

Song of Solomon 5:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers: his lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh.

Analysis

His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers (lechayyav ka'arugat habosem migdelot merqachim, לְחַיֵּי בַעֲרוּגַת הַבֹּשֶׂם מִגְדָּלוֹת מֶרְקָחִים)—the beloved's cheeks are compared to spice beds—cultivated gardens producing aromatic plants. "Sweet flowers" (migdelot merqachim, מִגְדָּלוֹת מֶרְקָחִים) literally means "towers of perfumers" or "raised beds of fragrant herbs." His very presence is aromatic—being near him is like walking through fragrant gardens.

His lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh (siphteha shoshanim notephot mor over, שִׁפְתֶּיהָ שׁוֹשַׁנִּים נֹטְפוֹת מֹר עֹבֵר, describes lips as lilies (purity, beauty) that drip myrrh (precious, fragrant, costly). His speech is both pure and precious—words that carry fragrant grace. This represents Christ's gracious words (Luke 4:22)—speech that blesses, teaches, and transforms. His presence and words both spread fragrance.

Historical Context

Cultivated spice gardens were luxury items—kings and wealthy landowners maintained elaborate gardens of imported aromatic plants. "Towers" or "raised beds" (migdelot, מִגְדָּלוֹת) may reference terraced garden architecture maximizing fragrance. The beloved's cheeks suggest his very presence creates aromatic atmosphere. Lilies represented purity and beauty throughout Scripture. Myrrh's costly fragrance represented devotion and suffering. The beloved's lips dropping myrrh suggested that every word carried precious, fragrant worth. Early church

fathers saw Christ's "cheeks as spice beds" as His incarnate presence making earth fragrant with heaven—wherever He went, spiritual fragrance followed (2 Corinthians 2:14-16). His lips dropping myrrh represented gospel words—both sweet and costly, gracious yet calling to sacrificial discipleship. The Reformers emphasized Christ's words as more precious than gold (Psalm 19:10)—Scripture carries His fragrant speech to believers. The Puritans taught meditation on Christ's words—savoring their beauty, fragrance, and nourishing power.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does Christ's presence spread spiritual "fragrance" in your life—making ordinary moments holy through awareness of His nearness?
2. What "sweet smelling myrrh" (precious, costly words) has Christ spoken into your life through Scripture that you need to remember and cherish?
3. In what ways do your words drop fragrance or poison—do you speak with the gracious, life-giving quality of the beloved's myrrh-dropping lips?

Interlinear Text

לְחִי	כַּעֲרוֹגַת	הַבִּשְׁמִים	מִגִּדְלֹת	מִרְקָחִים	שְׁפָתָיו
His cheeks	are as a bed	of spices	flowers	as sweet	his lips
H3895	H6170	H1314	H4026	H4840	H8193
שִׁשְׁוֹןִים	נֹטֵפִים	מִרְרָה	עֹרֵם:		
like lilies	dropping	myrrh	sweet smelling		
H7799	H5197	H4753	H5674		

Additional Cross-References

Song of Solomon 1:10: Thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels, thy neck with chains of gold.

Song of Solomon 2:1: I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.

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.

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