

Solomon's Agitprop Intensifies: He Compliments the Shulammite's Virginity with Metaphors of a Locked Garden with a Fountain & Spring Sealed Up, SOS 4:12

SOS 4:12 - [KS: Pick-UP Line #20] “A garden locked is my sister, my bride, a rock garden locked, a spring sealed up.”

1. Solomon now compliments her virginity. Actually, he intends for her to interpret it as a compliment. For him it describes an untouched paradise he intends to explore. The conquest will feed his sexual lust while validating his self-centered image of himself as a ladies' man.
2. The Hebrew word for “garden” is גַּן *gan* and refers to a plot of ground that is enclosed and protected. It was used to cultivate flowers, fruits, and vegetables. It had an abundance of water thus making it a place where conditions for life and production were maximized.
3. *Gan* is the same word used throughout Genesis 2 and 3 to describe the Garden of Eden, the place where all life as we know it began.
4. The garden described in verse 12 is said to be “locked,” and the word is the Qal passive participle of נָעַל *na'al* and refers to the securing of a door.
5. So what is described is a very lush garden with rich vegetation that has the capacity of producing abundant fruit and protected by a wall whose gated entrance is locked for protection against unlawful entry.
6. “Locked garden” became a figurative Hebrew expression for a virgin and this is documented by several dictionaries and lexicons. Here are a few:

Baker, Warren and Eugene Carpenter. *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament.* (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 2003), 739:

נָעַל *na'al* (lock). It is used in a figurative sense of a virgin whose love and attentions are locked up in her for her future husband (Song 4:12).

Harris, R. Laird, Gleason L. Archer, & Bruce K. Waltke. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament.* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 169:

גַּן *gan* (garden). An enclosed and fruitful garden became the figure of a chaste woman (Song 4:12).

Brown, Francis, S. R. Driver, & Charles A. Briggs. *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon.* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1979), 171:

Gan (garden). Canticles 4:14 (figurative of bride).

Delitzsch, Franz. *Commentary of the Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes.* Translated by M. G. Easton. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1968), 84:

(SOS 4:12) To a locked garden and spring no one has access but the rightful owner, and a sealed fountain is shut against all impurity. Thus she is closed against the world, and inaccessible to all that would disturb her pure heart, or desecrate her pure person.

Pope, Marvin H. *Song of Songs.* (New York: Doubleday, 1977), 488:

נָעַל *na'al* (lock). The bolting or locking a door from the inside. A garden or vineyard would be hedged or walled for its protection. The locked garden denotes virginity.

7. The “locked garden” refers to the Shulammite's virginity. It is sealed from the inside by the hymen, a mucous membrane designed by God to guard the entrance of the vagina.

8. Her virginal status, or locked garden, is considered by God to be sacrosanct and entry is forbidden except by the one who has the divinely approved key.
9. Solomon thinks it is he but the Shepherd is the one divinely designed for the Shulammitte:

Thieme, R. B., Jr. "The Perfect Design." In *Right Man-Right Woman*. Rev. ed. (Houston: Berachah Tapes and Publications, 1973), 18-19:

Jeremiah 31:22 - "How long will you go here and there [deviate from wheel-tracks of righteousness], apostate daughter [Israel as a client nation of God]? For the Lord has created a new thing on the earth—the female vagina will encompass the male phallus."

(Jeremiah 31:22) "Woman" in this passage is not "Ishah," which emphasized the whole woman. Instead, the Scripture uses "neqevah" [נִקְבָּה] here, which is the Hebrew word for female and emphasizes her physiology. The woman's body is different from the man's body. The next word, "t^esovev" [תְּסֹבֵב], is the piel imperfect of the word "savav" [סָבַב], translated here "to surround or to encompass," and actually means "to embrace or to fit." A woman shall fit a man. Her body is different from the male because she is designed to respond to the man. She is designed like a lock.

