



--Lovers in the Lilacs - Chagall (Chagall)

The Hieros Gamos Part 2: The Song and the Wisdom

Blood Roses: The Canticle of Canticles

Rabbi Akiva, who anointed Bar Cochba as warrior messiah a century after Jesus, had this to say in espousing the Song of Songs into the Jewish canon:

“The whole world is not worth the day on which the Song of Songs was given to Israel for all the writings are holy but the Song of Songs is the holiest of the holy”.

Now this is a truth and the Song of Songs is our salvation and the redemption of the Earth and the principle of the Song of Songs is the reunion and recognition between the two genders and each - Solomon giving the Queen of Sheba all that she desired is the key to Wisdom. The Wisdom of Solomon is what gave him the six hundred and sixty six talents and six hundred and sixty six, ‘here is Wisdom’ is Homo sapiens. Sapiens is Wisdom. The mark of the beast Homo is sapiens, Sophia or Hockmah - Wisdom (p 666).

The sacred marriage is not simply worshipping the female in an epoch of dominion, but it is the relationship of reconciliation between the two sexes and between humanity and nature. And light and darkness are represented in the sacred marriage. “I am black but comely O ye daughters of Jerusalem” The Queen of Sheba is the Shulamite, she’s the darkened one of the enclosed garden. She also represents the repressed feminine principle. In Luke and Matthew it says “The Queen of the South shall return and judge the men of this generation” and that is the sacred mar-

riage principle returning and it is the feminine principal returning and what apocalypsia means - the term 'apocalypse' is an unveiling and it is traditionally the unveiling of the bride - in the feminine gender in Greek.

The Song of Songs expresses for all time the fertility of sexual love in its full abundance. Through the love and passion of the young king and queen for one another, the living world springs forth anew, the plants bursting into flower and fruit, the wilderness into wild splendour and the herding flocks pregnant with offspring. The "Canticles" sits paradoxically in the Old Testament, being transparently a celebration of the hieros gamos of the Summer King "Salmaah, the Kenite Dionysus, making love to his twin", the Flower Queen, "the May bride of Shulem" (Graves 1948 261, 332). Although it is attributed to Solomon, its date is much more recent, (circa 200 BC).

It reverberates with the sexual erotica of the goddess of the enclosed garden:

"A garden concealed is my beloved" ... "Let my beloved come into his garden and eat its pleasant fruits" ... "Open to me my sister, my love... for my head is filled with dew".

However it's rationale for inclusion in the Bible comes from its being a metaphor for Keneseth Yisra'el, the "Community of Israel," as bride of God, a continuing Jewish theme, while yet uniquely celebrating sexual fertility. In the same manner Jesus became Bridegroom of the Church on the marriage bed of the Cross (Klagsbrun and Podwal). Robert Graves (1948 261) notes the same theme: "The Canticles, though apparently no more than a collection of village love-songs, were officially interpreted by the Pharisee sages of Jesus's day as the mystical essence of King Solomon's wisdom, and as referring to the love of Jehovah for Israel; which is why in the Anglican Bible they are interpreted as 'Christ's love for his Church'.

Villa Noailles, Grasse. Potter (1998)
"Secret Gardens"



The Song of Songs as Eden and gender relationships restored

Carol Meyers in "Discovering Eve" highlights the deep way in which the Song of Songs is the healing of the Fall from Eden. Her examination of the word desire underscores the way in which the desire of the Song of Songs is the requital of the cursed desire of Edens 'original sin': "The strong and earthy meaning of the word *tesuqa*, translated as 'desire' is clear. The noun is found in only two other places in the Hebrew Bible [Eve's desire and Cain's]. ... The Song of Songs, where the reciprocal nature of human love is the keynote... has the woman telling of the man's 'desire' for her. The ultimate consequence of the love attraction is sexual activity. What is fascinating about this

love song is that intervening between the expression of the man's yearning and the statement that the woman will give him her love is a depiction of what the couple will do together in the interim (i.e., between the declaration and its sexual fulfillment). The mutual attraction of the couple is not simply a sexual meeting, because their physical union apparently follows a day's work. The man and woman rise early, first to make their way through fields, vineyards, and orchards, and then to make love.... The idyllic world of Canticles (Song of Songs) recaptures the nonarduous labor of Eden. It also indicates the same interrelationship of sexuality and productivity that Genesis 3:16 emphasizes. Only the Song of Songs returns us to Eden, where the pleasure of sexuality stands out apart from the tribulations of its procreative aspect, and where the tending of a beautiful and productive garden does not entail great effort and anguish. Despite the broader aspects of "desire" in Song of Songs, one might be tempted to assign an exclusively sexual meaning to this word. Indeed, at least one scholar would translate it "desire for intercourse." Yet... 'Desire' is an emotional and/or physical attraction that transcends thought and rationality. Consequently, it is an entirely suitable designation for the sexual nature of the mutual attraction of a female and a male. The strength of the woman's feelings for her mate is thus indicated in this line of Genesis 3:16 by "desire," which includes but is broader than sexual attraction alone."

Although the Canticles ring with the sensual joy and longing of the sacred marriage and abounds like no other tract of writing before or since with the sheer abundance of fertility of garden, wilderness and flock alike, the undercurrents of human sacrifice are never far away. Although, as in the joyful courtship of Inanna, we delight in the abundant fertility - "Thy teeth are as a flock of sheep which go up from the washing, whereof every one beareth twins and there is not one barren one among them," we also find "As a lilly among thorns, so is my love among the daughters. As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. "The thorns of male sacrifice thus remain lurking among the sisters, for whom the red lilly is also a symbol of sacrificial blood, and the beloved is none other than the dying vegetation God Tammuz - Adonis or Lord: "The 'lilies' are the red anemones - the wind flower - that sprang up from the drops of blood that fell from Adonis's side when the wild boar killed him (Graves 1948 261), sprinkled with nectar by the mourning goddess. The name anemone appears to be derived from Naaman - darling, an epithet of Adonis (Frazer v4/1 226).



