

## 1. Shir ha-Shirim 5:2-10

I was asleep, But my heart was wakeful. Hark, my beloved knocks! "Let me in, my own, My darling, my faultless dove! For my head is drenched with dew, My locks with the damp of night."  
 I had taken off my robe— Was I to don it again? I had bathed my feet— Was I to soil them again? My beloved took his hand off the latch, And my heart was stirred for him.  
 I rose to let in my beloved; My hands dripped myrrh— My fingers, flowing myrrh— Upon the handles of the bolt.  
 I opened the door for my beloved, But my beloved had turned and gone. I was faint because of what he said. I sought, but found him not; I called, but he did not answer.  
 I met the watchmen Who patrol the town; They struck me, they bruised me. The guards of the walls Stripped me of my mantle.  
 I adjure you, O maidens of Jerusalem! If you meet my beloved, tell him this: That I am faint with love. How is your beloved better than another, O fairest of women? How is your beloved better than another That you adjure us so?  
 My beloved is clear-skinned and ruddy, Preeminent among ten thousand.

(ב) אָנִי יָשְׁנָה וְלִבִּי עַר קוֹל דּוֹדִי דּוֹפֵק פֶּתַח לִי  
 אַחֲתֵי רַעֲיִתִי יוֹנְתֵי תַמְתִּי שְׂרָאשִׁי נִמְלֵא טַל  
 קַוְצוֹתַי רְסִיסֵי לַיְלָה:  
 (ג) פִּשְׁטַתִּי אֶת כֶּתְנֵתִי אֵיכָכָה אֶלְבָּשְׁנָה רַחֲצַתִּי  
 אֶת רַגְלֵי אֵיכָכָה אֶטְנַפֵּם:  
 (ד) דּוֹדִי שָׁלַח יָדוֹ מִן הַחֵר וּמַעֵי הַמּוֹ עָלָיו:  
 (ה) קָמַתִּי אָנִי לְפֶתַח לְדוֹדִי וַיְדִי נִטְפוּ מוֹר  
 וְאַצְבָּעֵתִי מוֹר עִבְרָה עַל כַּפּוֹת הַמִּנְעוּל:  
 (ו) פֶּתַחְתִּי אָנִי לְדוֹדִי וְדוֹדִי חָמַק עִבְרָה נִפְשִׁי  
 יֵצֵאָה בְּדַבְרוֹ בְּקִשְׁתִּיהוּ וְלֹא מִצְאֵתִיהוּ קָרָאתִיו  
 וְלֹא עָנָנִי:  
 (ז) מִצְאֵנִי הַשֹּׁמְרִים הַסֹּבְבִים בְּעִיר הַכּוֹנֵי פִצְעוֹנֵי  
 נִשְׂאוּ אֶת רִדְדֵי מַעְלֵי שְׁמַרְי הַחֲמוֹת:  
 (ח) הַשְּׁבַעְתִּי אֶתְכֶם בְּנוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם אִם תִּמְצְאוּ  
 אֶת דּוֹדִי מֵהַ תְּגִידוּ לוֹ שְׁחֹלֶת אֶהְבֶּה אֹנִי:  
 (ט) מֵהַדֹּדֵךְ מִדּוֹד הַיָּפֶה בְּנָשִׁים מֵהַדֹּדֵךְ  
 מִדּוֹד שְׂכָנָה הַשְּׁבַעְתָּנִי:  
 (י) דּוֹדִי צַח וְאֵדוֹם דָּגוּל מִרְבֵּבָה:  
 . . .

## 2. R Tanchum of Jerusalem (13th c)

(2) "I am asleep but my heart is awake" — The Community of Israel said: Even though we were asleep when we were sunken in the darkness of exile, our heart never ceased to trust in God, may He be exalted, and to think of Him always. Therefore, while we were still in a state of unawareness, we already sensed how harbingers of salvation were coming from the side of the Beloved, and they [the signs] were calling: Prepare yourselves to meet me and rejoice at my coming — "The voice of my Beloved knocking". For "my head was filled with dew" — He flooded me with an abundance of lights of mercy, and these moved me [caused me to act] on account of your distress and your great weeping in the suffering of the night, that is, the exile — "my locks with the drops of the night."  
 (3–6) "I have taken off my coat" — These are the words of Israel, according to which they will return to

(ב) אָנִי יָשְׁנָה וְלִבִּי עַר אִמְרָה כְּנֹסֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל:  
 אִם אִמְנָם הֵינּוּ יְשִׁנִּים כְּשֵׁהֵינּוּ שְׁקוּעִים  
 בַּחֲשֵׁכֵי הַגְּלוּת, הָרִי שָׁלַבְנוּ לֹא חָדַל לְבַטּוֹחַ  
 בְּאֵל יִתְעַלָּה וּלְחֹשֵׁב עָלָיו תְּמִיד. לְפִיכֵךְ  
 בְּעוֹדֵנוּ בְּמַצֵּב שֶׁל חוֹסֵר מוֹדְעוֹת כִּבְר  
 הָרַגְשָׁנוּ כִּי צַד סִימָנִים מִבְּשָׂרִים שֶׁל יְשׁוּעָה  
 הִגִּיעוּ מִצִּדּוֹ שֶׁל הָאֱהוּב, וְהֵם [הַסִּימָנִים]  
 קוֹרְאִים: הַתְּכַנְנֵנוּ לְפִגּוֹשׁ אוֹתִי וְהִיוּ שְׂמֵחִים  
 לְקִרְאָתִי בּוֹאֵי "קוֹל דּוֹדִי דּוֹפֵק". שְׂרָאשִׁי  
 נִמְלֵא טַל הִצִּיפוּ אוֹתִי בְּשַׁפְעַת אוֹרוֹת  
 הַרְחָמִים, וְהֵם הִנִּיעוּ אוֹתִי [גִּרְמוּ לִי לְפַעוּל]  
 בְּגַלְל צִרְתְּכֶם וּבְכִיֵּיכֶם הִרְבַּת בְּמִצּוֹקֵת הַלַּיְלָה,  
 כְּלוֹמֵר הַגְּלוּת "קוֹצוֹתֵי רְסִיסֵי לַיְלָה".  
 (ג-ו) פִּשְׁטַתִּי אֶת כֶּתְנֵתִי דַבְּרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל  
 לְפִיָּהֶם הֵם יִחְזְרוּ לֹא לְיַעֲשׂוּ תְּשׁוּבָה עַל

