unfoldingWord® Translation Notes

v91

Song of Solomon

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unfoldingWord® Translation Notes - Song of Solomon

Introduction to the Song of Songs

Part 1: General Introduction

Outline of the Song of Songs

1. The title of the book (1:1)
2. The woman longs for the man she loves (1:2–1:7)
3. The man responds to the woman he loves (1:8–1:11)
4. The woman speaks to herself (1:12–1:14)
5. The man praises the woman he loves (1:15)
6. The woman responds to the man she loves (1:16–2:1)
7. The man responds to what the woman said in 2:1 (2:2)
8. The woman speaks to the man she loves, herself, and the women of Jerusalem (2:3–3:11)
9. The man praises the woman he loves (4:1–4:11)
10. The garden metaphor (4:12–5:1)
11. The woman and the women of Jerusalem speak to each other (5:2–6:1)
12. The woman speaks to herself (6:2–6:3)
13. The man praises the woman he loves (6:4–10)

14. The man goes to the walnut-tree orchard and imagines he is among chariots (6:11–6:12)
15. The women of Jerusalem speak to the woman, and the man replies to them (6:13)
16. The man praises the woman he loves and expresses his desire to be intimate with her (7:1–9a)
17. The woman responds to the man she loves (7:9b-8:3)
18. The woman speaks to the women of Jerusalem (8:4)
19. The women of Jerusalem see the woman and man coming from the wilderness (8:5a)
20. The woman expresses her thoughts on their love to the man she loves (8:5b–7)
21. The woman's brothers speak about their sister (8:8–9)
22. The woman responds to her brothers (8:10–12)
23. The man and the woman speak their concluding thoughts to each other (8:13–14)

There are different views among biblical scholars regarding how this book is structured and, therefore, how it should be outlined. The outline above offers one possible way of outlining this book.

What is the Song of Songs about?

The Song of Songs is a poem or a series of poems that celebrate love and intimacy between a man and a woman. Jews traditionally have interpreted the book as a picture of God's love for his people Israel. Until the 1800's the main view among Christians was that this book is primarily a picture of the love between Christ and his bride, the Church. Since the 1800's the more common view has been that it is a poem or a series of poems that give a beautiful picture of love between a man and a woman. Many Christians also think that, even though the main meaning of this poem is to give a beautiful portrayal of romantic love between a man and a woman, this book also contains lessons about God's love for his bride, the Church.

Who wrote the Song of Songs?

The first verse of the book ("The Song of Songs, which is of Solomon") gives the idea that King Solomon of Israel wrote it. However, there are several possible ways to interpret the meaning of this title. A translation note for this verse discusses the possible meanings.

How should the title of this book be translated?

This book is traditionally titled "Song of Songs," which means the very best song, or "Song of Solomon." It may also be called "Songs of Love," "Great Poems of Love," or "The Love Songs of Solomon." (See: How to Translate Names)

Part 2: Important Religious and Cultural Concepts

What place do the descriptions of sexual behavior have in the Song of Songs?

The Song of Songs approves of sexual behavior which expresses love between a husband and his wife.

Part 3: Important Translation Issues

How many characters are in the Song of Songs?

The two main characters in this book are the man and the woman, two people who love each other. In 8:8–9 the woman's brothers speak among themselves. In different places throughout the book, a group of women called the "daughters of Jerusalem" speak or are spoken to. However, it is possible that the group of women is not real but imagined. They may have been written into the poem for poetic effect.

Some interpreters believe there may be more characters than these, but this is not certain. The ULT and UST versions recognize only the man, the woman, the group of women (and possibly a group of friends in some parts), and the woman's brothers.

What are the lines in the UST about people speaking?

The Song of Songs is a poem that shows the words and thoughts of a man, a woman, the woman's friends, and the woman's brothers. Throughout the poem, the author does not

identify the speakers and their audience. To help readers understand the poem, some translations attempt to identify the speaker and the audience. Since it is not always certain who is speaking, translations sometimes disagree about the identity of the speaker.

The UST places a header before each speech to identify the speaker and the audience. For example: “The woman speaking to the women of Jerusalem,” “The woman speaking to the man,” “The man speaking to the woman,” or “The woman speaking to herself.” Translators are encouraged to include these ways of identifying the speaker and the audience. Be careful to format them differently from the scripture text. The translators should also include an initial note to their readers indicating that these explanations are not part of the scripture text.

There are different views among Bible scholars about who the man is—a shepherd boy or King Solomon. Some think that both speak at various times in this book and compete for the woman’s love. The headers in the UST indicate when a man is speaking or being spoken to, as in “The man speaking to the woman he loves” and “The woman speaking to the man she loves.” The headers do not indicate the identity of the man.

How should one translate the Song of Songs if the readers would view certain terms as coarse, vulgar, or improper?

Readers might consider many images or forms in the Song of Songs as socially improper when translated. Whenever possible, the translator should try to avoid offensive language by using expressions that will not cause offense. (See: Euphemism)

How do I translate metaphors and similes in this book?

Because the author uses images throughout this book to express things in a beautiful and captivating way, it is recommended that you maintain these images or select images from your culture and language that communicate the same concepts.

The many metaphors and similes in this book are used to add poetic beauty and emotional effect; however, their meaning is sometimes unclear. Sometimes the reader does not know whether a sexual meaning is intended. At times the wording carries both a literal and a sexual meaning. However, though meanings are often unclear, it is not always necessary to clarify the meaning; often ambiguity in translation is best. You could

translate the words as they are written to avoid committing to a specific meaning. (See: Metaphor)

Translating terms of endearment

The word which the ULT translates as “my beloved” occurs 26 times in this book. Each time it occurs the woman uses it to refer to the man she loves. You should translate this term consistently throughout this book. The word which the ULT translates as “my darling” appears nine times in this book. Each time it occurs the man uses it to refer to the woman he loves. Be sure to translate this term consistently throughout the book.

Song of Solomon 1

Song of Songs 1 Chapter Introduction

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Metaphors

In the ancient Near East, it was common to describe a woman by using metaphors involving animals. In many cultures today, such metaphors could be considered offensive. Cultures vary in the metaphors of beauty they use to describe women. (See: Metaphor)

The lines indicating who is speaking and who is being spoken to

Throughout the poem, the author does not identify the speakers or their audience. To help readers understand the poem, some translations attempt to identify the speaker and the audience. It is not always certain who the speaker is, so sometimes translations disagree about the identity of the speaker. Before each speech, the UST places a header to identify the speaker and the audience. You may wish to do the same in your translation.

“I am black”

In the ancient Near East, wealthy people usually had lighter skin because they did not need to work outside, where the sun darkened their skin. Because this young woman had to work outside in the sun, her skin became dark. This is why she says “I am black” in 1:5–6.

Song of Solomon 1:1

ULT	UST
The Song of Songs, which {is} of Solomon.	*This is King Solomon's most beautiful song. The woman thinks about the man she loves*

ULT **The Song of Songs, which {is} of Solomon**
UST This is King Solomon's most beautiful song
(שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים אֲשֶׁר לִשְׁלֹמֹה)

This verse is the title of this book. Use whatever formatting convention is most natural in your language for indicating the title of a poem or song. The ULT places this line further to the left than the other lines in this book to indicate that this verse is the title.

Support Reference: Poetry

ULT **The Song of Songs**
UST most beautiful song
(שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים)

The possessive form in **Song of Songs** is used here to indicate a comparison with other **Songs** and to show that this **Song** is the best or greatest of all songs. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use another form to indicate this. Alternate translation: [The best song] or [The most excellent song] or [The greatest song]

Support Reference: Possession

ULT **{is} of Solomon**
UST King Solomon's
(לִשְׁלֹמֹה)

The phrase **of Solomon** could mean: (1) Solomon wrote this song. Alternate translation: [Solomon wrote]; (2) this song was dedicated to Solomon. Alternate translation: [is dedicated to Solomon]; (3) this song was about Solomon. Alternate translation: [is about Solomon]

Support Reference: Possession

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
{is} of Solomon	King Solomon's

Song of Solomon 1:2

ULT	UST
Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for better {is} your love than wine.	*I wish he would kiss me on my lips, The woman speaks internally to the absent man because how you love me is more delightful than wine.*

ULT **Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for better {is} your love than wine … As for the scent of your oils—{they are} good; oil poured out {is} your name. Therefore, marriageable women love you … Draw me after you; let us run. The king has brought me {to} his bedroom**

UST I wish he would kiss me on my lips, because how you love me is more delightful than wine … The fragrance of the perfume on your skin is very pleasing. More and more people are honoring you, just as the fragrance of the perfume that you have put on your skin is spreading farther and farther. That is why the other young women are attracted to you … Take me quickly; take me to your home. He is like a king to me; I desire him to bring me into his bedroom

(יִשָּׁקֵנִי מִנְּשִׁיקוֹת פִּיהוּ כִּי־טוֹבִים דֹּדֶיךָ מִיָּיִן: לְרֵיחַ שְׁמָנֶיךָ טוֹבִים שֶׁמֶן תּוּרַק שְׁמֶךָ עַל־כֵּן עֲלָמוֹת אֲהֵבוּךָ: מָשְׁכֵנִי אַחֲרֶיךָ נָּרוּצָה הֱבִיאַנִי הַמֶּלֶךְ חֲדָרָיו) (1:2-4)

These lines of poetry most likely indicate internal words or thoughts, things that the woman is thinking while she is alone. Your language may have a way of indicating speech that is expressed toward a person who is not present to hear what is being said. If your language has a way to indicate that, you could use it here.

Support Reference: Poetry

ULT **Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth**

UST I wish he would kiss me on my lips

(יִשָּׁקֵנִי מִנְּשִׁיקוֹת פִּיהוּ)

Here, **kiss me with the kisses of his mouth** is an emphatic construction that uses a verb and its object that come from the same root. You may be able to use the same construction in your language to express the meaning here. Alternatively, your language may have another way of showing the emphasis. Alternate translation: [Let him kiss me again and again with the kisses of his mouth] or [Let him cover my face with the kisses of his mouth] or [I wish he would kiss me passionately with his mouth]

Support Reference: Poetry

ULT **your love**
UST how you love me
(דֹּדֶיךָ)

In this book every occurrence of the words **you** and **your** is singular. Your language may require you to mark these forms.

Support Reference: Forms of 'You' — Singular

ULT **better {is} your love than wine**
UST how you love me is more delightful than wine
(טוֹבִים דֹּדֶיךָ מִיָּיִן)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **love**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [the way you love me is better than wine] or [your loving is better than wine]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **better {is} your love than wine**
UST how you love me is more delightful than wine
(טוֹבִים דֹּדֶיךָ מִיָּיִן)

Alternate translation: [I enjoy your love more than I enjoy drinking wine] or [your love is more pleasant than wine]

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Let him kiss me	I wish he would kiss me
with the kisses of	on my lips
better {is}	is … delightful
your love	how you love me
than wine	more … than wine

Song of Solomon 1:3

ULT	UST
As for the scent of your oils—{they are} good; oil poured out {is} your name. Therefore, marriageable women love you.	*The fragrance of the perfume on your skin is very pleasing. More and more people are honoring you, just as the fragrance of the perfume that you have put on your skin is spreading farther and farther. That is why the other young women are attracted to you.*

ULT **As for the scent of**
UST The fragrance
(לְרֵיחַ)

The Hebrew word which the ULT translates as **As for** could: (1) indicate reference, in which case it should be translated with an equivalent phrase or as the ULT translates it. Alternate translation: [In reference to the scent of]; (2) indicate emphasis or be making an assertion. Alternate translation: [Truly, the scent of] or [Indeed, the scent of]

ULT **your oils—{they are} good**
UST of the perfume on your skin is very pleasing
(שְׁמָנֶיךָ טוֹבִים)

Here, **oils** refers to colognes or perfumes. The author is assuming the reader knows that pleasant-smelling spices were mixed into olive oil in order to make a pleasant-smelling perfume, which was then applied to the skin. You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers. If men do not put pleasant-smelling things on their skin in your culture, you could say that the scent of the man being spoken of here is pleasant. Alternate translation: [your colognes—they are good] or [your scented oils—they are good] or [your skin—it is good] or [your body—it is good]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

> ULT **oil poured out {is} your name**
> UST More and more people are honoring you, just as the fragrance of the perfume that you have put on your skin is spreading farther and farther
> (שֶׁמֶן תּוּרַק שְׁמֶךָ)

Here, **your name** represents her beloved's reputation. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [oil poured out is your reputation] or [your name is pleasant like good perfume is pleasant]

Support Reference: Metonymy

> ULT **oil poured out {is} your name**
> UST More and more people are honoring you, just as the fragrance of the perfume that you have put on your skin is spreading farther and farther
> (שֶׁמֶן תּוּרַק שְׁמֶךָ)

The woman makes a comparison between the man's reputation (which she refers to as his **name**) and scented oil that is poured out, after which the good smell of the oil spreads as the air moves. If it would be helpful in your language, you could explain the comparison. Alternate translation: [your reputation spreads like the fragrance of scented oil spreads after it has been poured out] or [your reputation spreads like the scent of perfumed oil after it has been poured out]

Support Reference: Metaphor

> ULT **Therefore**
> UST That is why
> (עַל־כֵּן)

The Hebrew words translated as **Therefore** indicate that what follows is a result of what came before. Use a connector in your language that makes it clear that what follows is a result of what came before. Alternate translation: [As a result]

Support Reference: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

ULT **marriageable women**
UST the other young women
(עֲלָמוֹת)

Here, **marriageable women** refers to young women who are old enough to be married or who have been recently married but not yet given birth to a child. Your language may have a term for women during this stage of life that you could use here, or you could use a more general term.

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
your oils	of the perfume on your skin
{they are} good	is very pleasing
oil … is	More and more people are honoring you, just as the fragrance of the perfume that you have put on your skin is spreading farther and farther
love you	are attracted to you

Song of Solomon 1:4

ULT	UST
Draw me after you; let us run. The king has brought me {to} his bedroom. Let us be glad and rejoice in you. Let us profess your love more than wine; rightly do they love you.	*Take me quickly; take me to your home. The woman speaking to herself He is like a king to me; I desire him to bring me into his bedroom. The women of Jerusalem speaking about the man We are very happy about you; we say that how you love is better than wine. The woman speaking to the man about the young women of Jerusalem It is not surprising that the young women adore you. The woman speaking to the women of Jerusalem*

ULT **Draw me**
UST Take me … take me
(מָשְׁכֵנִי)

Alternate translation: [Lead me]

ULT **let us run**
UST quickly
(נָּרוּצָה)

The word **us** refers to the young woman and the man that she is addressing, so use the inclusive form of that word if your language marks that distinction. Alternate translation: [let you and me run]

Support Reference: Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

ULT **let us run**
UST quickly
(נָּרוּצָה)

Here the woman uses **run** as a poetic way of expressing her desire that she and the man she loves should quickly go away together. You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [let us hurry]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **The king**
UST He is like a king to me
(הַמֶּלֶךְ)

Here the woman is speaking affectionately of the man she loves as if he were **The king**. She is not speaking of an actual king but using the word as a term of endearment. She is still speaking of the same man that she was speaking of in 1:2–3. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [He whom I love is like a king to me and] or [He who is like a king to me]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **The king has brought me**
UST He is like a king to me; I desire him to bring me
(הֱבִיאַנִי הַמֶּלֶךְ)

The original language word which the ULT translates as **The king has brought me** could be describing: (1) a request or wish that the woman has. Alternate translation: [May the king bring me]; (2) an action that has already happened. Alternate translation: [The king brought me]

Support Reference: Statements — Other Uses

ULT **has brought me**
UST I desire him to bring me
(הֱבִיאַנִי)

Your language may say “taken” rather than **brought** in a context such as this. Use whichever is more natural. Alternate translation: [has taken me]

Support Reference: Go and Come

ULT **Let us be glad and rejoice in you. Let us profess your love more than wine**
UST We are very happy about you; we say that how you love is better than wine
(נָגִילָה וְנִשְׂמְחָה בָּךְ נַזְכִּירָה דֹדֶיךָ מִיָּיִן)

The **us** in these two lines could be: (1) a group of young women speaking about the man. Alternate translation: [We will be glad and rejoice in you. We will profess your love more than wine]; (2) the woman continuing to speak to the man she loves and using **us** to refer to herself. Alternate translation: [May I be glad and rejoice in you. May I profess your love more than wine]

Support Reference: Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’

ULT **let us run … Let us be glad … Let us profess**
UST quickly … We are very happy … we say that
(נָּרוּצָה & נָגִילָה & נַזְכִּירָה)

The word **us** is inclusive all three times that it occurs in this verse. Use the inclusive form of this word if your language marks that distinction.

Support Reference: Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

ULT **Let us be glad and rejoice**
UST We are very happy
(נָגִילָה וְנִשְׂמְחָה)

The terms **be glad** and **rejoice** mean similar things. The author is using the two terms together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: [Let us greatly rejoice] or [Let us rejoice greatly]

Support Reference: Doublet

ULT **Let us profess**
UST we say that
(נַזְכִּירָה)

Alternate translation: [Let us proclaim]

ULT **more than wine**
UST better than wine
(מִיַּיִן)

The phrase **more than wine** could mean: (1) that the women would profess that the man's love was more delightful than wine. Alternate translation: [as being more delightful than wine]; (2) that the women would profess the delightfulness of the man's love more often than they would profess the delightfulness of wine. Alternate translation: [more often than we profess wine]

> ULT **your love more than wine**
> UST how you love is better than wine
> (דֹּדֶ֖יךָ מִיָּֽיִן)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **love**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [that the way you love is better than wine] or [that the way you love me is better than wine]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

> ULT **rightly do they love you**
> UST the young women It is not surprising that adore you
> (מֵישָׁרִ֖ים אֲהֵבֽוּךָ)

Here the speaker could be: (1) the woman speaking to the man about the young women who admire him. Alternate translation: [rightly do the young women love you]; (2) the young women speaking of other women who admire the man. Alternate translation: [rightly do the other young women love you]. You may wish to indicate who the presumed speaker is here by placing a heading above this section, as modeled by the UST.

> ULT **rightly do they love you**
> UST the young women It is not surprising that adore you
> (מֵישָׁרִ֖ים אֲהֵבֽוּךָ)

Alternate translation: [it is right that other young women adore you] or [no wonder other young women adore you]

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
The king	He is like a king to me
Let us be glad	We are very happy
and rejoice	We are very happy
your love	how you love is
more than wine	better than wine
do they love you	the young women … adore you

Song of Solomon 1:5

ULT	UST
I {am} black but lovely, daughters of Jerusalem, like the tents of Kedar, like the curtains of Solomon.	*You young women of Jerusalem, I am brown but beautiful; my dark skin is like the tents in Kedar, and I am beautiful like the curtains in Solomon's palace.*

ULT **I {am} black**
UST I am brown
(שְׁחוֹרָה אֲנִי)

Solomon assumes that his readers will understand that here, **I am black** means "my skin is black" or "my skin is very dark." If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [My skin is black] or [My skin is very dark]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **but lovely**
UST but beautiful
(וְנָאוָֹה)

Here the word **but** is introducing a contrast between what was expected and what follows. In the author's culture, it was not considered attractive for a woman to have skin darkened by the sun. Use a natural form in your language for introducing a contrast. Alternate translation: [yet lovely] or [but still lovely]

Support Reference: Connect — Contrast Relationship

ULT **daughters of Jerusalem**
UST You young women of Jerusalem
(בְּנוֹת יְרוּשָׁלָ͏ִם)

The woman is using the possessive form to poetically describe where the young women (**daughters of Jerusalem**) live. The phrase refers to the young women from Jerusalem; probably the same women as the "marriageable women" in 1:3 and "they" in 1:4. If your language would not use the possessive form for this, you could indicate the association between them in a way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [daughters from Jerusalem] or [young women from Jerusalem]

Support Reference: Possession

> ULT **like the tents of Kedar, like the curtains of Solomon**
> UST my dark skin is like the tents in Kedar, and I am beautiful like the curtains in Solomon's palace
> (כְּאָהֳלֵי קֵדָר כִּירִיעוֹת שְׁלֹמֹה)

The **Kedar** people group used black goat skins to make their **tents**. The woman is comparing her skin to these tents. The phrase **the curtains of Solomon** refers to the beautiful curtains in Solomon's palace. The point of the first comparison is that the woman's skin was **black**. The second indicates that the woman was also **lovely**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use equivalent comparisons from your culture, or you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: [like the dark tents of the Kedar people, like the curtains of Solomon's palace] or [as dark as the tents of Kedar, as beautiful as the curtains in Solomon's palace]

Support Reference: Simile

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Jerusalem	Jerusalem
like the tents of	my dark skin is like the
Kedar	tents in Kedar
like the curtains of	and I am beautiful like the curtains
Solomon	in Solomon's palace

Song of Solomon 1:6

ULT	UST
Do not look at me, that I {am} black, that the sun scorched me. The sons of my mother were angry with me; they appointed me {as} keeper of the vineyards— my vineyard that {is} mine I have not kept.	*But do not stare at me because the sun has made my skin dark; my brothers were angry with me, so they forced me to work outside in the sunshine in the vineyards, so I was not able to take good care of my skin. The woman speaking to the man she loves*

ULT **Do not look at me, that I {am} black**
UST But do not stare at me because … has made my skin dark
(אַל־תִּרְאוּנִי שֶׁאֲנִי שְׁחַרְחֹרֶת)

The phrase **Do not look at me** could mean: (1) the woman does not want people to look at her with contempt. Alternate translation: [Do not look at me with contempt, that I am black] or [Do not look at me disapprovingly, that I am black]; (2) the woman does not want people to stare at her in admiration of her beauty. Alternate translation: [Do not stare at my beauty, that I am black]

ULT **that I**
UST because
(שֶׁאֲנִי)

The word **that** indicates that what follows is a reason for what came before. Use a connector in your language that makes it clear that what follows is a reason for what came before. Alternate translation: [because I]

Support Reference: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

ULT **that I {am} black**
UST because … has made my skin dark
(שֶׁאֲנִי שְׁחַרְחֹרֶת)

Solomon assumes that his readers will understand that here, **I am black** means “my skin is black” or “my skin is very dark,” as it did in 1:5. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [that my skin is black] or [that my skin is very dark]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **that the sun scorched me**
UST the sun has made my skin dark
(שֶׁשְּׁזָפַתְנִי הַשָּׁמֶשׁ)

The word **that** indicates that what follows is a reason for what came before. Use a connector in your language that makes it clear that what follows is a reason for what came before. Alternate translation: [because the sun scorched me]

Support Reference: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

ULT **that the sun scorched me**
UST the sun has made my skin dark
(שֶׁשְּׁזָפַתְנִי הַשָּׁמֶשׁ)

The author assumes that his readers will understand that **the sun scorched me** means "the sun made my skin color turn very dark." You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [that the sun darkened my skin]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **{ … as} keeper of the vineyards— my vineyard that {is} mine I have not kept**
UST to work outside in the sunshine in the vineyards, so I was not able to take good care of my skin
(נֹטֵרָה אֶת־הַכְּרָמִים כַּרְמִי שֶׁלִּי לֹא נָטָרְתִּי)

Alternate translation: [as caretaker of the vineyards—I have not taken care of my own vineyard]

ULT **my vineyard that {is} mine I have not kept**
UST so I was not able to take good care of my skin
(כַּרְמִי שֶׁלִּי לֹא נָטָרְתִּי)

The woman is probably using the phrase **my vineyard** to refer to her skin. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [my skin I have not protected from the sun] or [I have not protected my complexion from the sun]

Support Reference: Metaphor

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
they appointed me	so they forced me
{as} keeper	to work outside in the sunshine
of the vineyards	in the vineyards

ULT	UST
my vineyard	my skin

Song of Solomon 1:7

ULT	UST
Declare to me, {you} whom my soul loves: where do you graze? Where do you make {your flocks} lie down at noontime? For why should I be like a woman who covers herself beside the flocks of your companions?	*You whom I love, where will you take your flock of sheep today? Where will you allow them to rest at noontime? I want to know because it is not right for me to wander around like a prostitute, looking for you among the flocks that belong to your friends. The man answering the woman he loves*

ULT **{you} whom my soul loves**
UST You whom I love
(שֶׁאָהֲבָה נַפְשִׁי)

The woman is using one part of herself, her **soul**, to represent all of her. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your culture or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [you, the man whom I love]

Support Reference: Synecdoche

ULT **where do you graze**
UST where will you take your flock of sheep today
(אֵיכָה תִרְעֶה)

The woman is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need to be complete. You could supply these words from the context if it would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: [where do you graze your flock] or [where do you graze your sheep]

Support Reference: Ellipsis

ULT **For why should I be like a woman who covers herself beside the flocks of your companions**
UST I want to know because it is not right for me to wander around like a prostitute, looking for you among the flocks that belong to your friends
(שַׁלָּמָּה אֶהְיֶה כְּעֹטִיָּה עַל עֶדְרֵי חֲבֵרֶיךָ)

Here the woman is not asking for information but is using the question form for emphasis. If you would not use a rhetorical question for this purpose in your language, you could translate her words as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [I do not want to be like a woman who covers herself beside the flocks of your companions] or [Tell me so that I will not be like a woman who covers herself beside the flocks of your companions]

Support Reference: Rhetorical Question

ULT **like a woman who covers herself beside the flocks of your companions**
UST for me to wander around like a prostitute, looking for you among the flocks that belong to your friends
(כְּעֹטִיָּה עַל עֶדְרֵי חֲבֵרֶיךָ)

The author assumes that his readers will understand that **covers herself** means "covers herself with a veil." The phrase **your companions** refers to the other shepherds who pastured their animals near the flocks of the man; they were probably his friends. You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [like a woman who covers herself with a veil beside the flocks of the other shepherds]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **For why should I be like a woman who covers herself beside the flocks of your companions**
UST I want to know because it is not right for me to wander around like a prostitute, looking for you among the flocks that belong to your friends
(שַׁלָּמָּה אֶהְיֶה כְּעֹטִיָּה עַל עֶדְרֵי חֲבֵרֶיךָ)

The woman does not want to look **like a woman who covers herself** because in her culture, prostitutes often covered their faces with a veil so that people would not recognize them. She did not want to be mistaken for a prostitute while attempting to find him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: [For why should I be like a prostitute who covers herself with a veil and wanders around among the flocks of your companions]

Support Reference: Simile

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Declare	הַגִּידָה (ORIG QUOTE)
my soul	I
{you} whom … loves	You whom … love
do you make {your flocks} lie down	will you allow them to rest
the flocks of	the flocks that belong to
your companions	your friends

Song of Solomon 1:8

ULT	UST
If you do not know, most beautiful among women, go out in the footprints of the flock, and pasture your young goats beside the tents of the shepherds.	*You who are the most beautiful of all the women, if you search for me and do not know where I will take my sheep, follow the tracks of the sheep. Then allow your young goats to eat grass near the shepherds' tents.*

ULT **If you do not know, most beautiful among women, go out**
UST You who are the most beautiful of all the women, if you search for me and do not know where I will take my sheep, follow
(אִם־לֹ֣א תֵדְעִ֣י לָ֔ךְ הַיָּפָ֖ה בַּנָּשִׁ֑ים צְאִי־לָ֞ךְ)

If it would help your readers to see that this is a conditional statement, you could supply a word like "then" in your translation. Alternate translation: [If you do not know, most beautiful among women, then go out]

Support Reference: Connect — Hypothetical Conditions

ULT **If you do not know, most beautiful among women**
UST You who are the most beautiful of all the women, if you search for me and do not know where I will take my sheep
(אִם־לֹ֣א תֵדְעִ֣י לָ֔ךְ הַיָּפָ֖ה בַּנָּשִׁ֑ים)

If it would be more natural in your language, you could begin this verse with the phrase **most beautiful among women**. Alternate translation: [Most beautiful among women, if you do not know]

Support Reference: Information Structure

ULT **go out**
UST follow
(צְאִי־לָ֞ךְ)

Your language may say "come" rather than **go** in contexts such as these. Use whichever is more natural. Alternate translation: [come out]

Support Reference: Go and Come

ULT and pasture your young goats
UST Then allow your young goats to eat grass
(וּרְעִי֙ אֶת־גְּדִיֹּתַ֔יִךְ)

Alternate translation: [and let your young goats graze] or [and let your young goats eat]

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
the tents of	tents
the shepherds	the shepherds
you do … know	you search for me and do … know where I will take my sheep
the flock	the sheep
your young goats	your young goats

Song of Solomon 1:9

ULT	UST
To a mare among the chariots of Pharaoh I liken you, my darling.	*You excite me, my dear one, like a mare walking among Pharoah's stallions.*

ULT To a mare among the chariots of Pharaoh I liken you, my darling
UST You excite me, my dear one, like a mare walking among Pharoah's stallions
(לְסֻסָתִי֙ בְּרִכְבֵ֣י פַּרְעֹ֔ה דִּמִּיתִ֖יךְ רַעְיָתִֽי)

If it would be more natural in your language, you could begin this verse with the phrase **my darling**. Alternate translation: [My darling, I liken you to a mare among the chariots of Pharaoh]

Support Reference: Information Structure

ULT To a mare among the chariots of Pharaoh I liken you
UST You excite me … like a mare walking among Pharoah's stallions
(לְסֻסָתִי֙ בְּרִכְבֵ֣י פַּרְעֹ֔ה דִּמִּיתִ֖יךְ)

The comparison **To a mare among the chariots of Pharaoh I liken you** could be: (1) the man saying that the excitement caused by a mare (a female horse) among Pharaoh's male chariot horses is like the excitement that the woman caused him to feel. (2) the man saying that the beauty of the woman is like the beauty of one of Pharaoh's mares. The horses of the king of Egypt, the Pharaoh, were known to be the best in the world and very beautiful. This is the second option because, normally, only stallions, not mares, pulled the chariots. Alternate translation: [Your beauty is like the beauty of Pharaoh's chariot horses] or [I compare your beauty to the beauty of Pharaoh's chariot horses]

Support Reference: Simile

ULT among the chariots of Pharaoh
UST walking among Pharoah's stallions
(בְּרִכְבֵ֣י פַּרְעֹ֔ה)

Here, **the chariots** represents "the horses that pull the chariots." Chariots were normally drawn by pairs of male horses (stallions). If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [among the stallions that pull Pharaoh's chariots] or [among the stallions that pull the chariots of Pharaoh]

Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **Pharaoh**
UST Pharoah's
(פַּרְעֹה)

The word **Pharaoh** is a title and represents kings of Egypt in general, not one particular king of Egypt. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a more natural expression. Alternate translation: [the king of Egypt]

Support Reference: Generic Noun Phrases

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
To a mare	a mare
among the chariots of	walking among … stallions
Pharaoh	Pharoah's

Song of Solomon 1:10

ULT	UST
Your cheeks are beautiful with earrings; your neck {is beautiful} with necklaces.	*Your cheeks are lovely with jewelry, and your neck is lovely with strings of beads around it.*

ULT **with earrings**
UST with jewelry
(בַּתֹּרִים)

The term which the ULT translates as **earrings** refers to strings of small ornaments or jewels which hung down the side of one's face from the ears. If your readers would not be familiar with this type of jewelry, you could use the name of something similar in your area, or you could use a more general term and put an explanation in a footnote. Alternate translation: [with neck ornaments] or [with strings of jewels]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **with necklaces**
UST with strings of beads around it
(בַּחֲרוּזִים)

Here, **necklaces** are a type of jewelry worn around the neck to make a person look more attractive. If your readers would not be familiar with necklaces, you could use the name of something similar in your area, or you could use a more general term and make a footnote to explain what a necklace is. Alternate translation: [with neck ornaments] or [with strings of jewels]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

Song of Solomon 1:11

ULT	UST
Earrings of gold we will make for you, with studs of silver.	*We will make for you some gold earrings that are inlaid with silver. The woman speaking to herself*

ULT **Earrings of**
UST some … earrings
(תּוֹרֵי)

See how you translated the term **Earrings** in the previous verse.

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **Earrings of gold we will make for you**
UST We will make for you some gold earrings
(תּוֹרֵי זָהָב נַעֲשֶׂה־לָּךְ)

By **we**, the writer could mean: (1) that the man will have someone make the **Earrings of gold** for her. The man is not including the woman, so use the exclusive form of this word if your language marks that distinction. Alternate translation: [Earrings of gold I will have someone make for you] or [I will pay someone to make earrings of gold for you]; (2) that though the man is using a plural form, he expects the woman to understand that he means "I." Alternate translation: [Earrings of gold I will make for you]; (3) that a group of people, and not the man, speak here. If you are using section headers, you can place a header above this section to indicate who you think is speaking.

Support Reference: Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

ULT **with studs of silver**
UST that are inlaid with silver
(עִם נְקֻדּוֹת הַכָּסֶף)

Alternate translation: [with beads of silver] or [that are decorated with silver]

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
gold	gold
silver	silver

Song of Solomon 1:12

ULT	UST
While the king {was} on his couch, my nard gave off its scent.	*During the time that he who is like a king to me reclined on his couch, the fragrance of my perfume spread around the room.*

ULT **the king**
UST he who is like a king to me
(שֶׁהַמֶּלֶךְ)

See how you translated the phrase **the king** in 1:4 where it is used with the same meaning.

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **{was} on his couch**
UST reclined on his couch
(בְּמְסִבּוֹ)

The word which the ULT translates as **couch** could: (1) refer to a couch, which is a long upholstered piece of furniture. (2) refer to a table. Alternate translation: [was at his table]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **my nard**
UST my perfume
(נִרְדִּי)

The term **nard** refers to pleasant-smelling, perfumed oil that was made from the roots of the nard plant. If your readers would not be familiar with nard plants, you could use a general expression or describe what nard is. Alternate translation: [my perfumed oil] or [my pleasant-smelling perfume made from the nard plant]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **gave off its scent**
UST the fragrance of … spread around the room
(נָתַן רֵיחוֹ)

Alternate translation: [gave off its good odor] or [spread its pleasant aroma]

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
the king	he who is like a king to me

Song of Solomon 1:13

ULT	UST
A bundle of myrrh {is} my beloved to me; between my breasts it stays.	*During the night I desire to cradle the man I love between my breasts; to me, he is like the bag of sweet-smelling perfume which I keep there.*

ULT **A bundle of myrrh {is} my beloved to me; between my breasts it stays**
UST During the night I desire to cradle the man I love between my breasts; to me, he is like the bag of sweet-smelling perfume which I keep there
(צְרֹור הַמֹּר ו דֹודִי לִי בֵּין שָׁדַי יָלִין)

In the author's culture, women sometimes wore a small bag or pouch of myrrh on a necklace so they could enjoy its pleasant fragrance. The woman makes a comparison between that enjoyable experience and that of having the man she loves near her. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [I enjoy having my beloved near me throughout the night just like I enjoy the fragrance of a bag of myrrh]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **myrrh**
UST sweet-smelling perfume which
(הַמֹּר)

Here, **myrrh** is a pleasant-smelling incense made from resin obtained from the bark of a certain kind of tree. If your readers would not be familiar with myrrh, you could use the name of something similar in your area, or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [pleasant-smelling perfume]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **{is} my beloved**
UST the man I love … he is like
(דֹודִי)

Alternate translation: [is my lover]

> ULT **A bundle of myrrh {is} my beloved to me; between my breasts it stays**
> UST During the night I desire to cradle the man I love between my breasts; to me, he is like the bag of sweet-smelling perfume which I keep there
> (צְרֹור הַמֹּר ׀ דֹודִי לִי בֵּין שָׁדַי יָלִין)

If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a polite way of referring to **breasts**, or state the meaning of the phrase **between my breasts it stays** by using a more general expression. Alternate translation: [My beloved stays very close to me during the night, like a bundle of myrrh around my neck]

Support Reference: Euphemism

> ULT **it stays**
> UST During the night I desire … I keep there
> (יָלִין)

Here the original language word that the ULT translates **it stays** is ambiguous regarding what it is that stays. This word could: (1) indicate that the **bundle of myrrh** is what stays. Alternate translation: [the bundle of myrrh stays]; (2) mean that the man does not leave that location throughout the night. Alternate translation: [he lingers]

Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
myrrh	sweet-smelling perfume which
{is} my beloved	the man I love … he is like

Song of Solomon 1:14

ULT	UST
A cluster of henna blossoms {is} my beloved to me, in the vineyards of Engedi.	*The man whom I love is like a bunch of the fragrant flowers that are in the grape farms of the city of En Gedi. The man speaking to the woman he loves*

ULT **henna blossoms**
UST the fragrant flowers that are
(הַכֹּפֶר)

The phrase **henna blossoms** refers to pleasant-smelling blossoms from the henna plant. If your readers would not be familiar with this plant, you could use the name of a fragrant plant in your area, you could describe the henna plant, or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [fragrant flowers] or [fragrant blossoms from the henna plant]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **A cluster of henna blossoms {is} my beloved to me, in the vineyards of Engedi**
UST The man whom I love is like a bunch of the fragrant flowers that are in the grape farms of the city of En Gedi
(אֶשְׁכֹּל הַכֹּפֶר ׀ דּוֹדִי לִי בְּכַרְמֵי עֵין גֶּדִי)

Here the phrase **the vineyards of Engedi** refers to one of the most beautiful places in Israel, and the henna blossoms there were famous for their exquisite fragrance. In this verse, the woman makes a comparison between the pleasurable experience of the vineyards and her enjoyment of having the man she loves near to her. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [The presence of my lover gives me feelings of pleasure] or [I delight in my beloved being near me like I delight in the smell of the henna flowers in the vineyards of En Gedi]

Support Reference: Metaphor

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
my beloved	The man whom I love
in the vineyards of	in the grape farms of
Engedi	the city of En Gedi

Song of Solomon 1:15

ULT	UST
Behold you, beautiful, my darling! Behold you, beautiful! Your eyes {are} doves.	*My dear one, you are beautiful; you are very beautiful! Your eyes are as gentle and beautiful as doves. The woman speaking to the man she loves*

ULT Behold you … Behold you
(הִנָּךְ & הִנָּךְ)

The man is using the term **Behold** to focus the woman's attention on what he is about to say. Your language may have a comparable expression that you can use in your translation. Alternate translation: [Look at you! … Look at you!]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT Behold you, beautiful, my darling! Behold you, beautiful! Your eyes {are} doves
UST My dear one, you are beautiful; you are very beautiful! Your eyes are as gentle and beautiful as doves
(הִנָּךְ יָפָה רַעְיָתִי הִנָּךְ יָפָה עֵינַיִךְ יוֹנִים)

The man uses the phrase **Behold you, beautiful** two times for emphasis. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could combine the phrases and express emphasis in a way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [Behold you, beautiful, my darling! Your eyes are doves]

Support Reference: Parallelism

ULT my darling
UST My dear one
(רַעְיָתִי)

See how you translated the phrase **my darling** in 1:9

ULT Your eyes {are} doves
UST Your eyes are as gentle and beautiful as doves
(עֵינַיִךְ יוֹנִים)

Here the man is speaking of the woman's **eyes** as if they were **doves**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Your eyes are like doves] or [Your eyes are gentle and beautiful]

Support Reference: Metaphor

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
doves	are as gentle and beautiful as doves

Song of Solomon 1:16

ULT	UST
Behold you! {You are} handsome, my beloved, truly pleasant. Indeed, our couch is leafy.	*You whom I love, you are very good-looking, you are delightful! The green grass will be like a bed where we lie down.*

ULT Behold you
(הִנָּךְ)

The woman is using the term **Behold** to focus the man's attention on what she is about to say. Your language may have a comparable expression that you could use in your translation. Alternate translation: [Look at you]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT Behold you! {You are} handsome, my beloved, truly pleasant. Indeed, our couch is leafy
UST You whom I love, you are very good-looking, you are delightful! The green grass will be like a bed where we lie down
(הִנָּךְ יָפָה דוֹדִי אַף נָעִים אַף־עַרְשֵׂנוּ רַעֲנָנָה)

If it would be more natural in your language, you could either begin or end this verse with the phrase **my beloved**. Alternate translation: [My beloved, behold you! You are handsome, truly pleasant. Indeed, our couch is leafy]

Support Reference: Information Structure

ULT my beloved
UST You whom I love
(דוֹדִי)

See how you translated the phrase **my beloved** in 1:13. Alternate translation: [my lover]

ULT my beloved, truly pleasant
UST You whom I love … you are delightful
(דוֹדִי אַף נָעִים)

The woman is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need to be complete. You could supply these words from the context if it would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: [my beloved. You are truly pleasant]

Support Reference: Ellipsis

> **ULT** **our couch is**
> **UST** will be like a bed where we lie down
> (עַרְשֵׂנוּ)

Here, **couch** refers to the place where the couple would lie down in the forest. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the place where we lie down is] or [the place on which we lie down like a bed is]

Support Reference: Metaphor

> **ULT** **leafy**
> **UST** The green grass
> (רַעֲנָנָה)

Here the word that the ULT translates as **leafy** could be translated in a general way such as "green," or you could indicate a more specific meaning. Here, **leafy** could refer to: (1) the grass that the couple lay down on. Alternate translation: [grass]; (2) the branches above their meeting place in the forest. Alternate translation: [under the cover of branches] or [shaded by branches]. The author assumes that readers will understand that it is not a literal couch. You could include this information if it would be helpful to your readers.

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
my beloved	You whom I love
pleasant	you are delightful

Song of Solomon 1:17

ULT	UST
The beams of our house {are} cedars; our rafters {are} pine.	*Branches of cedar trees will shade us; branches of pine trees will be like a roof over our heads.*

ULT **The beams of our house {are} cedars; our rafters {are} pine**
UST Branches of cedar trees will shade us; branches of pine trees will be like a roof over our heads
(קֹרוֹת בָּתֵּינוּ אֲרָזִים רחיטנו בְּרוֹתִים)

Here the woman is speaking of the forest as if it were a **house**, the cedar trees as if they were the **beams** of the house, and the **pine** trees as if they were the **rafters** of the house. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Our meeting place is shaded by cedar and pine trees] or [Branches of cedar and pine trees will be a canopy over our meeting place]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **{are} pine**
UST branches of pine trees
(בְּרוֹתִים)

The Hebrew word that the ULT translates as **pine** refers to a tall evergreen tree that is either a fir or a pine. This tree would provide a dense covering that would act like the **rafters** of a roof. If your readers would not be familiar with this type of tree, you could use the name of a similar tree in your area, or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [are tall leafy trees]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
our house	will shade us … will be like a roof over our heads
{are} cedars	Branches of cedar trees

Song of Solomon 2

Song of Songs 2 Chapter Introduction

Translation Issues in This Chapter

The woman and man compliment each other by using metaphors and similes

In 2:1 the woman uses a metaphor to tell the man she loves that she thinks she is common, like a flower that grows on the plains or a lily that grows in the valleys. The man responds in 2:2 by using a simile to tell her how special she is when compared to other women. She then uses a simile in 2:3 to tell him how special he is compared to other men. When translating these verses, pay close attention to the translation notes and the UST in order to understand the meaning.

Chiasm

Hebrew poetry sometimes uses a literary device called a "chiasm" (sometimes called "chiasmus"). A chiasm is when words or phrases are ordered in an AB-BA sequence. In Song of Songs 2:14 the author uses a chiasm. The ULT follows the Hebrew order and translates this verse as "show me your appearance, make me hear your voice, for your voice {is} sweet, and your appearance {is} lovely." Notice that the phrases "your appearance" and "your voice" are repeated in an AB-BA sequence: "your appearance … your voice … your voice … your appearance."

Song of Solomon 2:1

ULT	UST
I {am} a wildflower of Sharon, a lily of the valleys.	*I am like an insignificant flower on the plains, like an insignificant lily growing in the valleys. The man speaking to the woman he loves*

ULT **I {am} a wildflower of Sharon, a lily of the valleys**
UST I am like an insignificant flower on the plains, like an insignificant lily growing in the valleys
(אֲנִי֙ חֲבַצֶּ֣לֶת הַשָּׁר֔וֹן שׁוֹשַׁנַּ֖ת הָעֲמָקִֽים)

Here the woman is speaking of herself as if she is a type of wildflower. She compares herself to these common wildflowers to express that she thinks she is no more attractive than other young women. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [I am as common as a wildflower of Sharon or a lily of the valleys] or [My beauty is as common as a wildflower of Sharon or a lily of the valleys]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **{am} a wildflower of**
UST am like an insignificant flower
(חֲבַצֶּ֣לֶת)

The original word which the ULT translates as **wildflower** refers to a specific type of flower which grows on the ground. The exact type of flower that the original word refers to cannot be known with certainty, so you could use the name of a pretty wildflower in your area, or you could use a more general term.

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **I {am} a wildflower of Sharon**
UST I am like an insignificant flower on the plains
(אֲנִי֙ חֲבַצֶּ֣לֶת הַשָּׁרֹ֔ון)

The writer assumes that the reader will know that **Sharon** was the name of a specific plain (a flat area) and that the word itself refers to a flat, wide area. Here the woman is probably referring to "plains" in general and expressing that she is like a wildflower that grows on the plains. You could include this information if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [I am a flower that grows on the plain of Sharon] or [I am a flower that grows on the plains]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **I {am} a wildflower of Sharon, a lily of the valleys**
UST I am like an insignificant flower on the plains, like an insignificant lily growing in the valleys
(אֲנִי֙ חֲבַצֶּ֣לֶת הַשָּׁרֹ֔ון שֹׁושַׁנַּ֖ת הָעֲמָקִֽים)

These two phrases **a flower of Sharon** and **a lily of the valleys** mean basically the same thing. The second phrase emphasizes the meaning of the first by repeating the same idea with different words. Hebrew poetry was based on this kind of repetition, and it would be good to show this to your readers by including both phrases in your translation rather than combining them. However, if it would be helpful to your readers, you could combine the phrases into one. Alternate translation: [I am a wildflower that grows in the plains and the valleys]

Support Reference: Parallelism

ULT **a lily of**
UST like an insignificant lily
(שֹׁושַׁנַּ֖ת)

The woman is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. If it would be clearer in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: [I am a lily of]

Support Reference: Ellipsis

> ULT **a lily of**
> UST like an insignificant lily
> (שׁוֹשַׁנַּת)

The Hebrew word that the ULT translates as **lily** is a type of flower which grows as a wildflower. If your readers would not be familiar with this type of flower, you could use the name of something similar in your area, or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [a wildflower of]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Sharon	on the plains

Song of Solomon 2:2

ULT	UST
Like a lily among thorns, so {is} my darling among the daughters.	*Among all the other young women, you, my dear one, are like a lily growing among thorns! The woman speaking to herself*

ULT **Like a lily among thorns, so {is} my darling among the daughters**
UST Among all the other young women, you, my dear one, are like a lily growing among thorns
(כְּשׁוֹשַׁנָּה בֵּין הַחוֹחִים כֵּן רַעְיָתִי בֵּין הַבָּנוֹת)

The man is saying that the woman he loves is **like a lily among thorns**. The idea is that just as a lily is much more beautiful than thorns, so the woman he loves is much more beautiful than the other young women. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: [You, my darling, are much more beautiful than all other women]

Support Reference: Simile

ULT **Like a lily**
UST are like a lily growing
(כְּשׁוֹשַׁנָּה)

See how you translated the word **lily** in 2:1.

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **{is} my darling**
UST you, my dear one
(רַעְיָתִי)

See how you translated the phrase **my darling** in 1:9.

ULT **the daughters**
UST all the other young women
(הַבָּנוֹת)

The writer assumes that the readers will understand that **the daughters** refers to the "daughters of Jerusalem" mentioned in 1:5. The phrase probably also refers to all women. You could include this information if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [the young women of Jerusalem] or [the other young women]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
thorns	thorns

Song of Solomon 2:3

ULT	UST
Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest, so {is} my beloved among the sons. In his shadow I greatly delighted, and I sat, and his fruit {is} sweet to my palate.	*Compared to other men, you, the one whom I love, are like an apple tree that produces delicious fruit and grows in the forest among common trees. You are like a tree whose shade protects me from the sun, and your being close to me is delightful, like eating sweet fruit.*

> ULT **Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest, so {is} my beloved among the sons**
> UST Compared to other men, you, the one whom I love, are like an apple tree that produces delicious fruit and grows in the forest among common trees
> (כְּתַפּוּחַ בַּעֲצֵי הַיַּעַר כֵּן דוֹדִי בֵּין הַבָּנִים)

The woman is saying that the man is like an **apple tree** because, in the same way that **an apple tree** is more pleasant than the other **trees of the forest**, so the man she loves is more pleasant than other men. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: [As apple trees are more pleasant than other trees, so you, my beloved, are more pleasant than other men] or [As apple trees are more delightful than other trees, so you, my beloved, are more delightful than other men]

Support Reference: Simile

> ULT **Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest, so {is} my beloved among the sons**
> UST Compared to other men, you, the one whom I love, are like an apple tree that produces delicious fruit and grows in the forest among common trees
> (כְּתַפּוּחַ בַּעֲצֵי הַיַּעַר כֵּן דוֹדִי בֵּין הַבָּנִים)

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases. Alternate translation: [Among the other young men, my beloved is like an apple tree among the trees of the forest] or [Compared to other men, my beloved is like an apple tree among the trees of the forest]

Support Reference: Information Structure

ULT **Like an apple tree**
UST like an apple tree that produces delicious fruit
(כְּתַפּוּחַ)

An **apple tree** is a tree that produces apples, a round, pleasant-tasting fruit. Bible scholars are not certain that the word the ULT translates as **apple** refers to what we now call an apple. It could refer to an apricot or another type of fruit. If your readers would not be familiar with these types of trees, you could use the name of something similar in your area, or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [Like a tree that produces pleasant tasting fruit] or [Like an apricot tree]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **among the trees of the forest**
UST and grows in the forest among common trees
(בַּעֲצֵי הַיָּעַר)

The writer assumes that the reader will understand that **the trees of the forest** refers to the other trees of the forest, those which were considered common when compared to the beautiful, fruit-bearing **apple tree**. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [among the other trees of the forest] or [compared to the common trees of the forest]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **{is} my beloved**
UST you, the one whom I love, are
(דּוֹדִי)

See how you translated the phrase **my beloved** in 1:13.

ULT **among the sons**
UST Compared to other men
(בֵּין הַבָּנִים)

Here the writer assumes that the reader will know that **the sons** refers to the other young men. In the previous verse the man compared the woman to the other “daughters”. Here the woman compares the man she loves to the other young men, whom she calls **sons**. You could include this information if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [among the other young men] or [when compared to all the other men]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **In his shadow I greatly delighted, and I sat, and his fruit {is} sweet to my palate**
UST You are like a tree whose shade protects me from the sun, and your being close to me is delightful, like eating sweet fruit
(בְּצִלּוֹ חִמַּדְתִּי וְיָשַׁבְתִּי וּפִרְיוֹ מָתוֹק לְחִכִּי)

Here the woman continues speaking of the man as if he were **an apple tree**. The word **shadow** refers to the shade of the apple tree which gives protection from the sun. **I sat** represents being near or in the presence of the man. Here the woman speaks of her pleasurable feelings as if they were **his fruit** which is **sweet to my palate**. If it is possible in your language, you should try to retain the images used here or substitute a comparable image. However, if it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [He provides me with refreshment and protection when I am in his presence; he gives me great pleasure] or [I sit in his presence, and he refreshes and protects me. Like sweet fruit, he is delightful to me]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **In his shadow I greatly delighted, and I sat**
UST You are like a tree whose shade protects me from the sun, and your being close to me is delightful
(בְּצִלּוֹ חִמַּדְתִּי וְיָשַׁבְתִּי)

Alternate translation: [In his shade I took delight, and I sat]

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
{is} my beloved	you, the one whom I love, are
I greatly delighted	You are like a tree whose shade protects me from the sun, and your being close to me is delightful
and his fruit	like … fruit

Song of Solomon 2:4

ULT	UST
He brought me to the house of wine and his banner over me {is} love.	*I want you to lead me to the place where we can make love, and it is evident that you love me very much. The woman speaking to the man she loves*

> ULT **He brought me**
> UST I want you to lead me
> (הֱבִיאַנִי)

See how you translated the phrase “has brought me” in 1:4. The original language word which the ULT translates here as **He brought me** could be describing: (1) a request or wish that the woman has and not something that has already happened. Alternate translation: [May he bring me] or [I desire him to bring me]; (2) an action that has already happened. Alternate translation: [He has brought me]

Support Reference: Statements — Other Uses

> ULT **He brought me**
> UST I want you to lead me
> (הֱבִיאַנִי)

Your language might say “took” rather than **brought** in a context such as this. Alternate translation: [He took me]

Support Reference: Go and Come

> ULT **the house of wine**
> UST the place where we can make love
> (בֵּית הַיָּיִן)

The writer assumes that the reader will understand that the phrase **house of wine** refers to a location to which people went to drink wine. The phrase does not necessarily mean a house, so here it could be referring to the private location that the couple used as their meeting place, (described in 1:17). You could include this information if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [the place where wine is drunk] or [the place where wine is served] or [our meeting place]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

> ULT **the house of wine**
> UST the place where we can make love
> (בֵּית הַיָּיִן)

The woman is referring to a private meeting place, one in which they could enjoy expressing their love for each other. She speaks of it in a polite way by using the phrase **house of wine**, an image that was meaningful in her culture. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a polite way of referring to this in your language, or you could state this plainly. Alternate translation: [our meeting place so that we could enjoy our love] or [the place where we could celebrate our love for each other] or [the place where we could consummate our love]

Support Reference: Euphemism

> ULT **and his banner over me {is} love**
> UST and it is evident that you love me very much
> (וְדִגְלוֹ עָלַי אַהֲבָה)

The woman is speaking of the man's **love** for her as if it were a **banner**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and he publicly displays his love for me, and his intention is to protect me] or [and he covers me with his love]

Support Reference: Metaphor

> ULT **and his banner**
> UST and it is evident that you … me very much
> (וְדִגְלוֹ)

A **banner** is a flag made from a large piece of cloth that is attached to a long pole. People, groups, and kings had their own unique banners by which they identified themselves. If your readers would not be familiar with this type of flag, you could use the name of something similar in your area, or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [and his flag]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

> ULT **and his banner over me {is} love**
> UST and it is evident that you love me very much
> (וְדִגְלוֹ עָלַי אַהֲבָה)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **love**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [and his banner shows that I belong to him, and he loves me]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
the house	the place where we can make love
of wine	the place where we can make love
{is} love	love

Song of Solomon 2:5

ULT	UST
Sustain me with raisin cakes; refresh me with apples, for sick with love {am} I!	*Strengthen and refresh me with fruit, because the way you love me makes me feel lovesick. The woman speaking to herself*

ULT **Sustain me with raisin cakes; refresh me with apples**
UST Strengthen and refresh me with fruit
(סַמְּכוּנִי בָּאֲשִׁישׁוֹת רַפְּדוּנִי בַּתַּפּוּחִים)

These two clauses mean basically the same thing. In the author's culture both raisins and **apples** were believed to give people strength for love. The second clause emphasizes the meaning of the first by repeating the same idea with different words. Hebrew poetry was based on this kind of repetition. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could connect the clauses with a word that shows that the second clause is repeating the first one, not saying something additional, or you could combine these two clauses into one. Alternate translation: [Sustain me with raisin cakes; yes, refresh me with apples] or [strengthen me with fruit] or [strengthen me for love with fruit]

Support Reference: Parallelism

ULT **Sustain me … refresh me**
UST Strengthen and refresh me
(סַמְּכוּנִי & רַפְּדוּנִי)

The phrases **Sustain me** and **refresh me** are plural imperative forms in the original language. The woman is addressing the man using plural forms to show the intensity of her feelings. The ULT indicates this intensity by placing an exclamation point at the end of this verse. Your language may allow you to use a plural form for this purpose, or you could use the singular form and show the intensity of emotion in another way.

Support Reference: Unusual Uses of the Plural

> ULT **Sustain me with raisin cakes; refresh me with apples, for sick with love {am} I**
> UST Strengthen and refresh me with fruit, because the way you love me makes me feel lovesick
> (סַמְּכוּנִי בָּאֲשִׁישׁוֹת רַפְּדוּנִי בַּתַּפּוּחִים כִּי־חוֹלַת אַהֲבָה אָנִי)

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases, since the second phrase gives the reason for the result that the first phrase describes. Alternate translation: [Because I am sick with love, sustain me with raisin cakes and refresh me with apples]

Support Reference: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

> ULT **with raisin cakes**
> UST with fruit
> (בָּאֲשִׁישׁוֹת)

Here, **raisin cakes** were cakes made of dried grapes pressed together. If your readers would not be familiar with this type of fruit, you could use the name of something similar in your area, or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [with cakes made of dried fruit]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

> ULT **with apples**
> UST with fruit
> (בַּתַּפּוּחִים)

See how you translated the word “apple” in 2:3.

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

> ULT **for sick with love {am} I**
> UST because the way you love me makes me feel lovesick
> (כִּי־חוֹלַת אַהֲבָה אָנִי)

The woman speaks of feeling **sick with love** as an exaggeration to emphasize the strength of her feelings for the man. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different way to express the emphasis. Alternate translation: [for my love for you is so strong that I feel as if I were sick with love] or [because my love for you overwhelms me like a sickness]

Support Reference: Hyperbole

> ULT **love**
> UST the way you love me makes … feel lovesick
> (אַהֲבָה)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **love**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [longing for you]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
love	the way you love me makes … feel lovesick

Song of Solomon 2:6

ULT	UST
His left hand {is} under my head, and his right hand embraces me.	*The man whom I love has placed his left arm under my head, and he holds me close with his right arm. The woman speaking to the women of Jerusalem*

ULT His left hand {is} under my head, and his right hand embraces me

UST The man whom I love has placed his left arm under my head, and he holds me close with his right arm

(שְׂמֹאלוֹ תַּחַת לְרֹאשִׁי וִימִינוֹ תְּחַבְּקֵנִי)

This verse could be describing: (1) an action that the man was doing, in which case it should be translated in a similar way to the ULT. (2) a request or wish that the woman has, and not something which has already happened. Alternate translation: [I hope he puts his left arm under my head and holds me close with his right arm] or [I want him to put his left arm under my head and hold me close with his right arm]

ULT His left hand {is} under my head

UST The man whom I love has placed his left arm under my head

(שְׂמֹאלוֹ תַּחַת לְרֹאשִׁי)

Alternate translation: [The man I love cradles my head on his left arm]

Song of Solomon 2:7

ULT	UST
I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem, by the female gazelles or the does of the field, do not awaken nor stir love until it desires.	*You young women of Jerusalem, I want you to solemnly promise me, while the female gazelles and female deer are listening, that you will not cause people to love romantically until it is the right time. The woman speaking to herself*

ULT I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem
UST You young women of Jerusalem, I want you to solemnly promise me
(הִשְׁבַּעְתִּי אֶתְכֶם בְּנוֹת יְרוּשָׁלִָם)

Here the woman is speaking to the **daughters of Jerusalem**, but most likely they are not present. The woman is doing this as a poetic way of giving voice to her strong feelings. Because the author does this intentionally for poetic effect, it is suggested that you do the same. If it would be helpful in your language, you could indicate this in a footnote.

Support Reference: Apostrophe

ULT I adjure you … by the female gazelles or the does of the field
UST You … I want you to solemnly promise me, while the female gazelles and female deer are listening
(הִשְׁבַּעְתִּי אֶתְכֶם & בִּצְבָאוֹת אוֹ בְּאַיְלוֹת הַשָּׂדֶה)

The phrase **I adjure you** and the word **by** are both parts of a Hebrew oath formula. Use a natural way in your language to express an oath. Alternate translation: [I urge you to promise me … with the female gazelles or the does of the field as our witnesses] or [Please promise me … with the female gazelles or the does of the field as our witnesses] or [I want you to make an oath … with the female gazelles or the does of the field listening]

Support Reference: Oath Formulas

ULT daughters of Jerusalem
UST young women of Jerusalem
(בְּנוֹת יְרוּשָׁלִָם)

See how you translated the phrase **daughters of Jerusalem** in 1:5.

Support Reference: Possession

ULT **by the female gazelles or the does of the field**
UST while the female gazelles and female deer are listening
(בִּצְבָאוֹת אוֹ בְּאַיְלוֹת הַשָּׂדֶה)

Here the woman is using the possessive form to describe the **female gazelles** and **does** that are characterized as being **of the field** and therefore are wild animals. If your language would not use the possessive form for this, you could explain the meaning of the phrase **of the field** in your translation. Alternate translation: [by the wild female gazelles and does] or [by the wild female gazelles or the wild does] or [by the female gazelles or the does that live in the wild]

Support Reference: Possession

ULT **by the female gazelles**
UST while the female gazelles … are listening
(בִּצְבָאוֹת)

A gazelle is a small type of antelope, that looks and moves like a deer and is similar in size. If your readers would not be familiar with this type of animal, you could use the name of a similar animal in your area, or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [by the female antelopes]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **the does of**
UST female deer
(בְּאַיְלוֹת)

The writer assumes that the reader will understand that **does** refers to female deer. You could include this information if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [the female deer of]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **do not awaken nor stir love until it desires**
UST that you will not cause people to love romantically until it is the right time
(אִם־תָּעִירוּ ׀ וְאִם־תְּעוֹרְרוּ אֶת־הָאַהֲבָה עַד שֶׁתֶּחְפָּץ)

Here the woman speaks of **love** as if it were a person who could sleep, **awaken**, and have **desires**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [do not encourage people to love romantically until the appropriate time] or [do not encourage people to have romantic feelings until the appropriate time]

Support Reference: Personification

ULT **do not awaken nor stir**
UST that you will not cause people to
(אִם־תָּעִ֣ירוּ ׀ וְאִם־תְּעוֹרְרֻ֣וּ)

Here the words **awaken** and **stir** mean similar things. The repetition is used for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: [do not awaken] or [do not stir up feelings of]

Support Reference: Doublet

ULT **love**
UST love romantically
(אֶת־הָאַהֲבָ֖ה)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **love**, you could express the same idea in another way.

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Jerusalem	Jerusalem
love	love romantically

Song of Solomon 2:8

ULT	UST
The voice of my beloved! Behold, this one is coming, leaping over the mountains, jumping over the hills.	*Listen! Look! The man whom I love is coming. It is as though he is leaping over the mountains and skipping over the hills,*

ULT **leaping over the mountains, jumping over the hills … My beloved is being like a gazelle or a young stag**
UST It is as though he is leaping over the mountains and skipping over the hills … like a gazelle or a young male deer
(מְדַלֵּג עַל־הֶהָרִים מְקַפֵּץ עַל־הַגְּבָעוֹת: דּוֹמֶה דוֹדִי לִצְבִי אוֹ לְעֹפֶר הָאַיָּלִים) (2:8-9)

The woman is saying that the man she loves **is like a gazelle or a young stag** because he appears strong and exuberant as he approaches her. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state this explicitly. Alternate translation: [leaping over the mountains, jumping over the hills. My beloved is agile and exuberant, and he exudes freedom and strength as does a gazelle or young stag]

Support Reference: Simile

ULT **leaping over the mountains, jumping over the hills … My beloved is being like a gazelle or a young stag**
UST It is as though he is leaping over the mountains and skipping over the hills … like a gazelle or a young male deer
(מְדַלֵּג עַל־הֶהָרִים מְקַפֵּץ עַל־הַגְּבָעוֹת: דּוֹמֶה דוֹדִי לִצְבִי אוֹ לְעֹפֶר הָאַיָּלִים) (2:8-9)

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases. Alternate translation: [My beloved is being like a gazelle or a young stag, leaping over the mountains, jumping over the hills]

Support Reference: Information Structure

ULT **The voice of my beloved**
UST Listen … The man whom I love
(קוֹל דּוֹדִי)

Here the word **voice** either refers to: (1) the man's words that he is speaking or (2) the sound of his voice which indicates he is approaching. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Listen, I hear my beloved speaking] or [Listen, I hear my beloved approaching]

Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **Behold**
UST Look
(הִנֵּה)

Behold is an exclamation word that is used to bring attention to the man's approach. Use an exclamation that would communicate that meaning in your language. See how you translated **Behold** in 1:15. Alternate translation: [See]

Support Reference: Exclamations

ULT **is coming**
UST is coming
(בָּא)

Your language may say "going" rather than **coming** in contexts such as this. Use whichever is more natural. Alternate translation: [is going]

Support Reference: Go and Come

ULT **leaping over the mountains, jumping over the hills**
UST It is as though he is leaping over the mountains and skipping over the hills
(מְדַלֵּג עַל־הֶהָרִים מְקַפֵּץ עַל־הַגְּבָעוֹת)

These two phrases mean the same thing. The second emphasizes the meaning of the first by repeating the same idea with different words. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could combine these two phrases and provide emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [leaping over the mountains!] or [leaping and jumping over the mountains and hills!]

Support Reference: Parallelism

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
my beloved	The man whom I love

Song of Solomon 2:9

ULT	UST
My beloved is being like a gazelle or a young stag. Behold, this one is standing behind our wall, gazing through the windows, looking through the lattices.	*like a gazelle or a young male deer. Look! There he is! He is standing outside the wall of our house, peering in through the window, and looking intently through the wooden strips inside the window frame.*

ULT **a gazelle**
UST a gazelle
(לִצְבִי)

See how you translated the plural form, “gazelles,” in 2:7; then translate this word as the singular form of “gazelles.”

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **stag**
UST a … male deer
(הָאַיָּלִים)

The writer assumes that the readers will understand that a **stag** is an adult male deer. You could include this information if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [adult male deer]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **Behold**
UST Look! There … is
(הִנֵּה)

See how you translated the word **Behold** in 1:15 where it occurs with the same meaning.

