kabbalat Shabbat begins on page 28 as well.)

Psalm 95


לְכוּ

גְּרַנְנָה לַיהוָה, גְּרִיעָה לְצוּר יִשְׁעֵנוּ. נִקְדְּמָה
פָּנֵינוּ בְּתוֹדָה, בְּזִמְרוֹת גְּרִיעַ לוֹ. כִּי אֵל
גָּדוֹל יְהוָה, וּמִלְכֵּךְ גָּדוֹל עַל כָּל אֱלֹהִים.
אֲשֶׁר בָּיְדוֹ מַחְקְרֵי אָרֶץ, וְתוֹעֲפוֹת הָרִים
לוֹ. אֲשֶׁר לוֹ הַיָּם וְהוּא עֹשֶׂהוּ, וַיַּבֶּשֶׁת יָדָיו
יָצְרוּ. בָּאוּ גִשְׁתִּיחוּהָ וְנִכְרְעָה, גִּבְרָתָהּ לִפְנֵי
יְהוָה עֲשָׂנוּ. כִּי הוּא אֱלֹהֵינוּ וַאֲנַחְנוּ עִם
מִרְעִיתוֹ וְצֵאן יָדוֹ, הַיּוֹם אִם בְּקִלּוֹ תִשְׁמָעוּ.
אֵל תִּקְשׁוּ לְבַבְכֶם כַּמְרִיבָה, כִּיּוֹם מִסָּה
בַּמִּדְבָּר. אֲשֶׁר גִּסּוּנֵי אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם, בְּחַגּוּנֵי גַם
רָאוּ פְעָלָי.  אֲרַבְעִים שָׁנָה אָקוּט
בְּדוֹר וְאָמַר עִם תִּלְעִי לִבְבֵּי הֵם, וְהֵם לֹא
יָדְעוּ דַרְכָּי. אֲשֶׁר גִּשְׁפַּעְתִּי בְּאַפִּי, אִם
יִבְאוּן אֶל מְנוּחָתִי.

The Shulamite once made this proclamation of love to Solomon. “Make me like a seal upon your heart, like a seal on your arm, for love is as strong as death and passion, as fierce as Sheol . . . for its darts are darts of fire, the harbingers of an all-consuming conflagration. The greatest amount of water cannot extinguish love, nor could even a river overwhelm it. Indeed, if a man were to give every penny of his wealth to buy it, he would merely be asking for scorn.

Once, imagining her own brothers plotting to keep her from loving King Solomon, the Shulamite conjured up the words she would have used to counter theirs. “Our sister is just a girl,” she imagines them saying. “She doesn’t even have any breasts. How can we keep our sister safe until the day she is finally spoken for? If she were a wall, we could build a silver buttress to protect her. If she were a door, we could reinforce her with a board made of cedar . . .” But to this kind of paternalistic meddling, the Shulamite would know what to answer. “I am indeed a wall. And my breasts are like towers. But I’ve already found a lover . . . and, in his eyes I find great favor.”

The Shulamite notes that love cannot be purchased . . . not even by a Solomon. “Solomon had a vineyard in Baal Hamon. He hired guards to watch over it because it was so lush—for people would routinely offer a thousand pieces of silver for a single one of its fruits. I too have a vineyard in my possession. Keep your thousand pieces of silver, Solomon. . . . and the two hundred you were going to pay the guards as well!

And, finally, at the very end of the song, the Shulamite addresses other women who might be hoping to find a lover like King Solomon for their own. “O you women still tarrying in the garden, remember that men are always listening . . . so speak up and be heard! If you see a likely prospect, tell him these words, ‘Flee, lover, like a gazelle or a young antelope to the hills of spice!’” 

The Targum to the Song of Songs

Introduction: The Ten Songs

1:1 The greatest of Solomon's love poems, the Song of Songs.

These are the songs and praises which Solomon the prophet, king of Israel, spoke by the Spirit of Prophecy before א, the God of all the World.

Ten songs were spoken in this world, this song being the best of them all. The first song, Adam spoke at the time his guilt was forgiven him and the Sabbath Day arrived and protected him. He opened his mouth and sang, "A Psalm, a Song for the Sabbath Day (Psalm 92:1.)"

The second song, Moses sang with the children of Israel at the time the Ruler of the World divided the Reed Sea for them. All of them opened their mouths together and sang the song, as it is written: "Then sang Moses and the Israelites (Exodus 15:1.)"

The third song, the children of Israel sang at the time the well of water was given to them, as it is written, "Then sang Israel (Numbers 21:17.)"

The fourth song, the prophet Moses declaimed when his time had come to depart from the world. And by means of it, he reproved the people of the House of Israel, as it is written, "Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak (Deuteronomy 32:1.)"

The fifth song, Joshua, son of Nun, sang when he waged war in Gibeon, and the sun and moon stood still for thirty-six hours and they thus ceased to utter their own song of praise. He opened his mouth and sang the song, as it is written: "Thus recited Joshua before א (Joshua 10:12.)"

The sixth song, Barak and Deborah sang on the day א delivered Sisera and his camp into the hands of the Children of Israel, as it is written: "Then sang Deborah and Barak, son of Abinoam (Judges 5:1.)"

The seventh song, Hannah sang at the time she was granted a son by א, as it is written: "And Hannah prayed in the spirit of prophecy (1 Samuel 2:1.)"

Kabbalat Shabbat

(When Shabbat is one of the days of a festival, and on the Shabbatot that fall during Sukkot and Passover, Kabbalat Shabbat begins on page 29. When Shabbat follows a festival, Kabbalat Shabbat begins on page 29 as well.)


Psalm 95

Come let us sing hymns of joy to א; let us raise up a joyous noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before the divine face bringing a thanksgiving sacrifice; with songs, let us revel before our God.


For א is a great God, the great Sovereign over all other divinities, the One in Whose hand are the farthest reaches of the earth and to Whom the great heights of its mountains belong, the One to Whom the sea belongs as well—that sea made by God—and also the dry land fashioned by divine hands.

Come let us prostrate ourselves and bow down, let us kneel before א, our Maker, for this is our God and thus are we our God's people, the flock of sheep led forward by the divine hand even today, if you would only obey.

And what is God's holy voice saying? "Do not make your hearts hard as you did at Meribah, on that day at Massah when your ancestors tested Me. For although they tried Me, they also saw the power with which I can act.

 I spent forty years being irritated with that generation. I said that they were naught but a people of fickle hearts who knew not My ways, and about whom I actually swore in My anger that they should never arrive at the resting place I intended for them."

שִׁירֹו

לַיהוָה שִׁיר חֲדָשׁ, שִׁירֹו לַיהוָה כָּל הָאָרֶץ.
 שִׁירֹו לַיהוָה בְּרָכוּ שְׁמוֹ, בַּשִּׁירֹו מִיּוֹם לְיוֹם
 יִשׁוּעָתוֹ. סִפְרוּ בַגּוֹיִם כְּבוֹדוֹ, בְּכָל הָעַמִּים
 נִבְלָאוֹתָיו. כִּי גָדוֹל יְהוָה וּמְהַלָּל מְאֹד,
 נוֹרָא הוּא עַל כָּל אֱלֹהִים. כִּי כָּל אֱלֹהֵי
 הָעַמִּים אֱלִילִים, וַיהוָה שָׁמַיִם עָשָׂה. הוֹד
 וְהָדָר לְפָנָיו, עַז וְתִפְאֶרֶת בְּמִקְדָּשׁוֹ. הָבוּ
 לַיהוָה מִשְׁפָּחוֹת עַמִּים, הָבוּ לַיהוָה כְּבוֹד
 וְעֹז. הָבוּ לַיהוָה כְּבוֹד שְׁמוֹ, שִׂאוּ מִנְחָה
 וּבְאוּ לְחַצְרוֹתָיו. הִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ לַיהוָה בְּהַדְרַת
 קֹדֶשׁ, חִילוּ מִפְּנֵי כָּל הָאָרֶץ. אִמְרוּ בַגּוֹיִם
 יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ, אֵף תִּפְּוֹן תִּבְּל בַּל תִּמּוּט, יָדִין
 עַמִּים בְּמִישְׁרִים. יִשְׁמְחוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְתִגַּל
 הָאָרֶץ, יִרְעֵם הַיָּם וּמְלֹאוּ. יַעֲלֹז שִׁדְּי וְכָל
 אֲשֶׁר בּוֹ, אִזּוּ יִרְנְנוּ כָּל עֵצֵי יַעַר.  לְפָנָיו
 יְהוָה כִּי בָּא, כִּי בָּא לְשִׁפְטֵי הָאָרֶץ, יִשְׁפֹּט
 תִּבְּל בְּצַדִּיק וְעַמִּים בְּאִמוּנָתוֹ.

The eighth song, David, king of Israel, sang because of all the miracles which א had performed for him. He opened his mouth and spoke a song, as it is written, "And David praised in prophecy before א (2 Samuel 22:1.)"