God and repent of the sins that caused them to go into exile, and they will not return to doing such deeds. When they reflected on this in their hearts and committed to it, the lights of mercy began to shine upon them — since the time [of redemption] was drawing near, and a sign of this is the appearance of knowledge within them and the revelation of wisdoms and truths that had previously been hidden from them. It is as if this were a manifestation of the inner and hidden greatness, and from it one may bring proof of the approaching manifestation of the outer and revealed greatness. Concerning this he said: "My Beloved put his hand through the hole..." When the concentration of attention upon this intensified and I became more steadfast in this matter — and I strengthened my intention to open the door — then He flooded me with an abundance of divine lights and Providence added strength to me: "I arose to open for my Beloved, and my hands dripped with myrrh..."

It is also possible that there is here an allusion to the first return to Zion from Babylon, when they began building Jerusalem and the Temple, and thereafter forces appeared that halted the building for approximately twenty years until the proper time arrived, after which the building was completed without obstacle. The beginning was the drawing near of the time, concerning which he said "My Beloved put his hand through the hole"; the words "I opened for my Beloved" refer to the beginning of the building; and "My Beloved had turned away and was gone" refers to the halt in construction. The Beloved was present and appeared, and then disappeared. "My soul went out at his speaking" — joy and exultation at the command to return [to the Land] and build the Temple. "I sought him but could not find him" — an allusion to the interruption of the building.

החטאים אשר גרמו להם לגלות, ולא יחזרו לעשות מעשים כאלה. כאשר הם חשבו על כך בלבם והתכוונו לכך החלו אורות הרחמים לזרוח עליהם, כיוון שהזמן התקרב ו[סימן לכך] הוא המדעים המופיעים בקרבם וגילוי חכמות ואמיתות שהיו נסתרות מהם לפני כן, וכאילו זוהי הופעה של הגדולה הפנימית והנסתרת, וממנה ניתן להביא ראיה על התקרבות ההופעה של הגדולה החיצונית והגלויה, ועל כך אמר "דודי שלח ידו מן החור...". כאשר התחזק ריכוז תשומת הלב בכך ונעשיתי איתנה יותר בעניין זה והתחזקתי בכוונתי לפתוח את הדלת. אז הציפו אותי בשפע האורות האלוהיים וההשגחה הוסיפה לי כוח "קמתי אני לפתוח לדודי וידי נטפו מור...".

ייתכן [גם] שיש כאן רמיזה לשיבת ציון הראשונה מבבל, והם החלו בבניית ירושלים והמקדש, ולאחר מכן הופיעו גורמים שהפסיקו את הבנייה במשך כעשרים שנה עד שהגיע הזמן הראוי, ולאחר מכן בוצעה הבנייה ולא היה מכשול. ההתחלה הייתה ההתקרבות של הזמן אשר עליה אמר "דודי שלח ידו מן החור", והמילים "פתחתי אני לדודי" זוהי התחלת הבנייה, ו"דודי חמק עבר" הפסקת הבנייה. האהוב היה נוכח והופיע, ולאחר מכן נעלם. "נפשי יצאה בדברו" שמחה ועליצות על הפקודה לשוב [לארץ] ולבנות את בית המקדש. "ביקשתיהו ולא מצאתיהו" רמז להפסקת הבנייה... .

### 3. Chachmei Tzarfat 5:3-6

(3) "I have taken off my coat, how shall I put it on?" — Because she was asleep she did not know with certainty that it was her beloved who was knocking. Therefore she was reluctant to get up naked and barefoot and go to the door to see who was knocking — for had she known with certainty that it was her beloved, she would not have hesitated to go out to him naked and barefoot, as she ultimately did. Therefore it was a burden for her to put on

(ג) פשטתי את כתנתי איככה אלבשנה – מתוך שהיתה ישנה לא היתה יודעת בברור שזה דודה הדופק, לכך נתרשלה לקום ערומה ויחפה וללכת אל הפתח לראות מי הוא הדופק, שאילו היתה יודעת בברור שדודה הוא, לא היתה מתרשלת מלצאת אליו ערומה ויחפה כמו

her coat and soil her feet. And this is why she first said "I am asleep" (Song of Songs 5:2) — to inform us that the compulsion of sleep caused her not to recognize him.

(4) "My Beloved put his hand through the hole" — When I saw that he put his hand through the hole to wake me from my sleep, then I understood and recognized with certainty that it was my beloved — for no other person would have known to do such a thing, only my beloved who was accustomed to doing so. "Then my innards churned for him" — from the greatness of my love for him, and I regretted having been reluctant to open for him.

(5) "And immediately I arose" — from my bed. And I did not put on my coat but only a light wrap, as is proven below that she was wearing a wrap. "And my hands dripped with myrrh" — from the oil with which I had anointed myself when I went to my bed. "Flowing" (עובר) — whose fragrance passes and wafts far away. Or the meaning of "flowing" is like "current [money] with the merchant" (Genesis 23:16) — that is, choice and fine quality.

(6) "I opened for my Beloved" — As soon as I knew and understood with certainty that it was my beloved, I opened for him. "But my Beloved had turned away and was gone" — he had hidden and concealed himself from me.

