



The Shepherd's Banner of Love: the Shulammite's "Someone to Watch over Me," SOS-2:4; the Psychosomatic Disorder of Lovesickness, 2:5

8. To deviate from a standard means that one has become disoriented in the midst of pressure and thus loses contact with his source of strength and protection. Both the military and figurative uses of banners are found in Scripture as brought out in this article from:

Tenney, Merrill C. (gen. ed.). *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), 1:462:

Banner (banner, ensign, standard, flag, signal). A banner, standard or ensign, generally on a high pole on a promontory or carried on a staff.

The development of ensigns and standards took place in a military context. The early standards were not banners or flags made of some fabric, but figures, emblems or images of animals and birds, or of the gods made of wood or metal brightly painted and fastened at the end of a long pole or staff.

The exact nature of the standards of Israel is not known, but their presence at the camp (Numbers 2), causes scholars to believe that the wandering in the desert was really a military expedition. Later on standards and banners were used for other purposes.

Degel is used for the standard of each of the four large divisions of the tribes of Israel encamped in the desert. "The people of Israel shall pitch their tents by their companies, every man by his own camp and every man by his own standard" (Numbers 1:52).

In Psalm 20:5, *degel* becomes a battle flag: "May we shout for joy over your victory, and in the name of our God set up our banners!" In the Song of Solomon (2:4), however, it is used in a beautiful figure of love.

The word *nes* is translated "ensign" or "standard" in the English Bible, but it refers more specifically to a rallying point for the people. It marks the center of attraction on which people should pin their hopes. Moses called the altar of thanksgiving after Amalek's defeat, *Jehovah Nisi*, "Jehovah my banner." Messiah Himself becomes such a standard and a rallying point of nations (Isaiah 49:22 [Thus says the Lord God, "Behold I will lift up My hand to the nations and set up My standard (*nes*) to the peoples."]). It was raised to assemble the soldiers of an army at the sound of trumpets (Isaiah 18:3).

9. The Shulammite takes a military term that is used in Scripture to describe divine protection and turns it into a metaphor for the Shepherd's love for her.
10. His love for her is a banner, the standard to which she rallies. He is the one who has committed his soul to her and his enduring love is pictured as the banner, the standard to which she rallies.
11. Presently she is disoriented in the conflict. Solomon has launched his attack and she needs to reorient to her place of safety and protection in the battle.
12. Her memories take her back to that moment he proposed to her and thus planted his standard of love in her soul to which she has become as devoted as the Romans were to their eagle.
13. Just as the eagle represented the protection and freedom provided by SPQR to her citizens, so the love of the Shepherd is to her. Although she recalls his love he is not present and thus she must rely on his presence in her soul until he can rescue her from Solomon's grasp.
14. The idea behind this rationale is expressed in one of the famous musical standards by the Gershwin brothers released in 1926. It relates the longing of a woman who is in search of her idea of a right man, that is:

"Someone to Watch over Me"
(George and Ira Gershwin. © 1926 by Warner Brothers Music Corp. All rights reserved.)

There's a saying old says that love is blind.



Still we're often told "seek and ye shall find."
 So, I'm going to seek a certain lad I've had in mind.
 Looking everywhere, haven't found him yet.
 He's the big affair I cannot forget.
 Only man I ever think of with regret.

I'd like to add his initial to my monogram.
 Tell me, where is the shepherd for this lost lamb?

There's a somebody I'm longing to see.
 I hope that he turns out to be
 Someone who'll watch over me.

I'm a little lamb who's lost in a wood.
 I know I could always be good
 To one who'll watch over me.

Although he may not be the man some girls think of as handsome,
 To my heart, he carries the key.

Won't you tell him, please, to put on some speed,
 Follow my lead. Oh how I need
 Someone to watch over me.

15. The Shepherd is her commander-in-chief to whom she has committed her soul and his love watchers over her.
16. Likewise the Lord Jesus Christ is our Shepherd-in-Chief to whom we commit our souls and His enduring love continuously watches over us.
17. As the Shulammitte rallies to the banner of the Shepherd's love so we rally to the standard of Jehovah Nissi, יהוה נָסִי **Yahweh Nissi**, "Jehovah my banner."
18. At this point, the Shulammitte is overcome and requires the administration of restoratives:
 1. We examined the background for this verse when the Shulammitte compared the Shepherd to an apple tree in verse 3. First of all we have the Piel imperative of the verb סָמַח **samach** translated "sustain me."
 2. The Shulammitte is in a weakened state for two reasons. She is mentally staggered by Solomon's insinuation that she is his right woman and also by her longing to be with her absent Shepherd.
 3. There are two things that will restore her strength. First are "raisin-cakes," the plural of אֲשִׁישָׁה **'ashisha**, a food that was noted for its energizing qualities.
 4. Secondly, she wants to be "refreshed" with apples, the Piel imperative of the verb רָפַח **raphath** which means to reinvigorate, restore, or refresh.
 5. In verse three we did the research on how a sliced apple was used in the ancient world as a restorative much as smelling salts are today.
 6. The Shulammitte almost faints as a result of what King Solomon implies in verse 2 and her longing to be under the safety of her Shepherd's banner of love in verses 3-5:

SOS 2:2 - [KS: Pick-Up Line #5] "Like a lily among the thorns, so is my love among the virgins."

SOS 2:3 - [SW] "Like an apple tree among the trees of the grove, so is my beloved among the young men. In his shade I took great delight and sat down, and his fruit was sweet to my taste."



SOS 2:4 - [SW] “He brought me to the banquet house, and his banner over me was love.”

SOS 2:5 - [SW] “Sustain me with raisin cakes, refresh me with apples, because I am lovesick.”

7. The two verbs, sustain and refresh, are in the imperative mood and are urgent requests to the Daughters of Jerusalem to attend to her with food for sustenance and with apples to smell for the refreshment of her senses.
8. She then identifies the result of this weakness as “lovesickness,” a phrase made up of two words in the Hebrew: **חָלָה אֶהְיֶה *chalah 'ahavah***, to be “sick with love.”
9. Here we find the Shulammite a victim of a psychosomatic disorder brought about by a cause and an effect:
 1. Because of the physical absence of the Shepherd combined with his mental presence in her soul, the Shulammite begins to languish and feel weak.
 2. This is a psychosomatic condition called “lovesickness” which is a yearning to be with an absent loved one.
 3. This yearning provokes the excitement of her passions and desires to not only be with him but to make love to him.
 4. This is legitimate. They are right man-right woman and she is making the mental transition from control and restraint over to complete freedom and unrestraint.
 5. In God’s plan there is only one man designed to stimulate the woman’s passions and desires. He is the one her soul has identified as her right man. It is only to him that she devotes her soul, her spirit, and her body.
 6. In verse 5 the Shulammite’s unfulfilled yearning along with the continuous pressure from Solomon causes a physiological dysfunction in the Shulammite’s cardiovascular system that produces low blood pressure.
 7. This is a condition called syncope which means that she faints. Thus her psychological reaction to the absent Shepherd is to yearn for him which is accompanied by the physiological effect of low blood pressure. The two together are referred to as a psychosomatic disorder.
 8. This psychosomatic disorder is called lovesickness for which she needs restoratives, first, nourishment from raisin-cakes and, second, the restorative aroma from a sliced apple.
 9. Thus revived she continues her aria by looking forward to the time when she is married to the Shepherd and she imagines the time when they can allow their passions and desires to be fully expressed :

SOS 2:6 - [SW] “Let his left hand be under my head and his right hand embrace me.”