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **this one**
UST he
(זֶה)

Here the phrase **this one** refers to the man whom the woman calls **My beloved** in the first part of this verse. If this is not clear for your readers, you could specify the person here. Alternate translation: [this man] or [my beloved]

Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

ULT **behind our wall**
UST outside the wall of our house
(אַחַר כָּתְלֵנוּ)

Here the word **our** refers to the woman and her family and does not include the man, so use the exclusive form of that word in your translation if your language marks that distinction. Alternate translation: [behind the wall of my house] or [on the other side of the wall of my family's house]

Support Reference: Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

ULT **gazing through the windows, looking through the lattices**
UST peering in through the window, and looking intently through the wooden strips inside the window frame
(מַשְׁגִּיחַ מִן־הַחַלֹּנוֹת מֵצִיץ מִן־הַחֲרַכִּים)

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. The second emphasizes the meaning of the first by repeating the same idea with different words. Hebrew poetry was based on this kind of repetition, and it would be good to show this to your readers by including both phrases in your translation rather than combining them. However, if it would be helpful to your readers, you could connect the phrases with a word other than "and" in order to show that the second phrase is repeating the first one, not saying something additional. Alternate translation: [gazing through the windows, yes, looking through the lattices]

Support Reference: Parallelism

ULT **the windows … the lattices**
UST the window … the wooden strips inside the window frame
(הַחַלֹּנוֹת & הַחֲרַכִּים)

Here the words **windows** and **lattices** are plural forms and could: (1) have a plural meaning here, indicating that the man was walking around the house and looking into the house through different windows and lattices. (2) be used with singular meanings here, indicating the multiple openings of a single window and lattice. Alternate translation: [the window … the lattice]

Support Reference: Unusual Uses of the Plural

> ULT **the lattices**
> UST the wooden strips inside the window frame
> (הַחֲרַכִּים)

The **lattices** are vertical and horizontal strips found inside a window frame. They have spaces between them through which a person could look. If your readers would not be familiar with lattices, you could use the name of something similar in your area, or you could use the wording of the UST. Alternate translation: [the screen]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
My beloved	דּוֹדִי (ORIG QUOTE)
stag	a … male deer

Song of Solomon 2:10

ULT	UST
My beloved answered and said to me, “Get up, my darling, my beauty, and come,	*The man whom I love spoke to me and said, “My dear one, get up; my beautiful one, come with me!*

ULT and come
UST come with me
(וְלְכִי־לָךְ)

Your language may say “go” rather than **come** in a context such as this. Use whichever is more natural. Alternate translation: [and go]

Support Reference: Go and Come

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
My beloved	The man whom I love

Song of Solomon 2:11

ULT	UST
for, behold, the winter has gone; the rain has passed; it went away.	*Look, the cold season has ended; the rain has stopped.*

ULT behold
UST Look
(הִנֵּה)

The man is using the term **behold** to focus the woman's attention on what he is about to say. Your language may have a comparable expression that you could use in your translation. Alternate translation: [see]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT for, behold
UST Look
(כִּי־הִנֵּה)

Here the word **for** indicates that what follows is a reason for what came before. Use a connector in your language that makes it clear that what follows is a reason for what came before. Alternate translation: [behold, this is because]

Support Reference: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

ULT the winter
UST the cold season
(הַסְּתָו)

In Israel, **winter** is the time of year when it is cold and rains more heavily than during other seasons. If the seasons do not vary much in your location, you could explain this with a general expression such as "the cold season." Alternate translation: [the cold, rainy season] or [the cold, wet season]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **the winter has gone; the rain has passed**
UST the cold season has ended; the rain has stopped
(הִסְתָּו עָבַר הַגֶּשֶׁם חָלַף)

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. The second emphasizes the meaning of the first by repeating the same idea with different words. Hebrew poetry was based on this kind of repetition, and it would be good to show this to your readers by including both phrases in your translation rather than combining them. However, if it would be helpful to your readers, you could connect the phrases with a word other than "and" in order to show that the second phrase is repeating the first one, not saying something additional. Alternate translation: [the winter has gone; yes, the rain has passed]

Support Reference: Parallelism

ULT **has gone**
UST has ended
(עָבַר)

Your language might not say **has gone** in a context such as this. Alternate translation: [is finished] or [is over]

Support Reference: Go and Come

ULT **it went away**
UST has stopped
(הָלַךְ לוֹ)

Alternate translation: [it has ended] or [it has departed]

ULT **has passed; it went away**
UST has stopped
(חָלַף הָלַךְ לוֹ)

The terms **passed** and **went away** mean similar things. The author is using the two terms together for emphasis. If it would be clearer for your readers, you could express the emphasis with a single phrase. Alternate translation: [is over and gone] or [has gone away]

Support Reference: Doublet

Song of Solomon 2:12

ULT	UST
The blossoms have appeared in the land; the time of the song has arrived, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land.	*The flowers are blooming throughout the country. It is now time to sing; we hear the doves cooing throughout our land.*

ULT in the land
UST throughout the country
(בָּאָֽרֶץ)

Alternate translation: [throughout the land]

ULT and the voice of the turtledove is heard
UST we hear the doves cooing
(וְקוֹל הַתּוֹר נִשְׁמַע)

If your language does not use a passive form like **the turtledove is heard**, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you need to say who did the action, it is clear from the context that it is people. Alternate translation: [and people hear the voice of the turtledove] or [and people hear the turtledove cooing]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
the turtledove	the doves

Song of Solomon 2:13

ULT	UST
The fig tree ripens its green figs, and the vines {are in} blossom; they give off a smell. Get up, come, my darling, my beauty, and come."	*There are new figs on the fig trees, and there are blossoms on the grapevines, and their fragrance fills the air. My dear one, get up; my beautiful one, come with me!*

ULT The fig tree ripens its green figs
UST There are new figs on the fig trees
(הַתְּאֵנָה חָנְטָה פַּגֶּיהָ)

In this verse, the word **fig tree** is in singular form but refers to all the fig trees as a group. If it would be helpful in your language, you could say this plainly. Alternate translation: [The fig trees are ripening their green figs] or [The figs on the trees are becoming ripe]

Support Reference: Collective Nouns

ULT and the vines {are in} blossom
UST and there are blossoms on the grapevines
(וְהַגְּפָנִים ׀ סְמָדַר)

Alternate translation: [and the grapevines are flowering] or [and the grapevines are blossoming]

ULT they give off a smell
UST and their fragrance fills the air
(נָתְנוּ־רֵיחַ)

Here the pronoun **they** refers to the blossoms on the grapevines. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: [their flowers give off a pleasant smell] or [their blossoms have a sweet smell]

Support Reference: Pronouns — When to Use Them

ULT Get up, come, my darling, my beauty, and come
UST My dear one, get up; my beautiful one, come with me
(קוּמִי לכִי רַעְיָתִי יָפָתִי וּלְכִי־לָךְ)

See how you translated the similar phrase in 2:10. Alternate translation: [Get up, go, my darling, my beauty, and go]

Support Reference: Go and Come

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
The fig tree	the fig trees
its green figs	There are new figs on
and the vines	and … on the grapevines

Song of Solomon 2:14

ULT	UST
My dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the hiding places of the cliff, show me your appearance, make me hear your voice, for your voice {is} sweet, and your appearance {is} lovely.	*You are like a dove that is hiding far from me in an opening in the rocky cliff. Allow me to see your form, and allow me to hear your voice, because your voice sounds sweet, and your form is comely." The woman speaking to the man she loves*

ULT **My dove**
UST You are like a dove
(יוֹנָתִי)

Here the phrase **My dove** could be: (1) the man speaking directly to the woman. Alternate translation: [O my dove]; (2) the man speaking about the woman rather than speaking to her directly. Alternate translation: [The woman I love is a dove]

Support Reference: Direct and Indirect Quotations

ULT **My dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the hiding places of the cliff**
UST You are like a dove that is hiding far from me in an opening in the rocky cliff
(יוֹנָתִי בְּחַגְוֵי הַסֶּלַע בְּסֵתֶר הַמַּדְרֵגָה)

Here the man speaks to the woman he loves as if she were his **dove**. He then tells her the way in which she is like a dove. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state this meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [O my one who is like a dove. You are like a gentle and timid dove which hides in the clefts of the rock and in the hiding places of the cliff] or [You are like a dove, like a gentle and shy dove which hides in the clefts of the rock and in the hiding places of the cliff] or [You are like a dove, far away in the clefts of the rock, in the hiding places of the cliff]

Support Reference: Metaphor

> ULT **in the clefts of the rock, in the hiding places of the cliff**
> UST that is hiding far from me in an opening in the rocky cliff
> (בְּחַגְוֵי הַסֶּלַע בְּסֵתֶר הַמַּדְרֵגָה)

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. The second emphasizes the meaning of the first by repeating the same idea with different words. Hebrew poetry was based on this kind of repetition, and it would be good to show this to your readers by including both phrases in your translation rather than combining them. However, if it would be helpful to your readers, you could connect the phrases with a word such as "yes" in order to show that the second phrase is repeating a similar idea to the first one, not saying something additional. You could also combine the two lines as modeled by the UST. Alternate translation: [in the clefts of the rock, yes, in the hiding places of the cliff]

Support Reference: Parallelism

> ULT **in the clefts of the rock**
> UST that is hiding far from me in an opening in the rocky cliff
> (בְּחַגְוֵי הַסֶּלַע)

Alternate translation: [in the cracks of the rock]

> ULT **show me your appearance, make me hear your voice, for your voice {is} sweet, and your appearance {is} lovely**
> UST Allow me to see your form, and allow me to hear your voice, because your voice sounds sweet, and your form is comely
> (הַרְאִינִי אֶת־מַרְאַיִךְ הַשְׁמִיעֵנִי אֶת־קוֹלֵךְ כִּי־קוֹלֵךְ עָרֵב וּמַרְאַיִךְ נָאוֶה)

Here two ideas are presented and then they are further explained in reverse order. This is called a chiasm. Biblical Hebrew sometimes uses this literary device. If possible, try to follow this AB-BA sequence of presenting the information here. See the chapter introduction for more information regarding chiasms.

Support Reference: Poetry

ULT show me your appearance, make me hear
UST Allow me to see your form, and allow me to hear
(הַרְאִינִי אֶת־מַרְאַיִךְ הַשְׁמִיעֵנִי)

The phrases **show me** and **make me hear** are imperatives, but they communicate a polite request rather than a command. Use a form in your language that communicates a polite request. It may be helpful to add an expression such as “please” or “let” to make this clear. Alternate translation: [please let me see your appearance, please let me hear] or [let me see you, let me hear]

Support Reference: Imperatives — Other Uses

ULT your voice {is} sweet
UST your voice sounds sweet
(קוֹלֵךְ עָרֵב)

Alternate translation: [your voice is sweet-sounding] or [your voice sounds beautiful]

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
My dove	You are like a dove

Song of Solomon 2:15

ULT	UST
Catch the foxes for us, the little foxes that destroy the vineyards, and our vineyards {are in} blossom.	*There are harmful things that are like little foxes that ruin vineyards; do not allow these things to ruin our growing relationship.*

ULT **Catch the foxes for us, the little foxes that destroy the vineyards, and our vineyards {are in} blossom**

UST There are harmful things that are like little foxes that ruin vineyards; do not allow these things to ruin our growing relationship

(אֶחֱזוּ־לָנוּ שְׁוּעָלִים שְׁוּעָלִים קְטַנִּים מְחַבְּלִים כְּרָמִים וּכְרָמֵינוּ סְמָדַר)

Here the writer is speaking of **the foxes** as if they represent things, perhaps even other men, who could harm the man and woman's developing relationship with each other. Catching **the foxes** represents removing or protecting against them. The **vineyards** represent the love the man and woman have for each other. The phrase **our vineyards {are in} blossom** means that their love is growing, like a plant blossoms and grows. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Get rid of the harmful things that hinder and damage our relationship, for our relationship is blossoming] or [Remove the little things that threaten our growing relationship] or [There are other men who are like little foxes that ruin vineyards; do not allow those men to attack me]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **the foxes for us, the little foxes**

UST There are harmful things that are like little foxes … these things

(לָנוּ שְׁוּעָלִים שְׁוּעָלִים קְטַנִּים)

It is possible that the word that the ULT translates as **foxes** could, instead, refer to jackals. Jackals are wild dogs that resemble wolves and coyotes. Alternate translation: [the jackals for us, the little jackals]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

> ULT **the foxes for us, the little foxes**
> UST There are harmful things that are like little foxes … these things
> (לָ֨נוּ שׁוּעָלִ֜ים שׁוּעָלִ֥ים קְטַנִּ֖ים)

Both **foxes** and jackals are land animals that are similar to small dogs and would ruin vineyards by digging up roots and eating the budding blossoms. If your readers would not be familiar with these animals and their habits, you could use the name of something similar in your area, or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [the dog-like animals for us, the little dog-like animals]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

> ULT **for us … and our vineyards**
> UST our … relationship
> (לָ֨נוּ & וּכְרָמֵ֖ינוּ)

Here the words **us** and **our** refer to the woman and the man, so use the inclusive forms of these words if your language marks that distinction.

Support Reference: Exclusive and Inclusive 'We'

> ULT **and our vineyards {are in} blossom**
> UST our growing relationship
> (וּכְרָמֵ֖ינוּ סְמָדֵֽר)

Alternate translation: [because the grapevines in our vineyards are blooming] or [because our grapevines are in bloom]

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Catch	do not allow
that destroy	that ruin … to ruin
the vineyards	vineyards
and our vineyards	our … relationship

Song of Solomon 2:16

ULT	UST
My beloved {belongs} to me and I {belong} to him, the man grazing among the lilies.	*You whom I love, you are mine, and I am yours. You have pleasure when you kiss my lips, as a gazelle does when eating among the lilies.*

ULT My beloved {belongs} to me and I {belong} to him
UST You whom I love, you are mine, and I am yours
(דּוֹדִי לִי וַאֲנִי לוֹ)

The woman is speaking about the man in the third person even though she is most likely speaking directly to the man. This is common in Hebrew poetry. If this would not be natural in your language, you can translate this in a way that indicates that the woman is speaking directly to the man. Alternate translation: [My beloved, you belong to me, and I belong to you]

Support Reference: First, Second or Third Person

ULT the man grazing among the lilies
UST You have pleasure when you kiss my lips, as a gazelle does when eating among the lilies
(הָרֹעֶה בַּשּׁוֹשַׁנִּים)

The phrase **the man grazing among the lilies** could mean: (1) that the man himself is grazing among the lilies. (2) that the man grazes his flock of animals among the lilies. Alternate translation: [the man grazing his flock among the lilies]

ULT the man grazing among the lilies
UST You have pleasure when you kiss my lips, as a gazelle does when eating among the lilies
(הָרֹעֶה בַּשּׁוֹשַׁנִּים)

Here the woman is speaking of the man as if he were “a gazelle or a young stag” (2:9) that eats **among the lilies**. She is using **lilies** to represent herself as she did in 2:1. Here, **the lilies** probably represent the woman’s lips. The meaning here is that the man finds sustenance and enjoyment through being with the woman and kissing her lips. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [my beloved gets pleasure grazing among the lilies] or [my beloved gets pleasure as he grazes among the lilies]

Support Reference: Metaphor

> **ULT among the lilies**
> **UST** when you kiss my lips … when eating among the lilies
> (בַּשּׁוֹשַׁנִּֽים)

See how you translated “lily” (the singular form of **lilies**) in 2:1.

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
My beloved	You whom I love

Song of Solomon 2:17

ULT	UST
Until the day breathes and the shadows flee, turn; resemble, my beloved, a gazelle or a young stag on the mountains of Bether.	*You whom I love, come and be like a gazelle or a young male deer on the mountains in Bether, until the evening breeze blows and the sun sets.*

ULT **the day breathes and the shadows flee**
UST the evening breeze blows and the sun sets
(שֶׁיָּפ֣וּחַ הַיּ֔וֹם וְנָסוּ֙ הַצְּלָלִ֔ים)

The phrases **the day breathes** and **the shadows flee** mean basically the same thing. The second emphasizes the meaning of the first by repeating the same idea with different words. Hebrew poetry was based on this type of repetition, and it would be good to show this to your readers by including both phrases in your translation rather than combining them. Together, they both either refer to: (1) the evening time, when the evening breeze blows (**breathes**) and the shadows cast by the sun disappear (**flee**). Alternate translation: [the evening time when the breeze blows and the shadows cast by the sun disappear] or (2) the morning time, when the light from the sun dawns and the morning breeze blows (**breathes**). Alternate translation: [dawn tomorrow morning, when the darkness disappears]

Support Reference: Parallelism

ULT **and the shadows flee**
UST and the sun sets
(וְנָסוּ֙ הַצְּלָלִ֔ים)

Here the author is leaving out the word **Until** that in many languages this sentence would need in order to be complete. You could supply this word from earlier in the sentence if it would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: [and until the shadows flee]

Support Reference: Ellipsis

ULT **turn; resemble, my beloved**
UST You whom I love, come and be like
(סֹ֣ב דְּמֵה־לְךָ֤ דוֹדִי֙)

Alternate translation: [turn; my beloved, and be like]

ULT **a gazelle**
UST a gazelle
(לִצְבִי)

See how you translated the plural form “gazelles” in 2:7, and translate this word as the singular form of “gazelles.”

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **the mountains of Bether**
UST the mountains in Bether
(הָרֵי בָתֶר)

The word **Bether** is a word borrowed from the Hebrew that means “cleft” or “divided.” You will need to decide if you will borrow it into your language or if you will translate the meaning. Either approach has broad support. Here it could: (1) be a proper name that refers to a specific place in Israel. If you choose this option, then in your translation you could spell it the way that it sounds in your language and then put the meaning in a footnote. (2) be a description of **the mountains**. Alternate translation: [the cleft mountains] or [the rugged mountains] or [the mountain gorges]

Support Reference: Copy or Borrow Words

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
the day	the evening breeze blows
my beloved	You whom I love
stag	male deer

Song of Solomon 3

Song of Songs 3 Chapter Introduction

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Longing

Verses 3:1–3 describe the feeling of longing that the woman has for the man she loves, and it describes her diligently seeking him. Verse 3:4 describes the woman finding the man she loves, holding onto him, and bringing him to her mother's house.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Whether verses 3:1–4 describe a dream, a real event, or something imagined

Bible scholars do not know for certain whether the events described in 3:1–4 are real events or something that the woman dreamed or imagined. Many Bible scholars think that verses 3:1–4 describe a dream. You may wish to explain this in a footnote, or you could indicate in a section header whether you think this is a dream, a real event, or something she imagined. You could also use a general section header such as "The woman searches for the man she loves and finds him," which does not indicate whether this was a dream, a real event, or something imagined.

Song of Solomon 3:1

ULT	UST
On my bed in the night I sought him whom my soul loves; I sought him, but I did not find him.	*At night while I lay on my bed, I searched for the man whom I love. I searched for him, but could not find him.*

ULT On my bed in the night
UST At night while I lay on my bed
(עַל־מִשְׁכָּבִי֙ בַּלֵּילוֹת)

Because Bible scholars do not know if the events described in 3:1–4 describe real events, dreams, or things imagined, you should not expand on or explain the phrase **On my bed in the night** in the text. However, you may wish to make reference to these possibilities in a header or footnote. See the section "Translation Issues in This Chapter" in the chapter introduction for more information.

Support Reference: When to Keep Information Implicit

ULT in the night
UST At night
(בַּלֵּילוֹת)

In the original language, the phrase **in the night** uses a plural form of **night** and could mean that the woman: (1) sought the man during the night. Alternate translation: [during the night]; (2) sought the man throughout the night. Alternate translation: [throughout the night] or [all night long]; (3) sought the man on many nights. Alternate translation: [night after night]

Support Reference: Unusual Uses of the Plural

ULT I sought him whom my soul loves; I sought him
UST I searched for the man whom I love. I searched for him
(בִּקַּשְׁתִּי אֵת שֶׁאָהֲבָה נַפְשִׁי בִּקַּשְׁתִּיו)

The phrase **I sought him** is repeated for emphasis. Hebrew poetry often uses repetition for emphasis. You may be able to use the same construction in your language to show the emphasis here. Alternatively, your language may have another way of showing the emphasis. Alternate translation: [I desperately sought him whom my soul loves] or [I earnestly sought him whom my soul loves]

Support Reference: Poetry

> ULT **him whom my soul loves**
> UST the man whom I love
> (אֵת שֶׁאָהֲבָה נַפְשִׁי)

See how you translated the similar phrase “you whom my soul loves” in 1:7. Alternate translation: [him whom I love]

Support Reference: Synecdoche

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
my soul	I
him whom … loves	the man whom … love
I sought	I searched for
I sought him	I searched for him

Song of Solomon 3:2

ULT	UST
I will get up now and go about in the city, in the streets and in the squares; I will seek him whom my soul loves. I sought him, but I did not find him.	*So I said to myself, "I will get up now and walk around the city, through the streets and plazas, to search for the man whom I love." So I got up and went out to search for him, but I could not find him.*

ULT **I will get up now**
UST So I said to myself, I will get up now
(אָקוּמָה נָּא)

The writer assumes that the reader will understand that the woman is thinking or saying this to herself. You could include this information if that would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [I thought to myself, 'I will get up now]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **and go about in the city**
UST and walk around the city
(וַאֲסוֹבְבָה בָעִיר)

Alternate translation: [and walk through the city]

ULT **and in the squares**
UST and plazas
(וּבָרְחֹבוֹת)

The word **squares** refers to spacious open places where people gather to sell things and conduct business and legal matters. If your readers would not be familiar with this type of place, you could use the name of something similar in your area, or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [and in the open plazas] or [and in the wide-open places]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **I will seek … I sought him**
UST to search for … So I got up and went out to search for him
(אֲבַקְשָׁה & בִּקַּשְׁתִּיו)

Alternate translation: [I will look for … I looked for him]

> ULT **him whom my soul loves**
> UST the man whom I love
> (אֵת שֶׁאָהֲבָה נַפְשִׁי)

See how you translated the similar phrase “you whom my soul loves” in 1:7. Alternate translation: [him whom I love]

Support Reference: Synecdoche

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
I will seek	to search for
my soul	I
him whom … loves	the man whom … love
I sought him	So I got up and went out to search for him

Song of Solomon 3:3

ULT	UST
The guards going about in the city found me: "{Have} you seen him whom my soul loves?"	*The city watchmen saw me while they were walking around the city. I asked them, "Have you seen the man whom I love?"*

ULT The guards
UST The city watchmen
(הַשֹּׁמְרִים)

The word **guards** refers to men who had the job of walking about the city during the night for the purpose of keeping the people safe. If your readers would not be familiar with this term, you could use the name of something similar in your area, or you could use a more general term.

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT {Have} you seen him whom my soul loves
UST I asked them, Have you seen the man whom I love
(אֵת שֶׁאָהֲבָה נַפְשִׁי רְאִיתֶם)

The woman is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: [I said to them, "Have you seen him whom my soul loves]

Support Reference: Ellipsis

ULT him whom my soul loves
UST the man whom I love
(אֵת שֶׁאָהֲבָה נַפְשִׁי)

See how you translated the similar phrase "you whom my soul loves" in 1:7. Alternate translation: [him whom I love]

Support Reference: Synecdoche

ULT {Have} you seen him whom my soul loves
UST I asked them, Have you seen the man whom I love
(אֵת שֶׁאָהֲבָה נַפְשִׁי רְאִיתֶם)

Alternate translation: [Do you know where the man whom I love is?]

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
my soul	I
him whom … loves	the man whom … love

Song of Solomon 3:4

ULT	UST
Hardly had I passed by them when I found him whom my soul loves. I held him and I would not let him go until I had brought him to the house of my mother and to the room of the woman who conceived me.	*As soon as I walked past them, I found the man whom I love. I clung to him and would not release my hold on him until I brought him to my mother's house, to the bedroom of my mother who had conceived me. The woman speaking to the women of Jerusalem*

ULT Hardly
UST As soon as
(כִּמְעָט)

Alternate translation: [Scarcely]

ULT him whom my soul loves
UST the man I love … who
(אֵת שֶׁאָהֲבָה נַפְשִׁי)

See how you translated the similar phrase "you whom my soul loves" in 1:7. Alternate translation: [him whom I love]

Support Reference: Synecdoche

ULT I had brought him
UST I brought him
(שֶׁהֲבִיאתִיו)

Your language may say "taken" rather than **brought** in a context such as this. Use whichever is more natural in your language. Alternate translation: [I had taken him]

Support Reference: Go and Come

ULT I had brought him to the house of my mother and to the room of the woman who conceived me

UST I brought him to my mother's house, to the bedroom of my mother … had conceived me (שֶׁהֲבֵיאתִיו אֶל־בֵּית אִמִּי וְאֶל־חֶדֶר הוֹרָתִי)

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. The second emphasizes the meaning of the first by repeating the same idea with different words. Hebrew poetry was based on this kind of repetition, and it would be good to show this to your readers by including both phrases in your translation rather than combining them. However, if it would be helpful to your readers, you could connect the phrases with a word other than "and" in order to show that the second phrase is repeating the first one, not saying something additional. Alternate translation: [I had brought him to the house of my mother; yes, to the room of the woman who had conceived me]

Support Reference: Parallelism

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
my soul	I
him whom … loves	the man … love … who
the house of	house
the woman who conceived me	of my mother … had conceived me

Song of Solomon 3:5

ULT	UST
I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem, by the female gazelles or the does of the field, do not awaken nor stir love until it desires.	*You young women of Jerusalem, I want you to solemnly promise me, while the female gazelles and female deer are listening, that you will not cause people to love romantically until it is the right time. The woman speaking to herself*

ULT **I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem, by the female gazelles or the does of the field, do not awaken nor stir love until it desires**

UST You young women of Jerusalem, I want you to solemnly promise me, while the female gazelles and female deer are listening, that you will not cause people to love romantically until it is the right time

(הִשְׁבַּעְתִּי אֶתְכֶם בְּנוֹת יְרוּשָׁלִַם בִּצְבָאוֹת אוֹ בְּאַיְלוֹת הַשָּׂדֶה אִם־תָּעִירוּ ׀ וְאִם־תְּעוֹרְרוּ אֶת־הָאַהֲבָה עַד שֶׁתֶּחְפָּץ)

This verse is identical to Song of Songs 2:7. Translate this verse exactly as you translated that verse. This verse is a refrain (a repeated phrase). Refrains are a common feature of poetry. This refrain closes section 2:8–3:5.

Support Reference: Poetry

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Jerusalem	Jerusalem
love	love romantically

Song of Solomon 3:6

ULT	UST
Who {is} that coming up from the wilderness like columns of smoke, fragrant smoke of myrrh and frankincense, from all the powders of the merchant?	*Look! See what is coming up from the dry and uninhabited area. Look at what is stirring up dust like clouds of smoke, and like billows of smoke from burning myrrh and incense, which are from the fragrant powders imported by traveling traders!*

ULT **Who {is} that coming up from the wilderness like columns of smoke, fragrant smoke of myrrh and frankincense, from all the powders of the merchant**
UST Look! See what is coming up from the dry and uninhabited area. Look at what is stirring up dust like clouds of smoke, and like billows of smoke from burning myrrh and incense, which are from the fragrant powders imported by traveling traders
(מִי זֹאת עֹלָה מִן־הַמִּדְבָּר כְּתִימָרוֹת עָשָׁן מְקֻטֶּרֶת מֹר וּלְבוֹנָה מִכֹּל אַבְקַת רוֹכֵל)

The phrase **Who is that** could: (1) be a rhetorical question used to create a sense of expectation and interest. If you would not use a question for this purpose in your language, you could translate this as a statement or an exclamation. Alternate translation: [Look who is coming up from the wilderness like columns of smoke, fragrant smoke of myrrh and frankincense, from all the powders of the merchant]; (2) be a request for information. Alternate translation: [Who is it that I see arising from the wilderness like columns of smoke, fragrant smoke of myrrh and frankincense from all the powders of the merchant]

Support Reference: Rhetorical Question

ULT **{is} that coming up from the wilderness**
UST what is coming up from the dry and uninhabited area … what is
(זֹאת עֹלָה מִן־הַמִּדְבָּר)

The word translated as **that** here could refer to: (1) Solomon's "litter," which is named in the following verse. Alternate translation: [is that group of people arising from the wilderness]; (2) the woman. Alternate translation: [is this woman arising from the wilderness]

ULT **coming up**
UST coming up
(עֹלָה)

The writer assumes that the readers will understand that the phrase **coming up** describes the group of people traveling from the wilderness to Jerusalem because the wilderness is in the valley and Jerusalem is built on high hills. Use a word or phrase that expresses moving upward in elevation. Alternate translation: [moving upward] or [arising]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **coming up**
UST coming up
(עֹלָה)

Your language may say “going” rather than **coming** in a context such as this. Use whichever is more natural in your language. Alternate translation: [going up]

Support Reference: Go and Come

ULT **like columns of smoke, fragrant smoke of myrrh and frankincense**
UST stirring up dust like clouds of smoke, and like billows of smoke from burning myrrh and incense
(כְּתִימֲרוֹת עָשָׁן מְקֻטֶּרֶת מֹר וּלְבוֹנָה)

The writer is saying that the dust clouds created by a group of people traveling in a dry area are **like columns of smoke, fragrant smoke of myrrh and frankincense**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: [creating a dust cloud that resembles a column of smoke, which resembles the fragrant smoke of myrrh and frankincense]

Support Reference: Simile

ULT **like columns of smoke, fragrant smoke of myrrh and frankincense**
UST stirring up dust like clouds of smoke, and like billows of smoke from burning myrrh and incense
(כְּתִימֲרוֹת עָשָׁן מְקֻטֶּרֶת מֹר וּלְבוֹנָה)

Here the phrase **fragrant smoke of myrrh and frankincense** could be: (1) further describing the words **coming up**. Alternate translation: [creating dust clouds that resemble rising columns of smoke; Yes, creating dust clouds that resemble the fragrant smoke of myrrh and frankincense]; (2) describing the phrase **columns of smoke**. Alternate translation: [like a column of smoke, incensed with myrrh and frankincense]

Support Reference: Parallelism

ULT **fragrant smoke of**
UST and like billows of smoke from burning
(מְקֻטֶּרֶת)

The writer is leaving out a word that in many languages a sentence would need to be complete. You could supply this word from earlier in the sentence if it would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: [like fragrant smoke of]

Support Reference: Ellipsis

ULT **myrrh**
UST myrrh
(מֹר)

Alternate translation: [the sweet-smelling incense made from the resin of a myrrh tree]

ULT **from all the powders of the merchant**
UST which are from the fragrant powders imported by traveling traders
(מִכֹּל אַבְקַת רוֹכֵל)

The word translated as **from all** could: (1) be introducing **the powders of the merchant** as additional information about myrrh and frankincense. Alternate translation: [which are among the powders of the merchant]; (2) indicate that **the powders of the merchant** are being introduced as additional things the merchant sells. Alternate translation: [and other powders of the merchants]

Support Reference: Connecting Words and Phrases

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
the wilderness	the dry and uninhabited area
like columns of	stirring up dust like clouds
myrrh	myrrh
and frankincense	and incense

Song of Solomon 3:7

ULT	UST
Behold—his litter, which {belongs} to Solomon; 60 warriors surround it, from the warriors of Israel.	*Look! Solomon has sent his portable royal chair, and it is surrounded by 60 bodyguards chosen from the greatest soldiers in Israel.*

ULT **Behold**
UST Look
(הִנֵּה)

See how you translated the word **Behold** in 1:15 where it occurs with the same meaning.

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **his litter**
UST has sent his portable royal chair
(מִטָּתוֹ)

A **litter** was a portable bed or couch used to carry important people from place to place. It was carried by wooden poles that were attached to it. This litter probably had a canopy on top that functioned as a roof and curtains around it that could be opened and closed. If your readers would not be familiar with this term, you could use the name of something similar in your area, or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [his portable couch]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **his litter, which {belongs} to Solomon**
UST Solomon has sent his portable royal chair
(מִטָּתוֹ שֶׁלִּשְׁלֹמֹה)

The phrase **his litter, which belongs to Solomon** could mean: (1) that the woman was riding on the litter which belonged to Solomon and which he had sent for her. The UST models this interpretation. (2) that Solomon himself was riding in the litter. Alternate translation: [Solomon riding in his royal portable chair]

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
which {belongs} to Solomon	Solomon
warriors	bodyguards
from the warriors of	chosen from the greatest soldiers

ULT	UST
Israel	in Israel

Song of Solomon 3:8

ULT	UST
All of them are grasping a sword, studied {in} war. Each one {has} his sword at his thigh, against the terrors in the nights.	*They all have swords, and they all know how to use them. Each one has his sword strapped to his side and is prepared to defend against dangers that might occur during the night.*

ULT studied {in} war
UST and they all know how to use them
(מְלֻמְּדֵי מִלְחָמָה)

Alternate translation: [trained in warfare] or [and all of them have been trained to use their swords]

ULT Each one {has} his sword at his thigh, against the terrors in the nights
UST Each one has his sword strapped to his side and is prepared to defend against dangers that might occur during the night
(אִישׁ חַרְבּוֹ עַל־יְרֵכוֹ מִפַּחַד בַּלֵּילוֹת)

The implication is that **Each one has his sword at his thigh** means that his sword is strapped to his thigh so that it is ready to use to defend **against the terrors in the nights**. You could include this information if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [Each warrior has his sword strapped to his thigh so that it is ready to use against the terrors in the nights] or [Each warrior has his sword ready to use to defend against the terrors in the nights]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT against the terrors in the nights
UST and is prepared to defend against dangers that might occur during the night
(מִפַּחַד בַּלֵּילוֹת)

The woman is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: [ready to guard against dangers that happen during the night] or [ready to defend against the dangers of the night]

Support Reference: Ellipsis

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
a sword	swords
{has} his sword	has his sword

ULT	UST
against the terrors	and is prepared to defend against dangers

Song of Solomon 3:9

ULT	UST
He made for himself a palanquin, King Solomon, from the trees of Lebanon.	*King Solomon commanded his servants to make that royal portable chair for him; it was made with wood from Lebanon.*

ULT **He made for himself a palanquin, King Solomon, from the trees of Lebanon … He made its posts {out of} silver; its back, gold; its seat, purple cloth. Its interior was fitted {with} love from the daughters of Jerusalem**

UST King Solomon commanded his servants to make that royal portable chair for him; it was made with wood from Lebanon … The canopy that covered it was held up by posts made with silver, and the base of the palanquin was made with gold. The seat was covered with purple cloth, and the inside of the palanquin was lovingly decorated by the women of Jerusalem

(אַפִּרְיוֹן עָשָׂה לוֹ֙ הַמֶּ֣לֶךְ שְׁלֹמֹ֔ה מֵעֲצֵ֖י הַלְּבָנֽוֹן׃ עַמּוּדָ֥יו עָשָׂ֖ה כֶּ֑סֶף רְפִידָתוֹ֙ זָהָ֔ב מֶרְכָּבֹ֖ו אַרְגָּמָ֑ן תּוֹכ֖וֹ רָצ֥וּף אַהֲבָ֛ה מִבְּנ֥וֹת יְרוּשָׁלָֽ͏ִם) (3:9-10)

These two verses give background information about the **palanquin** to help readers understand the description more completely. In your translation, present this information in a way that makes it clear that this is background information.

Support Reference: Background Information

ULT **He made for himself a palanquin … He made its posts {out of} silver**

UST to make that royal portable chair for him … The canopy that covered it was held up by posts made with silver

(אַפִּרְיוֹן עָשָׂה לוֹ֙ & עַמּוּדָ֥יו עָשָׂ֖ה כֶּ֑סֶף) (3:9-10)

The implication is that Solomon had people make **a palanquin** for him, not that he made it himself. You could include this information if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [He had craftsmen make him a palanquin…He had craftsmen make its post with silver] or [He had a palanquin made for him…He had its posts made with silver]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

> ULT **a palanquin**
> UST that royal portable chair
> (אַפִּרְיֹון)

A **palanquin** is a sedan chair. Here it refers to the same object that the term “litter” referred to in 3:7 only in more descriptive terms. You could translate the term **palanquin** the same way you translated “litter” in 3:7 or you could use the name of something similar in your area. Alternate translation: [a portable couch] or [a sedan chair]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

> ULT **He made for himself a palanquin, King Solomon, from the trees of Lebanon**
> UST King Solomon commanded his servants to make that royal portable chair for him; it was made with wood from Lebanon
> (אַפִּרְיֹון עָשָׂה לוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ שְׁלֹמֹה מֵעֲצֵי הַלְּבָנוֹן)

Alternate translation: [King Solomon had a palanquin made from the trees in Lebanon]

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
King	King
Solomon	Solomon commanded his servants
Lebanon	Lebanon

Song of Solomon 3:10

ULT	UST
He made its posts {out of} silver; its back, gold; its seat, purple cloth. Its interior was fitted {with} love from the daughters of Jerusalem.	*The canopy that covered it was held up by posts made with silver, and the base of the palanquin was made with gold. The seat was covered with purple cloth, and the inside of the palanquin was lovingly decorated by the women of Jerusalem.*

ULT **He made its posts {out of} silver**
UST The canopy that covered it was held up by posts made with silver
(עַמּוּדָיו֙ עָשָׂה כָּ֔סֶף)

The writer assumes that the readers will know that the **posts** were made of wood and overlaid with **silver**. You could include this information if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [He made its posts of wood that was overlaid with silver] or [He made its posts of wood covered in silver]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **its back, gold**
UST and the base of the palanquin was made with gold
(רְפִידָתוֹ֙ זָהָ֔ב)

The writer is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need to be complete. You could supply these words from the context if it would be clearer in your language. The phrase **its back, gold** could mean: (1) that the base or foundation of the palanquin was covered in gold. Alternate translation: [its foundation was covered in gold] or [its base of gold]; (2) the back of the chair was covered in gold. Alternate translation: [its back is made from gold]

Support Reference: Ellipsis

ULT **its seat, purple cloth**
UST The seat was covered with purple cloth
(מֶרְכָּבוֹ֙ אַרְגָּמָ֔ן)

Alternate translation: [and covered the cushion with purple cloth]

ULT **Its interior was fitted {with} love from the daughters of Jerusalem**
UST and the inside of the palanquin was lovingly decorated by the women of Jerusalem
(תּוֹכוֹ רָצוּף אַהֲבָה מִבְּנוֹת יְרוּשָׁלָם)

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express this idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [The daughters of Jerusalem fitted its interior with love]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **Its interior was fitted {with} love from the daughters of Jerusalem**
UST and the inside of the palanquin was lovingly decorated by the women of Jerusalem
(תּוֹכוֹ רָצוּף אַהֲבָה מִבְּנוֹת יְרוּשָׁלָם)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **love**, you could express the same idea in another way that is natural in your language.

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **Its interior was fitted {with} love from the daughters of Jerusalem**
UST and the inside of the palanquin was lovingly decorated by the women of Jerusalem
(תּוֹכוֹ רָצוּף אַהֲבָה מִבְּנוֹת יְרוּשָׁלָם)

Alternate translation: [The inside of it was lovingly inlaid with decorations by the women of Jerusalem]

ULT **from the daughters of Jerusalem**
UST by the women of Jerusalem
(מִבְּנוֹת יְרוּשָׁלָם)

See how you translated the phrase **daughters of Jerusalem** in 1:5.

Support Reference: Possession

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
{out of} silver	silver
gold	gold
purple cloth	was covered with purple cloth
{with} love	was lovingly
Jerusalem	Jerusalem

Song of Solomon 3:11

ULT	UST
Go out and look, daughters of Zion, at King Solomon, at the crown with which his mother crowned him on the day of his wedding, on the day of the joy of his heart.	*You young women of Jerusalem, come and look at King Solomon wearing the headdress that his mother put on his head on the day when he was married, on the day when he was very happy.*

ULT **Go out**
UST come
(צְאֶינָה)

Your language may say “Come out” rather than **Go out** in a context such as this. Use whichever is more natural in your language. Alternate translation: [Come out]

Support Reference: Go and Come

ULT **daughters of Zion**
UST You young women of Jerusalem
(בְּנוֹת צִיּוֹן)

Here the possessive form **daughters of Zion** is a poetic way of describing the young women who were from the city of Jerusalem (These are probably the same women as the “marriageable women” in 1:3 and the women referred to as “daughters of Jerusalem” in 2:7 and 3:5). If your language would not use the possessive form for this, you could indicate the association between these young women and Zion in a way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [young women from Zion] or [young women from the city of Zion] or [you young women who live in Zion]

Support Reference: Possession

ULT **on the day of his wedding, on the day of the joy of his heart**
UST on the day when he was married, on the day when he was very happy
(בְּיוֹם חֲתֻנָּתוֹ וּבְיוֹם שִׂמְחַת לִבּוֹ)

These two phrases mean basically the same thing. The second emphasizes the meaning of the first by repeating the same idea with different words. Hebrew poetry was based on this kind of repetition, and it would be good to show this to your readers by including both phrases in your translation rather than combining them. However, if it would be helpful to your readers, you could connect the phrases with a word other than "and" in order to show that the second phrase is repeating the first one, not saying something additional. Alternate translation: [on the day of his wedding, yes, on the day of the joy of his heart]

Support Reference: Parallelism

ULT **on the day of the joy of his heart**
UST on the day when he was very happy
(וּבְיוֹם שִׂמְחַת לִבּוֹ)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **joy**, you could express the same idea in another way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [on the day his heart was exceedingly joyful] or [on the day when his heart was very joyful]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **on the day of the joy of his heart**
UST on the day when he was very happy
(וּבְיוֹם שִׂמְחַת לִבּוֹ)

Here, **heart** represents Solomon's inner being which the Jews viewed as the center of a person's mind and feelings. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language or state the meaning plainly.

Support Reference: Metonymy

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Zion	Jerusalem
at King	King
Solomon	Solomon
at the crown	wearing the headdress
with which … crowned	that … put on … head
on the day of	on the day
his wedding	when he was married

ULT	UST
on the day of	on the day
the joy of	when he was very happy

Song of Solomon 4

Song of Songs 4 Chapter Introduction

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Beauty

The man describes the woman he loves as the epitome of beauty and attractiveness in 4:1–5 and in 4:7.

Feelings of longing to be with one's lover who seems distant and temporarily inaccessible

In 4:8 the man speaks of the woman he loves as if she were far away from him, and he invites her to "come with" him and "descend from" the height of three high places and be with him. The woman is not actually dwelling in these places, but rather the man is using imaginative and poetic language to describe how he feels about being separated from her and to describe his desire to be with her. In 4:12 the man uses poetic language to describe the fact that the woman he loves is temporarily inaccessible.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

The garden metaphor

In this chapter, 4:12–5:1 is an extended metaphor. This metaphor is a conversation between the man and the woman he loves in which he first compares her to "a locked garden" (4:12–4:15) where many delightful things grow. She responds by inviting him to come to her garden in 4:16. The man then responds to her invitation in 5:1. The term "garden" is used as a metaphor for the woman in 4:12, 4:16 (two times), and 5:1. You should be consistent in how you translate the term "garden." In 4:13, the man speaks of the woman's body as "an orchard of pomegranate trees with delicious fruits," and then in 4:16 she invites the man to "come to his garden and eat its delicious fruit." (See: Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors)

The “sister” metaphor

The phrase “my sister” is used in 4:9, 4:10, 4:12, 5:1, and 5:2. The man uses this phrase as a term of endearment for the woman he loves. She is not actually his sister. You should translate this phrase the same way each time it occurs here, because the author uses it with the same meaning each time. See the note at the first occurrence of this phrase in 4:9 for more information.

Song of Solomon 4:1

ULT	UST
Behold you! {You are} beautiful, my darling. Behold you! {You are} beautiful. Your eyes {are} doves from behind your veil. Your hair {is} like a flock of goats that hop down from {the} slopes of Gilead.	*My dear one, you are beautiful, you are very beautiful! Beneath your veil, your eyes are as gentle and as beautiful as doves. Your long black hair moves from side to side like a flock of black goats moving down the slopes of Mount Gilead.*

ULT **Behold you! {You are} beautiful, my darling. Behold you! {You are} beautiful**
UST My dear one, you are beautiful, you are very beautiful
(הִנָּךְ יָפָה רַעְיָתִי הִנָּךְ יָפָה)

See how you translated these two parallel phrases in 1:15.

Support Reference: Parallelism

ULT **Your eyes {are} doves from behind your veil**
UST Beneath your veil, your eyes are as gentle and as beautiful as doves
(עֵינַיִךְ יוֹנִים מִבַּעַד לְצַמָּתֵךְ)

See how you translated the phrase **Your eyes are doves** in 1:15.

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **Your hair {is} like a flock of goats that hop down from {the} slopes of Gilead**
UST Your long black hair moves from side to side like a flock of black goats moving down the slopes of Mount Gilead
(שַׂעָרֵךְ כְּעֲדֶר הָעִזִּים שֶׁגָּלְשׁוּ מֵהַר גִּלְעָד)

The writer is saying that both the color and the motion of the woman's hair is **like a flock of goats that hop down from the slopes of Gilead**. The original readers would have understood this to mean that the woman's hair was black since goats in Israel were also black. Seen from a distance, a flock of black goats descending from the heights of Mount Gilead would have created a majestic visual effect because the goats would have looked like one long flowing mass of black. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: [Your black hair moves in graceful waves like a flock of black goats moving down the slopes of Mount Gilead] or [Your long black hair flows in graceful waves like a flock of black goats coming down the slopes of Mount Gilead]

Support Reference: Simile

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
doves	are as gentle and as beautiful as doves
your veil	your veil
like a flock of	like a flock of
goats	black goats
Gilead	Gilead

Song of Solomon 4:2

ULT	UST
Your teeth {are} like a flock of shorn {sheep} that have come up from the washing, all of which bear twins, and there is not among them one which is bereaved.	*Your teeth are very white, white like a flock of sheep whose wool people have just cut off and which have just come up from washing in a stream. You have all of your teeth on both sides of your mouth; none of them is missing.*

ULT **Your teeth {are} like a flock of shorn {sheep} that have come up from the washing**
UST Your teeth are very white, white like a flock of sheep whose wool people have just cut off and which have just come up from washing in a stream
(שִׁנַּיִךְ כְּעֵדֶר הַקְּצוּבּוֹת שֶׁעָלוּ מִן־הָרַחְצָה)

The writer is saying that the white color of the woman's **teeth** is being compared to the white color of sheep after they have been **shorn** and washed. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state that explicitly.

Support Reference: Simile

ULT **shorn {sheep}**
UST very white, white like a flock of sheep whose wool people have just cut off
(הַקְּצוּבּוֹת)

If your language does not use this passive form, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, it is implied that "shepherds" did it. Alternate translation: [sheep whose wool shepherds have cut off] or [sheep whose wool people have cut off]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **bear twins**
UST You have all of your teeth on both sides of your mouth; none of them is missing
(מַתְאִימוֹת)

Alternate translation: [give birth to twins]

ULT **all of which bear twins, and there is not among them one which is bereaved**
UST You have all of your teeth on both sides of your mouth; none of them is missing
(שֶׁכֻּלָּם מַתְאִימוֹת וְשַׁכֻּלָה אֵין בָּהֶם)

The writer is stating that the woman's **teeth are like a flock of** female sheep which have all given birth to twin lambs because each of the woman's teeth has a matching tooth on the other side of her mouth. She has not lost any of her teeth. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: [As a flock of female sheep that has born twin lambs without losing any, so your mouth has its teeth, each with a match, and none of them are missing]

Support Reference: Simile

ULT **and there is not among them one which is bereaved**
UST You have all of your teeth on both sides of your mouth; none of them is missing
(וְשַׁכֻּלָה אֵין בָּהֶם)

Alternate translation: [and there is not one among them which has died]

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
like a flock of	very white, white like a flock of sheep whose wool people have just cut off
shorn {sheep}	very white, white like a flock of sheep whose wool people have just cut off
bear twins	You have all of your teeth on both sides of your mouth; none of them is missing

Song of Solomon 4:3

ULT	UST
Like a thread of scarlet {are} your lips, and your mouth {is} lovely. Like a slice of pomegranate {are} your cheeks from behind your veil.	*Your lips are the color of bright red thread, and your mouth is beautiful. Beneath your veil, your cheeks are round and rosy like the halves of a pomegranate.*

ULT Like a thread of scarlet {are} your lips
UST Your lips are the color of bright red thread
(כְּחוּט הַשָּׁנִי שִׂפְתֹתַיִךְ)

The writer is stating that the woman's lips are **Like a thread of scarlet** because they are a bright red color. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state that explicitly. You could also use a term for a material that is thicker than thread such as ribbon. Alternate translation: [Your lips are a beautiful red like scarlet thread] or [Your lips are a beautiful red like scarlet ribbon]

Support Reference: Simile

ULT Like a slice of pomegranate {are} your cheeks
UST your cheeks are round and rosy like the halves of a pomegranate
(כְּפֶלַח הָרִמּוֹן רַקָּתֵךְ)

The term translated as **cheeks** could: (1) refer to the woman's two cheeks on the side of her mouth. (2) be translated as "temples" and refer to the woman's two temples on the side of her forehead. Alternate translation: [Like a slice of pomegranate are your temples]; (3) be translated as "forehead." Alternate translation: [Like a slice of pomegranate is your forehead]

ULT **Like a slice of pomegranate {are} your cheeks**
UST your cheeks are round and rosy like the halves of a pomegranate
(כְּפֶלַח רִמּוֹן רַקָּתֵךְ)

The writer could be comparing: (1) the shape of the woman's **cheeks** to the shape of a **pomegranate** which has been sliced in half and to the red outside color of a pomegranate. Alternate translation: [Your cheeks are red and rounded like a slice of pomegranate] or [Your cheeks resemble the color and shape of a slice of pomegranate] or (if you decided that the term **cheeks** refers to the woman's temples) [Your temples are red like a slice of pomegranate]; (2) the way the woman's cheeks looked through the inside of the veil to the color and pattern of a **pomegranate** which has been sliced in half. Alternate translation: [Your cheeks resemble the color and pattern of the inside of a slice of pomegranate] or (if you decided that the term **cheeks** refers to the woman's temples) [Your temples are the color of the inside of a slice of pomegranate]

Support Reference: Simile

ULT **from behind your veil**
UST Beneath your veil
(מִבַּעַד לְצַמָּתֵךְ)

See how you translated the phrase **from behind your veil** in 4:1.

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
pomegranate	a pomegranate
your veil	your veil

Song of Solomon 4:4

ULT	UST
Like the tower of David {is} your neck, built of layers— a thousand shields hanging on it, all the shields of the warriors.	*Your long neck is beautiful like the tower of King David that was built using layers of stone. The beauty of your jeweled neck is like a thousand shields hanging on the walls of a tower; like the beauty of a thousand warrior's shields hanging from a tower.*

ULT **Like the tower of David {is} your neck, built of layers**
UST Your long neck is beautiful like the tower of King David that was built using layers of stone. The beauty of your jeweled neck
(כְּמִגְדַּל דָּוִיד צַוָּארֵךְ בָּנוּי לְתַלְפִּיּוֹת)

The writer is saying that the woman's **neck** is **Like the tower of David** which was a tall fortress **built of layers** or rows. A long neck was considered beautiful in the writer's culture. King David built some of his towers of beautiful marble rock. It is probable that this tower was made from marble since it is compared to the beauty of the woman's neck. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: [Your neck is long and beautiful like the tower of David] or [Your neck is beautiful like the tower of David]

Support Reference: Simile

ULT **Like the tower of David {is}**
UST is beautiful like the tower of King David that was
(כְּמִגְדַּל דָּוִיד)

The **tower of David** was a tall building built for defense. Towers were significantly taller than other buildings and often were not wide. If your readers would not be familiar with this type of structure, you could use the name of something similar in your area, or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [Like the tall, narrow defense structure of David is] or [Like David's tall, thin rock defense building is]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **Like the tower of David {is} your neck, built of layers**
UST Your long neck is beautiful like the tower of King David that was built using layers of stone. The beauty of your jeweled neck
(כְּמִגְדַּל דָּוִיד צַוָּארֵךְ בָּנוּי לְתַלְפִּיּוֹת)

If your language does not use a passive form like **built of layers**, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, the context implies that David instructed men to build it. Alternate translation: [Your neck is like the tower of David that men built in layers] or [Your neck is like the tower of David that David had men build of layers]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

ULT **built of layers**
UST built using layers of stone
(בָּנוּי לְתַלְפִּיּוֹת)

Alternate translation: [built using rows of stones]

ULT **a thousand shields hanging on it, all the shields of the warriors**
UST is like a thousand shields hanging on the walls of a tower; like the beauty of a thousand warrior's shields hanging from a tower
(אֶלֶף הַמָּגֵן תָּלוּי עָלָיו כֹּל שִׁלְטֵי הַגִּבּוֹרִים)

In the writer's culture it was a common practice to hang shields on walls as decorations. Here the man compares the beauty of the woman's neck with **shields hanging on** the **tower of David**. This comparison probably included the decorations of the woman's necklaces which probably went around her neck many times. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: [The beauty of your neck jeweled in necklaces is like a thousand warriors' shields hanging from a tower]

Support Reference: Simile

ULT **a thousand**
UST a thousand … a thousand
(אֶלֶף)

In the writer's culture, the number **a thousand** was often used to represent a very large, but not precise, amount. This is how the number is being used here. Alternate translation: [with many]

Support Reference: Numbers

ULT **a thousand shields hanging on it, all the shields of the warriors**
UST is like a thousand shields hanging on the walls of a tower; like the beauty of a thousand warrior's shields hanging from a tower
(אֶ֣לֶף הַמָּגֵ֔ן תָּל֖וּי עָלָ֑יו כֹּ֖ל שִׁלְטֵ֥י הַגִּבּוֹרִֽים)

The phrase **all the shields of the warriors** is parallel to the statement **a thousand shields hanging on it** and adds the additional information that the **shields** belonged to **the warriors**. Hebrew poetry often used this kind of parallel statement, in which the second line gives additional information, so it would be good to show this to your readers by including both phrases in your translation rather than combining them. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could connect these two parallel phrases with "each of which" or "each one" in order to show that the second phrase is not repeating the first one but rather saying something additional. Alternate translation: [a thousand shields hanging on it, each of which belongs to the warriors] or [a thousand shields hanging on it, each one belonging to the warriors]

Support Reference: Parallelism

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Like the tower of … is	is beautiful like the tower of … that was
David	King David
shields	shields
the shields of	is like … like the beauty of … shields
the warriors	warrior's

Song of Solomon 4:5

ULT	UST
Your two breasts {are} like two fawns, twins of a female gazelle, the ones pasturing among the lilies.	*Your two breasts are as beautiful as two young twin gazelles that eat grass among lilies.*

ULT Your two breasts {are} like two fawns, twins of a female gazelle, the ones pasturing among the lilies

UST Your two breasts are as beautiful as two young twin gazelles that eat grass among lilies

(שְׁנֵי שָׁדַיִךְ כִּשְׁנֵי עֳפָרִים תְּאוֹמֵי צְבִיָּה הָרוֹעִים בַּשּׁוֹשַׁנִּים)

Here the man compares the woman's **two breasts** to young twin gazelles. The context does not explicitly indicate how exactly the woman's breasts are like young gazelles so it would be best if you leave the point of comparison unstated and simply express the simile as the author of this book has done.

Support Reference: Simile

ULT a female gazelle

UST gazelles

(צְבִיָּה)

See how you translated the plural form "gazelles" in 2:7.

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT among the lilies

UST among lilies

(בַּשּׁוֹשַׁנִּים)

See how you translated the singular form "lily" in 2:1.

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
fawns	young

Song of Solomon 4:6

ULT	UST
Until the day breathes and the shadows flee, I myself will go to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense.	*Until the evening breeze blows and the sun sets, I will go to your breasts because they are like two hills that smell like pleasant spices.*

ULT **Until the day breathes and the shadows flee**
UST Until the evening breeze blows and the sun sets
(עַד שֶׁיָּפוּחַ הַיּוֹם וְנָסוּ הַצְּלָלִים)

See how you translated the phrase **Until the day breathes and the shadows flee** in 2:17.

Support Reference: Personification

ULT **I myself will go**
UST I will go
(אֵלֵךְ לִי)

Your language may say “come” rather than **go** in a context such as this. Use whichever is more natural. Alternate translation: [I myself will come]

Support Reference: Go and Come

ULT **myrrh**
UST that smell like pleasant spices
(הַמֹּור)

See how you translated **myrrh** in 1:13.

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **I myself will go to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense**
UST I will go to your breasts because they are like two hills that smell like pleasant spices
(אֵלֵךְ לִי אֶל־הַר הַמֹּור וְאֶל־גִּבְעַת הַלְּבוֹנָה)

Here the writer is speaking of the woman's breasts as if they are **the mountain of myrrh** and **the hill of frankincense**. The man is discreetly indicating that his bride's breasts are pleasant smelling and that he wants to enjoy them. It would be good to retain this discreet and beautiful poetic imagery if possible. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly or use a comparison. Alternate translation: [I myself will go to your breasts, which are like two sweet-smelling mountains] or [I myself will be close to your breasts, which are like two pleasant-smelling hills]

Support Reference: Metaphor

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
the day	the evening breeze blows
myrrh	that smell like pleasant spices
frankincense	that smell like pleasant spices

Song of Solomon 4:7

ULT	UST
All of you {is} beautiful, my darling, and there is no blemish in you.	*My dear one, you are completely beautiful; your body is perfectly formed and has no blemish!*

ULT All of you {is} beautiful
UST you are completely beautiful
(כֻּלָּךְ יָפָה)

Alternate translation: [Every part of you is beautiful]

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
and … blemish	is perfectly formed and has no blemish

Song of Solomon 4:8

ULT	UST
{Come} with me from Lebanon, {my} bride; come with me from Lebanon. Descend from the top of Amana, from the top of Senir and Hermon, from the hiding places of lions, from the mountains of leopards.	*Come back to me, my bride. It is as though you are in Lebanon far away, where I cannot reach you. Come back to me. It is as though you are inaccessible on the top of Mount Hermon or the nearby peaks, where I cannot go to you. Come from the mountains, where the lions have their dens and where the leopards live.*

ULT **{ … Come} with me from Lebanon, {my} bride; come with me from Lebanon. Descend from the top of Amana, from the top of Senir and Hermon, from the hiding places of lions, from the mountains of leopards**

UST Come back to me, my bride. It is as though you are in Lebanon far away, where I cannot reach you. Come back to me. It is as though you are inaccessible on the top of Mount Hermon or the nearby peaks, where I cannot go to you. Come from the mountains, where the lions have their dens and where the leopards live

(אִתִּי מִלְּבָנוֹן כַּלָּה אִתִּי מִלְּבָנוֹן תָּבוֹאִי תָּשׁוּרִי ׀ מֵרֹאשׁ אֲמָנָה מֵרֹאשׁ שְׂנִיר וְחֶרְמוֹן מִמְּעֹנוֹת אֲרָיוֹת מֵהָרֵי נְמֵרִים)

This entire verse is a metaphor. This is poetry and the writer is not literally indicating that the woman is in the mountains and in danger. Rather, he is using this metaphor to express his feelings regarding the distance between them and his strong desire to have her near him. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly.

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **{Come} with me … come**

UST Come back to me

(אִתִּי & תָּבוֹאִי)

Your language may say “go” rather than **come** in a context such as this. Use whichever is more natural. Alternate translation: [Go with me … go]

Support Reference: Go and Come

ULT **Descend**

UST Come back to me

(תָּשׁוּרִי)

The word translated as **Descend** here could mean: (1) to come down from a height. Alternate translation: [Climb down]; (2) to bend down and look. Alternate translation: [Bend down and look]

> ULT **from the top of Amana, from the top of Senir and Hermon**
> UST It is as though you are inaccessible on the top of Mount Hermon or the nearby peaks, where I cannot go to you
> (מֵרֹאשׁ אֲמָנָה מֵרֹאשׁ שְׂנִיר וְחֶרְמוֹן)

The word **Hermon** is the name of a mountain range in northern Israel, and **Amana** and **Senir** are both the names of mountain peaks.

Support Reference: How to Translate Names

> ULT **from the hiding places of lions, from the mountains of leopards**
> UST Come from the mountains, where the lions have their dens and where the leopards live
> (מִמְּעֹנוֹת אֲרָיוֹת מֵהַרְרֵי נְמֵרִים)

These two phrases mean very similar things. The second emphasizes the meaning of the first by repeating the same idea with different words. Hebrew poetry was based on this kind of repetition, and it would be good to show this to your readers by including both phrases in your translation rather than combining them. However, if it would be helpful for your readers, you could combine these two phrases into one as modeled by the UST.

Support Reference: Parallelism

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
from Lebanon	It is as though you are in Lebanon far away, where I cannot reach you
{my} bride	my bride
from Lebanon	It is as though you are in Lebanon far away, where I cannot reach you
lions	the lions … their
leopards	and where the leopards live

Song of Solomon 4:9

ULT	UST
You have enchanted my heart, my sister, {my} bride; you have enchanted my heart with one {look} from your eyes, with one jewel from your necklace.	*You who are as dear to me as a sister, my bride, by only once quickly looking at me with your eyes, and by one strand of jewels in your necklace, you have obtained my full affection.*

ULT **You have enchanted my heart, my sister, {my} bride; you have enchanted my heart**
UST You who are as dear to me as a sister, my bride … you have obtained my full affection
(לִבַּבְתִּנִי אֲחֹתִי כַלָּה לִבַּבְתִּינִי)

If it would be more natural in your language, you could change the order of these phrases. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could also add the word "yes" to show that the phrase **You have enchanted my heart** is repeated in order to add emphasis. Alternate translation: [My sister, my bride; you have enchanted my heart. Yes, you have enchanted my heart]

Support Reference: Information Structure

ULT **You have enchanted my heart … you have enchanted my heart**
UST you have obtained my full affection
(לִבַּבְתִּנִי & לִבַּבְתִּינִי)

The phrase translated as **You have enchanted my heart** is an idiom which could mean: (1) to steal or capture a person's heart. In Jewish thinking, the heart was the center of a person's thinking. This phrase probably also meant that he was so in love that he could not think clearly. If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, you could use a comparable phrase from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [You have captured my heart … you have captured my heart] or [It is as though you have captured my heart … it is as though you have captured my heart] or [You have made me feel so in love with you that it is as if I have lost my mind … you have made me feel so in love with you that it is as if I have lost my mind]; (2) the woman had made the man's heart beat faster. Alternate translation: [You have caused my heart to beat fast … you have caused my heart to beat fast]; (3) that the woman had encouraged the man's heart. Alternate translation: [You have encouraged my heart … you have encouraged my heart] or [You have given me heart … you have given me heart]

Support Reference: Idiom

> ULT **my sister**
> UST You who are as dear to me as a sister
> (אֲחֹתִי)

Here the man is speaking of the woman as if she were his **sister**. This is a term of endearment which expresses affection, close companionship, and a deep emotional bond between the lovers. The woman is not actually his sister. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a different term of endearment or state the meaning plainly.

Support Reference: Metaphor

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
{my} bride	my bride

Song of Solomon 4:10

ULT	UST
How your love is beautiful, my sister, {my} bride! How your love {is} better than wine and the smell of your oils {is better} than all spices!	*You who are as dear to me as a sister, my bride, your love for me is delightful! It is more delightful than wine! The fragrance of your perfume is more pleasing than any spice!*

ULT **How … How**
UST delightful … more delightful
(מַה & מַה)

Here the word **How** is used as an exclamation to emphasize two statements about how wonderful the woman's love is. Use an exclamation that would communicate that meaning in your language.

Support Reference: Exclamations

ULT **my sister**
UST You who are as dear to me as a sister
(אֲחֹתִי)

See how you translated the phrase **my sister** in 4:9.

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **How your love is beautiful, my sister, {my} bride! How your love {is} better than wine**
UST You who are as dear to me as a sister, my bride, your love for me is delightful! It is more delightful than wine
(מַה־יָּפוּ דֹדַיִךְ אֲחֹתִי כַלָּה מַה־טֹּבוּ דֹדַיִךְ מִיָּיִן)

If it would be more natural in your language, you could change the order of these phrases. Alternate translation: [My sister, my bride; how your love is beautiful! How your love is better than wine]

Support Reference: Information Structure

ULT **How your love is beautiful … How your love {is} better than wine**
UST your love for me is delightful! It is more delightful than wine
(מַה־יָּפוּ דֹדַיִךְ & מַה־טֹּבוּ דֹדַיִךְ מִיָּיִן)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **love**, you could express the same idea in another way.

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **your oils {is better}**
UST your perfume
(שְׁמָנַיִךְ)

Here, **oils** refers to perfumes. In the author's culture, pleasant-smelling spices were mixed into olive oil in order to make perfume which was put on the skin. You could include this information if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [your scented oils are better] or [the perfumed oils on your skin are better]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **your oils {is better}**
UST your perfume
(שְׁמָנַיִךְ)

The writer is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You could supply the words **is better** from earlier in the sentence if it would be clearer in your language.

Support Reference: Ellipsis

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
your love is	your love for me is
your love is	your love for me is
{my} bride	my bride
your love {is}	It is
better	more delightful
than wine	than wine
your oils {is better}	your perfume
your oils {is better}	your perfume

Song of Solomon 4:11

ULT	UST
Your lips drip {with} nectar, {my} bride; honey and milk {are} under your tongue and the smell of your garments {is} like the smell of Lebanon.	*When you kiss me, my bride, it is as delightful as eating honey. Your kisses are as sweet as milk mixed with honey. The aroma of your clothes is like the aroma of cedar trees in Lebanon.*

ULT **Your lips drip {with} nectar**
UST When you kiss me … it is as delightful as eating honey
(נֹּפֶת תִּטֹּפְנָה שִׂפְתוֹתַיִךְ)

Here the woman's **lips** refer to the kisses from her lips. The man says that her **lips drip with nectar** to indicate the pleasantness of her kisses. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Your kisses are so pleasant that it is as if your lips drip with nectar] or [Your kisses are delightfully sweet] or [Being kissed by you is as enjoyable as eating honey]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **nectar**
UST it is as delightful as eating honey
(נֹּפֶת)

The word translated as **nectar** refers specifically to honey which drips or flows from a honeycomb. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly by translating it as "honey".

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **honey and milk {are} under your tongue**
UST Your kisses are as sweet as milk mixed with honey
(דְּבַשׁ וְחָלָב תַּחַת לְשׁוֹנֵךְ)

The phrase **honey and milk are under your tongue** could mean: (1) that the taste of the woman's kisses were as pleasant as milk and honey. Alternate translation: [your kisses are like milk and honey to me] or [your kisses are as pleasant and delightful as milk and honey]; (2) that the woman's words were as pleasant as milk and honey. Alternate translation: [your words are as pleasant as milk and honey]; (3) that both the woman's kisses and her words were as pleasant as milk and honey. Alternate translation: [the kisses from your mouth and your words are as pleasant as milk and honey to me]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **and the smell of your garments {is} like the smell of Lebanon**
UST The aroma of your clothes is like the aroma of cedar trees in Lebanon
(וְרֵיחַ שַׂלְמֹתַיִךְ כְּרֵיחַ לְבָנוֹן)

Lebanon is known for its forests of cedar trees. Cedar trees have a very pleasant smell. The phrase **the smell of your garments is like the smell of Lebanon** probably means that the woman's clothes smelled like cedar wood. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [and the smell of your garments is like the smell of Lebanon's pleasant-smelling cedar]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
{my} bride	my bride
honey	as sweet as … honey
your tongue	Your kisses are
Lebanon	cedar trees in Lebanon

Song of Solomon 4:12

ULT	UST
A locked garden {is} my sister, {my} bride, a locked spring, a sealed fountain.	*You who are as dear to me as a sister, my bride, you are like a garden that the owner keeps locked so that other men cannot enter it; you are like a spring or a fountain that is covered so that others may not drink from it.*

ULT **A locked garden {is} my sister, {my} bride, a locked spring, a sealed fountain**
UST You who are as dear to me as a sister, my bride, you are like a garden that the owner keeps locked so that other men cannot enter it; you are like a spring or a fountain that is covered so that others may not drink from it
(גַּן ׀ נָעוּל אֲחֹתִי כַלָּה גַּל נָעוּל מַעְיָן חָתוּם)

If it would be more natural in your language, you could change the order of these phrases. Alternate translation: [My sister, my bride; you are a locked garden, a locked spring, a sealed fountain]

Support Reference: Information Structure

ULT **A locked garden {is} my sister, {my} bride**
UST You who are as dear to me as a sister, my bride, you are like a garden that the owner keeps locked so that other men cannot enter it
(גַּן ׀ נָעוּל אֲחֹתִי כַלָּה)

The man is speaking of the woman as if she were a **locked garden**. He uses **garden** as a poetic way of referring to the woman herself, and by saying she is a **locked garden** he means that the woman is both beautiful and seemingly inaccessible like a locked garden. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [You are like a locked garden, my sister, my bride]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **A locked garden {is} my sister, {my} bride**
UST You who are as dear to me as a sister, my bride, you are like a garden that the owner keeps locked so that other men cannot enter it
(גַּן ׀ נָעוּל אֲחֹתִי כַלָּה)

The word translated as **garden** refers to a large, enclosed area where bushes, flowers, plants, and trees grow. If your readers would not be familiar with this type of garden, you could use the name of something similar in your area, or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [A locked park where many trees and plants grow is my sister, my bride]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **my sister**
UST You who are as dear to me as a sister
(אֲחֹתִי)

See how you translated the phrase **my sister** in 4:9.

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **a locked spring, a sealed fountain**
UST you are like a spring or a fountain that is covered so that others may not drink from it
(גַּל נָעוּל מַעְיָן חָתוּם)

The man continues to draw an extended comparison between the woman he loves and a garden by speaking of her as if she were **a locked spring** and **a sealed fountain** within a locked garden. The man means that the woman's body is beautiful and inaccessible like a locked spring or a sealed fountain. You could explain this comparison if it would be helpful to your readers. If you used the alternate translation, "You are like a locked garden, my sister, my bride", then you should use the alternate translation which follows. Alternate translation: [you are like a locked spring; you are like a sealed fountain]

Support Reference: Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors

> ULT **a locked spring, a sealed fountain**
> UST you are like a spring or a fountain that is covered so that others may not drink from it
> (גַּל נָעוּל מַעְיָן חָתוּם)

The phrases **a locked spring** and **a sealed fountain** mean basically the same thing. The second phrase emphasizes the meaning of the first by repeating the same idea using different words. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could combine the phrases and show the emphasis in some other way.

Support Reference: Parallelism

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
{my} bride	my bride
a … spring	you are like a spring
sealed	that is covered so that others may not drink from it
a … fountain	or a fountain

Song of Solomon 4:13

ULT	UST
Your shoots {are} an orchard of pomegranate trees with delicious fruits, henna with nard,	*You are like an orchard of pomegranate trees full of delicious fruit and plenty of plants that produce henna and nard spices,*

ULT **Your shoots {are} an orchard of pomegranate trees with delicious fruits, henna with nard … nard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense, myrrh and aloes, with all the best spices**

UST You are like an orchard of pomegranate trees full of delicious fruit and plenty of plants that produce henna and nard spices … and saffron and calamus and cinnamon and many other kinds of incense, myrrh and aloes, and many other fine spices

(שְׁלָחַיִךְ פַּרְדֵּס רִמּוֹנִים עִם פְּרִי מְגָדִים כְּפָרִים עִם־נְרָדִים׃ נֵרְדְּ ׀ וְכַרְכֹּם קָנֶה וְקִנָּמוֹן עִם כָּל־עֲצֵי לְבוֹנָה מֹר וַאֲהָלוֹת עִם כָּל־רָאשֵׁי בְשָׂמִים) (4:13-14)

The man continues to draw an extended comparison between these plants and the woman by speaking of her as if she were **an orchard of pomegranate trees** and various other spices, pleasant-smelling plants, and trees in the "locked garden" (4:12). If you translated 4:12 using the words "You are like," then you should also do that here. Alternate translation: [You are like an orchard of pomegranate trees with delicious fruits; henna with nard, nard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes with all the best spices]

Support Reference: Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors

ULT **Your shoots {are} an orchard of pomegranate trees with delicious fruits, henna with nard … nard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense, myrrh and aloes, with all the best spices**

UST You are like an orchard of pomegranate trees full of delicious fruit and plenty of plants that produce henna and nard spices … and saffron and calamus and cinnamon and many other kinds of incense, myrrh and aloes, and many other fine spices

(שְׁלָחַיִךְ פַּרְדֵּס רִמּוֹנִים עִם פְּרִי מְגָדִים כְּפָרִים עִם־נְרָדִים׃ נֵרְדְּ ׀ וְכַרְכֹּם קָנֶה וְקִנָּמוֹן עִם כָּל־עֲצֵי לְבוֹנָה מֹר וַאֲהָלוֹת עִם כָּל־רָאשֵׁי בְשָׂמִים) (4:13-14)

Here the man uses poetic language to describe the woman as if she is a garden where all types of pleasant plants and trees grow. These plants and trees would not normally grow in the same garden because they have different growing requirements, but because this is poetry the author places these plants in one garden to create a poetic comparison for how wonderful the woman is. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate in a footnote that the author is using plants and trees from different areas to create an image of how wonderful the woman is.

