

On Love and Judaism

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For Anne-Hannah

The Song of Songs is the only love poem in the whole Bible and one of the most beautiful love poems in world literature. Self-attributed to King Solomon, (Song 1,1) who ruled in the 10th c. B.C.E., its syntax and vocabulary are close to those of the Mishnah, edited 1000 years later. To take but one example, Classical Biblical Hebrew, spoken and written by King Salomon, uses the relative particle אשר /'aʃer/ (that / who(m) / which) whilst in the Song we find its late equivalent ך /ʃe-/, cf. אל תראוני שחרחרת Do not consider me as black-skinned' (Song 1,6), which in Salomon's time was but dialectal feature, used only and scarcely in the North - and not in Judaea - under the form /ʃa-/, cf. עד שקמתי דבורה שקמתי אם בישראל 'until I stood up, Deborah, until I stood up as a mother in Israel' (Judges 5,7). Still in syntax, we do not find in the Song the verbal forms preceded by the so called 'conversive waw', typical of Classical Biblical Hebrew. As for vocabulary, we find in the Song the words פרדס 'orchard' (4,13) from the Persian *pairi daeza* (> *Paradise*) 'surrounded by a fence' and אפריון from the Greek φόρειον (3,9). Now Persia conquers Judaea in the the 6th century B.C.E. and Alexandre the Great, in turn, takes it 2 centuries later, i.e. six hundred years after King Solomon's reign... who could not possibly know and use Persian and Greek words nor use the relatif ך in lieu and place of אשר. Another particularity of the Song concerns not form but content: this love song, explicit yet poetic was not meant to be included in the Biblical canon. It is only thanks to Rabbi Aqiba (1st century C.E.), who found an allegoric interpretation, that it became part and parcel of the Hebrew Bible. For him, all in the Bible is sacred, but the Song is sacred among sacred. He used to burst in tears each and every time he read it¹.

¹Treaty Bava Batra (15a) attributes to King Hezekiah and his team the Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes, among others (for this reference I am indebted to David Benabou and Rabbi Y. Toledano). It is a first intuition about the true period when both books were written, although it falls short of its correct period based on philological proofs and completely ignores the highly personal content of the poem.

The dialogue between the lovers which is in fact the Song of Songs begins with an injunction by the woman to her lover²: ‘Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth’ (1,1). Not only the woman is not an object, but it is she who takes the initiative of the sexual encounter! Perhaps it was this revolutionary stance together with explicit erotic scenes that put the Rabbis of the Hellenistic era ill at ease with this love poem. In their time, love life and indeed life in general was no longer as exuberant as it used to be in classical times. We no longer see feminine figures as Deborah who leads the people to war or Yael, who pierces the chief enemy’s head (Judges 4-5).

Be the author of this poem who it may have been - and perhaps it was indeed King Solomon, whose language was up-to-dated by some editor a thousand years later - it is of an incomparable beauty in its very flesh, in its capacity to wonder at the evocation of the other person's beauty - of a man if you are a woman, of a woman if you are a man - upon meeting each other. Is there a beauty superior to this one, which allows us to become what we are, desired and desiring beings ? Is there anything as beautiful on this Earth, *qui est quelquefois si jolie*, in the words of Jacques Prévert, as the body and face, both magnificent and perishable (and all the more magnificent because perishable) of our vis-à-vis of the opposite and complementary sex? In any case, for the Hebrews until the Hellenistic period, nothing concerning love including physical - except incest and some other prohibitions - is taboo and there are proofs galore. King Solomon or any later author would not have felt the need to enrich, let alone limit his poem to an allegoric interpretation. Love poems exist in all cultures because love is the human experience par excellence, and this includes us Jews, who are not less human than anybody else. The need to find an allegoric interpretation does not emerge until the epoch of the Mishnah, namely the first centuries before and after the beginning of the Common Era, largely the Hellenistic period.

