The Odes of Solomon

Rachel Bousfield

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Ode 12 ܡܙܡܘܪ ܝ"ב

And It Knows Neither Its Descent nor Its Course

1 He has filled me with utterances of truth,
so that I could speak it.
ܡܠܝ ܡܢ ܫܘܪܪ̈ܐ ܕܫܘܪܪ̈ܬܐ ܕܐܫܬܘ̈ܕܥ ܠܡܡܠܠ ܒܗ̇

• The poem's subject is the Word aka utterance, ܡܐܡܪܐ.

John 1:1-5 — *1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through Him all things were made, and without Him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In Him was life, and that life was the light of men. 5 The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.*

1 Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος. 2 οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν θεόν. 3 πάντα δι᾽ αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν ὃ γέγονεν. 4 ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν, καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων, 5 καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει, καὶ ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν.

• To speak is to participate in the act of creation itself

Psalm 33:6, 9 — *6 By the word of Hashem were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. 7 For He spoke, and it was; He commanded, and it stood.*

ו בִּדְבַר יְהוָה שָׁמַיִם נֶעֱשׂוּ וּבְרוּחַ פִּיו כָּל צְבָאָם. ט כִּי הוּא אָמַר וַיֶּהִי הוּא צִוָּה וַיַּעֲמֹד

Genesis 36:32 — *32 But His command, when He intended a thing, is only that He saith unto it: Be and it is.*

לב [וְזֶה] אִמְרָתוֹ וְיִהְיֶה כֹּל אֲשֶׁר יְצַוֶּנּוּ לְמַעַן יֵעָשֶׂה

Qur'an 4:171 — *171 The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only a messenger of Allâh, and His word which He conveyed unto Mary, and a spirit from Him.*

171 لَّيْسَ الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَكَلِمَتُهُ أَلْقَاهَا إِلَىٰ مَرْيَمَ وَرُوحٌ مِّنْهُ

• Sura'i Psalm speaks creation into existence.

2 And like the flowing of water,
truth flowed from my mouth,
and my lips declared its fruits.
ܘܐܝܟ ܕܡܝܐ ܕܡܫܟܝܢ ܫܪܪܐ ܡܢ ܦܘܡܝ ܘܣܦܝ ܐܡܪ ܦܪܝ̈ܗ̇

• The words we say sow fruit, even divine fruit.

Proverbs 18:21 — *21 Death and life are in the power of the tongue; and they that indulge it shall eat the fruit thereof.*

כא מָוֶת וְחַיִּים בְּיַד־לָשׁוֹן; וְאֹהֲבֶיהָ, יֹאכַל פִּרְיָהּ.

• Sura'i recalls the Epistle of James.

James 3:8 — *8 but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.*

ח לְשׁוֹן אֵין אָדָם יָכוֹל לְכוֹבְשָׁהּ רָעָה בִּלְתִּי נָחָה מָלְאָה רַעַל מָוֶת.

• Verse 2's truth flowing "like water" and verse 6's word that "never falls" are Isaiah's image of the word that does not return void but does not return void.

Isaiah 55:10-11 — *10 For as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, except it water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, and give seed to the sower and bread to the eater: 11 So shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, except it accomplish that which I please, and make the thing whereto I sent it prosper.*

י כִּי כַּאֲשֶׁר יֵרֵד הַגֶּשֶׁם וְהַשֶּׁלֶג מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְשָׁמָּה לֹא יָשׁוּב כִּי אִם־הִרְוָה אֶת־הָאָרֶץ וְהוֹלִידָהּ וְהִצְמִיחָהּ וְנָתַן זֶרַע לַזֹּרֵעַ וְלֶחֶם לָאֹכֵל׃ יא כֵּן יִהְיֶה דְבָרִי אֲשֶׁר יֵצֵא מִפִּי לֹא יָשׁוּב אֵלַי רֵיקָם כִּי אִם־עָשָׂה אֶת־אֲשֶׁר חָפַצְתִּי וְהִצְלִיחַ אֶת אֲשֶׁר שְׁלַחְתִּיהוּ׃

5 And be thou knowledge to abound in me,
because the mouth of the Lord is the truthful utterance,
and the opening of his light.
ܘܐܬܝ ܐܢܬ ܝܕ̈ܥܬܐ ܕܬܬܪܒܐ ܒܝ ܡܛܠ ܕܦܘܡܗ ܕܡܪܝܐ ܫܪܪܐ ܗܘ ܘܦܬܚ ܕܢܗܝܪܘܬܗ̇

• Literally the Lord's mouth is the door of his light, ܡܬܚܐ ܕܢܗܝܪܘܬܗ̇. This echoes Psalm 119's opening, ܦ"ה of God's words.