The ninth song, Solomon, king of Israel, sang by means of the Holy Spirit before the Ruler of all the World, א . (It is the Song of Songs.)

And the tenth song, the children of the exile are destined to sing at the time they are redeemed from exile, as it is written and explained by Isaiah the prophet: "You shall have this song for joy, as on the night the feast of Passover is sanctified, and for gladness of heart, as the people who go to appear before א three times a year with varieties of music and the sound of the drum come up to the mountain of א to worship before א , the Strength of Israel (Isaiah 30:29.)"

Section 1: The Wilderness

1:2 Would that he would grant me some of his mouth's sweet kisses, for your embraces are better than fine wine.

Solomon the prophet said: "Blessed be the name of א who gave us the Torah by the hand of Moses, the great scribe, inscribed on two tablets of stone, and (gave us) six orders of the Mishnah and the Gemara by oral tradition, and conversed with us face to face (as a man who kisses his companion) out of the great love with which God cherished us more than the seventy nations.

1:3 Even hearing your name spoken is like having the finest scented oil poured over me.

"At the sound of the mighty miracles which You performed for the people, the House of Israel, all the nations who heard the report of Your might and good signs trembled; and Your holy name was heard in all the earth, and it was more choice than the oil of high office with which the heads of kings and kohanim were anointed. And therefore the righteous love to follow the path of Your goodness in order that they may possess this world and the World to Come."

Psalm 96

1:4 Draw me after you, let us run off together! For the king has already brought me to his chambers. Let us all rejoice and be glad in your presence. Let us declare your embraces finer than good wine, for we are surely right to love you.


When the people of the House of Israel went out from Egypt, the Shechinah of the Ruler of the World was their leader; it went before them with a pillar of cloud by day and with a pillar of fire by night. The righteous of that generation said: "Ribono shel olam, draw us after You and we will run after the path of Your goodness. Draw us near to the base of Mount Sinai and give us Your laws from Your treasure house in the firmament, and we will rejoice and be glad with the twenty-two letters with which they are written. We will be mindful of them and will love Your divinity and we shall remove ourselves from the idols of the nations. And all the righteous who do what is upright in Your sight will revere You and love Your commands."

1:5 I am black and beautiful, O daughters of Jerusalem, just like the tents of Kedar and the opaque curtains of Solomon's palace.

When the House of Israel made the Golden Calf, their faces grew somber, like the children of Cush who dwell in the tents of Kedar. And when they turned back in repentance and their guilt was pardoned them, the splendor of their faces' glory increased like the angels, because they made the curtains for the Tabernacle and the Shechinah of A dwelt among them. And their master Moses went up to the firmament and made peace between them and sovereign God.

1:6 Do not stare at me because my skin is so dark—the sun darkened it when my mother's sons were angry with me and made me guard their vineyards for them. But my own vineyard, I have not guarded at all.

The Assembly of Israel said to the nations: "Do not despise me because I am worse than you, because I have done according to your deeds and have bowed down to the sun and the moon. For

Sing a new song unto A ; sing to A , all the earth. Sing to A , bless God's holy name; proclaim salvation in God from one day to the next. Tell of God's glory among the peoples of the earth, of God's wonders among the nations, for A is great and greatly praiseworthy, awesome and supreme over all other forms of divinity. Indeed, all the gods of the other nations are mere idols, but A made the heavens. Resplendence and magnificence flourish in God's presence; strength and splendor co-exist in the Temple of God. Render unto A , O families of the nations, render unto A glory and strength. Render unto A the honor due God's holy name; take up a grain offering and come to the courtyards of God. Bow down to A in the magnificence of the Sanctuary; tremble before God all the earth. Say among the nations, " A reigns over an earth that is firmly established and never totters . . . and will judge the nations in absolute fairness." Let the heavens rejoice; let the earth be glad. Let the sea and its fullness roar out loud. Let my fields and all that is in them exult, and then all the trees of the forest,  before A our God, the God Who is coming, Who is actually coming at this very moment, to judge the earth. God will judge the world in righteousness and the nations in good faith.

יהוה

מֶלֶךְ תִּגַּל הָאָרֶץ, יִשְׁמְחוּ אֵימִים רַבִּים. עֲנֵן
וְעַרְפָּל סְבִיבָיו, צֶדֶק וּמִשְׁפָּט מְכוּזָן כְּסָאוֹ.
אֵשׁ לְפָנָיו תִּלְךָ, וּתְלַהֵט סְבִיב צָרְיוֹ. הָאִירוּ
בְּרָקָיו תֵּבֵל, רָאֲתָה וַתַּחַל הָאָרֶץ. הָרִים
כִּדְוֶנֶג גַּמְסוּ מִלְּפָנֵי יְהוָה, מִלְּפָנֵי אֲדוֹן כָּל
הָאָרֶץ. הִגִּידוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם צְדָקוֹ, וּרְאוּ כָּל
הָעַמִּים כְּבוֹדוֹ. יִבְשׂוּ כָּל עַבְדֵי בַּסָּל
הַמִּתְהַלְלִים בְּאֱלִילִים, הַשִּׁתְּחוּ לוֹ כָּל
אֱלֹהִים. שִׁמְעָה וַתִּשְׁמַח צִיּוֹן וַתִּגְלָבָה בְּנוֹת
יְהוּדָה, לְמַעַן מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ יְהוָה. כִּי אַתָּה יְהוָה
עָלִיוֹן עַל כָּל הָאָרֶץ, מֵאֵד גַּעֲלִיתָ עַל כָּל
אֱלֹהִים. אֲהַבִּי יְהוָה שִׁנְאוֹ רָע, שִׁמְרֵם בְּפִשׁוֹת
חֲסִידָיו מִיַּד רְשָׁעִים יִצִּילֵם. אִוֵּר זֶרַע
לְצַדִּיק, וְלִישָׂרֵי לֵב שִׁמְחָה. שִׁמְחוּ צַדִּיקִים
בִּיהוָה, וְהוֹדוּ לְזִכְרֵךְ קֹדֶשׁוֹ.

false prophets caused the powerful fury of א to be drawn down upon me. They taught me to worship your idols and walk according to your laws. But the Ruler of the World, who is my God, I did not serve and I neither followed God’s laws nor kept the commandments and the Torah.”

1:7 Tell me, lover, how do you manage to slip away to go grazing? How do you get away long enough to lie down with me during an afternoon you should probably be somewhere else? Tell me—for why should I be tempted, veiled and anonymous, to visit your friends’ flocks?

When the time came for Moses the prophet to depart from the world, he said before א : “It has been revealed to me that this people will sin and be carried into exile. Now tell me how they will sustain themselves and live among the nations whose decrees are as strong as the heat of the noonday sun at the summer solstice, and why they will be carried away among the flocks of the children of Esau and Ishmael who treat their idols as Your companions.”

1:8 If you, O most beautiful of women, do not know the answer to those questions, why don’t you go out and follow the sheep’s footprints to find out? Just take your kids out to graze among the shepherds’ huts.

The blessed Holy One said to Moses the prophet: “If the Assembly of Israel (which is compared to a beautiful young woman whom My soul loves) wishes to survive the exile, let her walk in the ways of the righteous, let her order her prayers at the behest of the shepherd’s assistants—and the leaders of her generation; let her teach her children (which are compared to the kids of goats) to go to the synagogue and the study-house and, by that merit, they will be sustained in the exile until the time when I send King Messiah, who will lead them to their dwelling place, the Temple that David and Solomon, the shepherds of Israel, will build for them.”

1:9 When I think of you, my beloved, you remind me of the finest mare in Paraoh's stable.


When Israel went out from Egypt, Pharaoh and his army chased after them with chariots and horsemen, and the way was closed to them on four sides. On the right and left were wildernesses that were full of fiery serpents, behind them was the wicked Pharaoh with his armies, and in front of them was the Reed Sea. What did the blessed Holy One do? God revealed the fullness of divine strength at the sea, drying up the sea, but not the mud. The mixed multitude of foreigners who were among them said, "God can dry up the waters of the sea, but not the mud!" At that time, א became very angry with them and would have drowned them in the waters of the sea just as Pharaoh, his armies, his chariots, his horsemen, and horses were drowned—if it had not been for Moses the prophet, who stretched out his hands in prayer before א and turned back the anger of א from them. And he and the righteous of that generation opened their mouths and sang songs. And they passed in the midst of the Reed Sea on dry land by virtue of the merits of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the beloved ones of א.

1:10 Your cheeks are so lovely adorned with those doves, your neck so graceful beneath that necklace.


When they went out to the wilderness, א said to Moses: "How fit is this people to be given the Torah's commands, which will be like bridles between their jaws so that they do not depart from the good path, just as a horse which has a bridle between its jaws does not stray! And how fit is their neck to bear the yoke of my commands, which will rest on them like a yoke rests on the neck of an ox that plows in the field and supports himself and his master."

1:11 Let us fashion some new doves for you, ones made of gold and tastefully decorated with silver studs.