The Song calls the female companion רעיה, feminine of רע ‘fellow human’, of whom both Rabbi Aqiba and Hillel say that the precept that concerns him or her is the most

² This is pointed out by Julia Kristeva, ‘Le Cantique des cantiques’, *Pardès*, 2002/1 (n° 32-33), 65-78. For this reference I am indebted to Claude Boisson. Despite some mistakes in the interpretation of Hebrew terms - עלמה means ‘young woman’, not ‘young girl’, and רעיה is ‘female companion’, not ‘wife’ - Kristeva’s paper has some interesting insights.

important in the whole Torah : ואהבת לרעך כמוך 'Love thy fellow human as yourself' (Lev. 19,17). The noun רעיה implies that the beloved woman is not only an object of desire but also a fellow human. Is there a nobler feeling than the one which fills us when we meet a fellow human whose beauty replenishes our soul? This beauty, that finds its source in the eyes and soul of the observer no less than in the aspect of the observed, and which reflects the soul of the observed even more than its aspect and burns our heart just as the sun burns our skin. It is for this reason that the Song of Songs calls the beloved one *Terrible as the flag-bearers* (6,4איומה כנדגלות). It understands more than any other love poem that which is disarming in beauty and makes it terrible, and that which is supreme in love which makes the one who feels it vulnerable thus human. The Song contradicts Descartes. Man is not *Cogito ergo sum* 'I think so I am' but *Amo ergo sum*, 'I love so I am'. In this sense there is a sentence in the Torah comparable to the Song : ויהיו בעיניו כימים אחדים באהבתו אותה : 'And they were for him like a few days, so much he loved her', we are told about the fourteen years Jacob had to work for Rachel's father Laban before he was allowed to marry her (Genesis 29,20). Years later, Jacob says (Gn. 48,7) מתה עלי רחל 'Rachel died upon me': i.e. 'Rachel died and left me bereft'. How great a love in that simple preposition!

The Song gives, as we have said, a plastic-cum-poetic descriptions of the lovers' body which is, at the same time, deeply relevant from a psychic point of view: עזה כמוות 'As strong as death is Love' (8,6) which allows to understand that it is self-attributed to King Solomon: was he not born from the endless love that his parents King David and Bathsheba felt for each other? Uriah the Hittite, on the other hand, illustrates to which amount the lack of love and the absence of desire are tantamount to death: Freud, who placed desire at the heart of all things human, had read the Hebrew Bible which his father had given him upon his Bar-Mitzvah with these words in Hebrew: לבני שלמה 'for my son Solomon...' Summoned by David, who asks the news from the front and insists that he go home to wash himself, Uriah refuses, pleading that, as his comrades-in-arms sleep on the open field, he cannot לאכל ולשתות ולשכב עם 'eat and drink and couch with my wife' (2Samuel 11,11). Now the man comes from the war and will return to the war on the morrow. Between both situations in