Psalm 119:130 — *130 The opening of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.*

קל פֵּתַח דְּבָרֶיךָ יָאִיר מֵבִין פְּתָיִים.

Sirach 24:3 — *3 I came out of the mouth of the most High, and covered the earth as a cloud.*

ג Ἐγὼ ἐκ στόματος ὑψίστου ἐξῆλθον, καὶ ὡς ἀχλὺς κατεκάλυψα γῆν.

• Our friend Valery❸ notes the 8-fold path includes speech as a spoke.

7 And the Most High gave the message to his ages,
the interpreter of his deeds,
and the narrators of his glory,
and the praisers of his thought,
and the proclaimers of his mind,
and the explainers of his wonders.
ܘܝܗܒ ܠܗ ܥܠܝܐ ܡܐܡܪܐ ܠܥܠܡ̈ܘܗ̇ ܦܫܪ̈ܢ ܕܥ̈ܒ̈ܕ̈ܘܗ̇ ܘܣܦ̈ܪ̈ܢ ܕܫܒ̈ܚ̈ܬ̈ܗ̇ ܘܡ̈ܗ̈ܪ̈ܢ ܕܡ̈ܚ̈ܫ̈ܒ̈ܬ̈ܗ̇ ܘܡ̈ܐ̈ܡ̈ܪ̈ܢ ܕܥ̈ܠ̈ܝ̈ܬ̈ܗ̇ ܘܡ̈ܦ̈ܫ̈ܪ̈ܢ ܕ̈ܦ̈ܠ̈ܝ̈ܐ̈ܬ̈ܗ̇

• The word ages, ܥܠܡ̈ܐ, or aeons.

• The study of a text brings a scripture to life.

• An Islamic framing could emphasize verbal transmission.

7 For the utterance's fluent eloquence is beyond expression,
and like its expression, so are its swiftness and sharpness,
and its course is endless.
ܐܡܪ ܕܫܘܪܪ ܡܠܝܠ ܠܝܬ ܠܗ ܡܫܘܚ ܘܐܝܟ ܕܡܫܘܚ ܗܟܢ ܐܦ ܫܘܪ̈ܝ̈ܗ̇ ܘܠܝܬ ܠܗ ܣܘܦ

• The Epistle to the Hebrews uses this same metaphor of the word as blade.

Hebrews 4:12 — *12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

12 ζῶν γὰρ ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ ἐνεργὴς καὶ τομώτερος ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν μάχαιραν δίστομον, καὶ διϊκνούμενος ἄχρις μερισμοῦ ψυχῆς τε καὶ πνεύματος, ἁρμῶν τε καὶ μυελῶν, καὶ κριτικὸς ἐνθυμήσεων καὶ ἐννοιῶν καρδίας·

• Our friend Jack❸ notes that truth is not always so positive to those unready to hear it. It creates conflict.

Matthew 10:34 — ———

Thomas 16 — *16 "Jesus said: "Perhaps people think that I have come to cast peace upon the world, but they do not realize that I have come to cast various divisions upon the world: fire, sword, war. For there will be in a house; three will be against two, and two against three; the father against the son, and the son against the father, and they will stand alone."*

• Beyond measure and comprehension.

Secret John 2:23-27 — *23 "The One is majestic. The One is measureless majesty. 24 Chief of all Realms, Producing all realms. Light, Producing light. Life, Producing life. Blessedness, Producing blessedness. Knowledge, Producing knowledge. Good, Producing goodness. Mercy, Producing mercy. Grievous, Producing grievously. "It does not "possess" these things. "It grows forth light beyond measure, beyond comprehension." What can I say?*

23 ⲡⲉⲧⲙⲛⲧⲟ ⲙ̀ⲡⲉⲓⲱⲧ ⲛ̀ⲧⲉ ⲟⲩⲁ ⲡⲉⲧⲙⲛⲧⲟ ⲙ̀ⲙⲁⲓⲟⲥⲩⲛⲏ ⲛ̀ⲧⲉ ⲙⲙⲁⲓⲟⲥⲩⲛⲏ ⲧⲏⲣϥ ⲛ̀ⲧⲉ ⲙⲙⲁⲓⲟⲥⲩⲛⲏ ⲙ̀ⲡⲉⲧⲟⲩⲛⲟϭ ⲙ̀ⲡⲉⲧⲟⲩⲛⲟϭ ⲛ̀ⲧⲉ ⲛⲓⲙ ⲛⲓⲙ