Adonis' is anemone is in rich full flow.
Aphrodite's damask is lightly tinged with her foot pricks (Hay and Synge).
Anemone parvonia "blood lilly" of Adonis and the *Damask Rose* of Aphrodite

The rose also received its present hue from this fatal event, for as Aphrodite ran barefoot through the woods to the aid of her lover, the thorns of the white rose-briers, the damask rose, tore her delicate skin and the flowers were henceforth tinged with red (Henderson 119).

The apple is the Sidonian (i.e. Cretan) apple, or quince, sacred to Aphrodite the Love-goddess, and first cultivated in Europe by the Cretans. The true apple was not known in Palestine in Biblical times and it is only recently that varieties have been introduced there that yield marketable fruit” (Graves 1948 261).

Canticle of Canticles

*Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine.
Because of the savour of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth,
therefore do the virgins love thee.*

*Draw me, we will run after thee: The king hath brought me to his chambers:
we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine:
the upright love thee.*

*I am black but comely O ye daughters of Jerusalem,
as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon.*



Sabean Votive Offerings with a black Shulamite (Doe)

*Look not upon me because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me:
my mother's children were angry with me; they made me keeper of the vineyards;
but my own vineyard I have not kept.*

*Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth where thou feedest
where thy makest thy flock to rest at noon:*

*for why should I be one that turnest aside by the flocks of your companions?
If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock,
and feed thy kids beside the shepherds tents.*

I have compared thee, O my love to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots.

Thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels, thy neck with chains of gold.

While the king sitteth at his table, my spikenard sent forth the smell thereof.

A bundle of myrrh is my well-beloved unto me; he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts.

My beloved is to me as a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of En-gedi.

Behold thou art fair my love; behold thou art fair; thou hast dove's eyes.

Behold thou art fair my beloved, yea pleasant: also our bed is green.

The beams of our houses are cedar, and our rafters of fir.

I am the rose of Sharon, and the lilly of the valleys.

As a lilly among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.

As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons.

I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.

He brought me to his banqueting house and his banner over me was love.

*Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples; for I am sick of love.
His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me.
I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field,
that ye stir not up, nor awake my love till he please.*

The voice of my beloved!

*behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills
My beloved is like a roe or a young hart: behold he standeth behind our wall,
he looketh forth at the windows, shewing himself forth through the lattice.*

My beloved spake and said to me, Rise up my fair one, and come away.

For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone;

*The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing of birds is come
and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.*

*The fig tree putteth forth her green figs,
and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell,
arise my love, my fair one and come away.*

*O my dove that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs,
let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice;*

for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.

By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him but I found him not.

I will rise now and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways

I will seek him whom my soul loveth: I sought him but I found him not.

*The watchmen that go about the city found me:
to whom I said, Saw ye whom my soul loveth?*

*It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth:
I held him, and I would not let him go until I had brought him to my mother's house
and into the chamber of her that conceived me.*

Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke...

King Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon.

*He made the pillars thereof of silver and the bottom thereof of gold
the covering of it of purple,*

the midst thereof being paved with love for the daughters of Jerusalem.

*Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the crown
wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals,
and in the day of the gladness of his heart.*



. Jewish bride from Sheba (Yemen) in traditional costume (Uris)

*Come with me from Lebanon,
my spouse, with me from Lebanon:
look from the top of Amana,
from the top of Shenir and Hermon,
from the lion's dens,*

from the mountains of the leopards.

*Thou hast ravished my heart,
my sister, my spouse*

*thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine
eyes, with the chain of thy neck.*

How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse!

*how much better is thy love than wine!
and the smell of thine ointments
than all the spices!*

*Thy lips, O my spouse drop as the honey-
comb: honey and milk are under thy tongue
and the smell of thy garments
is like the smell of Lebanon.*

*A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse;
a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.*

*Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates,
with pleasant fruits;*

*camphire, spikenard, and saffron;
calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of
frankincense; myrrh and aloes,*

*with all the chief spices:
A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon.*



Iford manor, Wiltshire (Potter)

*Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden,
that the spices thereof may flow out.*

Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.

I have come into my garden, my sister, my spouse: I have gathered my myrrh and my spice;

*I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk:
eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.*

*I sleep but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh,
saying open to me my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled:*

for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.

I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?

My beloved put his hand in the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him.

*I rose up to open to my beloved and my hands dropped with myrrh,
and my fingers with sweet-smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock.*

I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself and was gone:

my soul failed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not find him;

I called him, but he gave me no answer

*The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me and they wounded me;
the keepers of the walls took away my veil from me.*

This prophesies the wounding of the feminine throughout history (p 777).

I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that ye tell him, that I am sick of love.

What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women?

what is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us?

My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand.

His head is as the most fine gold, hislocks are bushy and black as a raven.

His eyes are as the eyes of doves...

His mouth is most sweet yea he is altogether lovely.

This is my beloved, this is my friend, O ye daughters of Jerusalem.

Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women?

whither is thy beloved turned aside? that we may seek him with thee.

My beloved is gone down to his garden, to the beds of spices,

to feed in the gardens and to gather lilies.