which he is bound to give death and perhaps receive it, he has an opportunity to love, i.e. get life and give it. But for him, sex is equivalent to food and drink. Simple physiological functions. Let us imagine a man who loses a parent the day after Purim and decides to fast on the Yahrzeit. He fasts, then, the day before Purim because of Ta'anit Esther, and the day after Purim because of his parent. Now wishing to show his piety, he decides to fast the very day of Purim too. If love were a comparable to eat and drink, Uriah would have been like that man, eager to show his piety which is sheer bigotry. Yet it does not boil down to that. As a matter of fact, that very evening וַיִּקְרָא-לוֹ דָּוִד, וַיֹּאכַל לְפָנָיו וַיִּשְׂתֶּה--וַיִּשְׁכַּרְהוּ; וַיֵּצֵא בְעָרְב, לְשֹׁכֵב בְּמִשְׁכָּבוֹ עִם-עַבְדֵי אֲדֹנָיו, וְאֶל-בֵּיתוֹ, לֹא וַיֵּרָד 'David called upon him and Uriah ate and drank in front of him to the point of ebriety and in the evening went to couch with his Master's servants and to his home he did not go' (2S. 11,13). Notwithstanding his comrades-in-arms being unable to do so, he ate and got drunk and avoided going home. And as we know, בֵּיתוֹ זֶה אִשְׁתּוֹ 'His home is his wife' (Treaty Yoma 1a). Naturally, his comrades would have not refrained from encounter their wives if the opportunity arose. That which Uriah refuses twice - first implicitly, then explicitly - is the act, emotion and feeling of love. Now whoever refuses love refuses life. Uriah has transgressed the most important of all commandments, which is not one of them for it is self-evident. Thus he acted like a heathen, for as says the Psalmist, who is no other than David himself, לֹא הַמֵּתִים יִהְלְלוּ 'It is not the dead who glorify God nor those who go down to eternal silence' (Ψ 115,17). And this verse is part of the הלל Hallel, chanted in the High Holidays including the 1st day of each month... Thence Uriah's fate is clear. Actually, the text King Solomon would have written in his old age (with the same caveats as for the Song of Songs) mentions the loss of desire as one of the signs preceding death עַד אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יָבֹא יְמֵי הַרְעָה וְהִגִּיעוּ שָׁנִים, אֲשֶׁר תֹּאמַר אִין-לִי בָהֶם חִפְזִים... וְתִפְרַר הָאֲבִיוֹנָה פִּי-הַלֵּךְ 'Until the bad days come, years in which thou shall say I have no desire... and the libido declines for the man is going to his last residence' (Eccl. 12,1;5). If in an extreme nay ultimate situation Uriah refuses intercourse with his wife, he must not have been keen to see her in less urgent circumstances either. This,

together with the fact that to his wife's nocturnal company he prefers that of the King's servants does not need further commentary.

David then understands why Bathsheba had taken her bath in such a way that he would see her nudity. What he does then is not only pardonable; it is a mitzvah in the spirit of *Love thy fellow human as thyself*; it is love that vanquishes indifference thus death. It is love that accomplishes ובהרת בחיים (Dt. 30,19). 'Thou shalt choose life'. True, prophet Nathan gives to this episode the politically correct interpretation, but when speaking of the shepherd and his sole sheep, he does not say a word about his way of treating her. Following Nathan's words, David sees that he has committed a juridically illicit act (Ψ 51,2). Yet Nathan himself will deem Bathsheba right when she'll plead for her son's right to the throne. He is the son of love and life vanquishing death, just as in the case of Lot's daughters (*v. infra*).

Rabbi Eli'ezer, Rabbi Aqiba's master, was well inspired when he statues on the question of Akhnai's oven (Treaty Bava Metzi'a 59a-b). However his colleagues disagree. Then he summons the tree, the water conduct, the walls of the synagogue and even Heaven itself to prove him right, and they do ! Yet his vanity which leads him to call upon the supra-natural in order to override the human decision in a legal matter is a gross error: Once God's Law is given to Men, it is for Men, not God, to apply it. According to human standards, not divine ones (Ψ 115,16). To decide according to the majority of Judges' opinion is a human standard. So, even if according to a Godly ideal truth R. Eli'ezer is right, his colleagues who judge on human criteria disagree with him and as they outnumber him, they are right. Which is why in Messianic times, Halakha will be according to Beit Shammai, but until then it follows Beit Hillel. Uriah also deemed himself superior to love and life and he was wrong. Prophet Nathan defend his case on purely legal grounds, but he knows David to be right on a higher level. Which is why the Messiah will be the offspring of that love; the second son of David and Bathsheba, conceived after Uriah's death. Not only that but this son, שלמה Solomon, is also called Yedidiah, the friend of God (2S.12,25), and it is he, Amadeus, as it were, who would eventually build the Temple. Not a son of David and Michal, the daughter that King Saul gave in wedding to David. She had despised the