Support Reference: Poetry

ULT henna with nard … nard
UST and plenty of plants that produce henna and nard spices …
(כְּפָרִים עִם־נְרָדִים׃ נֵרְדְּ) (4:13-14)

See how you translated the word **nard** in 1:12 and the word **henna** in 1:14.

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT Your shoots {are}
UST You are like an orchard of
(שְׁלָחַיִךְ)

The word translated as **shoots** refers to the stems and roots that come out (shoot out) from trees and plants. The word **shoots** is used here to refer to the woman so if it would be helpful to your readers, you could translate the phrase **Your shoots** as "You". Alternately, you could translate it with a more general term that your language uses to speak of what grows out of plants and trees. Alternate translation: [Your sprouts are]

Support Reference: Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
pomegranate trees	pomegranate trees
fruits	full of … fruit

Song of Solomon 4:14

ULT	UST
nard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense, myrrh and aloes, with all the best spices,	*and saffron and calamus and cinnamon and many other kinds of incense, myrrh and aloes, and many other fine spices.*

ULT and saffron, calamus and cinnamon … and aloes
UST and saffron and calamus and cinnamon … and aloes
(וְכַרְכֹּם קָנֶה וְקִנָּמוֹן & וַאֲהָלוֹת)

Both **saffron**, a beautiful flowering plant that produces purple flowers, and **calamus**, a cane, were used to make a pleasant-smelling oil. The term **cinnamon** refers to a spice made from the bark of the cinnamon tree. The term **aloes** refers to the pleasant-smelling resin that comes from specific trees in Asia. If your readers would not be familiar with these types of plants, you could use the names of similar plants in your area, or you could use more general terms. Alternate translation: [and saffron flowers, calamus canes and cinnamon trees … and pleasant-smelling resins called aloes]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
frankincense	incense
myrrh	myrrh
the best	fine

Song of Solomon 4:15

ULT	UST
a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and flowing streams from Lebanon.	*You are like a spring in a garden, like a well of fresh-flowing water, and like streams that flow down from the mountains of Lebanon. The woman speaking to the man she loves*

ULT **a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and flowing streams from Lebanon**
UST You are like a spring in a garden, like a well of fresh-flowing water, and like streams that flow down from the mountains of Lebanon
(מַעְיַן גַּנִּים בְּאֵר מַיִם חַיִּים וְנֹזְלִים מִן־לְבָנוֹן)

Here the man continues the metaphor that he began in 4:12 and speaks of the woman he loves as if she were **a fountain** in a garden, **a well of living waters**, and **flowing streams from Lebanon**. If you translated 4:12–14 using the words “You are like”, you should do that here also. See how you translated the word “garden” in 4:12. Alternate translation: [you are like a fountain of gardens, like a well of living waters, and like flowing streams from Lebanon]

Support Reference: Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors

ULT **a fountain of gardens**
UST You are like a spring in a garden
(מַעְיַן גַּנִּים)

The writer assumes that the readers will understand that a **fountain** refers to a spring or underground well that is dug in order to be used as a water source. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [a garden spring] or [a garden well]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **a fountain of gardens**
UST You are like a spring in a garden
(מַעְיַן גַּנִּים)

Here the author could be using the plural form **gardens** to: (1) designate the kind of fountain that would be found in gardens. Alternate translation: [a garden fountain]; (2) designate a large garden. Alternate translation: [a fountain in a large garden]

Support Reference: Unusual Uses of the Plural

ULT **living waters**
UST fresh-flowing water
(מַ֥יִם חַיִּ֖ים)

Here the term **living** means that the water is fresh and flowing. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [fresh water] or [flowing water]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
a fountain of	You are like a spring
a well of	like a well of
Lebanon	the mountains of Lebanon

Song of Solomon 4:16

ULT	UST
Awake, north wind, and come, south wind; blow on my garden and let its spices flow. Let my beloved come to his garden and eat its delicious fruit.	*I want the north wind and the south wind to come and blow on me, so that the fragrance of my body will spread through the air and attract the man I love. You whom I love, I am like your garden. I want you to come and enjoy my body, like someone comes into a garden and enjoys eating the delicious fruit that grows there.*

ULT **Awake, north wind, and come, south wind; blow on my garden and let its spices flow**
UST I want the north wind and the south wind to come and blow on me, so that the fragrance of my body will spread through the air and attract the man I love
(עוּרִי צָפוֹן וּבוֹאִי תֵימָן הָפִיחִי גַּנִּי יִזְּלוּ בְשָׂמָיו)

The woman is speaking to the **wind** which she knows cannot hear her. She is doing this to communicate her strong desire that the pleasant smell of her body will flow through the air and attract the man she loves so that he will come to her. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate these words as a wish or desire. Alternate translation: [I wish that the north wind and south wind would come and blow on my garden and let its spices flow]

Support Reference: Apostrophe

ULT **and come … Let my beloved come**
UST to come … You whom I love … I want you to come … like someone comes
(וּבוֹאִי & יָבֹא דוֹדִי)

Your language may say “go” rather than **come** in a context such as this. Use whichever is more natural. Alternate translation: [and go … Let my beloved go]

Support Reference: Go and Come

ULT **Awake, north wind, and come, south wind; blow on my garden and let its spices flow. Let my beloved come to his garden and eat its delicious fruit**
UST I want the north wind and the south wind to come and blow on me, so that the fragrance of my body will spread through the air and attract the man I love. You whom I love, I am like your garden. I want you to come and enjoy my body, like someone comes into a garden and enjoys eating the delicious fruit that grows there
(עוּרִי צָפוֹן וּבוֹאִי תֵימָן הָפִיחִי גַנִּי יִזְלְוּ בְשָׂמָיו יָבֹא דוֹדִי לְגַנּוֹ וְיֹאכַל פְּרִי מְגָדָיו)

Here the woman continues the "garden" metaphor (from 4:12) by referring to her body as **my garden** and then **his garden**. The woman calls to the wind to blow on her **garden** so that **its spices flow** into the air and attract the man she loves. She invites him to **come to his garden** (a poetic way of inviting him to come and enjoy her body). You should translate the term **garden** here the same way you did in 4:12 because both uses refer to the woman's body. In 4:13 the man spoke of her body as "an orchard of pomegranate trees with delicious fruits," and here the woman invites the man to **come to his garden and eat its delicious fruit**. If you translated 4:12–15 as a comparison, you should also translate the sentence **Let my beloved come to his garden and eat its delicious fruit** as a comparison.

Support Reference: Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors

ULT **and let its spices flow**
UST so that the fragrance of my body will spread through the air and attract the man I love
(יִזְלְוּ בְשָׂמָיו)

Alternate translation: [and carry the pleasant smell of its spices through the air] or [and make the pleasant smell of its spices flow through the air]

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
my beloved	You whom I love
fruit	fruit that grows there

Song of Solomon 5

Song of Songs 5 Chapter Introduction

Structure and Formatting

5:1 The conclusion of the garden metaphor

5:2–8 The theme of longing and searching

5:9 The women of Jerusalem ask the young woman why she thinks the man she loves is special

5:10–16 The woman responds to the question the young women of Jerusalem asked her

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

The attractiveness of the man

The woman describes the man as the epitome of male attractiveness in 5:10–16.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Metaphors

As the author has done throughout this book so far, he continues to use metaphors to describe feelings and events that are common to romantic relationships. (See: Metaphor)

Order of events

5:2–8 seems to describe events that would have chronologically and logically occurred before the events described in 3:6–5:1. The solution to this seeming problem is to understand that this book is poetry and because the author is using poetry to describe the couple's romantic relationship and its associated feelings, he does not need to follow the conventions of chronological story telling.

Whether 5:2–8 describes events that really happened or that happened in a dream.

There are two main views among Bible scholars regarding the events described in 5:2–8. One view is that the events which 5:2–8 describe happened in a dream. The other view is that the events that 5:2–8 describe happened after the man awakened the women from sleeping or from being nearly asleep. The vast majority of Bible scholars think that the first view is correct and that the events described in 5:2–8 happened in a dream.

The “sister” metaphor

The phrase “my sister” is used in 4:9, 4:10, 4:12, 5:1, and 5:2. The man uses this phrase as a term of endearment for the woman he loves. The woman is not actually his sister. You should translate this phrase in 5:1 and 5:2 the same way you translated it in 4:9, 4:10, and 4:12, because the author uses it with the same meaning here. See the note at the first occurrence of this phrase in 4:9 for more information.

An alternate translation possibility for the word the ULT translates as “towers of” in 5:13

In verse 13, the ULT follows the standard Hebrew text by saying “towers of.” However, as a footnote in the ULT indicates, many biblical scholars believe that the original reading was more likely “yielding.” Consider using that reading in your translation. If “yielding” is used in place of “towers of” then the first portion of 5:13 in the ULT would read “His cheeks {are} like a bed of spices, yielding herbal spices” (and The UST would read “His cheeks are like a garden where spices grow that produce sweet-smelling perfume”). The phrase “yielding herbal spices” would then be further describing the phrase “a bed of spices.” The point of the comparison would be that the man’s cheeks smell like a garden bed of spices which yields herbal spices. If you choose to use the word “yielding” in your translation, you could explain the comparison if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [His cheeks smell like a bed of spices that produce herbal spices] or [His cheeks smell like a bed of spices that yield herbal spices]

Song of Solomon 5:1

ULT	UST
I have come to my garden, my sister, {my} bride; I have plucked my myrrh with my spice. I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk. Eat, friends; drink, and be drunk, beloved ones.	*You who are as dear to me as a sister, my bride, I am ready to go away with you now and enjoy making love with you. It will be delightful, delightful like when I gather my myrrh with my other spices, as wonderful as eating my honey and honeycomb, and as enjoyable as drinking my wine with milk. The women of Jerusalem speaking to the newly married couple Friends, enjoy making love; fully enjoy all that you do with each other. The woman speaking to the women of Jerusalem*

ULT **I have come to my garden, my sister, {my} bride; I have plucked my myrrh with my spice. I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk**
UST You who are as dear to me as a sister, my bride, I am ready to go away with you now and enjoy making love with you. It will be delightful, delightful like when I gather my myrrh with my other spices, as wonderful as eating my honey and honeycomb, and as enjoyable as drinking my wine with milk
(בָּאתִי לְגַנִּי אֲחֹתִי כַלָּה אָרִיתִי מוֹרִי עִם־בְּשָׂמִי אָכַלְתִּי יַעְרִי עִם־דִּבְשִׁי שָׁתִיתִי יֵינִי עִם־חֲלָבִי)

Here the man continues to draw an extended comparison between the woman's body and the **garden** that he began in 4:12. He accepts the woman's invitation (that she gave in the previous verse) to enjoy her body. The lines **I have plucked my myrrh with my spice** and **I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey** and **I have drunk my wine with my milk** are all metaphors for the man enjoying the woman's body. If you used the alternate translation in verses 4:12–16, you should do so here also. Alternate translation: [You who are as dear to me as a sister, my bride, I am ready to go with you and enjoy the delights of your body; it will be as though I am gathering myrrh with my other spices, eating my honey and honeycomb, and drinking my wine and my milk]

Support Reference: Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors

ULT **I have come to my garden, my sister, {my} bride; I have plucked my myrrh with my spice. I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk**
UST You who are as dear to me as a sister, my bride, I am ready to go away with you now and enjoy making love with you. It will be delightful, delightful like when I gather my myrrh with my other spices, as wonderful as eating my honey and honeycomb, and as enjoyable as drinking my wine with milk
(בָּאתִי לְגַנִּי֙ אֲחֹתִ֣י כַלָּ֔ה אָרִ֥יתִי מוֹרִ֖י עִם־בְּשָׂמִ֑י אָכַ֥לְתִּי יַעְרִ֖י עִם־דִּבְשִׁ֑י שָׁתִ֥יתִי יֵינִ֖י עִם־חֲלָבִ֑י)

Though the man is speaking as if he has already done these things, he is actually getting ready to do them. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [I am getting ready to come to my garden, my sister, my bride; I will pluck my myrrh with my spice. I will eat my honeycomb with my honey; I will drink my wine with my milk]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **I have come**
UST I am ready to go away … now
(בָּאתִי)

Your language may say “gone” rather than **come** in a context such as this. Use whichever is more natural. Alternate translation: [I have gone]

Support Reference: Go and Come

ULT **I have come to my garden, my sister, {my} bride**
UST You who are as dear to me as a sister, my bride, I am ready to go away with you now and enjoy making love with you
(בָּאתִי לְגַנִּי֙ אֲחֹתִ֣י כַלָּ֔ה)

If it would be more natural in your language, you could change the order of these phrases. Alternate translation: [My sister, my bride, I have come to my garden]

Support Reference: Information Structure

ULT **my sister**
UST You who are as dear to me as a sister
(אֲחֹתִ֣י)

See how you translated the phrase **my sister** in 4:9.

Support Reference: Metaphor

> ULT **Eat, friends; drink, and be drunk, beloved ones**
> UST Friends, enjoy making love; fully enjoy all that you do with each other
> (אִכְלוּ רֵעִים שְׁתוּ וְשִׁכְרוּ דּוֹדִים)

Since the author does not say who is speaking to the couple here, you should not indicate who is speaking in the text of your translation. However, if you are using section headers to indicate who is speaking, the speakers could be: (1) the "daughters of Jerusalem" who spoke earlier in the book. They are speaking to the couple at the couple's wedding. You can use a phrase such as "The young women of Jerusalem speak to the couple" or "The young women of Jerusalem speak to the couple at their wedding" (2) a group of people who are the couple's friends and wedding guests. You can use a phrase such as "The couple's friends speak" or "The couple's wedding guests speak"

Support Reference: When to Keep Information Implicit

> ULT **Eat, friends; drink, and be drunk, beloved ones**
> UST Friends, enjoy making love; fully enjoy all that you do with each other
> (אִכְלוּ רֵעִים שְׁתוּ וְשִׁכְרוּ דּוֹדִים)

Here the speaker is speaking of "eating and drinking" as metaphors to represent the couple enjoying their sexual union. The phrase **be drunk** is an encouragement to fully enjoy the delights of their sexual union. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could express the meaning plainly, or you could use a phrase such as "drink deeply" or "drink abundantly" instead of "be drunk." Alternate translation: [Enjoy your marital intimacy and make love until you are fully satisfied as if you are eating food until full and drinking wine freely] or [Eat, friends; Drink, and be drunk with love] or [Eat, friends; Drink, and drink abundantly of love]

Support Reference: Metaphor

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
{my} bride	my bride
my myrrh	my myrrh
my honeycomb	honeycomb
I have eaten … my honey	It will be delightful, delightful like when I gather … as wonderful as eating my honey … and as enjoyable as drinking
I have drunk	It will be delightful, delightful like when I gather … as wonderful as eating … and as enjoyable as drinking
my wine	my wine
friends	Friends

ULT	UST
and be drunk	fully enjoy
beloved ones	all that you do with each other

Song of Solomon 5:2

ULT	UST
I {am} asleep, but my heart {is} awake. A sound —my beloved is knocking: "Open to me, my sister, my darling, my dove, my perfect one, because my head {is} full of dew, my hair {is full of} the drops of the night."	*I was asleep, and I had a dream. In it I heard the man I love knocking at the door. He said, "You who are as dear to me as a sister, my dear one, you who are like a dove, my flawless one. Open the door for me because my hair is wet from the dew, from the mist that has fallen during the night."*

ULT **I {am} asleep, but my heart {is} awake**
UST I was asleep, and I had a dream. In it
(אֲנִי יְשֵׁנָה וְלִבִּי עֵר)

Here the term **heart** could represent: (1) the woman's thoughts and mental awareness which would make the phrase **my heart is awake** mean that her mind is alert and dreaming while she is sleeping. Alternate translation: [I am asleep, but my mind is dreaming] or [I am asleep, but my mind is alert and dreaming]; (2) the woman's entire person which would make the phrase **my heart is awake** mean that she had been awakened after falling asleep or awakened after she was almost asleep. Alternate translation: [I was almost asleep, now I am awakened] or [I was asleep, but now I have been awakened]

Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **A sound—my beloved is knocking**
UST I heard the man I love knocking at the door
(קוֹל ׀ דּוֹדִי דוֹפֵק)

Alternate translation: [I hear a sound; it is my beloved knocking] or [I hear a sound; it is the sound of my beloved knocking on my door]

ULT **my beloved**
UST the man I love
(דּוֹדִי)

See how you translated the phrase **my beloved** in 1:13. Alternate translation: [my lover]

ULT **my sister, my darling**
UST You who are as dear to me as a sister, my dear one
(אֲחֹתִי רַעְיָתִי)

See how you translated the phrase **my sister** in 4:9 and the phrase **my darling** in 1:9.

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **my dove**
UST you who are like a dove
(יוֹנָתִי)

See how you translated the phrase **my dove** in 2:14.

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **because my head {is} full of dew**
UST because my hair is wet from the dew
(שֶׁרֹּאשִׁי נִמְלָא־טָל)

Here the phrase **full of** is a Hebrew expression which means "wet with." If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [because my head is wet with dew]

Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **my hair {is full of}**
UST because my hair
(קְוֻצּוֹתַי)

The writer is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need to be complete. You could supply the words **is full of** from the previous phrase if it would be clearer to your readers.

Support Reference: Ellipsis

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
my beloved	the man I love
my dove	you who are like a dove
my perfect one	my flawless one

Song of Solomon 5:3

ULT	UST
“I have taken off my robe; how will I put it on? I have washed my feet; how could I get them dirty?”	*But I had already taken my robe off; I did not want to put it on again to open the door. I had already washed my feet; so I did not want them to get dirty again by answering the door.*

ULT I have taken off my robe; how will I put it on? I have washed my feet; how could I get them dirty

UST But I had already taken my robe off; I did not want to put it on again to open the door. I had already washed my feet; so I did not want them to get dirty again by answering the door

(פָּשַׁטְתִּי אֶת־כֻּתָּנְתִּי אֵיכָכָה אֶלְבָּשֶׁנָּה רָחַצְתִּי אֶת־רַגְלַי אֵיכָכָה אֲטַנְּפֵם)

This verse is a quotation of: (1) what the woman thought to herself. Alternate translation: [I thought to myself; I have taken off my robe; how will I put it on? I have washed my feet; how could I get them dirty?]; (2) the woman speaking directly to the man. Alternate translation: [I said to the man I love; I have taken off my robe; how will I put it on? I have washed my feet; how could I get them dirty?]

Support Reference: Quote Markings

ULT how will I put it on? I have washed my feet; how could I get them dirty

UST But … I did not want to put it on again to open the door. I had already washed my feet; so I did not want them to get dirty again by answering the door

(אֵיכָכָה אֶלְבָּשֶׁנָּה רָחַצְתִּי אֶת־רַגְלַי אֵיכָכָה אֲטַנְּפֵם)

The woman is using the question form for emphasis. If you would not use the question form for this purpose in your language, you could translate this as a statement or an exclamation and express the emphasis in a way that is natural in your language. Alternate translation: [I do not want to put it back on! I have already washed my feet so I do not want to get them dirty again!]

Support Reference: Rhetorical Question

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
my robe	my robe

Song of Solomon 5:4

ULT	UST
My beloved stretched out his hand through the hole and my belly roared concerning him.	*The man I love put his hand through the opening in the door, and I was thrilled in my inner being that he was there.*

ULT **My beloved**
UST The man I love
(דּוֹדִ֔י)

See how you translated the phrase **my beloved** in 1:13.

ULT **and my belly roared concerning him**
UST and I was thrilled in my inner being that he was there
(וּמֵעַ֖י הָמ֥וּ עָלָֽיו)

Here, **belly** represents the center of a person's emotions. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and my feelings for him roared]

Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **and my belly roared concerning him**
UST and I was thrilled in my inner being that he was there
(וּמֵעַ֖י הָמ֥וּ עָלָֽיו)

Here the term **belly** represents the woman's feelings and the woman saying that her **belly roared** is a poetic way of saying that her feelings were aroused. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and my feelings for him were aroused]

Support Reference: Metaphor

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
My beloved	The man I love

Song of Solomon 5:5

ULT	UST
I got myself up to open to my beloved and my hands dripped {with} myrrh and my fingers {dripped with} flowing myrrh on the hands of the bolt.	*I got up to open the door for the man I love, but first I put much myrrh on my hands. The liquid myrrh was dripping from my fingers while I unlatched the bolt.*

ULT **and my hands dripped {with} myrrh and my fingers {dripped with} flowing myrrh**
UST but first I put much myrrh on my hands. The liquid myrrh was dripping from my fingers
(וְיָדַי נָטְפוּ־מֹור וְאֶצְבְּעֹתַי מֹור עֹבֵר)

The two phrases **my hands dripped with myrrh** and **my fingers dripped with flowing myrrh** mean basically the same thing. The second emphasizes the meaning of the first by repeating the same idea with different words. Hebrew poetry was based on this kind of repetition, and it would be good to show this to your readers by including both phrases in your translation rather than combining them. However, if it would be helpful to your readers, you could connect the phrases with a word other than “and” in order to show that the second phrase is repeating the first one, not saying something additional. Alternate translation: [and my hands dripped with myrrh, yes, my fingers dripped with flowing myrrh]

Support Reference: Parallelism

ULT **flowing myrrh**
UST The liquid myrrh
(מֹור עֹבֵר)

The phrase translated as **flowing myrrh** refers to liquid myrrh. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: [liquid myrrh]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **and my fingers {dripped with}**
UST was dripping from my fingers
(וְאֶצְבְּעֹתַי)

The woman is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need to be complete. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could supply the words “dripped with.”

Support Reference: Ellipsis

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
to my beloved	for the man I love

ULT	UST
{with} myrrh	myrrh
myrrh	The … myrrh

Song of Solomon 5:6

ULT	UST
I myself opened to my beloved, but my beloved had turned and gone. My soul went out because he departed. I searched for him, but I did not find him; I called him, but he did not answer me.	*I opened the door for the man I love, but he had left. He had turned away and was gone! I greatly despaired because he was not there. I searched for him, but I could not find him. I called out for him, but he did not answer.*

ULT **to my beloved, but my beloved**
UST for the man I love, but he
(לְדוֹדִי וְדוֹדִי)

See how you translated the phrase **my beloved** in 1:13.

ULT **and gone**
UST and was gone
(עָבָר)

Your language may say “went” rather than **gone** in a context such as this. Use whichever is more natural. Alternate translation: [and went away]

Support Reference: Go and Come

ULT **My soul went out**
UST I greatly despaired
(נַפְשִׁי יָצְאָה)

Your language may say “gone” rather than **went** in a context such as this. Use whichever is more natural. Alternate translation: [My soul had gone out]

Support Reference: Go and Come

ULT **My soul went out**
UST I greatly despaired
(נַפְשִׁי יָצְאָה)

Here, **soul** represents the entire person, and the phrase **My soul went out** is a Hebrew idiom that means to feel extreme despair. If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, you could use a comparable expression from your language that has this meaning or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [My heart sank] or [I felt great despair]

Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **because he departed**
UST because he was not there
(בְּדַבְּרֹ֑ו)

Here the word translated as **because he departed** could mean: (1) when he departed. If you choose this option, use the translation of the ULT. (2) “when he spoke.” Alternate translation: [when he spoke]

ULT **but he did not answer me**
UST but he did not answer
(וְלֹ֥א עָנָֽנִי)

The implication is that the man did not answer because he was not there. She is not saying that he was present but not answering. You could include this information if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [but he did not answer me, since he was not there]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
to my beloved	for the man I love
but my beloved	but he
My soul	I
I searched for him	I searched for him
I called him	I called out for him

Song of Solomon 5:7

ULT	UST
The guards going about in the city found me. They beat me and wounded me; they lifted my shawl from me, the guards of the walls.	*The city watchmen saw me while they were walking around the city. They struck me and bruised me because they thought I was a prostitute; those watchmen who were guarding the city walls took my robe that was on me.*

ULT **The guards going about in the city found me**
UST The city watchmen saw me while they were walking around the city
(מְצָאַנִי הַשֹּׁמְרִים הַסֹּבְבִים בָּעִיר)

See how you translated the sentence **The guards going about in the city found me** in 3:3.

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **They beat me and wounded me; they lifted my shawl from me, the guards of the walls**
UST They struck me and bruised me because they thought I was a prostitute; those watchmen who were guarding the city walls took my robe that was on me
(הִכּוּנִי פְצָעוּנִי נָשְׂאוּ אֶת־רְדִידִי מֵעָלַי שֹׁמְרֵי הַחֹמוֹת)

If it would be more natural in your language, you could change the order of these phrases. Alternate translation: [The guards of the walls beat me and wounded me; they lifted my shawl from me]

Support Reference: Information Structure

ULT **They beat me and wounded me**
UST They struck me and bruised me because they thought I was a prostitute
(הִכּוּנִי פְצָעוּנִי)

The reason that the city watchmen **beat** and **wounded** the woman is because they thought she was a prostitute. You could include this information if it would be helpful to your readers.

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

> ULT **my shawl**
> UST my robe
> (אֶת־רְדִידִי)

The word translated as **shawl** could refer to: (1) a light article of clothing like a robe or cloak that was worn as an outer garment and wrapped around the body. Alternate translation: [my cloak]; (2) a large veil. Alternate translation: [my veil]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

> ULT **the guards of the walls**
> UST who were guarding the city walls
> (שֹׁמְרֵי הַחֹמוֹת)

The men called **the guards of the walls** are the same men as "The guards going about in the city" mentioned earlier in the verse. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [those guards who were going about in the city guarding the walls]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Song of Solomon 5:8

ULT	UST
I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved, what will you declare to him? {Declare to him} that sick {with} love {am} I.	*You young women of Jerusalem, if you see the man I love, what will you tell him? I want you to solemnly promise me that if you see him, you will tell him that the way he loves me makes me feel lovesick. The women of Jerusalem speaking to the woman*

ULT **I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem**
UST You young women of Jerusalem … I want you to solemnly promise me that
(הִשְׁבַּעְתִּי אֶתְכֶם בְּנוֹת יְרוּשָׁלִָם)

See how you translated the phrase **I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem** in 2:7.

Support Reference: Oath Formulas

ULT **{Declare to him} that sick {with} love {am} I**
UST you will tell him that the way he loves me makes me feel lovesick
(שָׁחוֹלַת אַהֲבָה אָנִי)

See how you translated the phrase **sick with love am I** in 2:5

Support Reference: Hyperbole

ULT **{Declare to him} that sick {with} love {am} I**
UST you will tell him that the way he loves me makes me feel lovesick
(שָׁחוֹלַת אַהֲבָה אָנִי)

The woman is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful in your language, you could supply these words from the context.

Support Reference: Ellipsis

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Jerusalem	Jerusalem
you find … beloved	you see … you see
will you declare	will you tell
{Declare to him} that sick … am	you will tell him that the way he loves me makes … feel lovesick

ULT	UST
{with} love	you will tell him that the way he loves me makes … feel lovesick

Song of Solomon 5:9

ULT	UST
What {is} your beloved more than {another} beloved, most beautiful among women? What {is} your beloved more than {another} beloved, that thus you adjure us?	*You who are the most beautiful of all the women, why do you think that the man you love is better than other men? In what way is he better than other men that would cause you to want us to solemnly promise that we will tell him that? The woman speaking to the women of Jerusalem*

ULT **What {is} your beloved more than {another} beloved, most beautiful among women? What {is} your beloved more than {another} beloved, that thus you adjure us**
UST You who are the most beautiful of all the women, why do you think that the man you love is better than other men? In what way is he better than other men that would cause you to want us to solemnly promise that we will tell him that
(מַה־דּוֹדֵךְ מִדּוֹד הַיָּפָה בַּנָּשִׁים מַה־דּוֹדֵךְ מִדּוֹד שֶׁכָּכָה הִשְׁבַּעְתָּנוּ)

The phrase **What is your beloved more than another beloved** is repeated for emphasis. This is a common feature of Hebrew poetry, and you may want to begin a new line at the start of each parallel statement. However, if it would be helpful to your readers, you could combine them into one. Alternate translation: [What is your beloved more than another beloved, most beautiful among women, that thus you adjure us] or [Most beautiful among women, what is your beloved more than another beloved, that thus you adjure us]

Support Reference: Poetry

ULT **What {is} your beloved more than {another} beloved**
UST why do you think that the man you love is better than other men
(מַה־דּוֹדֵךְ מִדּוֹד)

Alternate translation: [What makes the man you love better than other men] or [What is so special about the man you love]

ULT **What {is} your beloved more than {another} beloved, most beautiful among women**
UST You who are the most beautiful of all the women, why do you think that the man you love is better than other men
(מַה־דּוֹדֵךְ מִדּוֹד הַיָּפָה בַּנָּשִׁים)

If it would be more natural in your language, you could change the order of these phrases. Alternate translation: [Most beautiful among women, what is your beloved more than another beloved]

Support Reference: Information Structure

ULT **most beautiful among women**
UST You who are the most beautiful of all the women
(הַיָּפָה בַּנָּשִׁים)

See how you translated the phrase **most beautiful among women** in 1:8.

ULT **that thus you adjure us**
UST that would cause you to want us to solemnly promise that we will tell him that
(שֶׁכָּכָה הִשְׁבַּעְתָּנוּ)

Alternate translation: [with the result that thus you adjure us] or [with the result that you request us to promise that we tell him that] or [that would make you want to thus adjure us]

ULT **you adjure us**
UST you to want us to solemnly promise that we will tell him that
(הִשְׁבַּעְתָּנוּ)

See how you translated the word **adjure** in the previous verse.

Support Reference: Oath Formulas

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
{is} your beloved	the man you love
more than {another} beloved	is better than other men
{is} your beloved	he
more than {another} beloved	better than other men

Song of Solomon 5:10

ULT	UST
My beloved {is} shimmering and red, distinguished among ten thousand.	*It is because the man I love is handsome and healthy, outstanding among an uncountable number of other men.*

ULT My beloved {is} shimmering and red
UST It is because the man I love is handsome and healthy
(דּוֹדִי צַח וְאָדוֹם)

The words translated here as **shimmering** and **red** mean that the man's skin had a healthy glow and was a reddish-brown color. These two words used together indicate that the man's skin looked healthy and handsome. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [My beloved has radiant and healthy skin] or [My beloved's skin glows and is a handsome reddish-brown]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT distinguished among ten thousand
UST outstanding among an uncountable number of other men
(דָּגוּל מֵרְבָבָה)

In the Hebrew language **ten thousand** is the highest number that was used when making comparisons, so the woman uses this number to stand for an uncountable number of people. If you have a similar expression in your culture, you could use it, or if it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [better than anyone else] or [and there is no one else like him] or [one in a million]

Support Reference: Metaphor

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
My beloved	It is because the man I love

Song of Solomon 5:11

ULT	UST
His head {is} gold, refined gold; his hairs {are} wavy, black like the raven.	*His face is beautiful and gleams like gold; he is as precious as purest gold. His hair is wavy and as black as a raven.*

ULT His head {is} gold, refined gold
UST His face is beautiful and gleams like gold; he is as precious as purest gold
(רֹאשׁוֹ כֶּתֶם פָּז)

Here the woman is speaking of the man's **head** as if it were **gold**. Because she speaks of the appearance of the man's hair in the following line, she probably intends in this line to refer to his face. The phrase **refined gold** indicates that the gold is very valuable. By saying that the man's **head is gold, refined gold**, she is probably indicating that he is special and has great worth. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [His head is like gold that is refined] or [His face is beautiful and gleams like gold. He is precious and valuable like refined gold] or [His face gleams. He is precious and valuable]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT black like the raven
UST and as black as a raven
(שְׁחֹרוֹת כָּעוֹרֵב)

A **raven** is a large bird with dark black feathers. Ravens are as big as some hawks and are similar in color and appearance to crows but larger. If your readers would not be familiar with this type of bird, you could use the name of a similar bird in your area or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [black like a bird with dark black feathers] or [black like a dark black bird]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT his hairs {are} wavy, black like the raven
UST His hair is wavy and as black as a raven
(קְווּצּוֹתָיו תַּלְתַּלִּים שְׁחֹרוֹת כָּעוֹרֵב)

The writer is stating that the color of the man's hair is dark **black like the raven**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: [his hair is wavy and dark black]

Support Reference: Simile

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
{is} gold	is beautiful and gleams like gold
refined gold	he is as precious as purest gold

Song of Solomon 5:12

ULT	UST
His eyes {are} like doves beside stream beds of water, bathing in milk, sitting beside the pools.	*His eyes are as gentle and beautiful as doves which are beside streams. His eyes are as white as white doves which are sitting beside pools of water.*

ULT **His eyes {are} like doves beside stream beds of water, bathing in milk, sitting beside the pools**

UST His eyes are as gentle and beautiful as doves which are beside streams. His eyes are as white as white doves which are sitting beside pools of water

(עֵינָ֗יו כְּיוֹנִים֙ עַל־אֲפִיקֵ֣י מָ֔יִם רֹחֲצ֖וֹת בֶּחָלָ֑ב יֹשְׁבֹ֖ות עַל־מִלֵּֽאת)

In 1:15 the man said to the woman, “your eyes are doves.” Here the woman uses the word **like** and compares the man’s eyes to doves that are **bathing in milk**. The phrase **bathing in milk** refers to the color of the doves’ feathers and the man’s eyes. The two phrases **beside stream beds of water** and **sitting beside the pools** describe the doves as being by water. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: [His eyes are like doves beside stream beds of water that are bathing in milk and sitting beside the pools]

Support Reference: Simile

ULT **His eyes {are} like doves beside stream beds of water, bathing in milk, sitting beside the pools**

UST His eyes are as gentle and beautiful as doves which are beside streams. His eyes are as white as white doves which are sitting beside pools of water

(עֵינָ֗יו כְּיוֹנִים֙ עַל־אֲפִיקֵ֣י מָ֔יִם רֹחֲצ֖וֹת בֶּחָלָ֑ב יֹשְׁבֹ֖ות עַל־מִלֵּֽאת)

The phrases **beside stream beds of water** and **sitting beside the pools** mean basically the same thing. They both describe the doves as being by water. Hebrew poetry was based on this kind of repetition, and it would be good to show this to your readers by including both phrases in your translation rather than combining them. However, if it would be helpful to your readers, you could combine them. Alternate translation: [His eyes are like doves beside stream beds of water, bathing in milk] or [His eyes are like doves bathing in milk, sitting by the pools]

Support Reference: Parallelism

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
{are} like doves	are as gentle and beautiful as doves which

Song of Solomon 5:13

ULT	UST
His cheeks {are} like a bed of spices, towers of herbal spices. His lips {are} lilies, dripping {with} flowing myrrh.	*His cheeks are like a garden where spices grow and like towers where spices are kept. His lips are like lilies that have myrrh dripping from them.*

ULT **His cheeks {are} like a bed of spices, towers of herbal spices**
UST His cheeks are like a garden where spices grow and like towers where spices are kept
(לְחָיָו֙ כַּעֲרוּגַ֣ת הַבֹּ֔שֶׂם מִגְדְּלוֹת֙ מֶֽרְקָחִ֔ים)

Here the writer says that the man's **cheeks** are like a garden, or an area in a garden, used for planting spices because his cheeks smell **like a bed of spices** and are like **towers of herbal spices**. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: [His cheeks smell like a bed of spices and like towers that contain herbal spices]

Support Reference: Simile

ULT **like a bed of spices**
UST like a garden where spices grow
(כַּעֲרוּגַ֣ת הַבֹּ֔שֶׂם)

Here the term translated as **bed** refers to an area in a garden used for planting. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [like an area for planting spices] or [like a garden bed of spices] or [like planters of spices]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **towers of**
UST and like towers where … are kept
(מִגְדְּלוֹת֙)

See the Chapter 5 introduction for information regarding an alternate translation of the word that the ULT translates as **towers of**.

Support Reference: Textual Variants

ULT **towers of herbal spices**
UST and like towers where spices are kept
(מִגְדְּלוֹת מֶרְקָחִים)

The woman is leaving out some of the words that a sentence would need in many languages to be complete. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could supply these words from the context. Alternate translation: [like towers of herbal spices] or [and they are like towers of herbal spices]

Support Reference: Ellipsis

ULT **His lips {are} lilies, dripping {with} flowing myrrh**
UST His lips are like lilies that have myrrh dripping from them
(שִׂפְתוֹתָיו שְׁוֹשַׁנִּים נֹטְפוֹת מֹר עֹבֵר)

Here the woman is speaking of the man's **lips** as if they are **lilies** that are **dripping with flowing myrrh** because of the sweet smell of both lilies and myrrh, the beauty and softness of lilies, and because the man's kisses are wet like flowing myrrh. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [His lips are beautiful, fragrant, and soft. His kisses are sweet-smelling and moist]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **lilies**
UST like lilies that have
(שְׁוֹשַׁנִּים)

See how you translated **lilies** in 2:16.

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **flowing myrrh**
UST myrrh … from them
(מֹר עֹבֵר)

See how you translated the phrase **flowing myrrh** in 5:5.

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
towers of	and like towers where … are kept
myrrh	myrrh

Song of Solomon 5:14

ULT	UST
His arms {are} rods of gold mounted with topaz; his belly {is} a plate of ivory covered {with} sapphires.	*His arms are like round gold rods, that are decorated with precious stones. His abdomen is like ivory that is decorated with sapphires.*

ULT His arms {are} rods of gold mounted with topaz
UST His arms are like round gold rods, that are decorated with precious stones
(יָדָיו גְּלִילֵי זָהָב מְמֻלָּאִים בַּתַּרְשִׁישׁ)

Here the woman is speaking of the man's **arms** as if they were **rods of gold mounted with topaz** because rods of gold were powerful, had an attractive color and a finely rounded shape; and topaz would have made the rods of gold more beautiful. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [His arms are powerful, nicely rounded, and beautiful like rods of gold mounted with topaz]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT His arms {are}
UST His arms are
(יָדָיו)

The word that the ULT translates as **arms** could: (1) refer to arms in which case you can use the ULT's translation. (2) refer to "hands." Alternate translation: [His hands are]

ULT with topaz
UST precious stones
(בַּתַּרְשִׁישׁ)

A **topaz** is a beautiful gemstone used in jewelry and also to decorate other things. Bible scholars are not certain exactly what stone **topaz** refers to. Many different stones have been proposed such as topaz, chrysolite, beryl and others. If your readers are familiar with these types of stone, you could use one of them, or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [with beautiful stones] or [with jewels]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **his belly {is} a plate of ivory covered {with} sapphires**
UST His abdomen is like ivory that is decorated with sapphires
(מֵעָיו עֶשֶׁת שֵׁן מְעֻלֶּפֶת סַפִּירִים)

Here the woman is speaking of the man's **belly** as if it was **a plate of ivory covered with sapphires**. By making this comparison, she is saying that the man's belly looks especially attractive since ivory and sapphires were not only rare and costly but also quite beautiful. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [his belly is beautiful and precious] or [his belly is handsome]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **his belly {is}**
UST His abdomen is
(מֵעָיו)

Alternate translation: [his stomach is]

ULT **ivory**
UST like ivory that is
(שֵׁן)

The word **ivory** refers to the tusks of an elephant. Ivory is a white color and is very beautiful and costly. If your readers would not be familiar with ivory, you could explain this term in a footnote.

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **{with} sapphires**
UST sapphires
(סַפִּירִים)

The word **sapphires** refers to beautiful blue gemstones. If your readers would not be familiar with this type of stone, you could use the name of something similar in your area, or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [with blue gemstones] or [with beautiful blue gemstones]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
rods of	round … rods, that are

ULT	UST
gold	like … gold

Song of Solomon 5:15

ULT	UST
His thighs {are} pillars of alabaster set on bases of refined gold; his appearance {is} like Lebanon, {as} choice as the cedars.	*His legs are like alabaster columns that are set in bases made of pure gold. He is majestic, like the mountains of Lebanon. He is tall and strong and outstanding like the cedar trees that grow there.*

ULT **His thighs {are} pillars of alabaster set on bases of refined gold**
UST His legs are like alabaster columns that are set in bases made of pure gold
(שׁוֹקָיו עַמּוּדֵי שֵׁשׁ מְיֻסָּדִים עַל־אַדְנֵי־פָז)

Here the woman is speaking of the man's **thighs** as if they were **pillars of alabaster set on bases of refined gold** because the man's legs are strong and majestic looking. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [His thighs are strong and majestic like pillars of alabaster set on bases of gold]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **His thighs {are}**
UST His legs are
(שׁוֹקָיו)

The word the ULT translates as **thighs** most likely refers to the entirety of a person's legs, so you could translate this term as "legs" as in the UST.

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **alabaster**
UST alabaster
(שֵׁשׁ)

The word translated as **alabaster** can refer to either alabaster or marble, types of strong stone that are nice looking and used to make large columns, statues, and other things. If your readers would not be familiar with alabaster or marble, you could use the name of something similar in your area, or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [marble] or [stone]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **his appearance {is} like Lebanon, {as} choice as the cedars**
UST He is majestic, like the mountains of Lebanon. He is tall and strong and outstanding like the cedar trees that grow there
(מַרְאֵהוּ כִּלְבָנוֹן בָּחוּר כָּאֲרָזִים)

The woman is saying that the man's **appearance is like Lebanon, as choice as the cedars** because he is tall, strong, and outstanding in comparison to other men, just as the cedars of Lebanon are better than all other trees. Lebanon was famous for its cedar trees which were considered to be superior. The word **choice** here means "excellent quality." If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: [His appearance is tall and strong and stately. He is outstanding among other men] or [His appearance is majestic. He is strong and tall and better than other men]

Support Reference: Simile

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
pillars of	like … columns
refined gold	pure gold
like Lebanon	like the mountains of Lebanon
as the cedars	He is tall and strong … like the cedar trees that grow there

Song of Solomon 5:16

ULT	UST
His mouth {is} most sweet, and all of him {is} most desirable. This {is} my beloved, and this {is} my friend, daughters of Jerusalem.	*His kisses are very sweet; he is completely attractive. You young women of Jerusalem, this is what the man I love, who is my friend, is like, and this is why he is better than all other men.*

ULT His mouth {is} most sweet
UST His kisses are very sweet
(חִכּוֹ מַמְתַקִּים)

Here, **mouth** could refer to: (1) the man's kisses. Alternate translation: [His kisses are most sweet]; (2) the man's words. Alternate translation: [His speech is most sweet] or [The words from his mouth are most sweet]

Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT and all of him {is} most desirable
UST he is completely attractive
(וְכֻלּוֹ מַחֲמַדִּים)

Alternate translation: [and every part of him is very desirable]

ULT daughters of Jerusalem
UST You young women of Jerusalem
(בְּנוֹת יְרוּשָׁלָם)

See how you translated the phrase **daughters of Jerusalem** in 1:5.

Support Reference: Possession

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
{is} my beloved	is what the man I love, who is
{is} my friend	my friend, is like
Jerusalem	Jerusalem

Song of Solomon 6

Song of Songs 6 Chapter Introduction

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Beauty

In 6:4–10 the man describes the woman he loves as the epitome of female beauty and attractiveness by using various comparisons.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Metaphors

In the ancient Near East, it was acceptable to describe a woman using comparisons to animals. In many cultures today, this can be considered offensive. Different comparisons of beauty are used in different cultures. (See: Simile)

The meaning of 6:12

6:12 is very difficult to understand, and its meaning is uncertain. Therefore, Bible scholars have different opinions on the exact meaning of this verse, and of some of the words in context, and on how the words and phrases relate to each other. Published versions of the Bible differ significantly from one another in their rendering of it. The ULT seeks to offer a reasonable translation of this verse. If a translation of the Bible exists in your region, it may differ from the ULT in the way that it translates this verse. In that case, you may wish to use the rendering that it uses. If not, you may wish to follow the rendering of the ULT.

The meaning of the phrase “like the dance of two armies” in 6:13

The meaning of the phrase “like the dance of two armies” is uncertain and Bible scholars have different opinions on the exact meaning of this verse. The ULT offers one possible translation of this verse. If a translation of the Bible exists in your region, it may differ

from the ULT in the way that it translates this verse. In that case, you may wish to use the translation that it uses. If not, you may wish to follow the reading of the ULT.

Song of Solomon 6:1

ULT	UST
Where did he go, your beloved, most beautiful woman among women? Where did he turn, your beloved, and let us seek him with you?	*You who are the most beautiful of the women, where has the man you love gone? Tell us which direction he went, and we will go with you to search for him. The woman speaking to herself*

ULT **Where did he go, your beloved, most beautiful woman among women? Where did he turn, your beloved, and let us seek him with you**
UST You who are the most beautiful of the women, where has the man you love gone? Tell us which direction he went, and we will go with you to search for him
(אָנָה הָלַךְ דּוֹדֵךְ הַיָּפָה בַּנָּשִׁים אָנָה פָּנָה דוֹדֵךְ וּנְבַקְשֶׁנּוּ עִמָּךְ)

The questions **Where did he go, your beloved** and **Where did he turn, your beloved** have basically the same meaning. This question is asked twice, in slightly different ways, for emphasis and poetic effect. This type of repetition is a common feature of Hebrew poetry, and it would be good to retain this repetition if possible. However, if it would be helpful to your readers, you could combine the phrases into one. Alternate translation: [Where did he go, your beloved, most beautiful woman among women? Let us seek him with you] or [Most beautiful woman among women, where did he turn your beloved? Let us seek him with you]

Support Reference: Parallelism

ULT **Where did he go, your beloved … Where did he turn, your beloved**
UST where has the man you love gone? Tell us which direction he went
(אָנָה הָלַךְ דּוֹדֵךְ & אָנָה פָּנָה דוֹדֵךְ)

Alternate translation: [Where did your beloved go … Where did your beloved turn]

ULT **most beautiful woman among women**
UST You who are the most beautiful of the women
(הַיָּפָה בַּנָּשִׁים)

See how you translated the phrase **most beautiful woman among women** in 1:8.

> ULT **Where did he turn, your beloved**
> UST Tell us which direction he went
> (אָנָה פָּנָה דוֹדֵךְ)

Alternate translation: [Which way did your beloved go]

> ULT **and let us seek him with you**
> UST and we will go with you to search for him
> (וּנְבַקְשֶׁנּוּ עִמָּךְ)

The women of Jerusalem are leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You could supply these words from the context if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [tell us, so that we can seek him with you] or [tell us, and let us seek him with you]

Support Reference: Ellipsis

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
your beloved	the man you love
your beloved	he
and let us seek him	and we will go … to search for him

Song of Solomon 6:2

ULT	UST
My beloved went down to his garden, to the beds of spices, in order to graze in the gardens and in order to glean lilies.	*The man who I love has come to me. I am like his garden where pleasant spices grow. He has come to enjoy my body as a gazelle enjoys grazing in a garden and as a person enjoys picking lilies.*

ULT **My beloved went down to his garden, to the beds of spices, in order to graze in the gardens and in order to glean lilies**

UST The man who I love has come to me. I am like his garden where pleasant spices grow. He has come to enjoy my body as a gazelle enjoys grazing in a garden and as a person enjoys picking lilies

(דּוֹדִי יָרַד לְגַנּוֹ לַעֲרוּגוֹת הַבֹּשֶׂם לִרְעוֹת בַּגַּנִּים וְלִלְקֹט שׁוֹשַׁנִּים)

Here the woman resumes the “garden” metaphor that was used in 4:12–5:1 by again referring to her body as a **garden**. The phrase **graze in the gardens** and **glean lilies** are both metaphors for the man enjoying the woman’s body. If you used the word “like” to translate 4:12–5:1, you should continue to use it here, or if it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [My beloved went to me. I am like a garden where beds of spices grow. He came to me in order to enjoy my body like a gazelle enjoys grazing in gardens and like a person enjoys gleaning lilies]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **My beloved went down to his garden, to the beds of spices**

UST The man who I love has come to me. I am like his garden where pleasant spices grow

(דּוֹדִי יָרַד לְגַנּוֹ לַעֲרוּגוֹת הַבֹּשֶׂם)

The phrase **to the beds of spices** explains where in the garden the man went down to. This phrase is not describing a separate location from the **garden** (woman). If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [My beloved went down to the beds of spices in his garden] or [My beloved went to me who is like his spice garden]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **went down**
UST has come
(יָרַד)

Your language may say “gone” rather than **went** in a context such as this. Use whichever is more natural. Alternate translation: [has gone down]

Support Reference: Go and Come

ULT **to the beds of spices**
UST where pleasant spices grow
(לַעֲרוּגוֹת הַבֹּשֶׂם)

See how you translated the similar phrase **bed of spices** in 5:13.

ULT **in the gardens**
UST my body … in a garden
(בַּגַּנִּים)

Here the phrase **in the gardens** refers to the woman just like the phrase **his garden** does earlier in the verse. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [in his gardens] or [in his garden]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
My beloved	The man who I love
and in order to glean	and as a person enjoys picking

Song of Solomon 6:3

ULT	UST
I {belong} to my beloved, and my beloved {belongs} to me; he grazes among the lilies.	*I belong to the man I love, and he belongs to me. He feels pleasure when he is near me, as a gazelle does when eating among lilies. The man speaking*

ULT I {belong} to my beloved, and my beloved {belongs} to me
UST I belong to the man I love, and he belongs to me
(אֲנִי לְדוֹדִי וְדוֹדִי לִי)

See how you translated the similar phrase “My beloved belongs to me and I belong to him” in 2:16.

Support Reference: First, Second or Third Person

ULT he grazes among the lilies
UST He feels pleasure when he is near me, as a gazelle does when eating among lilies
(הָרֹעֶה בַּשּׁוֹשַׁנִּים)

See how you translated the similar phrase “the man grazing among the lilies” in 2:16.

Support Reference: Metaphor

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
{belong} to my beloved	belong to the man I love
and my beloved	and he

Song of Solomon 6:4

ULT	UST
You {are} beautiful, my darling, like Tirzah, lovely like Jerusalem, awe-inspiring like bannered armies.	*My dear one, you are beautiful. You are as beautiful as the city of Tirzah and as lovely as the city of Jerusalem. You are as exciting and majestic to look at as an army with banners.*

ULT You {are} beautiful, my darling, like Tirzah, lovely like Jerusalem
UST My dear one, you are beautiful. You are as beautiful as the city of Tirzah and as lovely as the city of Jerusalem
(יָפָה אַתְּ רַעְיָתִי כְּתִרְצָה נָאוָה כִּירוּשָׁלִָם)

The man is saying that the woman is **like** the city of **Tirzah** and **like** the city of **Jerusalem** because both of these cities were beautiful. These lines are parallel, and both mean basically the same thing. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state that explicitly. Alternately, you could combine the lines if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [You are beautiful, my darling, like the beautiful city of Tirzah, lovely like the lovely city of Jerusalem] or [You are beautiful and lovely, my darling, like the cities of Tirzah and Jerusalem]

Support Reference: Simile

ULT You {are} beautiful, my darling
UST My dear one, you are beautiful
(יָפָה אַתְּ רַעְיָתִי)

See how you translated the phrase “you are beautiful, my darling” in 1:15.

ULT You {are} beautiful, my darling, like Tirzah
UST My dear one, you are beautiful. You are as beautiful as the city of Tirzah
(יָפָה אַתְּ רַעְיָתִי כְּתִרְצָה)

If it would be more natural in your language, you could change the order of these phrases. Alternate translation: [My darling, you are beautiful like Tirzah]

Support Reference: Information Structure

> **ULT lovely like Jerusalem, awe-inspiring like bannered armies**
> **UST** and as lovely as the city of Jerusalem. You are as exciting and majestic to look at as an army with banners
> (נָאוָה כִּירוּשָׁלִַם אֲיֻמָּה כַּנִּדְגָּלוֹת)

The man is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. You could supply these words from the context if it would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: [you are lovely like Jerusalem; you are awe-inspiring like bannered armies]

Support Reference: Ellipsis

> **ULT awe-inspiring like bannered armies**
> **UST** You are as exciting and majestic to look at as an army with banners
> (אֲיֻמָּה כַּנִּדְגָּלוֹת)

The man is saying that the woman is **awe-inspiring like bannered armies** because looking at her causes the man to feel a sense of awe that is comparable to seeing an army with its banners above it. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: [and the awe I feel when looking at you is like the awe I would feel if I were to see armies with their banners] or [and the awe I feel when looking at you is like the awe I feel when I see armies with their banners above them]

Support Reference: Simile

> **ULT like bannered armies**
> **UST** as an army with banners
> (כַּנִּדְגָּלוֹת)

See how you translated the term “banner” in 2:4.

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
like Tirzah	You are as beautiful as the city of Tirzah
like Jerusalem	as the city of Jerusalem
awe-inspiring	You are as exciting and majestic to look at

Song of Solomon 6:5

ULT	UST
Turn your eyes away from me, because they excite me. Your hair {is} like a flock of goats that hop down from Gilead.	*Stop looking at me like that, because your eyes excite me very much. Your long black hair moves from side to side like a flock of black goats moving down the slopes of Mount Gilead.*

ULT Your hair {is} like a flock of goats that hop down from Gilead

UST Your long black hair moves from side to side like a flock of black goats moving down the slopes of Mount Gilead

(שַׂעְרֵךְ כְּעֲדֶר הָעִזִּים שֶׁגָּלְשׁוּ מִן־הַגִּלְעָד)

See how you translated the similar sentence “Your hair is like a flock of goats that hop down from the slopes of Gilead” in 4:1.

Support Reference: Simile

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
{is} like a flock of	like a flock of
goats	black goats
Gilead	the slopes of Mount Gilead

Song of Solomon 6:6

ULT	UST
Your teeth {are} like a flock of ewes that have come up from the washing, all of which bear twins, and there is not among them one which is bereaved.	*Your teeth are very white, white like a flock of sheep that has just come up from being washed in a stream. You have all of your teeth on both sides of your mouth; none of them is missing.*

ULT **Your teeth {are} like a flock of ewes that have come up from the washing, all of which bear twins, and there is not among them one which is bereaved**
UST Your teeth are very white, white like a flock of sheep that has just come up from being washed in a stream. You have all of your teeth on both sides of your mouth; none of them is missing
(שִׁנַּיִךְ כְּעֵדֶר הָרְחֵלִּים שֶׁעָלוּ מִן־הָרַחְצָה שֶׁכֻּלָּם מַתְאִימוֹת וְשַׁכְּלָה אֵין בָּהֶם)

See how you translated the almost identical verse in 4:2. The only difference between this verse and 4:2 is that 4:2 has the phrase “shorn sheep” instead of **ewes**.

Support Reference: Simile

ULT **ewes**
UST very white, white like a flock of sheep that
(הָרְחֵלִּים)

The term **ewes** refers to female sheep. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [female sheep]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
like a flock of	very white, white like a flock of sheep that
ewes	very white, white like a flock of sheep that
bear twins	You … all of your teeth on both sides of your mouth; none of them is missing

Song of Solomon 6:7

ULT	UST
Like a slice of a pomegranate {are} your cheeks from behind your veil.	*Beneath your veil, your cheeks are round and rosy like the halves of a pomegranate.*

ULT Like a slice of a pomegranate {are} your cheeks from behind your veil

UST Beneath your veil, your cheeks are round and rosy like the halves of a pomegranate
(כְּפֶלַח הָרִמּוֹן רַקָּתֵךְ מִבַּעַד לְצַמָּתֵךְ)

See how you translated 4:3 which is identical to this verse.

Support Reference: Simile

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
a pomegranate	a pomegranate
your veil	your veil

Song of Solomon 6:8

ULT	UST
Sixty {are} they, queens, and eighty concubines, and marriageable women without number.	*Even if a king had 60 queens and 80 concubines and more young women in his court than anyone can count,*

ULT Sixty {are} they, queens, and eighty concubines, and marriageable women without number … One {is} she, my dove; my perfect one—one {is} she to her mother; pure {is} she to the woman who bore her

UST Even if a king had 60 queens and 80 concubines and more young women in his court than anyone can count … none of them would be as special as she is. She is like a dove; she is flawless. Her mother considers her to be very special; she is her mother's favorite child

(שִׁשִּׁים הֵמָּה מְלָכוֹת וּשְׁמֹנִים פִּילַגְשִׁים וַעֲלָמוֹת אֵין מִסְפָּר׃ אַחַת הִיא יוֹנָתִי תַמָּתִי אַחַת הִיא לְאִמָּהּ בָּרָה הִיא לְיוֹלַדְתָּהּ) (6:8-9)

This is a comparison that expresses that the woman is superior to women in a king's royal court. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could add words that explicitly indicate that this is a comparison. Alternate translation: [When compared to sixty queens, eighty concubines, and marriageable women without number, none of them are as special as my dove; my perfect one who is special to her mother and pure to the woman who bore her] or [Even if compared to sixty queens, eighty concubines, and marriageable women without number, still none of them would be as special as my dove; my perfect one who is special to her mother and pure to the woman who bore her]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT Sixty {are} they, queens

UST Even if a king had 60 queens

(שִׁשִּׁים הֵמָּה מְלָכוֹת)

If it would be more natural in your language, you could change the order of the words in the phrase **Sixty are they, queens**. Alternate translation: [They are sixty queens]

Support Reference: Information Structure

ULT **Sixty {are} they, queens, and eighty concubines**
UST Even if a king had 60 queens and 80 concubines
(שִׁשִּׁים הֵמָּה מְלָכוֹת וּשְׁמֹנִים פִּילַגְשִׁים)

This is poetic language. The man is using the 3, 4 pattern that was commonly used at that time, and for emphasis he multiples the numbers 3 and 4 by the number 20. This gives the numbers **Sixty** and **eighty** that he uses to make his point. If your language has a way to indicate poetry, you could use it here. Alternate translation: [A large number of queens and a large number of concubines] or [Many queens and many concubines]

Support Reference: Poetry

ULT **and marriageable women**
UST and … young women in his court
(וְעַלָמוֹת)

See how you translated the phrase **marriageable women** in 1:3.

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **and marriageable women without number**
UST and more young women in his court than anyone can count
(וְעַלָמוֹת אַיִן מִסְפָּר)

Here, **without number** is an idiom that means “more than can be counted.” If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and too many marriageable women to count] or [and more marriageable women than can be counted]

Support Reference: Idiom

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
queens	queens
concubines	concubines

Song of Solomon 6:9

ULT	UST
One {is} she, my dove; my perfect one—one {is} she to her mother; pure {is} she to the woman who bore her. The daughters saw her and called her blessed; the queens and the concubines—they praised her:	*none of them would be as special as she is. She is like a dove; she is flawless. Her mother considers her to be very special; she is her mother's favorite child. When the young women of the king's court see her, they say that she is fortunate, and the queens and concubines praise her.*

ULT **One {is} she**
UST none of them would be as special as she is
(אַחַת הִיא)

Here the phrase **One is she** means "She is special" (the number **One** is used in contrast to the large numbers of other women described in the previous verse). If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [She is special] or [She is unique] or [She is special in comparison to other women]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **my dove; my perfect one**
UST She is like a dove; she is flawless
(יוֹנָתִי תַמָּתִי)

See how you translated the phrases **my dove** and **my perfect one** in 5:2.

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **one {is} she to her mother**
UST Her mother considers her to be very special
(אַחַת הִיא לְאִמָּהּ)

The phrase **one is she to her mother** could mean: (1) that the woman the man loves is special to her mother (in contrast to the large numbers of other women described in the previous verse). Alternate translation: [she is special to her mother] or [her mother thinks she is special] or [her mother thinks she is unique]; (2) that the woman was the only child or the only daughter of her mother. Alternate translation: [she is the only child of her mother] or [her mother's only daughter]

ULT **pure {is} she to the woman who bore her**
UST she is her mother's favorite child
(בָּרָה הִיא לְיוֹלַדְתָּהּ)

The phrase **pure is she to the woman who bore her** could mean: (1) that the woman was her mother's favorite child or favorite daughter. Alternate translation: [the favorite child of the woman who bore her] or [the favorite daughter of the woman who bore her]; (2) that the woman was pure or flawless in some way. Alternate translation: [flawless is she to the woman who bore her]

ULT **one {is} she to her mother; pure {is} she to the woman who bore her**
UST Her mother considers her to be very special; she is her mother's favorite child
(אַחַת הִיא לְאִמָּהּ בָּרָה הִיא לְיוֹלַדְתָּהּ)

If you decided that **one** means "special" here and that **pure** means "favorite" then these two lines are parallel and mean basically the same thing. The second line emphasizes the meaning of the first by repeating the same idea with different words. Hebrew poetry was based on this kind of repetition. It would be good to show this to your readers by including both phrases in your translation rather than combining them. However, if it would be helpful to your readers, you could combine these two lines into one. Alternate translation: [her mother thinks that she is very special] or [she is very special to her mother]

Support Reference: Parallelism

ULT **The daughters**
UST the young women of the king's court
(בָּנוֹת)

Here the word **daughters** could refer to: (1) the "marriageable women" in the previous verse. Alternate translation: [The marriageable women] or [The young women of the kings court]; (2) young women in general, possibly "the daughters of Jerusalem" mentioned several times earlier in the book. Alternate translation: [The young women]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
my dove	She is like a dove
my perfect one	she is flawless
pure {is}	favorite child
to the woman who bore her	her mother's

ULT	UST
and called her blessed	they say that she is fortunate
and called her blessed	they say that she is fortunate
the queens	and the queens
and the concubines	and concubines
they praised her	praise her

Song of Solomon 6:10

ULT	UST
“Who {is} that, the woman who looks down like {the} dawn, beautiful like the moon, pure like the sun, awe-inspiring like bannered armies?”	*Look at this woman who appears like the dawn, who is as beautiful to look at as the moon, who is radiant like the sun, who is as exciting and majestic to look at as an army with banners!*

ULT **Who {is} that, the woman who looks down like {the} dawn, beautiful like the moon, pure like the sun, awe-inspiring like bannered armies**

UST Look at this woman who appears like the dawn, who is as beautiful to look at as the moon, who is radiant like the sun, who is as exciting and majestic to look at as an army with banners
(מִי־זֹאת הַנִּשְׁקָפָה כְּמוֹ־שָׁחַר יָפָה כַלְּבָנָה בָּרָה כַּחַמָּה אֲיֻמָּה כַּנִּדְגָּלוֹת)

The author does not say who is speaking here so you should not indicate explicitly who is speaking in the text of your translation. However, if you are using section headers, the speaker or speakers could be: (1) the man speaking to the woman he loves. You can follow the example of the UST and include this verse under the section heading for 6:4–10 that indicates the man is speaking. (2) the “daughters,” the “queens,” and the “concubines” mentioned in the previous verse. You can use a phrase for the section header such as “The daughters, the queens, and the concubines praise the woman” or “The other women praise the woman” or something comparable.

Support Reference: When to Keep Information Implicit

ULT **Who {is} that, the woman who looks down like {the} dawn, beautiful like the moon, pure like the sun, awe-inspiring like bannered armies**

UST Look at this woman who appears like the dawn, who is as beautiful to look at as the moon, who is radiant like the sun, who is as exciting and majestic to look at as an army with banners
(מִי־זֹאת הַנִּשְׁקָפָה כְּמוֹ־שָׁחַר יָפָה כַלְּבָנָה בָּרָה כַּחַמָּה אֲיֻמָּה כַּנִּדְגָּלוֹת)

The man is not asking for information but is using the question form for emphasis. If you would not use the question form for this purpose in your language, you could translate this as a statement or an exclamation and communicate the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [Look at this woman who looks down like the dawn, beautiful like the moon, pure like the sun, terrifying like the bannered army!]

Support Reference: Rhetorical Question

ULT **the woman who looks down like {the} dawn**
UST woman who appears like the dawn
(הַנִּשְׁקָפָה כְּמוֹ־שָׁחַר)

Here the man speaks of the woman and compares her to the sun as it dawns in the morning. If it would be helpful in your language, you could express this meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the woman who shines like the sun as it rises early in the morning and brightens the sky] or [the woman who shines like the sun as it rises early in the morning and shines down from the sky]

Support Reference: Simile

ULT **the woman who looks down like {the} dawn, beautiful like the moon, pure like the sun**
UST woman who appears like the dawn, who is as beautiful to look at as the moon, who is radiant like the sun
(הַנִּשְׁקָפָה כְּמוֹ־שָׁחַר יָפָה כַלְּבָנָה בָּרָה כַּחַמָּה)

Here the man first says that the woman is like the sun in the morning as it dawns. He then says that her beauty is like the beauty of **the moon**. He then compares the woman's radiance to the radiance of **the sun**. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state these comparisons explicitly.

Support Reference: Simile

ULT **awe-inspiring like bannered armies**
UST who is as exciting and majestic to look at as an army with banners
(אֲיֻמָּה כַּנִּדְגָּלוֹת)

See how you translated the identical phrase **awe-inspiring like bannered armies** in 6:4.

Support Reference: Simile

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
pure	who is radiant
awe-inspiring	who is as exciting and majestic to look at

Song of Solomon 6:11

ULT	UST
To the garden of {the} nut tree I went down, to look at the green shoots of the valley, to see—had the vine budded? Had the pomegranates bloomed?	*I went down to the walnut tree orchard to look at the new plants that were growing in the valley. I wanted to see if the grapevines had budded and if the pomegranate trees were blooming.*

ULT **To the garden of {the} nut tree I went down, to look at the green shoots of the valley, to see—had the vine budded? Had the pomegranates bloomed … { … I did not know—my soul put me among} the chariots of my people, a noble**
UST I went down to the walnut tree orchard to look at the new plants that were growing in the valley. I wanted to see if the grapevines had budded and if the pomegranate trees were blooming … All of a sudden I imagined that I was among the chariots of my noble people
(אֶל־גִּנַּת אֱגוֹז יָרַדְתִּי לִרְאוֹת בְּאִבֵּי הַנָּחַל לִרְאוֹת הֲפָרְחָה הַגֶּפֶן הֵנֵצוּ הָרִמֹּנִים: לֹא יָדַעְתִּי נַפְשִׁי שָׂמַתְנִי מַרְכְּבוֹת עַמִּי־נָדִיב) (6:11-12)

It is difficult to know who is speaking in these two verses, and Bible scholars have different opinions about who is speaking here. Because the author does not say, you should not indicate who is speaking in the text of your translation. However, if you are using section headers, the speaker could be: (1) the man in both verses. If you decide the man is speaking, you can include these two verses under the section heading for 6:4–11. (2) the woman in both verses. If you decide the woman is speaking, you can put a section header at the top of 6:11.

Support Reference: When to Keep Information Implicit

ULT **To the garden of {the} nut tree I went down**
UST I went down to the walnut tree orchard
(אֶל־גִּנַּת אֱגוֹז יָרַדְתִּי)

The speaker is using the possessive form to describe an area where walnut trees grow. If your language would not use a possessive form for this, you could clarify the relationship for your readers. Alternate translation: [To the nut tree garden I went down] or [To the place where walnut trees grow, I went down]

Support Reference: Possession

ULT **To the garden of {the} nut tree I went down**
UST I went down to the walnut tree orchard
(אֶל־גִּנַּת אֱגוֹז יָרַדְתִּי)

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases. Alternate translation: [I went down to the garden of the nut tree]

Support Reference: Information Structure

ULT **I went down**
UST I went down
(יָרַדְתִּי)

Your language may say “gone” rather than **went** in a context such as this. Use whichever is more natural. Alternate translation: [I had gone down]

Support Reference: Go and Come

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
the vine	the grapevines
the pomegranates	the pomegranate trees

Song of Solomon 6:12

ULT	UST
I did not know—my soul put me {among} the chariots of my people, a noble.	*All of a sudden I imagined that I was among the chariots of my noble people. The women of Jerusalem speaking*

ULT **I did not know**
UST All of a sudden
(לֹא יָדַעְתִּי)

Here the phrase **I did not know** means "Before I realized it" or "Before I was aware." If it would be helpful to your readers, you could indicate that explicitly. Alternate translation: [Before I realized it] or [Before I was aware]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **my soul put me**
UST I imagined that
(נַפְשִׁי שָׂמַתְנִי)

The phrase **my soul put me** probably means that the man imagined what follows. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information.

