PHYSICAL LOVE AND SPIRITUAL LOVE

Leon's Commentary on the Song of Songs

**The Song of Songs, also known as the Song of Solomon, is a beautiful account of the love between a man and his beloved. Although it is considered out of place among the books of the Bible, which speak about man's relationship to God not to another person, but that is just the point which is made by inclusion of this human love affair, namely that physical love can only exist between human beings, not as other civilizations, such as Greek civilization considered physical love to be between humans and the gods. In Judaism love of God can only take a spiritual form, not a physical form.**

Today I was very fortunate to attend a very high level education day on the book of Song of Songs. It was all professors of Bible, all authorities on the subject, even the audience was mostly made up of teachers and professors, so it was very stimulating. It gave me new insight that I never thought about before.

It lead me to some serious thinking about the Song of Songs and its place in Judaism..

I ask the question why is the Song of Songs included in the Biblical canon?

It's just a love song between a man and a woman, similar in style to many Sumerian love songs. The name of God doesn't appear. It's all about a man and a woman. It's even got some very tantalizingly sensuous descriptions of the beauty of the woman which don't seem to fit into the category of "holy".

The answer of all the lecturers was unanimous, and all the rest of their thinking was based on that answer, namely that the whole book is an allegory of the love affair between God and His people Israel.

My understanding of the reason why the book is included in the canon is totally different and it doesn't preclude an allegorical interpretation.

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I expected one of the scholars there to come up with the same idea that I had, but, I'm sorry to tell you I was disappointed. In the presence of such wonderful scholars I just kept my mouth shut, even though what I was thinking appeared glaringly obvious to me.

My interpretation is very simple. It can almost be stated in one word. But before I say it let me remind you that the most shocking practice of idolatry, amongst many other shocking practices, was the sexual act performed between a woman and the gods, and I consider the eradication of idolatry as one of the main objectives of the Bible.

Practically every ancient love song of every nation, from the ancient Egyptians to the Greeks and the Babylonians, the Indians, Chinese and any other ancient civilization you can think of involves the act of love between a woman and the god.

Judaism removed this practice by deliberately introducing one of the most beautiful love songs in the world where God has no place. A beautiful love, according to the Song of Songs, is one between a man and a woman, not between God and a woman.

Of course one can reach a better understanding of the relationship between God and the People of Israel by allegorically comparing it with the love relationship between a man and a woman, but this only highlights Judaism's abhorrence of the real sexual relationship between a woman and God.

The Song of Songs is Judaism's way of placing the sexual expression of love in the human sphere.

In the Song of Songs the woman does not have a sexual relationship with God. She has a beautiful intimate, sexual relationship with her husband, man.

The Song of Songs places Woman next to man. They are both human and the love between them is beautiful and beautifies the world.

The Song of Songs rescues Woman from the ignominious position she had been put into by practically all the nations of the world, namely the position of the sex object or tool of the gods.

In Judaism, Man and Woman leave the Garden of Eden together. That's Genesis. Here, in the Song of Songs, thanks to its beautiful descriptions of the garden, woman and man don't fall into despondency and sin. Instead they begin a walk into the world as partners and continue, together, making the world, outside the Garden of Eden into the beautiful garden they left behind them.

Man and woman can make the world into that beautiful Garden of Eden by having a relationship of love and mutual appreciation and respect and attraction.

This relationship of equality and cooperation is the way that man and woman can return to the Garden of Eden by making this world a Garden of Eden.

**Leon Gork Tour Guide in Israel.**

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