

וְאֵלֶיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל יָשׁוּב׃

It was on a trip to a distant land where the prince, known far and wide for his deep wisdom and extraordinary heart, saw her among the slaves in the palace. His discerning eye immediately noticed the greatness and beauty hiding behind her disheveled appearance. He saw purity and goodness in her eyes such as he hadn't seen in any of the many princesses that were proposed to him as potential marriage prospects. So great an impression had she made upon him that he decided then and there not only to redeem her but to then take her hand in marriage as well. He was about to inform her of her great fortune: she would turn overnight from a slave to the princess of a mighty kingdom, from a girl who made due with a morsel of bread and some water each day to one who would have her hearts every desire. However, before he did, his great heart kicked in and he thought: If she were a great and mighty princess it would be expected of me to court her first, expressing to her my admiration and yearning to merit her becoming my princess. True, in this case she is a slave and would gladly give anything for me to merely redeem her from captivity and that I would actually make her my princess is beyond her wildest dreams, but I still want to give her that feeling of appreciation, as if she were a royal princess that I must cajole and convince to agree to be my bride.

Perhaps with the above parable we can understand the following perplexing pesukim in Shir HaShirim:

My beloved raised his voice and said to me, through Moses 'Arise (Exod. 3:17): "I will bring you up from the affliction of Egypt, my beloved, my fair one, and come away. For behold, the winter has passed There is no difficulty in traveling now; the rain is over and gone. The blossoms have appeared in the land, The days of summer are near, when the trees blossom and the travelers enjoy seeing them, the time of singing has arrived when the birds give forth their song, and the sound is pleasant for travelers, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land. It is customary for the birds to sing and chirp in the days of Nissan. The fig tree has put forth its green figs, and the vines with their tiny grapes have given forth their fragrance; arise, my beloved, my fair one, and come away. This entire episode, according to its simple meaning, is an expression of the affection of enticement, i.e., a young man appealing to his betrothed to follow him. So did my beloved do to me. (Shir HaShirim 2:10-13 with Rashi)

The King of the universe was about to redeem us from slavery and take our hand in eternal matrimony. However, He still made sure to make us feel how appreciated and great we were in His eyes by acting as if it was He who had to cajole us into following Him under the canopy!