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **{among} the chariots of my people, a noble**
UST I was among the chariots of my noble people
(מַרְכְּבוֹת עַמִּי־נָדִיב)

There are many different views among Bible scholars regarding what this phrase means and what this entire verse means. The UST offers one possible interpretation for what this phrase means. See the section on 6:12 in the Chapter 6 introduction for more information about how to translate this difficult verse.

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
I did … know	All of a sudden
my soul	I imagined that
{among} the chariots of	I was among the chariots of
a noble	noble

Song of Solomon 6:13

ULT	UST
Return, return, Shulammite, return, return and let us look at you. Why do you look at the Shulammite like the dance of two armies?	*Come back to us, beautiful woman from Shulam, come back to us, in order that we may see you! The man speaking Why do you want to look at the beautiful woman from Shulam, as if she were a dancer who dances to entertain armies?*

ULT **Return, return, Shulammite, return, return and let us look at you**
UST Come back to us, beautiful woman from Shulam, come back to us, in order that we may see you
(שׁוּבִי שׁוּבִי הַשּׁוּלַמִּית שׁוּבִי שׁוּבִי וְנֶחֱזֶה־בָּךְ)

It is difficult to know with certainty who is saying this. Because the author does not say who is speaking here, you should not indicate a speaker in the text of your translation. However, if you are using section headers, the speaker could be: (1) the young women of Jerusalem. If you decide this is who is speaking, you can indicate that with a section header. (2) friends of the man and woman. If you decide that this is who is speaking, you can place a section header indicating that. (3) the man. If you decide that this is who is speaking here, you can use a section header to indicate that.

Support Reference: When to Keep Information Implicit

ULT **Shulammite … at the Shulammite**
UST beautiful woman from Shulam … at the beautiful woman from Shulam
(הַשּׁוּלַמִּית & בַּשּׁוּלַמִּית)

The word translated as **Shulammite** refers to someone who is from the town of Shulam. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [woman from Shulam … at the woman from Shulam]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **Return, return, Shulammite, return, return and let us look at you**
UST Come back to us, beautiful woman from Shulam, come back to us, in order that we may see you
(שׁוּבִי שׁוּבִי הַשּׁוּלַמִּית שׁוּבִי שׁוּבִי וְנֶחֱזֶה־בָּךְ)

The man is repeating the verb **return** for emphasis. If your language can repeat words for emphasis, it would be good to do that here. If not, your language may express the emphasis in another way. Alternate translation: [Return Shulammite, return and let us look at you] or [Please return Shulammite, and let us look at you]

Support Reference: Reduplication

ULT **Why do you look at the Shulammite like the dance of two armies**
UST Why do you want to look at the beautiful woman from Shulam, as if she were a dancer who dances to entertain armies
(מַה־תֶּחֱזוּ בַּשּׁוּלַמִּית כִּמְחֹלַת הַמַּחֲנָיִם)

It is difficult to know with certainty who is saying this. Because the author does not say who is speaking here, you should not indicate this in the text of your translation. However, if you are using section headers to indicate who is speaking, the speaker could be: (1) the man. If you decide that the man is speaking here, you can indicate this with a section header above this part of the verse. (2) the woman speaking of herself in the third person. If you decide that the woman is speaking here, you can place a section header indicating this.

Support Reference: First, Second or Third Person

ULT **like the dance of two armies**
UST as if she were a dancer who dances to entertain armies
(כִּמְחֹלַת הַמַּחֲנָיִם)

The speaker is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need to be complete. You could supply these words from the context if it would be clearer in your language. Alternate translation: [like you look at the dance of two armies] or [like you would look at the dance of two armies]

Support Reference: Ellipsis

> ULT **like the dance of two armies**
> UST as if she were a dancer who dances to entertain armies
> (כִּמְחֹלַ֖ת הַֽמַּחֲנָֽיִם)

This phrase could be translated as: (1) **like the dance of two armies** which refers to a dance that is performed as entertainment for armies. Alternate translation: [like a dance performed before armies]; (2) “like the dance of Mahanaim” (3) “like two rows of dancers” or “like two companies of dancers” and mean “as you like to watch two rows of people dancing.” See the section in the Chapter 6 introduction for more information about how to translate this phrase.

Support Reference: Simile

Song of Solomon 7

Song of Songs 7 Chapter Introduction

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Beauty

In 7:1–7 the man describes the woman as the epitome of female beauty and attractiveness using various comparisons.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

Comparisons

There are many comparisons in this chapter. Their purpose is to describe the beauty of the woman and to describe romantic love between a man and a woman. (See: Simile) and (See: Metaphor)

An alternate translation possibility for the word the ULT translates as “love” in 7:6

In verse 6 the ULT follows the standard Hebrew text by saying “love.” However, as a footnote indicates, many biblical scholars believe that the original reading was more likely “one who is loved.” Consider using that reading in your translation. If “one who is loved” is used instead of “love,” then the portion of 7:6 that the ULT translates as “love with delights!” would instead be translated as “one who is loved with all your delights!”

An alternate translation possibility for the words that the ULT translates as “the lips of those who sleep” in 7:9

In verse 9 the ULT follows the standard Hebrew text by saying “the lips of those who sleep.” However, as a footnote indicates, many biblical scholars believe that the original reading was more likely “lips and teeth.” The translators of the Septuagint (the ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament) thought so, and they translated this phrase as “my lips and my teeth.” If a Bible translation exists in your region that translates this

phrase with the word “teeth” instead of “those who sleep,” consider using “lips and teeth” instead of “the lips of those who sleep” in your translation.

Song of Solomon 7:1

ULT	UST
How your feet are beautiful in sandals, daughter of a noble! The curves of your thighs {are} like ornaments, the work of the hands of a craftsman.	*You who are the daughter of a prince, have very lovely feet in your sandals! Your curved hips are like jewels that have been made by a man who shapes jewels very well.*

ULT **How your feet are beautiful in sandals, daughter of a noble! The curves of your thighs {are} like ornaments, the work of the hands of a craftsman**
UST You who are the daughter of a prince, have very lovely feet in your sandals! Your curved hips are like jewels that have been made by a man who shapes jewels very well
(מַה־יָּפוּ פְעָמַיִךְ בַּנְּעָלִים בַּת־נָדִיב חַמּוּקֵי יְרֵכַיִךְ כְּמוֹ חֲלָאִים מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵי אָמָּן)

If you are using section headers to indicate who is speaking, and you decided in the previous verse that the woman said the words “Why do you look at the Shulammite like the dance of two armies,” you will need to place a section header above this verse indicating that the man is now speaking. The man begins speaking directly to the woman in this verse and continues speaking to her until part way through 7:9.

Support Reference: When to Keep Information Implicit

ULT **How**
UST very
(מַה)

How is an exclamation that is emphasizing how **beautiful** the woman’s **feet** are in **sandals**. Use an exclamation that would communicate this meaning in your language.

Support Reference: Exclamations

ULT **How your feet are beautiful in sandals, daughter of a noble**
UST You who are the daughter of a prince, have very lovely feet in your sandals
(מַה־יָּפוּ פְעָמַיִךְ בַּנְּעָלִים בַּת־נָדִיב)

If it would be more natural in your language, you could reverse the order of these phrases. Alternate translation: [Daughter of a noble, how your feet are beautiful in sandals]

Support Reference: Information Structure

ULT **daughter of a noble**
UST You who are the daughter of a prince
(בַּת־נָדִיב)

This phrase could: (1) be translated as **daughter of a noble** and refer to the daughter of a nobleman (a man of high social status). Alternate translation: [daughter of a nobleman]; (2) be translated as "noble daughter" and mean that she had noble character. Alternate translation: [noble daughter] or [woman of noble character]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **The curves of your thighs {are} like ornaments, the work of the hands of a craftsman**
UST Your curved hips are like jewels that have been made by a man who shapes jewels very well
(חֲמוּקֵי יְרֵכַיִךְ כְּמוֹ חֲלָאִים מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵי אָמָּן)

The man is saying that the **curves** of the woman's thighs are like **ornaments** made by a skilled **craftsman** because she is very beautiful. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: [The curves of your thighs have an attractive shape, like ornaments that are made by the hands of a craftsman] or [The curves of your thighs are beautiful, like the lovely curves of jewels made by a skilled craftsman]

Support Reference: Simile

ULT **the work of the hands of a craftsman**
UST that have been made by a man who shapes jewels very well
(מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵי אָמָּן)

The phrase **the work of the hands of a craftsman** further describes the **ornaments**. Hebrew poetry often used this kind of parallel statement, in which the second line gives additional information. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could connect these two parallel phrases with the words "which are" to show that this phrase is describing the **ornaments** and not introducing something new. Alternate translation: [which are the work of the hands of a craftsman]

Support Reference: Parallelism

ULT **the work of the hands of a craftsman**
UST that have been made by a man who shapes jewels very well
(מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵי אָמָּן)

The man is using **the hands** to represent all of the **craftsman** in the act of making ornaments. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your culture or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the work of a craftsman] or [which a craftsman has made]

Support Reference: Synecdoche

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
in sandals	in your sandals
a noble	a prince
the work of	that have been made by

Song of Solomon 7:2

ULT	UST
Your navel {is} the rounded bowl— that never lacks spiced wine. Your belly {is} a heap of wheat encircled with the lilies.	*Your navel is like a round bowl that is always full of wine mixed with spices. Your belly is like a pile of wheat with lilies growing around it.*

ULT Your navel {is} the rounded bowl— that never lacks spiced wine
UST Your navel is like a round bowl that is always full of wine mixed with spices
(שָׁרְרֵךְ֙ אַגַּ֣ן הַסַּ֔הַר אַל־יֶחְסַ֖ר הַמָּזָ֑ג)

The man is speaking of the woman's shapely **navel** as if it were a **rounded bowl** used for serving wine. The phrase **that never lacks spiced wine** describes what is inside the rounded bowl. It probably means that, as **spiced wine** excites the man and gives him joy, so her navel excites him and gives him joy. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could explain the comparison. Alternate translation: [Your navel is beautifully rounded and causes me to feel excited] or [Your navel is beautifully rounded like a wine bowl, and it causes me to feel excited like drinking spiced wine] or [Your navel is beautifully rounded like a bowl and gives me joy and excitement like when I drink spiced wine]

Support Reference: Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors

ULT never lacks spiced wine
UST always full of wine mixed with spices
(אַל־יֶחְסַ֖ר הַמָּזָ֑ג)

The phrase that the ULT translates as **never lacks** could be: (1) an assertion and be translated as modeled by the ULT. (2) a strong wish. Alternate translation: [I hope never lacks spiced wine] or [I hope may never lack spiced wine]

ULT spiced wine
UST of wine mixed with spices
(הַמָּזָ֑ג)

The phrase **spiced wine** refers to wine that is mixed with spices. If your readers would not be familiar with this type of wine, you could use the name of something similar in your area, or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [wine that people have added spices to]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **Your belly {is} a heap of wheat encircled with the lilies**
UST Your belly is like a pile of wheat with lilies growing around it
(בִּטְנֵךְ֙ עֲרֵמַ֣ת חִטִּ֔ים סוּגָ֖ה בַּשּׁוֹשַׁנִּֽים)

The man continues to draw an extended comparison. He compares her **belly** to **a heap of wheat**, a food that satisfies hunger just as the woman satisfies him. The comparison extends to her shape which is soft and curved just like a heap of wheat. He also compares the color of her belly to wheat since a **heap of wheat** is a golden beige or tan color. The phrase **encircled with the lilies** describes the heap of wheat and probably means that, just as **a heap of wheat encircled with the lilies** looks beautiful, so her belly is beautiful. If it would be helpful in your language, you could explain these comparisons. Alternate translation: [Your belly is as beautiful as a heap of wheat that is encircled with lilies, and it satisfies me] or [The shape and color of your belly is beautiful] or [Your belly is beautiful and satisfying]

Support Reference: Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors

ULT **encircled with the lilies**
UST with lilies growing around it
(סוּגָ֖ה בַּשּׁוֹשַׁנִּֽים)

Alternate translation: [which has lilies all around it]

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
spiced wine	of wine mixed with spices
wheat	wheat

Song of Solomon 7:3

ULT	UST
Your two breasts {are} like two fawns, twins of a gazelle.	*Your breasts are as delicate as two young twin gazelles.*

ULT Your two breasts {are} like two fawns, twins of a gazelle
UST Your breasts are as delicate as two young twin gazelles
(שְׁנֵי שָׁדַיִךְ כִּשְׁנֵי עֳפָרִים תְּאֲמֵי צְבִיָּה)

See how you translated the almost identical statement in 4:5.

Support Reference: Simile

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
fawns	young

Song of Solomon 7:4

ULT	UST
Your neck {is} like a tower of ivory. Your eyes {are} pools in Heshbon by the gate of Bath Rabbim. Your nose {is} like the tower of Lebanon, looking {to the} face of Damascus.	*Your neck is long and beautiful, like a tower made of ivory. Your eyes sparkle like the pools of water in the city of Heshbon, near the Bath Rabbim gate. Your nose is beautiful like the tower in Lebanon that faces Damascus.*

ULT **Your neck {is} like a tower of ivory**
UST Your neck is long and beautiful, like a tower made of ivory
(צַוָּארֵךְ כְּמִגְדַּל הַשֵּׁן)

The man is saying that the woman's **neck** is like a **tower** that is adorned with **ivory** (not made of ivory) because the woman's neck is beautiful, tall, and slender. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: [Your neck is beautiful and slender] or [Your neck is beautiful and tall like a tower that people have adorned with ivory] or [Your neck is lovely and tall like a tower decorated with ivory]

Support Reference: Simile

ULT **ivory**
UST ivory
(הַשֵּׁן)

See how you translated the term **ivory** in 5:14.

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **Your eyes {are} pools in Heshbon by the gate of Bath Rabbim**
UST Your eyes sparkle like the pools of water in the city of Heshbon, near the Bath Rabbim gate
(עֵינַיִךְ בְּרֵכוֹת בְּחֶשְׁבּוֹן עַל־שַׁעַר בַּת־רַבִּים)

The man is speaking of the woman's **eyes** as if they were clear **pools** of water in the city of **Heshbon**. The man does not say how the woman's eyes are like **pools in Heshbon**. It may be that the woman's eyes sparkle or shine in the light like when light shines on water, that her eyes look mysterious and deep (and possibly dark) like a deep pool of water, or that her eyes reflect light like a pool of water. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Your eyes shine like the sun reflecting off the pools in Heshbon by the gate of Bath Rabbim] or [Your eyes are deep and mysterious like the pools in Heshbon by the gate of Bath Rabbim]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **in Heshbon**
UST in the city of Heshbon
(בְּחֶשְׁבּוֹן)

The word **Heshbon** is the name of a city.

Support Reference: How to Translate Names

ULT **by the gate of Bath Rabbim**
UST near the Bath Rabbim gate
(עַל־שַׁעַר בַּת־רַבִּים)

Bath Rabbim is the name of this gate. Alternate translation: [by the gate called Bath Rabbim] or [by the gate that people call Bath Rabbim]

Support Reference: How to Translate Names

ULT **Your nose {is} like the tower of Lebanon, looking {to the} face of Damascus**
UST Your nose is beautiful like the tower in Lebanon that faces Damascus
(אַפֵּךְ כְּמִגְדַּל הַלְּבָנוֹן צוֹפֶה פְּנֵי דַמָּשֶׂק)

The man is saying that the woman's **nose** is like **the tower of Lebanon** that faces toward the city of **Damascus** because the woman's nose was high and/or long (attractive in that culture) and beautiful and made her look dignified and impressive like **the tower of Lebanon**. This tower was high and was used as a military watch tower. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state the meaning explicitly. Alternate translation: [Your nose is beautiful and makes you look dignified] or [Your nose is long and beautiful like the tower in Lebanon that faces Damascus] or [Your nose is high and beautiful like the tower in Lebanon that faces Damascus]

Support Reference: Simile

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
like a tower of	long and beautiful, like a tower made of
in Heshbon	in the city of Heshbon
the gate of	gate
like the tower of	beautiful like the tower
Lebanon	in Lebanon
Damascus	Damascus

Song of Solomon 7:5

ULT	UST
Your head on you {is} like Carmel, and the loose hair of your head {is} like purple; a king is held captive in the tresses.	*Your head is majestic like Mount Carmel. Your long hair is shiny and black; it is as though I, your king, am captured by your tresses.*

ULT Your head on you {is} like Carmel
UST Your head is majestic like Mount Carmel
(רֹאשֵׁךְ עָלַיִךְ כַּכַּרְמֶל)

The man is saying that the woman's head is beautiful and majestic like Mount **Carmel** and it increases the beauty of the rest of her body. Mount Carmel is a beautiful and majestic looking mountain and adds beauty to what is below it. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: [Your head is beautiful and majestic like Mount Carmel]

Support Reference: Simile

ULT like Carmel
UST majestic like Mount Carmel
(כַּכַּרְמֶל)

Carmel refers to the mountain called Mount Carmel. You could include this information if it would be helpful to your readers.

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT and the loose hair of your head {is} like purple
UST Your long hair is shiny and black
(וְדַלַּת רֹאשֵׁךְ כָּאַרְגָּמָן)

Here the word **purple** refers to wool cloth that was dyed a purple-red color. The phrase **the loose hair of your head is like purple** could mean: (1) that the woman's hair was a shiny black that reflected a black-purplish color in sunlight. Alternate translation: [and the loose hair of your head is shiny and black] or [and the loose hair of your head looks shiny purplish black as the sun shines on it]; (2) that the woman's hair made her look like a queen (purple was associated with royalty). Alternate translation: [and the loose hair of your head is like royal cloth]

Support Reference: Simile

> ULT **a king is held captive in the tresses**
> UST it is as though I, your king, am captured by your tresses
> (מֶלֶךְ אָסוּר בָּרְהָטִים)

The man is speaking of the beauty of the **tresses** of the woman's hair as if they could capture **a king** because the woman's tresses are so beautiful that they captivate his attention. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Your tresses are so beautiful that a king is not able to stop admiring them] or [Your hair is so beautiful that a king is not able to stop admiring it] or [the king is captivated by your tresses]

Support Reference: Metaphor

> ULT **a king is held captive**
> UST it is as though I, your king, am captured
> (מֶלֶךְ אָסוּר)

The implication is that the man speaking here is the **king**. You could include this information if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [your king is held captive] or [I, your king, am held captive]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

> ULT **a king is held captive in the tresses**
> UST it is as though I, your king, am captured by your tresses
> (מֶלֶךְ אָסוּר בָּרְהָטִים)

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you could express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, the context implies that the woman's **tresses** did it. Alternate translation: [the tresses hold the king captive] or [your tresses hold the king captive]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

> ULT **in the tresses**
> UST by your tresses
> (בָּרְהָטִים)

Here the writer assumes his readers will understand that **tresses** refers to the woman's hair which hangs down from her head. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [in the long locks of your hair] or [in the flowing locks of your hair]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
like Carmel	majestic like Mount Carmel
like purple	shiny and black
a king	it is as though I, your king
is held captive	am captured

Song of Solomon 7:6

ULT	UST
How you are beautiful and how you are lovely — love with delights!	*You are very beautiful and very lovely! Loving you is very delightful!*

ULT How you are beautiful
UST You are very beautiful
(מַה־יָּפִית)

See how you translated the similar phrase “You are beautiful” in 6:4.

Support Reference: Exclamations

ULT How you are beautiful and how you are lovely
UST You are very beautiful and very lovely
(מַה־יָּפִית וּמַה־נָּעַמְתְּ)

This is an exclamation that is emphasizing the beauty and loveliness of the woman. Use an exclamation that would communicate that meaning in your language.

Support Reference: Exclamations

ULT love
UST Loving you is
(אַהֲבָה)

See the introduction to this chapter for information regarding an alternate translation of the word **love**.

ULT love with delights
UST Loving you is very delightful
(אַהֲבָה בַּתַּעֲנוּגִים)

The man is praising the delightfulness of romantic love. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [romantic love has many delights] or [how delightful romantic love is] or [romantic love is very delightful]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

> ULT **love with delights**
> UST Loving you is very delightful
> (אַהֲבָה בַּתַּעֲנוּגִים)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **love**, you could express the same idea in another way.

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
love	Loving you is
with delights	very delightful

Song of Solomon 7:7

ULT	UST
This is your height—it is like a palm tree, and your breasts {like its} clusters.	*You are tall like a palm tree, and your breasts are full and round like date clusters that hang from palm trees.*

ULT This is your height—it is like a palm tree
UST You are tall like a palm tree
(זֹאת קוֹמָתֵךְ דָּמְתָה לְתָמָר)

The man is saying that the woman is tall like a **palm tree**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: [You are tall]

Support Reference: Simile

ULT a palm tree … {like its} clusters
UST a palm tree … full and round like date clusters that hang from palm trees
(לְתָמָר & לְאַשְׁכֹּלוֹת)

A **palm tree** refers to a date palm, which is tall, thin, and produces small fruits called dates. The term **clusters** refers to bunches of dates that grow on the date palm. If your readers would not be familiar with this type of tree or its fruit, you could use the name of something similar in your area, or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [a tall and slender fruit tree … its clusters of fruit] or [a tall fruit tree … like its clusters of delicious fruit]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT and your breasts {like its} clusters
UST and your breasts are full and round like date clusters that hang from palm trees
(וְשָׁדַיִךְ לְאַשְׁכֹּלוֹת)

The man is saying that the woman's **breasts** are like the **clusters** of plump dates that grow on date palms. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: [and your breasts are plump and round] or [and your breasts are plump and round like its clusters]

Support Reference: Simile

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
a palm tree	a palm tree

Song of Solomon 7:8

ULT	UST
I said, "I will go up {the} palm tree; I will grab hold of its fruit stalks." And, please, let your breasts be like the clusters of the vine, and {let the} smell of your nose {be} like apples,	*I said to myself, "I will climb that palm tree and take hold of those clusters of dates." I want your breasts to be like sweet bunches of grapes that I can enjoy; I want your breath to be like the sweet fragrance of apples.*

ULT **I said, "I will go up {the} palm tree; I will grab hold of its fruit stalks**
UST I said to myself, "I will climb that palm tree and take hold of those clusters of dates
(אָמַרְתִּי אֶעֱלֶה בְתָמָר אֹחֲזָה בְּסַנְסִנָּיו)

Here the man is speaking of the woman as if she were **the palm tree** and her breasts as if they were **fruit stalks**. The man speaks of his desire to caress and be intimate with her by saying **I will grab hold of its fruit stalks**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [I will go to the woman I love and caress her breasts and enjoy being intimate with her] or [I will go to the woman I love and enjoy touching her breasts and being close to her]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **I said**
UST I said to myself
(אָמַרְתִּי)

Here the phrase **I said** means that the man said or thought to himself, **I will go up the palm tree; I will grab hold of its fruit stalks**. You could include this information if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [I thought to myself]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **{the} palm tree**
UST that palm tree
(בְתָמָר)

See how you translated **palm tree** in the previous verse.

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **I will go up {the} palm tree; I will grab hold of its fruit stalks**
UST I will climb that palm tree and take hold of those clusters of dates
(אֶעֱלֶה בְתָמָר אֹחֲזָה בְּסַנְסִנָּיו)

The man is using a future statement to indicate his intent or desire to do something. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate these words using a command or instruction form. Alternate translation: [I want to go up the palm tree; I want to grab hold of its fruit stalks] or [I have determined to go up the palm tree and grab hold of its fruit stalks]

Support Reference: Statements — Other Uses

ULT **I will go up**
UST I will climb
(אֶעֱלֶה)

Your language may say “come” rather than **go** in a context such as this. Alternate translation: [I will come up]

Support Reference: Go and Come

ULT **And, please, let your breasts be like the clusters of the vine, and {let the} smell of your nose {be} like apples**
UST I want your breasts to be like sweet bunches of grapes that I can enjoy; I want your breath to be like the sweet fragrance of apples
(וְיִהְיוּ־נָא שָׁדַיִךְ כְּאַשְׁכְּלוֹת הַגֶּפֶן וְרֵיחַ אַפֵּךְ כַּתַּפּוּחִים)

The phrases **let your breasts be like the clusters of the vine** and **let the smell of your nose be like apples** are both comparisons. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: [And, please, let your breasts be sweet and enjoyable like the clusters of the vine, and let the smell of your breath be pleasant like the pleasant smell of apples]

Support Reference: Simile

ULT **And, please, let your breasts be … and {let the} smell of**
UST I want your breasts … I want your breath to be
(וְיִהְיוּ־נָא שָׁדַיִךְ & וְרֵיחַ)

The man is expressing a wish or desire. You could include this information if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [And, please, may your breasts be … and may the smell of]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **like the clusters of the vine**
UST to be like sweet bunches of grapes that I can enjoy
(כְּאֶשְׁכְּלוֹת הַגֶּפֶן)

The phrase **like the clusters of the vine** refers to clusters of grapes that grow on grapevines. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [like the clusters of the grapevine]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **and {let the} smell of your nose {be} like apples**
UST I want your breath to be like the sweet fragrance of apples
(וְרֵיחַ אַפֵּךְ כַּתַּפּוּחִים)

Here, **nose** represents breath. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and let the smell of your breath be like apples] or [and let the smell of the breath coming from your nose be like apples]

Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **and {let the} smell of**
UST I want your breath to be
(וְרֵיחַ)

The man is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need to be complete. You could supply the words “let the” if it would be clearer in your language.

Support Reference: Ellipsis

ULT **{be} like apples**
UST like the sweet fragrance of apples
(כַּתַּפּוּחִים)

An apple is a round hard fruit that has a sweet taste and a pleasant smell. If your readers would not be familiar with this type of fruit, you could use the name of something similar in your area, or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [be like sweet fruit] or [be like fragrant fruit] or [be like fruit]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
{the} palm tree	that palm tree
its fruit stalks	those clusters of dates

ULT	UST
please	I want
the vine	grapes that I can enjoy

Song of Solomon 7:9

ULT	UST
and {let} your mouth {be} like the best wine. Going down for my beloved smoothly, gliding over the lips of those who sleep.	*I want your kisses to be like very good wine. The woman speaking to the man she loves When I kiss you, the man whom I love, I want my kisses to be as if you are freely drinking wine, and as if wine is flowing over our lips as we sleep together.*

ULT **and {let} your mouth {be} like the best wine. Going down for my beloved smoothly, gliding over the lips of those who sleep**
UST I want your kisses to be like very good wine. When I kiss you, the man whom I love, I want my kisses to be as if you are freely drinking wine, and as if wine is flowing over our lips as we sleep together
(וְחִכֵּךְ כְּיֵין הַטּוֹב הוֹלֵךְ לְדוֹדִי לְמֵישָׁרִים דּוֹבֵב שִׂפְתֵי יְשֵׁנִים)

The man is saying that the woman's kisses (**mouth**) are like **wine** because both are pleasant tasting and have a powerful effect on the body. The woman continues this comparison. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: [and let your mouth be pleasant tasting and intoxicating like the best wine. May my mouth be like pleasant and intoxicating wine which goes down to my beloved smoothly, gliding over the lips of those who sleep]

Support Reference: Simile

ULT **and {let} your mouth {be}**
UST I want your kisses to be
(וְחִכֵּךְ)

The man is expressing a wish or desire. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [and may your mouth be]

Support Reference: Statements — Other Uses

ULT **and {let} your mouth {be}**
UST I want your kisses to be
(וְחִכֵּךְ)

Here, **mouth** represents the kisses which come from the woman's mouth. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and let your kisses be]

Support Reference: Metonymy

> ULT **Going down for my beloved smoothly, gliding over the lips of those who sleep**
> UST When I kiss you, the man whom I love, I want my kisses to be as if you are freely drinking wine, and as if wine is flowing over our lips as we sleep together
> (הוֹלֵךְ לְדוֹדִי לְמֵישָׁרִים דּוֹבֵב שִׂפְתֵי יְשֵׁנִים)

Some Bible scholars think the speaker in this part of the verse: (1) is the woman. Because the author does not say who is speaking here, you should not indicate the speaker explicitly in the text. However, if you are using section headers, you can indicate that the woman is now speaking. (2) continues to be the man. If you decide that the man is still speaking, you do not need a header above this portion, but if you are using headers, you will need a header above the next verse indicating that the woman is speaking (since Bible scholars agree that the speaker is the woman beginning in 7:10 and continuing through at least 8:3).

Support Reference: When to Keep Information Implicit

> ULT **Going down for my beloved smoothly**
> UST When I kiss you, the man whom I love, I want my kisses to be as if you are freely drinking wine
> (הוֹלֵךְ לְדוֹדִי לְמֵישָׁרִים)

Your language may say “Coming” rather than **Going** in a context such as this. Alternate translation: [Coming down for my beloved smoothly]

Support Reference: Go and Come

> ULT **Going down for my beloved smoothly, gliding over the lips of those who sleep**
> UST When I kiss you, the man whom I love, I want my kisses to be as if you are freely drinking wine, and as if wine is flowing over our lips as we sleep together
> (הוֹלֵךְ לְדוֹדִי לְמֵישָׁרִים דּוֹבֵב שִׂפְתֵי יְשֵׁנִים)

Going down and **gliding** both refer to the wine mentioned earlier in the verse. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [Wine, which is going down to my beloved smoothly, gliding over the lips of those who sleep] or [Wine, which is going down to my beloved smoothly; wine, which is gliding over the lips of those who sleep]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **smoothly, gliding over**
UST I want my kisses to be as if you are freely drinking wine, and as if wine is flowing over
(לְמֵישָׁרִים דּוֹבֵב)

Here the word **smoothly** means "freely" and refers to freely flowing wine. The word **gliding** here means "flowing." If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [freely, flowing over]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **the lips of those who sleep**
UST our lips as we sleep together
(שִׂפְתֵי יְשֵׁנִים)

See the Chapter 7 introduction for information regarding an alternate translation of the words that the ULT translates as **the lips of those who sleep**.

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
best	very good
like the … wine	like … wine
for my beloved	When I kiss you, the man whom I love

Song of Solomon 7:10

ULT	UST
I {belong} to my beloved and his longing {is} for me.	*I belong to the man I love, and he desires me.*

> **ULT I {belong} to my beloved**
> UST I belong to the man I love
> (אֲנִי לְדוֹדִי)

See how you translated the identical phrase in Song of Songs 6:3.

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
{belong} to my beloved	belong to the man I love

Song of Solomon 7:11

ULT	UST
Come, my beloved, let us go out {to} the fields; let us spend the night in the villages.	*You whom I love, come with me, and let us go to the countryside, and sleep in one of the villages.*

ULT Come
UST come with me
(לְכָה)

Your language may say “Go” rather than **Come** in a context such as this. Alternate translation: [Go]

Support Reference: Go and Come

ULT Come, my beloved
UST You whom I love, come with me
(לְכָה דוֹדִי)

If it would be more natural in your language, you could change the order of these phrases. Alternate translation: [My beloved, come]

Support Reference: Information Structure

ULT let us spend the night in the villages
UST and sleep in one of the villages
(נָלִינָה בַּכְּפָרִים)

Alternate translation: [and let us stay overnight in a village somewhere]

ULT in the villages
UST one of the villages
(בַּכְּפָרִים)

The word which the ULT translates as **in the villages** has two possible meanings in the original language. Here it could mean: (1) **in the villages** as in the ULT. (2) “among the henna bushes” (which produce flowers). If you choose this option, see how you translated the phrase “henna blossoms” in 1:14. Alternate translation: [among the henna bushes] or [among the wildflowers] or [among the henna blossoms]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
my beloved	You whom I love

Song of Solomon 7:12

ULT	UST
Let us go early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine has budded, {if} the blossoms have opened, {if} the pomegranates have bloomed. There I will give my love to you.	*And let us go early to the vineyards to see if the grapevines have budded and if there are blossoms on them that have opened, and to see if the pomegranate trees are blooming, and there I will have sexual relations with you.*

ULT **Let us go early**
UST And let us go early
(נַשְׁכִּימָה)

Alternate translation: [Let us wake up early and go] or [Let us get up early and go]

ULT **Let us go early**
UST And let us go early
(נַשְׁכִּימָה)

Your language may say “come” rather than **go** in a context such as this. Alternate translation: [Let us come early]

Support Reference: Go and Come

ULT **the vine has budded**
UST the grapevines have budded
(פָּרְחָה הַגֶּפֶן)

See how you translated the similar phrase “had the vine budded” in 6:11.

ULT **{if} the pomegranates have bloomed**
UST and to see if the pomegranate trees are blooming
(הֵנֵצוּ הָרִמּוֹנִים)

See how you translated the similar phrase “Had the pomegranates bloomed” in 6:11.

> ULT **I will give my love to you**
> UST I will have sexual relations with you
> (אֶתֵּן אֶת־דֹּדַי לָךְ)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **love**, you could express the same idea in another way as modeled by the UST.

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
to the vineyards	to the vineyards
the vine	the grapevines
{if} the pomegranates	if the pomegranate trees
my love	I will have sexual relations

Song of Solomon 7:13

ULT	UST
The mandrakes give off a scent, and over our doors {are} all choice fruits, new ones and also old ones. My beloved, I have stored {these} up for you.	*The mandrake plants are producing a fragrant scent, and the pleasures we will experience as we express our love for each other will be like choice fruits that have been stored, new ones and old ones. You whom I love, I have reserved my love for you as if I were storing choice fruit.*

ULT **The mandrakes give off a scent**

UST The mandrake plants are producing a fragrant scent

(הַדּוּדָאִים נָתְנוּ־רֵיחַ)

The **mandrakes** are plants which produce pleasant-smelling flowers. People in that culture thought that smelling or eating fruit from the mandrake plant would arouse a person's sexual desire and would help women to conceive children. If your readers would not be familiar with this type of plant, you could use the name of a similar plant in your area, or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [The love flowers give off their scent] or [The scent of the love flowers is in the air]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **and over our doors {are} all choice fruits, new ones and also old ones. My beloved, I have stored {these} up for you**

UST and the pleasures we will experience as we express our love for each other will be like choice fruits that have been stored, new ones and old ones. You whom I love, I have reserved my love for you as if I were storing choice fruit

(וְעַל־פְּתָחֵינוּ כָּל־מְגָדִים חֲדָשִׁים גַּם־יְשָׁנִים דּוֹדִי צָפַנְתִּי לָךְ)

Here the woman is speaking of her love for the man as if it were **all choice fruits** that she has **stored up** (reserved) for him. She also speaks of the pleasure they will enjoy together when they express their love as **all choice fruits** stored **over our doors**. (In that culture fruit was often kept on a shelf above doors). If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and we are surrounded by delightful pleasures, new ones and old ones, pleasures that I have been saving to give to you, my beloved]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **and over our doors {are} all choice fruits**
UST and the pleasures we will experience as we express our love for each other will be like choice fruits that have been stored
(וְעַל־פְּתָחֵינוּ כָּל־מְגָדִים)

Alternate translation: [and above the entrance of our house are every one of the best fruits]

ULT **new ones and also old ones**
UST new ones and old ones
(חֲדָשִׁים גַּם־יְשָׁנִים)

Here, **new ones and also old ones** is an idiom which means “all kinds of fruit.” **New ones** refers to fruit which is not yet ripe and **old ones** refers to ripe fruit. If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [fruit that is not yet ripe and also sweet ripe fruit] or [all kinds of fruit]

Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **My beloved, I have stored {these} up for you**
UST You whom I love, I have reserved my love for you as if I were storing choice fruit
(דּוֹדִי צָפַנְתִּי לָךְ)

Alternate translation: [My beloved, I have saved these so that I can give them to you] or [My beloved, I have saved my love so that I can give it to you]

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
choice fruits	the pleasures we will experience as we express our love for each other will be like choice fruits that
old ones	old ones
My beloved	You whom I love

Song of Solomon 8

Song of Songs 8 Chapter Introduction

Religious and Cultural Concepts in This Chapter

Strong feelings of love and commitment between a man and woman who love each other romantically

8:6–7 describe the strong feelings of love, commitment, and emotional attachment that exist between a man and woman who love each other romantically.

Translation Issues in This Chapter

The meaning of 8:12

The three possible meanings of 8:12 are: (1) that the woman is speaking of herself as a vineyard and saying that her vineyard is hers alone. She is comparing herself to Solomon's vineyard (discussed in 8:11) and saying that Solomon and his vineyard keepers can keep the profits from that vineyard. (2) that the woman is speaking of herself as a vineyard but saying that she chooses to give herself freely to the man whom she loves and calls Solomon. (3) that the man is speaking of the woman he loves as a vineyard and is comparing his vineyard to Solomon's vineyard. He feels wealthier than Solomon because he has the woman he loves as his vineyard, and so Solomon and Solomon's keepers can keep their portion of the profits from that vineyard.

Song of Solomon 8:1

ULT	UST
Who will give you like a brother to me, who nursed at the breasts of my mother? If I found you outside, I would kiss you. Yes, they would not despise me.	*I wish that you were like my brother, my own brother, who nursed from my mother's breasts when he was a baby. Because then, whenever I met you outside the house, I could kiss you, and no one would criticize me.*

ULT **If I found you outside, I would kiss you. Yes, they would not despise me … I would lead you; I would bring you to the house of my mother, she {who} taught me. I would make you drink from the wine of spice, from the juice of my pomegranate**

UST Because then, whenever I met you outside the house, I could kiss you, and no one would criticize me … I would like to bring you to my mother's house, to where my mother, who taught me so many things, lives. I would like to take you to my mother's house so I could have sexual relations with you there. Having sexual relations with you would be as if I were giving you spiced wine to drink, as if I were giving you sweet pomegranate wine

(אֶמְצָאֲךָ בַחוּץ אֶשָּׁקָה גַּם לֹא־יָבוּזוּ לִי׃ אֲנַהֲגְךָ אֲבִיאֲךָ אֶל־בֵּית אִמִּי תְּלַמְּדֵנִי אַשְׁקְךָ מִיַּיִן הָרֹקַח מֵעֲסִיס רִמֹּנִי) (8:1-2)

The woman is using a hypothetical situation (the situation of the man being **like a brother** and her finding him **outside**) to express what she would do if the man she loved were like a brother to her. Alternate translation: [If you were like a brother to me and if I found you outside, then I would kiss you. Yes, if you were like a brother to me, they would not despise me. If you were like a brother to me, then I would lead you; I would bring you to the house of my mother who taught me, and I would make you drink from the wine of spice, from the juice of my pomegranate]

Support Reference: Connect — Hypothetical Conditions

> ULT **Who will give you like a brother to me, who nursed at the breasts of my mother**
> UST I wish that you were like my brother, my own brother, who nursed from my mother's breasts when he was a baby
> (מִי יִתֶּנְךָ֨ כְּאָ֜ח לִ֗י יוֹנֵ֥ק שְׁדֵֽי אִמִּ֑י)

Here the woman is using the Hebrew idiom **Who will give you** to express her wish that the man she loves be **like a brother** to her (so that she could publicly kiss him). If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning, or you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [How I wish that you were like a brother to me, who nursed at the breasts of my mother] or [How I desire that you were like a brother to me, who nursed at the breasts of my mother]

Support Reference: Idiom

> ULT **Who will give you like a brother to me, who nursed at the breasts of my mother**
> UST I wish that you were like my brother, my own brother, who nursed from my mother's breasts when he was a baby
> (מִי יִתֶּנְךָ֨ כְּאָ֜ח לִ֗י יוֹנֵ֥ק שְׁדֵֽי אִמִּ֑י)

The woman is referring implicitly to cultural norms which prohibited a display of public affection toward a spouse and/or a romantic partner but allowed siblings to show affection in public. If it would be helpful in your language, you could include this information in a footnote.

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

> ULT **Who will give you like a brother to me, who nursed at the breasts of my mother**
> UST I wish that you were like my brother, my own brother, who nursed from my mother's breasts when he was a baby
> (מִי יִתֶּנְךָ֨ כְּאָ֜ח לִ֗י יוֹנֵ֥ק שְׁדֵֽי אִמִּ֑י)

The phrase **who nursed at the breasts of my mother** describes the word **brother** and has a similar meaning. This is poetic language. Saying the same thing in slightly different ways is a common feature of Hebrew poetry. If your language has a way to indicate poetry, you could use it here. Alternate translation: [Who will give you like a brother to me]

Support Reference: Poetry

> ULT **Yes**
> (גַּם)

Here the word **Yes** is used to strongly affirm what follows it in this sentence. Use a natural form that would communicate that meaning in your language.

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

> ULT **they would not despise me**
> UST and no one would criticize me
> (לֹא־יָבֻזוּ לִי)

The woman is saying that if the man she loved were **like a brother** and she found him **outside** and kissed him, the result is that **they would not despise me**. Use a natural form in your language for expressing a statement like this. Alternate translation: [then they would not despise me]

Support Reference: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
I would kiss you	I could kiss you

Song of Solomon 8:2

ULT	UST
I would lead you; I would bring you to the house of my mother, she {who} taught me. I would make you drink from the wine of spice, from the juice of my pomegranate.	*I would like to bring you to my mother's house, to where my mother, who taught me so many things, lives. I would like to take you to my mother's house so I could have sexual relations with you there. Having sexual relations with you would be as if I were giving you spiced wine to drink, as if I were giving you sweet pomegranate wine.*

ULT **I would bring you to the house of my mother**
UST I would like to bring you to my mother's house
(אֲבִיאֲךָ אֶל־בֵּית אִמִּי)

See how you translated the similar phrase **I had brought him to the house of my mother** in 3:4. Alternate translation: [I would take you to the house of my mother]

Support Reference: Go and Come

ULT **I would bring you to the house of my mother, she {who} taught me**
UST I would like to bring you to my mother's house, to where my mother, who taught me so many things, lives
(אֲבִיאֲךָ אֶל־בֵּית אִמִּי תְּלַמְּדֵנִי)

Alternate translation: [I would bring you to the house of my mother who taught me]

ULT **I would make you drink from the wine of spice**
UST I would like to take you to my mother's house so I could have sexual relations with you there. Having sexual relations with you would be as if I were giving you spiced wine to drink
(אַשְׁקְךָ מִיַּיִן הָרֶקַח)

The phrase **I would make you drink from the wine of spice** means "I would cause you to drink (by giving you) spiced wine." If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include that information. Alternate translation: [I would cause you to drink spiced wine] or [I would give you spiced wine to drink]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **from the wine of spice**
UST spiced wine
(מִיֵּין הָרֹקַח)

See how you translated the similar phrase “spiced wine” in 7:2.

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **I would make you drink from the wine of spice, from the juice of my pomegranate**
UST I would like to take you to my mother’s house so I could have sexual relations with you there. Having sexual relations with you would be as if I were giving you spiced wine to drink, as if I were giving you sweet pomegranate wine
(אַשְׁקְךָ֙ מִיֵּין הָרֹקַח מֵעֲסִ֖יס רִמֹּנִֽי)

The woman is politely and poetically referring to giving herself sexually to the man by using the phrase **I would make you drink from the wine of spice** and drink **from the juice of my pomegranate**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use a polite way of referring to this in your language, or you could state this plainly. Alternate translation: [I will give myself to you as if I were making you drink from the wine of spice and pomegranate juice] or [I will give myself to you as if I were giving you spiced wine to drink and giving you pomegranate juice to enjoy]

Support Reference: Euphemism

ULT **from the juice of my pomegranate**
UST as if I were giving you sweet pomegranate wine
(מֵעֲסִ֖יס רִמֹּנִֽי)

Here the term the ULT translates as **juice** refers to fresh new wine that is sweet. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [from my fresh pomegranate wine] or [from my sweet pomegranate wine]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
the house of	house
from the wine of	wine
my pomegranate	pomegranate

Song of Solomon 8:3

ULT	UST
His left hand {is} under my head and his right hand embraces me.	*The man I love has placed his left arm under my head and he holds me close with his right arm. The woman speaking to the women of Jerusalem*

ULT His left hand {is} under my head and his right hand embraces me

UST The man I love has placed his left arm under my head and he holds me close with his right arm

(שְׂמֹאלוֹ תַּחַת רֹאשִׁי וִימִינוֹ תְּחַבְּקֵנִי)

This verse is identical to Song of Songs 2:6. Translate this verse exactly as you translated 2:6.

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Song of Solomon 8:4

ULT	UST
I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem, do not awaken and do not stir love until it desires.	*You young women of Jerusalem, I want you to solemnly promise me, that you will not cause people to love romantically until it is the right time. The women of Jerusalem speaking*

ULT I adjure you, daughters of Jerusalem, do not awaken and do not stir love until it desires

UST You young women of Jerusalem, I want you to solemnly promise me, that you will not cause people to love romantically until it is the right time

(הִשְׁבַּעְתִּי אֶתְכֶם בְּנוֹת יְרוּשָׁלִָם מַה־תָּעִירוּ ׀ וּמַה־תְּעֹרְרוּ אֶת־הָאַהֲבָה עַד שֶׁתֶּחְפָּץ)

You should translate this verse in a similar way to how you translated Song of Songs 2:7, but because this verse does not have the phrase “by the female gazelles or the does of the field,” you should not include that phrase in this verse.

Support Reference: Oath Formulas

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
Jerusalem	Jerusalem
love	love romantically

Song of Solomon 8:5

ULT	UST
Who {is} that coming up from the wilderness, leaning against her beloved? Under the apple tree I awakened you; there your mother was in labor {with} you; there she was in labor; she gave birth {to} you.	*Look at this woman who is coming up from the wilderness, the woman who is leaning on the man she loves! The young woman speaking to the man she loves I woke you up when you were under the apple tree at the place where your mother gave birth to you, the place where you were born.*

ULT **Under the apple tree I awakened you; there your mother was in labor {with} you; there she was in labor; she gave birth {to} you … Place me like the seal on your heart, like the seal on your arm, because strong like death {is} love; unyielding like Sheol {is} zeal. Its flashes {are} flashes of fire, the flame of Yah … Many waters are not able to quench {this} love and rivers will not drown it. If a man would give all {the} wealth of his house in exchange for love, they would utterly despise it**

UST I woke you up when you were under the apple tree at the place where your mother gave birth to you, the place where you were born … Keep me close to you, like a seal that rests against your chest as it hangs down from its cord, or like a seal worn on your bracelet. The strength with which I love you is as powerful as the strength of death; it is as strong as the grave. It is as though our love for each other bursts into flames, and as though our love is the lightning that Yahweh creates … We love each other so deeply, that how we love each other can be compared to a strong fire that no river or flood can put out. If a man tried to cause a woman to love him by saying he would give her everything that he owns, she would refuse

(תַּחַת הַתַּפּוּחַ עוֹרַרְתִּיךָ שָׁמָּה חִבְּלָה יְלָדַתְךְ: שִׂימֵנִי כַחוֹתָם עַל־לִבֶּךָ כַּחוֹתָם עַל־זְרוֹעֶךָ כִּי־עַזָּה כַמָּוֶת אַהֲבָה קָשָׁה כִשְׁאוֹל קְנָאָה רְשָׁפֶיהָ רִשְׁפֵּי אֵשׁ שַׁלְהֶבֶתְיָהּ: מַיִם רַבִּים לֹא יוּכְלוּ לְכַבּוֹת אֶת־הָאַהֲבָה וּנְהָרוֹת לֹא יִשְׁטְפוּהָ אִם־יִתֵּן אִישׁ אֶת־כָּל־הוֹן בֵּיתוֹ בָּאַהֲבָה בּוֹז יָבֻזוּ לוֹ) (8:5-7)

The author does not say who is speaking here so you should not indicate who you think is speaking in the text of your translation. However, if you are using section headers to indicate who is speaking, you can place a header above this section indicating who the speaker is. Here the speaker could be: (1) the woman. (2) The man.

Support Reference: When to Keep Information Implicit

ULT **Who {is} that coming up from the wilderness, leaning against her beloved**
UST Look at this woman who is coming up from the wilderness, the woman who is leaning on the man she loves
(מִי זֹאת עֹלָה מִן־הַמִּדְבָּר מִתְרַפֶּקֶת עַל־דּוֹדָהּ)

The author does not say who is speaking here so you should not indicate who you think is speaking explicitly in the text of your translation. However, if you are using section headers to indicate who is speaking, the speakers here are most likely the “daughters of Jerusalem” who spoke several times earlier in the book and who were addressed in the previous verse.

Support Reference: When to Keep Information Implicit

ULT **Who {is} that coming up from the wilderness, leaning against her beloved**
UST Look at this woman who is coming up from the wilderness, the woman who is leaning on the man she loves
(מִי זֹאת עֹלָה מִן־הַמִּדְבָּר מִתְרַפֶּקֶת עַל־דּוֹדָהּ)

The writer is using the question form, **Who is that**, to create a sense of expectation and interest. If you would not use the question form for this purpose in your language, you could translate these words as a statement or an exclamation.

Support Reference: Rhetorical Question

ULT **coming up**
UST coming up
(עֹלָה)

The writer assumes that his readers understand that the group of people **coming up from the wilderness** to Jerusalem must travel upward because the wilderness is low in the Jordan valley and Jerusalem is built on hills. You could include this information if it would be helpful to your readers. Alternate translation: [moving upward] or [arising]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **coming up**
UST coming up
(עֹלָה)

Your language may say “going” rather than **coming** in a context such as this. Use whichever is more natural. Alternate translation: [going up]

Support Reference: Go and Come

ULT **the apple tree**
UST the apple tree
(הַתַּפּוּחַ)

See how you translated the phrase **apple tree** in 2:3.

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **was in labor {with} you**
UST gave birth to you
(חִבָּלַתְךָ)

The phrase the ULT translates as **was in labor with you** could: (1) refer to the process of a mother being in labor and be translated as the ULT models. (2) refer to the act of conception. Alternate translation: [conceived you]

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
the wilderness	the wilderness
her beloved	the man she loves
was in labor {with} you	gave birth to you
she was in labor	you were born

Song of Solomon 8:6

ULT	UST
Place me like the seal on your heart, like the seal on your arm, because strong like death {is} love; unyielding like Sheol {is} zeal. Its flashes {are} flashes of fire, the flame of Yah.	*Keep me close to you, like a seal that rests against your chest as it hangs down from its cord, or like a seal worn on your bracelet. The strength with which I love you is as powerful as the strength of death; it is as strong as the grave. It is as though our love for each other bursts into flames, and as though our love is the lightning that Yahweh creates.*

ULT **Place me like the seal on your heart**
UST Keep me close to you, like a seal that rests against your chest as it hangs down from its cord
(שִׂימֵנִי כַחוֹתָם עַל־לִבֶּךָ)

Here, **heart** could represent: (1) the chest of a person. Alternate translation: [Place me like a seal that is hung by a cord around your neck and hangs down onto your chest]; (2) the emotions and thoughts of a person. Alternate translation: [Always love and think about me] or [Always love and think about me as if I were stamped onto your heart] If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language, or you could state the meaning plainly.

Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **Place me like the seal on your heart, like the seal on your arm**
UST Keep me close to you, like a seal that rests against your chest as it hangs down from its cord, or like a seal worn on your bracelet
(שִׂימֵנִי כַחוֹתָם עַל־לִבֶּךָ כַּחוֹתָם עַל־זְרוֹעֶךָ)

The woman is saying that she wants the man she loves to be close to her **like the seal** hanging from a cord around his neck down over his **heart** (chest) and like a **seal** that is worn on his **arm**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: [Please keep me very near to you]

Support Reference: Simile

> ULT **like the seal on your arm**
> UST or like a seal worn on your bracelet
> (כַּחוֹתָם עַל־זְרוֹעֶךָ)

The word which the ULT translates as **arm** can refer to any part of the arm, including the wrist and hand. The phrase **the seal on your arm** refers to a seal that is worn on a bracelet on the wrist. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [like a seal worn on your wrist] or [like a seal worn on a bracelet on your wrist]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

> ULT **like the seal on your arm**
> UST or like a seal worn on your bracelet
> (כַּחוֹתָם עַל־זְרוֹעֶךָ)

The speaker is leaving out some of the words that in many languages a sentence would need in order to be complete. If it would be clearer in your language, you could supply these words from earlier in the sentence. Alternate translation: [place me like the seal on your arm]

Support Reference: Ellipsis

> ULT **strong like death {is} love; unyielding like Sheol {is} zeal**
> UST The strength with which I love you is as powerful as the strength of death; it is as strong as the grave
> (עַזָּה כַמָּוֶת אַהֲבָה קָשָׁה כִשְׁאוֹל קִנְאָה)

The phrases **strong like death is love** and **unyielding like Sheol is zeal** are comparisons because romantic **love** and **death** are both very strong and overcome a person in a powerful and irresistible way, while **Sheol** and the **zeal** of romantic love are both **unyielding**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state that explicitly.

Support Reference: Simile

> ULT **because strong like death {is} love**
> UST The strength with which I love you is as powerful as the strength of death
> (כִּי־עַזָּה כַמָּוֶת אַהֲבָה)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **love**, you could express the same idea in another way that is natural in your language.

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

> ULT **unyielding like Sheol {is} zeal**
> UST it is as strong as the grave
> (קָשָׁה כִשְׁאוֹל קִנְאָה)

Here the word the ULT translates as **zeal** could: (1) have the positive meaning of the romantic fervor that lovers have for one another. Alternate translation: [unyielding like Sheol is the zeal lovers have for each other] or [the passionate feelings lovers have for one another is unyielding like Sheol]; (2) refer to the negative feelings of lovers who are jealous for the affection, love, and attention of the other. Alternate translation: [unyielding like Sheol is jealousy] or [the jealousy lovers have for the love of one another is unyielding like Sheol]

> ULT **unyielding like Sheol {is} zeal**
> UST it is as strong as the grave
> (קָשָׁה כִשְׁאוֹל קִנְאָה)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **zeal**, you could express the same idea in another way. Alternate translation: [lovers zealously love each other in a way that is unyielding like Sheol] or [lovers passionately love each other in a way that is unyielding like Sheol]

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

> ULT **like Sheol**
> UST as the grave
> (כִשְׁאוֹל)

Here, **Sheol** represents **death**. This line is parallel in meaning to the preceding line. The woman is again referring to **death** by association with **Sheol**, which is where dead people were thought to go in that culture. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression from your language or state the meaning plainly.

Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT Its flashes {are} flashes of fire, the flame of Yah
UST It is as though our love for each other bursts into flames, and as though our love is the lightning that Yahweh creates
(רִשְׁפֶּיהָ רִשְׁפֵּי אֵשׁ שַׁלְהֶבֶתְיָה)

Here the woman is speaking of the zeal of romantic love as if it were **flashes of fire** and **the flame of Yah**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [The zeal of lovers is like flashes of fire and like the flame of Yahweh] or [The passion of lovers is like flashes of fire and like the flame of Yahweh]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT the flame of Yah
UST and as though our love is the lightning that Yahweh creates
(שַׁלְהֶבֶתְיָה)

Here, **the flame of Yah** is an expression that means “lightning.” If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, you could use a comparable expression from your language that does have that meaning or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [the lightning of Yah] or [the flashes of lightning]

Support Reference: Idiom

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
like the seal	close to you, like a seal
like the seal	or like a seal
love	I love you
like Sheol	as the grave
zeal	it is
Yah	Yahweh creates

Song of Solomon 8:7

ULT	UST
Many waters are not able to quench {this} love and rivers will not drown it. If a man would give all {the} wealth of his house in exchange for love, they would utterly despise it.	*We love each other so deeply, that how we love each other can be compared to a strong fire that no river or flood can put out. If a man tried to cause a woman to love him by saying he would give her everything that he owns, she would refuse. The young woman's brothers speaking among themselves*

ULT **Many waters are not able to quench {this} love and rivers will not drown it**
UST We love each other so deeply, that how we love each other can be compared to a strong fire … no river or flood can put out … that
(מַ֣יִם רַבִּ֔ים לֹ֥א יוּכְל֖וּ לְכַבּ֣וֹת אֶת־הָאַהֲבָ֑ה וּנְהָר֖וֹת לֹ֥א יִשְׁטְפ֖וּהָ)

Here the writer is speaking of **love** as if it is a strongly burning fire which **Many waters** cannot **quench** and which **rivers** cannot **drown**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [Love is so strong that it is like a strong fire that great amounts of water cannot quench and which rivers full of water cannot put out] or [The feelings of love which a man and a woman who are lovers have for each other is very strong] or [Nothing can stop romantic love]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **Many waters are not able to quench {this} love and rivers will not drown it**
UST We love each other so deeply, that how we love each other can be compared to a strong fire … no river or flood can put out … that
(מַ֣יִם רַבִּ֔ים לֹ֥א יוּכְל֖וּ לְכַבּ֣וֹת אֶת־הָאַהֲבָ֑ה וּנְהָר֖וֹת לֹ֥א יִשְׁטְפ֖וּהָ)

Alternate translation: [Nothing can extinguish our love for each other, not even a flood]

ULT **{this} love … in exchange for love**
UST We love each other so deeply, that how we love each other can be compared to a strong fire … tried to cause a woman to love him by saying … that
(אֶת־הָאַהֲבָ֑ה & בְּאַהֲבָ֑ה)

If your language does not use an abstract noun for the idea of **love**, you could express the same idea in some other way that is natural in your language.

Support Reference: Abstract Nouns

ULT **If a man would give all {the} wealth of his house in exchange for love, they would utterly despise it**
UST that … If a man tried to cause a woman to love him by saying he would give her everything … he owns, she would refuse
(אִם־יִתֵּן אִישׁ אֶת־כָּל־הׇוֹן בֵּיתוֹ בָּאַהֲבָה בּוֹז יָבֻוזוּ לוֹ)

The woman speaks as if this were a hypothetical situation, but she means that it must be true. If your language does not state something as a condition if it is certain or true, and if your readers might think that what the woman is saying is uncertain, then you could translate her words as an affirmative statement. Alternate translation: [Even though a man tries to give all the wealth of his house in exchange for love, his offer will be utterly despised]

Support Reference: Connect — Factual Conditions

ULT **in exchange for love**
UST tried to cause a woman to love him by saying
(בָּאַהֲבָה)

Alternate translation: [in order to get love] or [in order to buy love]

ULT **it**
UST she would refuse
(לוֹ)

The word the ULT translates as **it** could: (1) refer to **all the wealth of his house**. Alternate translation: [it]; (2) refer to the **man** who is offering **all the wealth of his house in exchange for love**. Alternate translation: [him]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
to quench	put out
{this} love	We love each other so deeply, that how we love each other can be compared to a strong fire … that
his house	that … everything … he owns
in exchange for love	tried to cause a woman to love him by saying

Song of Solomon 8:8

ULT	UST
A sister {belongs} to us—a little one— and breasts there are not for her. What will we do for our sister on the day when it is spoken for her?	*We have a young sister, and her breasts are not large yet. What should we do for her at the time that we promise some young man that he can marry her?*

ULT **A sister {belongs} to us—a little one— and breasts there are not for her. What will we do for our sister on the day when it is spoken for her … If she {is} a wall, we will build on her a battlement of silver. And if she {is} a door, we will enclose over her boards of cedar**
UST We have a young sister, and her breasts are not large yet. What should we do for her at the time that we promise some young man that he can marry her … We will protect her virginity, as if we were soldiers building a battlement of silver to protect a wall. We will protect her virginity, like we would protect a door from intruders by covering it with boards made of cedar wood
(אָחוֹת לָנוּ קְטַנָּה וְשָׁדַיִם אֵין לָהּ מַה־נַּעֲשֶׂה לַאֲחוֹתֵנוּ בַּיּוֹם שֶׁיְּדֻבַּר־בָּהּ: אִם־חוֹמָה הִיא נִבְנֶה עָלֶיהָ טִירַת כָּסֶף וְאִם־דֶּלֶת הִיא נָצוּר עָלֶיהָ לוּחַ אָרֶז)
(8:8-9)

Since the author does not say who is speaking here, you should not indicate who you think is speaking explicitly in the text of your translation. However, the majority of Bible scholars think that the woman's brothers are speaking. Because of this and because the phrases **A sister belongs to us** and **What will we do for our sister** in 8:8 seem to indicate that the woman's brothers are speaking, you can place a header above 8:8–9 indicating that the woman's brothers are speaking.

Support Reference: When to Keep Information Implicit

ULT **a little one**
UST a young
(קְטַנָּה)

Here the phrase **a little one** means "a young one" or "a younger one." If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [a young one] or [a younger one]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

> ULT **and breasts there are not for her**
> UST and her breasts are not large yet
> (וְשַׁדַּיִם אֵין לָהּ)

The phrase **and breasts there are not for her** is an expression that means the woman's brothers think she has not reached full physical maturity and is therefore not yet ready for marriage. If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, you could use a comparable expression that does have that meaning or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [and she is not yet fully grown] or [and her breasts are still small] or [and she is not yet ready for marriage]

Support Reference: Idiom

> ULT **on the day**
> UST at the time
> (בַּיּוֹם)

Here, **on the day** is an expression that means "at the time." If this phrase does not have that meaning in your language, you could use a comparable expression that does have that meaning or state the meaning plainly.

Support Reference: Idiom

> ULT **on the day when it is spoken for her**
> UST at the time that we promise some young man that he can marry her
> (בַּיּוֹם שֶׁיְּדֻבַּר־בָּהּ)

The phrase **on the day when it is spoken for her** means "at the time when she is betrothed to be married." If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [on the day when she is pledged to be married] or [on the day when she is spoken for in marriage]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

> ULT **when it is spoken for her**
> UST that we promise some young man that he can marry her
> (שֶׁיְּדֻבַּר־בָּהּ)

If your language does not use the passive form in this way, you can express the idea in active form or in another way that is natural in your language. If you must state who did the action, the context implies that the brothers are the ones who will do it. Alternate translation: [when we speak for her by promising a man that he can marry her]

Support Reference: Active or Passive

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
on the day	at the time

Song of Solomon 8:9

ULT	UST
If she {is} a wall, we will build on her a battlement of silver. And if she {is} a door, we will enclose over her boards of cedar.	*We will protect her virginity, as if we were soldiers building a battlement of silver to protect a wall. We will protect her virginity, like we would protect a door from intruders by covering it with boards made of cedar wood. The woman speaking*

ULT **If she {is} a wall, we will build on her a battlement of silver**
UST We will protect her virginity, as if we were soldiers building a battlement of silver to protect a wall
(אִם־חוֹמָ֣ה הִ֔יא נִבְנֶ֥ה עָלֶ֖יהָ טִירַ֣ת כָּ֑סֶף)

Here the woman's brothers are speaking of their sister as if she were **a wall** that they would protect by building **a battlement of silver** on it. The meaning could be: (1) that they would protect her virginity by guarding her, like a wall that has a battlement can be guarded. Alternate translation: [We will protect her virginity like we would protect a wall by building a battlement of silver on it]; (2) that her chest was flat because her breasts were not fully formed, and they would try to make her attractive for the man she was going to marry by adorning her with silver jewels. Alternate translation: [If her chest is flat like a wall, we will decorate it by putting silver jewels that are like towers on it]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **And if she {is} a door, we will enclose over her boards of cedar**
UST We will protect her virginity, like we would protect a door from intruders by covering it with boards made of cedar wood
(וְאִם־דֶּלֶת הִ֣יא נָצ֣וּר עָלֶ֔יהָ לוּחַ֖ אֶרֶז)

Here the woman's brothers are speaking of their sister as if she were **a door** that they would **enclose** with **boards of cedar**. The meaning could be: (1) that they would make an effort to protect her virginity. Alternate translation: [We will protect her virginity like we would enclose a door with boards of cedar]; (2) that her chest was flat because her breasts were not fully formed, and so they would try to make her more attractive for the man she was going to marry by adorning her the way they would decorate a door with cedar wood. (The word the ULT translates as **enclose** is identical in form to another word which means "decorate" so "decorate" could be the intended meaning here.) Alternate translation: [And if she is flat like a door, we will decorate her like we would decorate a door with planks of cedar wood]

Support Reference: Metaphor

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
silver	silver
cedar	cedar wood

Song of Solomon 8:10

ULT	UST
I {was} a wall and my breasts {are} like towers; then I was, in his eyes, like a person who finds peace.	*Like a wall that allows no one to enter, I have remained a virgin and let no man come into me; but now my breasts are large like towers. So I am delightful to my beloved.*

ULT **I {was} a wall and my breasts {are} like towers; then I was, in his eyes, like a person who finds peace**

UST Like a wall that allows no one to enter, I have remained a virgin and let no man come into me; but now my breasts are large like towers. So I am delightful to my beloved

(אֲנִי חוֹמָה וְשָׁדַי כַּמִּגְדָּלוֹת אָז הָיִיתִי בְעֵינָיו כְּמוֹצְאַת שָׁלוֹם)

The author does not say who is speaking here so you should not indicate who you think is speaking in the text of your translation. However, if you are using section headers to indicate who is speaking, you can place a header above 8:10 indicating that the speaker is the woman.

Support Reference: When to Keep Information Implicit

ULT **I {was} a wall**

UST Like a wall that allows no one to enter, I have remained a virgin and let no man come into me

(אֲנִי חוֹמָה)

Here the woman continues the metaphor that her brothers began in the preceding verse by referring to herself as **a wall**. She could: (1) be indicating that she had remained a virgin. Alternate translation: [I was like a wall and remained a virgin]; (2) be referring to her chest by saying that in the past her breasts were not fully formed. Alternate translation: [My chest was previously flat like a wall]

Support Reference: Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors

ULT **and my breasts {are}**

UST but now my breasts are

(וְשָׁדַי)

Alternate translation: [but now my breasts are]

ULT **and my breasts {are} like towers**
UST but now my breasts are large like towers
(וְשָׁדַ֖י כַּמִּגְדָּלֽוֹת)

The woman is saying that her breasts are large **like towers**. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state that explicitly. Alternate translation: [and now my breasts are large] or [and now my breasts are fully grown]

Support Reference: Simile

ULT **then**
UST So
(אָ֣ז)

The word translated as **then** indicates that what follows is a result of what came before. Use a connector in your language that makes it clear that what follows is a result of what came before. Alternate translation: [this is why] or [as a result]

Support Reference: Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

ULT **I was, in his eyes**
UST I am … to my beloved
(הָיִ֥יתִי בְעֵינָ֖יו)

Here, **his eyes** represent his evaluation or estimation. If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or state the meaning plainly. Alternate translation: [I am, in his judgment] or [he thinks of me] or [I was, in his opinion]

Support Reference: Metonymy

ULT **like a person who finds**
(כְּמוֹצְאַ֥ת)

The word the ULT translates as **finds** could mean: (1) “finds.” If you choose this option, translate this word in a similar way to the ULT. (2) “brings.” Alternate translation: [like a person who brings]

> ULT **I was, in his eyes, like a person who finds peace**
> UST I am delightful to my beloved
> (הָיִיתִי בְעֵינָיו כְּמוֹצְאֵת שָׁלוֹם)

Here the word **peace** refers to "favor." If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [I found favor in his eyes]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
like towers	large like towers
peace	delightful

Song of Solomon 8:11

ULT	UST
{There} was a vineyard for Solomon in Baal Hamon. He gave the vineyard to keepers. Each person brought in exchange for its fruit a thousand {pieces of} silver.	*King Solomon had a vineyard at a place called Baal Hamon, and he rented it to people for them to farm it. He required each one to pay him one thousand pieces of silver each year for the grapes that they harvested.*

ULT **{ … There} was a vineyard for Solomon in Baal Hamon. He gave the vineyard to keepers. Each person brought in exchange for its fruit a thousand {pieces of} silver … My vineyard that {belongs} to me {is} to my face. The thousand {belong} to you, Solomon, and the two hundred {belong} to the people who {are} keepers of its fruit**
UST King Solomon had a vineyard at a place called Baal Hamon, and he rented it to people for them to farm it. He required each one to pay him one thousand pieces of silver each year for the grapes that they harvested … But my body is like my own vineyard, which is mine to give to the man whom I choose. Solomon can keep the one thousand pieces of silver that he receives from renting his vineyard, and the farmers who take care of it for him can keep the two hundred pieces of silver he pays them
(כֶּרֶם הָיָה לִשְׁלֹמֹה בְּבַעַל הָמוֹן נָתַן אֶת־הַכֶּרֶם לַנֹּטְרִים אִישׁ יָבִא בִּפְרִיוֹ אֶלֶף כֶּסֶף: כַּרְמִי שֶׁלִּי לְפָנָי הָאֶלֶף לְךָ שְׁלֹמֹה וּמָאתַיִם לִנֹטְרִים אֶת־פִּרְיוֹ)
(8:11-12)

Because the author does not say who is speaking, you should not indicate who is speaking in the text. If you are using section headers to indicate who is speaking, the speaker could be: (1) the woman in both 8:11 and 8:12. If you decide that the woman is speaking, you can include both verses under the section heading for 8:10 indicating that. (2) the man in both these verses. If you decide the man is speaking, you can put a section header at the top of 8:11 indicating that.