Thus it was said to Moses: "Come up to the firmament, and I will give you two tablets of stone hewn from the sapphire of My glorious throne,

When א reigns, the earth is glad and its many islands rejoice; cloud and fog come together to surround our God, as do righteousness and justice—the foundation elements of the divine throne. Fire goes forth before God, consuming enemies on every side. When bolts of divine lightning illuminate the world, the earth sees and trembles. Mountains melt like wax before א, before the Ruler of the whole earth. When the heavens tell of God's righteousness and the nations see God's glory, then all those idolaters who boast about their gods will become ashamed as they come to imagine those divinities bowing down before God. Zion will hear this and rejoice, the daughters of Judah will be glad for the sake of Your justice, א. For You, א, are supreme above the entire earth; You have made Yourself supreme over every other form of divinity. Those who love א, hate evil—for the God Who watches over the souls of pious followers will surely save them from the wicked.  Indeed, light is sown for the righteous individual and joy for the upright of heart. Rejoice, O righteous ones, in א and give thanks to God's holy name.

מִזְמוֹר

שִׁירוֹ לַיהוָה שִׁיר חֲדָשׁ, כִּי נִפְלְאוֹת
 עָשָׂה, הוֹשִׁיעָה לוֹ יְמֵינוּ וְזָרוּעַ קִדְשׁוֹ.
 הוֹדִיעַ יְהוָה יְשׁוּעָתוֹ, לְעֵינֵי הַגּוֹיִם גְּלָה
 צְדָקָתוֹ. זָכַר חֲסִדוֹ וְאַמוּנָתוֹ לְבֵית
 יִשְׂרָאֵל, רָאוּ כָּל אַפְסֵי אֶרֶץ אֵת יְשׁוּעַת
 אֱלֹהֵינוּ. הָרִיעוּ לַיהוָה כָּל הָאָרֶץ, פָּצְחוּ
 וְרַנְּנוּ וְזַמְּרוּ. זַמְּרוּ לַיהוָה בְּכִנּוֹר,
 וְקוֹל זַמְּרָה. בְּחִצְצָרוֹת וְקוֹל שׁוֹפָר,
 הָרִיעוּ לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ יְהוָה. יִרְעֵם הַיָּם
 וּמִלְאֵאוֹ, תִּבֵּל וַיֵּשְׁבֵי בָהּ. נִהְרוֹת יִמְחֲאוּ
 כָּתָּהּ, יַחַד הָרִים יִרְנְנוּ.  לִפְנֵי יְהוָה
 כִּי בָּא לְשַׁפֵּט הָאָרֶץ, יִשְׁפֹּט תִּבֵּל בְּצֶדֶק
 וְעַמִּים בְּמִישְׁרִים.

bright as pure gold, arranged in lines, written by My finger, upon which are inscribed the Ten Commandments, refined more than silver purified seven times seven (totaling forty-nine, the number of ways to interpret what is in them), and I will give them by your hand to the people of the House of Israel.”

1:12 When the king lay on his divan, he was close enough to smell my perfume, my spikenard.

And while Moses, their rabbi, was still in the firmament to receive the two tablets of stone that contained (the basic principles of) the Torah and the commandments, the wicked of that generation and the mixed multitude among them arose and made the golden calf, and they corrupted their deeds. And they earned a bad reputation in the world. While, previously, their fragrance had gone forth in the world, after this they smelled like nard, which has a terrible odor, and the plague of leprosy came down upon their flesh.

1:13 My lover himself is the bundle of myrrh that rests between my breasts.

At that time A said to Moses: “Go, descend, for your people have done wrong. Go away from Me and I will destroy them.” Then Moses turned and begged mercy from A. And, in their favor, A remembered the binding of Isaac, whose father bound him on the altar on Mount Moriah. And A turned away from anger and let the Shechinah dwell among them as before.

1:14 And he is my bunch of cypress twigs as well, no less fragrant than if he came from Ein Gedi itself.

Listen! When Moses came down with the two tablets of stone in his hands, his hands were heavy because of the sins of Israel and the tablets fell and were broken! Then Moses went and destroyed the calf, scattered its dust in the river, made the Children of Israel drink, and killed everyone who deserved to be killed. And he ascended a second time to the firmament and prayed before A and made atonement for the Children of Israel. Then he was commanded to make the Tabernacle and

the Ark. At that time, Moses hurried and made the Tabernacle, all its vessels, and the Ark, and he put in the Ark two different tablets. And he appointed the sons of Aaron the kohen to offer up the sacrifice on the altar and to offer a libation of wine at the sacrifice. And where did they get the wine for libations? They were in the desert, were they not? And is the desert a convenient place for agriculture or a place of figs, vines, or pomegranates? But they went to the vineyards of En-Gedi and took bunches of grapes from there and pressed wine from them and offered it as a libation on the altar, a quarter of a hin for each lamb.

1:15 How beautiful you are, my beloved! You are beauty itself, your eyes as graceful as doves.

When the Children of Israel did the will of their Sovereign, God praised them with a divine word in the household of the holy angels. And this is what God said: "How beautiful are your deeds, My beloved daughter, Assembly of Israel, when you do my will, by following the dictates of My Torah! And how proper are your deeds and affairs! They are like turtledoves, the nestlings of doves that are fit to be offered on the altar!"

1:16 It is you who are beautiful, my lover, and comely. Even our bed is luxuriant!


The Assembly of Israel replied before the Ruler of the World and this is what she said: "How beautiful is Your Shechinah when You dwell among us and receive our prayers with favor, when You cause love to dwell in our bed and our many children to dwell on the earth, when we increase and multiply like trees planted by a spring of water, whose foliage is beautiful and whose fruit is plentiful!"

1:17 Our house has beams of cedar and rafters of fine cypress.

Solomon the prophet said, "How beautiful is the Temple of א that was built by my hands from cedar! But even more beautiful will be the Temple that is destined to be built in the days of King Messiah, the beams of which will be from the cedars of the Garden of Eden, and the pillars of which will be made of fir, juniper, and cypress."

Psalm 98

A Psalm.

Sing a new song unto א , for our God has done wondrous things, bringing salvation with the divine right hand, with that holiest of arms. א has demonstrated the extent of the saving power of the divine and revealed to the nations the meaning of divine righteousness. God remembered the mercy and faithfulness once shown to the House of Israel; the very ends of the earth can see the salvation of our God. Make a joyous noise unto א , all the earth; open your mouth, exult, sing out! Accompany your song to א on a lyre; play a lyre and sing out with a melodious voice. With trumpets too, and with a blast of the *shofar*, make joyous noise before the divine Sovereign, א . Let roar the sea and its fullness, the world and its inhabitants. Let the rivers clap their hands, let all the mountains come together to be glad before א ,  Who is coming to judge the earth . . . for God will surely judge the world with justice and its nations with honesty.

יהוה

מֶלֶךְ יִרְגְּזוּ עַמִּים, יֵשֵׁב כְּרוֹבֵיִם תְּנוּט
הָאָרֶץ. יְהוָה בְּצִיּוֹן גָּדוֹל, וְרֵם הוּא עַל כָּל
הָעַמִּים. יוֹדוּ שְׁמֶךָ גָּדוֹל וְנוֹרָא, קְדוֹשׁ
הוּא. וְעַז מֶלֶךְ מִשְׁפָּט אָהֵב, אֶתָּה פּוֹנֵנֶת
מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל, מִשְׁפָּט וְצִדְקָה בִּיעֲקֹב אֶתָּה
עֲשִׂיתָ. רוֹמְמוֹ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִי
לְהַדָּם רַגְלָיו, קְדוֹשׁ הוּא. מִשָּׂה וְאֶהְרֹן
בְּכַהֲנָיו וְשִׁמּוֹאֵל בְּקִרְאֵי שְׁמוֹ, קִרְאִים אֶל
יְהוָה וְהוּא יַעֲנֵם. בְּעַמּוּד עָנָן יִדְבֹר
אֲלֵיהֶם, שְׁמֵרוּ עֲדוֹתָיו וְחֹק גִּתָּן לָמוֹ. יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶתָּה עֲנִיתָם, אֵל גִּישָׁא הֵייתָ לָהֶם
וְנִקָּם עַל עֲלִילוֹתָם.  רוֹמְמוֹ יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִי לְהַר קְדִשׁוֹ, כִּי קְדוֹשׁ
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ.

2:1 I am a crocus of the Sharon, a lily of the valleys.

The Assembly of Israel said, “During the time that the Ruler of the World makes the Shechinah dwell among us, I am like a narcissus fresh from the Garden of Eden and my actions are beautiful like a rose in the valley of the Pleasure Garden that was in Eden.

2:2 When I see my beloved among the other maidens, it is like looking at a lily amidst the brambles.

“But when I turn from the path which is straight before me, and God removes the holy Shechinah from me, I am like the lily that blooms among thorns which pierce and tear her foliage. In the same way, I am pierced and torn by the evil decrees in the exile among the nations.