*I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine: he feedeth among the lilies.
Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem,
terrible as an army with banners.*

*Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me:
thy hair is a flock of goats that appear from Gilead.*

*Thy teeth are as a flock of sheep which go up from the washing,
whereof every one beareth twins
and there is not one barren one among them.*

*As a piece of pomegranate are thy temples within thy locks.
There are three score queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number.*

*My dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother,
she is the choice one of her that bear her. The daughters saw her and blessed her;
yea the queens and the concubines and they praised her.*

*Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun,
and terrible as an army with banners?*

*I went down into the garden of nuts to see the fruits of the valley,
and to see whether the vine flourished, and the pomegranates budded...*

*Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon thee.
What will ye see in the Shulamite? As it were the company of two armies...*

*I said, I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof;
now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine, and the smell of thy nose like apples.
And the roof of thy mouth, like the best wine for my beloved, that goeth down sweetly
causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak.*

I am my beloved's and his desire is towards me.

*Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine flourish,
whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth:
there I will give thee my loves.*

*The mandrakes give a smell, and at our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits,
new and old, which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved.*

*Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?
I raised thee up under the apple tree: there thy mother brought thee forth:
she that brought thee forth that bare thee.*

*Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm:
for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave:
the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame.*

*Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it:
if a man would give all the substance of his house for love,
it would be utterly contemned.*

*We have a little sister and she hath no breasts:
what shall we do for our sister on the day when she shall be spoken for?*

*If she be a wall, we will build upon her a palace of silver:
and if she be a door, we will enclose her with boards of cedar.*

I am a wall and my breasts like towers: then was I in his eyes as one which found favour.

*Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon; he let out the vineyard to the keepers;
every one of the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand pieces of silver.*

*My vineyard, which is mine is before me: thou O Solomon must have a thousand
and those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred.*

*Thou that dwellest in the gardens,
the companions harken to my voice: cause me to hear it.*

*Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like a roe,
or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices.*

The Song of Songs as a Mandala of Love

Pondering the way the words of the Song of Songs have held so powerfully true in our tangled dilemmas of love and life I suddenly wondered ... "who wrote the song of songs", from the love strong as death to the "passion fierce as Sheol" and the utterly flowing tenderness of feminine sexual arousal echoing through the verses?

The book is also called the Song of Solomon because the first verse appends the words li-shlomo to the phrase "song of songs." Depending on one's interpretation, li-shlomo can either be "by Solomon", or "for Solomon." Was the author then a

woman, or a man? Was it written by one person or many? At one time, or over many episodes? How come such a nakedly lubricious sexual piece made it into the Jewish and hence the Christian bible and whence did it come anyway ... if not from the alleged hand of Solomon?

The answer to how it gained entry to the Bible is itself intriguing. At the 90 A.D. Council of Jamnia. Jewish Rabbis from across the spectrum of Judaism assembled in order to close in Jewish Canon. The Palestinian rabbinical school of Shammai stood in the fore of the opposition for canonization of Song of Songs. They argued that nothing could be considered scripture that was being employed in lewd, bar-room songs. Notably, like Esther it does not mention god explicitly. Fortunately the cause of Song of Songs was championed by the less stringent Babylonian rabbinical school of Hillel. Akiba said: "The entire universe is not as worthy as the day on which the Song of Songs was given to Israel, for all the Writings are holy, but the Song of Songs are the Holy of Hollies." Lead by the defense of Rabbi Aqiba, the Hillel school succeeded in maintaining the canonicity of Song of Songs. The inclusion of the Song of Songs within the canon is at some level an affirmation of the essential created goodness of sex, as if the Rabbis appreciated the goodness of human love, and realized the importance of canonically affirming it.

Hillel was a very enlightened benefactor of Yeshua's teachings. Hillel said "Do not do unto others what you would not have them do unto you" a more protective inverse of Yeshua's assertive "Do unto others what you would have them do to you". Akiba is also famous for anointing the Jewish Zealot Bar Cochbah as mashiach shortly afterwards, for which his detractors said "grass will grow out of your jaw" because it led to the final destruction and diaspora of the Jewish nation by the Romans.

Now coming back to the Song of Songs, we find, despite their attribution to Solomon, they are redacted much more recently perhaps around 400-300 BC. The presence of Aramaic, Persian, and Greek words in the text means that the work antedates the sixth century B.C. All internal evidence considered, the best dating available places the compilation of Song of Songs between 400 and 300 B.C.

Many writers attribute the Song to being simply a collection of pastoral love poems which have been drawn together over many years into a larger piece. The variety of explanations of the Song's allegorical or ritual meaning shed a fascinating light on its long and tortuous history.

Midrash, Targum, and Medieval Jewish commentators state that the intended message of Song of Songs is an allegory of God and Israel. The succession of events flows from the Sinai Covenant through subsequent events. Later, the early church fathers adapted this view to Christianity by changing the role to the love of Christ for the Church. This allegorical view is parried by the natural perspective, given its direct sexual overtones that the song is simply a song of heady infatuation or at best a series of insights in the nature of love as a spiritual teaching.

But there are references in the Song which point to much earlier times and to the lost traditions of Northern Israel. The naming of the city of Tirzah in 6:4 is evidence that compilation must have occurred sometime before 876 B.C. This is because Tirzah, compared to Jerusalem in the verse, ceased to be the capital of Israel in 876 B.C. when Omri moved the Northern capital to Samaria. This could place some of its early compilations back to the time of Solomon.

Running through the Song are a series of motifs shared by rituals and customs of Palestinian and Syrian wedding ceremonies. Parallels with Syrian wedding songs written in Arabic have been noted for centuries. Other authorities have suggested they may be related to ancient Mesopotamian and Canaanite ceremonies uniting divinities in marriage. This would place the development of the Song of Songs as something preceding Israelite religion and stemming from the most ancient sacred marriage celebrations throughout pastoral Mesopotamia, from Inanna and Dumuzi and Tammuz and Ishtar, continuing all the way to rural Israel-Palestine in Yeshua's time.

