

Song of Solomon 4:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

The bride speaks of her beloved: '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.' The bride summons the winds (north and south representing all directions) to blow through 'my garden,' releasing fragrant spices. Gardens in ancient Israel were enclosed, private spaces cultivated for beauty, fruit, and fragrance. The 'spices' suggest aromatic plants that require wind to release their scent. The bride desires that her beloved experience the garden's full fragrance and fruit—a metaphor for her offering herself completely to him. The shift from 'my garden' to 'his garden' (verse 16b) indicates mutual belonging and the bride's gift of herself to the beloved. The invitation 'let my beloved come into his garden' employs garden imagery for intimate marital union. The 'pleasant fruits' represent the delights and satisfactions of covenant love. This verse celebrates the bride's desire for full intimacy, her gift of herself to her beloved, and the mutual delight of covenant union.

Historical Context

Gardens in ancient Palestine were valuable, cultivated spaces requiring significant labor—enclosed for protection, irrigated for fertility, planted with fruit trees, herbs, and spices. Only the wealthy maintained such gardens, making them symbols of blessing and delight (Genesis 2:8-9; Nehemiah 3:15). The enclosed garden (gan na'ul, גַּן נָאֻל) in 4:12 represents the bride's exclusive commitment to

her beloved—a private space accessible only to him. The wind releasing spices creates powerful sensory imagery—fragrance intensifying and spreading. Song interpreters have traditionally read this as the bride offering herself intimately to the bridegroom in the context of marriage. Early church fathers allegorically interpreted the garden as the Church, the spices as virtues, and the wind as the Holy Spirit who releases spiritual fragrance for Christ's enjoyment. The Reformers emphasized that both partners in marriage should cultivate gifts, character, and intimacy to delight their spouse. Modern readers see both the literal celebration of marital intimacy and the spiritual reality that believers offer themselves to Christ, inviting Him into every aspect of life.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How do you cultivate your 'garden'—developing character, gifts, and intimacy—to delight your spouse or to offer yourself fully to Christ?
2. What does it mean to invite the 'winds' of God's Spirit to blow through your life, releasing spiritual fragrance that glorifies Christ and serves others?

Interlinear Text

ע וְיָרִי	צָפוֹן	יָבֹא	תִּימָן	הִפֹּיחִי	לְגַן וְ
Awake	O north wind	and come	thou south	blow	into his garden
H5782	H6828	H935	H8486	H6315	H1588
וְיֵצֵא	בְּשִׁמְךָ	יָבֹא	דּוֹדִי	לְגַן וְ	
thereof may flow out	that the spices	and come	Let my beloved	into his garden	
H5140	H1314	H935	H1730	H1588	
וְיֹאכַל	פְּרֵי	מִגְדֵּיוֹ:			
and eat	fruits	his pleasant			
H398	H6529	H4022			

Additional Cross-References

Song of Solomon 6:2: My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies.

Song of Solomon 5:1: I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse: I have gathered my myrrh with 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.

Ezekiel 37:9: Then said he unto me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.

1 Peter 2:5: Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.