manifestation of joy of his husband who danced in honour of the Holy Arch. She died childless, which means that David never approached her after that incident when she thought a King must not express emotion. Bruria, one of the rare women cited in the Talmud as a Sage on her own right, wife of R. Meir and daughter of R. Hanania ben Tradion, also believed she was above love therefore life : her end was tragic (Treaty Aboda Zara 18b). Uriah the Hittite, Nathan the prophet, R. Eli'ezer, Princess Michal and Sage Bruria, men and women of doubtless dignity, forgot that God gave the Earth to Man, reserving Heaven for himself. And that 'לא ניתנה התורה למלאכי השרת' 'the Torah was not given to angels' (Treaty Kiddushin 54a).

It is David who sings the Psalms and he knows what he is talking about : it is with an earthly weapon that he has to fight Goliath and win. And as a matter of fact, he takes care of all the earthly details : he chooses 5 stones in the bed of the river, so as to have one at hand as soon as he looks for it in his bag, and choose he must so that they are not too heavy and attain the giant's front but not too light nor too small in order to pierce it, moreover after he tries King Saul's armour and helmet, he prefers not to wear them for combat for he is not accustomed to their weight nor is he used to fight with such equipment (1S,17,39) *לא אוכל ללכת בַּאֲלֵהָ פִּי לֹא נִסִּיתִי*. David is a fighter, not a child (he had already killed a lion and a bear) and his combat is a matter of experience, strength, courage, tactics and... faith: upon approaching Goliath, he cries the name of God. David has both heart and head. He does not flee fight nor love. As a matter of fact, he was a great lover but we know all of his beloved women's names: they were fellow humans, not just objects of desire.

The daughters of Lot, cited above, do not flee their human fate either. After Sodom and Gomorrah are destroyed, and facing the lack of a single man on Earth to give them offspring, they inebriate their father one night after the other and then sleep with him so as to continue Humankind. A priori it is an incest, a posteriori a mitzvah: *ובחרת בחיים* 'thou will choose life'. The elder gives birth to Moab³, ancestor of Ruth

³The /mo/ of Moab is the /-mo/ found also in kemo, bemo and lemo 'self, own', cf. Job (40,3-4) *הֲנִי קְלוּתִי מֵהָ* . מו is an emphatic version of מה, what/thing, cf. in Wallon French 'je te dirai quoi' I shall tell you a thing'. Therefore Moab means "the own father, the father himself". By giving her son that name, Lot's daughter says that he

thus of David and eventually the Messiah who will therefore be the offspring of an incest between daughter and father, then of a convert and finally of adultery. A series of transgressions. In their context, however, each and every one of those acts perpetuates life and love: a categorical imperative. Which means that rule are to be obeyed, but if context leaves no other choice, they should be broken.

Just as human sacrifice is abolished when God commands Abraham to sacrifice his son then forbids this act, sanctifying life over death. Likewise and for the same reason, sexual abstinence is forbidden both for men and women. Even the prescriptions of *nazir* exclude sexual abstinence (Nu. 6). The *nazir* is not a monk, he does not inhabit a monastery, from Greek *μόνος* (*alone*). And Treaty Brakhot (57b) says שלושה נאים דברים מרחיבים דעתו של אדם: דירה נאה, אשה נאה וכלים נאים. Three phenomena rejoice a man's heart: a beautiful house, a beautiful wife and beautiful utensils.

This solves the second point evoked earlier on the Song of Songs. If it is the love between God and the assembly of Jews that it treats, as thought R. Aqiba - it is nonetheless the love between a man and a woman that it chooses as its metaphor. It could have chosen love between mother and son, cf. Rebecca's love for Jacob, or between two male friends, cf. David and Jonathan, or between two female friends, cf. Ruth and her mother-in-law Na'omi, or of a servant for his master, cf. אֶהְבֶּתִי אֶת אֲדֹנָי 'I love my master' (Ex. 21,5), or of a brother to his sister, cf. of Amnon for Tamar (2S. 13,1-37, see below).