Support Reference: When to Keep Information Implicit

ULT **in Baal Hamon**
UST at a place called Baal Hamon
(בְּבַעַל הָמוֹן)

Baal Hamon is the name of a place. The name **Baal Hamon** means “master of wealth, wealthy master, possessor of abundance.” Because the meaning of the name has significance here, you could include a footnote indicating that.

Support Reference: How to Translate Names

ULT **to keepers**
UST to people for them to farm it
(לַנֹּטְרִים)

Here, **keepers** are farmers who rent land from an owner and farm it. The **keepers** paid Solomon **a thousand pieces of silver** to farm his land. If your readers would not be familiar with this type of farmer, you could use the name of something similar in your area, or you could use a more general term. Alternate translation: [to people who would pay him to let them farm it] or [to men who would pay him so that they could farm it]

Support Reference: Translate Unknowns

ULT **He gave the vineyard to keepers**
UST and he rented it to people for them to farm it
(נָתַן אֶת־הַכֶּרֶם לַנֹּטְרִים)

Alternate translation: [He rented the vineyard to keepers] or [He leased the vineyard to keepers] or [He agreed to let keepers pay him so they could grow grapes in the vineyard]

ULT **Each person brought in exchange for its fruit a thousand {pieces of} silver**
UST He required each one to pay him one thousand pieces of silver each year for the grapes that they harvested
(אִישׁ יָבֵא בְּפִרְיוֹ אֶלֶף כָּסֶף)

Here the phrase **its fruit** refers to the fruit of **the vineyard**, and the phrase **Each person** refers to each of the **keepers**. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [Each keeper brought in exchange for the fruit of the vineyard a thousand pieces of silver] or [Each keeper brought Solomon a thousand pieces of silver as payment for the fruit of the vineyard]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **a thousand {pieces of} silver**
UST one thousand pieces of silver
(אֶלֶף כָּסֶף)

Alternate translation: [a thousand silver coins]

Support Reference: Biblical Money

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
a vineyard	a vineyard

ULT	UST
for Solomon	King Solomon
the vineyard	it
to keepers	to people for them to farm it
in exchange for its fruit	each year for the grapes that they harvested
{pieces of} silver	pieces of silver

Song of Solomon 8:12

ULT	UST
My vineyard that {belongs} to me {is} to my face. The thousand {belong} to you, Solomon, and the two hundred {belong} to the people who {are} keepers of its fruit.	*But my body is like my own vineyard, which is mine to give to the man whom I choose. Solomon can keep the one thousand pieces of silver that he receives from renting his vineyard, and the farmers who take care of it for him can keep the two hundred pieces of silver he pays them. The man speaking to the woman he loves*

ULT **My vineyard**
UST But my body is like my … vineyard
(כַּרְמִי)

Here the phrase **My vineyard** is a metaphor (see the section on 8:12 in the chapter introduction for the meaning of this entire verse). It could be: (1) the woman referring to herself as a vineyard, as she did in 1:6. Alternate translation: [I am like a vineyard] or [My body is like a vineyard]; (2) the man referring to the woman he loves as if she were his vineyard. Alternate translation: [The woman whom I love is like my vineyard] or [The woman whom I love is like a vineyard]

Support Reference: Metaphor

ULT **{is} to my face**
UST which is mine to give to the man whom I choose
(לְפָנָי)

The phrase **is to my face** means “is mine to give.” If it would be helpful in your language, you could use an equivalent expression or plain language. Alternate translation: [is at my disposal] or [is mine to do with as I desire] or [is mine to give to whom I choose]

Support Reference: Idiom

ULT **The thousand {belong} to you, Solomon, and the two hundred {belong} to the people who {are} keepers of its fruit**
UST Solomon can keep the one thousand pieces of silver that he receives from renting his vineyard, and the farmers who take care of it for him can keep the two hundred pieces of silver he pays them
(הָאֶלֶף לְךָ֥ שְׁלֹמֹ֖ה וּמָאתַ֥יִם לִנֹטְרִ֖ים אֶת־פִּרְיֽוֹ)

Here the word **thousand** refers to the "thousand pieces of silver" in the previous verse. The phrase **the two hundred** refers to the two hundred pieces of silver that Solomon would have paid to **the people who are keepers** of the vineyard's fruit. If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [The thousand pieces of silver belong to you, Solomon, and the two hundred pieces of silver belong to the people whom you pay to be keepers of the vineyard's fruit]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **The thousand {belong} to you, Solomon**
UST Solomon can keep the one thousand pieces of silver that he receives from renting his vineyard
(הָאֶ֥לֶף לְךָ֖ שְׁלֹמֹֽה)

Here the woman could be: (1) speaking as if **Solomon** is present with her even though he is not, in order to use him as an example. If it would be helpful in your language, you could translate these words as if the woman is speaking about Solomon and not to him. Alternate translation: [The thousand belong to Solomon]; (2) calling the man she loves **Solomon** (even though he is not Solomon) as a term of endearment, similar to how she called the man she loved "The king" in 1:4. Alternate translation: [The thousand belong to you, the man I love, you who are like king Solomon] or [The thousand belong to you, the man I love, you whom I call Solomon]

Support Reference: Apostrophe

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
My vineyard	But my body is like my … vineyard
Solomon	Solomon
{belong} to the people who {are} keepers of its fruit	the farmers who take care of it for him can keep
	the farmers who take care of it for him can keep

Song of Solomon 8:13

ULT	UST
{You} who reside in the gardens; companions are listening intently for your voice— let me hear it.	*You, the woman I love, who are staying in the gardens, my friends are eagerly listening so that they can hear you speak; speak to me! The young woman speaking to the man she loves*

ULT **{ … You} who reside in the gardens; companions are listening intently for your voice — let me hear it**

UST You, the woman I love, who are staying in the gardens, my friends are eagerly listening so that they can hear you speak; speak to me

(הַיּוֹשֶׁבֶת בַּגַּנִּים חֲבֵרִים מַקְשִׁיבִים לְקוֹלֵךְ הַשְׁמִיעִינִי)

The author does not say who is speaking in this verse so you should not indicate who you think is speaking in the text. However, if you are using section headers to indicate who is speaking, you could place a header above this section indicating that the man is speaking.

Support Reference: When to Keep Information Implicit

ULT **companions are**

UST my friends are

(חֲבֵרִים)

Here the term **companions** is masculine in form in the original language and most likely refers to the man's friends who were shepherds and were mentioned in 1:7. See how you translated the term **companions** in 1:7.

Support Reference: When Masculine Words Include Women

ULT **for your voice**

UST so that they can hear you speak

(לְקוֹלֵךְ)

Here the word **voice** could: (1) represent the woman's words. Alternate translation: [to hear you speak]; (2) refer to the sound of the woman's voice. Alternate translation: [to hear your voice]

Support Reference: Metonymy

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
companions are	my friends are

Song of Solomon 8:14

ULT	UST
Flee, my beloved, and resemble a gazelle or a young stag on the mountains of spices.	*You whom I love, come to me quickly! Run to me like a gazelle or a young male deer runs across mountains where spices grow.*

ULT **Flee, my beloved, and resemble a gazelle or a young stag on the mountains of spices**
UST You whom I love, come to me quickly! Run to me like a gazelle or a young male deer runs across mountains where spices grow
(בְּרַח ׀ דּוֹדִי וּדְמֵה־לְךָ לִצְבִי אוֹ לְעֹפֶר הָאַיָּלִים עַל הָרֵי בְשָׂמִים)

The author does not say who is speaking in this verse so you should not indicate who you think is speaking in the text. However, if you are using section headers to indicate who is speaking, you could place a header above this section indicating that the woman is speaking.

Support Reference: When to Keep Information Implicit

ULT **Flee**
UST come to me quickly
(בְּרַח)

Here the word **Flee** means "come quickly." If it would be helpful to your readers, you could include this information. Alternate translation: [Come quickly] or [Hurry]

Support Reference: Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

ULT **my beloved, and resemble a gazelle or a young stag**
UST You whom I love … Run to me like a gazelle or a young male deer
(דּוֹדִי וּדְמֵה־לְךָ לִצְבִי אוֹ לְעֹפֶר הָאַיָּלִים)

See how you translated the similar expression, "My beloved is resembling a gazelle or a young stag" in 2:9.

Support Reference: Simile

ULT **on the mountains of spices**
UST runs across mountains where spices grow
(עַל הָרֵי בְשָׂמִים)

Here the woman is speaking of herself as if she is the **mountains of spices** and she wants the man she loves to come to her and enjoy her body. If it would be helpful in your language, you could state the meaning plainly.

Support Reference: Metaphor

UNFOLDINGWORD® TRANSLATION WORDS

ULT	UST
my beloved	You whom I love
stag	male deer

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Abstract Nouns

Description

Abstract nouns are nouns that refer to attitudes, qualities, events, or situations. These are things that cannot be seen or touched in a physical sense, such as happiness, weight, unity, friendship, health, and reason. This is a translation issue because some languages may express a certain idea with an abstract noun, while others would need a different way to express it.

Remember that nouns are words that refer to a person, place, thing, or idea. Abstract nouns are the nouns that refer to ideas. These can be attitudes, qualities, events, situations, or even relationships between those ideas. These are things that cannot be seen or touched in a physical sense, such as joy, peace, creation, goodness, contentment, justice, truth, freedom, vengeance, slowness, length, weight, and many, many more.

Some languages, such as Biblical Greek and English, use abstract nouns a lot. They provide a way of giving names to actions or qualities. With names, people who speak these languages can talk about the concepts as though they were things. For example, in languages that use abstract nouns, people can say, “I believe in the forgiveness of sin.” But some languages do not use abstract nouns very much. In these languages, speakers may not have the two abstract nouns “forgiveness” and “sin,” but they would express the same meaning in other ways. For example, they would express, “I believe that God is willing to forgive people after they have sinned,” by using verb phrases instead of nouns for those ideas.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

The Bible that you translate from may use abstract nouns to express certain ideas. Your language might not use abstract nouns for some of those ideas. Instead, it might use phrases to express those ideas. Those phrases will use other kinds of words such as adjectives, verbs, or adverbs to express the meaning of the abstract noun. For example, “What is its **weight**?” could be expressed as “How much does it **weigh**?” or “How **heavy** is it?”

Examples From the Bible

> From **childhood** you have known the sacred writings … (2 Timothy 3:15a ULT)

The abstract noun “childhood” refers to when someone was a child.

> But **godliness** with **contentment** is great **gain**. (1 Timothy 6:6 ULT)

The abstract nouns “godliness” and “contentment” refer to being godly and content. The abstract noun “gain” refers to something that benefits or helps someone.

> Today **salvation** has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. (Luke 19:9 ULT)

The abstract noun “salvation” here refers to being saved.

> The Lord does not move slowly concerning his promises, as some consider **slowness** to be (2 Peter 3:9a ULT)

The abstract noun “slowness” refers to the lack of speed with which something is done.

> He will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the **purposes** of the heart. (1 Corinthians 4:5b ULT)

The abstract noun “purposes” refers to the things that people want to do and the reasons they want to do them.

Translation Strategies

If an abstract noun would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here is another option:

(1) Reword the sentence with a phrase that expresses the meaning of the abstract noun. Instead of a noun, the new phrase will use a verb, an adverb, or an adjective to express the idea of the abstract noun.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Reword the sentence with a phrase that expresses the meaning of the abstract noun. Instead of a noun, the new phrase will use a verb, an adverb, or an adjective to express the idea of the abstract noun. Alternative translations are indented below the Scripture example.

> … from **childhood** you have known the sacred writings … (2 Timothy 3:15a ULT)
>
> > Ever since **you were a child** you have known the sacred writings.
>
> But **godliness** with **contentment** is great **gain**. (1 Timothy 6:6 ULT)
>
> > But **being godly** and **content** is very **beneficial**. But we **benefit** greatly when we **are godly** and **content**. But we **benefit** greatly when we **honor and obey God** and when we are **happy with what we have**.
>
> Today **salvation** has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. (Luke 19:9 ULT)

> > Today the people in this house **have been saved** …
> > Today God **has saved** the people in this house …

The Lord does not move slowly concerning his promises, as some consider **slowness** to be. (2 Peter 3:9a ULT)

> > The Lord does not move slowly concerning his promises, as some consider **moving slowly** to be.

He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the **purposes** of the heart. (1 Corinthians 4:5b ULT)

> > He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal **the things that people want to do and the reasons that they want to do them**.

Song of Solomon References:

1:2; 1:4; 2:4; 2:5; 2:7; 3:10; 3:11; 4:10; 7:6; 7:12; 8:6; 8:6; 8:7

Active or Passive

Some languages use both active and passive sentences. In active sentences, the subject does the action. In passive sentences, the subject is the one that receives the action. Here are some examples with their subjects bolded:

- Active: **My father** built the house in 2010.
- Passive: **The house** was built in 2010.

Translators whose languages do not use passive sentences will need to know how they can translate passive sentences that they find in the Bible. Other translators will need to decide when to use a passive sentence and when to use the active form.

Description

Some languages have both active and passive forms of sentences.

- In the active form, the subject does the action and is always mentioned.
- In the passive form, the action is done to the subject, and the one who does the action is not always mentioned.

In the examples of active and passive sentences below, we have bolded the subject.

- active: **My father** built the house in 2010.
- passive: **The house** was built by my father in 2010.
- passive: **The house** was built in 2010. (This does not tell who did the action.)

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

All languages use active forms. Some languages use passive forms, and some do not. Some languages use passive forms only for certain purposes, and the passive form is not used for the same purposes in all of the languages that use it.

Purposes for the Passive

- The speaker is talking about the person or thing the action was done to, not about the person who did the action.
- The speaker does not want to tell who did the action.
- The speaker does not know who did the action.

Translation Principles Regarding the Passive

- Translators whose language does not use passive forms will need to find another way to express the idea.
- Translators whose language has passive forms will need to understand why the passive is used in a particular sentence in the Bible and decide whether or not to use a passive form for that purpose in his translation of the sentence.

Examples From the Bible

> Then their shooters shot at your soldiers from off the wall, and some of the king's servants **were killed**, and your servant Uriah the Hittite **was killed** too. (2 Samuel 11:24 ULT)

This means that the enemy's shooters shot and killed some of the king's servants, including Uriah. The point is what happened to the king's servants and Uriah, not who shot them. The purpose of the passive form here is to keep the focus on the king's servants and Uriah.

> When the men of the city arose early in the morning, and see, the altar of Baal **was torn down**. (Judges 6:28a ULT)

The men of the town saw what had happened to the altar of Baal, but they did not know who broke it down. The purpose of the passive form here is to communicate this event from the perspective of the men of the town.

> It would be better for him if a millstone **were put** around his neck and he **were thrown** into the sea. (Luke 17:2a ULT)

This describes a situation in which a person ends up in the sea with a millstone around his neck. The purpose of the passive form here is to keep the focus on what happens to this person. Who does these things to the person is not important.

Translation Strategies

If your language would use a passive form for the same purpose as in the passage that you are translating, then use a passive form. If you decide that it is better to translate without a passive form, here are some strategies that you might consider.

(1) Use the same verb in an active sentence and tell who or what did the action. If you do this, try to keep the focus on the person receiving the action.
(2) Use the same verb in an active sentence, and do not tell who or what did the action. Instead, use a generic expression like “they” or “people” or “someone.”
(3) Use a different verb.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use the same verb in an active sentence and tell who did the action. If you do this, try to keep the focus on the person receiving the action.

> A loaf of bread **was given** him every day from the street of the bakers. (Jeremiah 37:21b ULT)
>
> > **The king’s servants gave** Jeremiah a loaf of bread every day from the street of the bakers.

(2) Use the same verb in an active sentence, and do not tell who did the action. Instead, use a generic expression like “they” or “people” or “someone.”

> It would be better for him if a millstone **were put** around his neck and he **were thrown** into the sea. (Luke 17:2a ULT)
>
> > It would be better for him if **they were to put** a millstone around his neck and **throw** him into the sea.
> > It would be better for him if **someone were to put** a

> > heavy stone around his neck and **throw** him into the sea.

(3) Use a different verb in an active sentence.

> A loaf of bread **was given** him every day from the street of the bakers. (Jeremiah 37:21 ULT)
>
> > He **received** a loaf of bread every day from the street of the bakers.

Song of Solomon References:

2:12; 3:10; 4:2; 4:4; 7:5; 8:8

Apostrophe

Description

An apostrophe is a figure of speech in which a speaker turns his attention away from his listeners and speaks to someone or something that he knows cannot hear him. He does this to tell his listeners his message or feelings about that person or thing in a very strong way.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Many languages do not use apostrophe, and readers could be confused by it. They may wonder who the speaker is talking to, or think that the speaker is crazy to talk to things or people who cannot hear.

Examples from the Bible

> Mountains of Gilboa, let there not be dew or rain on you. (2 Samuel 1:21a ULT)

King Saul was killed on Mount Gilboa, and David sang a sad song about it. By telling these mountains that he wanted them to have no dew or rain, he showed how sad he was.

> Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those sent to you. (Luke 13:34a ULT)

Jesus was expressing his feelings for the people of Jerusalem in front of his disciples and a group of Pharisees. By speaking directly to Jerusalem as though its people could hear him, Jesus showed how deeply he cared about them.

> He cried against the altar by the word of Yahweh: "**Altar**, **altar**! This is what Yahweh says, 'See, … on you they will burn human bones.'" (1 Kings 13:2 ULT)

The man of God spoke as if the altar could hear him, but he really wanted the king, who was standing there, to hear him.

Translation Strategies

If apostrophe would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. But if this way of speaking would be confusing to your people, let the speaker continue speaking to the people that are listening to him as he tells **them** his message or feelings about the people or thing that cannot hear him. See the example below.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

> He cried against the altar by the word of Yahweh: "**Altar**, **altar**! This is what Yahweh says, 'See, … on you they will burn human bones.'" (1 Kings 13:2 ULT)
>
> > He said this about the altar: "This is what Yahweh says **about this altar.** 'See, … they will burn people's bones on **it**.'"
>
> **Mountains of Gilboa**, let there not be dew or rain on **you.** (2 Samuel 1:21a ULT)
>
> > **As for these mountains of Gilboa**, let there not be dew or rain on **them**.

Song of Solomon References:

2:7; 4:16; 8:12

Assumed Knowledge and Implicit Information

Assumed knowledge is whatever a speaker assumes his audience knows before he speaks and gives them some kind of information. The speaker does not give the audience this information because he believes that they already know it.

When the speaker does give the audience information, he can do so in two ways. The speaker gives explicit information in what he states directly. Implicit Information is what the speaker does not state directly because he expects his audience to be able to learn it from other things he says.

Description

When someone speaks or writes, he has something specific that he wants people to know or do or think about. He normally states this directly. This is explicit information.

The speaker assumes that his audience already knows certain things that they will need to think about in order to understand this information. Normally he does not tell people these things, because they already know them. This is called assumed knowledge.

The speaker does not always directly state everything that he expects his audience to learn from what he says. Implicit information is information that he expects people to learn from what he says even though he does not state it directly.

Often, the audience understands this implicit information by combining what they already know (assumed knowledge) with the explicit information that the speaker tells them directly.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

All three kinds of information are part of the speaker's message. If one of these kinds of information is missing, then the audience will not understand the message. Because the target translation is in a language that is very different from the biblical languages and is made for an audience that lives in a very different time and place than the people in the Bible, many times the assumed knowledge or the implicit information is missing from the message. In other words, modern readers do not know everything that the original speakers and hearers in the Bible knew. When these things are important for understanding the message, it is helpful if you include this information in the text or in a footnote.

Examples From the Bible

> Then a scribe came to him and said, “Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.” Jesus said to him, “Foxes **have holes**, and the birds of the sky **have nests**, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.” (Matthew 8:19-20 ULT)

Jesus did not say what foxes and birds use holes and nests for, because he assumed that the scribe would have known that foxes sleep in holes in the ground and birds sleep in their nests. This is **assumed knowledge**.

Jesus did not directly say here “I am the Son of Man” but, if the scribe did not already know it, then that fact would be **implicit information** that he could learn because Jesus referred to himself that way. Also, Jesus did not state explicitly that he travelled a lot and did not have a house that he slept in every night. That is **implicit information** that the scribe could learn when Jesus said that he had nowhere to lay his head.

> Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! If the mighty deeds had been done in **Tyre and Sidon** which were done in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the **day of judgment** than for you. (Matthew 11:21-22 ULT)

Jesus assumed that the people he was speaking to knew that Tyre and Sidon were very wicked, and that the day of judgment is a time when God will judge every person. Jesus also knew that the people he was talking to believed that they were good and did not need to repent. Jesus did not need to tell them these things. This is all **assumed knowledge**.

An important piece of **implicit information** here is that the people he was speaking to would be judged more severely than the people of Tyre and Sidon would be judged **because** they did not repent.

> Why do your disciples violate the traditions of the elders? For **they do not wash their hands when they eat bread**. (Matthew 15:2 ULT)

One of the traditions of the elders was a ceremony in which people would wash their hands in order to be ritually clean before eating. People thought that in order to be righteous, they had to follow all the traditions of the elders. This was **assumed knowledge** that the Pharisees who were speaking to Jesus expected him to know. By saying this, they were accusing his disciples of not following the traditions, and thus not being righteous. This is **implicit information** that they wanted him to understand from what they said.

Translation Strategies

If readers have enough assumed knowledge to be able to understand the message, along with any important implicit information that goes with the explicit information, then it is good to leave that knowledge unstated and leave the implicit information implicit. If the readers do not understand the message because one of these is missing for them, then follow these strategies:

(1) If readers cannot understand the message because they do not have certain assumed knowledge, then provide that knowledge as explicit information.
(2) If readers cannot understand the message because they do not know certain implicit information, then state that information clearly, but try to do it in a way that does not imply that the information was new to the original audience.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If readers cannot understand the message because they do not have certain assumed knowledge, then provide that knowledge as explicit information.

> Jesus said to him, “Foxes **have holes**, and the birds of the sky **have nests**, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.” (Matthew 8:20 ULT)

The assumed knowledge was that the foxes slept in their holes and birds slept in their nests.

> > Jesus said to him, “Foxes **have holes to live in**, and the birds of the sky **have nests to live in**, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head and sleep.”
>
> It will be more tolerable for **Tyre and Sidon** at the day of judgment than for you (Matthew 11:22 ULT)

The assumed knowledge was that the people of Tyre and Sidon were very, very wicked. This can be stated explicitly.

> > At the day of judgment, it will be more tolerable for **those cities of Tyre and Sidon, whose people were very wicked**, than it will be for you. or At the day of judgment, It will be more tolerable for those **wicked cities, Tyre and Sidon,** than for you.
>
> Why do your disciples violate the traditions of the elders? For **they do not wash their hands** when they eat bread. (Matthew 15:2 ULT)

The assumed knowledge was that one of the traditions of the elders was a ceremony in which people would wash their hands in order to be ritually clean before eating, which they must do to be righteous. It was not to remove germs from their hands to avoid sickness, as a modern reader might think.

> > Why do your disciples violate the traditions of the elders? For **they do not go through the ceremonial**

> > **handwashing ritual of righteousness** when they eat bread.

(2) If readers cannot understand the message because they do not know certain implicit information, then state that information clearly, but try to do it in a way that does not imply that the information was new to the original audience.

> Then a scribe came to him and said, “Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.” Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes, and the birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.” (Matthew 8:19-20 ULT)

The implicit information is that Jesus himself is the Son of Man. Other implicit information is that if the scribe wanted to follow Jesus, then, like Jesus, he would have to live without a house.

> > Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes, and the birds of the sky have nests, but **I, the Son of Man**, have **no home to rest in. If you want to follow me, you will live as I live**.”
>
> It will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you (Matthew 11:22 ULT)

The implicit information is that God would not only judge the people; he would punish them. This can be made explicit.

> > At the day of judgment, God will **punish Tyre and Sidon**, cities whose people were very wicked, **less severely than he will punish you**.
> > or:
> > At the day of judgment, God will **punish you more severely** than Tyre and Sidon, cities whose people were very wicked.

Modern readers may not know some of the things that the people in the Bible and the people who first read it knew. This can make it hard for them to understand what a speaker or writer says, and to learn things that the speaker left implicit. Translators may need to state some things explicitly in the translation that the original speaker or writer left unstated or implicit.

Song of Solomon References:

1:3; 1:4; 1:5; 1:6; 1:6; 1:7; 1:16; 2:1; 2:2; 2:3; 2:3; 2:4; 2:7; 2:9; 3:2; 3:6; 3:8; 3:9-10; 3:10; 4:10; 4:11; 4:11; 4:15; 4:15; 5:1; 5:5; 5:6; 5:7; 5:7; 5:10; 5:13; 5:13; 5:15; 6:2; 6:2; 6:6; 6:9; 6:9; 6:12; 6:12; 6:12; 6:13; 7:1; 7:5; 7:5; 7:5; 7:6; 7:8; 7:8; 7:8; 7:9; 7:9; 8:1; 8:1; 8:2; 8:2; 8:3; 8:5; 8:6; 8:7; 8:8; 8:8; 8:10; 8:11; 8:12; 8:14

Background Information

Description

When people tell a story, they normally tell the events in the order that they happened. This sequence of events makes up the storyline. The storyline is full of action verbs that move the story along in time. But sometimes a writer may take a break from the storyline and give some information to help his listeners understand the story better. This type of information is called background information. The background information might be about things that happened before the events he has already told about, or it might explain something in the story, or it might be about something that would happen much later in the story.

Example — The bolded phrases in the story below are all background information.

Peter and John went on a hunting trip because **their village was going to have a feast the next day**. **Peter was the best hunter in the village.He once killed three wild pigs in one day!** They walked for hours through low bushes until they heard a wild pig. The pig ran, but they managed to shoot the pig and kill it. Then they tied up its legs with some rope **they had brought with them** and carried it home on a pole. When they brought it to the village, Peter's cousin saw the pig and realized that it was his own pig. Peter had mistakenly killed his cousin's pig.

Background information often tells about something that had happened earlier or something that would happen much later. Examples of these are: "their village was going to have a feast the next day," "He once killed three wild pigs in one day," and "that they had brought with them."

Often background information uses "be" verbs like "was" and "were," rather than action verbs. Examples of these are "their village was going to have a feast the next day," and "Peter **was** the best hunter in the village."

Background information can also be marked with words that tell the reader that this information is not part of the event line of the story. In this story, some of these words are "because," "once," and "had."

A writer may use background information:

- to help their listeners be interested in the story
- to help their listeners understand something in the story
- to help the listeners understand why something is important in the story
- to tell the setting of a story

> - Setting includes:
> - where the story takes place
> - when the story takes place
> - who is present when the story begins
> - what is happening when the story begins

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Languages have different ways of marking background information and storyline information.
- You (the translator) need to know the order of the events in the Bible, which information is background information, and which is storyline information.
- You will need to translate the story in a way that marks the background information in a way that your own readers will understand the order of events, which information is background information, and which is storyline information.

Examples From the Bible

> Hagar gave birth to Abram's son, and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. Abram **was 86 years old** when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram. (Genesis 16:15-16 ULT)

The first sentence tells about two events. Hagar gave birth and Abraham named his son. The second sentence is background information about how old Abram was when those things happened.

> And Jesus himself **was beginning about 30 years old**. He **was the son (as it was assumed)** of Joseph, of Heli, (Luke 3:23 ULT)

The verses before this tell about when Jesus was baptized. This sentence introduces a section of background information about Jesus' age and ancestors (Luke 3:23-38). The story resumes in chapter 4 where it tells about Jesus going to the wilderness.

> Then **it happened on a Sabbath** that he **was going through the grain fields**, and his disciples **were picking and eating the heads of grain**, **rubbing them in their hands**. But some of the Pharisees said … (Luke 6:1-2a ULT)

These verses give the setting of the story. The events took place in a grain field on the Sabbath day. Jesus, his disciples, and some Pharisees were there, and Jesus' disciples were picking heads of grain and eating them. The main action in the story starts with the phrase, "But some of the Pharisees said …."

Translation Strategies

To keep translations clear and natural you will need to study how people tell stories in your language. Observe how your language marks background information. You may need to write down some stories in order to study this. Observe what kinds of verbs your language uses for background information and what kinds of words or other markers signal that something is background information. Do these same things when you translate, so that your translation is clear and natural and people can understand it easily.

(1) Use your language's way of showing that certain information is background information.
(2) Reorder the information so that earlier events are mentioned first. (This is not always possible when the background information is very long.)

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use your language's way of showing that certain information is background information. The examples below explain how this was done in the ULT English translations.

> **And** Jesus himself **was** beginning about 30 years old. He **was** the son **(as it was assumed)** of Joseph, of Heli. (Luke 3:23 ULT)

As here, English sometimes uses the word “and” to show that there is some kind of change in the story. The verb “was” shows that it is background information. A set of parentheses is also a way to mark background information. Here, “as it was assumed” gives background information to the phrase, “He was the son.” People assumed that Joseph was Jesus‘ father, although his true father was God.

> Therefore, also exhorting many other things, he preached the good news to the people. But Herod the tetrarch, having been rebuked by him concerning Herodias, the wife of his brother, and **concerning all the evil things that Herod had done**, added even this to them all: He locked John up in prison. (Luke 3:18-20 ULT)

The bolded phrase happened before John rebuked Herod. In English, the helping verb “had” in “had done” shows that Herod did those things before John rebuked him.

(2) Reorder the information so that earlier events are mentioned first.

> Hagar gave birth to Abram’s son, and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. **Abram was 86 years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram**. (Genesis 16:16 ULT)
>
> > “**When Abram was 86 years old**, Hagar gave birth to his son, and Abram named his son Ishmael.”

> Therefore, also exhorting many other things, he preached the good news to the people. But Herod the tetrarch, having been rebuked by him concerning Herodias, the wife of his brother, and **concerning all the evil things that Herod had done**, added even this to them all: He locked John up in prison. (Luke 3:18-20 ULT)

The translation below reorders John's rebuke and Herod's actions.

> > "Now Herod the tetrarch married his brother's wife, Herodias, and **he did many other evil things**, so John rebuked him. But then Herod did another very evil thing. He had John locked up in prison."

Song of Solomon References:

3:9-10

Biblical Imagery — Extended Metaphors

An **extended metaphor** is an explicit metaphor that uses multiple images and multiple ideas at the same time. This is in contrast to a simple metaphor, which uses only a single Image and a single Idea. The difference between an extended metaphor and a complex metaphor is that an extended metaphor is explicitly stated by a writer/speaker, but a complex metaphor is not.

Explanation of an Extended Metaphor

When using a metaphor, a writer/speaker uses a physical Image in order to express an abstract Idea about some immediate Topic, with at least one point of comparison between the Topic and the Image. In an extended metaphor, the writer/speaker explicitly states the Topic, and then describes multiple images and communicates multiple ideas.

In Isaiah 5:1b-7, the prophet Isaiah uses a vineyard (the **Image**) to express God's disappointment (the **Idea**) with the nation of Israel (the **Topic**) for their unfaithfulness to God and his covenant with them as his people. Farmers care for their gardens, and a farmer would feel disappointed if his vineyard produced bad fruit. If a vineyard produced only bad fruit for a long enough time, the farmer would eventually stop caring for it. We call this an extended metaphor because the prophet describes in detail multiple images relating to a vineyard as well as multiple aspects of God's disappointment.

> 1b My well beloved had a **vineyard** on a very fertile hill. 2 He **spaded it,removed the stones**, and **planted it** with an excellent kind of vine. He **built a tower** in the middle of it, and also **built a winepress**. **He waited for it to produce grapes, but it produced wild grapes**. 3 So now, inhabitant of Jerusalem and man of Judah; judge between me and my vineyard. 4 What more could have been done for my vineyard, that I have not done for it? **When I looked for it to produce grapes, why did it produce wild grapes**? 5 Now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard; I will remove the hedge; I will turn it into a pasture; I will break down its wall, and it will be trampled down. 6 I will lay it waste, and it will not be pruned nor hoed. Instead, briers and thorns will spring up. I

> will also command the clouds not to rain on it. 7 For **the vineyard of Yahweh of hosts is the house of Israel**, and the man of Judah his pleasant planting; **he waited for justice, but instead, there was killing**; **for righteousness, but, instead, a shout for help**. (Isa 5:1b-7 ULT)

Other Examples From the Bible

In Psalm 23, the psalmist uses the physical **Image** of a shepherd to describe the way that God (the **Topic**) shows great concern and care (the **Idea**) for his people. The psalmist describes multiple aspects of what shepherds do for sheep (leads them to pasture and to water, protects them, etc.). The psalmist also describes multiple aspects of how God takes care of him (gives him life, righteousness, comfort, etc.). Shepherds give sheep what they need, take them to safe places, rescue them, guide them, and protect them. What God does for his people is like these actions.

> 1 Yahweh is my shepherd; I will lack nothing.
> 2 He **makes me** to lie down in green pastures;
> he **leads me** beside tranquil water.
> 3 He **brings back** my life;
> he **guides me** along right paths for his name's sake.
> 4 Even though I walk through a valley of darkest shadow,
> I will not fear harm since you are with me;
> your rod and your staff comfort me. (Psalm 23:1-4 ULT)

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- People may not realize that the images represent other things.
- People may not be familiar with the things that are used as images.
- Extended metaphors are often so profound that it would be impossible for a translator to show all of the meaning generated by the metaphor.

Translation Principles

- Make the meaning of the extended metaphor as clear to the target audience as it was to the original audience.

- Do not make the meaning more clear to the target audience than it was to the original audience.
- When someone uses an extended metaphor, the images are an important part of what he is trying to say.
- If the target audience is not familiar with some of the images, you will need to find some way of helping them understand the images so that they can understand the whole extended metaphor.

Translation Strategies

Consider using the same extended metaphor if your readers will understand it in the same way the original readers would have understood it. If not, here are some other strategies:

(1) If the target audience would think that the images should be understood literally, translate the metaphor as a simile by using words such as “like” or “as.” It may be enough to to do this in just the first sentence or two.
(2) If the target audience would not know the image, find a way of translating it so they can understand what the image is.
(3) If the target audience still would not understand, then state it clearly.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the target audience would think that the images should be understood literally, translate the metaphor as a simile by using words such as “like” or “as.” It may be enough to to do this in just the first sentence or two. See Psalm 23:1-2 as an example:

> Yahweh is **my shepherd**; I will lack nothing.
> He makes **me** to lie down in green pastures;
> **he leads me** beside tranquil water. (ULT)

Can be translated as:

> “Yahweh is **like** a shepherd to me, so I will lack nothing.
> **Like** a shepherd who makes his sheep lie down in green pastures and leads them by peaceful waters, Yahweh helps me to rest peacefully.”

(2) If the target audience would not know the image, find a way of translating it so they can understand what the image is.

> My well beloved had a **vineyard** on a very fertile hill.
> He **spaded** it, removed the stones, and planted it with **an excellent kind of vine**.
> He built **a tower** in the middle of it, and also built a **winepress**.
> He waited for it to produce grapes, but it only produced **wild grapes.**
> (Isaiah 5:1b-2 ULT)

May be translated as:

> My well beloved had a **grapevine garden** on a very fertile hill.
> He **dug up the ground** and removed the stones, and planted it with **the best grapevines**.
> He built a **watchtower** in the middle of it, and also built **a tank where he could crush the juice out of the grapes**.
> He waited for it to produce grapes, but it produced **wild grapes that were not good for making wine**.

(3) If the target audience still would not understand, then state it clearly.

> Yahweh is **my shepherd**; I will lack nothing. (Psalm 23:1 ULT)
>
> > "Yahweh **cares for me** like a shepherd that cares for his sheep, so I will lack nothing."
>
> For the vineyard of Yahweh of hosts **is** the house of Israel,
> and the men of Judah his pleasant planting;

> he waited for justice, but instead, there was killing;
> for righteousness, but, instead, a shout for help. (Isaiah 5:7 ULT)

Can be translated as:

> > For the vineyard of Yahweh of hosts **represents** the house of Israel,
> > and the men of Judah **are like** his pleasant planting;
> > he waited for justice, but instead, there was killing;
> > for righteousness, but, instead, a cry for help.

or as:

> > **So asa farmer stops caringforagrapevinegarden that produces bad fruit**,
> > **Yahweh will stop protecting** Israel and Judah,
> > **because they do not do what is right.**
> > He waited for justice, but instead, there was killing;
> > for righteousness, but, instead, a cry for help.

Song of Solomon References:

4:intro; 4:12; 4:13-14; 4:13; 4:15; 4:16; 5:1; 7:2; 7:2; 8:10

Biblical Money

Description

In early Old Testament times, people weighed their metals, such as silver and gold, and would pay a certain weight of that metal in order to buy things. Later, people started to make coins that each contained a standard amount of a certain metal. The daric is one such coin. In New Testament times, people used silver and copper coins.

The two tables below show some of the most well-known units of money found in the Old Testament (OT) and New Testament (NT). The table for Old Testament units shows what kind of metal was used and how much it weighed. The table for New Testament units shows what kind of metal was used and how much it was worth in terms of a day's wage.

Unit in OT	Metal	Weight
daric	gold coin	8.4 grams
shekel	various metals	11 grams
talent	various metals	33 kilograms

Unit in NT	Metal	Day's Wage
denarius/denarii	silver coin	1 day
drachma	silver coin	1 day
mite	copper coin	1/64 day
shekel	silver coin	4 days
talent	silver	6,000 days

Translation Principle

Do not use modern money values since these change from year to year. Using them will cause the Bible translation to become outdated and inaccurate.

Translation Strategies

The value of most money in the Old Testament was based on its weight. So when translating these weights in the Old Testament, see **Biblical Weight**. The strategies below are for translating the value of money in the New Testament.

(1) Use the Bible term and spell it in a way that is similar to the way it sounds. (See Copy or Borrow Words.)
(2) Describe the value of the money in terms of what kind of metal it was made of and how many coins were used.
(3) Describe the value of the money in terms of what people in Bible times could earn in one day of work.
(4) Use the biblical term and give the equivalent amount in the text or a footnote.
(5) Use the biblical term and explain it in a footnote.

Translation Strategies Applied

The translations strategies are all applied to Luke 7:41 below.

> The one owed 500 denarii, and the other, 50. (Luke 7:41b ULT)

1. Use the Bible term and spell it in a way that is similar to the way it sounds. (See Copy or Borrow Words.)

> > “The one owed **500 denali**, and the other, **50**.”

1. Describe the value of the money in terms of what kind of metal it was made of and how many pieces or coins were used.

> > "The one owed **500 silver coins**, and the other, **50**."

(3) Describe the value of the money in terms of what people in Bible times could earn in one day of work.

> > "The one owed **500 days' wages**, and the other, **50**."

(4) Use the Bible term and give the equivalent amount in the text or a footnote.

> > "The one owed **500 denarii** 1, and the other owed **50 denarii**. 2"

The footnotes would look like:

> > [1] 500 days' wages [2] 50 days' wages

(5) Use the Bible term and explain it in a footnote.

> > “The one owed **500 denarii**,1 and the other, **50**.”
> > (Luke 7:41 ULT)

> > [1] A denarius was the amount of silver that people could earn in one day of work.

Song of Solomon References:

8:11

Collective Nouns

Description

A collective noun is a singular noun that refers to a group of something. Examples: a **family, clan,** or **tribe** is a group of people who are related to each other; a **flock** is a group of birds or sheep; a **fleet** is a group of ships; and an **army** is a group of soldiers.

Many collective nouns are used exclusively as a singular replacement for a group as in the examples above. Frequently in the Bible the name of an ancestor is used, through a process of metonymy, as a collective noun referencing the group of his descendants. In the Bible, sometimes the singular noun will take a singular verb form, other times it will take a plural verb form. This may depend on how the author is thinking about the group, or whether the action is being done as a group or as individuals.

Reason This is a Translation Issue

There are several issues that require care when translating collective nouns. Further care is needed because the language you are translating into may not use collective nouns in the same way as the language you are translating from. Issues include:

1. The source language may have a collective noun for a group that the target language does not and vice-versa. You may have to translate a collective noun with a plural noun in your language, or you may need to translate a plural noun with a collective noun in your language.
2. Subject-verb agreement. Different languages or dialects may have different rules about using singular or plural verbs with collective nouns. Examples (from Wikipedia):
    - a singular noun with a singular verb: The team *is* in the dressing room.
    - a singular noun with a plural verb which is correct in British, but not American, English: The team *are* fighting among themselves. The team *have* finished the project.
3. Pronoun agreement. Similar to the previous, care needs to be taken to use the correct pronoun plurality and possibly gender or noun class to agree with the number/gender/class of the noun used. See the biblical examples below.
4. Clarity of referent. Especially if there is a mismatch in your translation between the verb and noun or pronoun concerning any of the factors above, readers may be confused about who or what is being referenced.

Examples from the Bible

> And Joab and all the **army** which was with him arrived (2 Samuel 3:23a ULT)

The word in bold is written in singular form in both Hebrew and English, but it refers to a group of warriors that fight together.

> and though the **flock** is cut off from the fold and there are no cattle in the stalls. (Habakkuk 3:17b ULT)

The word in bold is singular and refers to a group of sheep.

> And he went out again beside the sea, and all the **crowd** was coming to him, and he was teaching **them**. (Mark 2:13 ULT)

Note in this example that the noun is singular but the pronoun is plural. This may or may not be allowed or natural in your language.

> Do not let **your heart** be troubled. **You** believe in God; believe also in me. (John 14:1 ULT)

In this verse, the words translated “your” and “you” are plural, referring to many people. The word “heart” is singular in form, but it refers to all of their hearts as a group.

> And he shall take the **hair** of the head of his separation. And he shall put **it** on the fire that is under the sacrifice of the peace offerings. (Num 6:18b ULT)

The word **hair** is singular, but it refers to many hairs, not just one.

> And Pharaoh said, “Who is Yahweh that I should listen to his voice to let **Israel** go? I do not know Yahweh; and moreover, I will not let **Israel** go.” (Exodus 5:2 ULT)

Here, “Israel” is singular, but means “the Israelites” by metonymy.

Translation Strategies

If your language has a collective (singular) noun that refers to the same group as referenced by the collective noun in the source text, then translate the word using that term. If not, here are some strategies to consider:

(1) Translate the collective noun with a plural noun.
(2) Add a plural word to the collective noun so that you can use a plural verb and pronouns.
(3) Use a phrase to describe the group that the collective noun references. A useful strategy here can be to use a general collective noun that refers to a group of people or things.
(4) If your language uses a collective noun for something that is a plural noun in the source language, you can translate the plural noun as a collective noun and, if necessary, change the form of the verb and any pronouns so that they agree with the singular noun.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Translate the collective noun with a plural noun.

> And Pharaoh said, “Who is Yahweh that I should listen to his voice to let **Israel** go? I do not know Yahweh; and moreover, I will not let **Israel** go.” (Exodus 5:2 ULT)

And Pharaoh said, “Who is Yahweh that I should listen to his voice to let **the Israelites** go? I do not know Yahweh; and moreover, I will not let **the Israelites** go.”

> And he shall take the **hair** of the head of his separation. And he shall put **it** on the fire that is under the sacrifice of the peace offerings. (Num 6:18b ULT)

And he shall take the **hairs** of the head of his separation. And he shall put **them** on the fire that is under the sacrifice of the peace offerings.

(2) Add a plural word to the collective noun so that you can use a plural verb and pronouns.

> And Joab and all the **army** which was with him arrived (2 Samuel 3:23a ULT)

And Joab and all the **army men who were** with him arrived

> And he went out again beside the sea, and all the **crowd** was coming to him, and he was teaching **them**. (Mark 2:13 ULT)

And he went out again beside the sea, and all the **people of the crowd were** coming to him, and he was teaching **them**.

(3) Use a phrase to describe the group that the collective noun references. A useful strategy here can be to use a general collective noun that refers to a group of people or things.

> and though the **flock** is cut off from the fold and there are no cattle in the stalls. (Habakkuk 3:17b ULT)

and though the **group of sheep** is cut off from the fold and there are no cattle in the stalls.

> And Pharaoh said, “Who is Yahweh that I should listen to his voice to let **Israel** go? I do not know Yahweh; and moreover, I will not let **Israel** go.” (Exodus 5:2 ULT)

And Pharaoh said, “Who is Yahweh that I should listen to his voice to let **the people of Israel** go? I do not know Yahweh; and moreover, I will not let **the people of Israel** go.”

(4) If your language uses a collective noun for something that is a plural noun in the source language, you can translate the plural noun as a collective noun and, if necessary, change the form of the verb and any pronouns so that they agree with the singular noun.

> Now this John had his clothing from the **hairs** of a camel and a leather belt around his waist (Matthew 3:4a ULT)

Now this John had his clothing from the **hair** of a camel and a leather belt around his waist

> You shall not make for yourself a carved figure nor any likeness that {is} in **the heavens** above, or that {is} in the earth beneath, or that {is} in **the waters** under the earth. (Deuteronomy 5:8 ULT)

You shall not make for yourself a carved figure nor any likeness that is in **heaven** above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in **the water** under the earth.

Song of Solomon References:

2:13

Connect — Contrast Relationship

Logical Relationships

Some connectors establish logical relationships between two phrases, clauses, sentences, or chunks of text.

Contrast Relationship

Description

A contrast relationship is a logical relationship in which one event or item is in contrast or opposition to another.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

In Scripture, many events did not happen as the people involved intended or expected them to happen. Sometimes people acted in ways that were not expected, whether good or bad. Often it was God at work, changing the events. These events were often pivotal. It is important that translators understand and communicate these contrasts. In English, contrast relationships are often indicated by the words “but,” “although,” “even though,” “though,” “yet,” or “however.”

Examples From OBS and the Bible

> You tried to do evil when you sold me as a slave, **but** God used the evil for good! (Story 8 Frame 12 OBS)

Joseph’s brothers’ evil plan to sell Joseph is contrasted with God’s good plan to save many people. The word “but” marks the contrast.

> For who is greater, the one who reclines at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? **Yet** I am among you as one who serves. (Luke 22:27 ULT)

Jesus contrasts the proud way that human leaders behave with the humble way that he behaves. The contrast is marked by the word “yet.”

> The hill country will also be yours. **Though** it is a forest, you will clear it and it will become yours to its farthest borders, for you will drive out the Canaanites, even **though** they have chariots of iron, and even **though** they are strong. (Joshua 17:18 ULT)

It was unexpected that the Israelites, who had been slaves in Egypt, would be able to conquer and lay claim to the promised land.

Translation Strategies

If your language uses contrast relationships in the same way as in the text, then use them as they are.

(1) If the contrast relationship between the clauses is not clear, then use a connecting word or phrase that is more specific or more clear.
(2) If it is more clear in your language to mark the other clause of the contrast relationship, then use a connecting word on the other clause.
(3) If your language shows a contrast relationship in a different way, then use that way.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the contrast relationship between the clauses is not clear, then use a connecting word or phrase that is more specific or more clear.

> For who is greater, the one who reclines at table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? **Yet** I am among you as one who serves. (Luke 22:27 ULT)
>
> > For who is greater, the one who reclines at table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at

> > table? **Unlike that person**, I am among you as one who serves.

(2) If it is more clear in your language to mark the other clause of the contrast relationship, then use a connecting word on the other clause.

> The hill country will also be yours. **Though** it is a forest, you will clear it and it will become yours to its farthest borders, for you will drive out the Canaanites, even **though** they have chariots of iron, and even **though** they are strong. (Joshua 17:18 ULT)
>
> > The hill country will also be yours. It is a forest, **but** you will clear it and it will become yours to its farthest borders. They have chariots of iron, and they are strong, **but** you will drive out the Canaanites.

(3) If your language shows a contrast relationship in a different way, then use that way.

> {David} found favor in the sight of God, and he asked if he might find a dwelling place for the house of Jacob. **However**, Solomon built the house for him. **But** the Most High does not live in houses made with hands. (Acts 7:46-48a ULT)
>
> > [David] found favor in the sight of God, and he asked if he might find a dwelling place for the house of Jacob. **But** it was, Solomon, **not David**, who built the house for God. **Even though Solomon built him a**

> **house**, the Most High does not live in houses made with hands.

Song of Solomon References:

1:5

Connect — Factual Conditions

Conditional Relationships

Conditional connectors connect two clauses to indicate that one of them will happen when the other one happens. In English, the most common way to connect conditional clauses is with the words, “if … then.” Often, however, the word “then” is not stated.

Factual Conditions

Description

A Factual Condition is a condition that sounds hypothetical but is already certain or true in the speaker’s mind. In English, a sentence containing a Factual Condition can use the words “even though,” “since,” or “this being the case” to indicate that it is a factual condition and not a hypothetical condition.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not state something as a condition if it is certain or true. Translators from these languages may misunderstand the original languages and think that the condition is uncertain. This would lead to mistakes in their translations. Even if the translators understand that the condition is certain or true, the readers may misunderstand it. In this case, it would be best to translate it as a statement of fact rather than as a conditional statement.

Examples From OBS and the Bible

> “**If** Yahweh is God, worship him!” (Story 19 Frame 6 OBS)

> Elijah came near to all the people and said, “How long will you keep changing your mind? **If Yahweh is God**, follow him. But if Baal is God, then follow him.” Yet the people did not answer him a word. (1 Kings 18:21 ULT)

This sentence has the same construction as a hypothetical condition. The condition is "if Yahweh is God." If that is true, then the Israelites should worship Yahweh. But the prophet Elijah does not question whether or not Yahweh is God. In fact, he is so certain that Yahweh is God that later in the passage he pours water all over his sacrifice. He is confident that God is real and that he will burn even an offering that is completely wet. Over and over again, the prophets taught that Yahweh is God, so the people should worship him. The people did not worship Yahweh, however, even though He is God. By putting the statement or instruction into the form of a Factual Condition, Elijah is trying to get the Israelites to understand more clearly what they should do.

> "A son honors his father, and a servant honors his master. **If** I, then, am a father, where is my honor? **If** I am a master, where is the reverence for me?" says Yahweh of hosts to you priests, who despise my name. (Malachi 1:6 ULT)

Yahweh has said that he is a father and a master to Israel, so even though this sounds like a hypothetical condition because it begins with "if," it is not hypothetical. This verse begins with the proverb that a son honors his father. Everyone knows that is right. But the Israelites are not honoring Yahweh. The other proverb in the verse says that a servant honors his master. Everyone knows that is right. But the Israelites are not honoring Yahweh, so it seems that he is not their master. But Yahweh is the master. Yahweh uses the form of a hypothetical condition to demonstrate that the Israelites are wrong. The second part of the condition that should occur naturally is not happening, even though the conditional statement is true.

Translation Strategies

If using the form of a hypothetical condition is confusing or would make the reader think that the speaker doubts what he is saying in the first part of the sentence, then use a statement instead. Words such as "since" or "you know that …" or "it is true that …" can be helpful to make the meaning clear.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

> "**If** Yahweh is God, worship him!" (Story 19 Frame 6 OBS)

> > "**It is true that** Yahweh is God, so worship him!"

> "A son honors his father, and a servant honors his master. **If** I, then, am a father, where is my honor? **If** I am a master, where is the reverence for me?" says Yahweh of hosts to you priests, who despise my name. (Malachi 1:6 ULT)

> > "A son honors his father, and a servant honors his master. **Since** I, then, am a father, where is my honor? **Since** I am a master, where is the reverence for me?"

Song of Solomon References:

8:7

Connect — Hypothetical Conditions

Conditional Relationships

Conditional connectors connect two clauses to indicate that one of them will happen when the other one happens. In English, the most common way to connect conditional clauses is with the words “if … then.” Often, however, the word “then” is not stated.

Hypothetical Condition

Description

A Hypothetical Condition is a condition in which the second event (the “then” clause) will only take place if the first event (the “if” clause) takes place or is fulfilled in some way. Sometimes what takes place is dependent on the actions of other people.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

It is important that translators understand whether or not something is a Hypothetical Condition so that they translate it in the correct way. For example, some of God’s promises to Israel were conditional, based on whether or not Israel obeyed God. However, many of God’s promises to Israel were not conditional; God would keep these promises whether or not the Israelites obeyed. It is important that you (the translator) know the difference between these two types of promises and communicate each one accurately in your own language. Also, sometimes conditions are stated in an order different than the order in which they would happen. If the target language would state the clauses in a different order, then you will need to make that adjustment.

Examples From OBS and the Bible

> God promised to bless the people and protect them, **if** they obeyed these laws. But he said he would punish them **if** they did not obey them (Story 13 Frame 7 OBS)

There are two hypothetical conditions in this frame. In both of these conditions, the first event (the “if clause”) is stated after the “then” clause. If this is unnatural or confusing, the clauses can be restated in the more natural order. The first hypothetical condition is: if the Israelites obeyed God, then God would bless and protect them. The second hypothetical condition is: if the Israelites did not obey God, then God would punish them.

> If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? (Genesis 4:7a ULT)

If Cain does what is right, then he will be accepted. The only way for Cain to be accepted is by doing what is right.

> … **if** this plan or this work is of men, it will be overthrown. But **if** it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. (Acts 5:38b-39aULT)

There are two hypothetical conditions here: (1) If it is true that this plan is of men, then it will be overthrown; (2) If it is true that this plan is of God, then it cannot be overthrown.

Translation Strategies

(1) If the order of clauses makes the hypothetical condition confusing, then change the order of the clauses.

(2) If it is not clear where the second event is, mark that part with a word like “then.”

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the order of clauses makes the hypothetical condition confusing, then change the order of the clauses.

> God promised to bless the people and protect them **if** they obeyed these laws. But he said he would punish them **if** they did not obey them. (Story 13 Frame 7 OBS)

> > If the people obeyed these laws, God promised he would bless them and protect them. But **if** they did not obey these laws, God said that he would punish them.

(2) If it is not clear where the second event is, mark that part with a word like “then.”

> God promised to bless the people and protect them, **if** they obeyed these laws. But he said he would punish them **if** they did not obey them. (Story 13 Frame 7 OBS)

> > If the people obeyed these laws, **then** God promised he would bless them and protect them. But **if** they did not obey these laws, **then** God said that he would punish them.

> … **if** this plan or this work is of men, it will be overthrown. But **if** it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them; (Acts 5:38b-39a ULT)

> > … **if** this plan or this work is of men, **then** it will be overthrown. But **if** it is of God, **then** you will not be able to overthrow them;

Song of Solomon References:

1:8; 8:1-2

Connect — Reason-and-Result Relationship

Logical Relationships

Some connectors establish logical relationships between two phrases, clauses, sentences, or chunks of text.

Reason-and-Result Relationships

Description

A reason-and-result relationship is a logical relationship in which one event is the **reason** or cause for another event. The second event, then, is the **result** of the first event.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

A reason-and-result relationship can look forward — "I did Y because I wanted X to happen." But usually it is looking backward — "X happened, and so I did Y." Also, it is possible to state the reason either before or after the result. Many languages have a preferred order for the reason and the result, and it will be confusing for the reader if they are in the opposite order. Common words used to indicate a reason-and-result relationship in English are "because," "so," "therefore," and "for." Some of these words can also be used to indicate a goal relationship, so translators need to be aware of the difference between a goal relationship and a reason-and-result relationship. It is necessary for translators to understand how the two events are connected, and then communicate them clearly in their language.

If the reason and result are stated in different verses, it is still possible to put them in a different order. If you change the order of the verses, then put the verse numbers together at the beginning of the group of verses that were rearranged like this: 1-2. This is called a **Verse Bridge** 🔗.

Examples From OBS and the Bible

> The Jews were amazed, **because** Saul had tried to kill believers, and now he believed in Jesus! (Story 46 Frame 6 OBS)

The **reason** is the change in Saul — that he had tried to kill people who believed in Jesus, and now he himself believed in Jesus. The **result** is that the Jews were amazed. “Because” connects the two ideas and indicates that what follows it is a reason.

> Behold, a great storm arose on the sea, **so that** the boat was covered with the waves. (Matthew 8:24a ULT)

The **reason** is the great storm, and the **result** is that the boat was covered with the waves. The two events are connected by “so that.” Notice that the term “so that” often indicates a goal relationship, but here the relationship is reason-and-result. This is because the sea cannot think and therefore does not have a goal.

> God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, **because** in it he rested from all his work which he had done in his creation. (Genesis 2:3 ULT)

The **result** is that God blessed and sanctified the seventh day. The **reason** is because he rested on the seventh day from his work.

> “Blessed are the poor, **for** yours is the kingdom of God.” (Luke 6:20b ULT)

The **result** is that the poor are blessed. The **reason** is that the kingdom of God is theirs.

> But he raised up in their place their sons that Joshua circumcised, being uncircumcised, **because** they had not been circumcised on the way. (Joshua 5:7 ULT)

The **result** is that Joshua circumcised the boys and men who had been born in the wilderness. The **reason** was that they had not been circumcised while they were journeying.

Translation Strategies

If your language uses reason-and-result relationships in the same way as in the text, then use them as they are.

(1) If the order of the clauses is confusing for the reader, then change the order.

(2) If the relationship between the clauses is not clear, then use a more clear connecting word.

(3) If it is more clear to put a connecting word in the clause that does not have one, then do so.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

> God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, **because** in it he rested from all his work which he had done in his creation. (Genesis 2:3 ULT)

(1) God rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done in his creation. **That is why** he blessed the seventh day and sanctified it.

> Blessed are the poor, **for** yours is the kingdom of God. (Luke 6:20 ULT)

(1) The kingdom of God belongs to you who are poor. **Therefore**, the poor are blessed.

(2) Blessed are the poor, **because** yours is the kingdom of God.

(3) **The reason that** the poor are blessed **is because** yours is the kingdom of God.

> Behold, a great storm arose on the sea, **so that** the boat was covered with the waves. (Matthew 8:24a ULT)

(1) Behold, the boat was covered with the waves **because** a great storm arose on the sea.

(2) Behold, a great storm arose on the sea, **with the result that** the boat was covered with the waves.

(3) Behold, **because** a great storm arose on the sea, the boat was covered with the waves.

> **Since** he was not able to find out anything for certain because of the noise, he ordered that he be brought into the fortress. (Acts 21:34b ULT)

(1) The captain ordered that Paul be brought into the fortress, **because** he could not tell anything because of all the noise.

(2) **Because** the captain could not tell anything because of all the noise, he ordered that Paul be brought into the fortress.

(3) The captain could not tell anything because of all the noise, **so** he ordered that Paul be brought into the fortress.

Song of Solomon References:

1:3; 1:6; 1:6; 2:5; 2:11; 8:1; 8:10

Connecting Words and Phrases

Description

As humans, we write our thoughts in phrases and sentences. We usually want to communicate a series of thoughts that are connected to each other in different ways. **Connecting words and phrases** show how these thoughts are related to each other. For example, we can show how the following thoughts are related by using the Connecting Words in bold type:

- It was raining, **so** I opened my umbrella.
- It was raining, **but** I did not have an umbrella. **So** I got very wet.

Connecting words or phrases can connect phrases or clauses within a sentence. They can connect sentences to each other. They can also connect entire chunks to one another in order to show how the chunk before relates to the chunk after the connecting word. Very often, the connecting words that connect entire chunks to one another are either conjunctions or adverbs.

> It was raining, but I did not have an umbrella, so I got very wet.
>
> **Now** I must change my clothes. Then I will drink a cup of hot tea and warm myself by the fire.

In the above example, the word **now** connects the two short chunks of text, showing the relationship between them. The speaker must change his clothes, drink hot tea, and warm himself because of something that happened earlier (that is, he got wet in the rain).

Sometimes people might not use a connecting word because they expect the context to help the readers understand the relationship between the thoughts. Some languages do not use connecting words as much as other languages do. They might say:

- It was raining. I did not have an umbrella. I got very wet.

You (the translator) will need to use the method that is most natural and clear in the target language. But in general, using connecting words whenever possible helps the reader to understand the ideas in the Bible most clearly.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- You need to understand the relationship between paragraphs, between sentences, and between parts of sentences in the Bible, and how connecting words and phrases can help you to understand the relationship between the thoughts that they are connecting.
- Each language has its own ways of showing how thoughts are related.
- You need to know how to help readers understand the relationship between the thoughts in a way that is natural in your language.

Translation Principles

- You need to translate in a way that readers can understand the same relationship between thoughts that the original readers would have understood.
- Whether or not a connecting word is used is not as important as readers being able to understand the relationship between the ideas.

The Different Types of Connections

Listed below are different types of connections between ideas or events. These different types of connections can be indicated by using different connecting words. When we write or translate something, it is important to use the right connecting word so that these connections are clear for the reader. If you would like additional information, simply click the colored, hyperlinked word to be directed to a page containing definitions and examples for each type of connection.

- **Sequential Clause** — a time relationship between two events in which one happens and then the other happens.
- **Simultaneous Clause** — a time relationship between two or more events that occur at the same time.
- **Background Clause** — a time relationship in which the first clause describes a long event that is happening at the time when the beginning of the second event happens, which is described in the second clause.
- **Exceptional Relationship** — one clause describes a group of people or items, and the other clause excludes one or more items or people from the group.
- Hypothetical Condition — the second event will only take place if the first one takes place. Sometimes what takes place is dependent on the actions of other people.
- Factual Condition — a connection that sounds hypothetical but is already certain or true, so that the condition is guaranteed to happen.
- **Contrary-to-Fact Condition** — a connection that sounds hypothetical but is already certain that it is not true. See also: **Hypothetical Statements**.

- Goal Relationship — a logical relationship in which the second event is the purpose or goal of the first.
- Reason and Result Relationship — a logical relationship in which one event is the reason for the other event, the result.
- Contrast Relationship — one item is being described as different or in opposition to another.

Examples from the Bible

> I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood. I did not go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me. **Instead**, I went to Arabia and then returned to Damascus. **Then** after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and I stayed with him 15 days. (Galatians 1:16b-18 ULT)

The word “instead” introduces something that contrasts with what was said before. The contrast here is between what Paul did not do and what he did do. The word “then” introduces a sequence of events. It introduces something that Paul did after he returned to Damascus.

> **Therefore,** whoever breaks the least one of these commandments **and** teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. **But** whoever keeps them and teaches them, that one will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:19 ULT)

The word “therefore” links this section with the section before it, signaling that the section that came before gave the reason for this section. “Therefore” usually links sections larger than one sentence. The word “and” links only two actions within the same sentence, that of breaking commandments and teaching others. In this verse the word “but” contrasts what one group of people will be called in God’s kingdom with what another group of people will be called.

> We place nothing as a stumbling block in front of anyone, **so that** our ministry might not be discredited. **Instead**, we commend ourselves in everything as God's servants. (2 Corinthians 6:3-4 ULT)

Here the words "so that" connect what follows as the reason for what came before; the reason that Paul does not place stumbling blocks is that he does not want his ministry brought into disrepute. "Instead" contrasts what Paul does (prove by his actions that he is God's servant) with what he said he does not do (place stumbling blocks).

General Translation Strategies

See each type of Connecting Word above for specific strategies

If the way the relationship between thoughts is shown in the ULT would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, then consider using it. If not, here are some other options.

(1) Use a connecting word (even if the ULT does not use one).
(2) Do not use a connecting word if it would be strange to use one and people would understand the right relationship between the thoughts without it.
(3) Use a different connecting word.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use a connecting word (even if the ULT does not use one).

> Jesus said to them, "Come follow me, and I will make you to become fishers of men." Then immediately they left the nets and followed him. (Mark 1:17-18 ULT)

They followed Jesus because he told them to. Some translators may want to mark this clause with the connecting word "so."

> > Jesus said to them, “Come follow me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.” **So**, immediately they left the nets and followed him.

(2) Do not use a connecting word if it would be odd to use one, and if people would understand the right relationship between the thoughts without it.

> Therefore, whoever breaks the least one of these commandments **and** teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. **But** whoever keeps them and teaches them, that one will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:19 ULT)

Some languages would prefer not to use connecting words here because the meaning is clear without them and using them would be unnatural. They might translate like this:

> > Therefore, whoever breaks the least one of these commandments, teaching others to do so as well, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever keeps them and teaches them, that one will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

> I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood. I did not go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me. **Instead**, I went to Arabia and then returned to Damascus. **Then** after three years, I went up to

> Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and I stayed with him 15 days. (Galatians 1:16b-18 ULT) (Galatians 1:16-18 ULT)

Some languages might not need the words “instead” or “then” here. They might translate like this:

> > I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who had become apostles before me. I went to Arabia and then returned to Damascus. After three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas, and I stayed with him 15 days.

(3) Use a different connecting word.

> Therefore, whoever breaks the least one of these commandments **and** teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. **But** whoever keeps them and teaches them, that one will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:19 ULT)

Instead of a word like “therefore,” a language might need a phrase to indicate that there was a section before it that gave the reason for the section that follows. Also, the word “but” is used here because of the contrast between the two groups of people. But in some languages, the word “but” would show that what comes after it is surprising because of what came before it. So “and” might be clearer for those languages. They might translate like this:

> > **Because of that**, whoever breaks the least one of these commandments and teaches others to do so will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. **And** whoever keeps them and teaches them, that one will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Song of Solomon References:

3:6

Copy or Borrow Words

Description

Sometimes the Bible includes things that are not part of your culture and for which your language may not have a word. The Bible also includes people and places for which you may not have names.

When that happens you can "borrow" the word from the Bible in a familiar language and use it in your translation in your own language. This means that you basically copy it from the other language. This page tells how to "borrow" words. (There are also other ways to translate words for things that are not in your language. See Translate Unknowns.)

Examples From the Bible

> Seeing one fig tree along the roadside, he went to it. (Matthew 21:19a ULT)

If there are no fig trees where your language is spoken, there might not be a name for this kind of tree in your language.

> Above him were the **seraphim**; each one had six wings; with two each covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. (Isaiah 6:2 ULT)

Your language might not have a name for this kind of creature.

> The declaration of the word of Yahweh to Israel by the hand of **Malachi**. (Malachi 1:1 ULT)

Malachi might not be a name that people who speak your language use.

Translation Strategies

There are several things to be aware of when borrowing words from another language.

- Different languages use different scripts, such as the Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Cyrillic, Devanagari, and Korean scripts. These scripts use different shapes to represent the letters in their alphabets.
- Languages that use the same script might pronounce the letters in that script differently. For example, when speaking German, people pronounce the letter “j” the same way that people pronounce the letter “y” when speaking English.
- Languages do not all have the same sounds or combinations of sounds. For example, many languages do not have the soft “th” sound in the English word “think,” and some languages cannot start a word with a combination of sounds like “st” as in “stop.”

There are several ways to borrow a word.

(1) If your language uses a different script from the language you are translating from, you can simply substitute each letter shape with the corresponding letter shape of the script of your language.
(2) You can spell the word as the Other Language spells it, and pronounce it the way your language normally pronounces those letters.
(3) You can pronounce the word similarly to the way the Other Language does, and adjust the spelling to fit the rules of your language.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If your language uses a different script from the language you are translating from, you can simply substitute each letter shape with the corresponding letter shape of the script of your language.

> צְפַנְיָה — A man’s name in Hebrew letters.

> > “Zephaniah” — The same name in Roman letters

(2) You can spell the word as the Other Language spells it, and pronounce it the way your language normally pronounces those letters.

> Zephaniah — This is a man’s name.
>
> > “Zephaniah” — The name as it is spelled in English, but you can pronounce it according to the rules of your language.

(3) You can pronounce the word similarly to the way the Other Language does, and adjust the spelling to fit the rules of your language.

> Zephaniah — If your language does not have the “z,” you could use “s.” If your writing system does not use “ph” you could use “f.” Depending on how you pronounce the “i” you could spell it with “i” or “ai” or “ay.”
>
> > “Sefania”
> >
> > “Sefanaia”
> >
> > “Sefanaya”

Song of Solomon References:

2:17

Direct and Indirect Quotations

Description

There are two kinds of quotations: direct quotations and indirect quotations.

A direct quotation occurs when someone reports what another person said from the viewpoint of that original speaker. People usually expect that this kind of quotation will represent the original speaker's exact words. In the example below, John would have said "I" when referring to himself, so the narrator, who is reporting John's words, uses the word "I" in the quotation to refer to John. To show that these are John's exact words, many languages put the words between quotation marks: "".

- John said, "**I** do not know at what time **I** will arrive."

An indirect quotation occurs when a speaker reports what someone else said, but in this case, the speaker is reporting it from his own point of view instead and not from the original person's point of view. This kind of quotation usually contains changes in pronouns, and it often includes changes in time, in word choices, and in length. In the example below, the narrator refers to John as "he" in the quotation and uses the word "would" to replace the future tense, indicated by "will."

- John said that **he** did not know at what time **he** would arrive.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

In some languages, reported speech can be expressed by either direct or indirect quotations. In other languages, it is more natural to use one than the other. There may be a certain meaning implied by using one rather than the other. So for each quotation, translators need to decide whether it is best to translate it as a direct quotation or as an indirect quotation.

Examples From the Bible

The verses in the examples below contain both direct and indirect quotations. In the explanation below the verse, we have marked in bold the words that are quoted.