2:3 When I see my lover among the other young men, it is like looking at a luscious apple tree among the other trees of the forest. I love to sit in his shade and nothing is as sweet to my palate as his fruit.

“Just as the citron is beautiful and is praised among ornamental trees and all the world acknowledges it, so was the Ruler of the World praised among the angels when the reality of the divine was revealed on Mount Sinai at the time God gave the Torah to the people. At that time, I longed to dwell under the shadow of the Shechinah, and the commands of the Torah were like sweet spice to my palate—and the reward for my observances was stored up on my behalf for the World to Come.”

2:4 He brought me to a wine-house and the flag he flew over me was called “Love.”

The Assembly of Israel said: “ A brought me into the study-house at Sinai to learn Torah from the mouth of Moses, the great scribe. And I received the banner of the commandments of God over me with love, and I said: ‘All that A has commanded, I will do and obey.’

2:5 They fed me there with raisin cakes and sustained me with apples, for I needed sustenance: I was faint with love.


“When I heard the sound of God’s word that was projecting forth from within the flame of fire, I trembled and shook with fear. Then I approached Moses and Aaron and told them, ‘You withstand the voice of A and receive God’s words from within the fire. Then bring me to the study-house and sustain me with the words of the Torah, upon which the world is based. And put chains upon my neck—I mean, by explaining the holy words, which are as sweet to my palate as apples from the Garden of Eden so that I can be occupied with them—for perhaps they will heal me, since they have made me lovesick.’”

2:6 His left hand was beneath my head while he embraced me with his right arm.

While the people of the House of Israel were wandering in the wilderness, four clouds of glory surrounded them from the four winds (i.e., directions) of the earth, so that the Evil Eye had no power over them. Another cloud was above them, so that neither the heat nor the sun, neither rain nor hail, would overcome them. Another was below them, and it carried them in the manner of a male nurse carrying an infant in his bosom. Another ran before them three days’ journey to level mountains and raise valleys; it killed all the poisonous serpents and scorpions in the wilderness and it would scout out suitable places for them to rest, so that they could be occupied with instruction in the Torah which had been given to them by the right hand of A .

2:7 You must swear to me, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or wild rams of that place, that you will never attempt to provoke or arouse love until the time be perfectly right.

After this, Moses was told in a prophecy from A to send messengers to spy out the land. When they returned from spying, they brought a bad report about the Land of Israel, and so were delayed forty years in the wilderness. Moses

When A reigns, nations tremble. But when God actually sits upon the cherub-throne, the earth itself quakes. A is great in Zion, exalted over all nations; its inhabitants, therefore, will acclaim Your great and awesome name, for it is holy. The might of the divine Sovereign derives from loving justice; indeed, You invented fairness, granting both justice and righteousness to Jacob. Exalt A , our God, and bow down to the divine footstool . . . for God is holy. As Moses and Aaron were among God’s priests, so was Samuel among those who called out in God’s name; when they cried out to A , God answered them. God spoke to them in a pillar of cloud; they kept the sacred testimonies and God gave them law. A , our God, You answered them. You were their patient God, the One who avenged plots hatched against them.  Exalt A , our God, and bow down to the holy mountain of God, for A , our God, is holy.

*The congregation rises to chant the Twenty-Ninth Psalm.**

מִזְמוֹר

לְדָוִד, הָבוּ לַיהוָה בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים, הָבוּ לַיהוָה כְּבוֹד
וְעֹז. הָבוּ לַיהוָה כְּבוֹד שְׁמוֹ הַשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לַיהוָה
בְּהַדְרַת קֹדֶשׁ. קוֹל יְהוָה עַל הַמַּיִם אֵל הַכְּבוֹד
הַרְעִים, יְהוָה עַל מַיִם רַבִּים. קוֹל יְהוָה בַּפֶּתַח,
קוֹל יְהוָה בְּהַדְרָה. קוֹל יְהוָה שִׁיר אֲרָזִים, וַיִּשְׁבֵּר
יְהוָה אֶת אֲרָזֵי הַלְּבָנוֹן. וַיִּרְקִידֵם כְּמוֹ עֵגֶל, לְבָנוֹן
וְשָׁרִיוֹן כְּמוֹ בֶן רְאִמִּים. קוֹל יְהוָה חִצָּב לַהַבּוֹת
אֵשׁ, קוֹל יְהוָה יַחִיל מִדְּבַר, יַחִיל יְהוָה מִדְּבַר
קֹדֶשׁ. קוֹל יְהוָה יַחֲלֵל אֵילוֹת, וַיִּחַשֵּׁף יַעֲרוֹת,
וַבְּהִיכָלוֹ פָּלוּ אֵמֹר כְּבוֹד.  יְהוָה לַמְּבוּל
יֵשֵׁב, וַיִּשָּׁב יְהוָה מִלֶּקֶד לְעוֹלָם. יְהוָה עֹז לְעַמּוֹ
יִתֵּן, יְהוָה יְבָרֵךְ אֶת עַמּוֹ בְּשָׁלוֹם.

אָנָּה, בְּכַח גְּדֻלַּת יְמִינָהּ, תַּתִּיר צְרוּרָהּ. קֶבֶל רַבַּת עַמּוּקָה, שֶׁגָּבְנוּ, טַהֲרָנוּ
נוֹרָא. נָא גְבוּר, דּוֹרְשֵׁי יַחֲוֹדָה כְּבַבַּת שְׁמֵרָם. בְּרַכָּם, טַהֲרָם, רַחֲמָם,
צְדָקָתָהּ תַּמִּיד גְּמִלָּם. חֲסִין קְדוֹשׁ, בְּרוּב טוֹבָה נֶהַל עֲדָתָהּ. יַחִיד גְּאָה,
לְעַמּוּקָה פִּנְהָ, זוֹכְרֵי קְדֻשָּׁתָהּ. שׁוֹעֲתֵינוּ קֶבֶל וּשְׁמַע צַעֲקוֹתֵנוּ, יוֹדֵעַ
תַּעֲלָמוֹת. בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

The congregation may be seated.

**This psalm appears in transliteration on page 582.*

opened his mouth and this is what he said, "I adjure you, O Assembly of Israel, by A of Hosts, by the Mighty One of the Land of Israel, that you do not presume to go up to the land of Canaan until it is the will of A that the whole generation of warriors in the camp finally dies out. Do not be presumptuous like your brothers, the Ephraimites, who left Egypt thirty years before the end had come and fell into the hands of the Philistines living in Gath, who killed them. But wait the period of forty years and then your children will go up and take possession of it."

2:8 That is the sound of my lover! He must be coming right now, skipping over mountains and leaping over hills.

King Solomon said, "While the people of the House of Israel were living in Egypt, their complaint rose to heaven above. Then, suddenly, the glory of A was revealed to Moses on Mount Horeb. And God sent him to Egypt to deliver them and to bring them out from the bitter oppression of Egypt. He skipped them forward to the appointed end of their years of slavery by virtue of the merit of their patriarchs (who are compared to mountains) and skipped a hundred and ninety years of the time of slavery because of the righteousness of their matriarchs (who are compared to hills.)"

2:9 My lover is like a gazelle or a young buck . . . and here he is, standing just behind the wall of our home, peering through the latticework.

The Assembly of Israel said, "At the time when the glory of A was revealed in Egypt on the night of Passover and the Almighty killed every firstborn, God rode on a swift thundercloud, running like a gazelle or an antelope fawn to shield the houses where we were. Indeed, God stood behind our wall and, looking through the window, and peering through the lattice, saw the blood of the Passover sacrifice and the blood of the circumcision which was marked on our doors. Then God hastened from heaven above and saw the people of God eating the sacrifice of the Passover feast roasted by fire, along with bitter herbs and

endives and unleavened bread, and had mercy on us and did not allow the Destroying Angel to destroy us.”

2:10 And I can hear him speaking as well, saying to me these words, “Come, my beloved, my beauty, and let us be off.”

And, at morning time, my Beloved answered and said to me, “Arise, O Assembly of Israel, my beloved from of old, beautiful in deeds. Depart, go forth from the slavery of the Egyptians.

2:11 For the winter is over and the rains are ended. “For, behold, the time of slavery (which is like winter) is over. The years of which I spoke to Abraham in ‘the covenant between the animal parts’ have been cut short; the bitterness of the Egyptians (which is compared to constant rain) is over and gone—and you will never see them again.

2:12 The buds are visible again in the land. The gardener’s day has come and the voice of the turtledove can again be heard in our land.


“And Moses and Aaron (who are likened to palm branches) have appeared to perform miracles (which word in Hebrew sounds like the word for “buds”) in the land of Egypt. The time has arrived for the slaying of the firstborn and for the voice of the Holy Spirit of Redemption of which I spoke to your father Abraham. (You have already heard what I said to him: ‘I will judge the nation they will serve, and afterwards they will go out with many possessions.’) I wish to do now what I swore to him by My word.”

2:13 The green fruit is forming on the branches of the fig tree. The vines in flower are exuding the sweetest of scents.