It follows that it is reciprocated love between boy and girl which is considered the strongest and noblest human love of them all. For only it can beget new life, *procreate* almost as God *creates*. Therefore, whether the Song of Songs be allegoric or real, the fact is there : it is based upon human love. And mind you, it is not just spiritual but carnal love: it is of Solomon's bed that we are told (Song 3,7), a piece of furniture that is by no means Platonic and recalls Ulysses and Penelope's *θάλαμος* 'nuptial bed'. Love between man and woman is our supreme emotion, for only this sort of

has been begot by her own father, by her father himself. It is the sheer truth and that is the case with many a name in the Bible who evoke the circumstances of conception, birth, character, destiny, cf. יצחק, יעקב, נפתלי, etc. שמעון, לוי, אשר, בנימין

love can grant us earthly descendants, and it is also the only one which brings us to our absolute complementary being, a woman for a man, a man for a woman. Rabbi Aqiba himself is the perfect example, for like Jacob before him, he falls in love with a Rachel and like him he must work - study, in his case - for a dozen years before she accepts to spouse her.

We mentioned the case of Amnon and Tamar. It turns out to be a lesson in itself. Here desire was present, albeit disguised as love. Amnon loves his sister - not from the same mother - but since he is not reciprocated, he rapes her. Two years later, he is killed at the hand of another of her brothers. A similar such drama is recounted in Gn. 34. Dinah, Jacob's daughter, mingles with the country's young women and ends up being raped by the son of the city's dignitary. Who thereafter falls in love with her and wishes to marry her. Dinah's brothers Levi and Simeon, however, are furious and take due revenge, killing the raper and all of the city's males, for *הֲכִזּוּנָהּ יַעֲשֶׂה אֶת־אֶחָיוֹתָיו* 'would we have him make a whore out of our sister?' (ibid.3,1)⁴. Imposing one's desire - be it disguised or turned into love - on another person is a crime punished by death. Treaty Abot (5,16) gives Amnon and Tamar's story as an example of false love: *כל אהבה שהיא תלויה בדבר, בטל דבר, בטלה אהבה. ושאינה תלויה בדבר, אינה בטלה לעולם.* 'Any love which depends on something, if that thing disappears, love disappears too. But a love that does not depend on anything never disappears. Which one is a love that depends on something? The love of Amnon for Tamar.'

It is the woman who experiments the highest degree of passion (Gn. 3,16). The woman is life, which is the meaning of *חַוָּה* Hava (> Eve), it is upon her that desire befalls in the first place, it is she whom the serpent seduces, and that makes her dependent on her man. And man cannot exert his domination but through a profound knowledge of his woman, in her deepest affective and bodily needs, which for a wo-

4 Prostitution is not prohibited. Women of this trade are called *זֹנָה* or *קדשה* 'separated' (which is also the etymological sense of 'saint' Lat. *sa(n)ctus* 'cut apart', cf. *sanctio, sectio, secare* 'to cut'). Rahab was instrumental in the conquest of Jericho (hence the rest of the Land Joshua (2 ; 6), and according to the midrash (Treaty Megillah 14b:12) she converted to Judaism and Joshua married her. Tamar, 'Er's wife, pretends to be one and her father-in-law Judah, eventually, admits having required her services. Judge Jephte was the son of a prostitute. Prophet Hosea is told by God to marry a prostitute whose name is *גֹּמֵר בַּת דְּבַלְיָיִם* Gomer (1,3).