> And he commanded him to tell no one, but, “Go, show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.” (Luke 5:14 ULT)

- Indirect quote: He commanded him **to tell no one**,
- Direct quote: but told him, “**Go, show yourself to the priest …**”

> And being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, he answered them and said, “The kingdom of God is not coming with careful observation. Neither will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘There it is!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is among you.” (Luke 17:20-21 ULT)

- Indirect quote: Being asked by the Pharisees **when the kingdom of God was coming,**
- Direct quote: he answered them and said, “**The kingdom of God is not coming with careful observation. Neither will they say, ‘Look. here it is!’ or ‘There it is!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is among you.**”
- Direct quotes: Neither will they say, ‘**Look, here it is!**’ or, ‘**There it is!**’

Translation Strategies

If the kind of quote used in the source text would work well in your language, consider using it. If the kind of quote used in that context is not natural for your language, follow these strategies.

(1) If a direct quote would not work well in your language, change it to an indirect quote.
(2) If an indirect quote would not work well in your language, change it to a direct quote.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If a direct quote would not work well in your language, change it to an indirect quote.

> And he commanded him to tell no one, but, “**Go, show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.**” (Luke 5:14 ULT)

> > He commanded him to tell no one, but **to go and show himself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for his cleansing according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them**.

(2) If an indirect quote would not work well in your language, change it to a direct quote.

> And he commanded him **to tell no one,** but, "Go, show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing, according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them." (Luke 5:14 ULT)
>
> > He commanded him, "**Tell no one**. But go and show yourself to the priest and offer a sacrifice for your cleansing according to what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them."

You may also want to watch the video at https://ufw.io/figs_quotations.

Song of Solomon References:

2:14

Doublet

Description

We are using the word “doublet” to refer to two words or phrases that are used together and either mean the same thing or mean very close to the same thing. Often they are joined with the word “and.” Unlike **Hendiadys**, in which one of the words modifies the other, in a doublet the two words or phrases are equal and are used to emphasize or intensify the one idea that is expressed by the two words or phrases.

A very similar issue is the repetition of the same word or phrase for emphasis, usually with no other words between them. Because these figures of speech are so similar and have the same effect, we will treat them here together.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

In some languages people do not use doublets. Or they may use doublets, but only in certain situations, so a doublet might not make sense in their language in some verses. People might think that the verse is describing two ideas or actions, when it is only describing one. In this case, translators may need to find some other way to express the meaning expressed by the doublet.

Examples From the Bible

> He has one people **scattered** and **dispersed** among the peoples (Esther 3:8 ULT)

The bolded words mean the same thing. Together they mean the people were spread out.

> He attacked two men **more righteous** and **better** than himself. (1 Kings 2:32b ULT)

This means that they were “much more righteous” than he was.

> You have decided to prepare **false** and **deceptive** words. (Daniel 2:9b ULT)

This means that they had decided to lie, which is another way of saying that they intended to deceive people.

> … like of a lamb **without blemish** and **without spot**. (1 Peter 1:19b ULT)

This means that he was like a lamb that did not have any defect—not even one.

> Then they approached {and} woke him up, saying, **"Master! Master!** We are perishing!" (Luke 8:24 ULT)

The repetition of "Master" means that the disciples called to Jesus urgently and continually.

Translation Strategies

If a doublet would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, consider these strategies.

(1) Translate only one of the words or phrases.
(2) If the doublet is used to intensify the meaning, translate one of the words or phrases and add a word that intensifies it such as "very" or "great" or "many."
(3) If the doublet is used to intensify or emphasize the meaning, use one of your language's ways of doing that.

Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Translate only one of the words.

> You have decided to prepare **false** and **deceptive** words. (Daniel 2:9b ULT)

> > "You have decided to prepare **false** things to say."

(2) If the doublet is used to intensify the meaning, translate one of the words and add a word that intensifies it such as "very" or "great" or "many."

> He has one people **scattered** and **dispersed** among the peoples (Esther 3:8 ULT)
>
> > "He has one people **very spread out**."

(3) If the doublet is used to intensify or emphasize the meaning, use one of your language's ways of doing that.

> … like a lamb **without blemish** and **without spot**. (1 Peter 1:19b ULT)
>
> • English can emphasize this with "any" and "at all."
>
> > "… like a lamb **without any blemish at all**."

> Then they approached {and} woke him up, saying, **"Master! Master!** We are perishing!" (Luke 8:24 ULT)

> Then they approached {and} woke him up, **urgently shouting, "Master!** We are perishing!"

Song of Solomon References:

1:4; 2:7; 2:11

Ellipsis

Description

An ellipsis[^1] occurs when a speaker or writer leaves out one or more words that normally should be in the sentence. The speaker or writer does this because he knows that the hearer or reader will understand the meaning of the sentence and supply the words in his mind when he hears or reads the words that are there. For example:

> So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, **nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous**. (Psalm 1:5 ULT)

There is ellipsis in the second part because “nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous” is not a complete sentence. The speaker assumes that the hearer will understand what it is that sinners will not do in the assembly of the righteous by filling in the action from the previous clause. With the action filled in, the complete sentence would read:

> So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor **will** sinners **stand** in the assembly of the righteous.

[^1]: English has a punctuation symbol which is also called an ellipsis. It is a series of three dots (…) used to indicate an intentional omission of a word, phrase, sentence or more from text without altering its original meaning. This translationAcademy article is not about the punctuation mark, but about the concept of omission of words that normally should be in the sentence.

Two Types of Ellipsis

1. A Relative Ellipsis happens when the reader has to supply the omitted word or words from the context. Usually the word is in the previous sentence, as in the example above.

2. An Absolute Ellipsis happens when the omitted word or words are not in the context, but the phrases are common enough in the language that the reader is expected to supply what is missing from this common usage or from the nature of the situation.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Readers who see incomplete sentences or phrases may not know that there is information missing that the writer expects them to fill in. Or readers may understand that there is information missing, but they may not know what information is missing because they do not know the original biblical language, culture, or situation as the original readers did. In this case, they may fill in the wrong information. Or readers may misunderstand the ellipsis if they do not use ellipsis in the same way in their language.

Examples From the Bible

Relative Ellipsis

> He makes Lebanon skip like a calf **and Sirion like a young ox**. (Psalm 29:6 ULT)

The writer wants his words to be few and to make good poetry. The full sentence with the information filled in would be:

> He makes Lebanon skip like a calf and **he makes**
> Sirion **skip** like a young ox.
>
> Watch carefully, therefore, how you walk—**not as unwise but as wise**. (Ephesians 5:15b ULT)

The information that the reader must understand in the second parts of these sentences can be filled in from the first parts:

> > Watch carefully, therefore, how you walk—**walk** not as unwise but **walk** as wise,

Absolute Ellipsis

> Then when he had come near, he asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?” And so he said, “Lord, **that I might recover my sight**.” (Luke 18:40b-41 ULT)

It seems that the man answered in an incomplete sentence because he wanted to be polite and not directly ask Jesus for healing. He knew that Jesus would understand that the only way he could receive his sight would be for Jesus to heal him. The complete sentence would be:

> > “Lord, **I want you to heal me so** that I might receive my sight.”
>
> To Titus, a true son in our common faith. Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior. (Titus 1:4 ULT)

The writer assumes that the reader will recognize this common form of a blessing or wish, so he does not need to include the full sentence, which would be:

> > To Titus, a true son in our common faith. **May you receive** grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior.

Translation Strategies

If ellipsis would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here is another option:

(1) Add the missing words to the incomplete phrase or sentence.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Add the missing words to the incomplete phrase or sentence.

> So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor **sinners in the assembly** of the righteous. (Psalm 1:5 ULT)
>
> > So the wicked will not stand in the judgment, and **sinners will not stand in the assembly** of the righteous.
>
> Then when he had come near, he asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?” And so he said, “Lord, **that I might recover my sight**.” (Luke 18:40b-41 ULT)
>
> > Then when the man was near, Jesus asked him, “What do you want me to do for you?” He said,

> > “Lord, **I want you to heal me** that I might receive my sight.”
>
> He makes Lebanon skip like a calf **and Sirion like a young ox**. (Psalm 29:6 ULT)
>
> > He makes Lebanon skip like a calf, and **he makes** Sirion **skip** like a young ox.

Song of Solomon References:

1:7; 1:16; 2:1; 2:17; 3:3; 3:6; 3:8; 3:10; 4:10; 5:2; 5:5; 5:8; 5:13; 6:1; 6:4; 6:13; 7:8; 8:6

Euphemism

Description

A euphemism is a mild or polite way of referring to something that is unpleasant, embarrassing, or socially unacceptable, such as death or activities usually done in private.

> … they found Saul and his sons **fallen** on Mount Gilboa. (1 Chronicles 10:8b ULT)

This means that Saul and his sons "were dead." It is a euphemism because the important thing was not that Saul and his sons had fallen but that they were dead. Sometimes people do not like to speak directly about death because it is unpleasant.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Different languages use different euphemisms. If the target language does not use the same euphemism as in the source language, readers may not understand what it means and they may think that the writer means only what the words literally say.

Examples From the Bible

> … where there was a cave. Saul went inside to **cover his feet**. (1 Samuel 24:3b ULT)

The original hearers would have understood that Saul went into the cave to use it as a toilet, but the writer wanted to avoid offending or distracting them, so **he did not say specifically** what Saul did or what he left in the cave.

> But Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I have not **known a man**?" (Luke 1:34 ULT)

In order **to be polite**, Mary uses a euphemism to say that she has never had sexual intercourse with a man.

Translation Strategies

If euphemism would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are other options:

(1) Use a euphemism from your own culture.
(2) State the information plainly without a euphemism if it would not be offensive.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use a euphemism from your own culture.

> … where there was a cave. Saul went inside to **cover his feet**. (1 Samuel 24:3b ULT) — Some languages might use euphemisms like these:
>
> > "… where there was a cave. Saul went into the cave to **dig a hole**"
> >
> > "… where there was a cave. Saul went into the cave to **have some time alone**"
>
> But Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I have not **known a man**?" (Luke 1:34 ULT)
>
> > But Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I have not **slept with a man**?"

(2) State the information plainly without a euphemism if it would not be offensive.

> They found Saul and his sons **fallen** on Mount Gilboa. (1 Chronicles 10:8b ULT)
>
> > "They found Saul and his sons **dead** on Mount Gilboa."

Song of Solomon References:

front:intro; 1:13; 2:4; 8:2

Exclamations

Description

Exclamations are words or sentences that show strong feeling such as surprise, joy, fear, or anger. In the ULT and UST, they usually have an exclamation mark (!) at the end. The mark shows that it is an exclamation. The situation and the meaning of what the people said helps us understand what feelings they were expressing. In the example below from Matthew 8, the speakers were terribly afraid. In the example from Matthew 9, the speakers were amazed, because something happened that they had never seen before.

> Save us, Lord; we are about to die! (Matthew 8:25b ULT)

> When the demon had been driven out, the mute man spoke. The crowds were astonished and said, “This has never been seen before in Israel!” (Matthew 9:33 ULT)

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Languages have different ways of showing that a sentence communicates strong emotion.

Examples From the Bible

Some exclamations have a word that shows feeling. The sentences below have “Oh” and “Ah.” The word “oh” here shows the speaker’s amazement.

> **Oh**, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! (Romans 11:33 ULT)

The word “Alas” below shows that Gideon was very frightened.

> When Gideon saw that he was the angel of Yahweh, Gideon lamented, "**Alas**, O my Lord Yahweh, for because of this I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!" (Judges 6:22 ULT)
>
> Some exclamations start with a question word such as "how" or "why," even though they are not questions. The sentence below shows that the speaker is amazed at how unsearchable God's judgments are.
>
> **How** unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways beyond discovering! (Romans 11:33b ULT)

Some exclamations in the Bible do not have a main verb. The exclamation below shows that the speaker is disgusted with the person he is speaking to.

> You worthless person! (Matthew 5:22b ULT)

Translation Strategies

(1) If an exclamation in your language needs a verb, add one. Often a good verb is "is" or "are."
(2) Use an exclamation word from your language that shows the strong feeling.
(3) Translate the exclamation word with a sentence that shows the feeling.
(4) Use a word that emphasizes the part of the sentence that brings about the strong feeling.
(5) If the strong feeling is not clear in the target language, then tell how the person felt.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If an exclamation in your language needs a verb, add one. Often a good verb is "is" or "are."

> You worthless person! (Matthew 5:22b ULT)

> > "You **are** such a worthless person!"

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! (Romans 11:33b ULT)

> > "Oh, the riches of the wisdom and the knowledge of God **are** so deep!"

(2) Use an exclamation word from your language that shows the strong feeling. In the first suggested translation below, the word "wow" shows that they were astonished. In the second suggested translation, the expression "Oh no" shows that something terrible or frightening has happened.

> They were extremely astonished, saying, "He has done everything well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak." (Mark 7:37 ULT)
>
> > "They were extremely astonished, saying, '**Wow**! He has done everything well. He even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.'"
>
> Alas, oh my Lord Yahweh! For because of this I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face! (Judges 6:22b ULT)
>
> > "**Oh no**, Lord Yahweh! I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!"

(3) Translate the exclamation word with a sentence that shows the feeling.

> "**Alas,** O my Lord Yahweh, for because of this I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!" (Judges 6:22 ULT)
>
> > "Lord Yahweh, **what will happen to me**? For I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!"
> > "**Help**, Lord Yahweh! For I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!"

(4) Use a word that emphasizes the part of the sentence that brings about the strong feeling.

> How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways beyond discovering! (Romans 11:33b ULT)
>
> > "His judgments are **so** unsearchable and his ways are **far** beyond discovering!"

(5) If the strong feeling is not clear in the target language, then tell how the person felt.

> When Gideon saw that he was the angel of Yahweh, Gideon lamented, "**Alas,** O my Lord Yahweh, for because of this I have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!" (Judges 6:22 ULT)

> Gideon understood that this was the angel of Yahweh.
> **He was terrified** and said, "**Alas**, Lord Yahweh! I
> have seen the angel of Yahweh face to face!"

Song of Solomon References:

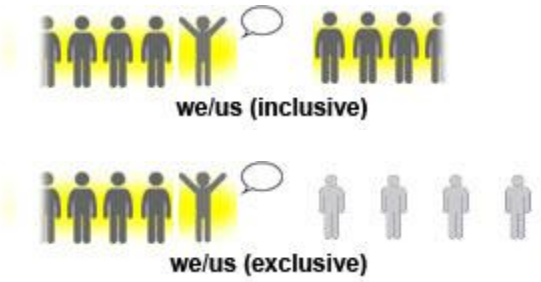
2:8; 4:10; 7:1; 7:6; 7:6

Exclusive and Inclusive ‘We’

Description

Some languages have more than one form of “we”: an inclusive form that means “I and you” and an exclusive form that means “I and someone else but not you.” The exclusive form excludes the person being spoken to. The inclusive form includes the person being spoken to and possibly others. This is also true for “us,” “our,” “ours,” and “ourselves.” Some languages have inclusive forms and exclusive forms for each of these. Translators whose language has separate exclusive and inclusive forms for these words will need to understand what the speaker meant so that they can decide which form to use.

See the pictures. The people on the right are the people that the speaker is talking to. The yellow highlight shows who the inclusive “we” and the exclusive “we” refer to.



Reason This Is a Translation Issue

The Bible was first written in the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek languages. Like English, these languages do not have separate exclusive and inclusive forms for “we.” If your language has separate exclusive and inclusive forms of “we,” then you will need to understand what the speaker meant so that you can decide which form of “we” to use.

Examples From the Bible

Exclusive

> They said, “There are not more than five loaves of bread and two fish with us—unless **we** go and buy food for all these people.” (Luke 9:13 ULT)

In the second clause, the disciples are talking about some of them going to buy food. They were speaking to Jesus, but Jesus was not going to buy food. So languages that have inclusive and exclusive forms of "we" would use the **exclusive** form there.

> **We** have seen it, and **we** bear witness to it. **We** are announcing to you the eternal life, which was with the Father, and which has been made known to **us**. (1 John 1:2 ULT)

John is telling people who have not seen Jesus what he and the other apostles have seen. So languages that have inclusive and exclusive forms of "we" and "us" would use the **exclusive** forms in this verse.

Inclusive

> The shepherds said one to each other, "Let **us** now go to Bethlehem, and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to **us**." (Luke 2:15b ULT)

The shepherds were speaking to one another. When they said "us," they were including the people they were speaking to, so languages that have inclusive and exclusive forms of "we" and "us" would use the **inclusive** form in this verse.

> Now it happened that on one of those days, he indeed got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, "Let **us** go over to the other side of the lake." So they set sail. (Luke 8:22 ULT)

When Jesus said "us," he was referring to himself and to the disciples he was speaking to, so languages that have inclusive and exclusive forms of "we" and "us" would use the **inclusive** form in this verse.

Song of Solomon References:

1:4; 1:4; 1:4; 1:11; 2:9; 2:15

First, Second or Third Person

Normally a speaker refers to himself as “I” and the person he is speaking to as “you.” Sometimes in the Bible a speaker refers to himself or to the person he is speaking to with terms other than “I” or “you.”

Description

- First person — This is how a speaker normally refers to himself. English uses the pronouns “I” and “we.” (Also: me, my, mine; us, our, ours)
- Second person — This is how a speaker normally refers to the person or people he is speaking to. English uses the pronoun “you.” (Also: your, yours)
- Third person — This is how a speaker refers to someone else. English uses the pronouns “he,” “she,” “it,” and “they.” (Also: him, his, her, hers, its; them, their, theirs) Noun phrases like “the man” or “the woman” are also third person.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Sometimes in the Bible a speaker uses the third person to refer to himself or to the people he is speaking to. Readers might think that the speaker was referring to someone else. They might not understand that he meant “I” or “you.”

Examples From the Bible

Sometimes people used the third person instead of “I” or “me” to refer to themselves.

> But David said to Saul, “**Your servant** used to keep **his** father’s sheep.” (1 Samuel 17:34 ULT)

David referred to himself in the third person as “your servant” and used “his.” He was calling himself Saul’s servant in order to show his humility before Saul.

> Then Yahweh answered Job out of a fierce storm and said,
> “… Do you have an arm like **God’s**? Can you thunder with a voice like **his**?” (Job 40:6, 9 ULT)

God referred to himself in the third person with the words “God’s” and “his.” He did this to emphasize that he is God, and he is powerful.

Sometimes people use the third person instead of “you” or “your” to refer to the person or people they are speaking to.

> Abraham answered and said, “Look, I have undertaken to speak to my Lord, even though I am only dust and ashes!” (Genesis 18:27 ULT)

Abraham was speaking to the Lord, and referred to the Lord as “My Lord” rather than as “you.” He did this to show his humility before God.

> So also my heavenly Father will do to you, if **each of you** does not forgive **his** brother from your heart. (Matthew 18:35 ULT)

After saying “each of you,” Jesus used the third person “his” instead of “your.”

Translation Strategies

If using the third person to mean “I” or “you” would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other options.

(1) Use the third person phrase along with the pronoun “I” or “you.”
(2) Simply use the first person (“I”) or second person (“you”) instead of the third person.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use the third person phrase along with the pronoun “I” or “you.”

> But David said to Saul, “**Your servant** used to keep **his** father’s sheep.” (1 Samuel 17:34)

> > But David said to Saul, "**I, your servant**, used to keep **my** father's sheep."

(2) Simply use the first person ("I") or second person ("you") instead of the third person.

> Then Yahweh answered Job out of a fierce storm and said, "… Do you have an arm like **God's**? Can you thunder with a voice like **his**?" (Job 40:6, 9 ULT)
>
> > Then Yahweh answered Job out of a fierce storm and said, "… Do you have an arm like **mine**? Can you thunder with a voice like **mine**?"
>
> So also my heavenly Father will do to you if **each of you** does not forgive **his** brother from your heart. (Matthew 18:35 ULT)
>
> > So also my heavenly Father will do to you if **each of you** does not forgive **your** brother from your heart.

Song of Solomon References:

2:16; 6:3; 6:13

Forms of ‘You’ — Singular

Description

Some languages have a **singular** form of “you” for when the word “you” refers to just one person, and a **plural** form for when the word “you” refers to more than one person. Translators who speak one of these languages will always need to know what the speaker meant so they can choose the right word for “you” in their language. Other languages, such as English, have only one form, which people use regardless of how many people it refers to.

The Bible was first written in the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek languages. These languages all have both a singular form of “you” and a plural form of “you.” When we read the Bible in those languages, the pronouns and verb forms show us whether the word “you” refers to one person or more than one. When we read the Bible in a language that does not have different forms of you, we need to look at the context to see how many people the speaker was speaking to.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- Translators who speak a language that has distinct singular and plural forms of “you” will always need to know what the speaker meant so they can choose the right word for “you” in their language.
- Many languages also have different forms of the verb depending on whether the subject is singular or plural. So even if there is no pronoun meaning “you,” translators of these languages will need to know if the speaker was referring to one person or more than one.

Often the context will make it clear whether the word “you” refers to one person or more than one. If you look at the other pronouns in the sentence, they will help you know the number of people the speaker was speaking to. Sometimes Greek and Hebrew speakers used the singular form of “you” even though they were speaking to a group of people. (See **Forms of ‘You’ — Singular to a Crowd**.)

Examples From the Bible

> But he said, “All these things **I** have kept from my youth.” But when he heard this, Jesus said to him, “One thing is still lacking to **you**. All things,

> as much as **you** have, **sell** all and **distribute** to the poor, and **you** will have treasure in heaven—and **come**, **follow** me." (Luke 18:21-22 ULT)

The ruler was speaking about just himself when he said "I." This shows us that when Jesus said "you" he was referring only to the ruler and he used the singular form. So languages that have singular and plural forms of "you" need the singular form here, as well as for the verbs "sell," distribute," "come," and "follow."

> The angel said to him, "**Dress yourself** and **put on your** sandals." So he did that. He said to him, "**Put on your** outer garment and **follow** me." (Acts 12:8 ULT)

The angel used singular forms here and the context makes it clear that he was speaking to one person and that only one person did what the the angel commanded. So languages that have singular and plural forms of "you" would need the singular form here for "yourself" and "your." Also, if verbs have different forms for singular and plural subjects, then the verbs "dress," "put on," and "follow" need the form that indicates a singular subject.

> All the ones {who are} with me greet **you**. **Greet** the ones loving us in faith. Grace {be} with all of **you**. (Titus 3:15 ULT)

Paul wrote this letter to one person, Titus, so most of the time the word "you" in this letter is singular and refers only to Titus. In this verse, the first "you" is singular, so the greeting is for Titus, as well as the instruction to greet the others there. The second "you," however, is plural, so the blessing is for Titus and for all of the believers there in Crete.

> "Having gone, **search** carefully for the young child, and after **you** have found him, **report** to me so that I also, having come, might worship him." (Matthew 2:8 ULT)

Since Herod is speaking to all of the learned men, the word “you” and the commands “search” and “report” are plural.

Strategies for finding out how many people “you” refers to

(1) Look at the notes to see if they tell whether “you” refers to one person or more than one person.
(2) Look at the UST to see if it says anything that would show you whether the word “you” refers to one person or more than one person.
(3) If you have a Bible that is written in a language that distinguishes “you” singular from “you” plural, see which form of “you” that Bible has in that sentence.
(4) Look at the context to see how many people the speaker was talking to and who responded.

You may also want to watch the video at https://ufw.io/figs_younum.

Song of Solomon References:

1:2

Generic Noun Phrases

Description

Generic noun phrases refer to people or things in general rather than to specific individuals or things. This happens frequently in proverbs, because proverbs tell about things that are true about people in general.

> Can **a man** walk on hot coals without scorching his feet?
> So is **the man who goes in to his neighbor's wife**;
> **the one who touches her** will not go unpunished. (Proverbs 6:28-29 ULT)

The phrases in bold above do not refer to a specific man. They refer to any man who does these things.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Different languages have different ways of showing that noun phrases refer to something in general. You (the translator) should refer to these general ideas in ways that are natural in your language.

Examples From the Bible

> The **righteous person** is kept away from trouble and it comes upon **the wicked** instead. (Proverbs 11:8 ULT)

The bold phrases above do not refer to a specific person but to anyone who does what is right or anyone who is wicked.

> People curse **the man who refuses to sell grain**. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)

This does not refer to a particular man, but to any person who refuses to sell grain.

> Yahweh gives favor to **a good man**, but he condemns **a man who makes evil plans**. (Proverbs 12:2 ULT)

The phrase “a good man” does not refer to a particular man, but to any person who is good. The phrase “a man who makes evil plans” does not refer to a particular man, but to any person who makes evil plans.

Translation Strategies

If your language can use the same wording as in the ULT to refer to people or things in general rather than to specific individuals or things, consider using the same wording. If not, here are some strategies you might use.

(1) Use the word “the” in the noun phrase.
(2) Use the word “a” in the noun phrase.
(3) Use the word “any,” as in “any person” or “anyone.”
(4) Use the plural form, as in “people.”
(5) Use any other way that is natural in your language.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use the word “the” in the noun phrase.

> Yahweh gives favor to **a good man**, but he condemns **a man who makes evil plans**. (Proverbs 12:2 ULT)
>
> > “Yahweh gives favor to **the good man**, but he condemns **the man who makes evil plans**.” (Proverbs 12:2)

(2) Use the word “a” in the noun phrase.

> People curse **the man** who refuses to sell grain. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)
>
> > "People curse **a man** who refuses to sell grain."

(3) Use the word "any," as in "any person" or "anyone."

> People curse **the man** who refuses to sell grain. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)
>
> > "People curse **any man** who refuses to sell grain."

(4) Use the plural form, as in "people" (or in this sentence, "men").

> People curse **the man** who refuses to sell grain. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)
>
> > "People curse **men** who refuse to sell grain"

(5) Use any other way that is natural in your language.

> People curse **the man** who refuses to sell grain. (Proverbs 11:26 ULT)
>
> > "People curse **whoever** refuses to sell grain."

Song of Solomon References:

1:9

Go and Come

Description

Different languages have different ways of determining whether to use the words “go” or “come” and whether to use the words “take” or “bring” when talking about motion. For example, when saying that they are approaching a person who has called them, English speakers say “I am coming,” while Spanish speakers say “I am going.” You will need to study the context in order to understand what is meant by the words “go” and “come” (and also “take” and “bring”), and then translate those words in a way that your readers will understand which direction people are moving in.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Different languages have different ways of talking about motion. The biblical languages or your source language may use the words “go” and “come” or “take” and “bring” differently than your language uses them. If these words are not translated in the way that is natural in your language, your readers may be confused about which direction people are moving.

Examples From the Bible

> Yahweh said to Noah, “**Come**, you and all your household, into the ark.” (Genesis 7:1 ULT)

In some languages, this would lead people to think that Yahweh was in the ark.

> But you will be free from my oath if you **come** to my relatives and they will not give her to you. Then you will be free from my oath. (Genesis 24:41 ULT)

Abraham was speaking to his servant. Abraham’s relatives lived far away from where he and his servant were standing and he wanted his servant to **go** to them, not **come** toward Abraham.

> When you have **come** to the land that Yahweh your God gives you, and when you take possession of it and begin to live in it … (Deuteronomy 17:14a ULT)

Moses is speaking to the people in the wilderness. They had not yet gone into the land that God was giving them. In some languages, it would make more sense to say, "When you have **gone** into the land …"

> They **brought** him up to the temple in Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. (Luke 2:22b ULT)

In some languages, it might make more sense to say that they **took** or **carried** Jesus to the temple.

> Then see, there was a man whose name was Jairus, and he was a leader of the synagogue. And falling at the feet of Jesus, he begged him to come to his house. (Luke 8:41 ULT)

The man was not at his house when he spoke to Jesus. He wanted Jesus to **go** with him to his house.

> What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind? (Luke 7:24b ULT)

In some languages, it might make more sense to ask what did you come out to see.

Translation Strategies

If the word used in the ULT would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are other strategies.

(1) Use the word “go,” “come,” “take,” or “bring” that would be natural in your language.
(2) Use another word that expresses the right meaning.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use the word “go,” “come,” “take,” or “bring” that would be natural in your language.

> But you will be free from my oath if you **come** to my relatives and they will not give her to you. (Genesis 24:41 ULT)
>
> > But you will be free from my oath if you **go** to my relatives and they will not give her to you.

> What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind? (Luke 7:24b ULT)
>
> > What did you come out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind?

(2) Use another word that expresses the right meaning.

> When you have **come** to the land that Yahweh your God gives you, and when you take possession of it and begin to live in it … (Deuteronomy 17:14 ULT)

> > "When you have **arrived** in the land that Yahweh your God gives you, and when you take possession of it and begin to live in it …"

> Yahweh said to Noah, "**Come**, you and all your household, into the ark …" (Genesis 7:1 ULT)
>
> > Yahweh said to Noah, "**Enter**, you and all your household, into the ark …"

> What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind? (Luke 7:24b ULT)
>
> > What did you travel out into the desert to see? A reed shaken by the wind?

Song of Solomon References:

1:4; 1:8; 2:4; 2:8; 2:10; 2:11; 2:13; 3:4; 3:6; 3:11; 4:6; 4:8; 4:16; 5:1; 5:6; 5:6; 6:2; 6:11; 7:8; 7:9; 7:11; 7:12; 8:2; 8:5

How to Translate Names

Description

The Bible contains the names of many people, groups of people, and places. Some of these names may sound strange and be hard to say. Sometimes readers may not know what a name refers to, and sometimes they may need to understand what a name means. This page will help you see how you can translate these names and how you can help people understand what they need to know about them.

Meaning of names

Most names in the Bible have meaning. Most of the time, names in the Bible are used simply to identify the people and places they refer to, but sometimes the meaning of a name is especially important.

> For this **Melchizedek**, king of Salem, priest of God Most High, was the one who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him. (Hebrews 7:1 ULT)

Here the writer uses the name “Melchizedek” primarily to refer to a man who had that name, and the title “king of Salem” tells us that he ruled over a certain city.

> His name first indeed means “king of righteousness,” and then also “king of Salem,” that is, “king of peace.” (Hebrews 7:2b ULT)

Here the writer explains the meanings of Melchizedek’s name and title because those things tell us more about the person. Other times, the writer does not explain the meaning of a name because he expects the reader to already know the meaning. If the meaning of the name is important to understand the passage, you can include the meaning in the text or in a footnote.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Readers may not know some of the names in the Bible. They may not know whether a name refers to a person or place or something else.
- Readers may need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand the passage.
- Some names may have different sounds or combinations of sounds that are not used in your language or are unpleasant to say in your language. For strategies to address this problem, see Borrow Words.
- Some people and places in the Bible have two names. Readers may not realize that two names refer to the same person or place.

Examples From the Bible

> Then you crossed over the **Jordan** and came to **Jericho**, and the men of Jericho, and the **Amorites** … fought against you, but I gave them into your hand. (Joshua 24:11 ULT)

Readers might not know that "Jordan" is the name of a river, "Jericho" is the name of a city, and "Amorites" is the name of a group of people.

> She said, "Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?" Therefore, the well was called **Beer Lahai Roi**. (Genesis 16:13b-14a ULT)

Readers may not understand the second sentence if they do not know that "Beer Lahai Roi" means "Well of the Living One who sees me."

> And she called his name **Moses** and she said, "For out of the water I drew him." (Exodus 2:10b ULT)

Readers may not understand why she said this if they do not know that the name Moses sounds like the Hebrew words "pull out."

> **Saul** was in agreement with his execution. (Acts 8:1a ULT)
>
> But when the apostles, Barnabas and **Paul**, heard of it, they tore their clothing. (Acts 14:14a ULT)

Readers may not know that the names Saul and Paul refer to the same person.

Translation Strategies

(1) If readers cannot easily understand from the context what kind of a thing a name refers to, you can add a word to clarify it.
(2) If readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, copy the name and tell about its meaning either in the text or in a footnote.
(3) Or if readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, and that name is used only once, translate the meaning of the name instead of copying the name.
(4) If a person or place has two different names, use one name most of the time and the other name only when the text tells about the person or place having more than one name or when it says something about why the person or place was given that name. Write a footnote when the source text uses the name that is used less frequently.
(5) Or if a person or place has two different names, then use whatever name is given in the source text, and add a footnote that gives the other name.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If readers cannot easily understand from the context what kind of a thing a name refers to, you can add a word to clarify it.

> Then you crossed over the **Jordan** and came to **Jericho**, and the men of Jericho, and the **Amorites** … fought against you, but I gave them into your hand. (Joshua 24:11 ULT)

> > You went over the **Jordan River** and came to the **city of Jericho**. The men of Jericho fought against you, along with **the tribe of the Amorites.**
>
> At that hour, certain Pharisees approached, saying to him, “Leave and go away from here, because **Herod** wants to kill you.” (Luke 13:31 ULT)
>
> > At that hour, certain Pharisees approached, saying to him, “Go and leave here, because **King Herod** wants to kill you.”

(2) If readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, copy the name and tell about its meaning either in the text or in a footnote.

> And she called his name **Moses** and she said, “For out of the water I drew him.” (Exodus 2:10b ULT)
>
> > She called his name **Moses (which sounds like ‘drawn out’),** and she said, “For out of the water I drew him.”

(3) Or if readers need to understand the meaning of a name in order to understand what is said about it, and that name is used only once, translate the meaning of the name instead of copying the name.

> She said, “Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?” Therefore, the well was called **Beer Lahai Roi**. (Genesis 16:13b-14a ULT)
>
> > She said, “Do I really continue to see, even after he has seen me?” Therefore, the well was called **Well of the Living One who sees me**.

(4) If a person or place has two different names, use one name most of the time and the other name only when the text tells about the person or place having more than one name or when it says something about why the person or place was given that name. Write a footnote when the source text uses the name that is used less frequently. For example, Paul is called “Saul” before Acts 13 and “Paul” after Acts 13. You could translate his name as “Paul” all of the time, except in Acts 13:9 where it talks about him having both names.

> … a young man named **Saul**. (Acts 7:58b ULT)
>
> > … a young man named **Paul** 1

The footnote would look like:

> > [1] Most versions say “Saul” here, but most of the time in the Bible he is called “Paul.”

Then later in the story, you could translate this way:

> But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit; (Acts 13:9)
>
> > But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit;

(5) Or if a person or place has two names, use whatever name is given in the source text, and add a footnote that gives the other name. For example, you could write “Saul” where the source text has “Saul” and “Paul” where the source text has “Paul.”

> a young man named **Saul** (Acts 7:58 ULT)
>
> > a young man named **Saul**

The footnote would look like:

> > [1] This is the same man who is called Paul beginning in Acts 13.

Then later in the story, you could translate this way:

> But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit; (Acts 13:9)
>
> > But **Saul**, who is also called **Paul**, was filled with the Holy Spirit;

Then after the story has explained the name change, you could translate this way.

> It came about in Iconium that **Paul** and Barnabas entered together into the synagogue (Acts 14:1 ULT)
>
> > It came about in Iconium that **Paul**[1] and Barnabas entered together into the synagogue

The footnote would look like:

> > [1] This is the same man who was called Saul before Acts 13.

Song of Solomon References:

front:intro; 4:8; 7:4; 7:4; 8:11

Hyperbole

Description

A speaker or writer can use exactly the same words to say something that he means as completely true, or as generally true, or as a hyperbole. This is why it can be hard to decide how to understand a statement. For example, the sentence below could mean three different things.

It rains here every night.

1. The speaker means this as literally true if he means that it really does rain here every night.
2. The speaker means this as a **generalization** if he means that it rains here most nights.
3. The speaker means this as a **hyperbole** if he wants to say that it rains more than it actually does, usually in order to express a strong attitude toward the amount or frequency of rain, such as being annoyed or being happy about it.

Hyperbole

In hyperbole, a figure of speech that uses exaggeration, a speaker deliberately describes something with an extreme or even unreal statement, usually to show his strong feeling or opinion about it. He expects people to understand that he is exaggerating.

> They will not leave **stone upon stone in you.** (Luke 19:44b ULT)

This is an exaggeration. It means that the enemies will completely destroy Jerusalem.

> Moses was educated in **all the wisdom of the Egyptians.** (Acts 7:22a ULT)

This hyperbole means that he had learned everything an Egyptian education could offer.

Generalization

This is a statement that is true most of the time or in most situations that it could apply to.

> The one who ignores instruction **will have poverty and shame,**
> but **honor will come** to him who learns from correction. (Proverbs 13:18)

These generalizations tell about what normally happens to people who ignore instruction and what normally happens to people who learn from correction. There may be some exceptions to these statements, but they are generally true.

> And when you pray, do not make useless repetitions as **the Gentiles do,**
> **for they think that they will be heard because of their many words.**
> (Matthew 6:7)

This generalization tells about what Gentiles were known for doing. Many Gentiles did this. It does not matter if a few did not. The point was that the hearers should not join in this well-known practice.

Even though a hyperbole or a generalization may have a strong-sounding word like “all,” “always,” “none,” or “never,” it does not necessarily mean **exactly** “all,” “always,” “none,” or “never.” It simply means “most,” “most of the time,” “hardly any,” or “rarely.”

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

1. Readers need to be able to understand whether or not a statement is literally true.
2. If readers realize that a statement is not literally true, they need to be able to understand whether it is a hyperbole, a generalization, or a lie. (Though the Bible is completely true, it tells about people who did not always tell the truth.)

Examples From the Bible

Examples of Hyperbole

> If your hand causes you to stumble, **cut it off**. It is better for you to enter into life maimed … (Mark 9:43a ULT)

When Jesus said to cut off your hand, he meant that we should **do whatever extreme things** we need to do in order not to sin. He used this hyperbole to show how extremely important it is to try to stop sinning.

> The Philistines gathered together to fight against Israel with 3,000 chariots, 6,000 men to drive the chariots, and troops **as numerous as the sand on the seashore**. (1 Samuel 13:5a ULT)

The bolded phrase is an exaggeration for the purpose of expressing the emotion that the Philistine army was overwhelming in number. It means that there were **many, many** soldiers in the Philistine army.

> But as his anointing teaches you **everything** and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, remain in him. (1 John 2:27b ULT)

This is a hyperbole. It expresses the assurance that God's Spirit teaches us about **all things that we need to know**. God's Spirit does not teach us about everything that it is possible to know.

> When they found him, they also said to him, "**Everyone** is looking for you." (Mark 1:37 ULT)

The disciples probably did not mean that everyone in the city was looking for Jesus, but that **many people** were looking for him, or that all of Jesus' closest friends there were looking for

him. This is an exaggeration for the purpose of expressing the emotion that they and many others were worried about him.

Examples of Generalization

> Can **any good thing** come out of Nazareth? (John 1:46b ULT)

This rhetorical question is meant to express the generalization that there is nothing good in Nazareth. The people there had a reputation for being uneducated and not strictly religious. Of course, there were exceptions.

> One of them, of their own prophets, has said, "**Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy bellies**." (Titus 1:12 ULT)

This is a generalization that means that Cretans had a reputation to be like this because, in general, this is how Cretans behaved. It is possible that there were exceptions.

> **A lazy hand causes a person to be poor, but the hand of the diligent person gains riches.** (Proverbs 10:4 ULT)

This is generally true, and it reflects the experience of most people. It is possible that there are exceptions in some circumstances.

Caution

- Do not assume that something is an exaggeration just because it seems to be impossible. God does miraculous things.

> They saw Jesus **walking on the sea** and coming near the boat. (John 6:19b ULT)

This is not hyperbole. Jesus really walked on the water. It is a literal statement.

- Do not assume that the word “all” is always a generalization that means “most.”

> Yahweh is righteous in **all** his ways
> and gracious in **all** he does. (Psalms 145:17 ULT)

Yahweh is always righteous. This is a completely true statement.

Translation Strategies

If the hyperbole or generalization would be natural and people would understand it and not think that it is a lie, consider using it. If not, here are other options.

(1) Express the meaning without the exaggeration.
(2) For a generalization, show that it is a generalization by using a phrase like “in general” or “in most cases.”
(3) For a hyperbole or a generalization, add a word like “many” or “almost” to show that the hyperbole or generalization is not meant to be exact.
(4) For a hyperbole or a generalization that has a word like “all,” “always,” “none,” or “never,” consider deleting that word.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Express the meaning without the exaggeration.

> The Philistines gathered together to fight against Israel: 3,000 chariots, 6,000 men to drive the chariots, and troops **as numerous as the sand on the seashore**. (1 Samuel 13:5a ULT)
>
> > The Philistines gathered together to fight against
> > Israel: 3,000 chariots, 6,000 men to drive the chariots,
> > and **a great number of troops**.

(2) For a generalization, show that it is a generalization by using a phrase like “in general” or “in most cases.”

> **The one who ignores instruction will have poverty and shame.**
> (Proverbs 13:18a ULT)
>
> > **In general,** the one who ignores instruction will have poverty and shame
>
> When you pray, do not make useless repetitions as the **Gentiles do,** for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. (Matthew 6:7 ULT)
>
> > And when you pray, do not make useless repetitions as the Gentiles **generally** do, for they think that they will be heard because of their many words.

(3) For a hyperbole or a generalization, add a word like “many” or “almost” to show that the hyperbole or generalization is not meant to be exact.

> The **whole** country of Judea and **all** the people of Jerusalem went out to him. (Mark 1:5a ULT)
>
> > **Almost all** the country of Judea and **almost all** the people of Jerusalem went out to him.
> > or:

> > **Many** of the country of Judea and **many** of the people of Jerusalem went out to him.

(4) For a hyperbole or a generalization that has a word like “all,” “always,” “none,” or “never,” consider deleting that word.

> The **whole** country of Judea and **all** the people of Jerusalem went out to him. (Mark 1:5a ULT)
>
> > The country of Judea and the people of Jerusalem went out to him.

Song of Solomon References:

2:5; 5:8

Idiom

An idiom is a figure of speech made up of a group of words that, as a whole, has a meaning that is different from what one would understand from the meanings of the individual words. Someone from outside of the culture usually cannot understand an idiom without someone inside the culture explaining its true meaning. Every language uses idioms. Some English examples are:

- You are pulling my leg. (This means, “You are teasing me by telling me something that is not true.”)
- Do not push the envelope. (This means, “Do not take a matter to its extreme.”)
- This house is under water. (This means, “The debt owed for this house is greater than its actual value.”)
- We are painting the town red. (This means, “We are going around town tonight celebrating very intensely.”)

Description

An idiom is a phrase that has a special meaning to the people of the language or culture who use it. Its meaning is different than what a person would understand from the meanings of the individual words that form the phrase.

> he **set his face** to go to Jerusalem. (Luke 9:51b ULT)

The words “set his face” is an idiom that means “decided.”

Sometimes people may be able to understand an idiom from another culture, but it might sound like a strange way to express the meaning.

> I am not worthy that you would **come under my roof**. (Luke 7:6b ULT)

The phrase “come under my roof” is an idiom that means “enter my house.”

> Put these words **into your ears**. (Luke 9:44a ULT)

This idiom means “Listen carefully and remember what I say.”

Purpose: An idiom is probably created in a culture somewhat by accident when someone describes something in an unusual way. But, when that unusual way communicates the message powerfully and people understand it clearly, other people start to use it. After a while, it becomes a normal way of talking in that language.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- People can easily misunderstand idioms in the original languages of the Bible if they do not know the cultures that produced the Bible.
- People can easily misunderstand idioms that are in the source language Bibles if they do not know the cultures that made those translations.
- It is useless to translate idioms literally (according to the meaning of each word) when the target language audience will not understand what they mean.

Examples From the Bible

> Then all Israel came to David at Hebron and said, “Look, we are your **flesh and bone**.” (1 Chronicles 11:1 ULT)

This means, “We and you belong to the same race, the same family.”

> The children of Israel went out **with a high hand**. (Exodus 14:8b ASV)

This means, “The Israelites went out defiantly.”

> the one who **lifts up my head** (Psalm 3:3b ULT)

This means, “the one who helps me.”

Translation Strategies

If the idiom would be clearly understood in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other options.

(1) Translate the meaning plainly without using an idiom.
(2) Use a different idiom that people use in your own language that has the same meaning.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Translate the meaning plainly without using an idiom.

> Then all Israel came to David at Hebron and said, “Look, we are your **flesh and bone**.” (1 Chronicles 11:1 ULT)
>
> > Look, we all **belong to the same nation**.

> Then he **set his face** to go to Jerusalem. (Luke 9:51b ULT)
>
> > He started to travel to Jerusalem, **determined to reach it**.

> I am not worthy that you would come **under my roof**. (Luke 7:6b ULT)
>
> > I am not worthy that you should enter **my house**.

(2) Use an idiom that people use in your own language that has the same meaning.

> Put these words **into your ears.** (Luke 9:44a ULT)
>
> > **Be all ears** when I say these words to you.

> My **eyes grow dim** from grief. (Psalm 6:7a ULT)
>
> > I am crying my **eyes out**

Song of Solomon References:

4:9; 5:2; 5:6; 6:8; 7:13; 8:1; 8:6; 8:8; 8:8; 8:12

Imperatives — Other Uses

Description

Imperative sentences are mainly used to express a desire or requirement that someone do something. In the Bible, sometimes imperative sentences have other uses.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages would not use an imperative sentence for some of the functions that they are used for in the Bible.

Examples From the Bible

Speakers often use imperative sentences to tell or ask their listeners to do something. In Genesis 26, God spoke to Isaac and told him not to go to Egypt but to live where God would tell him to live.

> Now Yahweh appeared to him and said, "**Do not go down** to Egypt; **live** in the land that I tell you to live in." (Genesis 26:2 ULT)

Sometimes imperative sentences in the Bible have other uses.

Imperatives that make things happen

God can make things happen by commanding that they happen. Jesus healed a man by commanding that the man be healed. The man could not do anything to obey the command, but Jesus caused him to be healed by commanding it. (In this context, the command "Be clean" means to "be healed" so that others around would know that it was safe to touch the man again.)

> "I am willing. **Be clean**." Immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy. (Matthew 8:3b ULT)

In Genesis 1, God commanded that there should be light, and by commanding it, he caused it to exist. Some languages, such as the Hebrew of the Bible, have commands that are in the third person. English does not do that, and so it must turn the third-person command into a general, second-person command, as in the ULT:

> God said, "**Let there be** light," and there was light. (Genesis 1:3 ULT)

Languages that have third-person commands can follow the original Hebrew, which translates into English as something like "light must be."

Imperatives that function as blessings

In the Bible, God blesses people by using imperatives. This indicates what his will is for them.

> God blessed them and said to them, "**Be fruitful**, and **multiply**. **Fill** the earth, and **subdue** it. **Have dominion** over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." (Genesis 1:28 ULT)

Imperatives that function as conditions

An imperative sentence can also be used to tell the **condition** under which something will happen. The proverbs mainly tell about life and things that often happen. The purpose of Proverbs 4:6 below is not primarily to give a command, but to teach what people can expect to happen **if** they love wisdom.

> **Do not abandon** wisdom and she will watch over you;
> **love** her and she will keep you safe. (Proverbs 4:6 ULT)

The purpose of Proverbs 22:6, below, is to teach what people can expect to happen if they teach their children the way they should go.

> **Teach** a child the way he should go,
> and when he is old he will not turn away from that instruction. (Proverbs 22:6 ULT)

Imperatives that function as good results

An imperative sentence can also describe a desirable result. In Proverbs 3:3-4, several imperatives give instructions, then the final imperative describes the good outcome of following those instructions.

> Do not let covenant faithfulness and trustworthiness leave you;
> tie them on your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart,
> and **find favor** and good insight in the eyes of God and man! (Proverbs 3:3-4 ULT)

Translation Strategies

(1) If people would not use an imperative sentence for one of the functions in the Bible, try using a statement instead.
(2) If people would not understand that a sentence is used to cause something to happen, add a connecting word like “so” to show that what happened was a result of what was said.
(3) If people would not use a command as a condition, translate it as a statement with the words “if” and “then.”

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If people would not use an imperative sentence for one of the functions in the Bible, try using a statement instead.

> **Be clean**. (Matthew 8:3b ULT)

> **You are now clean.**
> **I now cleanse you.**

God said, "**Let there be** light," and there was light. (Genesis 1:3 ULT)

> God said, "**There is now** light" and there was light.

God blessed them and said to them, "**Be fruitful**, and **multiply**. **Fill** the earth, and **subdue** it. **Have dominion** over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." (Genesis 1:28 ULT)

> God blessed them and said to them, "**My will for you is that you be fruitful**, and **multiply**. **Fill** the earth, and **subdue** it. **I want you to have dominion** over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."

Do not let covenant faithfulness and trustworthiness leave you;
tie them on your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart,
and find favor and good insight in the eyes of God and man! (Proverbs 3:3-4 ULT)

> Do not let covenant faithfulness and trustworthiness
> leave you;
> tie them on your neck, write them on the tablet of

> > your heart,
> > **then you will find favor** and good insight in the eyes
> > of God and man!

(2) If people would not understand that a sentence is used to cause something to happen, add a connecting word like "so" to show that what happened was a result of what was said.

> God said, "**Let there be** light," and there was light. (Genesis 1:3 ULT)
>
> > God said, 'Let there be light,' **so** there was light.
> > God said, "Light must be;" **as a result**, there was
> > light.

(3) If people would not use a command as a condition, translate it as a statement with the words "if" and "then."

> Teach a child the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn away from that instruction. (Proverbs 22:6 ULT)

Translated as:

> "**If** you teach a child the way he should go,
> **then** when he is old he will not turn away from that instruction."

Song of Solomon References:

2:14

Information Structure

Description

Different languages arrange the parts of the sentence in different ways. In English, a sentence normally has the subject first, then the verb, then the object, then other modifiers, like this: Peter painted his house yesterday.

Many other languages normally put these things in a different order such as: Painted yesterday Peter his house.

Although all languages have a normal order for parts of a sentence, this order can change depending on what information the speaker or writer considers to be the most important.

Suppose that someone is answering the question, “What did Peter paint yesterday?” The person asking the question already knows all of the information in our sentence above except for the object, “his house.” Therefore, that becomes the most important part of the information, and a person answering in English might say “His house is what Peter painted (yesterday).”

This puts the most important information first, which is normal for English. Many Other Languages would normally put the most important information last. In the flow of a text, the most important information is usually what the writer considers to be new information for the reader. In some languages the new information comes first, and in others it comes last.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Different languages arrange the parts of a sentence in different ways. If you (the translator) copy the order of the parts of a sentence from the source, it may not make sense in your language.
- Different languages put important or new information in different places in the sentence. If you keep the important or new information in the same place that it had in the source language, it may be confusing or give the wrong message in your language.

Examples From the Bible

> They all ate until they were satisfied. (Mark 6:42 ULT)

The parts of this sentence were in a different order in the original Greek source language. They were like this: And they ate all and they were satisfied.

In English, this means that the people ate everything. But the next verse says that they took up twelve baskets full of leftover pieces of food. In order for this to not be so confusing, the translators of the ULT put the parts of the sentence in the right order for English.

> And the day began to end, and the twelve came to him and said, “Send the crowd away so that, going into the surrounding villages and countryside, they may find lodging and food, because we are here in an desolate place.” (Luke 9:12 ULT)

In this verse, what the disciples say to Jesus puts the important information first, that he should send the crowd away. In languages that put the important information last, people would understand that the reason that they gave, being in an isolated place, is the most important part of their message to Jesus. They might then think that the disciples are afraid of the spirits in that place, and that sending the people to buy food is a way to protect them from the spirits. That is the wrong message.

> Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for their fathers treated the false prophets in the same way. (Luke 6:26 ULT)

In this verse, the most important part of the information is first, that “woe” is coming on the people for what they are doing. The reason that supports that warning comes last. This could be confusing for people who expect the important information to come last.

Translation Strategies

(1) Study how your language arranges the parts of a sentence, and use that order in your translation.
(2) Study where your language puts the new or important information, and rearrange the order of information so that it follows the way it is done in your language.

Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Study how your language arranges the parts of a sentence, and use that order in your translation.

This is the verse in the original Greek order:

> And he went out from there and came to the hometown his, and they followed him the disciples his. (Mark 6:1)

The ULT has put this into the normal order for English:

> Now Jesus went out from there and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. (Mark 6:1 ULT)

(2) Study where your language puts the new or important information and rearrange the order of information so that it follows the way it is done in your language.

> And the day began to end, and the twelve came and said to him, “Send the crowd away so that, going into the surrounding villages and countryside, they may find lodging and food, because we are here in a desolate place.” (Luke 9:12 ULT)

If your language puts the important information last, you can change the order of the verse.

> > Now the day was about to come to an end, and the twelve came to him and said, “Because we are here in an desolate place, send the crowd away that they may

> > go into the surrounding villages and countryside to find lodging and food.”
>
> Woe to you, when all men speak well of you, for that is how their ancestors treated the false prophets. (Luke 6:26 ULT)

If your language puts the important information last, you can change the order of the verse.

> > When all men speak well of you, which is just as people’s ancestors treated the false prophets, then woe to you!

Song of Solomon References:

1:8; 1:9; 1:16; 2:3; 2:8-9; 4:9; 4:10; 4:12; 5:1; 5:7; 5:9; 6:4; 6:8; 6:11; 7:1; 7:11

Metaphor

Description

A metaphor is a figure of speech in which someone speaks of one thing as if it were a different thing because he wants people to think about how those two things are alike.

For example, someone might say, “The girl I love is a red rose.”

A girl and a rose are very different things, but the speaker considers that they are alike in some way. The hearer’s task is to understand in what way they are alike.

The Parts of a Metaphor

The example above shows us that a metaphor has three parts. In this metaphor, the speaker is talking about “the girl I love.” This is the **Topic**. The speaker wants the hearer to think about what is similar between her and “a red rose.” The red rose is the **Image** to which he compares the girl. Most probably, he wants the hearer to consider that they are both beautiful. This is the **Idea** that the girl and the rose both share, and so we may also call it the **Point of Comparison**.

Every metaphor has three parts:

- The **Topic**, the item being immediately discussed by the writer/speaker.
- The **Image**, the physical item (object, event, action, etc.) which the speaker uses to describe the topic.
- The **Idea**, the abstract concept or quality that the physical **Image** brings to the mind of the hearer when he thinks of how the **Image** and the **Topic** are similar. Often, the **Idea** of a metaphor is not explicitly stated in the Bible, but it is only implied from the context. The hearer or reader usually needs to think of the **Idea** himself.

Using these terms, we can say that a metaphor is a figure of speech that uses a physical **Image** to apply an abstract **Idea** to the speaker’s **Topic**.

Usually, a writer or speaker uses a metaphor in order to express something about a **Topic**, with at least one **Point of Comparison** (**Idea**) between the **Topic** and the **Image**. Often in metaphors, the **Topic** and the **Image** are explicitly stated, but the **Idea** is only implied. The

writer/speaker often uses a metaphor in order to invite the readers/listeners to think about the similarity between the **Topic** and the **Image** and to figure out for themselves the **Idea** that is being communicated.

Speakers often use metaphors in order to strengthen their message, to make their language more vivid, to express their feelings better, to say something that is hard to say in any other way, or to help people remember their message.

Sometimes speakers use metaphors that are very common in their language. However, sometimes speakers use metaphors that are uncommon, and even some metaphors that are unique. When a metaphor has become very common in a language, often it becomes a "passive" metaphor, in contrast to uncommon metaphors, which we describe as being "active." Passive metaphors and active metaphors each present a different kind of translation problem, which we will discuss below.

Passive Metaphors

A passive metaphor is a metaphor that has been used so much in the language that its speakers no longer regard it as one concept standing for another. Linguists often call these "dead metaphors." Passive metaphors are extremely common. Examples in English include the terms "table **leg**," "family **tree**," "book **leaf**" (meaning a page in a book), or the word "crane" (meaning a large machine for lifting heavy loads). English speakers simply think of these words as having more than one meaning. Examples of passive metaphors in Biblical Hebrew include using the word "hand" to represent "power," using the word "face" to represent "presence," and speaking of emotions or moral qualities as if they were "clothing."

Patterned Pairs of Concepts Acting as Metaphors

Many ways of metaphorical speaking depend on pairs of concepts, where one underlying concept frequently stands for a different underlying concept. For example, in English, the direction "up" (the Image) often represents the concepts of "more" or "better" (the Idea). Because of this pair of underlying concepts, we can make sentences such as "The price of gasoline is going **up**," "A **highly** intelligent man," and also the opposite kind of idea: "The temperature is going **down**," and "I am feeling very **low**."

Patterned pairs of concepts are constantly used for metaphorical purposes in the world's languages because they serve as convenient ways to organize thought. In general, people like

to speak of abstract qualities (such as power, presence, emotions, and moral qualities) as if they were body parts, or as if they were objects that could be seen or held, or as if they were events that could be watched as they happened.

When these metaphors are used in normal ways, it is rare that the speaker and audience regard them as figurative speech. Examples of metaphors in English that go unrecognized are:

- "Turn the heat **up**." More is spoken of as up.
- "Let us **go ahead** with our debate." Doing what was planned is spoken of as walking or advancing.
- "You **defend** your theory well." Argument is spoken of as war.
- "A **flow** of words." Words are spoken of as liquids.

English speakers do not view these as metaphorical expressions or figures of speech, so it would be wrong to translate them into other languages in a way that would lead people to pay special attention to them as figurative speech. For a description of important patterns of this kind of metaphor in biblical languages, please see **Biblical Imagery — Common Patterns** and the pages it will direct you to.

When translating something that is a passive metaphor into another language, do not treat it as a metaphor. Instead, just use the best expression for that thing or concept in the target language.

Active Metaphors

These are metaphors that people recognize as one concept standing for another concept, or one thing for another thing. Metaphors make people think about how the one thing is like the other thing, because in most ways the two things are very different. People also easily recognize these metaphors as giving strength and unusual qualities to the message. For this reason, people pay attention to these metaphors. For example,

> But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. (Malachi 4:2a ULT)

Here, God speaks about his salvation as if it were the sun rising in order to shine its rays on the people whom he loves. He also speaks of the sun's rays as if they were wings. Also, he speaks

of these wings as if they were bringing medicine that would heal his people. Here is another example:

> And he said to them, “Go and tell that fox …” (Luke 13:32a ULT)

Here, “that fox” refers to King Herod. The people listening to Jesus certainly understood that Jesus was intending for them to apply certain characteristics of a fox to Herod. They probably understood that Jesus intended to communicate that Herod was evil, either in a cunning way or as someone who was destructive, murderous, or who took things that did not belong to him, or all of these.

Active metaphors require the translator’s special care to make a correct translation. To do so, you need to understand the parts of a metaphor and how they work together to produce meaning.

> Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; he who comes to me will not be hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.” (John 6:35 ULT)

In this metaphor, Jesus called himself the bread of life. The **Topic** is “I” (meaning Jesus himself) and the **Image** is “bread.” Bread was the primary food that people ate in that place and time. The similarity between bread and Jesus is that people need both to live. Just as people need to eat food in order to have physical life, people need to trust in Jesus in order to have eternal life. The **Idea** of the metaphor is “life.” In this case, Jesus stated the central Idea of the metaphor, but often the Idea is only implied.

Purposes of Metaphor

- One purpose of metaphor is to teach people about something that they do not know (the **Topic**) by showing that it is like something that they already do know (the **Image**).
- Another purpose is to emphasize that something (the **Topic**) has a particular quality (the **Idea**) or to show that it has that quality in an extreme way.
- Another purpose is to lead people to feel the same way about the **Topic** as they would feel about the **Image**.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- People may not recognize that something is a metaphor. In other words, they may mistake a metaphor for a literal statement, and thus, misunderstand it.
- People may not be familiar with the thing that is used as an image, and so, not be able to understand the metaphor.
- If the topic is not stated, people may not know what the topic is.
- People may not know the points of comparison that the speaker wants them to understand. If they fail to think of these points of comparison, they will not understand the metaphor.
- People may think that they understand the metaphor, but they do not. This can happen when they apply points of comparison from their own culture, rather than from the biblical culture.

Translation Principles

- Make the meaning of a metaphor as clear to the target audience as it was to the original audience.
- Do not make the meaning of a metaphor more clear to the target audience than you think it was to the original audience.

Examples From the Bible

> Listen to this word, **you cows of Bashan**, (Amos 4:1q ULT)

In this metaphor Amos speaks to the upper-class women of Samaria (“you,” the Topic) as if they were cows (the Image). Amos does not say what similarity(s) he intends between these women and cows. He wants the reader to think of them, and he fully expects that readers from his culture will easily do so. From the context, we can see that he means that the women are like cows in that they are fat and interested only in feeding themselves. If we were to apply similarities from a different culture, such as that cows are sacred and should be worshiped, we would get the wrong meaning from this verse.

NOTE: Amos does not actually mean that the women are cows. He speaks to them as human beings.

> Yet, Yahweh, you are our father; **we are the clay**. **You are our potter**; and we all are the work of your hand. (Isaiah 64:8 ULT)

The example above has two related metaphors. The Topic(s) are “we” and “you,” and the Image(s) are “clay” and “potter.” The similarity between a potter and God is the fact that both make what they wish out of their material. The potter makes what he wishes out of the clay, and God makes what he wishes out of his people. The Idea being expressed by the comparison between the potter’s clay and “us” is that **neither the clay nor God’s people have a right to complain about what they are becoming**.

> Jesus said to them, “Take heed and beware of **the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees**.” The disciples reasoned among themselves and said, “It is because we did not take bread.” (Matthew 16:6-7 ULT)

Jesus used a metaphor here, but his disciples did not realize it. When he said “yeast,” they thought he was talking about bread, but “yeast” was the Image in his metaphor, and the Topic was the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Since the disciples (the original audience) did not understand what Jesus meant, it would not be good to state clearly here what Jesus meant.

Translation Strategies

If people would understand the metaphor in the same way that the original readers would have understood it, go ahead and use it. Be sure to test the translation to make sure that people do understand it in the right way.

If people do not or would not understand it, here are some other strategies.

(1) If the metaphor is a common expression in the source language or expresses a patterned pair of concepts in a biblical language (that is, it is a passive metaphor), then express the **Idea** in the simplest way preferred by your language.
(2) If the metaphor seems to be an active metaphor, you can translate it literally **if you think that the target language also uses this metaphor in the same way to mean the same thing as in the Bible**. If you do this, be sure to test it to make sure that the language community understands it correctly.
(3) If the target audience does not realize that it is a metaphor, then change the metaphor to a simile. Some languages do this by adding words such as “like” or “as.” See Simile.
(4) If the target audience would not know the **Image**, see Translate Unknowns for ideas on how to translate that image.

(5) If the target audience would not use that **Image** for that meaning, use an image from your own culture instead. Be sure that it is an image that could have been possible in Bible times.
(6) If the target audience would not know what the **Topic** is, then state the topic clearly. (However, do not do this if the original audience did not know what the Topic was.)
(7) If the target audience would not know the intended similarity (the **Idea**) between the topic and the image, then state it clearly.
(8) If none of these strategies is satisfactory, then simply state the **Idea** plainly without using a metaphor.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the metaphor is a common expression in the source language or expresses a patterned pair of concepts in a biblical language (that is, a passive metaphor), then express the Idea in the simplest way preferred by your language.

> Then, see, one of the leaders of the synagogue, named Jairus, came, and when he saw him, **fell at his feet**. (Mark 5:22 ULT)
>
> > Then one of the leaders of the synagogue, named Jairus, came, and when he saw him, **immediately bowed down in front of him**.

(2) If the metaphor seems to be an active metaphor, you can translate it literally **if you think that the target language also uses this metaphor in the same way to mean the same thing as in the Bible**. If you do this, be sure to test it to make sure that the language community understands it correctly.

> But Jesus said to them, “He wrote this commandment to you because of your **hardness of heart.**” (Mark 10:5 ULT)

> > It was because of your **hard hearts** that he wrote you this law.

We made no change to this one, but it must be tested to make sure that the target audience correctly understands this metaphor.

(3) If the target audience does not realize that it is a metaphor, then change the metaphor to a simile. Some languages do this by adding words such as “like” or “as.”

> Yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we **are the clay.** You **are our potter**; and we all are the work of your hand. (Isaiah 64:8 ULT)
>
> > And yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we are **like** clay. You are **like** a potter; and we all are the work of your hand.

(4) If the target audience would not know the **Image**, see Translate Unknowns for ideas on how to translate that image.

> Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you **to kick against a goad**. (Acts 26:14b ULT)
>
> > Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to **kick against a pointed stick**.

(5) If the target audience would not use that **Image** for that meaning, use an image from your own culture instead. Be sure that it is an image that could have been possible in Bible times.

> Yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we are the **clay**. You are our **potter**; and we all are the work of your hand. (Isaiah 64:8 ULT)
>
> > "And yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we are the **wood**. You are our **carver**; and we all are the work of your hand."
> > "And yet, Yahweh, you are our father; we are the **string**. You are the **weaver**; and we all are the work of your hand."

(6) If the target audience would not know what the **Topic** is, then state the topic clearly. (However, do not do this if the original audience did not know what the topic was.)

> Yahweh lives; may **my rock** be praised. May the God of my salvation be exalted. (Psalm 18:46 ULT)
>
> > Yahweh lives; **He is my rock**. May he be praised.
> > May the God of my salvation be exalted.

(7) If the target audience would not know the intended similarity between the Topic and the Image, then state it clearly.

> Yahweh lives; may **my rock** be praised. May the God of my salvation be exalted. (Psalm 18:46 ULT)

> > Yahweh lives; may he be praised because he is the rock **under which I can hide from my enemies**. May the God of my salvation be exalted.
>
> Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you **to kick against a goad**. (Acts 26:14 ULT)
>
> > Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? You **fight against me and hurt yourself like an ox that kicks against its owner's pointed stick**.

(8) If none of these strategies are satisfactory, then simply state the idea plainly without using a metaphor.

> I will make you to become **fishers of men**. (Mark 1:17b ULT)
>
> > I will make you to become **people who gather men**. Now you gather fish. I will make you **gather people**.

To learn more about specific metaphors, see **Biblical Imagery — Common Patterns** 🔗.

Song of Solomon References:

front:intro; 1:intro; 1:3; 1:4; 1:6; 1:12; 1:13; 1:14; 1:15; 1:15; 1:16; 1:16; 1:17; 2:1; 2:3; 2:4; 2:9; 2:11; 2:14; 2:15; 2:16; 3:7; 4:1; 4:6; 4:8; 4:9; 4:10; 4:11; 4:11; 4:12; 4:12; 5:intro; 5:1; 5:1; 5:2; 5:2; 5:4; 5:10; 5:11; 5:13; 5:14; 5:14; 5:15; 6:2; 6:3; 6:8-9; 6:9; 7:intro; 7:4; 7:5; 7:8; 7:13; 8:6; 8:7; 8:9; 8:9; 8:12; 8:14

Metonymy

Description

Metonymy is a figure of speech in which an item (either physical or abstract) is called not by its own name, but by the name of something closely associated with it. A metonym is a word or phrase used as a substitute for something that it is associated with.

> … and **the blood** of Jesus his Son cleanses us from every sin. (1 John 1:7b ULT)

The blood represents Christ's death.

> And he took **the cup** in the same way after supper, saying, "**This cup** is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you." (Luke 22:20 ULT)

The cup represents the wine that is in the cup.

Metonymy can be used

- as a shorter way of referring to something
- to make an abstract idea more meaningful by referring to it with the name of a physical object associated with it

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

The Bible uses metonymy very often. Speakers of some languages are not familiar with metonymy and they may not recognize it when they read it in the Bible. If they do not recognize the metonymy, they will not understand the passage or, worse yet, they will get a wrong understanding of the passage. Whenever a metonym is used, people need to be able to understand what it represents.

Examples From the Bible

> The Lord God will give to him **the throne** of his father David. (Luke 1:32b ULT)

A throne represents the authority of a king. “Throne” is a metonym for “kingly authority,” “kingship,” or “reign.” This means that God would make him become a king who would follow King David.

> Then immediately his **mouth** was opened (Luke 1:64a ULT)

The mouth here represents the power to speak. This means that he was able to talk again.

> Who warned you to flee from **the wrath** that is coming? (Luke 3:7b ULT)

The word “wrath” or “anger” is a metonym for “punishment.” God was extremely angry with the people and, as a result, he would punish them.

Translation Strategies

If people would easily understand the metonym, consider using it. Otherwise, here are some options.

(1) Use the metonym along with the name of the thing it represents.

(2) Use only the name of the thing the metonym represents.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use the metonym along with the name of the thing it represents.

> And he took the cup in the same way after the supper, saying, "**This cup** is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you." (Luke 22:20 ULT)
>
> > He took the cup in the same way after supper, saying,
> > "**The wine in this cup** is the new covenant in my
> > blood, which is poured out for you."

This verse also contains a second metonym: The cup, (representing the wine it contains) also represents the new covenant made with the blood Christ shed for us.

(2) Use the name of the thing the metonym represents.