In addition, the Song presents a dramatic cycle either involving the romance of two lovers or an eternal triangle composed of Solomon, a rustic maiden and the maiden's shepherd lover. This brings us back full circle to the celebration of the sacred reunion as a dramatic rite of renewal in world fertility, uniting in turn with the marriage traditions to generate a primordial wisdom literature expounding the mysteries of sexual love in reunion, with all the spice and coals, apples and thorns of love, fertility and tragedy woven in - a teaching of the cumulated poetry of sexual fertility manifest in all the cultures from Jericho and Sumeria, through Israel, echoed again in the medieval arts of courtly love. The Queen of southern Saba, who is also the bride of the scented garden, is notably a black but comely Shulamite, thus personifying the black madonna, Kali.

The Song of Songs has thus become the consummate cultural evolutionary mosaic of the hieros gamos or sacred marriage, weaving into its themes, from a succession of cultures, not only the joys of love; but sacrificial motifs - the love who had withdrawn himself and was gone, the rose among the thorns, the smiting and wounding of the bride; and all the dimensions of sexual love's paradox, from the select one and only love undefiled amid the many wives and concubines, to the male competition for the female hinted at in the king and shepherd lover - "Is the male lover the same as the king, with king just being love language, or is the king in competition with a rustic lover?" In its dramatic movement, the unmistakable message of the book is the complexity and power of human love.

Perhaps this begins to give some explanation why the Song of Songs has no parallel for sheer fertility in the midst of the sap and dew of erotic consummation and for the deep lessons it provides of the paradoxical dilemmas of love and the source love provides for cosmic awakening in perpetual fertility.

In celebrating the sacred marriage, we become direct inheritors of all the paradoxes these lines contain. This is why we face the dilemmas we do. It is part of the mystery into which we enter as a key.

Nikaulis and Solomon: A Cultural Hieros Gamos

The mythical and possibly historical pilgrimage of the Queen of Sheba, Nikaulis to Josephus, Bilqis to Muhammad (*pilgesh* - concubine Heb.) and Makeda in Ethiopia to King Solomon celebrates a rare union of the genders, each in their true power, a cultural hieros gamos between a great Goddess Queen and a great King of the Father God, each of whom is master and mistress of their own domains and destinies, and never a mere consort of the other. They celebrate the confluence of their lives as two independent figures in history each on their own journey.

The Golden Legend - The Meeting
(Lavin)

Solomon is renowned for the splendour of his reign, his wisdom, the power of the magic of the Key of Solomon, and his appreciation for and understanding of nature. "And Solomon's wisdom excelled all the wisdom of all the children of the east country and all the children of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men... And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hysop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things and fishes. And there came all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all the kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom". His palace in the cedars was twice the size of that in the capital.

Solomon's beautiful black bride the Shulamite, reflects the Goddess of darkness *Zulumat*, the fertile garden-paradise of the Oriental kings. The queens of Sheba of had a capital *Mariaba* with king consorts forbidden to leave the temple on pain of stoning (Walker 946). It is also related that Solomon feared she had animal feet like *Lilith* and arranged to view her feet reflected from beneath her long skirt in a still pool of water, finding to his relief, that she was fully human, if a little hairy. The term *Shayba* 'old woman' is an epithet of the Great Goddess, still extant in the *Bene shaybah* guardians of the *Ka'aba*.

"Now when the Queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord, she came to test him with hard questions. She came to Jerusalem with a very great retinue, with camels bearing spices, and very much gold, and precious stones; and when she came in to Solomon, she told him all that was on her mind. And Solomon answered all her questions; there was nothing hidden from the king which he did not explain to her. And when the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built, the food of his table, the seating of his officials, and the attendance of his servants, their clothing, his cupbearers, and his burnt offerings which he offered at the house of the Lord, there was no more spirit in her. And she said to the king, 'The report was true which I heard in my own land of your affairs and of your wisdom, but I did not believe the reports until I came and my own eyes had seen it; and, behold, the half was not told me; your wisdom and prosperity surpass the report which I heard.'"

"Happy are your men! Happy are these your servants, who continually stand before you and hear your wisdom! Blessed be the Lord your God, who has delighted in you and set you on the throne of Israel! Because the Lord loved Israel



for ever, he has made you king, that you may execute justice and righteousness. Then she gave the king a hundred and twenty talents of gold, and a very great quantity of spices, and precious stones; never again came such an abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon.... Moreover the fleet of Hiram, which brought gold from Ophir, brought from Ophir a very great amount of almug wood and precious stones. And the king made of the almug wood supports for the house of the Lord, and for the kings house, lyres also and harps for the singers; no such almug wood has come or been seen, to this day” (1 Kings 10:8)



Solomon seizes Makeda:
An Abyssinian (p 209)
illustration (Pritchard
1974).

“And King Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba all that she desired, whatever she asked besides what was given her by the bounty of King Solomon. So she turned and went back to her own land,

with her servant. Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred threescore and six talents of gold” (1 Kings 10:13).