שעשתה לבסוף. ולפיכך היה לה טורח ללבוש כתנתה ולטנף רגליה. ולפיכך הקדימה לומר: אני ישינה (שיר השירים ה"ב), להודיע לנו שאונס השינה גרמה לה שלא הכירתו. (ד) דודי שלח ידו מן החור – כשראיתי ששלח ידו מן החור להקיצני משנתי, אז הבנתי והכרתי בודאי שדודי הוא, ששום אדם לא היה יודע לעשות כן, רק דודי שהיה נהוג לעשות כן. אז המו מעי לו – מרוב אהבתי אותו, ונתחרטתי שנתרשלתי לפתוח לו. (ה) ומיד קמתי – ממטתי. ולא לבשתי כתנתי רק רדיד, כמו שמוכיח למטה שהיתה לבושה רדיד. וידי נטפו {וגוי} מר עובר – מן הסיכה שסכתי בלכתי במשכבי. עובר – שריחו עובר ונודף למרחוק. או פי' עובר, כמו: עובר לסחר (בראשית כ"ג:ט"ז). (ו) פתחתי אני לדודי – מיד שידעתי והבנתי בברור שדודי הוא, פתחתי לו. ודודי חמק עבר – נחבא ונסתר ממני,

#### 4. Rabbi Joseph B Soloveitchik, [Kol Dodi Dofek](#)

...  
When a miracle does not find its appropriate echo in actual deeds, a lofty vision dissipates and is squandered, whereupon Divine Justice indicts the ungrateful recipient of the miracle. "The Holy One sought to make Hezekiah the Messiah and Sennacherib, Gog of Armageddon. However, God's Justice said to Him ... 'Hezekiah, for whom You wrought all these miracles, did not sing in praise before You. Shall You make him Messiah?'"<sup>5</sup> Then comes distress, the hour of misery. Suffering is the final warning given by Providence to the man, who is devoid of gratitude for the good God has done for him. To the final proclamation that issues forth from suffering, one must react quickly and answer the call of the Almighty, who cries out to him, "Where are you?" (Genesis 3:9). Judaism has been very careful about not missing the appointed hour. It has a very sensitive time awareness; any delay is considered sinful. Man may sometimes lose his entire world for but one sin — that of tarrying. "But he lingered" (Genesis 19:16). What is the sin of leaving over a sacrifice, if not missing the appointed hour (Leviticus 19:5–8)? What is the desecration of the Sabbath, if not the performing of prohibited actions one second after the setting of the sun — work that just one second before was permitted? How does the loss of the ability to perform a *mitzvah* occur if not for the tarrying of a few moments, such as reciting the passages of the *Shema* after its appointed hour or the taking of the *Lulav* and *Etrog* after sunset, and the like? Two kings of Israel, both equally the anointed of the Lord and heroes of

the nation, sinned, repented fully, and confessed. One God did not absolve; the other was immediately forgiven upon his confession. With regard to Saul, God acted in accordance with the demands of strict justice and tore the kingdom from him. With respect to David, He tempered justice with mercy and his dynasty was not wrested from his children. Why was the Holy One so strict with Saul and compassionate with David? The question does not require special analysis. The answer is quite simple. David did not miss the opportunity and immediately confessed his sin; Saul tarried a bit, and for this delay kingship was wrested from him. When Nathan the prophet came to David and uttered his cry, "You are the man!" (II Samuel 12:7), David, in the blinking of an eye, began his confession. "And David said to Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord" (II Samuel 12:13). After he heard Samuel's reprimand, Saul wasted one precious second, a second "more precious than gold and pearls" (Proverbs 20:15). "And why did you not listen to the command of God but instead went after the booty?" (I Samuel 15:19). Saul began to argue with the prophet and only later confessed: "And Saul [initially] said to Samuel: 'Indeed I have done what God has commanded me to do, and I have gone along the path in which the Lord has sent me'" (I Samuel 15:20). Indeed, in that confrontation, [after a moment's reflection] he also confessed his sins out of a broken heart and a tempest-tossed spirit. "And Saul said ... 'I have sinned, for I transgressed God's command and your instructions'" (I Samuel 15:24). But this confession was not timely, and a momentary lag such as this caused Saul to lose his kingdom. By the time Saul confessed, the decree was already sealed and the opportunity was lost. "The Lord has rent the kingdom of Israel from you" (I Samuel 15:28). If Saul had not missed the proper moment, and had he not been among the laggards, his dynasty would have continued.<sup>6</sup>

What is the essence of the story of the Song of Songs, if not the description of a paradoxical and tragic hesitation on the part of the love-intoxicated, anxiety stricken Lover, when the opportunity, couched in majestic awe, presented itself? What is it, if not the deferral of a great and sublime opportunity pregnant with a possibility of which she dreamed, for which she fought, which she sought, and for which she had searched with all the fervor of her soul? The delicate and refined Lover, passion-driven to her fair-eyed Beloved, who in days resplendent in brightness wandered the paths of the vineyards, the mountain ridges, through wheat fields and orchards, and in evenings bathed in the pale light of an enchanting moon or gloomy with darkness passed between the walls in search of her Lover — she returned one rain-stormy night to her tent, tired and weary, and fell asleep. The patter of quick-moving, light footsteps was heard in the stillness of the tent. In that mysterious and strange night, the Beloved for whom she had so hoped and kept watch, suddenly appeared out of the darkness and beckoned at the entrance of her tent. He knocked and pleaded that she open the door for Him. "Listen! My Beloved Is Knocking, saying, 'Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is drenched with dew, and my locks with the damp of the night'" (Song of Songs 5:2). The great moment for which she had been waiting with such longing came at a time of inattentiveness. The elusive and secretive Beloved, weary of wandering and tribulations, appeared with His curly locks, black eyes, powerful build, and shining countenance. He stood in her doorway and thrust His hand through the hole in the lock, seeking shelter from the dampness of the night. He wanted to recount to her His mighty love, His longing and yearning for a life together filled with desire and joy, and of fulfillment of expectations and realization of