> The Lord God will give him **the throne** of his father David. (Luke 1:32b ULT)
>
> > "The Lord God will give him **the kingly authority** of
> > his father, David."
> > or:
> > "The Lord God will **make him king** like his ancestor,
> > King David."
>
> Who warned you to flee from **the wrath** that is coming? (Luke 3:7b ULT)
>
> > "Who warned you to flee from God's coming
> > **punishment**?"

To learn about some common metonymies, see **Biblical Imagery — Common Metonymies** 🔗.

Song of Solomon References:

1:3; 1:9; 2:8; 3:11; 5:2; 5:4; 5:16; 7:8; 7:9; 8:6; 8:6; 8:10; 8:13

Numbers

Description

There are many numbers in the Bible. They can be written as words (“five”) or as numerals (“5”). Some numbers are very large, such as “two hundred” (200), “twenty-two thousand” (22,000), or “one hundred million” (100,000,000). Some languages do not have words for all of these numbers. Translators need to decide how to translate numbers and whether to write them as words or numerals.

Some numbers are exact and others are rounded.

> Abram was **86** years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram. (Genesis 16:16 ULT)

Eighty-six (86) is an exact number.

> That day about **3,000** of the people died. (Exodus 32:28b ULT)

Here the number three thousand (3,000) is a round number. It may have been a little more than that or a little less than that. The word “about” shows that it is not an exact number.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages do not have words for some of these numbers.

Translation Principles

- Exact numbers should be translated as closely and specifically as they can be.
- Rounded numbers can be translated more generally.

Examples From the Bible

> When Jared had lived **162** years, he became the father of Enoch. After he became the father of Enoch, Jared lived **800** years. He became the father of more sons and daughters. Jared lived **962** years, and then he died. (Genesis 5:18-20 ULT)

The numbers 162, 800, and 962 are exact numbers and should be translated with something as close to those numbers as possible.

> Our sister, may you be the mother of **thousands of ten thousands.** (Genesis 24:60b ULT)

This is a rounded number. It does not say exactly how many descendants she should have, but it was a huge number of them.

Translation Strategies

(1) Write numbers using numerals.
(2) Write numbers using your language's words or the Gateway Language words for those numbers.
(3) Write numbers using words, and put the numerals in parentheses after them.
(4) Combine words for large numbers.
(5) Use a very general expression for very large rounded numbers and write the numeral in parentheses afterward.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

We will use the following verse in our examples:

> Now, see, at great effort I have prepared for Yahweh's house **100,000** talents of gold, **1,000,000** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities. (1 Chronicles 22:14a ULT)

(1) Write numbers using numerals.

> I have prepared for Yahweh's house **100,000** talents of gold, **1,000,000** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(2) Write numbers using your language's words or the Gateway Language words for those numbers.

> I have prepared for Yahweh's house **one hundred thousand** talents of gold, **one million** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(3) Write numbers using words, and put the numerals in parenthesis after them.

> I have prepared for Yahweh's house one **hundred thousand (100,000)** talents of gold, **one million (1,000,000)** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(4) Combine words for large numbers.

> > I have prepared for Yahweh's house **one hundred thousand** talents of gold, **a thousand thousand** talents of silver, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

(5) Use a very general expression for very large rounded numbers and write the numeral in parentheses afterward.

> I have prepared for Yahweh's house **a great amount of gold (100,000 talents)**, **ten times that amount of silver (1,000,000 talents)**, and bronze and iron in large quantities.

Consistency

Be consistent in your translations. Decide how the numbers will be translated, using numbers or numerals. There are different ways of being consistent.

- Use words to represent numbers all of the time. (You might have very long words.)
- Use numerals to represent numbers all of the time.
- Use words to represent the numbers that your language has words for and use numerals for the numbers that your language does not have words for.
- Use words for low numbers and numerals for high numbers.
- Use words for numbers that require few words and numerals for numbers that require more than a few words.
- Use words to represent numbers, and write the numerals in parentheses after them.

Consistency in the ULT and UST

The *unfoldingWord® Literal Text* (ULT) and the *unfoldingWord® Simplified Text* (UST) use words for the numbers one through ten and use numerals for all numbers above ten.

> When Adam had lived **130** years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, after his image, and he called his name Seth. After Adam became the father of Seth, he lived **800** years. He became the father of more sons and daughters. Adam lived **930** years, and then he died. (Genesis 5:3-5 ULT)

Song of Solomon References:

4:4

Oath Formulas

An oath is a solemn promise that someone makes to another person to do something or to solemnly testify that something is true. The oath includes the idea that a bad thing will happen if the person making the oath does not do the thing promised or if what the person says is not true.

Description

There are two types of oath in the Bible. We can call the first type a “Promise” oath, and the second type a “Truth” oath.

Promise Oath

In this type of oath, the person saying it is promising to do something. As a guarantee that the person taking the oath will do what he promises, the person calls on God to witness the oath and to punish him severely if he does not do the thing promised. A complete Promise oath has four parts, but some of them are often left unspoken and only implied:

1. Calling on God to witness the oath and judge the person making it
2. Making the promise (may be implied as the opposite of the violation)
3. Telling what would be a violation of the oath (may be implied as the opposite of the promise)
4. Saying what punishment God would do if the person violates the oath (often implied)

Truth Oath

In this type of oath, the person saying it is affirming that what he is saying is true, and he guarantees that it is true by naming the life of God. Sometimes the person will not name God directly but will instead name something holy that is associated with God, such as the temple. In some situations, a person might name a revered person, such as a king. The implication is that if the person’s statement proves to be false, that person will lose any relationship to God or to the revered person. These oaths have three parts, but the third part is implied and not stated:

1. Naming something holy, usually the life of God or of someone who is revered.
2. Making the statement.
3. Implied: The speaker and hearers of the oath understand that the speaker forfeits his relationship to God or to the revered person if his statement is false.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue:

People in some cultures may not be familiar with the practice of taking oaths, and so they may not understand what the people in the Bible are doing. In many languages, people would not take an oath the way that people did in the Bible, and so they might not recognize that the person is taking an oath. In the Old Testament, people often did not speak one or more parts of the oath, leaving those parts implied. The part that was most often left unspoken was the part that would tell what would happen if they break the oath. People believed that spoken words have power, and that speaking the part about punishment might cause the punishment to happen, so they often left that part to be understood silently. Because of these things, people might think that the person in the Bible is not making a real oath or they may not understand what the verse is talking about at all.

Examples From the Bible

Promise Oath

> “I raise my hand to Yahweh, God Most High, the possessor of heaven and earth, if from a thread even to the strap of a sandal, or if I take from anything that {belongs} to you, so that you will not say, ‘I made Abram rich.’ (Genesis 14:22-23 ULT)

In the verse above, Abram describes a symbolic action (raising his hand to Yahweh) to signal that he is taking an oath and calling on Yahweh as witness and judge. He says what would violate his oath (thus promising to do the opposite). Then he leaves out the part that would describe how Yahweh would punish him if he fails to do what he is promising.

> May Yahweh do thus to me, and thus may he add, if death separates between me and between you. (Ruth 1:17 ULT)

Ruth calls on Yahweh and includes the part about Yahweh punishing her, says what the violation would be (thus promising to do the opposite), but does not say what the punishment would be.

> And Saul said, “Thus may God do and thus may he add, for dying you will die, Jonathan.” (1 Samuel 14:44 ULT)

Saul takes an oath that Jonathan will die, but does not specifically say whom God would punish, what the punishment would be, or what the person would do that would violate the oath and bring about God’s punishment.

Truth Oath

> But indeed, the life of Yahweh and the life of yourself, that between me and between death is like a step!” (1 Samuel 20:3)

Here David uses a truth oath to convince Jonathan that Saul does indeed want to kill David. David says this because Jonathan had been trying to assure David that he had nothing to fear from Saul. But Jonathan knows that David holds both Yahweh’s and Jonathan’s life as sacred, and so this oath convinces Jonathan that David truly believes what he is saying.

> The life of your soul, my lord, I {am} the woman having stationed herself with you in this {place} to pray to Yahweh. (1 Samuel 1:26 ULT)

Hannah is speaking to the priest Eli. She demonstrates that she holds the priest’s life as sacred by swearing by it that what she is saying is true.

And Elijah said, “The life of Yahweh of armies, before whom I stand, that I will appear before him today.” (1 Kings 18:15 ULT)

Elijah uses this oath to convince Obadiah to announce his arrival to Ahab. Obadiah knows that Elijah would never break his relationship to Yahweh.

Combination oath

> The life of Pharaoh, if you leave from this {place} without your youngest brother coming here. (Genesis 42:15)

Joseph is speaking to his brothers as an Egyptian official, and so he swears by the life of Pharaoh rather than by the life of the God of the Hebrews. Joseph combines the two types of oaths here by using a conditional "if" statement (part 3 of the "Promise" oath). He leaves unstated the "then" part of the oath which would be either a punishment from Pharoah (as with a Promise oath) or a breaking of relationship with Pharaoh (as with a "Truth" oath) if this conditional statement proves true.

Translation Strategies

If people who speak your language would recognize the oath as it is in the ULT, consider translating it in its current form. If not, consider using the following strategies.

(1) Add in the missing parts so that people recognize it as an oath.
(2) If oaths are unfamiliar, add a short explanation of what an oath is.
(3) Put the oath into a form that would be natural in your language.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Add in the missing parts so that people recognize it as an oath.

> "I raise my hand to Yahweh, God Most High, the possessor of heaven and earth, if from a thread even to the strap of a sandal, or if I take from anything that {belongs} to you, so that you will not say, 'I made Abram rich.' (Genesis 14:22-23 ULT)

"I raise my hand to Yahweh, God Most High, the possessor of heaven and earth, **and ask him to punish me severely** if from a thread even to the strap of a sandal, or if I take from anything that {belongs} to you, so that you will not say, 'I made Abram rich.'

> And Saul said, “Thus may God do and thus may he add, for dying you will die, Jonathan.” (1 Samuel 14:44 ULT)

And Saul said, “May God **punish me severely** and may he add **even more punishment if I do not kill you**, for dying you will die, Jonathan.”

> But indeed, the life of Yahweh and the life of yourself, that between me and between death is like a step! (1 Samuel 20:3)

But indeed, **I swear by** Yahweh’s life and **by** the life of yourself that **it is true that** between me and death is like a step!

> The life of Pharaoh, if you leave from this {place} without your youngest brother coming here. (Genesis 42:15)

I swear by the life of Pharaoh, if you leave from this {place} without your youngest brother coming here, **may Pharaoh punish me severely**.

(2) If oaths are unfamiliar, add a short explanation of what an oath is.

> May Yahweh do thus to me, and thus may he add, if death separates between me and between you. (Ruth 1:17 ULT)

Then Ruth called on Yahweh to enforce her promise: “May Yahweh do thus to me, and thus may he add, if death separates between me and between you.”

> But indeed, the life of Yahweh and the life of yourself, that between me and between death is like a step! (1 Samuel 20:3)

Then David made a statement to Jonathan to convince him that he truly believed that he was in danger: "But indeed, **I forfeit my relationship to** Yahweh and **to you** yourself **if it is not true** that between me and death is like a step!"

(3) Put the oath into a form that would be natural in your language.

> "I raise my hand to Yahweh, God Most High, the possessor of heaven and earth, if from a thread even to the strap of a sandal, or if I take from anything that {belongs} to you, so that you will not say, 'I made Abram rich.' (Genesis 14:22-23 ULT)

"**I solemnly swear before** Yahweh, God Most High, the possessor of heaven and earth, **that I will not take** from a thread even to the strap of a sandal, or from anything that {belongs} to you, **so help me God**, so that you will not say, 'I made Abram rich.'

> May Yahweh do thus to me, and thus may he add, if death separates between me and between you. (Ruth 1:17 ULT)

May Yahweh **strike me dead right where I stand** if death separates between me and between you.

> But indeed, the life of Yahweh and the life of yourself, that between me and between death is like a step! (1 Samuel 20:3)

But indeed, **before** Yahweh and **before you** yourself, **I swear** that between me and death is like a step!

Song of Solomon References:

2:7; 5:8; 5:9; 8:4

Parallelism

Description

Parallelism is a poetic device in which two phrases or clauses that are similar in structure or idea are used together. The following are some of the different kinds of parallelism.

- The second clause or phrase means the same as the first. This is called synonymous parallelism.
- The second clarifies or strengthens the meaning of the first.
- The second completes what is said in the first.
- The second says something that contrasts with the first, but adds to the same idea.

Parallelism is most commonly found in Old Testament poetry, such as in the books of Psalms and Proverbs. It also occurs in Greek in the New Testament, both in the four gospels and in the apostles' letters.

This article will only discuss synonymous parallelism, the kind in which the two parallel phrases mean the same thing, because that is the kind that presents a problem for translation. Note that we use the term "synonymous parallelism" for long phrases or clauses that have the same meaning. We use the term "doublet" for words or very short phrases that mean basically the same thing and are used together.

In the poetry of the original languages, synonymous parallelism has several effects:

- It shows that something is very important by saying it more than once and in more than one way.
- It helps the hearer to think more deeply about the idea by saying it in different ways.
- It makes the language more beautiful and raises it above the ordinary way of speaking.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages would not use synonymous parallelism. They would either think it odd that someone said the same thing twice, or, since it is in the Bible, they would think that the two phrases must have some difference in meaning. For them it would be confusing, rather than beautiful. They would not understand that the repetition of the idea in different words serves to emphasize the idea.

Examples From the Bible

> Your word is a lamp to my feet
>
> and a light for my path. (Psalm 119:105 ULT)

Both parts of the sentence are metaphors saying that God's word teaches people how to live. That is the single idea. The words "lamp" and "light" are similar in meaning because they refer to light. The words "my feet" and "my path" are related because they refer to a person walking. Walking is a metaphor for living.

> You make him to rule over the works of your hands;
>
> you have put all things under his feet (Psalm 8:6 ULT)

Both lines say that God made man the ruler of everything. "To rule over" is the same idea as putting things "under his feet," and "the works of your [God's] hands" is the same idea as "all things."

> Yahweh sees everything a person does
>
> and watches all the paths he takes. (Proverbs 5:21 ULT)

The first phrase and the second phrase mean the same thing. There are three ideas that are the same between these two phrases. "Sees" corresponds to "watches," "everything…does" corresponds to "all the paths…takes," and "a person" corresponds to "he."

> Praise Yahweh, all you nations;
>
> exalt him, all you peoples! (Psalm 117:1 ULT)

Both parts of this verse tell people everywhere to praise Yahweh. The words ‘Praise’ and ‘exalt’ mean the same thing. The words ‘Yahweh’ and ‘him’ refer to the same person. The terms ‘all you nations’ and ‘all you peoples’ refer to the same people.

> For Yahweh has a lawsuit with his people,
>
> and he will fight in court against Israel. (Micah 6:2b ULT)

The two parts of this verse say that Yahweh has a serious disagreement with his people, Israel. These are not two different disagreements or two different groups of people.

Translation Strategies

For most kinds of parallelism, it is good to translate both of the clauses or phrases. For synonymous parallelism, it is good to translate both clauses if people in your language understand that the purpose of saying something twice is to strengthen a single idea. But if your language does not use parallelism in this way, then consider using one of the following translation strategies.

(1) Combine the ideas of both clauses into one.
(2) If it appears that the clauses are used together to show that what they say is really true, you could combine the ideas of both clauses into one and include words that emphasize the truth such as “truly” or “certainly.”
(3) If it appears that the clauses are used together to intensify an idea in them, you could combine the ideas of both clauses into one and use words like “very,” “completely,” or “all.”

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Combine the ideas of both clauses into one.

> Until now you have dealt deceitfully with me and you have spoken lies to me. (Judges 16:13, ULT)

Delilah expressed this idea twice to emphasize that she was very upset.

> > Until now you have deceived me with your lies.
>
> Yahweh sees everything a person does and watches all the paths he takes. (Proverbs 5:21 ULT)

The phrase “all the paths he takes” is a metaphor for “all he does.”

> > Yahweh pays attention to everything a person does.
>
> For Yahweh has a lawsuit with his people, and he will fight in court against Israel. (Micah 6:2 ULT)

This parallelism describes one serious disagreement that Yahweh had with one group of people. If this is unclear, the phrases can be combined:

> > For Yahweh has a lawsuit with his people, Israel.

(2) If it appears that the clauses are used together to show that what they say is really true, you could combine the ideas of both clauses into one and include words that emphasize the truth such as “truly” or “certainly.”

> Yahweh sees everything a person does and watches all the paths he takes. (Proverbs 5:21 ULT)

> > Yahweh truly sees everything a person does.
>
> You make him to rule over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet (Psalm 8:6 ULT)
>
> > You have certainly made him to rule over everything that you have created.

(3) If it appears that the clauses are used together to intensify an idea in them, you could combine the ideas of both clauses into one and use words like “very,” “completely” or “all.”

> Until now you have dealt deceitfully with me and you have spoken lies to me. (Judges 16:13, ULT)
>
> > All you have done is lie to me.
>
> Yahweh sees everything a person does and watches all the paths he takes. (Proverbs 5:21 ULT)
>
> > Yahweh sees absolutely everything that a person does.

Song of Solomon References:

1:15; 2:1; 2:5; 2:8; 2:9; 2:11; 2:14; 2:17; 3:4; 3:6; 3:11; 4:1; 4:4; 4:8; 4:12; 5:5; 5:12; 6:1; 6:9; 7:1

Personification

Description

Personification is a figure of speech in which someone speaks of something as if it could do things that animals or people can do. People often do this because it makes it easier to talk about things that we cannot see:

Such as wisdom:

> Does not Wisdom call out? (Proverbs 8:1a ULT)

Or sin:

> Sin crouches at the door. (Genesis 4:7b ULT)

People also use personification because it is sometimes easier to talk about people's relationships with non-human things such as wealth as if they were relationships between people.

> You cannot serve God and wealth. (Matthew 6:24b ULT)

In each case, the purpose of the personification is to highlight a certain characteristic of the non-human thing. As in metaphor, the reader needs to think of the way that the thing is like a certain kind of person.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Some languages do not use personification.
- Some languages use personification only in certain situations.

Examples From the Bible

> You cannot **serve** God and wealth. (Matthew 6:24b ULT)

Jesus speaks of wealth as if it were a master whom people might serve. Loving money and basing one's decisions on it is like serving it as a slave would serve his master.

> Does not Wisdom **call** out? Does not Understanding **raise her voice**? (Proverbs 8:1 ULT)

The author speaks of wisdom and understanding as if they were woman who calls out to teach people. This means that they are not something hidden, but something obvious that people should pay attention to.

Translation Strategies

If the personification would be understood clearly, consider using it. If it would not be understood, here are some other ways for translating it.

(1) Add words or phrases to make the human (or animal) characteristic clear.
(2) In addition to Strategy (1), use words such as "like" or "as" to show that the sentence is not to be understood literally.
(3) Find a way to translate it without the personification.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Add words or phrases to make the human (or animal) characteristic clear.

> **Sin crouches** at the door. (Genesis 4:7b ULT) — God speaks of sin as if it were a wild animal that is waiting for the chance to attack. This shows how dangerous sin is. An additional phrase can be added to make this danger clear.

> > **Sin** is at your door, **waiting to attack you.**

(2) In addition to Strategy (1), use words such as “like” or “as” to show that the sentence is not to be understood literally.

> Sin crouches at the door. (Genesis 4:7b ULT) — This can be translated with the word “as.”

> > Sin is crouching at the door, **just as a wild animal does as it waits to attack a person.**.

(3) Find a way to translate it without the personification.

> Even the **winds and the sea obey him**. (Matthew 8:27b ULT) — The men speak of the “wind and the sea” as if they are able to hear and obey Jesus, just as people can. This could also be translated without the idea of obedience by speaking of Jesus controlling them.
>
> > He even **controls the winds and the sea**.

NOTE: We have broadened our definition of "personification" to include "zoomorphism" (speaking of other things as if they had animal characteristics) and "anthropomorphism" (speaking of non-human things as if they had human characteristics) because the translation strategies for them are the same.

Song of Solomon References:

2:7; 4:6

Poetry

Description

Poetry is one of the ways that people use the words and sounds of their language to make their speech and writing more beautiful and to express strong emotion. Through poetry, people can communicate deeper emotion than they can through simple non-poetic forms. Poetry gives more weight and elegance to statements of truth, such as proverbs, and is also easier to remember than ordinary speech.

In poetry we commonly find:

- many figures of speech such as Apostrophe
- arrangements of clauses into particular patterns such as:
  - parallel lines (See Parallelism)
  - acrostics (beginning lines with successive letters of the alphabet)
  - chiasms (in which the first line relates to the last line, the second to the next-to-last line, etc.):

> You should not give what is holy to the dogs,
>
> > and should not throw your pearls in front of the pigs.
> >
> > Otherwise they will trample them under their feet,
>
> and having turned, they might tear you to pieces. (Matt 7:6 ULT)

- repetition of some or all of a line:

> Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his hosts. Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars. (Psalm 148:2-3 ULT)

- lines of similar length:

> Listen to my call to you,
>
> Yahweh; think about my groanings.
>
> Listen to the sound of my call, my King and my God,
>
> for it is to you that I pray. (Psalm 5:1-2 ULT)

• the same sound used at the end or at the beginning of two or more lines:

> "Twinkle, twinkle little **star**. How I wonder what you **are**." (from an English rhyme)

• the same sound repeated many times:

> "Peter, Peter, pumpkin eater" (from an English rhyme)

• The same root word used as both a verb and as a noun:

> Your old men will **dream dreams** (Joel 2:28 ULT)

> Yahweh,…**light lightning** and scatter them (Psalm 144:5-6 ULT)

We also find:

• old words and expressions
• dramatic imagery
• different use of grammar — including:
  ◦ incomplete sentences
  ◦ lack of connective words

Some places to look for poetry in your language

1. Songs, particularly old songs or songs used in children's games
2. Religious ceremony or chants of priests or witch doctors
3. Prayers, blessings, and curses
4. Old legends

Elegant or fancy speech

Elegant or fancy speech is similar to poetry in that it uses beautiful language, but it does not use all of the language's features of poetry, and it does not use them as much as poetry does. Popular speakers in the language often use elegant speech, and this is probably the easiest source of text to study to find out what makes speech elegant in your language.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue:

- Different languages use poetry for different things. If a poetic form would not communicate the same meaning in your language, you may need to write it without the poetry.
- Different languages use different poetic devices. A poetic device that conveys elegance or emotion in a biblical language may be confusing or misunderstood in another language.
- In some languages, using poetry for a particular part of the Bible would make it much more powerful.

Examples From the Bible

The Bible uses poetry for songs, teaching, and prophecy. Almost all of the books of the Old Testament have poetry in them and many of the books are completely made up of poetry.

> … for you saw my affliction; you knew the distress of my soul. (Psalm 31:7b ULT)

This example of Parallelism has two lines that mean the same thing.

> Yahweh, judge the nations; vindicate me, Yahweh, because I am righteous and innocent, Most High. (Psalm 7:8 ULT)

This example of parallelism shows the contrast between what David wants God to do to him and what he wants God to do to the unrighteous nations. (See Parallelism.)

> Keep your servant also from arrogant sins; let them not rule over me.
> (Psalm 19:13a ULT)

This example of personification speaks of sins as if they could rule over a person. (See Personification.)

> Oh, give thanks to Yahweh; for he is good,
>
> for his covenant faithfulness endures forever. Oh, give thanks to the God of gods, for his coven
>
> (Psalm 136:1-3 ULT)

This example repeats the phrases “give thanks” and “his covenant faithfulness endures forever.”

Translation Strategies

If the style of poetry that is used in the source text would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here are some other ways of translating it.

(1) Translate the poetry using one of your styles of poetry.
(2) Translate the poetry using your style of elegant speech.
(3) Translate the poetry using your style of ordinary speech.

If you use poetry it may be more beautiful.

If you use ordinary speech it may be more clear.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

> Blessed is the man who does not walk in the advice of the wicked, or stand in the pathway with sinners, or sit in the assembly of mockers. But

> his delight is in the law of Yahweh, and on his law he meditates day and night. (Psalm 1:1-2 ULT)

The following are examples of how people might translate Psalm 1:1-2.

(1) Translate the poetry using one of your styles of poetry. (The style in this example has words that sound similar at the end of each line.)

> > "Happy is the person not encouraged **to sin**,
> > Disrespect for God he will not **begin**, To those who
> > laugh at God he is **no kin.** God is his constant
> > **delight**, He does what God says **is right**, He thinks of
> > it all day **and night**."

(2) Translate the poetry using your style of elegant speech.

> > This is the kind of person who is truly blessed: the one who does not follow the advice of wicked people nor stop along the road to speak with sinners nor join the gathering of those who mock God. Rather, he takes great joy in Yahweh's law, and he meditates on it day and night.

(3) Translate the poetry using your style of ordinary speech.

> > The people who do not listen to the advice of bad people are really happy. They do not spend time with people who continually do evil things or join with those who do not respect God. Instead, they love to obey Yahweh's law, and they think about it all the time.

Song of Solomon References:

1:1; 1:2-4; 1:2; 2:14; 3:1; 3:5; 4:13-14; 5:9; 6:8; 8:1

Possession

Description

In English, the grammatical form that commonly indicates possession is also used to indicate a variety of relationships between people and objects or people and other people. In English, that grammatical relationship is shown by using the word "**of**," by using **an apostrophe and the letter "s"**, or by using a **possessive pronoun**. The following examples are different ways to indicate that my grandfather owns a house.

- the house **of** my grandfather
- my **grandfather's** house
- **his** house

Possession is used in Hebrew, Greek, and English for a variety of situations. Here are a few common situations that it is used for.

- Ownership — Someone owns something.

> The clothes of me - my clothes — The clothes that I own

- Social Relationship — Someone has some kind of social relationship with another.

> The mother of John — John's mother - the woman who gave birth to John, or the woman who cared for John

> A teacher of Israel - Israel's teacher — a person who teaches Israel

- Association — A particular thing is associated with a particular person, place, or thing.

> The sickness of David - David's sickness — the sickness that David is experiencing

> the fear of the Lord — the fear that is appropriate for a human being to have when relating to the Lord

• Contents — Something has something in it.

> a bag of clothes — a bag that has clothes in it, or a bag that is full of clothes

• Part and whole: One thing is part of another.

> my head — the head that is part of my body

> the roof of a house — the roof that is part of a house

In some languages there is a special form of possession, termed **inalienable possession.** This form of possession is used for things that cannot be removed from you, as opposed to things you could lose. In the examples above, *my head* and *my mother* are examples of inalienable possession (at least in some languages), while *my clothes* or *my teacher* would be alienably possessed. What may be considered alienable vs. inalienable may differ by language. In languages that mark the difference, the expression of inalienable possession and alienable possession will be different.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

• You (the translator) need to understand the relationship between two ideas represented by the two nouns when one is in the grammatical relationship of possessing the other.

- Some languages do not use grammatical possession for all of the situations that your source text Bible might use it for.

Examples From the Bible

Ownership — In the example below, the son owned the money.

> The younger son … wasted his wealth by living recklessly. (Luke 15:13b)

Social Relationship — In the example below, the disciples were people who learned from John.

> Then **the disciples of John** came to him. (Matthew 9:14a ULT)

Association — In the example below, the gospel is the message associated with Paul because he preaches it.

> Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, from the seed of David, according to **my gospel**, (2 Timothy 2:8 ULT)

Material — In the example below, the material used for making the crowns was gold.

> On their heads were something like **crowns of gold.** (Revelation 9:7b)

Contents — In the example below, the cup has water in it.

> For whoever gives you **a cup of water** to drink … will not lose his reward. (Mark 9:41 ULT)

Part of a whole — In the example below, the door was a part of the palace.

> But Uriah slept at **the door of the king's palace.** (2 Samuel 11:9a ULT)

Part of a group — In the example below, "us" refers to the whole group and "each one" refers to the individual members.

> Now to **each one of us** grace has been given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. (Ephesians 4:7 ULT)

Events and Possession

Sometimes one or both of the nouns is an abstract noun that refers to an event or action. In the examples below, the abstract nouns are in **bold** print. These are just some of the relationships that are possible between two nouns when one of them refers to an event.

Subject — Sometimes the word after "of" tells who would do the action named by the first noun. In the example below, **John baptized people**.

> The **baptism of John**, was it from heaven or from men? Answer me. (Mark 11:30)

In the example below, **Christ loves us**.

> Who will separate us from the **love of Christ**? (Romans 8:35)

Object — Sometimes the word after "of" tells who or what something would happen to. In the example below, **people love money**.

> For the **love of money** is a root of all kinds of evil. (1 Timothy 6:10a ULT)

Instrument — Sometimes the word after "of" tells how something would happen. In the example below, God would **punish people by sending enemies to attack them with swords**.

> Then be afraid of the sword, because wrath brings **the punishment of the sword**. (Job 19:29a ULT)

Representation — In the example below, John was baptizing people who were repenting of their sins. They were being baptized to show that they were repenting. Their **baptism represented their repentance**.

> John came, baptizing in the wilderness and preaching **a baptism of repentance** for the forgiveness of sins. (Mark 1:4 ULT)

Strategies for learning what the relationship is between the two nouns

(1) Read the surrounding verses to see if they help you to understand the relationship between the two nouns.
(2) Read the verse in the UST. Sometimes it shows the relationship clearly.
(3) See what the notes say about it.

Translation Strategies

If possession would be a natural way to show a particular relationship between two nouns, consider using it. If it would be strange or hard to understand, consider these.

(1) Use an adjective to show that one noun describes the other.
(2) Use a verb to show how the two are related.
(3) If one of the nouns refers to an event, translate it as a verb.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use an adjective to show that one noun describes the other.

> On their heads were something like **crowns of gold.** (Revelation 9:7b)

> > "On their heads were **gold crowns**"

(2) Use a verb to show how the two are related.

> Whoever gives you **a cup of water** to drink … will not lose his reward. (Mark 9:41 ULT)
>
> > Whoever gives you a **cup that has water in it** to drink … will not lose his reward.
>
> Wealth is worthless on **the day of wrath.** (Proverbs 11:4a ULT)
>
> > Wealth is worthless on **the day when God shows his wrath**.
> > or:
> > Wealth is worthless on the **day when God punishes people because of his wrath**.

(3) If one of the nouns refers to an event, translate it as a verb. (In the example below, there are two possession relationships, "punishment of Yahweh" and "your God.")

> Notice that I am not speaking to your children, who have not known or seen **the punishment of Yahweh your God.** (Deuteronomy 11:2a ULT)

> > Notice that I am not speaking to your children who have not known or seen **how Yahweh, the God whom you worship, punished the people of Egypt**.
>
> You will only observe and see the **punishment of the wicked**. (Psalms 91:8 ULT)
>
> > You will only observe and see **how Yahweh punishes the wicked**.
>
> You will receive **the gift of the Holy Spirit**. (Acts 2:38b ULT)
>
> > You will receive the **Holy Spirit, whom God will give to you**.

Song of Solomon References:

1:1; 1:1; 1:5; 2:7; 2:7; 3:10; 3:11; 5:16; 6:11

Pronouns — When to Use Them

Description

When we talk or write, we use pronouns to refer to people or things without always having to repeat the noun or name. Usually, the first time we refer to someone in a story, we use a descriptive phrase or a name. The next time we might refer to that person with a simple noun or by name. After that we might refer to him simply with a pronoun as long as we think that our listeners will be able to understand easily to whom the pronoun refers.

> Now there was **a man from thePharisees whose name was Nicodemus, a Jewish leader**. **This man** came to Jesus at night. Jesus replied and said to **him** … (John 3:1, 2a, 3a ULT)

In John 3, Nicodemus is first referred to with noun phrases and his name. Then he is referred to with the noun phrase “this man.” Then he is referred to with the pronoun “him.”

Each language has its rules and exceptions to this usual way of referring to people and things.

- In some languages, the first time something is referred to in a paragraph or chapter, it is referred to with a noun rather than a pronoun.
- The main character is the person whom a story is about. In some languages, after a main character is introduced in a story, he is usually referred to with a pronoun. Some languages have special pronouns that refer only to the main character.
- In some languages, marking on the verb helps people know who the subject is. (See Verbs.) In some of these languages, listeners rely on this marking to help them understand who the subject is. Speakers will use a pronoun, noun phrase, or proper name only when they want either to emphasize or to clarify who the subject is.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- If translators use a pronoun at the wrong time for their language, readers might not know about whom the writer is talking.
- If translators too frequently refer to a main character by name, listeners of some languages might not realize that the person is a main character, or they might think that there is a new character with the same name.
- If translators use pronouns, nouns, or names at the wrong time, people might think that there is some special emphasis on the person or thing to which it refers.

Examples From the Bible

The example below occurs at the beginning of a chapter. In some languages it might not be clear to whom the pronouns refer.

> Then Jesus entered into the synagogue again, and there was a man who had a withered hand. Some people watched **him** closely to see if **he** would heal **him** on the Sabbath so that they might accuse **him**. (Mark 3:1-2 ULT)

In the example below, two men are named in the first sentence. It might not be clear whom "he" in the second sentence refers to.

> Now after some days had passed, **King Agrippa** and Bernice came down to Caesarea to pay their respects to **Festus**. After **he** had been there for many days, Festus presented to the king the things concerning Paul. (Acts 25:13-14)

Jesus is the main character of the book of Matthew, but in the verses below he is referred to four times by name. This may lead speakers of some languages to think that Jesus is not the main character. Or it might lead them to think that there is more than one person named Jesus in this story. Or it might lead them to think that there is some kind of emphasis on him, even though there is no emphasis.

> At that time **Jesus** went on the Sabbath day through the grainfields. **His** disciples were hungry and began to pluck heads of grain and eat them. But when the Pharisees saw that, they said to **Jesus**, "See, your disciples do what is unlawful to do on the Sabbath." But **Jesus** said to them, "Have you never read what David did, when he was hungry, and the men who were with him?" Then **Jesus** left from there and went into their synagogue. (Matthew 12:1-3,9 ULT)

Translation Strategies

(1) If it would not be clear to your readers to whom or to what a pronoun refers, use a name or a noun.
(2) If repeating a noun or name would lead people to think that a main character is not a main character, or that the writer is talking about more than one person with that name, or that there is some kind of emphasis on someone when there is no emphasis, use a pronoun instead.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If it would not be clear to your readers to whom or to what a pronoun refers, use a name or a noun.

> Again **he** walked into the synagogue, and a man with a withered hand was there. Some Pharisees watched **him** to see if **he** would heal the man on the Sabbath. (Mark 3:1-2)
>
> > Again **Jesus** walked into the synagogue, and a man with a withered hand was there. Some Pharisees watched **Jesus** to see if **he** would heal the man on the Sabbath.

(2) If repeating a noun or name would lead people to think that a main character is not a main character, or that the writer is talking about more than one person with that name, or that there is some kind of emphasis on someone when there is no emphasis, use a pronoun instead.

> At that time **Jesus** went on the Sabbath day through the grainfields. **His** disciples were hungry and began to pluck heads of grain and eat them. But when the Pharisees saw that, they said to **Jesus**, “See, your disciples do what is unlawful to do on the Sabbath.” But **Jesus** said to them, “Have you never read what David did, when he was hungry, and the men who

> were with him?" Then **Jesus** left from there and went into their synagogue. (Matthew 12:1-3,9 ULT)

This may be translated as:

> > At that time **Jesus** went on the Sabbath day through the grainfields. **His** disciples were hungry and began to pluck heads of grain and eat them. But when the Pharisees saw that, they said to **him**, "See, your disciples do what is unlawful to do on the Sabbath." But **he** said to them, "Have you never read what David did, when he was hungry, and the men who were with him?" Then **he** left from there and went into their synagogue.

Song of Solomon References:

1:13; 2:9; 2:13

Quote Markings

Description

Some languages use quotation marks to mark off direct quotes from the rest of the text. English uses the mark “ immediately before a quote and ” immediately after it.

- John said, “I do not know when I will arrive.”

Quotation marks are not used with indirect quotes.

- John said that he did not know when he would arrive.

When there are several layers of quotations inside of other quotations, it might be hard for readers to understand who is saying what. Alternating two kinds of quotation marks can help careful readers to keep track of them. In English, the outermost quotation has double quote marks, and the next quotation within it has single marks. If there is a third embedded quote, that quotation again has double quotation marks.

- Mary said, “John said, ‘I do not know when I will arrive.’ ”
- Bob said, “Mary told me, ‘John said, “I do not know when I will arrive.” ’ ”

Some languages use other kinds of quotation marks: Here are some examples: , ‘ ’ „ “ ” ‹ › « » ⁊ — .

Examples From the Bible

The examples below show the kind of quotation markings used in the ULT.

A quotation with only one layer

A first layer direct quote has double quotation marks around it.

> So the king replied, “That is Elijah the Tishbite.” (2 Kings 1:8b ULT)

Quotations with two layers

A second layer direct quote has single quotation marks around it. We have printed it and the phrase in bold type for you to see them clearly.

> They asked him, “Who is the man who said to you, **‘Pick it up and walk’**?” (John 5:12 ULT)
>
> He sent two of the disciples, saying, “Go into the village ahead of you. As you enter, you will find a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it to me. If any one asks you, **‘Why are you untying it?’** you will say thus, **‘The Lord has need of it.’**” (Luke 19:29b-31 ULT)

A quotation with three layers

A third layer direct quote has double quotation marks around it. We have printed it in bold type for you to see them clearly.

> Abraham said, “Because I thought, ‘Surely there is no fear of God in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife.’ Besides, she is indeed my sister, the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife. When God caused me to leave my father’s house and travel from place to place, I said to her, ‘You must show me this faithfulness as my wife: At every place where we go, say about me, “**He is my brother**.”’” (Genesis 20:11-13 ULT)

A quotation with four layers

A fourth layer direct quote has single quotation marks around it. We have printed it in bold for you to see it clearly.

> They said to him, “A man came to meet us who said to us, ‘Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, “Yahweh says this: **‘Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal**

> **Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.'** " ' " (2 Kings 1:6 ULT)

Quote Marking Strategies

Here are some ways you may be able to help readers see where each quote starts and ends so they can more easily know who said what.

(1) Alternate two kinds of quote marks to show layers of direct quotation. English alternates double quote marks and single quote marks.
(2) Translate one or some of the quotes as indirect quotes in order to use fewer quote marks, since indirect quotes do not need them. (See Direct and Indirect Quotations.)
(3) If a quotation is very long and has many layers of quotation in it, indent the main overall quote, and use quote marks only for the direct quotes inside of it.

Examples of Quote Marking Strategies Applied

(1) Alternate two kinds of quotation marks to show layers of direct quotation as shown in the ULT text below.

> They said to him, "A man came to meet us who said to us, 'Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, "Yahweh says this: 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.'"'" (2 Kings 1:6 ULT)

(2) Translate one or more of the quotes as indirect quotes in order to use fewer quotation marks, since indirect quotes do not need them. In English, the word "that" can introduce an indirect quote. In the example below, everything after the word "that" is an indirect quote of what the messengers said to the king. Within that indirect quote, there are some direct quotes marked with double and single quotation marks.

> They said to him, “A man came to meet us who said to us, ‘Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, “Yahweh says this: ‘Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.’”’” (2 Kings 1:6 ULT)

> > They told him **that** a man came to meet them who said to them, “Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, ‘Yahweh says this: “Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.”’”

(3) If a quotation is very long and has many layers of quotation in it, indent the main overall quote, and use quote marks only for the direct quotes inside of it.

> They said to him, “A man came to meet us who said to us, ‘Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, “Yahweh says this: ‘Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.’”’” (2 Kings 1:6 ULT)

> > They said to him,

> A man came to meet us who said to us, “Go back to the king who sent you, and say to him, ‘Yahweh says this: “Is it because there is no God in Israel that you sent men to consult with Baal Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not come down from the bed to which you have gone up; instead, you will certainly die.”””

Song of Solomon References:

5:3

Reduplication

Description

Writers and speakers in the Bible sometimes repeat the same word or forms of the same word. This is to increase the intensity, completeness, or certainty of the action that the word describes, or to otherwise increase the emotional impact of the word.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages may not repeat words to increase the intensity, completeness, or certainty of an action, or they may not repeat words to increase the level of emotion that they communicate. In these cases, repeated words may appear to be a mistake or may indicate that the speaker is unable to speak correctly.

Examples From the Bible

To the woman he said, “To multiply I will multiply your pain and your childbearing…” (Genesis 3:16 ULT)

The speaker is repeating forms of the verb “multiply” in order to intensify the idea of multiplying.

To be circumcised he must be circumcised (Genesis 17:13)

The speaker is repeating forms of the verb “circumcise” in order to increase the certainty that this must happen.

Begin, possess, to possess his land (Deuteronomy 2:31 ULT)

Moses repeats the word “possess” to emphasize the completeness of the action of possessing the land.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? (Psalm 22:1 ULT)

The writer repeats “my God” to increase the level of emotion that he wants to communicate; he is crying out desperately to God.

“Fallen, fallen has Babylon the Great…” (Revelation 14:8 ULT)

The angel repeats the word “fallen” in order to show deep emotion in this lament for the ruined city of Babylon.

Translation Strategies

If repeating words would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, then do the same in your translation. If not, here are some other options:

(1) If your language would not repeat words to increase the intensity, completeness, or certainty of an action, then use a different word or phrase to add that meaning.
(2) If your language would not repeat words to increase emotional intensity, then use an emotional word to do that.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If your language would not repeat words to increase the intensity, completeness, or certainty of an action, then use a different word or phrase to add that meaning.

> To the woman he said, “To multiply I will multiply your pain and your childbearing…” (Genesis 3:16 ULT)

> > To the woman he said, “I will greatly multiply your pain and your childbearing…”

> To be circumcised he must be circumcised (Genesis 17:13 ULT)

> > He certainly must be circumcised
> > Or By all means, he must be circumcised

> Begin, possess, to possess his land (Deuteronomy 2:31 ULT)

> > Begin to completely possess his land
> > Or Enter his land until you completely possess it

(2) If your language would not repeat words to increase emotional intensity, then use an emotional word to do that.

> My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? (Psalm 22:1 ULT)

> > You are my God! Why, then, have you forsaken me?
> > Or My God, oh, why have you forsaken me?

> "Fallen, fallen has Babylon the Great…" (Revelation 14:8 ULT)

> > "Alas, Babylon the Great has fallen!

Song of Solomon References:

6:13

Rhetorical Question

A rhetorical question is a question that a speaker asks when he is more interested in expressing his attitude about something than in getting information about it. Speakers use rhetorical questions to express deep emotion or to encourage hearers to think deeply about something. The Bible contains many rhetorical questions, often to express surprise, to rebuke or scold the hearer, or to teach. Speakers of some languages use rhetorical questions for other purposes as well.

Description

A rhetorical question is a question that strongly expresses the speaker's attitude toward something. Often the speaker is not looking for information at all. Or, if he is asking for information, it is not usually the information that the question appears to ask for. The speaker is more interested in expressing his attitude than in getting information.

> But those who stood by said, "**Are you insulting the high priest of God?**"(Acts 23:4 ULT)

The people who asked Paul this question were not asking if he was insulting God's high priest. Rather, they used this question to accuse Paul of insulting the high priest.

The Bible contains many rhetorical questions. These rhetorical questions might be used for the purposes: of expressing attitudes or feelings, rebuking people, teaching something by reminding people of something they know and encouraging them to apply it to something new, or introducing something they want to talk about.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Some languages do not use rhetorical questions; for them a question is always a request for information.
- Some languages use rhetorical questions, but for purposes that are different or more limited than in the Bible.
- Because of these differences between languages, some readers might misunderstand the purpose of a rhetorical question in the Bible.

Examples From the Bible

> Do you not still rule the kingdom of Israel? (1 Kings 21:7b ULT)

Jezebel used the question above **to remind** King Ahab of something he already knew: he still ruled the kingdom of Israel. The rhetorical question made her point more strongly than if she had merely stated it, because it forced Ahab to admit the point himself. She did this in order **to rebuke** him for being unwilling to take over a poor man's property. She was implying that, since he was the king of Israel, he had the power to take the man's property.

> **Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils?** Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number! (Jeremiah 2:32 ULT)

God used the question above **to remind** his people of something they already knew: a young woman would never forget her jewelry or a bride forget her veils. He then **rebuked** his people for forgetting him who is so much greater than those things.

> But you, why do you judge your brother? And you also, why do you despise your brother? (Romans 14:10 ULT)

Paul used these rhetorical questions **to rebuke** the Romans for doing what they should not do.

> Why did I not die when I came out from the womb? (Job 3:11a ULT)

Job used the question above **to show deep emotion**. This rhetorical question expresses how sad he was that he did not die as soon as he was born. He wished that he had not lived.

> And how has this happened to me that the mother of my Lord would come to me? (Luke 1:43 ULT)

Elizabeth used the question above **to show how surprised and happy she was** that the mother of her Lord came to her.

> Or what man is there among you, of whom his son will ask for a loaf of bread, but he will give him a stone? (Matthew 7:9 ULT)

Jesus used the question above **to remind** the people of something they already knew: a good father would never give his son something bad to eat. By introducing this point, Jesus could go on **to teach them** about God with his next rhetorical question:

> Therefore, if you who are evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him? (Matthew 7:11 ULT)

Jesus used this question **to teach** the people in an emphatic way that God gives good things to those who ask him.

> **What is the kingdom of God like, and what can I compare it to?** It is like a mustard seed that a man took and threw into his garden … (Luke 13:18b-19a ULT)

Jesus used the question above **to introduce what he was going to talk about**. He was about to compare the kingdom of God to something. In this case, he compared the kingdom of God to a mustard seed.

Translation Strategies

In order to translate a rhetorical question accurately, first be sure that the question you are translating truly is a rhetorical question and is not an information question. Ask yourself, "Does the person asking the question already know the answer to the question?" If so, it is a rhetorical question. Or, if no one answers the question, did the person who asked it expect to receive an answer? If not, it is a rhetorical question.

When you are sure that the question is rhetorical, then be sure that you understand the purpose for the rhetorical question. Is it to encourage or rebuke or shame the hearer? Is it to bring up a new topic? Is it to express surprise or other emotion? Is it to do something else?

When you know the purpose of the rhetorical question, then think of the most natural way to express that purpose in the target language. It might be as a question, or a statement, or an exclamation.

If using the rhetorical question would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider doing so. If not, here are other options:

(1) Add the answer after the question.
(2) Change the rhetorical question to a statement or exclamation.
(3) Change the rhetorical question to a statement, and then follow it with a short question.
(4) Change the form of the question so that it communicates in your language what the original speaker communicated in his.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Add the answer after the question.

> **Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils?** Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number! (Jeremiah 2:32 ULT)
>
> > Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils? **Of course not!** Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number!

> Or what man is there among you, of whom his son will ask for a loaf of bread, but he will give him a stone? (Matthew 7:9 ULT)

> > Or what man is there among you, of whom his son will ask for a loaf of bread, but he will give him a stone? **None of you would do that!**

(2) Change the rhetorical question to a statement or exclamation.

> **What is the kingdom of God like, and what can I compare it to?** It is like a mustard seed. (Luke 13:18-19a ULT)
>
> > **This is what the kingdom of God is like.** It is like a mustard seed …

> **Are you insulting the high priest of God?** (Acts 23:4b ULT) (Acts 23:4 ULT)
>
> > **You should not insult God's high priest!**

> **Why did I not die when I came out from the womb?** (Job 3:11a ULT)
>
> > **I wish I had died when I came out from the womb!**

> **And how has this happened to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?** (Luke 1:43 ULT)
>
> > **How wonderful it is that the mother of my Lord has come to me!**

(3) Change the rhetorical question to a statement, and then follow it with a short question.

> **Do you not still rule** the kingdom of Israel? (1 Kings 21:7b ULT)
>
> > You still rule the kingdom of Israel, **do you not?**

(4) Change the form of the question so that it communicates in your language what the orignal speaker communicated in his.

> Or what man is there among you, of whom his son will ask for a loaf of bread, but he will give him a stone? (Matthew 7:9 ULT)
>
> > If your son asks you for a loaf of bread, **would you give him a stone**?

> **Will a virgin forget her jewelry, a bride her veils**? Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number! (Jeremiah 2:32 ULT)

> **What virgin would forget her jewelry, and what bride would forget her veils**? Yet my people have forgotten me for days without number!

> But you, **why do you judge your brother**? And you also, **why do you despise your brother**? (Romans 14:10 ULT)
>
> > Do you think it is good to judge your brother? Do you think it is good to despise your brother?

Song of Solomon References:

1:7; 3:6; 5:3; 6:10; 8:5

Simile

Description

A simile is a comparison of two things that are not normally thought to be similar. The simile focuses on a particular trait the two items have in common, and it includes the words “like,” “as,” or “than.”

> When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were troubled and discouraged, **like sheep not having a shepherd**. (Matthew 9:36)

Jesus compared the crowds of people to sheep without a shepherd. Sheep grow frightened when they do not have a good shepherd to lead them in safe places. The crowds were like that because they did not have good religious leaders.

> See, I send you out **as sheep in the midst of wolves**, so be as wise **as the serpents** and harmless **as the doves**. (Matthew 10:16 ULT)

Jesus compared his disciples to sheep and their enemies to wolves. Wolves attack sheep; Jesus’ enemies would attack his disciples.

> For the word of God is living and active and sharper **than any two-edged sword**. (Hebrews 4:12a ULT)

God’s word is compared to a two-edged sword. A two-edged sword is a weapon that can easily cut through a person’s flesh. God’s word is very effective in showing what is in a person’s heart and thoughts.

Purposes of Simile

- A simile can teach about something that is unknown by showing how it is similar to something that is known.
- A simile can emphasize a particular trait, sometimes in a way that gets people's attention.
- Similes help form a picture in the mind or help the reader experience what he is reading about more fully.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- People may not know how the two items are similar.
- People may not be familiar with both of the items being compared.

Examples From the Bible

> Suffer hardship with me, **as a good soldier** of Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 2:3 ULT)

In this simile, Paul compares suffering with what soldiers endure, and he encourages Timothy to follow their example.

> Just as the lightning flashing from a place under the sky shines to another place under the sky, so will the Son of Man be. (Luke 17:24b ULT)

This verse does not tell how the Son of Man will be like the lightning. But in context we can understand from the verses before it that just as lighting flashes suddenly and everyone can see it, the Son of Man will come suddenly and everyone will be able to see him. No one will have to be told about it.

Translation Strategies

If people would understand the correct meaning of a simile, consider using it. If they would not, here are some strategies you can use:

(1) If people do not know how the two items are alike, tell how they are alike. However, do not do this if the meaning was not clear to the original audience.

(2) If people are not familiar with the item that something is compared to, use an item from your own culture. Be sure that it is one that could have been used in the cultures of the Bible. If you use this strategy, you may want to put the original item in a footnote.
(3) Simply describe the item without comparing it to another.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If people do not know how the two items are alike, tell how they are alike. However, do not do this if the meaning was not clear to the original audience.

> See, I send you out **as sheep in the midst of wolves.** (Matthew 10:16a ULT) — This compares the danger that Jesus' disciples would be in with the danger that sheep are in when they are surrounded by wolves.
>
> > See, I send **you out among wicked people** and you will be in danger from them **as sheep are in danger when they are among wolves**.
>
> For the word of God is living and active and sharper **than any two-edged sword**. (Hebrews 4:12a ULT)
>
> > For the word of God is living and active and **more powerful than a very sharp two-edged sword**.

(2) If people are not familiar with the item that something is compared to, use an item from your own culture. Be sure that it is one that could have been used in the cultures of the Bible. If you use this strategy, you may want to put the original item in a footnote.

> See, I send you out **as sheep in the midst of wolves**, (Matthew 10:16a ULT) — If people do not know what sheep and wolves are, or that wolves kill and eat sheep, you could use some other animal that kills another.
>
> > See, I send you out **as chickens in the midst of wild dogs**.
>
> How often did I long to gather your children together, just **as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings**, but you were not willing! (Matthew 23:37b ULT)
>
> > How often I wanted to gather your children together, **as a mother closely watches over her infants**, but you refused!
>
> If you have faith **as a grain of mustard** … (Matthew 17:20)
>
> > If you have faith even as small **as a tiny seed**,

(3) Simply describe the item without comparing it to another.

> See, I send you out **as sheep in the midst of wolves**. (Matthew 10:16a ULT)
>
> > See, I send you out among **people who will want to harm you**.

> How often did I long to gather your children together, just **as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings**, but you were not willing! (Matthew 23:37b ULT)
>
> > How often I wanted to **protect you**, but you refused!

Song of Solomon References:

1:5; 1:7; 1:9; 2:2; 2:3; 2:8-9; 3:6; 4:1; 4:2; 4:2; 4:3; 4:3; 4:4; 4:4; 4:5; 5:11; 5:12; 5:13; 5:15; 6:intro; 6:4; 6:4; 6:5; 6:6; 6:7; 6:10; 6:10; 6:10; 6:13; 7:intro; 7:1; 7:3; 7:4; 7:4; 7:5; 7:5; 7:7; 7:7; 7:8; 7:9; 8:6; 8:6; 8:10; 8:14

Statements — Other Uses

Description

Normally statements are used to give information. Sometimes they are used in the Bible for other functions.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Some languages would not use a statement for some of the functions that statements are used for in the Bible.

Examples From the Bible

Statements are normally used to give **information**. All of the sentences in John 1:6-8 below are statements, and their function is to give information.

> There was a man who was sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness in order to testify about the light, that all might believe through him. John was not the light, but came that he might testify about the light. (John 1:6-8 ULT)

A statement can also be used as a **command** to tell someone what to do. In the examples below, the high priest used statements with the verb “will” to tell people what to do.

> He commanded them, saying, “This is what you **must** do. A third of you who come on the Sabbath **will** keep watch over the king’s house, and a third **will** be at the Sur Gate, and a third at the gate behind the guardhouse.” (2 Kings 11:5 ULT)

A statement can also be used to give **instructions**. The speaker below was not just telling Joseph about something Joseph would do in the future; he was telling Joseph what he needed to do.

> She will give birth to a son, and **you will call his name Jesus**, for he will save his people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21 ULT)

A statement can also be used to make a **request**. The man with leprosy was not just saying what Jesus was able to do. He was also asking Jesus to heal him.

> Behold, a leper came to him and bowed before him, saying, "Lord, if you are willing, **you are able to make me clean**." (Matthew 8:2 ULT)

A statement can also be used to **perform** something. By telling Adam that the ground was cursed because of him, God actually cursed it.

> … **cursed is the ground** because of you; (Genesis 3:17b ULT)

By telling a man that his sins were forgiven, **Jesus forgave** the man's sins.

> When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, "**Son, your sins are forgiven**." (Mark 2:5 ULT)

Translation Strategies

(1) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, **use a sentence type** that would express that function.
(2) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, **add a sentence type** that would express that function.
(3) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, **use a verb form** that would express that function.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, use a sentence type that would express that function.

> She will give birth to a son, and **you will call his name Jesus**, for he will save his people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21 ULT)

The phrase "you will call his name Jesus" is an instruction. It can be translated using the sentence type of a normal instruction.

> > She will give birth to a son. **Name him Jesus**,
> > because he will save his people from their sins.

(2) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, add a sentence type that would express that function.

> Lord, if you are willing, **you are able to make me clean**. (Matthew 8:2 ULT)

The function of "you are able" is to make a request. In addition to the statement, a request can be added.

> > Lord, you are able to make me clean. If you are
> > willing, **please do so**.
> > OR:

> > Lord, if you are willing, **please heal me**. I know that you are able to do so.

(3) If the function of a statement would not be understood correctly in your language, use a verb form that would express that function.

> She will give birth to a son, and **you will call his name Jesus**, for he will save his people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21 ULT)
>
> > She will give birth to a son, and **you must call his name Jesus**, for he will save his people from their sins.
>
> Son, your sins are forgiven. (Mark 2:5 ULT)
>
> > Son, I forgive your sins.
> > OR:
> > Son, God hereby forgives your sins.

Song of Solomon References:

1:4; 2:4; 7:8; 7:9

Synecdoche

Description

Synecdoche is a figure of speech in which a speaker uses a part of something to refer to the whole thing, or uses the whole to refer to a part.

> **My soul** magnifies the Lord. (Luke 1:46b ULT)

Mary was was very happy about what the Lord was doing, so she said "my soul," which means the inner, emotional part of herself, to refer to her whole self.

> So **the Pharisees** said to him, "Look, why are they doing that which is not lawful?" (Mark 2:24a ULT)

The Pharisees who were standing there did not all say the same words at the same time. Instead, it is more likely that one man representing the group said those words.

Reasons This Is a Translation Issue

- Some readers may not recognize the synecdoche and thus misunderstand the words as a literal statement.
- Some readers may realize that they are not to understand the words literally, but they may not know what the meaning is.

Example From the Bible

> Then I looked on all the deeds that **my hands** had accomplished.
> (Ecclesiastes 2:11a ULT)

"My hands" is a synecdoche for the whole person because clearly the arms and the rest of the body and the mind were also involved in the person's accomplishments. The hands are chosen

to represent the person because they are the parts of the body most directly involved in the work.

Translation Strategies

If the synecdoche would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, here is another option:

(1) State specifically what the synecdoche refers to.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) State specifically what the synecdoche refers to.

> "**My soul** magnifies the Lord." (Luke 1:46b ULT)
>
> > "**I** magnify the Lord."
>
> So **the Pharisees** said to him … (Mark 2:24a ULT)
>
> > **Arepresentative of the Pharisees** said to him …
>
> Then I looked on all the deeds that **my hands** had accomplished. (Ecclesiastes 2:11a ULT)
>
> > I looked on all the deeds that **I** had accomplished

Song of Solomon References:

1:7; 3:1; 3:2; 3:3; 3:4; 7:1

Textual Variants

Description

Thousands of years ago, people wrote the books of the Bible. Other people then copied them by hand and translated them. They did this work very carefully, and over the years many people made thousands of copies. However, people who looked at them later saw that there were small differences between them. Some copiers accidentally left out some words, or some mistook one word for another that looked like it. Occasionally, they added words or even whole sentences, either by accident or because they wanted to explain something. Modern Bibles are translations of the old copies. Some modern Bibles include some of these sentences that were added. In the ULT, these added sentences are usually written in footnotes.

Bible scholars have read many old copies and compared them with each other. For each place in the Bible where there was a difference, they have figured out which wordings are most likely correct. The translators of the ULT based the ULT New Testament on wordings that scholars say are most likely correct. The ULT Old Testament is based on the Westminster Leningrad Codex, which is considered to be the best representative of the ancient copies. Because people who use the ULT may have access to Bibles that are based on other copies, the ULT translators have sometimes included information about some of the differences between them, either in the ULT footnotes or in the unfoldingWord® Translation Notes.

Translators are encouraged to translate the text in the ULT and to write about added sentences in footnotes, as is done in the ULT. However, if the local church really wants those sentences to be included in the main text, translators may put them in the text and include a footnote about them.

Examples From the Bible

Matthew 18:10-11 ULT has a footnote about verse 11.

> 10 See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I say to you that in heaven their angels always look on the face of my Father who is in heaven. 11 [1]

> [1] Many authorities, some ancient, insert v. 11: **For the Son of Man came to save that which was lost.**

John 7:53-8:11 is not in the best earliest copies. It has been included in the ULT, but it is marked off with square brackets ([ ]) at the beginning and end, and there is a footnote after verse 11.

> 53 [Then everyone went to his own house … 11 She said, “No one, Lord.” Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more.”] [2]
>
> [2] Some ancient manuscripts include John 7:53-8:11

Psalm 100:3 ULT follows the Westminster Leningrad Codex. It says:

> Know that Yahweh, he {is} God; he, he made us, **and not we**,

There are some other ancient copies that say:

> Know that Yahweh, he {is} God; he, he made us, **and we are his**,

There is an unfoldingWord® Translation Note at that place to tell the translator about this other reading and that either one is an acceptable choice.

Translation Strategies

When there is a textual variant, you may choose to follow the ULT or another version that you have access to.

(1) Translate the verses as they are in the ULT and include a footnote about the alternate reading such as the one that the ULT provides or one in the unfoldingWord® Translation Notes.

(2) Translate the verses as another version has them, and change the footnote so that it fits this situation.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

The translation strategies are applied to Mark 7:14-16 ULT, which has a footnote about verse 16.

> 14 He called the crowd again and said to them, “Listen to me, all of you,
> and understand. 15 There is nothing from outside the man that can defile
> him when it enters into him. But the things that come out of the man are
> the things that defile the man.” 16 [1]

> [1] Some ancient manuscripts include verse 16: **If any man has ears to hear, let him hear.**

(1) Translate the verses as they are in the ULT and include the footnote that the ULT provides.

> 14 He called the crowd again and said to them, “Listen to me, all of you,
> and understand. 15 There is nothing from outside the man that can defile
> him when it enters into him. But the things that come out of the man are
> the things that defile the man.” 16 [1]
>
> > [1] Some ancient manuscripts include verse 16: **If any man has ears to hear, let him hear.**

(2) Translate the verses as another version has them, and change the footnote so that it fits this situation.

> 14 He called the crowd again and said to them, “Listen to me, all of you,
> and understand. 15There is nothing from outside the man that can defile
> him when it enters into him. But the things that come out of the man are
> the things that defile the man. 16 If any man has ears to hear, let him hear.”
> [1]
>
> > [1] Some ancient manuscripts do not include verse 16.

Song of Solomon References:

5:13

Translate Unknowns

While working to translate the Bible, you (the translator) might find yourself asking: “How do I translate words like lion, fig tree, mountain, priest, or temple when people in my culture have never seen these things and we do not have a word for them?”

Description

Unknowns are things that occur in the source text that are not known to the people of your culture. The unfoldingWord® Translation Words pages and the unfoldingWord® Translation Notes will help you understand what they are. After you understand them, you will need to find ways to refer to those things so that people who read your translation will understand what they are.

> They said to him, “We have nothing here except five loaves of **bread** and two fish.” (Matthew 14:17 ULT)

Bread is a particular food made by mixing finely crushed grains with oil, and then cooking the mixture so that it is dry. (Grains are the seeds of a kind of grass.) In some cultures people do not have bread and do not know what it is.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- Readers may not know some of the things that are in the Bible because those things are not part of their own culture.
- Readers may have difficulty understanding a text if they do not know some of the things that are mentioned in it.

Translation Principles

- Use words that are already part of your language if possible.
- Keep expressions short if possible.
- Represent God’s commands and historical facts accurately.

Examples From the Bible

> So I will turn Jerusalem into piles of ruins, a hideout for **jackals**. (Jeremiah 9:11a ULT)

Jackals are wild animals like dogs that live in only a few parts of the world. So they are not known in many places.

> Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous **wolves**. (Matthew 7:15 ULT)

If wolves do not live where the translation will be read, the readers may not understand that they are fierce, wild animals like dogs that attack and eat sheep.

> They offered him wine mixed with **myrrh**, but he did not drink it. (Mark 15:23 ULT)

People may not know what myrrh is and that it was used as a medicine.

> … to him who made **great lights** … (Psalm 136:7a ULT)

Some languages have terms for things that give light, like the sun and fire, but they have no general term for lights.

> Your sins … will be white like **snow**. (Isaiah 1:18b ULT)

People in many parts of the world have not seen snow, but they may have seen it in pictures.

Translation Strategies

Here are ways you might translate a term that is not known in your language:

(1) Use a phrase that describes what the unknown item is, or what is important about the unknown item for the verse being translated.
(2) Substitute something similar from your language if doing so does not falsely represent a historical fact.
(3) Copy the word from another language, and add a general word or descriptive phrase to help people understand it.
(4) Use a word that is more general in meaning.
(5) Use a word or phrase that is more specific in meaning.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use a phrase that describes what the unknown item is, or what is important about the unknown item for the verse being translated.

> Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but are inwardly they are **ravenous wolves**. (Matthew 7:15 ULT)
>
> > Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but **inwardly they are very hungry and dangerous animals**.

"Ravenous wolves" is part of a metaphor here, so the reader needs to know that they are very dangerous to sheep in order to understand this metaphor. (If sheep are also unknown, then you will need to also use one of the translation strategies to translate sheep, or change the metaphor to something else, using a translation strategy for metaphors. See Translating Metaphors.)

> "We have nothing here except five **loaves of bread** and two fish." (Matthew 14:17 ULT)

> > We have nothing here except five **loaves of baked grain seeds** and two fish.

(2) Substitute something similar from your language if doing so does not falsely represent a historical fact.

> Your sins … will be white like **snow.** (Isaiah 1:18b ULT) This verse is not about snow. It uses snow in a figure of speech to help people understand how white something will be.
>
> > Your sins … will be white like **milk**.
> >
> > Your sins … will be white like **the moon**.

(3) Copy the word from another language, and add a general word or descriptive phrase to help people understand it.

> Then they tried to give Jesus wine that was mixed with **myrrh**. But he refused to drink it. (Mark 15:23 ULT) — People may understand better what myrrh is if it is used with the general word "medicine."
>
> > Then they tried to give Jesus wine that was mixed with **a medicine called myrrh**. But he refused to drink it.

> "We have nothing here except five **loaves of bread** and two fish." (Matthew 14:17 ULT) — People may understand better what bread is if it is used with a phrase that tells what it is made of (seeds) and how it is prepared (crushed and baked).
>
> > We have nothing here except five loaves of **baked crushed seed bread** and two fish.

(4) Use a word that is more general in meaning.

> I will turn Jerusalem into piles of ruins, a hideout for **jackals** (Jeremiah 9:11a ULT)
>
> > I will turn Jerusalem into piles of ruins, a hideout for **wild dogs**

> "We have nothing here except five **loaves of bread** and two fish." (Matthew 14:17 ULT)
>
> > We have nothing here except five **loaves of baked food** and two fish.

(5) Use a word or phrase that is more specific in meaning.

> … to him who made **great lights** … (Psalm 136:7a ULT)
>
> > to him who made **the sun and the moon**

Song of Solomon References:

1:3; 1:10; 1:10; 1:11; 1:12; 1:12; 1:13; 1:14; 1:17; 2:1; 2:1; 2:2; 2:3; 2:4; 2:5; 2:5; 2:7; 2:9; 2:9; 2:11; 2:15; 2:15; 2:16; 2:17; 3:2; 3:3; 3:7; 3:9; 4:4; 4:5; 4:5; 4:6; 4:12; 4:13-14; 4:14; 5:7; 5:7; 5:11; 5:13; 5:14; 5:14; 5:14; 5:15; 6:4; 6:8; 7:2; 7:4; 7:7; 7:8; 7:8; 7:11; 7:13; 8:2; 8:5; 8:11

Unusual Uses of the Plural

The biblical languages sometimes use plural forms to refer to single objects, ideas, or people.

Description

Using a plural form to refer to something singular is done to show an intensified feeling about the object, idea, or person, or to show that an object or idea is extraordinary in some way. Also, sometimes a person refers to himself or herself with a plural pronoun. If the person is a king or a leader in a high position, this is to show that the person is very important and represents many people. If the person is writing a letter, such as Paul in the New Testament, this is to do the opposite. It is to avoid referring directly to himself, to avoid any sense that he is boasting or drawing attention to himself.

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

Many languages do not use plural forms to refer to single objects, ideas, or people. In these languages, doing so would be both wrong and confusing. Instead, they need to use a singular form and express any intended intensification in another way.

Examples From the Bible

> The tents of robbers prosper, and securities {are} to the provokers of God (Job 12:6 ULT)

Job is using the plural form **securities** to indicate that these provokers of God experience security to a supreme extent.

> Now you had cast me deep into the heart of the seas (Jonah 2:3 ULT)

Jonah refers to the sea using the plural **seas** to intensify the idea of either the sea's vastness or activity.

> The letter that you sent to **us** has been carefully read aloud before me. (Ezra 4:18 ULT)

Artaxerxes, the king of Persia, refers to himself as **us** in response to a letter sent to him.

> …through whom [Jesus] **we** received grace and apostleship for obedience of faith among all the Gentiles (Romans 1:5 ULT)

Since this letter is from Paul alone, it is likely that he is using the plural **we** to refer to himself.

Translation Strategies

If a plural form would be natural and give the right meaning in your language, consider using it. If not, consider these strategies.

(1) Use a singular form instead of the plural.
(2) If the plural is used to intensify the meaning, use a singular form with another word that intensifies it such as “very” or “great” or “many.”
(3) If the plural is used to intensify or emphasize the meaning, use one of your language’s ways of doing that.

Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use a singular form instead of the plural.

> The letter that you sent to **us** has been carefully read aloud before me. (Ezra 4:18 ULT)

The letter that you sent to **me** has been carefully read aloud before me.

> …through whom [Jesus] **we** received grace and apostleship for obedience of faith among all the Gentiles (Romans 1:5 ULT)

…through whom [Jesus] **I** received grace and apostleship for obedience of faith among all the Gentiles

(2) If the plural is used to intensify or emphasize the meaning, use a singular form with another word that intensifies it such as “very” or “great” or “many.”