Did you ever get the wrong key in a lock and jam the whole apparatus? That could be the story of your married life for the next fifty years if you get the wrong man or the wrong woman! (pp. 18-19)

There is only one man who is designed for a specific woman. Your life may be characterized by "operation skeleton key," but it won't work! Promiscuity destroys the whole concept of sex. (p. 19)

10. Solomon is no more interested in protecting the reputation or the future happiness of the Shulammitte than he has been about any one of the other thousand women he's abused. Undeterred, he arrogantly continues his agitprop assault on the Shulammitte's soul.
11. Again he refers to her as "my Jewess," or in other words, we are brother and sister in the bloodline of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and it would be the biblical thing to do for us to unite in matrimony.
12. This is followed up by the fifth use of *kallah*, the word for wife. Solomon's agitprop continues as he seeks to wear down the Shulammitte's resistance to the idea of him being her right man.
13. Solomon then adds, according to the NASB, the phrase "a rock garden locked." It is difficult to translate the word for "rock": גַּל *gal*. It and its derivatives have about 15-20 different translations but the prevailing opinion for its translation here is a "spring of water."
14. Water is life and the garden that produces life is locked to all but the one authorized to participate in the procreation of biological life and that is the Shepherd.
15. Thus it is not a rock garden but a "spring shut up." For the Shepherd it is a place of refreshment as well as where he may cultivate his posterity.
16. In conjunction with this idea we find in the next phrase that it is the Shulammitte who will provide the "seed" that Solomon intends to fertilize in her "garden":
מַעַיִן *ma'yan*: "fountain": a flow of water from an opening in a hillside or valley ... distinguished from "well" or "cistern."
17. This fountain is said to be "sealed up." The Hebrew word is חָתַם *chatham*: to seal up:

Harris, et al., *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, 334:

𐤇𐤍𐤏 *chatham*. Sealing designates that which is securely enclosed. A sealed fountain is a metaphor for a chaste woman (Song 4:12).

18. In the woman's physiology her ovaries produce the eggs (half of the essential DNA to form biological life) which in Solomon's Pick-Up Line are illustrated by water.
19. These eggs, or water, enter into the "stream," or the fallopian tube, which carries the ova from the ovary to the uterus, or the "fountain" where it emerges and attaches itself to the uterine wall.
20. This fountain is said to be sealed, another reference to the hymen which protects the fountain from improper fertilization until the right man is identified and matrimony is accomplished.
21. This fountain is sealed awaiting God's perfect timing when the Shepherd can legitimately use his key to open the locked garden.
22. PRINCIPLE: The garden's seal is broken only once. It is the responsibility of the woman to preserve the integrity of her seal until she is married to her right man.
23. PRINCIPLE: It is the responsibility of the man to guard the integrity of every woman's seal until he is married to his right woman.
24. This is a major area of faith-rest for single men and women believers. All the allurements that a man may suggest in his pick-up lines and all the excitement promised by excited passions and desires cannot equal a lifetime spent with the right person.
25. The Shulammitte has discovered her right man. These principles remain operational until she is married to her Shepherd. Until then she must stand fast before the assaults of Solomon who would destroy her purity while as the same time destroy her chance for a lifetime of happiness.
26. PRINCIPLE: When a man has premarital sex with a virgin, he damages both her soul and her body and thus negatively affects the life of at least two other people—the man to whom she rightly belongs and whoever is designed as his right woman.
27. Only doctrine can repair the souls of those so affected but the sad thing is that doctrine has it to do. However long it takes is time lost that could be spent in marital bliss with one's right person.
28. With all these technical details and principles in mind we are able to see how Pick-Up Line #20 is the most extremely personal one yet.
29. Solomon for the fifth time refers to the Shulammitte as his wife but this time as his virgin wife. This is followed by a description of how her "garden" is "sealed," a clear indication that he has concluded he is the Keymaster, the one appointed to break that seal.
30. Here then is a paraphrase of Solomon's twentieth effort at agitprop toward the Shulammitte:

SOS 4:12 - [KS: Pick-UP Line #20: a paraphrase] "You are a protected virgin, my Jewess, my wife, whose womb is a locked garden, its spring of life sealed up within."