The Assembly of Israel (likened to the first fruits of the figs) opened her mouth and sang the Song at the Reed Sea. Even youths and suckling babes praised the Ruler of the World with their tongues. Immediately, the Ruler of the World said to them: “Arise, O Assembly of Israel, My beloved, My beautiful one, go from here to the land which I promised to your ancestors.”

*The congregation rises to chant the Twenty-Ninth Psalm.**

A psalm of David.

Render unto A , O divine beings, render glory and strength unto A . Render unto A the glory due the divine name; bow down low to A in the splendor of the Sanctuary. The voice of A goes out over the waters; the God of glory thunders forth. A thunders forth over the multitude of waters. The voice of A is powerful; the voice of A is splendid. The voice of A can destroy cedars; indeed, A can demolish all the cedars of Lebanon. Alternately, our God can make those cedars dance like romping calves or make Lebanon and Sirion gambol about like young oxen. The voice of A can hew flames of fire. The voice of A can make a desert tremble; A can even make tremble the Kadesh Desert. The voice of A can make ewes dance or defoliate entire forests; within God’s Sanctuary, however, its full force exists only to say, “Glory.”  A reigned at the time of the flood and A will reign for all time. A gives strength unto the people of God; may A ever bless the people of God with peace.

O God, unleash the power of Your right hand to release those in bondage, and, as You accept the prayers of Your people, O awesome God, exalt us and purify us. Protect the people Israel, the apple of Your divine eye who ever seek to proclaim Your unity, O mighty God. Bless them, purify them, deal kindly with them; may You deal with them always in accordance with Your righteous nature. O divine source of strength, O Holy One, lead Your congregation forward in accordance with Your indescribable beneficence. O unique God, O resplendent God, turn to Your people in kindness, for they are the ones in this world who remain mindful of Your holiness. Accept our supplication and listen to our prayers, O God Who knows the secrets of humanity. Forever be blessed the name of the glorious sovereignty of God.

The congregation may be seated.

**This psalm appears in transliteration on page 582.*

Lechah Dodi

(The text of Lekhah Dodi appears in transliteration on page 582.)

לְכָה דוּדֵי לְקִרְאֵת פֶּלֶה, פְּנֵי שַׁבַּת נִקְבְּלָה.
שְׂמוֹר וְזָכוֹר בְּדַבּוּר אֶחָד, הַשְּׂמִיעֵנוּ אֵל הַמַּיְחָד.
יְהוּה אֶחָד וְשִׁמוֹ אֶחָד, לְשֵׁם וּלְתַפְאֵרֶת וּלְתַהֲלָה.
לְכָה דוּדֵי לְקִרְאֵת פֶּלֶה, פְּנֵי שַׁבַּת נִקְבְּלָה.
לְקִרְאֵת שַׁבַּת לָכוּ וְנִלְכָה, כִּי הִיא מְקוֹר הַבְּרָכָה.
מִרֹאשׁ מְקַדְּדִים גְּסוּכָה, סוּף מַעֲשֵׂה בְּמַחְשָׁבָה תַּחֲלָה.
לְכָה דוּדֵי לְקִרְאֵת פֶּלֶה, פְּנֵי שַׁבַּת נִקְבְּלָה.
מִקְדָּשׁ מְלֻכָּה עִיר מְלוּכָה, קוֹמֵי צְאֵי מִתּוֹף הַחֶפְכָּה.
רַב לָךְ שַׁבַּת בְּעֵמֶק הַבְּכָא, וְהוּא יַחְמוּל עֲלֶיךָ חֲמָלָה.
לְכָה דוּדֵי לְקִרְאֵת פֶּלֶה, פְּנֵי שַׁבַּת נִקְבְּלָה.
הַתְּנַעֲרֵי מֵעַפְר קוֹמֵי, לְבָשִׁי בְּגָדֵי תַפְאֵרֶת עֲמִי.
עַל יַד בֶּן יִשִׁי בֵּית הַלְחָמִי, קִרְבָּה אֵל גַּפְשִׁי גְּאֻלָּה.
לְכָה דוּדֵי לְקִרְאֵת פֶּלֶה, פְּנֵי שַׁבַּת נִקְבְּלָה.
הַתְּעוֹרְרֵי הַתְּעוֹרְרֵי, כִּי בָּא אֲוֵרָה קוֹמֵי אֲוֵרִי.
עוֹרֵי עוֹרֵי שִׁיר דְּבָרֵי, כְּבוֹד יְהוּה עֲלֶיךָ נִגְלָה.
לְכָה דוּדֵי לְקִרְאֵת פֶּלֶה, פְּנֵי שַׁבַּת נִקְבְּלָה.
לֹא תִבּוֹשִׁי וְלֹא תִפְלֹמֵי, מֵה תִשְׁתַּחֲוִי וּמֵה תִתְהַמֵּי.
בְּךָ יַחֲסוּ עַנְיֵי עַמִּי, וְנִבְנְתָה עִיר עַל תְּלָה.
לְכָה דוּדֵי לְקִרְאֵת פֶּלֶה, פְּנֵי שַׁבַּת נִקְבְּלָה.
וְהָיוּ לְמִשְׁסָה שְׂאִסְיָה, וְרַחֲקוּ כָּל מִבְלַעֲיָה.
יִשִׁישׁ עֲלֶיךָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ, כְּמִשׁוֹשׁ חֲתָן עַל פֶּלֶה.
לְכָה דוּדֵי לְקִרְאֵת פֶּלֶה, פְּנֵי שַׁבַּת נִקְבְּלָה.
יְמִין וְשְׂמֹאל תִּפְרֹצֵי, וְאֵת יְהוּה תַעֲרִיצֵי.
עַל יַד אִישׁ בֶּן פְּרָצִי, וְנִשְׁמָחָה וְנִגְלָה.
לְכָה דוּדֵי לְקִרְאֵת פֶּלֶה, פְּנֵי שַׁבַּת נִקְבְּלָה.
בּוֹאֵי בְּשִׁלּוֹם עֵטְרֵת בַּעֲלָה, גַּם בְּשִׁמְחָה וּבְצַחֲלָה.
תּוֹף אֲמוּנֵי עִם סִגְלָה, בּוֹאֵי כֹלָה, בּוֹאֵי כֹלָה.
לְכָה דוּדֵי לְקִרְאֵת פֶּלֶה, פְּנֵי שַׁבַּת נִקְבְּלָה.

During the mourning week, these words of comfort are offered to mourners:
הַמְּקוֹם יִנַּחֵם אֶתְכֶם בְּתוֹף שְׂאֵר אֲבֵלֵי צִיּוֹן וִירוּשָׁלַיִם.

2:14 My love is like a dove in the crannies of rocks, hidden by the looming rock face. Show yourself to me! Let me hear your voice, for it is so pleasant, and your form, so fair.

And when wicked Pharaoh pursued the people of Israel, the Assembly of Israel was compared to a dove trapped in the clefts of a rock with a snake threatening it from within and a hawk threatening it from without. In the same way, the Assembly of Israel was trapped in all four directions: in front of them was the sea, behind them was the enemy in pursuit, and on either side were wildernesses full of the kind of fiery serpents which wound and kill people with their sting. Then, immediately, the Assembly opened its mouth in prayer before Δ and an echo came from the heaven above and this is what it said, “You, O Assembly of Israel, who resemble a dove, pure and hiding in the hiding place of the clefts of the rocks or in the hidden places of the stairs, show me your face and your worthy deeds and let me hear your voice. For your voice is sweet when it prays in the lesser sanctuary—in the synagogue—and your face is beautiful when you perform good deeds.”

2:15 Let us catch us some foxes, some little ones, before they destroy our vineyard while it is in full bloom.

After they had crossed the sea, they grumbled about the water and wicked Amalek came upon them, he who kept a grudge against them on account of the birthright and the blessing which Jacob our father took from Esau. And he came to wage war against Israel because they neglected the words of the Torah. And from beneath the edges of the Cloud of Glory, the wicked Amalek would steal souls from the tribe of Dan to kill them, because the graven image of Micah was in their hands. At that time, the House of Israel would have been condemned to destruction (like a vineyard about to be destroyed), if it had not been for the righteous ones of that generation (who may be compared to a sweet perfume.)

**2:16 My lover is wholly mine, as I am his,
for he is my shepherd amidst the lilies.**

At that time, they returned to God in repentance. And Moses the prophet stood ready and prayed before א . Joshua, his servant, was equipped and went forth from beneath the edges of א 's Cloud of Glory, and with him went righteous heroes (who in their deeds resemble lilies.) They waged war against Amalek and shattered Amalek and his people under the ban of א , bringing them death and destruction according to the law of the sword.

2:17 Go about and act the gazelle, my gentle lover, before the day wanes and the shadows grow. Or, if you prefer, be my young stag and creep along into the craggy cleft.