The terms come in and all that she desired are taken to mean that Solomon and Nikaulis were lovers and that she sought a child by the king. It is said that their meeting took place in terms of an ancient prophecy of the messiah king, and that Bilquis was coming as a queen of the ancient race to see if this was really the case. A passage in the Midrash ha-Gadol begins by referring to Genesis 25:6: 'But to Abraham's sons by concubines Abraham gave gifts while he was still living, and he sent them away...' Among those thus sent away was Jokshan, father of Sheba (Genesis 25:3). They were, the story continues, to remain apart from Isaac and his descendants until the messiah had come. Now in the days of Solomon, the situation was so favourable, as 1 Kings 4:25 reports, that it seemed as though the Messiah had come (Pritchard 68).... However, when it was recognized that Solomon was not the messiah, the concubines' descendants returned home to await his coming. The passage concludes: “And they are destined to return in the days of the Messiah, may it come quickly and in our days, for it is said in scripture,” (Isaiah 60:6) “the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee ... all they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense.”

The idea that Solomon was the messiah was justified, for his reign was one of both splendour and peace: 1 Kings 4:21 "And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life. ... For he had dominion over all ... the kings on this side the river: and he had peace on all sides round about him.... And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan even to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon.”

Jesus stands on the tradition of this myth when in Matthew 12:38 he claims to be

messiah, by prophesying the arrival of Nikaulis, at the same time as refusing to confirm his miraculous nature, offering only the ritual of the descent of the three days of darkness: "Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, 'Master, we would see a sign from the'. But he answered and said unto them, 'An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. ... The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here'."

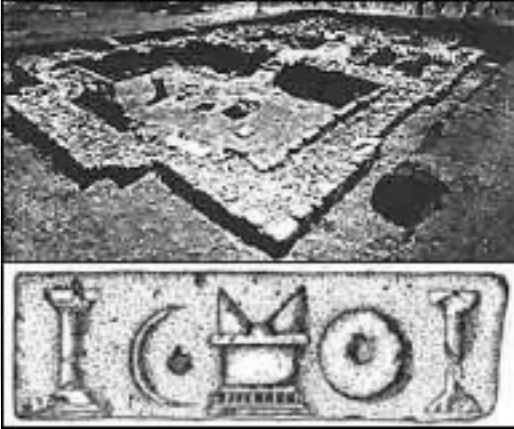


The Judgement of Solomon (Uffizi).
The swordsman is about to divide the contested child.

Solomon's accession to the throne has all the hallmarks of a traditional sacred king. He is appointed through the wiles and power of his mother, with the more than coincidental name Bath-Sheba, after his half-brother Absalom is hung in a tree after challenging David by going to his concubines in the sight of all Israel and his brother Adonijah makes a similar display of assuming power over Solomon after the failure of the old and feeble King David to perform the sacred act with the comely Shunnamite Abishag. Adonijah is temporarily forgiven when he holds on to the horns of the altar. However when he then makes a play for Abishag's hand, thus attempting to assert virility rites over the young regent, Solomon has him killed. Solomon then receives his wisdom from God in a dream at Gibeon and demonstrates it to the two women fighting over an offspring, by threatening to divide the child in two.

His temple is notable for its male and female symbolism. 1 Kings 7:15 "For he cast two pillars of brass,... And he made the pillars, and two rows round about upon the one network,... And the chapters that were upon the top of the pillars were of lily work... And the chapters upon the two pillars had pomegranates... two hundred in

rows round about... and he set up the right pillar, and called the name thereof Jachin: and he set up the left pillar, and called the name thereof Boaz.” The two pillars, Jachin and Boaz were “he shall establish” (the sun) and “in its strength” (the moon), consistent with worship of the heavenly host. The pomegranate, rimmon, was a symbol of both the womb and fertility of the seed (Walker 805).



A temple from Hazor on the same plan as Solomon's temple of the 10th century (Pritchard 1974). Hazor is named after Hathor. A horned altar with crescent moon and (lunar) disc and twin pillars - Jordan (Zehren)

Solomon's diverse Religious Exploits

Solomon is also renowned for his love of his diverse wives' deities. “And Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter, and brought her unto the city of David”. He built a temple to Yahweh to replace the tabernacle tent, and the

many sanctuaries in the high places. “And the Lord said if thou wilt walk before me as David... then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel forever”. “But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of the Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians and Hittites” let alone the Shulamite Queen of Sheba. “Solomon clave unto these in love” And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines... For it came to pass that when Solomon was old that his wives turned away his heart after other gods... Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites... Chemosh of Moab, Molech of Ammon... and likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burned incense and sacrificed unto their gods.... And the Lord was angry with Solomon”. “I will surely rend the kingdom from thee... but will give one tribe to thy son for David thy father's sake” (1 Kings 11:1) However the fall of Solomon's empire resulted from a previous escape of Hadad the Edomite from his initial patricide and thus predated Solomon's transgressions.

The very large numbers of wives and concubines is consistent with the models of sacred kingship based on spermatogenic fertility, characteristic both of many national leaders, up to the 20th century in the case of Mao Tse Tung.

Although the riches and bounty of Solomon's era as King of Israel is famed in the Bible, the Sabaeans possessed a long-lived culture lasting from 1700 BC to 400 AD, which has left significantly greater evidence of its richness than the kingdom of Solomon, of which there are few archaeological records. While Solomon made good trade in minerals and chariots, Sabeian wealth was based on the spice trade in frankincense and myrrh.

Solomon's Kingdom: The Archaeological Evidence

“Archaeology has been able to recover sizeable portions of three cities of the tenth

century BC, cities prominent enough to have been mentioned in the Bible as cities which Solomon built. Each is extremely modest in extent: Megiddo (after which Armageddon is named) is no larger than 13 acres; Gezer measures approximately 27 acres; and the area of the higher mound at Hazor, half of which was encircled by the tenth-century casemate wall, is only 30 acres. These 'cities'.. even by the ancient Near Eastern standards,... were far from what one might call urban centers; they were more like villages.... Artifacts of bone, stone, clay, an occasional metal tool or weapon., suggest a cultural level which was apparently lacking in both artistic sophistication and wealth. As yet no. evidence has been found for the use of chariotry or for the metal trappings for the harness of horses. As for gold and other precious metals, its occurrence is limited to an occasional earring or other article of personal adornment.... Solomon is mentioned in no Egyptian, or Mesopotamian, or Phoenician document. Only from the Bible do we learn that he lived" (Pritchard 1974 17).