man are one and the same thing. Body and soul are one and a single unit, which is why for the Zohar the union of man and wife is necessary to acquire the primeval unity that prevailed when God created them. Love is both are reward and our punishment. We have eaten the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge and thence we are bound to know our vis-a-vis and be known by her. To physical and individual knowledge, social and moral knowledge was added by that act. For as Rashi points out judiciously, based on verbal syntax, Adam had known Eve *before* they were expelled from Paradise: וְהָאָדָם יָדַע אֶת חַוָּה אִשְׁתּוֹ 'And Adam *had known* his wife' (Gn. 4,1). It is thanks to this knowledge that we exist truly, to the opposite of Descartes opinion. Animals only copulate with each other. Men and woman *know each other*. We have exchanged eternal life without knowledge, i.e. without love, against a finite life full with it. Our days are scarce but their nights are wondrous which illuminate them. One is tempted to ask whether Eve did not let the snake tempt her by God's design in order for her and her man to become human, namely knowing animals, in order to unite and thus have an idea of God's unity (and uniqueness) too. Or of God as an idea...

I have evoked Esther : that is a school case. The intertwined emotions, desires and ambitions occult any other presence, to the point that the name of God isn't even mentioned, not once in the whole of the Book. And yet it is said that salvation will come to the Jews from another place (Esth. 4,14). Now אָהָר in our tradition means the unconscious, sometimes the diabolic. First there is the love hence desire of the King for Esther, then the desire for her of Haman the wicked, his hatred for Mordekhai who had not kneeled to him, and the love of both Mordekhai and Esther for their people. All of the Book of Esther is about love and desire, of love which becomes desire and desire which becomes love. The death-wish of Haman reverts its direction and leads to is own death against the Jews and Mordekhai, unconscious won against conscious and emotion vanquished reason. This is why in Messianic Times, Purim will be the only holy day with Kippurim to be observed, for desire and love will always be there, the unconscious too, and we shall need atonement but also peace within ourselves and with our fellow human beings, of our male soul with our female soul, of our head with our heart, of our body and our soul, of our death-wish and our

life impulsion, of egoism represented by Vashti and altruism represented by Esther. This Book exalts women and womanhood, namely *life* and *love* (same root in Germanic, with vowel alternation and voiced/voiceless consonantal alternation). That is why we disguise ourselves in Purim, in order to better reveal our true self, and that is also why we drink enough to liberate our unconscious. *In vino veritas*. And what is there in the red heart of the unconscious ? Love.

The linguist I am thinks that it is thus that language emerged in the course of evolution⁵. Indeed, there is no reason to think that God almighty was not able or willing to recur to evolution in order to create the realm of the living as we know it. If the Song of Songs is an allegory, there is no reason to think that the 7 days of Creation are not an allegory as well for us to understand a very long process in terms of human time, since for God or the idea of God the very notion of Time is irrelevant. As a result of an endless number of encounters during which non linguistic communication took place in order to secure the survival of a mammal that became bi-pedal against stronger quadrupeds. Encounters unlimited in time, place, age or goal, viz. unrestricted to mating, defending ourselves and feeding, like in the other animals, in the framework of an altruistic collaboration unlimited to a genetic pre-established program. Language is the anatomization, physiologization and geneticization of love for our fellow beings. Here too, as said by Jean-Baptiste, knight of Lamarck, who invented the term biology and with it the discipline itself, *l'usage crée la forme*, function creates organ⁶. Incidentally, Creation as recounted in Genesis follows the same path : a Big-Bang of energy (light), then water, then vegetal life, then aquatic animals, then birds, then mammals, then Man. No contradiction between science and faith.

Communication ended up creating language, then intelligence and conscience. Yet the need to communicate, namely care for each other, whose highest expressions is love, was the basis of this process. No other animal than Man would risk its own life to save a conspecific (animal of the same species) with whom he partakes no personal links : among us humans it is a normal behaviour.

5 Kirtchuk, P. 2016. *A Unified and Integrative Theory of Language*. Oxford: Peter Lang.

6 Lamarck, J.-B. 1801-1806. *Cours d'Ouverture*, 21 Floréal An 8. Repris et développé dans : Philosophie Zoologique, Paris, Dantou 1809.