A few days later, the Children of Israel made the Golden Calf, and the Cloud of Glory which had sheltered them was lifted, and they were left exposed and deprived of their weaponry on which was inscribed the great Name interpreted in seventy ways. And א would have wiped them from the world, except that God called to mind the covenant sworn with a divine word to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, who were as swift in worshiping God as a gazelle or an antelope fawn. And God called to mind that Abraham had offered to offer his son Isaac in sacrifice on Mount Moriah and that he had previously offered his sacrifices there and divided them evenly.

3:1 I was already in bed when I realized I could not bear not to seek out my lover. And so I sought him out . . . but I did not find him.

When the people of the House of Israel saw that the Cloud of Glory had been withdrawn from over them and that the crown of holiness which had been given them at Sinai was removed from them, they were left in darkness, like at night. They sought the crown of holiness which had been lifted from them, but they did not find it.

Lechah Dodi

(The text of Lekhah Dodi appears in transliteration on page 582.)

Come let us welcome the Sabbath, the bride,
The queen of all days, with gladness and pride.
“Keep” and “Remember”, two words spoke as one
By God from the mountain, a miracle done
To impress on the people a point highly salient
That words spoken clearly can be multivalent.

Let us anticipate the onset sabbatical
For, in so doing, we do nothing radical.
For blessings come to us because of such piety,
Creation week's last gift to human society.

A temple in time, a palace, God's city—
The safest of havens in no need of pity.
A release from the sadness that suffuses the week,
Of God's mercy, the ultimate; of compassion, the peak.
Arise from your misery, don garments of majesty,
Abandon your feelings of sadness and travesty,
Await our Messiah with hope and with song,
For our redeemer will undoubtedly come before long.

Awake from your slumber, let go of fatigue,
For the Sabbath brings light to entice, to intrigue,
To call you to sing of the dawn of salvation.
Of the glory of God, sing a hymn of elation.

Refuse to succumb to unwanted depression,
No moaning, no groaning, of joy no suppression.
Your care for the needy by God joined, required,
In Jerusalem rebuilt, in one city united.

Your foes will pay for their hatred unquellable,
With exile and death, and with suffering untellable.
But for Israel all worries and woes shall soon dissipate,
As a groom without worry, his bride does anticipate.

You shall spread o'er the earth, all its lands you shall dwell in,
As you venerate your God beyond verbal telling.
Your joy as you see your Messiah arriving,
In love for your God, your redemption deriving.

Enter in peace, O splendiferous Shabbos,
Of your joy and of gladness, the world cannot rob us.
Spend a day in our midst, be thou our pride,
Enter our queen, holy Sabbath, our bride.

*During the mourning week, these words of comfort are offered to mourners:
May God comfort you among the other mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.*

מִזְמוֹר

שִׁיר לַיּוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת. טוֹב לְהַדוֹת לַיהוָה, וּלְזַמֵּר
 לְשִׁמְךָ עֲלֵינוּ. לְהַגִּיד בַּבֶּקֶר חֶסֶדְךָ, וְאִמּוֹנְתְךָ
 בַּלַּיְלוֹת. עָלַי עָשׂוֹר וְעָלַי גָּבַל, עָלַי הַגִּיוֹן בְּכַפּוֹר.
 כִּי שָׁמַחְתָּנִי יְהוָה בַּפְּעֻלָּה, בְּמַעֲשֵׂי יְדִיךָ אֲרֵנָּה.
 מִה גָּדְלוֹ מַעֲשֵׂיךָ יְהוָה, מְאֹד עָמְקוֹ מִחֻשְׁבֹּתֶיךָ.
 אִישׁ בַּעַר לֹא יָדַע, וְכֹסִיל לֹא יָבִין אֶת זֹאת.
 בַּפֶּרֶחַ רִשְׁעִים כָּמוֹ עֵשֶׂב, וַיִּצְיִצּוּ כָּל פְּעֻלֵי אֹן
 לְהַשְׁמָדֵם עַד־יָעַד. וְאַתָּה מְרוֹם לְעֵלָם יְהוָה. כִּי
 הִנֵּה אֵיבֶיךָ יְהוָה, כִּי הִנֵּה אֵיבֶיךָ יֵאבְדוּ, יִתְפָּרְדּוּ
 כָּל פְּעֻלֵי אֹן. וַתִּרְם כְּרֵאִים קִרְנֵי, בַּלְתִּי בְּשִׁמּוֹן
 רַעְנָן. וַתִּבֹט עֵינַי בְּשׂוֹרֵי, בְּקַמִּים עָלַי מִרְעִים
 תִּשְׁמַעְנָה אֲזֵנִי. צִדִּיק כַּתְּמָר יִפְרַח, כְּאֶרֶז
 בְּלִבְנוֹן יִשְׁגָה. שְׁתוּלִים בְּבֵית יְהוָה, בְּחֻצְרוֹת
 אֱלֹהֵינוּ יִפְרִיחוּ. עוֹד יִגְבוּן בְּשִׁיבָה, דְּשֻׁנִים
 וְרַעְנָנִים יִהְיוּ. לְהַגִּיד כִּי יֵשֶׁר יְהוָה, צִוְרֵי וְלֹא
 עוֹלָתָה בּוֹ.

3:2 I got up, left the house, wandered in the city—in the markets and city squares— seeking my lover, seeking him endlessly, but not finding him.

The Children of Israel said to one another, “Let us rise and go and surround the Tent of Meeting which Moses set up outside the camp, and let us request instruction from א , and the holy Shechinah which has been removed from us.” Then they went around in the towns, streets, and squares, but they did not find any evidence of God’s presence.

3:3 The men of the night watch found me as they patrolled the city. I asked them, “Have you seen the one I love?”

The Assembly of Israel said, “Moses, Aaron and the Levites, who keep watch over the word of א in the Tent of Meeting and who patrol around it, found me, and I asked them about the Glorious Presence of א which had been removed from me. Moses, the great scribe of Israel, answered and this is what he said, ‘I will ascend to heaven on high and pray before א . Perhaps God will forgive your guilt and make the Shechinah dwell among you as before.’”

3:4 But, then, just as I was walking away from them, I managed to catch a glimpse of my lover. I caught him and would not let him go until he agreed to bring me to my mother’s house, to her private room.

Then, after a little time, א turned away from fierce anger and commanded the prophet Moses to make the Tent of Meeting and the Ark of the Presence to be located within it. And the people of the House of Israel would offer their sacrifices and be occupied with the words of the Torah in the chamber of the study-house of Moses, their rabbi, and in the classroom of Joshua, son of Nun, his assistant.

3:5 You truly must swear by the gazelles or stags of the field, O daughters of Jerusalem, not to provoke or arouse love until the time be perfectly right.

When the seven nations heard that the Children of Israel were about to take possession of their

land, they rose at once and cut down the trees, stopped up the water springs, and laid waste their towns and fled. The blessed Holy One said to Moses the prophet: “I promised the patriarchs of these people to bring up their children to take possession of a land producing milk and honey. But I am bringing their children into a wasted and barren land. I will now detain them forty years in the wilderness, and My Torah will be blended into their bodies. And meanwhile these wicked nations will build up what they have destroyed.”

Therefore Moses said to the Children of Israel, “I adjure you, O Assembly of Israel, by A of Hosts and by the Mighty One of the Land of Israel, that you do not presume to go up to the land of the Canaanites until the completion of the forty years and it is the will of A to deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hands. Then, you will cross the Jordan and the land will be subdued before you.”

3:6 Who is that coming from the desert like a stately pillar of smoke scented with myrrh and frankincense, and with all the best powders of the scent merchant?

When Israel came up from the wilderness and crossed the Jordan with Joshua, son of Nun, the nations of the land said, “What chosen people is this coming up from the wilderness, perfumed with the incense of spices,”—supported by the merit of Abraham, who worshiped and prayed before A on Mount Moriah, “and anointed with the oil of high office,”—with the righteousness of Isaac, who was bound for sacrifice in the location of the Temple, called the Mountain of Frankincense, “and for whom miracles are performed?”—through the piety of Jacob, with whom an angel wrestled until the break of dawn, yet who prevailed over him and was spared, both he and twelve tribes.

Section 2: The Temple

3:7 Here is Solomon’s bed, habitually encircled by sixty warriors, each a hero of Israel.

When Solomon, king of Israel, built the Temple of A in Jerusalem, A said, “How beautiful is this


Psalm 92

A psalm-song for the Sabbath day.


It is good to give thanks to A and to sing to Your name, O God on high, to tell in the morning of Your mercy and of Your trustworthiness during the night to the accompaniment of the ten-stringed harp and the *nevel*, of the *higayon* among the lyres. For You have brought me happiness through Your deeds, A ; in the work of Your hands, I rejoice.

How grand are Your works, A ; Your thoughts are very deep. Now a boor will not know this nor will a fool understand: when the wicked sprout up like blades of grass and doers of iniquity blossom like flowers, You are sufficiently exalted, A , to destroy them permanently.

For behold, A , behold Your enemies perish and whole gangs of evildoers disband while You raise up my horn like that of an ox and soak me through with fresh oil.

