

SONG 3: 1 By night on my bed, I sought him whom my soul loves. I sought him, but I didn't find him.

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The bride mentions the absence of her spouse, her search after him, and her ultimate success, Sol 3:1-5. A description of the bridegroom, his bed, chariot, etc., Sol 3:6-11.

Verse 1

By night on my bed I sought him - It appears that the bridegroom only saw the bride by night: that on the night referred to here he did not come as usual. The bride troubled on the account, rose and sought him, inquired of the city guards, and continued to seek till at last she found him, and brought him to her apartment, Sol 3:2-4.

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SONG 3: 2 I will get up now, and go about the city; in the streets and in the squares I will seek him whom my soul loves. I sought him, but I didn't find him.

SONG 3: 3 The watchmen who go about the city found me; "Have you seen him whom my soul loves?"

SONG 3: 4 I had scarcely passed from them, when I found him whom my soul loves. I held him, and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother's house, into the room of her who conceived me.

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Verse 4

Into my mother's house - The women in the East have all separate apartments, into which no person ever attempts to enter except the husband. We find Isaac bringing Rebecca into his mother's tent, when he made her his wife, Gen 24:67. What is here related appears to refer to the third night of the nuptials.

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SONG 3: 5 I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, or by the hinds of the field, that you not stir up, nor awaken love, until it so desires.

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Verse 5

I charge you - The same adjuration as before, Sol 2:7.

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SONG 3: 6 Who is this who comes up from the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all spices of the merchant?

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Verse 6

Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness - Going to Egypt was called descending or going down, coming from it was termed coming up. The bride, having risen, goes after her spouse to the country, and the clouds of incense arising from her palanquin seemed like pillars of smoke; and the appearance was altogether so splendid as to attract the admiration of her own women, who converse about her splendor, excellence, etc., and then take occasion to describe Solomon's nuptial bed and chariot. Some think that it is the bridegroom who is spoken of here. With this verse the third night is supposed to end.

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SONG 3: 7 Behold, it is Solomon's carriage! Sixty mighty men are around it, of the mighty men of Israel.

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Verse 7

Threescore valiant men - These were the guards about the pavilion of the bridegroom, who were placed there because of fear in the night. The security and state of the prince required such a guard as this, and the passage is to be literally understood.

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SONG 3: 8 They all handle the sword, and are expert in war. Every man has his sword on his thigh, because of fear in the night.

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Verse 8

They all hold swords - They are swordsmen. Every man has a sword, and is well instructed how to use it.

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SONG 3: 9 King Solomon made himself a carriage of the wood of Lebanon.

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Verse 9

Of the wood of Lebanon - Of the cedar that grew on that mount. It is very likely that a nuptial bed, not a chariot, is intended by the original word אפירון appiryon. Montanus properly translates it sponsarum thalamum, a nuptial bed. It may, however, mean a palanquin.

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SONG 3: 10 He made its pillars of silver, its bottom of gold, its seat of purple, its midst being paved with love, from the daughters of Jerusalem.

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Verse 10

The pillars - of silver - The bedposts were made of silver, or cased with wrought silver plates, like the king's chairs brought from Hanover, now, in one of the staterooms in Windsor Castle.

The bottom thereof of gold - This may refer to cords made of gold thread, or to the mattress, which was made of cloth ornamented with gold.

The covering - of purple - Most probably the canopy.

The midst - paved with love - The counterpane, a superb piece of embroidery, wrought by some of the noble maids of Jerusalem, and, as a proof of their affection, respect, and love, presented to the bride and bridegroom, on their nuptial day. This is most likely to be the sense of the passage, though some suppose it to refer to the whole court.

A Turkish couch is made of wooden lattices painted and gilded; the inside is painted with baskets of flowers and nose-gays, intermixed with little mottoes according to the fancy of the artist. Solomon's couch may have been of the same kind, and decorated in the same way; and the paving with love may refer to the amatory verses worked either on the counterpane, hangings, or embroidered carpet. And as this was done by the daughters of Jerusalem, they might have expressed the most striking parts of such a chaste history of love as Halaly's Leely and Mejnoon on the different parts. I see that Dr. Good is of this opinion. It is sufficiently probable.

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SONG 3: 11 Go out, you daughters of Zion, and see king Solomon, with the crown with which his mother has crowned him, in the day of his weddings, in the day of the gladness of his heart.

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#### Verse 11

Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion - This is the exhortation of the companions of the bride to the females of the city to examine the superb appearance of the bridegroom, and especially the nuptial crown, which appears to have been made by Bathsheba, who it is supposed might have lived till the time of Solomon's marriage with the daughter of Pharaoh. It is conjectured that the prophet refers to a nuptial crown, Isa 61:10. But a crown, both on the bride and bridegroom, was common among most people on such occasions. The nuptial crown among the Greeks and Romans was only a chaplet or wreath of flowers.

In the day of the gladness of his heart - The day in which all his wishes were crowned, by being united to that female whom beyond all others he loved.

Here the third day is supposed to end.