

1/ Mystical Experience of “Some words from Solomon’s Song of Songs”

Prologue & Ch. 1, 1-7

Meditations on the Song of Songs
by Teresa of Avila

Prologue

I have seen the mercies our Lord grants souls He has brought to these monasteries who observe the primitive rule of our Lady of Mount Carmel...

Only the souls who know about the **need for an explanation** ...of what passes between the soul and our Lord will be able to see the **trial suffered** in not having **light**.

For a number of years the Lord has given me **great delight** each time I hear or read words from Solomon’s Song of Songs. The delight is so great that without understanding **Latin**, my soul is **stirred** and recollected more than by books ... I understand... When the Latin was translated for me I no longer understood the text...

2. For about two years, the Lord has been giving me the understanding of certain words. I think these words will bring consolation both to the Sisters led by this path as well as to myself...

3. For those I am obliged to obey, I shall now write about the **understanding** the Lord gives me of what is contained in the words that bring delight to my soul about this **path of prayer** ...

Accept this poor little gift from one who desires both for you and herself all the **gifts of the Holy Spirit** ... If I succeed in saying something worthwhile... May it please the divine Majesty...

Chapter 1

Treats of the veneration with which the Sacred Scriptures should be read and of the difficulty women have in comprehending them, especially the Song of Songs.

Let the Lord kiss me with the kiss of His mouth, for Your breasts are better than wine, etc... (Sg. 1:2)

... It seems ... that the soul is **speaking** with one person and **asking** peace from another. It says: *Let Him kiss me with the kiss of His mouth*; and next, seemingly, it speaks to someone whom it is with: *Your breasts are better...*

I don’t understand why... but that I don’t understand gives me great delight. Indeed, daughters, the soul will not have to reflect upon the things it grasps but upon those that cannot be understood; His **mysteries** cause us to respect Him more.

Let me recommend that ... you avoid wasting your thoughts on what you cannot properly understand. Many things are not meant for women to understand, nor even for men.

2. When the Lord desires to give understanding, He does so without our effort ... Those whom the Lord has called to explain the Scriptures to us must work; they will have much gain from their work.

We should simply accept what the Lord gives us; what He doesn’t we shouldn’t tire ourselves over, but rejoice over what a great Lord we have. One word of His will contain a thousand mysteries; our understanding is very elementary...

Women have need of no more than what is sufficient for their meditations. With this, God will favor them. When His Majesty desires to give us understanding of the

words... we shall surely find it. If not, let us humble ourselves and rejoice that we have such a Lord that even words of His spoken in our own language cannot be understood.

3. It may seem to you that there are some words in the *Song of Songs* that could have been said differently. In light of our dullness, such an opinion doesn't surprise me. I have heard some persons say that they avoid listening to them. Oh, God help me, how great is our misery!

The Lord gives us great favors in **revealing** what is possessed by the soul who loves Him and in **encouraging** it to speak and find delight with Him. We, however, **create fears** and **give opinions** that manifest the **small degree of love of God** we have.

4. How poorly we profit from the blessing You grant us! You devise plans to show Your love for us. We, inexperienced in loving You, esteem this love so poorly that our minds ... cease to think of the great mysteries the language spoken by the Holy Spirit contains within itself.

What more was necessary than this language to enkindle us in His love and make us realize that not without good reason did He choose this style.

5. I recall hearing a priest preach a very good sermon, most of which was an explanation of those **loving delights with which the bride communed with God.**

There was so much laughter that I was shocked...

The reason for not understanding is that we **practice so poorly the love of God** that it doesn't seem possible for a soul to commune in such a way with God.

These people did not benefit because they did not understand nor think anything but

that the preacher made the sermon up in his head.

6. I know someone (Teresa herself) who for a number of years had many fears ... The Lord was pleased that she hear some words from the *Song of Songs*, and through them, she understood that her soul was being well guided and that it was possible for a soul in love with its Spouse to experience all these **favors**— swoons, deaths, afflictions, delights, and joys in relation to Him.

It does so, after it has left all the world's joys out of love for Him, is completely given over into His hands and when it has done this, not just in words, but in all truth, confirmed by works.

How well God repays! You have a Lord and Spouse, daughters, with whom nothing takes place without His seeing and understanding it. Though the things be very small, do not fail to do what you can for love of Him. The Lord will repay them; He only looks at the love with which you do them.

7. I conclude by saying that you should never dwell on what you do not understand in Sacred Scripture or the mysteries of our faith, nor should you be startled by the lofty words that take place between God and the soul.

Being what we are, the love He has for us surprises and bewilders me more. Knowing He has such love, I understand that there is no exaggeration in the words He uses to reveal it to us. He has shown this love even more through His deeds. Pause a moment to think about what He has suffered for us.

Note that a love so powerful and strong, that it made Him suffer so much, could not reveal itself in words, should not be any surprise to us. AMEN