My eye sees those who are watching me; when evildoers rise up against me, my ears hear of it.  A righteous person will blossom like a palm tree and will grow as tall as a cedar on Mount Lebanon; indeed, those who are planted in the House of A will blossom in the courtyards of our God. In old age, they will still be alive; they will remain more than full enough of sap and freshness to demonstrate that A is just—my rock in which there is no flaw.

יהוה

מֶלֶךְ גִּיּוֹרִים לְבַשׁ, לְבַשׁ יְהוָה עֵז הַתְּאֵזָר,
 אֵף תִּכּוֹן יִתְּבַל בֶּל תִּמּוּט. נִכּוֹן כְּסֵאֶךָ
 מִיָּז, מִעוֹלָם אָתָּה. נִשְׂאוּ נְהַרּוֹת יְהוָה,
 נִשְׂאוּ נְהַרּוֹת קוֹלָם, יִשְׂאוּ נְהַרּוֹת דְּכִיָּם.
 מִקּוֹלוֹת מַיִם רַבִּים, אֲדִירִים מִשְׁבְּרֵי
 יָם, אֲדִיר בַּמְרוֹם יְהוָה.  עֲדַתֶּיךָ
 נֶאֱמְנוּ מְאֹד, לְבֵיתֶךָ נִבְּאוּ קֹדֶשׁ, יְהוָה,
 לְאֶרֶץ יָמִים.

Temple built for Me by King Solomon, son of David. And how beautiful are the kohanim at the time they spread their hands while standing on their dais, and bless the people of the House of Israel with the sixty-letter blessing which was transmitted to Moses, their rabbi. That blessing surrounds them like a high and strong wall, and by it all the heroes of Israel are strengthened and made to prosper.”

3:8 Each hero bears a mighty sword and is well trained in the art of war. They keep their swords strapped to their thighs for fear of nocturnal disturbances.

And the kohanim and the Levites, and all the tribes of Israel, are distinguished in the words of the Torah (which is compared to a sword) and they swing it and turn it among themselves, as heroes experienced in warfare. Each and every one of them has the seal of circumcision on his flesh, just as the flesh of Abraham their father was marked with a seal, and they are strengthened by it like a hero whose sword is girded on his thigh. On this account, they are not afraid of demons or shades that prowl by night.

3:9 The palanquin, on the other hand, King Solomon had made of wood from the Lebanon.

King Solomon built himself a holy Temple from zingiber, box, and cedar which he brought from Lebanon, and he overlaid it with pure gold.

3:10 Its posts are made of silver and its upholstery is gold. The seats are all purple, but the inside is festooned from one end to the other with love tokens from the maidens of Jerusalem.

After he had completed it, he placed in it the Ark of the Testimony, which is the pillar of the world. Inside the Ark, he placed the two tablets of stone which Moses had deposited there at Horeb, and which were more precious than refined silver, more beautiful than pure gold. He spread out the curtain of blue and purple to cover it from above and between the cherubim that were on the

mercy seat dwelled the Presence of א , Who caused the divine name to dwell in Jerusalem alone among all the cities of the Land of Israel.

3:11 Go forth and take a good look, O maidens of Jerusalem, at the crown the king's mother gave him on his wedding day, on the day of his greatest happiness.

When King Solomon came to dedicate the Temple, a powerful herald went forth and this is what he said, "Inhabitants of the districts of the Land of Israel and people of Zion, come and see the crown and diadem with which the people of the House of Israel have crowned King Solomon on the day of dedication of the Temple. And rejoice with the joy of the Feast of Sukkot!" For at that time King Solomon celebrated the Feast of Sukkot for fourteen days.

4:1 How beautiful you are, my beloved. You are beauty itself, your eyes as graceful as doves. Behind your veil, your hair tumbles down like a flock of goats careening down Mount Gilead.

On that day, King Solomon sacrificed a thousand burnt offerings on the altar and his offering was accepted with favor by א . An echo came forth from heaven and this is what it said, "How beautiful you are, O Assembly of Israel, and how beautiful are those leaders of the Assembly and the sages sitting in the Sanhedrin, they who enlighten forever and ever the people of the House of Israel (who resemble the nestlings of a dove.) Even the rest of the members of your Assembly and the people of the land are as righteous as the sons of Jacob who gathered stones and made a monument on Mount Gilead.

4:2 Your teeth are like a flock of ewes climbing up out of the washing pond, all of them in pairs and none bereft of her young.

"How beautiful are the kohanim and Levites who bring your offerings and eat holy meat, tithe, and terumah grain, and who are untainted by any theft or robbery, just as the flocks of Jacob's sheep were clean at the time they were shorn and came up

Psalm 93

א reigns wearing robes of majesty. א wears, or rather, girds the divine loins with, that very might once used to create the world and make it sturdy and permanent.

Your throne too stands eternally firm; You Yourself, of course, exist forever.

The rivers, א , the rivers lift up their voice; the rivers lift up their flood. But א is mighty on high, mightier even than the sound of the great waters, even than the roar of the sea's mightiest breakers.

 Your testimonies regarding Your House, the most beautiful of holy places, are entirely true, א , and permanently so.

*The Mourner's Kaddish**

יִתְגַּדֵּל וְיִתְקַדֵּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא בְּעֵלְמָא דִּי בְּרָא
כְּרַעוּתָהּ, וְיִמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתָהּ בְּתַיִיכוֹן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוֹן
וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּעֵגְלָא וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב,
וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

The congregation joins the mourners in reciting this line.

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלַם וּלְעֵלְמֵי עֵלְמֵיָא.

The mourners continue:

יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח, וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמֵם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא
וְיִתְהַדָּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלָּל שְׁמֵהּ דְקֻדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא

Except between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, say:

לְעֵלָא מִן כָּל

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, say:

לְעֵלָא לְעֵלָא מְכַל

בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירְתָּא, תְּשַׁבַּחְתָּא וְנַחֲמַתָּא, דְאִמְיָרוּן
בְּעֵלְמָא, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמֵיָא, וְחַיִּים, עָלֵינוּ וְעַל
כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו, הוּא יַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ
וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

*The Mourner's Kaddish appears in transliteration on page 397.

from the River Jabbok, because none of them was obtained by theft or robbery. All of them resembled one another, they bore twins every time, and none of them was barren or miscarried.”

4:3 Your lips are like scarlet thread, your mouth is loveliness itself . . . and your cheeks behind your veil have the rosy hue of a peeled pomegranate.

As the lips of the High Priest were uttering prayers before A on the Day of Atonement, his words changed the sins of Israel (which resembled a scarlet thread) and made them white as clean wool. And the king who was at their head was full of mitzvot as a pomegranate is full of seeds, not to mention the overseers and rulers who were near the king, all of whom were righteous and in whom there was nothing evil.

4:4 Your neck is as tall and straight as the Tower of David, built in sturdy layers strong enough to support the shields and bucklers even of a thousand warriors.

And the head of the Academy, who was master to you, was as mighty in merit and great in good deeds as David, king of Israel, by the word of whose mouth the world was sustained. And the people of the House of Israel were confident in the teaching of the Torah with which he was occupied, and they were victorious in war as if they had been holding all sorts of mighty weapons in their hands.

4:5 Your breasts are like two fawns grazing amidst the lilies, the twin offspring of a single gazelle.

Your two redeemers who are destined to redeem you, the Messiah, son of David, and the Messiah, son of Ephraim, resemble Moses and Aaron, the sons of Jochebed (who were comparable to two young fawns, twins of a single gazelle.) And by their merit they fed the people of the House of Israel for forty years in the wilderness on manna, plump fowl, and with the water of Miriam's well.

4:6 While there is still some daylight and the shadows have not yet fled, I will take myself to the mountain of spice, to the hillock of frankincense.

And all the time that the House of Israel held fast to the ways of their righteous ancestors, the demons and night demons and morning demons and midday demons fled from among them, because the glorious Presence of A dwelt in the Temple that was built on Mount Moriah, and all the demons and destroyers would flee from the smell of the incense.

4:7 You are wholly lovely, my beloved, totally without even the slightest blemish.

And at the time that the people, the House of Israel, did the will of the Ruler of the World, God would praise them in heaven above, saying: "You are all beautiful, O Assembly of Israel, and there is no blemish in you!"

4:8 Come down with me, come down with me, my bride, from Mount Lebanon. Look down from the peak of the Amarna, from the top of Senir and Mount Hermon, from the lairs of lions, from hills thick with leopards.

A said with a divine word, "The Assembly of Israel (which resembles a chaste bride) will dwell with Me, and with Me they will go up to the Temple. And the heads of the people who dwell by the River Amana and who dwell on the peak of Snow Mountain, and the nations who are in Hermon, will bring gifts to you. And those who inhabit strong cities, mighty as lions, will bring tribute to you, the offering from cities of the mountains which are stronger than leopards.

4:9 You have captured my heart totally, my sister, my bride. You have captured my heart totally with just one look of your eyes, with just one bead from your necklace.