dreams. A simple extension of the hand to turn the lock separated the Lover and her Beloved — the great dream from its complete fulfillment. With one leap the Lover could have attained all her life's desires. "Draw me, we will run after you. ... We will be glad and rejoice in you" (Song of Songs 1:4). Deceitful is the heart (Jeremiah 17:9), however, and who can explain it? That very night, sloth, the result of a strange inertia, took hold of the Lover. For one small moment the flame of yearning that burned within her was buried, the mighty desire withered, and her feelings and dreams were silenced. The Lover refused to leave her bed. She did not open the door of her tent to her handsome Beloved. A cruel confusion swept her into forgetfulness and apathy. The Lover became lazy and stubborn, she poured forth countless excuses and pretexts to explain her strange behavior. "I have removed my cloak, how shall I put it on again? I have washed my feet, how shall I soil them?" (Song of Songs 5:3). The Beloved continued to beckon, and as His beckoning became more persistent, so too did the insanity that chilled and tainted the Lover.

So long as the whispering of the Beloved split the hush of the night, so did the heart of the Lover harden. Pleading and patient the Beloved continued to beckon while the minutes and hours of the clock were ticking away. The Lover did not respond to the voice of the Beloved. The door to her tent was locked shut. The opportunity was lost, and the vision of an exalted life died. True, after a brief delay the Lover awoke from her slumber and jumped in haste from her bed to greet the Beloved. "I rose up to open to my Beloved" (Song of Songs 5:5), but the leap came too late. The Beloved had stopped beckoning and had disappeared into the darkness of the night, "My Beloved had turned away, and was gone" (Song of Songs 5:6). The joy of her life was exiled. Her existence became a desert, a storehouse of emptiness. The episodes of feverish search returned. She, the Lover, still wanders through the dwellings of the shepherds seeking her Beloved.

## 5. Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah 5:2,3

<p>"I am asleep" – the congregation of Israel said before the Holy One blessed be He: Master of the universe, "I am asleep" regarding the mitzvot, "but my heart is awake" for acts of kindness. "I am asleep" regarding acts of charity, "but my heart is awake" to perform them. "I am asleep" regarding the offerings, "but my heart is awake" for reciting <i>Shema</i> and <i>Amida</i>. "I am asleep" regarding the Temple, "but my heart is awake," in synagogues and study halls. "I am asleep" regarding the end [of days], "but my heart is awake" for the redemption. "I am asleep" regarding the redemption, but the heart of the Holy One blessed be He is awake to redeem me. Rabbi Hiyya bar Abba said: Where have we found that the Holy One blessed be He is called the heart of Israel? It is from this verse, as it is written: "But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever" (Psalms 73:26).</p>	<p>אָנִי יְשֻנָּה, אֲמַרְהָ כְּנֶסֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל לִפְנֵי הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, רְבוּנוּ שֶׁל עוֹלָם אָנִי יְשֻנָּה מִן הַמִּצְוֹת, וְלִבִּי עֵר לְגַמְלוֹת חֻסְדִּים. אָנִי יְשֻנָּה מִן הַצְּדָקוֹת, וְלִבִּי עֵר לְעִשׂוֹתַי. אָנִי יְשֻנָּה מִן הַקְּרָבָנוֹת, וְלִבִּי עֵר לְקְרִיאַת שְׁמַע וּתְפִלָּה. אָנִי יְשֻנָּה מִבֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ, וְלִבִּי עֵר לְבֵיתִי כְּנִסְיֹת וּבֵיתִי מִדְּרָשׁוֹת. אָנִי יְשֻנָּה מִן הַקֶּץ, וְלִבִּי עֵר לְגְאֻלָּה. אָנִי יְשֻנָּה מִן הַגְּאֻלָּה, וְלִבִּי עֵר לְקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא עֵר לְגְאֻלָּתִי. אָמַר רַבִּי חֵיָא בַר אֲבָא אֵיכָן מְצִינוּ שֶׁנִּקְרָא הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לְבֵן שֶׁל יִשְׂרָאֵל, מִן הַדִּין קְרָא, דְּכַתִּיב (תְּהִלִּים עג, כו): צוּר לִבִּי וְחֵלְקִי אֱלֹקִים לְעוֹלָם.</p>
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“I have removed my tunic” – Rabbi Yoḥanan said: Even the simplest of the simple knows how to undress and dress, and you say: “I have removed my tunic”? Rabbi Ḥanina and Rabbi Yoḥanan say: On the day that the wicked Nebuchadnezzar attacked Israel, he removed from them two great garments: the garment of priesthood and the garment of royalty. “I have washed my feet” – from the filth of idol worship. I knew that the dust of that place induces one to idol worship; nevertheless, my beloved extended His hand through the hole.

Rabbi Abba bar Kahana said: Why is the image of a hole employed, as the hole is a place where creeping animals breed? Rather, this is what the congregation of Israel said before the Holy One blessed be He: Master of the universe, all the miracles that You performed on my behalf by means of Cyrus, would it not have been preferable to have performed them by means of Daniel, or by means of a righteous person? Nevertheless, “my core was stirred for him.”

