



Embracing the Divine Feminine: Finding God through God the Ecstasy of Physical Love? The Song of Songs Annotated & Explained (SkyLight Illuminations)

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More than ancient erotic love poetry, this celebration of the human relationship with Wisdom can be a companion for your own spiritual journey.

The Song of Songs is the Hebrew Bible's deeply erotic poem of love, sexual yearning and consummation. Holding it sacred yet troubled by its thinly veiled eroticism, Jews and Christians for millennia have read the Song of Songs as an allegory of God's love for Israel?the classic Jewish understanding?or Jesus's love for his Church?the classic Christian understanding. This fresh translation restores the Song's eroticism and interprets it as a celebration of the love between the Divine Feminine and the contemporary spiritual seeker.

Scholar and award-winning teacher Rami Shapiro renders this ancient love song as Lady Wisdom offering seekers physical and spiritual intimacy with her so that they might awaken to and participate wisely in the unity of God, woman, man and nature. His intriguing facing-page commentary provides historical, religious and spiritual insights from Christian and Jewish wisdom traditions as well as clear comparisons to other translations.

Now you can understand the poetry, beauty, genius and mystery of the Song of Songs with no previous knowledge of the Hebrew Bible or wisdom literature. Compelling in its novelty and accessible in its presentation, this version of the Song of Songs will beckon you more deeply into Jewish-Christian sacred texts while offering you wisdom teachings and practices rooted in but not limited to religion.

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Editorial Review

Review

Shir HaShirim, the Song of Songs by King Solomon, has been interpreted as an allegory of God's love for the Jewish people (and Jesus' love for the church). Rabbi Shapiro asserts that "the Song of Songs is about the realization of Wisdom through the unification of the spiritual (feminine) and the physical (masculine). The woman in the Song isn't Israel or the church but Lady Wisdom, and the man in the Song isn't God but you, the seeker of Wisdom." After several introductory chapters that discuss the origins of the text (which may have been authored by someone who ascribed the Song to King Solomon), the feminine in Biblical texts, and love poems from ancient India, Shapiro provides his translation lined up next to his interpretation of the text. For example, although the Hebrew word *tapuach* translates to "apple," Shapiro deems "apricot" a better fit for fruit native to Israel and representative of the poet's intent. In a chapter after the text, "The Path of Ecstasy: How to Use the Song of Songs," the author outlines ways to unify the spiritual and the physical. Notes and a bibliography are included in the back matter.

A prolific author, Rabbi Shapiro received ordination from Hebrew Union College and is also initiated into the Ramakrishna Order of Vedanta Hinduism. With a Foreword by Rev. Cynthia Bourgeault, an Episcopal Priest, numerous references to the Divine Feminine in Eastern practices, and comparisons to Christian ideas with quotes from the New Testament, the author embraces the publisher's motto of "Walking Together, Finding the Way" and "For People of All Faiths, All Backgrounds." With Rabbi Shapiro's bold disagreement with Rashi's allegorical interpretation and suggestions for "a fuller ecstasy" practice with a partner, this book is not for traditional Jews. It will have a place in libraries that collect feminist-oriented literature and novel interpretations of Judaic texts, and whose patrons are interested in comparative religion and creating their own rituals.

(Chava Pinchuck Association of Jewish Libraries)

About the Author

Rami Shapiro, a renowned teacher of spirituality across faith traditions, is an award-winning storyteller, poet and essayist. He is author of *The Sacred Art of Lovingkindness: Preparing to Practice, Recovery? The Sacred Art: The Twelve Steps as Spiritual Practice* and *The Divine Feminine in Biblical Wisdom Literature: Selections Annotated & Explained* (all SkyLight Paths), among other books.

Rami Shapiro is available to speak on the following topics:

- Writing?The Sacred Art: Beyond the Page to Spiritual Practice
- Stop Playing God: 12 Steps as Spiritual Practice
- Biblical Wisdom for Post-biblical Times: An Exploration of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Job
- The Sacred Art of Lovingkindness: Cultivating Compassion in Daily Life
- Hasidic Wisdom: An Exploration of Hasidic Storytelling, Theology and Contemplative Practice
- Saints and Sages: Biblical Prophets, Ancient Rabbis and the Building of a Just World

Rev. Cynthia Bourgeault, PhD, is an Episcopal priest and retreat leader focusing in Christian Spirituality. She is principal teacher for the Contemplative Society in Victoria, British Columbia, and founding director of the Aspen Wisdom School in Aspen, Colorado. Her books include *Centering Prayer and Inner Awakening*, *The Wisdom Way of Knowing*, *Encountering the Wisdom Jesus*, *Mystical Hope and Love Is Stronger than Death*. She serves on the core faculty for the Spiritual Paths Foundation whose mission is to promote curiosity, respect and acceptance between people of diverse spiritual traditions.

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