"Your love is fixed upon the tablet of My heart, O My sister, the Assembly of Israel, so like a chaste bride. Fixed upon the tablet of My heart is the love of the least of your rabbis, who is no less righteous than one of the rabbis of the Sanhedrin or than

*The Mourner's Kaddish**

Magnified and sanctified be the great name of God in this world created according to divine plan, and may God's sovereignty be established speedily and soon during the days of our lives and the lives of all members of the House of Israel, and let us say, Amen.

The congregation joins the mourners in reciting this line.

May God's great name be blessed forever and throughout all eternity.

The mourners continues:

May the name of the Holy One, source of all blessing, be blessed, adored, lauded, praised, extolled, glorified and venerated in language . . .

Except between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, say: more exalted

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, say: entirely more exalted

. . . than any blessing, hymn, ode or prayer recited by the faithful in this world, and let us say, Amen.

May we, and all Israel, be blessed with great peace that comes to us directly from heaven, and with life, and let us say, Amen.

May the same God Who brings peace to the heavens grant peace to us and to all Israel, and let us say, Amen.

**The Mourner's Kaddish appears in transliteration on page 397.*

Lighting the Shabbat and Festival Candles

On Friday evenings, except when a festival coincides with Shabbat, say:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ
הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל שַׁבָּת.

On festivals, say:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר
שֶׁל יוֹם טוֹב.

When a festival falls on Friday evening, say:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר
קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל שַׁבָּת
וְשֶׁל יוֹם טוֹב.

On all festivals other than the last two nights of Passover, add:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁחַיֵּינוּ וְקִיְמָנוּ
וְהַגִּיעָנוּ לְזִמְנוּ הַזֶּה.



No chapters of the Bible express the languid sensuality of Shabbat evening more evocatively or effectively than the eight chapters of the Song of Songs, presented here in a new translation by the editor followed by an English-language rendition of the traditional Aramaic translation, the Targum (which, in the case of the Song of Songs, is more of a midrash than a translation) by Jay C. Treat of the University of Pennsylvania. The editor's translation of the Song of Songs is also a kind of midrash, however, and presents readers with a literal rendition of the original Hebrew stretched across a frame of theoretical stage instructions and background information printed in italics. These instructions, plus any number of words and phrases added to make the text more easily intelligible to moderns, reflect the context in which this translation is being published and the point of its publication: as a text in a prayerbook intended as an aid to worshippers seeking to access the dreamy eroticism of the most famous of all love poems to enhance their enjoyment of the eve of the Sabbath, not as a critical tool for serious scholars of ancient Hebrew solely interested in a literal translation of each consecutive verse.

The Song of Songs

Chapter One

The greatest of Solomon's love-poems, the Song of Songs. A street in ancient Jerusalem at dusk. A beautiful woman dressed in the traditional garb of the town of Shulem (possibly the same place better known as Shunem) is seen standing with a group of other young women, but also slightly apart from them. At first, they appear to be gathered together merely to enjoy each other's company, but then, as we look on, we discover the more pressing reason they have gathered in the street: Solomon, the young king of Israel, is

Lighting the Shabbat and Festival Candles

about to pass by with his royal entourage . . . and he is clearly expected. At first, we cannot see him, only them. And even when we become aware of his approach, we cannot really see him at first, only a phalanx of royal bodyguards and mighty porters, each the size of a bear, carrying the regal palanquin. As would naturally be the case, the women—some of them hardly more than girls—are clearly agog at the proximity of royalty and its splendid appurtenances, but the women of Shulem—that one among them who caught our eye in the first place—she, for some reason, appears to be relating to Solomon's arrival differently . . . more eagerly, more anxiously, and with a greater sense of urgency than the others. For a long moment, we watch the king's company make its ponderous progress towards the spot on the street where the women are standing. Then, as we look on, the Shulamite woman steps out of the group and, just briefly, stands between the royal party and the bevy of her friends. And then she speaks. "Would that he would grant me some of his mouth's sweet kisses," she says to her friends out loud, only to turn to the unseen king inside his human-borne howdah to address him directly. "For," she adds, without at first saying clearly how she knows any of this to be the case, "your embraces are better than fine wine. Even hearing your name spoken is like having the finest scented oil poured over me . . . which is why all the maidens are in love with you." And now she gets to the point, "Draw me after you," she calls out to the young regent, "let us run off together!" We can see the puzzled look on the maidens' faces, and so apparently can the Shulamite. She turns quickly to them, therefore, to offer a brief word of explanation, "The king," she mentions openly, without bothering to dissemble even slightly, "has already brought me to his chambers." And now she turns back to the unseen Solomon, addressing him openly on her friends' behalf. "Let us all rejoice and be glad in your presence," she proposes gamely. "Let us declare your embraces finer than good wine, for we are surely right to love you."

Suddenly, it appears to strike the Shulamite that she can also address her lover obliquely by speaking to her friends in his presence and so, turning to him by turning to them, she continues.. "I am black,"

On Friday evenings, except when a festival coincides with Shabbat, say:

Blessed are You, אלהינו, our God, Sovereign of the universe, Who, sanctifying us with divine commandments, commanded us to kindle the Sabbath lights.

On festivals, say:

Blessed are You, אלהינו, our God, Sovereign of the universe, Who, sanctifying us with divine commandments, commanded us to kindle the festival lights.

When a festival falls on Friday evening, say:

Blessed are You, אלהינו, our God, Sovereign of the universe, Who, sanctifying us with divine commandments, commanded us to kindle the Sabbath and festival lights.

On all festivals other than the last two nights of Passover, add:

Blessed are You, אלהינו, our God, Sovereign of the universe, Who has kept us in life and sustained us, thus enabling us to reach this season.

will be all Sabbath (that is: the World to Come). And this is also intimated by Psalm 90:4: "For a thousand years are in your eyes but as a single yesterday."

The disciples of Elijah taught: The world will continue for six thousand years, the first two thousand of which were chaos, the second two thousand are characterized by wisdom, and the third two thousand will be the days of the Messiah . . . but because of our many sins, many years have elapsed and he still has not come. Elijah said to R. Judah, the brother of R. Sala the Pious: The world will continue for no less than eighty-five jubilee periods, and in the last jubilee period the Messiah, son of David, will come. When asked if this would occur at its beginning or at its end, he answered: I do not know. Has this passed already, or will it come? He also answered: I do not know. R. Ashi, however, said: Elijah told him thus, Until the above mentioned time passes, you need not have any hope for him. But after that time, you may hope.

R. Chanan b. Tachlifa sent a message to R. Joseph: I met a man who possessed a scroll written in Assyrian characters and in the holy language. And to my question from where he got it, he answered: I hired myself to the Persian army and I found it among the treasures of Persia. And it was written therein that, 2291 years after the creation, the world will yet be an "orphan." Of them, many years will be taken up by the war of the sea monsters and many more years (after that), with the war of Gog and Magog. The remainder, however, will constitute the days of the Messiah, but the blessed Holy One will not renew the world until seven thousand have elapsed. R. Aha b. R. Rava said: Not until five thousand years from today have elapsed. . . .

Abaye said: There are no less than thirty-six upright persons in every generation who receive the Shechinah. Is this so? Did not Rava say that the row (i.e., in Paradise) in front of the blessed Holy One is eighteen thousand parasangs long, as it is stated in Scripture: "All around God shall be eighteen thousand (Ezekiel 48:35)?" (Why would thirty-six individuals require that much space?) This

The Twenty-Third Psalm

A Psalm of David.

I want for nothing, for A is my shepherd; it is God Who lets me lie down in pastures of grass and Who leads me to calm waters to restore my spirit, Who walks me in level pastures as befits a shepherd of sound reputation. Even though I must sometimes pass through dark valleys, I fear no harm for You are with me; indeed, Your crook and Your walking stick are sources of constant comfort for me. You set a table for me in the presence of my enemies; You have anointed my head with so much fine oil that I feel like an overflowing cup. Nothing but goodness and mercy pursue me all the days of my life; indeed, I feel certain that I shall dwell in the House of A for days without end.

The Mourner's Kaddish

Yitgadal veyitkadash shmei rabba be'alma di vra
khirutei veyamlakh malkhutei bechayeichon uve-
yomeikhon uvechayei dekhohol beit yisrael, ba'agala
uvizman kariv, ve'imru amen.

Yehei shmei rabba mevorakh
le'alam ule'almei almaya.

Yitbarakh veyishtabach, veyitpa'ar veyitromam veyitnasei
veyithadar veyitaleh veyithalal shmei dekudsha brikh hu

Except during Yizkor on Yom Kippur, say:

le'eila min kol

At Yizkor on Yom Kippur, say:

le'eila le'eila mikol

birkhata veshirata, tushbechata venechemata da'amiran
be'alma, ve'imru amen.

Yehei shlama rabba min shmaya, vechayim, aleinu
ve'al kol yisrael, ve'imru amen.

Oseh shalom bimromav, hu ya'aseh shalom aleinu
ve'al kol yisrael, ve'imru amen.