In contrast to the picture of life in the tenth century is that derived from 1 Kings 3-11, a life that might be termed a 'Golden Age'. Mentioned are huge amounts of gold, ivory carvings., bronze in abundance, woods imported from distant lands. Since it was obvious that Palestine was a relatively poor land and gold was not indigenous to the area, the author took pains to identify its source, Ophir, a distant land reached by the navies of Solomon and Hiram. In one verse the figure of 420 talents... is mentioned; in another, it is said that 666 talents - more than 38,000,000 gold dollars flowed into the treasury of Solomon each year (1 Kings 10:14). Yet there is nothing to indicate what was exported in exchange for this gigantic income.

"When we compare this account of his age with that of the Court History of David in II Samuel 9-20 and Chapters 1-2 of 1 Kings, which has been almost universally acclaimed by biblical scholars... for its candid objectivity, here there is but one mention of the precious metal: the crown of Milcom, king of Ammon, conquered by David's forces, contained but one talent of gold (2 Samuel 12:30). In the Court History of the king who conquered the vast kingdom over which his son Solomon ruled this one talent, as far as we are told, constituted David's entire assets of gold" (Pritchard 1974 35).

Archaeology of the Realm of Nikaulis

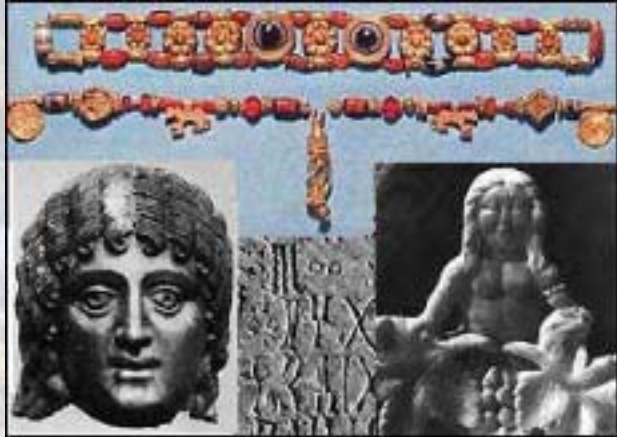
Diodorus Siculus notes: "This tribe [the Sabeans] surpasses not only the neighbouring Arabs but also all other men in wealth and in their several extravagancies besides. For in the exchange and sale of their wares they, of all men who carry on trade for the sake of the silver they receive in exchange, obtain the highest price in return for things of the smallest weight. Consequently, since they have never for ages suffered the ravages of war because of their secluded position, and since an abundance of both gold and silver abounds in the country,... they have embossed goblets of every description, made of silver and gold, couches and tripods with silver feet, and every other furnishing of incredible costliness, and halls encircled by large columns, some of them gilded, and others having silver figures on the capitals. Their ceilings and doors they partitioned by means of panels and coffers made of gold, set with precious stones and placed close together, and have thus made the structure of their houses in every part marvellous for its costliness; for some parts they have constructed of silver and gold, others of ivory and the most showy precious stones or of whatever else men esteem most highly" (Pritchard 1974 44).

Their sculpture and votive offerings were refined.

Strabo noted that the king of Saba who “presides over the court of justice and other things” was not permitted to leave the palace, for if he did “the people would at once stone him, in consequence of a saying of an oracle” (Pritchard 1974 66).

Sabean jewelry in gold carnelian and onyx. Statue, Sabean script, and a decorative panel in marble (Doe).

While her tomb and documents of her time have yet to come to light, and remains of the tenth century BC are still largely unknown to archaeology, the recovery of a small amount of contemporary evidence together with a considerable amount of material from only



three or four centuries later enables us to reconstruct a general outline of the Queen of Sheba's culture with considerable probability. She would have lived surrounded by the accoutrements of an affluent civilization: a thriving trade that brought unparalleled prosperity; an irrigation agriculture that provided ample subsistence; a distinctive architecture in stone that was second only to that of Egypt in the ancient Near East in its execution and variety of ornamentation; a richness in metallurgy and stone carving as well as an abundance of artists and artisans who pursued these vocations; a high degree of literacy among the people, who had a keen appreciation of the importance of a written language and of their beautiful alphabetic script; and an art that is representational in a symbolic archaic manner (Pritchard 40).

Sabean religion was astral with a prominent male moon deity 'Ilumquh. The sun-goddess was the moon's consort; she was perhaps best known in South Arabia as Dhat Hamym, 'she who sends forth strong rays of benevolence'. The Quran described the Queen as a sun worshipper (see The Daughters of Al-Llah).

The Demonization of the Queen: Nikaulis the Judaic Lilith

The Targum Sheni of the early centuries AD describes an allegory of Ahasuerus' banquet, recounted in the Book of Esther. There was a great feast which Solomon gave for 'all the kings of the East and of the West'. Not only were the kings summoned but 'the wild beasts, the birds, the reptiles, the devils, the demons, and the spirits' who danced before him 'to show his greatness'. When the roll was called, all had assembled but the cock-of-the-woods (hoopoe). Solomon was not to be thus insulted and gave the order that the bird be brought before him under threat of death. The hoopoe then in defence, relates the tale of Kitor (Hebrew *ketoret* means smoke of incense) "Now, if it please my lord the king, I shall gird my loins like a mighty man, and shall rise and go to the city of Kitor, in the land of Saba, and shall

bind its king and governor in chains of iron, and shall bring them to my lord the king” (Lassner 64)



The hoopoe visits Nikaulis to entice her to Solomon (Lassner).