פִּשְׁטִי אֶת כְּתָנְתִּי, אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן  
אָפְלוּ תַמָּה שְׁבַתְמוֹת יוֹדַעַת לְפֶשֶׁט  
וְלִלְבָשׁ, וְאֵת אֲמַרְתִּי פִּשְׁטִי אֶת  
כְּתָנְתִּי, רַבִּי חֲנִינְא וְרַבִּי יוֹחָנָן אָמְרֵי יוֹם  
שֶׁנִּזְדָּוּ לָהֶם בְּבוֹכְדִנְצָר הַרְשָׁע  
לְיִשְׂרָאֵל פֶּשֶׁט מֵהֶם שָׁנֵי לְבוּשִׁים  
גְּדוּלִים, לְבוּשׁ כְּהֵנָה וְלְבוּשׁ מַלְכוּת.  
רְחִצְתִּי אֶת רַגְלִי, מִטְנוּף עֲבוֹדַת  
כּוֹכָבִים, יוֹדַעַת הֵייתִי שְׂאֲבֵק שֶׁל אוֹתוֹ  
מִקוּם מִשִּׁיאֵנִי לְעֲבוֹדַת כּוֹכָבִים, אֵף עַל  
פִּי כֵן דוֹדֵי שֶׁלַח יָדוּ מִן הַחוּר. אָמַר רַבִּי  
אָבָא בַר כְּהֵנָא, וְכִי מַה טִּיבוֹ שֶׁל חוּר  
זֶה לְהִיּוֹת מְגַדֵּל שְׂרָצִים, אֲלֵא כֹּה  
אָמְרָה כְּנֶסֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל לְפָנֵי הַקְּדוֹשׁ  
בְּרוּךְ הוּא, רְבוּנוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם כָּל נְסִים  
שֶׁעָשִׂיתָ לִּי עַל יְדֵי כּוֹרֶשׁ, לֹא הָיָה  
מוֹטֵב לַעֲשׂוֹתָן לִּי עַל יְדֵי דְנִינְאֵל, וְעַל  
יְדֵי אָדָם צְדִיק, אֵף עַל פִּי כֵן, מַעֵי הֵמוּ  
עָלָיו.

## 6. Rashi 5:7

*Metzuda transl.*

**Sent forth his hand.** And He demonstrated His vengeance in the days of Achaz, and He brought upon him the king of Aram’s army. [It states,] “and they smote him and captured from him a great captivity, etc. And Pekach the son of Remalyah slew in Yehudah one hundred and twenty thousand in one day.”

**And my innards longed for him.** Chizkiyahu, his son, came and repented with all his heart to seek the Holy One, Blessed Is He, and his entire generation was wholehearted; there never arose a generation like them in Yisroel, as is explained in “Cheilek,” “They searched from Dan to Be’ersheva and did not find an ignoramus, from Gabas to Antochya, and did not find a man or a woman who was not proficient in the laws of ritual contamination and purity.” This is [the meaning of], “my hands dripped myrrh, etc.” Also, regarding Yoshiyahu it is stated, “Before him there had never been a king like him, etc.,” “Because he saw the punishment which had come upon Menashe and upon Ammon, thereby fulfilling [the words], “he sent forth his hand from the portal, and my innards longed for him.”

**I opened for my beloved but my beloved had vanished and gone.** He did not annul His decree, as it is stated about Chizkiyahu, “Behold, days are coming when everything in your palace will be carried off, etc. ... [some] of your sons ... whom you will beget.” These are Doniyeil, Chananyah, Misha’eil, and Azaryah, and also concerning Yoshiyahu,

שֶׁלַח יָדוֹ. וְהִרְאָה נִקְמַתוֹ בִּימֵי אַחָז,  
וְהִבִּיא עָלָיו חֵיל מֶלֶךְ אַרָם, "וַיִּכּוּ בוֹ  
וַיִּשְׁבוּ מִמֶּנּוּ שְׂבִיָּה גְדוּלָּה וְגו' וַיִּהְרַג  
פֶּקַח בֶּן רִמְלִיָּהוּ בִּיהוּדָה מֵאָה  
וְעֶשְׂרִים אֶלֶף בַּיּוֹם אֶחָד":  
וּמַעֵי הֵמוּ עָלָיו. כֵּן חִזְקִיָּהוּ בְּנוֹ וְשֵׁב  
בְּכָל לִבּוֹ לְדַרוֹשׁ לְהַקְדֹּשׁ בְּרוּךְ  
הוּא כָּל דּוֹרוֹ שְׁלָמִים, לֹא קָם דּוֹר  
בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל כְּמוֹתָם, כְּמוֹ שְׁמִפּוֹרֶשׁ  
בְּחִלְקוֹ: "בְּדַקּוֹ מִדָּן וְעַד בְּאֵר שֶׁבַע  
וְלֹא מָצְאוּ עִם הָאָרֶץ, מִגְבַּת וְעַד  
אֲנְטוֹכְיָא, וְלֹא מָצְאוּ אִישׁ וְאִשָּׁה שְׂאִין  
בְּקִיָּאִין בְּהַלְכוֹת טְמֵאָה וְטָהֳרָה".  
זֶהוּ: "וַיְדִי נְטִפּוֹ מוֹר וְגו'". אֵף  
יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ נֹאמַר בוֹ "וְכִמּוֹהוּ לֹא הָיָה  
לְפָנָיו מֶלֶךְ", כִּי רָאָה פּוֹרְעֵנוֹת  
שֶׁבָּאָה עַל מְנַשֶּׁה וְעַל אַמּוֹן, לְקַיֵּם:  
"שֶׁלַח יָדוֹ מִן הַחוּר וּמַעֵי הֵמוּ עָלָיו":  
פְּתַחְתִּי אֲנִי לְדוֹדֵי יוֹדֵי חֲמֵק עֲבָרִי.  
לֹא בִטַּל גְּזַרְתּוֹ, שֶׁנֹּאמַר בְּחִזְקִיָּהוּ,  
"הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים וְנִשְׂא כָּל אֲשֶׁר  
בְּבֵיתְךָ וְגו'. וּמִבְּנֵיךָ אֲשֶׁר תּוֹלִיד" אֵלֶי  
דְּנִינְאֵל, חֲנַנְיָה, מִישָׁאֵל וְעִזְרְיָה; וְאֵף  
בְּיֹאשִׁיָּהוּ עַל יְדֵי חִלְדָּה הַנְּבִיאָה  
"הִנְנִי מְבִיאָה רְעָה אֶל הַמְּקוֹם הַזֶּה  
וְעַל יִשְׁבִּי וְגו'", וְאוֹמֵר, "וְכִמּוֹהוּ לֹא

