

# Song of Solomon 2:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether.

## Analysis

**Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether.** The bride appeals for her beloved's presence until morning comes. The Hebrew ad sheyafuach hayom venasu hatselalimsov demeh-lekha dodi litsebi o le-ofer ha-ayalim al-harei bater (עד שפומ פיום ונסו האללים סב דמה-לב דודי לאבי או לעופר האלים על-) blends longing, urgency, and sensual imagery.

"Until the day break" (ad sheyafuach hayom) literally means "until the day breathes" or "blows"—the morning breeze that dispels night. "The shadows flee away" (venasu hatselalim) describes darkness retreating before dawn. Night represents separation, shadows symbolize obstacles. The bride desires her beloved's presence throughout the night until dawn reunites them fully. This temporal imagery gains eschatological significance: believers await Christ's return when "the shadows flee away" and we see "face to face" (1 Corinthians 13:12).

"Turn, my beloved" (sov dodi) invites responsive movement—come to me, turn toward me. The comparison to "roe or young hart" (litsebi o le-ofer ha-ayalim) emphasizes grace, strength, swiftness, and vigor. The gazelle (tsebi) and young stag (of er ayalim) were proverbially swift and sure-footed on mountains (2 Samuel 2:18, Proverbs 6:5). "Mountains of Bether" (harei bater) likely means "mountains of separation" or "rugged mountains"—geography emphasizing distance overcome

by love. Christ leaps over every barrier (2:8) to reach His beloved, demonstrating His pursuing grace (Luke 19:10).

## Historical Context

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This verse concludes a section where the bride searches for her beloved (2:8-17). Ancient Near Eastern love poetry commonly employed night/day, darkness/light symbolism to represent separation/union. The gazelle and deer were native to ancient Israel's hill country, familiar sights conveying beauty and agility. Mountains represented both obstacle and opportunity—barriers requiring effort but offering vantage points. The bride's appeal reflects cultural norms where women's mobility was restricted, especially at night, so she invites her beloved to come to her. This section anticipates themes developed in chapter 3 where she actively searches the city for him.

## Related Passages

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**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

## Study Questions

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1. How does "until the day break and the shadows flee away" point toward Christ's return when all separation and darkness end?
2. What spiritual barriers or "mountains of separation" does Christ overcome to pursue and secure His bride, the church?
3. How should longing for Christ's presence and return shape daily Christian life and affections?

## Interlinear Text

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|                    |              |            |               |             |                 |
|--------------------|--------------|------------|---------------|-------------|-----------------|
| סַב                | הַצְלָלִים   | וְעַתָּה   | שִׁיפָּה      | וְעַתָּה    | בְּעַתָּה       |
| H5704              | break        | H3117      | Until the day | H5127       | flee away       |
| H6315              |              |            |               | H6752       | and the shadows |
|                    |              |            |               | H5437       | turn            |
| עַל                | בְּאֶלְעָמָן | לְעַפְרָר  | אֵלָא         | לְאַבְרָהָם | לְבָדֵד         |
| and be thou like   | H0           | my beloved | a roe         | H176        | or a young      |
| H1819              |              | H1730      | H6643         | H6082       | Hart            |
|                    |              |            |               |             | H5921           |
| עַל                | בְּרֵרָה     | בְּרֵרָה   |               |             |                 |
| upon the mountains |              | of Bether  |               |             |                 |
| H2022              |              | H1336      |               |             |                 |

## Additional Cross-References

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**Song of Solomon 4:6:** Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense.

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