“Of course Solomon was delighted with the prospect and dispatched a letter of demand together with an armada of birds so great as to obscure the sun and cause the queen such consternation that she took hold of her clothes and tore them in pieces”....The queen’s counsellors were unimpressed: “We do not know Solomon nor do we esteem his kingdom”. Womanly intuition, however, overbore their advice. She gathered a great fleet, loaded it with ‘presents of pearls and of precious stones’ That the queen was in haste to visit Solomon is evident from her letter of reply: ‘Although the journey from Kitor to the land of Israel is of seven years, yet owing to the question I have to ask thee, I shall come in three’ (Lassner 74)

The Targum Sheni merely reports that the queen thought that Solomon was sitting in the midst of water and so, in approaching him, raised the hem of her garments, and disclosed that her feet were hairy. The king remarks: “Thy beauty is the beauty of women, and thy hair is the hair of men; hair is becoming to men, but to a woman it is a shame” The queen ignores his unseemly remark and turns at once to ‘her hard questions’ (Lassner 75).

The very brief mention of the visit in *Alphabetum Siracidis* reports that the queen was hairy all over and that Solomon, quite intent on possessing her but apparently somewhat finicky, sent her various depilatories that proved effective.’The Tale of the Queen of Sheba’ has a somewhat different focus, for it alone reports that the queen is a ‘demon’ - a matter to which we shall return at length. In ‘The Tale of the Queen of Sheba’ it is part of a plan on Solomon’s part, for he wishes ‘to lie with her’ - he knows, of course, that her husband is dead - but is repelled by her hairiness which was considered a demonic characteristic.

The queen propounds riddles to test Solomon’s wisdom. There are many versions of the riddles. Here is a typical set:

- The Queen: “Seven cease, nine begin. Two offer drink, one drinks.” Solomon: “It is the days of menstruation and the months of pregnancy, the two breasts

and the one child.”

- The Queen: “A woman says: ‘Your father is mine, your grandfather is mine, you are my son and I am your sister’. Solomon: “The daughters of Lot”
- The Queen presents identical looking boys and girls. Solomon gets them to eat nuts and grain and watches their movements.
- The Queen presents circumcised and uncircumcised boys. Solomon opens the Ark and the circumcised bow down.

The Targum to Job calls her Lilith the Queen of Demons, who strangled infants in their cradles (cot death syndrome), could be summoned with magic charms, and as a succubus coupled with men. (Lassner 65)

In the Zohar the Queen asks Solomon the arts of sorcery, in particular the handling of the snakes of the bones of the heathen seer Balaam. It is said that Solomon didn't need to make shoes for her, because she was a demon.

Ben Yosef relates that The mother of the queen was a beautiful djinn who saves the future king from an unsolvable riddle. The gifted daughter then married the king who and reigned in his stead after his death as queen of both the djinn and Sabians (Pritchard 1974 81).

Solomon catches the thirsty Makeda and possesses her (p 203) (Pritchard 1974).

Makeda the Founding Heroine of Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, the tale of Solomon and Sheba is central to the Ethiopian monarchy which traces its line back to Menelick II the son of Solomon and Makeda the Queen, complete with an entry in the constitution concerning the ‘oil of kingship’ - the messianic anointing oil.



The Kebra Nagast a medieval romance. Relays the meeting as a consequence of trading relations. Solomon is very overwhelmed by Makeda and becomes determined to take her. She poses a question “What in the world is most valuable?” He offers a great banquet with highly seasoned food and at the end of the evening ask her to stay in his tent. She accepts provided he doesn't take her by force. He accepts on condition she takes nothing. During the night she is thirsty and takes a drink. He stays her hand. She learns that water is the most precious thing. From the lesson of the water Makeda returns to Saba to build the Marib dam and irrigate.

Solomon takes her by force under the pretext of the broken promise. He then has a dream that the sun will depart from Israel and stand forever over Ethiopia. Makeda returns to the Land of Saba bearing his infant son. Menelick later journeys to Solomon and returns with the Ark (the Shekina). In the illustrations, the Queen is pictured full-face (good) while Solomon is profile (evil). Like the Qur'an and probably derived from it, she thus abandons Sun worship for the god of Israel.

The Wisdom, Hochmah or Sophia of Solomon

“The proverbs (1:1) of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel” are “To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity; To give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion”. Wisdom, or Sophia is imbued with the feminine gender, which is in other places recognized as a cryptic name for the goddess and her wiles. She is also portrayed as a pragmatic worldly figure rather than the transcendent godhead. See also (p 491) and (p 555).

Proverbs 9

*Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars...
she hath sent forth her maidens: she crieth on the high places of the city” ...
and as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him,
‘Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant. ...
But he knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell’.*

Although some people try to claim Wisdom is but the first creation of God, she claims to be coprimal with God “from everlasting” and God’s consort:

Proverbs 8

*Doth not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice?
She standeth in the top of high places, by the way in the places of the paths.
She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors.
Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man.
For my mouth shall speak truth; and wickedness is an abomination to my lips....
Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength.
By me kings reign,... and nobles, even all the judges of the earth....
I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.
Riches and honour are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness.
My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold; and my revenue than choice silver....
The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old.
I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was....
When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face...
When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment:
Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men...
Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways...
For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the LORD.*



Solomon's Pool (Uris)

Like the Song of Songs, The Wisdom of Solomon dates long after Solomon, first century BC.