Martin Buber said that a real Life is *Begegnung*, encounter, and that the Human being cannot access true life if he does not access the *Ich und Du*⁷ relationship, by which he confirms the different and complementary identity of the other thus confirming the identity of self. They depend on each other. That is why even activities that can be led by the individual alone such as prayer and study, we Jews accomplish them in company: או מיתותא או חברותא, 'company or death', says Treaty Ta'anit 23a. For Buber the relationship of *Ich und Du* can be absolute only with God, the Absolute and Eternal Thou, cf. אהיה אשר אהיה 'I am who am' (Ex. 3,14). In הלכה Halacha, dawn is defined as the moment in which we can recognise a person from a distance of 4 cubits, viz. approximately 2 yards (Treaty Berakhot 72b). The first moment of the Day in which we address God in prayer is determined on the basis of our ability to recognise and address a fellow human being. 'Another person's face confers responsibility on me by its very vulnerability, it appeals to my solidarity and my feelings endowed with an intrinsic moral', says E. Levinas⁸. And that person's face as much as it reflects the person's soul can permeate us by its eyes, expression, smile. Levinas probably did not know it, but there is a dedicated centre in the brain meant to recognise faces and only them⁹. Actually, an image represented on an almost identical background cannot be discerned except if it is... a human face !

Likewise, a fault committed against a human being cannot be excused by anyone else, including God. It is only the offended person that can, may and indeed should forgive it. In other words, our relation with our fellow humans is more important than our relation with God. There is no Self without a relation to the Other, and each and everyone of us is an Other for another Self. We love and fear God, in that order, and God himself gave us the Torah with love, as it is said in the שמע. Man and woman are for each other the most different and complementary fellow possible within the living realm, and here is what King Salomon says in his Proverbs (18,22) : מְצָא אִשָּׁה מְצָא טוֹב

7 Buber, M. 1923. *Ich und Du*. Leipzig, Insel Verlag.

8 Levinas, E.1998. *L'Éthique comme philosophie première*. Paris, Rivages, coll. «Rivages poche».

9 Bentin S., McCarthy, G., Pérez, E., Puce, A., Allison, T. (1996). 'Electrophysiological studies of face perception in humans'. *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience*, 8, 551-565, Botzel, K., Grusser, O. J. (1989). 'Electric brain potentials-evoked by pictures of faces and non-faces – a search for face-specific EEG-potentials'. *Experimental Brain Research*, 77, 349-360.

וַיִּפֶּק רְצוֹן מִיְהוָה ‘He who has found a woman has found the Good, and will obtain the Good from God’.

The Prophets conclude their prophecies by consoling words, the Ecclesiastes¹⁰ (12,13) concludes his thought by an injunction to obey God כִּי זֶה כָּל הָאָדָם ‘for this is the whole of Man’, and King Solomon concludes his Proverbs by a whole chapter (32) dedicated to the eulogy of the Woman of Worth, אִשַׁת חַיִל !

This is also the conclusion of the present study.

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¹⁰ I have been asked how come that the name of קהלה was translated by a noun meaning ‘church’, ‘priest’ etc. As it were, the Greek language is documented from the 15th century B.C.E., with the Mycenaean inscriptions, and it went through several periods. Homeric poetry was written probably in the 8th c. B.C.E., Plato lived in the 4th c. B.C.E and so on. The Septuagint, Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, is from the IIIrd c. B.C.E. Churches as such did not exist at the time nor did the Roman Catholic Church. The Greek εκκλησια still meant ‘assembly’, like קהל whose derivate קהלת is ‘he who ressembles’. In Hebrew εκκλησια was borrowed as אוכלוסין ‘inhabitants’ (Tossefta Treaty Pessahim 4, Halakha 12 : פעם אחת ביקש אגריפס המלך : לידע כמה מניינים של אוכלוסין ‘Once King Agrippas wanted to know the number of inhabitants...’). The word εκκλησια’s descendants in European languages, viz. *église, iglesia, igreja, chiesa, church, kirk, Kirch* and the like are as late as the concept itself.