<p>through Chuldah the prophetess [it states], "Behold, I am bringing calamity upon this place and upon its inhabitants, etc." And it states, "Before him there had never been a king like him... Nevertheless, God did not relent from His great wrath, for His wrath burned against Yehudah, because of all the provocation with which Menashe had provoked Him. And Adonoy said, 'I will remove Yehudah, too, from My Presence as I have removed Yisroel, and I will reject this city.'"</p> <p><b>My soul departed as he spoke.</b> It left me when He spoke of this matter.</p> <p><b>I sought him but could not find him.</b> Now if you should ask, "Was not Yirmiyahu standing and prophesying during the days of Yehoyakim and Tzidkiyahu, [And similarly Malachi said,] 'Return to Me, and I will return to you'?" [This was] not to nullify the decree, but to lighten the punishment and to prepare their kingdom upon their return from the exile, to plant them without uprooting and to build them without demolishing.</p> <p><b>The watchmen found me.</b> Nevuchadnetzar and his armies.</p> <p><b>Those who go about the city.</b> To wreak the vengeance of the Omnipresent.</p> <p><b>They stripped my ornament.</b> The Beis Hamikdosh.</p>	<p>הִיָּה לִפְנֵי מֶלֶךְ וְגו'. אֲךָ לֹא נָשַׁב ה' מִחֲרוֹן אַפּוֹ הַגָּדוֹל אֲשֶׁר חָרָה אַפּוֹ בַיהוּדָה עַל כָּל הַכְּעָסִים אֲשֶׁר הִכְעִיסוּ מִנְשֵׁה. וַיֹּאמֶר ה', 'גַּם אֶת יְהוּדָה אֲסִיר מֵעַל פְּנֵי כְּאֲשֶׁר הִסְרִיתִי אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל וּמֵאֲסִיתִי אֶת הָעִיר הַזֹּאת":</p> <p><b>נַפְשִׁי יָצְאָה בְּדַבְרוֹ. יָצְאָה מִמֶּנִּי בְּדַבְרוֹ דְּבַר זֶה:</b></p> <p><b>בִּקְשָׁתִי הוּוּ וְלֹא מָצָאתִיהוּ. וְאִם תֹּאמַר, "וְהֲלֹא יִרְמְיָה עֹמֵד וּמְתַנַּבֵּא בַיָּמִי יְהוֹנָקִים וְצִדְקִיָּהוּ, 'שׁוּבוּ אֵלַי וְאֲשׁוּבָה אֲלֵיכֶם", לֹא לְבַטֵּל הַגְּזֵרָה, אֲלֵא לְהַקֵּל הַפְּרָעוֹת וְלְהַכִּין מַלְכוּתָם בְּשׁוּבָם מִן הַגּוֹלָה, לְנִטְעָם מֵאִין נְתִישָׁה וְלְבַנוֹתָם מֵאִין הוֹרָס: <b>מֵצֵאֵנִי הַשְּׂמָרִים. נְבוּכַדְנֶאצַּר וְחִילוֹתָיו:</b></b></p> <p><b>הַסֹּבְבִים בְּעִיר. לְנִקּוּם נִקְמָתוֹ שֶׁל מִקּוּם:</b></p> <p><b>נִשְׂאוּ אֶת רְדִידִי. בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ:</b></p>
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## 7. Metzudat David

<p>(3) <i>"I have taken off my coat"</i> — ...and the allegorical meaning is to say: I had grown lazy about going up to Jerusalem, for I had already settled in Babylon and that land had become pleasant to me, and I did not want to trouble myself with the burden of the journey.</p> <p>(4) <i>"My Beloved put his hand through the hole"</i> — After this, the beloved stretched his hand through the hole beside the door — <u>the intention being that she would see his hand and long for him, and feel distress at his parting from her.</u> <i>"And my innards churned for him"</i> — When I saw his hand stretched through the hole, I was pained on his account and my compassion was stirred. And the allegorical meaning is to say that the Holy Blessed One sent His word through Haggai and Zechariah to prophesy to her that the end [of exile] had come, and through this she was awakened to build the Temple — as it is said: <i>"And Haggai the prophet and Zechariah prophesied... then Zerubbabel arose... and began to build the House of God"</i> (Ezra 5:1-2). <i>"I arose."</i></p> <p>(5) <i>"I arose"</i> — ...and the allegorical meaning is to say: I engaged in the building with a willing spirit and</p>	<p>(ג) פשטתי את כתנתי - . . . והנמשל הוא לומר הנה נתעצלתי לעלות לירושלים, לפי שכבר נתישבתי בבבל והיתה הארץ ההיא ערבה עלי, ולא רציתי לטרוח בטלטול הדרך.</p> <p>(ד) דודי שלח ידו מן החור - אחר זה הושיט החשוק את ידו מן החור שאצל הדלת, הכוונה היה למען תראה ידו ותגעגע עליו ויצר לה בהפרידו ממנה. ומעי המו עליו - כאשר ראיתי ידו השלוחה מן החור, נצטערתי בעבורו ונכמרו רחמי והנמשל הוא לומר שהמקום ברוך הוא שלח דברו על ידי חגי וזכריה לנבאות לה שבא הקץ, ועל ידי זה נתעוררה לבנות הבית, כמו שנאמר והתנבי חגי נביאה וזכריה וגו' באדין קמו זרובבל וגו' ושריו למבנא בית אלהא וגו' קמתי אני.</p> <p>(ה) קמתי אני - . . . והנמשל הוא לומר הן עסקתי בבנין בנפש חפיצה והצלחתי בה, כמו שנאמר ושבי יהודיא בנין ומצלחין.</p>
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<p>succeeded in it, as it is said: <i>"And the elders of Judah were building and succeeding"</i> (Ezra 6:14).  <b>(6) "I sought him"</b> — After this I sought him and searched for him but could not find him, and I called to him thinking he was in a hidden place and would reveal himself to me upon hearing my voice — but he did not answer me. <u>And the allegorical meaning is to say: when I completed the building of the Temple, prophecy was withdrawn, and I was greatly pained by its absence, and I went about seeking to restore prophecy but was unable to achieve it.</u></p>	<p>(ו) . . . בקשתיהו – אחר זה בקשתי אותו וחפשתי אחריו ולא מצאתי אותו, וקראתי אותו בחשבי שהוא במקום סתר ויגלה עצמו אלי בשמעו קולי, אבל לא ענה לי והנמשל הוא לומר כאשר גמרתי בנין הבית נסתלקה הנבואה ומאוד נצטערתי על העדרה, ומחזרת הייתי על החזרת הנבואה ולא עלתה בידי.</p>
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**8. JPS (1985, 2023) Shir haShirim 5:4**