From The Wisdom of Solomon

*I myself also am a mortal man, like to all,
and the offspring of him that was first made of the earth.
And in my mother's womb was fashioned to be flesh in the time of ten months,
being compacted in blood, of the seed of man, and the pleasure that came with sleep.
And when I was born, I drew in common air, and fell upon the earth, which is of like nature
and the first voice I uttered was crying which all others do...
For all men have one entrance to life and the like going out...
Wherefore I prayed, and understanding was given me:
I called upon God and the spirit of wisdom came to me.
I preferred her to sceptres and thrones...
Neither I compared her to any precious stone,
because all gold in respect of her is as little sand,
and silver shall be counted as clay before her.
I loved her more above health and beauty, and chose to have her instead of light:
for the light that cometh from her never goeth out.
All good things came to me with her and innumerable riches in her hands.
And I rejoiced in them all, because wisdom goeth before them:
and I knew not that she was the mother of them...
For she is a treasure unto men that never faileth:
which they that use become the friends of God,
being commended for the gifts that come from learning.
God hath granted me to speak as I would,
and to conceive as is meet for the things that are given me:
because it is he that leadeth unto wisdom and directeth the wise...
For he hath given me certain knowledge of the things that are, namely,
to know how the world was made, and the operation of the elements:
the beginning, ending and the midst of times:
the alternations of the turning of the sun and the changes of the seasons...
The natures of the living creatures, and the furies of wild beasts:
the violence of winds and the reasonings of men:
the diversities of plants and the virtues of roots.
And all such things as are either secret or manifest, them I know.
For wisdom, which is the worker of all things taught me:
for in her is an understanding spirit, holy, one only, manifold, subtil, clear...
not subject to hurt, loving the thing that is good... ready to do good.
Kind to man, steadfast, sure, free from care, having all power..
For she is the breath and power of God...
For she is the brightness of the everlasting light,
the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and the image of his goodness
and being but one, she can do all things
and remaining in herself she reneweth all things
and passing into holy souls from age to age
she maketh friends of God and the prophets.
For she is more beautiful than the sun, and above the order of the stars
being compared with the light, she is found before it
for after this cometh night, but no evil can overcome Wisdom.
I loved her and sought her out from my youth,
I desired to make her my spouse and I was a lover of her beauty...
If a man desire much experience, she knoweth things of old,
and conjectureth aright what is to come:...
she forseeth signs and wonders, and the events of seasons and times.
Therefore I purposed to take her to live with me,
knowing she would be a counsellor of good things and a comfort in cares and grief...
Moreover by means of her I shall obtain immortality,
and leave behind me an everlasting memorial to those that come after me...*

Praise of Wisdom

Now I like a rivulet from her stream, channeling the waters into a garden, said to myself,

*'I will water my plants, my flower bed I will drench';
and suddenly this rivulet of mine became a river, then this stream of mine, a sea.
Thus do I send my teachings forth shining like the dawn, to become known afar off.
Thus do I pour out instruction like prophecy and bestow on generations to come.
Ecclesiasticus Yeshua ben Sirach 24*

The Gnosis of Sophia

Sophia (Sapientia) continues to have a pivotal presence in later gnostic writings, where she plays both the role of the divine feminine principle of wisdom unfolding true understanding where the jealous male God has withheld it, and as wisdom which has attempted to preempt the creative Logos of the paternal deity, as illustrated in the passages below from Elaine Pagels (Gnostic Gospels 75-78).

“In addition to the eternal, mystical Silence and the Holy Spirit, certain gnostics suggest a third characterization of the divine Mother: as Wisdom. Here the Greek feminine term for ‘wisdom’, sophia, translates a Hebrew feminine term, *hokhmah*. Early interpreters had pondered the meaning of certain Biblical passages - for example, the saying in Proverbs that ‘God made the world in Wisdom’. Could Wisdom be the feminine power in which God’s creation was ‘conceived’? According to one teacher, the double meaning of the term conception - physical and intellectual - suggests this possibility: ‘The image of thought [ennoia] is feminine, since ... [it] is a power of conception.’

“The Apocalypse of Adam, discovered at Nag Hammadi, tells of a feminine power who wanted to conceive by herself: ‘... from the nine Muses, one separated away. She came to a high mountain and spent time seated there, so that she desired herself alone in order to become androgynous. She fulfilled her desire, and became pregnant from her desire...’

“The poet Valentinus uses this theme to tell a famous myth about Wisdom: Desiring to conceive by herself, apart from her masculine counterpart, she succeeded, and became the ‘great creative power from whom all things originate’, often called Eve, ‘Mother of all living’. But since her desire violated the harmonious union of opposites intrinsic in the nature of created being, what she produced was aborted and defective; from this, says Valentinus, originated the terror and grief that mar human existence. ‘To shape and manage her creation, Wisdom brought forth the demiurge, the creator-God of Israel, as her agent.’” (Pagels 1979)

“Wisdom, then, bears several connotations in gnostic sources. Besides being the ‘first universal creator’, ‘who brings forth all creatures’, she also enlightens human beings and makes them wise. Followers of Valentinus and Marcus therefore prayed to the Mother as the ‘mystical, eternal Silence’ and to ‘Grace, She who is before all things’, and as ‘incorruptible Wisdom’ for insight (gnosis)”.

Some gnostics taught that genesis narrates an androgynous creation. Others attributed to Sophia the benefits that Adam and Eve received in Paradise.... When the creator became angry with the human race because they did not worship or honor him as Father and God, he sent forth a flood upon them, that he might destroy them. But Wisdom opposed him... and Noah and his family were saved in the ark by means of the sprinkling of the light that proceeded from her.e.