My beloved took his hand off the latch,  
 And my heart was stirred for him.

**9. Lekach Tov**

<p>(3) "I have taken off my coat, how shall I put it on?" — The Community of Israel said before the Holy Blessed One: Open for me an opening of repentance so that I may redeem you. And she says: How shall I return? I have already taken off my coat — the royal garment, the priestly garment, and the prophetic garment, each one of which is called a "coat" in its own right. And likewise, during the time when the Temple stood, we would go and bring offerings and the Holy Blessed One would forgive our sins. But since the Temple was destroyed and was given into the hands of the nations, we do not know how to return, how to open an opening of repentance. And she says: "I have taken off my coat, how shall I put it on" — how can I return to my former state?      "My Beloved put his hand through the hole" — When the Holy Blessed One saw Israel growing lazy about repentance, like a lazy person who is in bed and is too sluggish to get out of it, He immediately sent His plague — as it is said: "My Beloved put his hand through the hole" — for God does not send the plague through the full force of the door or the window, but only a little through the hole, in order to frighten them and alarm them and bring them back to repentance. He stirs the nations against them and frightens them, as He did in the days of Haman, and brings them back to the right path. "And my innards churned for him."</p>	<p>(ג) פשטתי את כותנתי איככה אלבשנה – אמרת כנסת ישראל לפני הקב"ה פתחי פתח התשובה כדי שאגאלך והיא אומרת במה אשוב כבר פשטתי את כותנתי לבוש המלכות ולבוש הכהונה ולבוש הנבואה כל אחת ואחת [נקראת] כתונת לעצמה וכן זמן שהיה בית המקדש קיים היינו הולכין ומקריבין קרבנות והקב"ה סולח לעונות משחרב בית המקדש ונתנה ביד הגוים אין אנו יודעים במה נשוב לפתוח פתח התשובה והיא אומרת פשטתי את כותנתי איככה אלבשנה לחזור לקדמותי.      . . .  <b>דודי שלח ידו מן החור</b> – כיון שראה הקב"ה את ישראל מתעצלין מן התשובה כאדם עצל שהוא במטה והוא מתעצל לירד ממנה מיד שלח מכתו שנאמר דודי של ידו מן החור שאין השם שולח המכה ביד כח מן הפתח או מן החלון אלא מעט מן החור כדי להפחידם ולבהלם להחזירם בתשובה מגרה בהם האומות ומפחידם כדרך שעשה בימי המן ומחזירן למוטב ומעי המו עלי.</p>
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## 10. R Elazar Rokeach Shir haShirim 5:6

"I opened for my Beloved, but my Beloved had turned away and was gone" — The Community of Israel said: When Israel stood before Mount Sinai and received the Torah, they caused through the act of the Golden Calf that "my Beloved turned away and was gone" — and this is "my Beloved turned away and was gone."  
 Another interpretation: "I opened" — He said to His congregation: How long will you evade me? And they did not wish to listen, therefore He too turned away and was gone. He turned away (חמק) at the First Destruction, and was gone (עבר) at the Second Destruction.

"I sought him but could not find him" — Earlier it is written (Song of Songs 3:2) "I sought him but could not find him" in the shorter form, but here an extra ה is added, and it also says "I called him but he did not answer me." In the first exile He did not distance Himself from me for a long time, but in the final exile He has distanced Himself for many hundreds of years. And this is "I sought him (בקשתיהו) but could not find him" — I sought him many times, and therefore [the word is written with] the יה, and this is "I called him but he did not answer me."  
 Another interpretation: "I sought him but could not find him" — the ה is added twice, because the Shekhinah traveled ten journeys until it ascended on high (Rosh Hashanah 31a), and after it ascended — "I called him but he did not answer me."

**פתחתי אני לדודי ודודי חמק עבר** – אמרה כנסת ישראל, כשהיו ישראל לפני הר סיני וקבלו התורה, גרמו במעשה עגל שדודי חמק עבר, וזהו **דודי חמק עבר**. דבר אחר, **פתחתי אני** – הוא אמר לכנסיינו עד מתי תתחמקי ולא רצו לשמוע, לכך גם הוא **חמק ועבר**. **חמק** בחורבן ראשון, **ועבר** בחורבן שני. **נפשי יצאה בדברו** כשדיבר הדיבור בדבורו של כורש, דגזר דלא עבר פרת לא יעבר" (שיר השירים רבה). **בקשתיהו ולא מצאתיהו** למעלה נאמר "בקשתיו ולא מצאתיו" **שיר השירים ג:ב** בלשון קצר וכאן הוסיף ה', וגם אמר **קראתיו ולא ענני**, בגלות ראשונה לא הרחיק ממני זמן גדול אבל בגלות אחרונה כמה מאות שנה הרחיק. וזהו **בקשתיהו ולא מצאתיהו** הרבה פעמים בקשתיהו ולכך היה, וזהו **קראתיו ולא ענני**. דבר אחר, **בקשתיהו ולא מצאתיהו** – ה"הוסיף ה' ב"פ, כי " מסעות נסעה שכינה עד שעלתה למרום ראש השנה לא, ואחר שעלתה – **קראתיו ולא ענני**.

## 11. The Other Oaths:

(a) שיר השירים ב:ה-z

"Sustain me with raisin cakes, Refresh me with apples, For I am faint with love." His left hand was under my head, His right arm embraced me. I adjure you, O maidens of Jerusalem, By gazelles or by hinds of the field: Do not wake or rouse Love until it please!

(ה) סִמְכוּנִי בַאֲשִׁישׁוֹת רִפְדוּנִי בְּתַפּוּחִים כִּי חוֹלֵת אֶהְבֶּה אֲנִי:  
 (ו) שְׁמְאֵלוֹ תַחַת לְרִאשִׁי וְיָמִינוֹ תַחְבֵּקֵנִי:  
 (ז) הַשְׁבַּעְתִּי אֶתְכֶם בְּנוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם בְּצִבְאוֹת אוֹ בְּאֵילוֹת הַשָּׂדֶה אִם תַּעֲרִירוּ וְאִם תַּעֲזְרוּ אֶת הָאֶהְבָּה עַד שֶׁתִּחַפֵּץ:

(b) שיר השירים ג-א

<p>Upon my couch at night I sought the one I love— I sought, but found him not. “I must rise and roam the town, Through the streets and through the squares; I must seek the one I love.” I sought but found him not. I met the watchmen Who patrol the town. “Have you seen the one I love?” Scarcely had I passed them When I found the one I love. I held him fast, I would not let him go Till I brought him to my mother’s house, To the chamber of her who conceived me I adjure you, O maidens of Jerusalem, By gazelles or by hinds of the field: Do not wake or rouse Love until it please!</p>	<p>(א) על משכבי בלילות בקשתי את שאהבה נפשי בקשתי ולא מצאתיו: (ב) אקומה נא ואסובבה בעיר בשוקים וברחובות אבקשה את שאהבה נפשי בקשתי ולא מצאתיו: (ג) מצאוני השמרים הסבבים בעיר את שאהבה נפשי ראיתם: (ד) כמעט שעברתי מהם עד שמצאתי את שאהבה נפשי אחזתי ולא ארפנו עד שהביאתי אל בית אמי ואל חדר הורת: (ה) השבעתי אתכם בנות ירושלים בצבאות או באילות השדה אם תעירו ואם תעוררו את האהבה עד שתחפץ:</p>
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(c) שיר השירים ח:ד

<p>I adjure you, O maidens of Jerusalem: Do not wake or rouse Love until it please!</p>	<p>(ד) השבעתי אתכם בנות ירושלים מה תעירו ומה תעוררו את האהבה עד שתחפץ:</p>
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12. Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah 2:7

<p>Rabbi Helbo says: There are four oaths here. He administered an oath to Israel that they would not rebel against the kingdoms; would not accelerate [the advent of] the end of days; would not reveal their secrets to the nations of the world; and they would not ascend as a wall from the Diaspora. If they did, why would the messianic king come to gather the exiles of Israel? Rabbi Onya said: He administered to them four oaths corresponding to the four generations that sought to accelerate [the advent of] the end of days, and failed, and they are: One during the days of Amram; one during the days of Deinai; one during the days of ben Kozeva; and one during the days of Shutelah ben Ephraim, as it is stated: “The sons of Ephraim were archers equipped with bows [yet they turned back on the day of battle. They did not keep the covenant of God]” . . .</p>	<p>רבי חלבו אומר ארבע שבועות יש כאן, השביע לישראל שלא ימרדו על המלכות, וישאל ידחקו על הקץ, וישאל יגלו מסטירין שלהם לאמות העולם, וישאל יעלו חומה מן הגולה. אם כן למה מלך המשיח בא, לקבץ גליותיהן של ישראל. רבי אוניא אמר ארבע שבועות השביען כנגד ארבעה דורות שדחקו על הקץ ונקשלו, ואלו הן: אחד בימי עמרם, ואחד בימי דיניי, ואחד בימי בן כוזבא, ואחד בימי שותלח בן אפרים, הדא הוא דכתיב (תהלים עח, ט): בני אפרים נושקי רומי קשת.</p>
<p>“That you will not awaken, and you will not rouse [love, until it pleases],” Rabbi Yudan and Rabbi Berekhya, Rabbi Yudan said: The love that Isaac had for Esau, as it is stated: “Isaac loved Esau” (Genesis 25:28). What is “until it pleases”? Until</p>	<p>רבי יודן אמר אהבה שאהב יצחק את עשו, שנאמר (בראשית כה, כח): ויאהב יצחק את עשו, מהו עד שתחפץ, עד שנעשה חפצו של זקן.</p>

it becomes the wish of the elder. Rabbi Berekhya said: The love that the Holy One blessed be He had for Israel, as it is stated: "I have loved you, said the Lord" (Malachi 1:2). What is "until it pleases"? [Until it pleases] the heavenly kingdom: When the attribute of justice will so desire in and of itself, I will bring it with loud voice and will not delay. Therefore, it says: "Until it pleases."

רבי בְּרֵכְיָה אָמַר אֶהְבֵּה שְׂאֵב  
הַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר  
(מְלָאכִי א, ב): אֶהְבֵּתִי אֶתְכֶם אָמַר  
ה', מֵהוּ עַד שֶׁתִּחְפֹּץ, מַלְכוּת שֶׁל  
מַעַל, לְקַשְׁתִּיחֶפֶץ מִדַּת הַדִּין מֵאֵלֶיהָ,  
אֲנִי הוּא מְבִיאָה בְּקוֹלִי קוֹלוֹת וְלֹא  
אֶתְעַב, לְכָה נֶאֱמַר: עַד שֶׁתִּחְפֹּץ.