> The tents of robbers prosper, and **securities {are}** to the provokers of God (Job 12:6 ULT)

The tents of robbers prosper, and **great security {is}** to the provokers of God

> Now you had cast me deep into the heart of the **seas** (Jonah 2:3 ULT)

Now you had cast me deep into the heart of the **great sea**

(3) If the plural is used to intensify or emphasize the meaning, use one of your language’s ways of doing that.

> The tents of robbers prosper, and **securities {are}** to the provokers of God (Job 12:6 ULT)

The tents of robbers prosper, and the provokers of God **enjoy complete security**

> Now you had cast me deep into the heart of the **seas** (Jonah 2:3 ULT)

Now you had cast me deep into the heart of the **raging sea**

Song of Solomon References:

2:5; 2:9; 3:1; 4:15

When Masculine Words Include Women

In the Bible, sometimes the words “men,” “brothers,” and “sons” refer only to men. At other times, those words include both men and women. In those places where the writer meant both men and women, you (the translator) need to translate it in a way that does not limit the meaning to men.

Description

In some languages a word that normally refers to men can also be used in a more general way to refer to both men and women. For example, the Bible sometimes says “brothers” when it refers to both brothers and sisters.

Also in some languages, the masculine pronouns “he” and “him” can be used in a more general way for any person if it is not important whether the person is a man or a woman. In the example below, the pronoun is “his,” but it is not limited to males.

> A wise son makes **his** father rejoice
> but a foolish son brings grief to **his** mother. (Proverbs 10:1 ULT)

Reason This Is a Translation Issue

- In some cultures words like “man,” “brother,” and “son” can only be used to refer to men. If those words are used in a translation in a more general way, people will think that what is being said does not apply to women.
- In some cultures, the masculine pronouns “he” and “him” can only refer to men. If a masculine pronoun is used, people will think that what is said does not apply to women.

Translation Principles

When a statement applies to both men and women, translate it in such a way that people will be able to understand that it applies to both.

Examples From the Bible

> Now we want you to know, **brothers**, the grace of God that has been given to the churches of Macedonia. (2 Corinthians 8:1 ULT)

This verse is addressing the believers in Corinth, not only men, but **men and women**.

> Then said Jesus to his disciples, “If anyone wants to follow me, **he** must deny **himself**, take up **his** cross, and follow me.” (Matthew 16:24 ULT)

Jesus was not speaking only of men, but of **men and women**.

Caution: Sometimes masculine words are used specifically to refer to men. Do not use words that would lead people to think that they include women. The words below are specifically about men.

> Moses said, ‘If **someone** dies, not having children, **hisbrother** must marry **his** wife and have children for **hisbrother**.’ (Matthew 22:24 ULT)

Translation Strategies

If people would understand that that masculine words like “man,” “brother,” and “he” can include women, then consider using them. Otherwise, here are some ways for translating those words when they include women.

(1) Use a noun that can be used for both men and women.
(2) Use a word that refers to men and a word that refers to women.
(3) Use pronouns that can be used for both men and women.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

(1) Use nouns that can be used for both men and women.

> The wise **man** dies just like the fool dies. (Ecclesiastes 2:16b ULT)
>
> > "The wise **person** dies just like the fool dies."
> > "Wise **people** die just like fools die."

(2) Use a word that refers to men and a word that refers to women.

> For we do not want you to be uninformed, **brothers**, about the troubles that happened to us in Asia. (2 Corinthians 1:8) — Paul was writing this letter to both men and women.
>
> > "For we do not want you to be uninformed, **brothers and sisters**, about the troubles that happened to us in Asia."

(3) Use pronouns that can be used for both men and women.

> "If anyone wants to follow me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me." (Matthew 16:24 ULT)

English speakers can change the masculine singular pronouns, "he," "himself," and "his" to plural pronouns that do not mark gender, "they," "themselves," and "their" in order to show that it applies to all people, not just men.

> > “If **people** want to follow me, **they** must deny **themselves**, take up **their** cross, and follow me.”

Song of Solomon References:

8:13

When to Keep Information Implicit

Description

Sometimes it is better not to state assumed knowledge or implicit information explicitly. This page gives some direction about when not to do this.

Translation Principles

- If a speaker or author intentionally left something unclear, do not try to make it more clear.
- If the original audience did not understand what the speaker meant, do not make it so clear that your readers would find it strange that the original audience did not understand.
- If you need to explicitly state some assumed knowledge or implicit information, try to do it in a way that does not make your readers think that the original audience needed to be told those things.
- Do not make implicit information explicit if it confuses the message or leads the reader to forget what the main point is.
- Do not make assumed knowledge or implicit information explicit if your readers already understand it.

Examples From the Bible

> From the eater came forth food;
> and from the strong one came forth sweetness. (Judges 14:14 ULT)

This was a riddle. Samson purposely said this in a way that it would be hard for his enemies to know what it meant. Do not make it clear that the eater and the strong thing was a lion and that the sweet thing to eat was honey.

> Jesus said to them, “Take heed and beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” They reasoned among themselves saying, “It is because we did not take bread.” (Matthew 16:6-7 ULT)

Some possible implicit information here is that the disciples should beware of the false teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. But Jesus' disciples did not understand this. They thought that Jesus was talking about real yeast and bread. So it would not be appropriate to state explicitly that the word "yeast" here refers to false teaching. The disciples did not understand what Jesus meant until they heard what Jesus said in Matthew 16:11.

> "How is it that you do not understand that I was not speaking to you about bread? Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees." Then they understood that he was not telling them to beware of yeast in bread, but to beware of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees. (Matthew 16:11-12 ULT)

Only after Jesus explained that he was not talking about bread did they realize that he was talking about the false teaching of the Pharisees. Therefore, it would be wrong to explicitly state the implicit information in Matthew 16:6.

Translation Strategies

Because we recommend that translators not change this kind of passage to make it more clear, this page does not have any translation strategies.

Examples of Translation Strategies Applied

Because we recommend that translators not change this kind of passage to make it more clear, this page does not have any translation strategies applied.

Song of Solomon References:

3:1; 5:1; 6:10; 6:11-12; 6:13; 7:1; 7:9; 8:5-7; 8:5; 8:8-9; 8:10; 8:11-12; 8:13; 8:14

unfoldingWord® Translation Words - Song of Solomon

v91

age, aged, old, old age, years old

Definition:

In this sense, the term “age” refers to the number of years a person has lived. In the Bible the terms “aged” and “old” are both used to describe someone who has lived a for many years.

Translation Suggestions:

- The phrase “at a very old age” could be translated as “at many years old” or “when he was very old” or “when he had lived a very long time.”
- The term “aged” could also be translated as “old” or “very old” depending on context.

Bible References:

Word Data:

- Strong’s: G01650, G01660

Song of Solomon References:

7:13

appoint, appointed

Definition:

The terms “appoint” and “appointed” refer to choosing someone to fulfill a specific task or role.

- To “be appointed” can also refer to being “chosen” to receive something, as in “appointed to eternal life.” That people were “appointed to eternal life” means they were chosen to receive eternal life.
- The phrase “appointed time” refers to God’s “chosen time” or “planned time” for something to happen.
- The word “appoint” may also mean to “command” or “assign” someone to do something.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, ways to translate “appoint” could include “choose” or “assign” or “formally choose” or “designate.”
- The term “appointed” could be translated as “assigned” or “planned” or “specifically chose.”
- The phrase “be appointed” could also be translated as “be chosen.”

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 8:11
- Acts 3:20
- Acts 6:2
- Acts 13:48
- Genesis 41:33-34
- Numbers 3:9-10

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0561, H0977, H2163, H2296, H2706, H2708, H2710, H3198, H3245, H3259, H3677, H3983, H4150, H4151, H4152, H4483, H4487, H4662, H5324, H5344, H5414, H5567, H5975, H6310, H6485, H6565, H6635, H6680, H6923, H6942, H6966, H7760, H7896, G03220, G06060, G12990, G13030, G19350, G25250, G27490, G42870, G42960, G43840, G49290, G50210, G50870

Song of Solomon References:

1:6

awe, awesome

Definition:

The term “awe” refers to the sense of amazement and deep respect that comes from seeing something great, powerful, and magnificent.

- The term “awesome” describes someone or something that inspires a feeling of awe.
- The visions of the glory of God seen by the prophet Ezekiel were “awesome” or “awe-inspiring.”
- Typical human responses showing awe of God’s presence include: fear, bowing or kneeling down, covering the face, and trembling.

(See also: **fear**, **glory**)

Bible References:

- **1 Chronicles 17:21**
- **Genesis 28:16-17**
- **Hebrews 12:28**
- **Psalm 22:23**
- **Psalms 147:4-5**

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0366, H1481, H3372, H6206, H7227, G21240

Song of Solomon References:

6:4; 6:10

bear, bearer, bore, borne, produce, produced

Definition:

Used in this sense, the term “bear” means to “produce” or “give birth to.”

- A common expression in the Bible is “bear fruit,” which means “produce fruit”
- When speaking of a woman who will bear a child, this means “give birth to” a child
- Depending on context, this term could be translated as “produce” or “give birth to.”

(Translation suggestions: fruit)

Bible References:

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3205, H3209, H3211, H5375, G01420, G03990, G04300, G09410, G10800, G41600, G47220, G50410, G50880, G53420, G54090

Song of Solomon References:

4:2; 6:6; 6:9

beloved

Definition:

The term “beloved” is an expression of affection that describes someone who is loved and dear to someone else.

- The term “beloved” literally means “loved (one)” or “(who is) loved.”
- God refers to Jesus as his “beloved Son.”
- In their letters to Christian churches, the apostles frequently address their fellow believers as “beloved.”

Translation Suggestions:

- This term could also be translated as “loved” or “loved one” or “well-loved,” or “very dear.”
- In the context of talking about a close friend, this could be translated as “my dear friend” or “my close friend.” In English it is natural to say “my dear friend, Paul” or “Paul, who is my dear friend.” Other languages may find it more natural to order this in a different way.
- Note that the word “beloved” comes from the word for God’s love, which is unconditional, unselfish, and sacrificial.

(See also: love)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 4:14
- 1 John 3:2
- 1 John 4:7
- Mark 1:11
- Mark 12:6
- Revelation 20:9
- Romans 16:8
- Song of Songs 1:14

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0157, H1730, H2532, H3033, H3039, H4261, G00250, G00270, G52070

Song of Solomon References:

1:13; 1:14; 1:16; 2:3; 2:8; 2:9; 2:10; 2:16; 2:17; 4:16; 5:1; 5:2; 5:4; 5:5; 5:6; 5:8; 5:9; 5:10; 5:16; 6:1; 6:2; 6:3; 7:9; 7:10; 7:11; 7:13; 8:5; 8:14

blemish, unblemished, defect

Definition:

The term “blemish” refers to a physical defect or imperfection on an animal or person. It can also refer to spiritual imperfections and faults in people.

- For certain sacrifices, God instructed the Israelites to offer an animal with no blemishes or defects.
- This is a picture of how Jesus Christ was the perfect sacrifice, without any sin.
- Believers in Christ have been cleansed from their sin by his blood and are considered to be without blemish.
- Ways to translate this term could include “defect” or “imperfection” or “sin,” depending on the context.

(See also: **believe**, **clean**, **sacrifice**, **sin**)

Bible References:

- **1 Peter 1:19**
- **2 Peter 2:13**
- **Deuteronomy 15:19-21**
- **Numbers 6:13-15**
- Song of Songs 4:7

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3971, H8400, H8549, G34700

Song of Solomon References:

4:7

bless, blessed, blessing

Definition:

To “bless” someone or something means to cause good and beneficial things to happen to the person or thing that is being blessed.

- Blessing someone also means expressing a desire for positive and beneficial things to happen to that person.
- In Bible times, a father would often pronounce a formal blessing on his children.
- When people “bless” God or express a desire that God be blessed, this means they are praising him.
- The term “bless” is sometimes used for consecrating food before it is eaten, or for thanking and praising God for the food.

Translation Suggestions:

- To “bless” could also be translated as to “provide abundantly for” or to “be very kind and favorable toward.”
- “God has brought great blessing to” could be translated as “God has given many good things to” or “God has provided abundantly for” or “God has caused many good things to happen to”.
- “He is blessed” could be translated as “he will greatly benefit” or “he will experience good things” or “God will cause him to flourish.”
- “Blessed is the person who” could be translated as “How good it is for the person who.”
- Expressions like “blessed be the Lord” could be translated as “May the Lord be praised” or “Praise the Lord” or “I praise the Lord.”
- In the context of blessing food, this could be translated as “thanked God for the food” or “praised God for giving them food” or “consecrated the food by praising God for it.”

(See also: praise)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 10:16
- Acts 13:34
- Ephesians 1:3
- Genesis 14:20
- Isaiah 44:3

- James 1:25
- Luke 6:20
- Matthew 26:26
- Nehemiah 9:5
- Romans 4:9

Examples from the Bible stories:

- 1:7 God saw that it was good and he **blessed** them.
- 1:15 God made Adam and Eve in his own image. He **blessed** them and told them, “Have many children and grandchildren and fill the earth.”
- 1:16 So God rested from all he had been doing. He **blessed** the seventh day and made it holy, because on this day he rested from his work.
- 4:4 “I will make your name great. I will **bless** those who **bless** you and curse those who curse you. All families on earth will be **blessed** because of you.”
- 4:7 Melchizedek **blessed** Abram and said, “May God Most High who owns heaven and earth **bless** Abram.”
- 7:3 Isaac wanted to give his **blessing** to Esau.
- 8:5 Even in prison, Joseph remained faithful to God, and God **blessed** him.

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0833, H0835, H1288, H1289, H1293, G17570, G21270, G21280, G21290, G31060, G31070, G31080, G60500

Song of Solomon References:

6:9

bride, bridal

Definition:

A bride is the woman in a marriage ceremony who will marry the bridegroom (the **man**).

Translation Suggestions:

You could use the term that your language uses to refer to the woman who is getting married in a marriage ceremony or if you do not have a term for this in your language you could use a descriptive phrase to describe what a bride is. Depending on the context you could translate the term "bride" with descriptive phrases such as "a woman getting married" or "a woman who is being married" or "the woman getting married."

(See also: bridegroom, marriage)

Bible References:

- Exodus 22:16
- Isaiah 62:5
- Joel 2:16

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3618, G35650

Song of Solomon References:

4:8; 4:9; 4:10; 4:11; 4:12; 5:1

call, called

Definition:

The terms “call” and “called,” in this sense, mean to name a place, person, or being. When referring to a person or thing the terms “call” and “called” can refer either to initially giving someone or something a name for the first time or to saying that thing or persons pre-existing name or title.

- The Bible sometimes uses these terms in the context of naming someone. For example, “His name is called John,” means “He is named John” or “His name is John.”
- To be “called by the name of” means that someone is given the name of someone else. God says that he has called his people by his name.

Translation Suggestions:

- “You must call his name” can also be translated as “you must name him.”
- “His name is called” could also be translated as “his name is” or “he is named.”
- The expression “you are called by my name” could be translated as “I have given you my name, showing that you belong to me.”
- You could translates Jesus’ words “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’” as “You address me as ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’” or something similar to show that the word “call” in this context means to “address” someone by a specific name or title.

(See also: call to summon)

Bible References:

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H7121, G25640, G30040, G55810

Song of Solomon References:

6:9

call, called, call out, called out

Definition:

The terms “call” and “call out,” in this sense, mean to speak loudly.

- To “call out” to someone means to shout, to announce, or to proclaim. It can also mean to ask someone for help, especially God.
- In some contexts the terms “call” and “call out” mean to loudly ask for help.

Translation Suggestions:

- The expression “call out to you” could be translated as “ask you for help” or “pray to you urgently.”
- To “call out” could be translated as “say loudly” or “shout” or “say with a loud voice.” Make sure the translation of this does not sound like the person is angry.

(See also: **pray**, **cry**, **call to summon**, call name)

Bible References:

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0559, H2199, H4744, H6817, H7121, H7123, H7769, H7773, G01540, G03630, G14580, G15280, G19410, G19510, G20280, G20460, G25640, G28210, G28220, G28400, G29190, G30040, G31060, G33330, G33430, G36030, G36860, G36870, G43160, G43410, G43770, G47790, G48670, G54550, G55370, G55810

Song of Solomon References:

5:6

captive, captivate, captivity, catch

Definition:

The terms “captive” and “captivity” refer to people who have been captured and forced to live somewhere they do not want to live, such as in a foreign country.

- The Israelites from the kingdom of Judah were held captive in the kingdom of Babylonia for 70 years.
- Captives are often required to work for the people or nation that captured them.
- Daniel and Nehemiah were Israelite captives who worked for the Babylonian king.
- The expression to “take captive” is another way of talking about capturing someone.
- The expression, “carry you away captive” could also be translated as “force you to live as captives” or “take you away to another country as prisoners.”
- In a figurative sense, the apostle Paul tells Christians to “take captive” every thought and make it obedient to Christ.
- He also talks about how a person can be “taken captive” by sin, which means he is “controlled by” sin.

Translation Suggestions

- Depending on the context, to be “held captive” could also be translated by, “not allowed to be free” or “kept in prison” or “forced to live in a foreign country.”
- The expression, “led captive” or “taken captive” could be translated as “captured” or “imprisoned” or “forced to go to a foreign land.”
- The term “captives” could also be translated as “people who were captured” or “enslaved people.”
- Depending on the context, “captivity” could also be translated as “imprisonment” or “exile” or “forced stay in a foreign country.”

(See also: **Babylon**, **exile**, **prison**, **seize**)

Bible References:

- **2 Corinthians 10:5**
- **Isaiah 20:4**
- **Jeremiah 43:3**
- **Luke 4:18**

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1123, H1473, H1540, H1546, H1547, H7617, H7622, H7628, H7633, H7686, G01610, G01620, G01630, G01640, G22210

Song of Solomon References:

2:15; 7:5

Carmel, Mount Carmel

Definition:

"Mount Carmel" refers to a mountain range that was located along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea just north of the Plain of Sharon. Its highest peak is 546 meters high.

- There was also a town called "Carmel" located in Judah, south of the Salt Sea.
- The wealthy landowner Nabal and his wife Abigail lived near the town of Carmel, where David and his men helped guard Nabal's sheep shearers.
- On Mount Carmel, Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal to a contest in order to prove that Yahweh is the only true God.
- To make it clear that this was not just a single mountain, "Mount Carmel" could be translated as "mountain on the Carmel mountain range" or "Carmel mountain range."

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Names)

(See also: **Baal**, **Elijah**, **Judah**, **Salt Sea**)

Bible References:

- **1 Kings 18:18-19**
- **1 Samuel 15:12**
- **Jeremiah 46:18**
- **Micah 7:14-15**

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3760, H3761, H3762

Song of Solomon References:

7:5

cedar, cedarwood

Definition:

The term “cedar” refers to a large fir tree which normally has reddish-brown wood. Like other firs, it has cones and needle-like leaves.

- The Old Testament often mentions cedar trees in connection with Lebanon, where they grew plentifully.
- Cedar wood was used in the construction of the Jerusalem temple.
- It was also used for sacrifices and purification offerings.

(See also: fir, pure, sacrifice, temple)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 14:1-2
- 1 Kings 7:1-2
- Isaiah 2:13
- Zechariah 11:2

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0730

Song of Solomon References:

1:17; 5:15; 8:9

chariot, charioteer

Definition:

In ancient times, chariots were lightweight, two-wheeled carts that were pulled by horses.

- People would sit or stand in chariots, using them for war or travel.
- In war, an army that had chariots had a great advantage of speed and mobility over an army that did not have chariots.
- The ancient Egyptians and Romans were well-known for their use of horses and chariots.

(See also: How to Translate Unknowns)

(See also: **Egypt**, **Rome**)

Bible References:

- **1 Kings 9:22**
- **2 Chronicles 18:28-30**
- **Acts 8:29**
- **Acts 8:38**
- **Daniel 11:40-41**
- **Exodus 14:25**
- **Genesis 41:43**

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **12:10** So they followed the Israelites onto the path through the sea, but God caused the Egyptians to panic and caused their **chariots** to get stuck.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2021, H4817, H4818, H7393, H7395, H7398, G07160, G44800

Song of Solomon References:

1:9; 6:12

cistern, well

Definition:

The terms “well” and “cistern” refer to two different kinds of sources for water in Bible times.

- A well is a deep hole dug into the ground so that underground water can flow into it.
- A cistern is a deep hole dug into rock that was used as a holding tank for collecting rain water.
- Cisterns were usually dug into rock and sealed with plaster to keep the water in. A “broken cistern” happened when the plaster became cracked so that the water leaked out.
- Cisterns were often located in the courtyard area of people’s homes to catch the rainwater that would run off the roof.
- Wells were often located where they could be accessed by several families or a whole community.
- Because water was very important for both people and livestock, the right to use a well was often a cause of strife and conflict.
- Both wells and cisterns were usually covered with a large stone to prevent anything falling in it. Often there was a rope with a bucket or pot attached to it to bring the water up to the surface.
- Sometimes a dry cistern was used as a place to imprison someone, such as happened to Joseph and Jeremiah.

Translation Suggestions:

- Ways to translate “well” could include “deep water hole” or “deep hole for spring water” or “deep hole for drawing water.”
- The term “cistern” could be translated as “stone water pit” or “deep and narrow pit for water” or “underground tank for holding water.”
- These terms are similar in meaning. The main difference is that a well continually receives water from underground springs, whereas a cistern is a holding tank for water that usually comes from rain.

(See also: **Jeremiah**, **prison**, **strife**)

Bible References:

- **1 Chronicles 11:17**
- **2 Samuel 17:17-18**
- **Genesis 16:14**

- Luke 14:4-6
- Numbers 20:17

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0875, H0883, H0953, H1360, H4599, H4726, H4841, G40770, G54210

Song of Solomon References:

4:15

column, pillar

Definition:

The term “pillar” usually refers to a large vertical structure that is used to hold up a roof or other part of a building. Another word for “pillar” is “column.”

- In Bible times, pillars used as support in buildings were normally carved from a single piece of stone.
- When Samson in the Old Testament was captured by the Philistines, he destroyed their pagan temple by pushing the supporting pillars and causing the temple to collapse.
- The word “pillar” sometimes refers to a large stone or boulder that is set up as a memorial to mark a grave or to mark the place where an important event happened.
- It can also refer to an idol that was made to worship a false god. It is another name for a “carved image” and could be translated as “statue.”
- The term “pillar” is used to refer to something that is shaped like a pillar, such as the “pillar of fire” that led the Israelites at night through the desert or the “pillar of salt” that Lot’s wife became after she looked back at the city.
- As a structure supporting a building, the term “pillar” or “column” could be translated as “upright stone support beam” or “supporting stone structure.”
- Other uses of “pillar” could be translated as “statue” or “pile” or “mound” or “monument” or “tall mass,” depending on the context.

(See also: **foundation**, **false god**, **image**)

Bible References:

- **2 Kings 18:4**
- **Exodus 13:21**
- **Exodus 33:9**
- **Genesis 31:45**
- **Proverbs 9:1-2**

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0352, H0547, H2106, H2553, H3730, H4552, H4676, H4678, H4690, H5324, H5333, H5982, H8490, G47690

Song of Solomon References:

3:6; 5:15

companion, fellow worker, friend

Definition:

The term “companion” refers to a person who goes with someone else or who is associated with someone else, such as in a friendship or marriage. The term “fellow worker” refers to someone who works with another person.

- Companions go through experiences together, share meals together, and support and encourage each other.
- Depending on the context, this term could also be translated with a word or phrase that means, “friend” or “fellow traveler” or “supporting-person who goes with” or “person who works with.”

Bible References:

- Ezekiel 37:16
- Hebrews 1:9
- Proverbs 2:17
- Psalms 38:11-12

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0251, H0441, H2269, H2270, H2273, H2278, H3674, H3675, H4828, H7453, H7462, H7464, G28440, G33530, G48980, G49040

Song of Solomon References:

1:7; 5:1; 5:16; 8:13

conceive, conceived, conception

Definition:

Used in this sense, the terms “conceive” and “conception” usually refer to a woman becoming pregnant with a child. It can also be used for animals that become pregnant.

- The phrase “conceive a child” could be translated as “become pregnant” or some other term that is an acceptable way of referring to this.
- The related term “conception” could be translated as “beginning of a pregnancy” or “moment of becoming pregnant.”
- Depending on context, the term “conceived” could be translated as “became pregnant” or “became pregnant with.”

(See also: **create**, **womb**)

Bible References:

- **Genesis 21:1-4**
- **Hosea 2:4-5**
- **Job 15:35**
- **Luke 1:24-25**
- **Luke 2:21**

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H2029, H2030, H2032, H2232, H2254, H2803, H3179, G10800, G17220, G28450, G48150

Song of Solomon References:

3:4

concubine

Definition:

A concubine is a woman who is a secondary wife for a man who already has a wife. Usually a concubine is not legally married to the man.

- In the Old Testament, concubines were often female slaves.
- A concubine could be acquired by purchase, through military conquest, or in payment of a debt.
- For a king, having many concubines was a sign of power.

Bible References:

- 2 Samuel 3:7
- Genesis 22:24
- Genesis 25:5-6
- Genesis 35:21-22
- Genesis 36:12
- Judges 19:1-2

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3904, H6370

Song of Solomon References:

6:8; 6:9

crown, crowned

Definition:

A crown is a decorative, circular headpiece worn on the head of rulers such as kings and queens. The term to "crown" means to put a crown on someone's head; figuratively it means, to "honor."

- Crowns are usually made of gold or silver, and are embedded with precious gems such as emeralds and rubies.
- A crown was intended to be a symbol of a king's power and wealth.
- By contrast, the crown made of thorn branches that the Roman soldiers placed on Jesus' head was meant to mock him and hurt him.
- In ancient times, winners of athletic contests would be awarded a crown made out of olive branches. The apostle Paul mentions this crown in his second letter to Timothy.
- Used figuratively, to "crown" means to honor someone. We honor God by obeying him and praising him to others. This is like putting a crown on him and acknowledging that he is King.
- Paul calls fellow believers his "joy and crown." In this expression, "crown" is used figuratively to mean that Paul has been greatly blessed and honored by how these believers have remained faithful in serving God.
- When used figuratively, "crown" could be translated as "prize" or "honor" or "reward."
- The figurative use of to "crown" could be translated as to "honor" or to "decorate."
- If a person is "crowned" this could be translated as "a crown was put on his head."
- The expression, "he was crowned with glory and honor" could be translated as "glory and honor were bestowed on him" or "he was given glory and honor" or "he was endowed with glory and honor."

(See also: **glory**, king, **olive**)

Bible References:

- **John 19:3**
- **Lamentations 5:16**
- **Matthew 27:29**
- **Philippians 4:1**
- **Psalms 21:3**
- **Revelation 3:11**

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3803, H3804, H5145, H5849, H5850, H6936, G12380, G47350, G47370

Song of Solomon References:

3:11

curtain

Definition:

In the Bible, the term “curtain” refers to a very thick, heavy piece of material used in the making of the tabernacle and the temple.

- The tabernacle was built using four layers of curtains for the top and sides. These curtain coverings were made of cloth or animal skins.
- Cloth curtains were also used to form a wall surrounding the tabernacle courtyard. These curtains were made out of “linen” which was a kind of cloth made out of the flax plant.
- In both the tabernacle and temple building, a thick cloth curtain hung between the holy place and the most holy place. It was this curtain that was miraculously torn into two parts when Jesus died.

Translation Suggestions:

- Since modern-day curtains are very different from the curtains used in the Bible, it may be more clear to use a different word or to add words that describe the curtains.
- Depending on the context, ways to translate this term could include, “curtain covering” or “covering” or “piece of thick cloth” or “animal skin covering” or “hanging piece of cloth.”

(See also: **holy place**, **tabernacle**, **temple**)

Bible References:

- **Hebrews 10:20**
- **Leviticus 4:17**
- **Luke 23:45**
- **Matthew 27:51**
- **Numbers 4:5**

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1852, H3407, H4539, H6532, H7050, G26650

Song of Solomon References:

1:5

Damascus

Definition:

Damascus is the capital city of the country of Syria. It is still in the same location as it was in Bible times.

- Damascus is one of the oldest, continuously inhabited cities in the world.
- During the time of Abraham, Damascus was the capital of the Aram kingdom (located in what is now Syria).
- Throughout the Old Testament, there are many references to the interactions between the inhabitants of Damascus and the people of Israel.
- Several biblical prophecies predict the destruction of Damascus. These prophecies may have been fulfilled when Assyria destroyed the city during Old Testament times, or there may be also be a future, more complete destruction of this city.
- In the New Testament, the Pharisee Saul (later known as Paul) was on his way to arrest Christians in the city of Damascus when Jesus confronted him and caused him to become a believer.

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Names)

(See also: **Aram**, **Assyria**, **believe**, **Syria**)

Bible References:

- **2 Chronicles 24:23-24**
- **Acts 9:1-2**
- **Acts 9:3**
- **Acts 26:12**
- **Galatians 1:15-17**
- **Genesis 14:15-16**

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1834, G11540

Song of Solomon References:

7:4

David

Definition:

David was the second king of Israel and he loved and served God. He was the main writer of the book of Psalms.

- When David was still a young boy caring for his family's sheep, God chose him to become the next king of Israel.
- David became a great fighter and led the Israelite army in battles against their enemies. His defeat of Goliath the Philistine is well known.
- King Saul tried to kill David, but God protected him, and made him king after Saul's death.
- David committed a terrible sin, but he repented and God forgave him.
- Jesus, the Messiah, is called the "Son of David" because he is a descendant of King David.

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Names)

(See also: Goliath, Philistines, Saul (OT))

Bible References:

- 1 Samuel 17:12-13
- 1 Samuel 20:34
- 2 Samuel 5:2
- 2 Timothy 2:8
- Acts 2:25
- Acts 13:22
- Luke 1:32
- Mark 2:26

Examples from the Bible stories:

- 17:2 God chose a young Israelite named **David** to be king after Saul. **David** was a shepherd from the town of Bethlehem. … **David** was a humble and righteous man who trusted and obeyed God.

- 17:3 **David** was also a great soldier and leader. When **David** was still a young man, he fought against a giant named Goliath.
- 17:4 Saul became jealous of the people's love for **David**. Saul tried many times to kill him, so **David** hid from Saul.
- 17:5 God blessed **David** and made him successful. **David** fought many battles and God helped him defeat Israel's enemies.
- 17:6 **David** wanted to build a temple where all the Israelites could worship God and offer him sacrifices.
- 17:9 **David** ruled with justice and faithfulness for many years, and God blessed him. However, toward the end of his life he sinned terribly against God.
- 17:13 God was very angry about what **David** had done, so he sent the prophet Nathan to tell **David** how evil his sin was. **David** repented of his sin and God forgave him. For the rest of his life, **David** followed and obeyed God, even in difficult times.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1732, G11380

Song of Solomon References:

4:4

day

Definition:

The term “day” generally refers to the time it takes for the alternating periods of light and darkness in the sky to complete one cycle (that is, 24 hours). However, in the Bible the same term is often used to refer to a shorter period of time (such as the time between sunrise and sunset) or a longer period of time that is often not specified.

- “Day” is sometimes used in contrast to “night.” In these cases, the term refers to the period of time when the sky is light.
- The term may also refer to a specific point in time, such as “today.”
- Sometimes the term “day” is used figuratively to refer to a longer period of time, such as the “day of Yahweh” or “last days.” Some languages will use a different expression to translate these figurative uses or will translate “day” non-figuratively.

Translation Suggestions:

- It is best to translate this term literally as “day” or “daytime” using the word in your language that refers to the part of the day when there is light.
- Other translations of “day” could include “daytime,” “time,” “season,” “occasion” or “event,” depending on the context.

(See also: time, judgment day, last day)

Bible References:

- Acts 20:6
- Daniel 10:4
- Ezra 6:15
- Ezra 6:19
- Matthew 9:15

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3117, H3118, H6242, G22500

Song of Solomon References:

2:17; 3:11; 4:6; 8:8

declare, proclaim, announce

Definition:

The terms “declare” and “declaration” refer to making a formal or public statement, often to emphasize something. Other terms with similar meaning include “proclaim,” “proclamation,” “announce,” and “announcement.”

- A “declaration” not only emphasizes the importance of what is being proclaimed, but it also calls attention to the one making the declaration.
- For example, in the Old Testament, a message from God is often preceded by “the declaration of Yahweh” or “this is what Yahweh declares.” This expression emphasizes that it is Yahweh himself who is saying this. The fact that the message comes from Yahweh shows how important that message is.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, “declare” could also be translated as “proclaim” or “publicly state” or “strongly say” or “emphatically state.”
- The term “declaration” could also be translated as “statement” or “proclamation.”
- The phrase “this is Yahweh’s declaration” could be translated as “this is what Yahweh declares” or “this is what Yahweh says.”

(See also: **preach**, **decree**)

Bible References:

- **1 Chronicles 16:24**
- **1 Corinthians 15:31-32**
- **1 Samuel 24:17-18**
- **Amos 2:16**
- **Ezekiel 5:11-12**
- **Matthew 7:21-23**

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0262, H0559, H0816, H0874, H1696, H3045, H4853, H5002, H5042, H5046, H5608, H6567, H7121, H7561, H7878, H8085, G03120, G05180, G06690, G12290, G13440, G15550, G17180, G18340, G20970, G25110, G26050, G26070, G31400, G36700, G37240, G38220, G38700, G39550, G42960

Song of Solomon References:

1:7; 5:8

deer, doe, fawn, roebuck, stag

Definition:

A deer is a large, graceful, four-legged animal that lives in forests or on mountains. The male animal has large horns or antlers on its head.

- The term “doe” refers to a female deer and a “fawn” is the name of a baby deer.
- The terms “buck” and “stag” refer to a male deer.
- A “roebuck” is the male of the specific variety called “roe deer.”
- Deer have strong, thin legs that help them jump high and run fast.
- Their feet have split hooves which help them walk or climb easily on most any terrain.

(See also: How to Translate Unknowns)

Bible References:

- 2 Samuel 22:34
- Genesis 49:21
- Job 39:2
- Psalms 18:33
- Song of Songs 2:7

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0354, H0355, H0365, H3180, H3280, H6643, H6646

Song of Solomon References:

2:9; 2:17; 4:5; 7:3; 8:14

delight

Definition:

The term “delight” means great pleasure or great joy.

- To “delight in” something means to “to take pleasure in” or “take joy in” or “be happy about” it. If a person “delights in” something, it means that he enjoys it very much.
- When something is very agreeable or pleasing it is called “delightful.”
- The expression “my delight is in the law of Yahweh” could be translated as “the law of Yahweh gives me great joy” or “I love to obey the laws of Yahweh” or “I am happy when I obey Yahweh’s commands.”
- The phrases “take no delight in” and “have no delight in” could be translated as “not at all pleased by” or “not happy about.”
- The phrase “delight himself in” means “he enjoys doing” something or “he is very happy about” something or someone.
- The term “delights” refers to things that a person enjoys. This could be translated as “pleasures” or “things that give joy.”
- An expression such as “I delight to do your will” could also be translated as “I enjoy doing your will” or “I am very happy when I obey you.”

Bible References:

- Proverbs 8:30
- Psalm 1:2
- Psalms 119:69-70
- Song of Songs 1:3

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1523, H2530, H2531, H2532, H2654, H2655, H2656, H2836, H4574, H5276, H5727, H5730, H6026, H6027, H7306, H7381, H7521, H7522, H8057, H8173, H8191, H8588, H8597

Song of Solomon References:

2:3; 7:6

desert, wilderness

Definition:

A desert, or wilderness, is a dry, barren place where very few plants and trees can grow.

- A desert is a land area with a dry climate and few plants or animals.
- Because of the harsh conditions, very few people can live in the desert, so it is also referred to as "wilderness."
- "Wilderness" conveys the meaning of being remote, desolate and isolated from people.
- This word can also be translated as "deserted place" or "remote place" or "uninhabited place."

Bible References:

- Acts 13:16-18
- Acts 21:38
- Exodus 4:27-28
- Genesis 37:21-22
- John 3:14
- Luke 1:80
- Luke 9:12-14
- Mark 1:3
- Matthew 4:1
- Matthew 11:8

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0776, H2723, H3293, H3452, H4057, H6160, H6723, H6728, H6921, H8047, H8414, G20470, G20480

Song of Solomon References:

3:6; 8:5

destroy, destruction, annihilate

Definition:

The term “destroy” means to completely make an end to something, so that it no longer exists.

- The term “destroyer” means “a person who destroys.”
- This term is often used in the Old Testament as a general reference to anyone who destroys other people, such as an invading army.
- When God sent the angel to kill all the firstborn males in Egypt, that angel was referred to as “the destroyer of the firstborn.” This could be translated as “the one (or angel) who killed the firstborn males.”
- In the book of Revelation about the end times, Satan or some other evil spirit is called “the Destroyer.” He is the “one who destroys” because his purpose is to destroy and ruin everything God created.

(See also: **angel**, **Egypt**, **firstborn**, **Passover**)

Bible References:

- **Exodus 12:23**
- **Hebrews 11:28**
- **Jeremiah 6:26**
- **Judges 16:24**

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0006, H0007, H0622, H0398, H1104, H1197, H1820, H1826, H1942, H2000, H2015, H2026, H2040, H2254, H2255, H2717, H2718, H2763, H2764, H3238, H3341, H3381, H3423, H3582, H3615, H3617, H3772, H3807, H4191, H4229, H4591, H4658, H4889, H5218, H5221, H5307, H5362, H5420, H5422, H5428, H5595, H5642, H6365, H6789, H6979, H7665, H7667, H7703, H7722, H7760, H7843, H7921, H8045, H8074, H8077, H8316, H8552, G03550, G03960, G06220, G08530, G13110, G18420, G20490, G25060, G25070, G26470, G26730, G27040, G30890, G36450, G41990, G53510, G53560

Song of Solomon References:

2:15

dove, pigeon, turtledove

Definition:

Doves and pigeons are two kinds of small, gray-brown birds that look similar. A dove is often thought of as being lighter in color, almost white.

- Some languages have two different names for them, while others use the same name for both.
- Doves and pigeons were used in sacrifices to God, especially for people who could not afford to buy a larger animal.
- A dove brought the leaf of an olive tree to Noah when the flood waters were going down.
- Doves sometimes symbolize purity, innocence, or peace.
- If doves or pigeons are not known in the language area where the translation is being done, this term could be translated as “a small grayish brown bird called a dove” or “a small gray or brown bird, similar to a (name of local bird)”.
- If both a dove and a pigeon are referred to in the same verse, it is best to use two different words for these birds, if possible.
- A turtledove is a type of dove mentioned in Genesis 15:9, Song of Songs 2:12, and Leviticus 12:6.

(See also: How to Translate Unknowns)

(See also: olive, innocent, pure)

Bible References:

- Genesis 8:9
- Luke 2:22-24
- Mark 1:10
- Matthew 3:16
- Matthew 21:12-14

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1469, H1686, H3123, H8449, G40580

Song of Solomon References:

1:15; 2:12; 2:14; 4:1; 5:2; 5:12; 6:9

drunk, drunkard

Definition:

The term “drunk” means to be intoxicated from drinking too much of an alcoholic beverage.

- A “drunkard” is a person who is often drunk. This kind of person could also be referred to as an “alcoholic.”
- The Bible tells believers not to be drunk with alcoholic drinks, but to be controlled by God’s Holy Spirit.
- The Bible teaches that drunkenness is unwise and influences a person to sin in other ways.
- Other ways to translate “drunk” could include “inebriated” or “intoxicated” or “having too much alcohol” or “filled with fermented drink.”

(See also: wine)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 5:11-13
- 1 Samuel 25:36
- Jeremiah 13:13
- Luke 7:34
- Luke 21:34
- Proverbs 23:19-21

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H5433, H7301, H7910, H7937, H7941, H7943, H8354, H8358, G31780, G31820, G31830, G31840, G36300, G36320

Song of Solomon References:

5:1

En Gedi

Definition:

En Gedi was the name of a city in the wilderness of Judah southeast of Jerusalem.

- En Gedi was located on the western bank of the Salt Sea.
- Part of its name means “fountain,” referring to a spring which watered the city.
- En Gedi was known for having beautiful vineyards and other fertile land, probably due to the continual watering by the spring of water.
- There were strongholds in En Gedi which David fled to when he was being chased by King Saul.

(See also: David, desert, fountain, **Judah**, **rest**, **Salt Sea**, **Saul (OT)**, **stronghold**, vineyard)

Bible References:

- **2 Chronicles 20:2**
- Song of Songs 1:12-14

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H5872

Song of Solomon References:

1:14

ewe, ram, sheep, sheepfold, sheepshearer, sheepskin

Definition:

A “sheep” is a medium-sized animal with four legs that has wool all over its body. A male sheep is called a “ram.” A female sheep is called a “ewe.” The plural of “sheep” is also “sheep.”

- A baby sheep is called a “lamb.”
- The Israelites often used sheep for sacrifices, especially male sheep and young sheep.
- People eat meat from sheep and use their wool to make clothing and other things.
- Sheep are very trusting, weak, and timid. They are easily influenced to wander away. They need a shepherd to lead them, protect them, and provide them with food, water, and shelter.
- In the Bible, people are compared to sheep who have God as their shepherd.

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Unknowns)

(See also: Israel, **lamb**, **sacrifice**, shepherd)

Bible References:

- **Acts 8:32**
- **Genesis 30:32**
- **John 2:14**
- **Luke 15:5**
- **Mark 6:34**
- **Matthew 9:36**
- **Matthew 10:6**
- **Matthew 12:12**
- **Matthew 25:33**

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **9:12** One day while Moses was taking care of his **sheep**, he saw a bush that was on fire.

- 17:2 David was a shepherd from the town of Bethlehem. At different times while he was watching his father's **sheep**, David had killed both a lion and a bear that had attacked the **sheep**.
- 30:3 To Jesus, these people were like **sheep** without a shepherd.
- 38:8 Jesus said, "All of you will all abandon me tonight. It is written, 'I will strike the shepherd and all the **sheep** will be scattered.'"

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0352, H1494, H1798, H2169, H3104, H3532, H3535, H3733, H3775, H5739, H5763, H6260, H6629, H6792, H7353, H7462, H7716, G41650, G42620, G42630

Song of Solomon References:

4:2; 6:6

fig

Definition:

A fig is a small, soft, sweet fruit that grows on trees. When ripe, this fruit can be a variety of colors, including brown, yellow, or purple.

- Fig trees can grow 6 meters in height and their large leaves provide pleasant shade. The fruit is about 3-5 centimeters long.
- Adam and Eve used the leaves from fig trees to make clothing for themselves after they had sinned.
- Figs can be eaten raw, cooked, or dried. People also chop them into small pieces and press them into cakes to eat later.
- In Bible times, figs were important as a source of food and income.
- The presence of fruitful fig trees is frequently mentioned in the Bible as a sign of prosperity.
- Several times Jesus used fig trees as an illustration to teach his disciples spiritual truths.

Bible References:

- Habakkuk 3:17
- James 3:12
- Luke 13:7
- Mark 11:14
- Matthew 7:17
- Matthew 21:18

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1061, H1690, H6291, H8384, G36530, G48080, G48100

Song of Solomon References:

2:13

flock, herd

Definition:

In the Bible, “flock” refers to a group of sheep or goats and “herd” refers to a group of cattle or pigs.

- Different languages may have different ways of naming groups of animals or birds.

Translation Suggestions

- Consider what terms are used in your language to refer to different groups of animals, and use the appropriate term for each kind of animal.
- If your language uses the same word to refer to both groups of sheep and cattle, then you may need to say “groups of sheep” where the Bible says only “flocks,” and “groups of cattle” where the Bible says only “herds.” Alternatively, if the Biblical context does not demand differentiation (if the text simply says “flocks and herds,” meaning all their domesticated animals) you may just use the one word once.

(See also: goat, cow, pig, sheep)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 10:28-29
- 2 Chronicles 17:11
- Deuteronomy 14:22-23
- Luke 2:8-9
- Matthew 8:30
- Matthew 26:31

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0951, H1241, H2835, H4029, H4735, H4830, H5349, H5739, H6251, H6629, H7399, H7462, G00340, G41670, G41680

Song of Solomon References:

1:7; 1:8; 4:1; 4:2; 6:5; 6:6

fountain, source, spring

Definition:

The terms “fountain” and “spring” usually refer to a large amount of water that flows out naturally from the ground.

- These words are also used figuratively in the Bible to refer to blessings flowing from God or to refer to something that cleanses and purifies.
- In modern times, a fountain is often a manmade object that has water flowing out of it, such as a drinking fountain. Make sure that the translation of this term refers to a natural source of flowing water.
- Compare the translation of this term with how the term “flood” is translated.

(See also: flood)

Bible References:

- 2 Peter 2:17
- Genesis 7:11
- Genesis 8:2
- Genesis 24:13
- Genesis 24:42
- James 3:11

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0953, H1530, H1543, H3222, H4002, H4161, H4456, H4599, H4726, H5033, H5869, H5927, H6524, H6779, H8444, H8666, G02420, G40770

Song of Solomon References:

4:12; 4:15

frankincense

Definition:

Frankincense is a fragrant spice made from tree resin. It is used to make perfumes and incense.

- In Bible times, frankincense was an important spice used to prepare dead bodies for burial.
- This spice is also valuable for its healing and calming qualities.
- When learned men came from an eastern country to visit baby Jesus in Bethlehem, frankincense was one of the three gifts they brought him.

(See also: **Bethlehem**, **learned men**)

Bible References:

- **1 Chronicles 9:28-29**
- **Exodus 30:34-36**
- **Matthew 2:11-12**
- **Numbers 5:15**

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3828, G30300

Song of Solomon References:

3:6; 4:6; 4:14

fruit, fruitful, unfruitful

Definition:

The term “fruit” refers to the part of a plant that can be eaten. Something that is “fruitful” produces a lot of fruit. Something that is “unfruitful” does not produce fruit.

- In general, the expression “fruit of” refers to anything that comes from or that is produced by something else. For example, the phrase “the fruit of every tree” refers to the fruit that comes from these trees.
- The expression “fruit of the land” refers generally to everything that the land produces for people to eat. This includes not only fruits such as grapes or dates, but also vegetables, nuts, and grains.

Translation Suggestions:

- When the term “fruit” refers to what a specific plant produces, the specific term for the fruit of that plant can be used, otherwise, use a general word for the edible things that plants produce, if possible. In many languages it may be more natural to use the plural “fruits” whenever it refers to more than one fruit.
- When used literally, the term “fruitful” could be translated as “producing much fruit.”
- The expression “fruit of the land” could also be translated as “food that the land produces” or “food crops that are growing in that region.”
- When used literally, the expression “will be more fruitful” could also be translated as “will produce more fruit.”

(See also: descendant, grain, grape, Holy Spirit, vine, womb)

Bible References:

- Genesis 1:11
- Matthew 7:17

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0004, H1061, H1063, H1069, H2233, H2981, H3581, H3759, H3899, H3978, H4022, H5108, H6509, H6529, H7019, H8393, H8570, G10810, G25900, G25920, G25930, G37030, G50520, G53520

Song of Solomon References:

2:3; 4:13; 4:16; 7:8; 7:13; 8:11; 8:12

gate, gate bar, gatekeeper, gatepost, gateway

Definition:

The term “gate” refers to an access point in a fence, wall, or other kind of barrier that surrounds a house, property, city, etc.

- A city gate could be opened to allow people, animals, and cargo to travel in and out of the city.
- To protect the city, its walls and gates were thick and strong. Gates were closed and locked with a metal or wooden bar to prevent enemy soldiers from entering the city.
- A “bar” for a gate refers to a wood or metal bar that can be moved into place so that the doors of the gate cannot be opened from the outside.
- In Bible times, a city gate was often the social center for that town or city. It was a place where news of current events was exchanged between people, where business transactions occurred, and where civil judgments were made.

Translation Suggestions:

- Depending on the context, other ways to translate “gate” could be “door” or “wall opening” or “barrier” or “entranceway.”
- The phrase “bars of the gate” could be translated as “gate bolts” or “wooden beams to lock the gate” or “metal locking rods of the gate.”

Bible References:

- Acts 9:24
- Acts 10:18
- Deuteronomy 21:18-19
- Genesis 19:1
- Genesis 24:60
- Matthew 7:13

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1817, H5592, H6607, H8179, G23740, G44390, G44400

Song of Solomon References:

7:4

Gilead, Gileadite

Definition:

Gilead was the name of a mountainous region east of the Jordan river where the Israelite tribes of Gad, Reuben, and Manasseh lived.

- This region was also referred to as the "hill country of Gilead" or "Mount Gilead."
- "Gilead" was also the name of several men in the Old Testament. One of these men was the grandson of Manasseh. Another Gilead was the father of Jephthah.

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Names)

(See also: **Gad**, **Jephthah**, **Manasseh**, **Reuben**, **twelve tribes of Israel**)

Bible References:

- **1 Chronicles 2:22**
- **1 Samuel 11:1**
- **Amos 1:3**
- **Deuteronomy 2:36-37**
- **Genesis 31:21**
- **Genesis 37:25-26**

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1568, H1569

Song of Solomon References:

4:1; 6:5

glean, gleaning, gleanings

Definition:

The term “glean” means to go through a field or orchard and pick up whatever grain or fruit the harvesters have left behind.

- God commanded the Israelites to let the widows, poor people, and foreigners glean the leftover grain in order to provide food for themselves.
- Sometimes the owner of the field would allow the gleaners to go directly behind the harvesters to glean, which enabled them to glean much more of the grain. A clear example of how this worked is in the story of Ruth, who was generously allowed to glean among the harvesters in the fields of her relative Boaz.
- Other ways to translate “glean” can be “pick up” or “gather” or “collect.”

(See also: **Boaz**, **grain**, **harvest**, **Ruth**)

Bible References:

- **Deuteronomy 24:21-22**
- **Isaiah 17:4-5**
- **Job 24:6**
- **Ruth 2:2**
- **Ruth 2:15**

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3950, H3951, H5953, H5955

Song of Solomon References:

6:2

goat, goatskin, scapegoat, kid

Definition:

A goat is a medium-sized, four-legged animal which is similar to a sheep and is raised primarily for its milk and meat. A baby goat is called a "kid."

- Like sheep, goats were important animals of sacrifice, especially at Passover.
- Although goats and sheep can be very similar, these are some ways that they are different:
  - Goats have coarse hair; sheep have wool.
  - The tail of a goat stands up; the tail of a sheep hangs down.
  - Sheep usually like to stay with their herd, but goats are more independent and tend to wander away from their herd.
- In Bible times, goats were often the main source of milk in Israel.
- Goat skins were used for tent coverings and to make bags for holding wine.
- In both the Old and New Testaments, the goat was used as a symbol for unrighteous people, perhaps because of its tendency to wander away from the one taking care of it.
- The Israelites also used goats as symbolic sin bearers. When one goat was sacrificed, the priest would lay his hands on a second, live goat, and send it into the desert as a symbol that the animal was bearing the people's sins.

(See also: flock, sacrifice, sheep, righteous, wine)

Bible References:

- Exodus 12:3-4
- Genesis 30:32
- Genesis 31:10
- Genesis 37:31
- Leviticus 3:12-14
- Matthew 25:33

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0689, H1423, H1429, H3277, H3629, H5795, H5796, H6260, H6629, H6842, H7716, H8163, H8166, H8495, G01220, G20550, G20560, G51310

Song of Solomon References:

1:8; 4:1; 6:5

gold, golden

Definition:

Gold is a yellow, high quality metal that was used for making jewelry and religious objects. It was the most valuable metal in ancient times.

- In Bible times, many different kinds of objects were made out of solid gold or were covered with a thin layer of gold.
- These objects included earrings and other jewelry, and idols, altars, and other objects used in the tabernacle or temple, such as the ark of the covenant.
- In Old Testament times, gold was used as a means of exchange in buying and selling. It was weighed on a scale to determine its value.
- Later on, gold and other metals such as silver were used to make coins to use in buying and selling
- When referring to something that is not solid gold, but only has a thin covering of gold, the term “golden” or “gold-covered” or “gold-overlaid” could also be used.
- Sometimes an object is described as “gold-colored,” which means it has the yellow color of gold, but may not actually be made of gold.

(See also: altar, ark of the covenant, false god, silver, tabernacle, temple)

Bible References:

- 1 Peter 1:7
- 1 Timothy 2:8-10
- 2 Chronicles 1:15
- Acts 3:6
- Daniel 2:32

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1220, H1722, H2091, H2742, H3800, H5458, H6884, H6885, G55520, G55530, G55540, G55570

Song of Solomon References:

1:11; 3:10; 5:11; 5:14; 5:15

good, right, pleasant, better, best, goodness

Definition:

The term “good” generally refers to a positive evaluation of the quality of something or someone, often in a moral or emotional sense. However, the term conveys various nuances throughout the Bible depending on the context.

- Something that is “good” could be emotionally pleasant, morally right, excellent, helpful, suitable, or profitable.
- In the Bible, the general meaning of “good” is often contrasted with “evil.”

Translation Suggestions:

- The general term for “good” in the target language should be used wherever this general meaning is accurate and natural, especially in contexts where it is contrasted to evil.
- Depending on the context, other ways to translate this term could include “kind” or “excellent” or “pleasing to God” or “righteous” or “morally upright” or “profitable.”
- “Good land” could be translated as “fertile land” or “productive land”; a “good crop” could be translated as a “plentiful harvest” or “large amount of crops.”
- The phrase “do good to” means to do something that benefits others and could be translated as “be kind to” or “help” or “benefit” someone or “cause someone to prosper.”
- To “do good on the Sabbath” means to “do things that help others on the Sabbath.”
- Depending on the context, ways to translate the term “goodness” could include “blessing” or “kindness” or “moral perfection” or “righteousness” or “purity.”

(See also: **righteous**, **prosper**, **evil**)

Bible References:

- **Galatians 5:22-24**
- **Genesis 1:12**
- **Genesis 2:9**
- **Genesis 2:17**
- **James 3:13**
- **Romans 2:4**

Examples from the Bible stories:

- 1:4 God saw that what he had created was **good**.
- 1:11 God planted the tree of the knowledge of **good** and evil.
- 1:12 Then God said, “It is not **good** for man to be alone.”
- 2:4 “God just knows that as soon as you eat it, you will be like God and will understand **good** and evil like he does.”
- 8:12 “You tried to do evil when you sold me as a slave, but God used the evil for **good**!”
- 14:15 Joshua was a **good** leader because he trusted and obeyed God.
- 18:13 Some of these kings were **good** men who ruled justly and worshiped God.
- 28:1 “**Good** teacher, what must I do to have eternal life?” Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me ‘**good**?’ There is only one who is **good**, and that is God.”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0117, H0145, H0155, H0202, H0239, H0410, H1580, H1926, H1935, H2532, H2617, H2623, H2869, H2895, H2896, H2898, H3190, H3191, H3276, H3474, H3788, H3966, H4261, H4399, H5232, H5750, H6287, H6643, H6743, H7075, H7368, H7399, H7443, H7999, H8231, H8232, H8233, H8389, H8458, G00140, G00150, G00180, G00190, G05150, G07440, G08650, G09790, G13800, G20950, G20970, G21060, G21070, G21080, G21090, G21140, G21150, G21330, G21400, G21620, G21630, G21740, G22930, G25650, G25670, G25700, G25730, G28870, G29860, G31400, G36170, G37760, G41470, G46320, G46740, G48510, G52230, G52240, G53580, G55420, G55430, G55440

Song of Solomon References:

1:2; 1:3; 1:16; 4:10; 4:14; 7:9

Hades, Sheol

Definition:

The terms “Hades” (in Greek) and “Sheol” (in Hebrew) are proper names for the place where the spirits of dead people would go after they had died.

- In these ancient cultures, people thought of this as an underground dwelling place where the spirits of dead people existed in a shadowy, semi-conscious form.
- Although these terms are place names, in the Bible they often mean the same thing as “death” or “the grave.”
- Throughout most of biblical history, “Sheol” and “Hades” refer to a neutral place where all of the dead go to await judgment, both the righteous and the unrighteous. In the New Testament, however, “Hades” begins to be seen as a place for only the unrighteous, in contrast with “Abraham’s side” (Luke 16:22) or “paradise” (Luke 23:43), which describe the place for the righteous.

Translation Suggestions

- Both “Sheol” and “Hades” can be translated in various ways, depending on the context. Some possibilities include: “place of the dead,” “place for dead spirits,” “the underworld,” “the pit,” “the grave,” or “death.”
- Some translations keep the proper names “Sheol” and “Hades,” spelling them to fit the sound patterns of the language of translation. (See: How to Translate Unknowns).
- A phrase could also be added to each term to explain it. Examples of doing this are, “Sheol, place where dead people are” and “Hades, place of death.”

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Unknowns)

(See also: **death**, **heaven**, **hell**, **tomb**)

Bible References:

- **Acts 2:31**
- **Genesis 44:29**
- **Jonah 2:2**
- **Luke 10:15**
- **Luke 16:23**
- **Matthew 11:23**

- **Matthew 16:18**
- **Revelation 1:18**

Word Data:

- Strong's: H7585, G00860

Song of Solomon References:

8:6

Heshbon

Definition:

In Bible times, Heshbon was a major city of Moab. It was the capital city of king Sihon before the Israelites conquered it and began living in it.

(Translation suggestions: Translate Names)

(See also: Moab, Sihon)

Bible References:

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2809

Song of Solomon References:

7:4

honey, honeycomb

Definition:

"Honey" is the sweet, sticky, edible substance that honeybees make out of flower nectar.

Honeycomb is the waxy frame where the bees store honey.

- Depending on the kind, honey can be yellowish or brownish in color.
- Honey can be found in the wild, such as in the hollow of a tree, or wherever bees make a nest. People also raise bees in hives in order to produce honey to eat or sell, but probably the honey mentioned in the Bible was wild honey.
- Three people that the Bible specifically mentions as eating wild honey were Jonathan, Samson, and John the Baptist.
- This term is often used figuratively to describe something that is sweet or very pleasurable. For example, God's words and decrees are said to be "sweeter than honey." (See also: Simile, Metaphor)
- Sometimes a person's words are described as seeming sweet like honey, but instead result in deceiving and harming others.

(See also: **John (the Baptist)**, **Jonathan**, **Philistines**, **Samson**)

Bible References:

- **1 Kings 14:1-3**
- **Deuteronomy 6:3**
- **Exodus 13:3-5**
- **Joshua 5:6**
- **Proverbs 5:3**

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1706, H3293, H3295, H5317, H6688, G31920

Song of Solomon References:

4:11; 5:1

horse, warhorse, horseback, stallion, steed, mare

Definition:

A horse is a large, four-legged animal that in Bible times was mostly used for war and for transporting people. A stallion is a male horse and a mare is a female horse. “Steed” is a poetic word referring to a horse that is powerful or fast.

- Some horses were used to pull carts or chariots, while others were used to carry individual riders.
- In the Bible, horses were considered to be valuable possessions and a measure of wealth, mainly because of their use in war. For example, part of King Solomon’s great wealth was the thousands of horses and chariots that he had.
- Animals that are similar to the horse are the donkey and the mule.
- Horses often wear a bit and bridle on their heads so they can be guided.

(See also: chariot, donkey, Solomon)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 18:4
- 2 Kings 2:11
- Exodus 14:23-25
- Ezekiel 23:5-7
- Zechariah 6:8

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0047, H5483, H5484, H6571, H7409, G24620

Song of Solomon References:

1:9

house

Definition:

The term “house” refers to a small building, shelter, or tent, usually the place where a family sleeps.

- When referring to a building where people live and sleep the term “house” could be translated as “dwelling place” or “dwelling structure” or with another term that expresses the meaning.

Bible References:

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1004, H1005, H1035, H1397, G36140, G36240

Song of Solomon References:

1:17; 2:4; 3:4; 8:2; 8:7

Israel, Israelites

Definition:

The term “Israel” is the name that God gave to Jacob. Often it refers to the nation that is descended from him.

- The name Israel probably means “He struggles with God.”
- The descendants of Jacob became known as the “sons of Israel” or the “people of Israel” or the “nation of Israel” or the “Israelites.”
- God formed his covenant with the people of Israel. They were his chosen people.
- The nation of Israel consisted of twelve tribes.
- Soon after King Solomon died, Israel was divided into two kingdoms: the southern kingdom, called “Judah,” and the northern kingdom, called “Israel.”
- Often the term “Israel” can be translated as “the people of Israel” or “the nation of Israel,” depending on the context.

(See also: **Jacob**, **kingdom of Israel**, **Judah**, **nation**, **twelve tribes of Israel**)

Bible References:

- **1 Chronicles 10:1**
- **1 Kings 8:2**
- **Acts 2:36**
- **Acts 7:24**
- **Acts 13:23**
- **John 1:49-51**
- **Luke 24:21**
- **Mark 12:29**
- **Matthew 2:6**
- **Matthew 27:9**
- **Philippians 3:4-5**

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **8:15** The descendants of the twelve sons became the twelve tribes of **Israel**.

- 9:3 The Egyptians forced the **Israelites** to build many buildings and even whole cities.
- 9:5 A certain **Israelite** woman gave birth to a baby boy.
- 10:1 They said, “This is what the God of **Israel** says, ‘Let my people go!’”
- 14:12 But despite all this, the people of __Israel __ complained and grumbled against God and against Moses.
- 15:9 God fought for **Israel** that day. He caused the Amorites to be confused and he sent large hailstones that killed many of the Amorites.
- 15:12 After this battle, God gave each tribe of __Israel __ its own section of the Promised Land. Then God gave **Israel** peace along all its borders.
- 16:16 So God punished __Israel __ again for worshiping idols.
- 43:6 “Men of **Israel**, Jesus was a man who did many mighty signs and wonders by the power of God, as you have seen and already know.”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3478, H3479, H3481, H3482, G09350, G24740, G24750

Song of Solomon References:

3:7

Jerusalem

Definition:

Jerusalem was originally an ancient Canaanite city that later became the most important city in Israel. It is located about 34 kilometers west of the Salt Sea and just north of Bethlehem. It is still the capital city of Israel today.

- The name "Jerusalem" is first mentioned in the book of Joshua. Other Old Testament names for this city include "Salem" "city of Jebus," and "Zion." Both "Jerusalem" and "Salem," have the root meaning of "peace."
- Jerusalem was originally a Jebusite fortress called "Zion" which King David captured and made into his capital city.
- It was in Jerusalem that David's son Solomon built the first temple in Jerusalem, on Mount Moriah, which was the mountain where Abraham had offered his son Isaac to God. The temple was rebuilt there after it was destroyed by the Babylonians.
- Because the temple was in Jerusalem, the major Jewish festivals were celebrated there.
- People normally referred to going "up" to Jerusalem since it is located in the mountains.

(See also: **Babylon**, **Christ**, David, **Jebusites**, **Jesus**, Solomon, **temple**, Zion)

Bible References:

- **Galatians 4:26-27**
- **John 2:13**
- **Luke 4:9-11**
- **Luke 13:5**
- **Mark 3:7-8**
- **Mark 3:20-22**
- **Matthew 3:6**
- **Matthew 4:23-25**
- **Matthew 20:17**

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **17:5** David conquered **Jerusalem** and made it his capital city.

- 18:2 In **Jerusalem**, Solomon built the Temple for which his father David had planned and gathered materials.
- 20:7 They (Babylonians) captured the city of **Jerusalem**, destroyed the Temple, and took away all the treasures of the city and the Temple.
- 20:12 So, after seventy years in exile, a small group of Jews returned to the city of **Jerusalem** in Judah.
- 38:1 About three years after Jesus first began preaching and teaching publicly, Jesus told his disciples that he wanted to celebrate this Passover with them in **Jerusalem**, and that he would be killed there.
- 38:2 After Jesus and the disciples arrived in **Jerusalem**, Judas went to the Jewish leaders and offered to betray Jesus to them in exchange for money.
- 42:8 "It was also written in the scriptures that my disciples will proclaim that everyone should repent in order to receive forgiveness for their sins. They will do this starting in **Jerusalem**, and then go to all people groups everywhere."
- 42:11 Forty days after Jesus rose from the dead, he told his disciples, "Stay in **Jerusalem** until you receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you."

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3389, H3390, G24140, G24150, G24190

Song of Solomon References:

1:5; 2:7; 3:5; 3:10; 5:8; 5:16; 6:4; 8:4

joy, joyful, rejoice, glad

Definition:

joy

The term “joy” refers to a feeling of delight or deep satisfaction. The related term “joyful” describes a person who feels very glad and is full of deep happiness.

- A person feels joy when he has a deep sense that what he is experiencing is very good.
- God is the one who gives true joy to people.
- Having joy does not depend on pleasant circumstances. God can give people joy even when very difficult things are happening in their lives.
- Sometimes places are described as joyful, such as houses or cities. This means that the people who live there are joyful.

rejoice

The term “rejoice” means to be full of joy and gladness.

- This term often refers to being very happy about the good things that God has done.
- It could be translated as “be very happy” or “be very glad” or “be full of joy.”
- When Mary said “my soul rejoices in God my Savior,” she meant “God my Savior has made me very happy” or “I feel so joyful because of what God my Savior has done for me.”

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “joy” could also be translated as “gladness” or “delight” or “great happiness.”
- The phrase, “be joyful” could be translated as “rejoice” or “be very glad” or it could be translated “be very happy in God’s goodness.”
- A person who is joyful could be described as “very happy” or “delighted” or “deeply glad.”
- A phrase such as “make a joyful shout” could be translated as “shout in a way that shows you are very happy.”
- A “joyful city” or “joyful house” could be translated as “city where joyful people live” or “house full of joyful people” or “city whose people are very happy.” (See: metonymy)

Bible References:

- Nehemiah 8:10

- Psalm 48:2
- Isaiah 56:6-7
- Jeremiah 15:15-16
- Matthew 2:9-10
- Luke 15:7
- Luke 19:37-38
- John 3:29
- Acts 16:32-34
- Romans 5:1-2
- Romans 15:30-32
- Galatians 5:23
- Philippians 4:10-13
- 1 Thessalonians 1:6-7
- 1 Thessalonians 5:16
- Philemon 1:4-7
- James 1:2
- 3 John 1:1-4

Examples from the Bible stories:

- 33:7 "The rocky ground is a person who hears God's word and accepts it with **joy**."
- 34:4 "The kingdom of God is also like hidden treasure that someone hid in a field… Another man found the treasure and then buried it again. He was so filled with **joy**, that he went and sold everything he had and used the money to buy that field."
- 41:7 The women were full of fear and great **joy**. They ran to tell the disciples the good news.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1523, H1524, H1525, H2302, H2304, H2305, H2654, H2898, H4885, H5937, H5947, H5965, H5970, H6342, H6670, H7440, H7442, H7444, H7445, H7797, H7832, H8055, H8056, H8057, H8342, H8643, G00200, G00210, G21650, G21670, G27440, G46400, G47960, G49130, G54630, G54790

Song of Solomon References:

1:4; 3:11

Kedar

Definition:

Kedar was Ishmael's second son. It was also an important city, which was probably named after the man.

- The city of Kedar is located in the northern part of Arabia near the southern border of Palestine. In Bible times, it was known for its greatness and beauty.
- The descendants of Kedar formed a large people group that is also called "Kedar."
- The phrase "dark tents of Kedar" refers to the black goathair tents the people of Kedar lived in.
- These people raised sheep and goats. They also used camels for transporting things.
- In the Bible, the phrase "the glory of Kedar" refers to the greatness of that city and its people.

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Names)

(See also: Arabia, goat, Ishmael, sacrifice)

Bible References:

- Song of Songs 1:5

Word Data:

- Strong's: H6938

Song of Solomon References:

1:5

king, kingship

Definition:

In the Bible, the term “king” refers to a man who is the supreme ruler of a particular group of people or a particular region of land (or both).

- In biblical times, a king was usually chosen to rule on the basis of family relation to the previous king(s). When a king died, usually his oldest son became the next king.
- The Bible often refers to God is as a king who rules over the entire universe (in a general sense) and over his people (in a specific sense).
- The New Testament refers to Jesus as a king in various ways, including: “king of the Jews;” “king of Israel;” and “king of kings.”
- Depending on the context, the term “king” might also be translated as “supreme chief” or “sovereign ruler.”
- The phrase “king of kings” might be translated as “king who rules over all other kings” or “supreme ruler who has authority over all other rulers.”

(See also: **authority**, **Herod Antipas**, **kingdom**, **kingdom of God**)

Bible References:

- **1 Timothy 6:15-16**
- **2 Kings 5:18**
- **2 Samuel 5:3**
- **Acts 7:9-10**
- **Acts 13:22**
- **John 1:49-51**
- **Luke 1:5**
- **Luke 22:24-25**
- **Matthew 5:35**
- **Matthew 14:9**

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **8:6** One night, the Pharaoh, which is what the Egyptians called their kings, had two dreams that disturbed him greatly.

- 16:1 The Israelites had no **king**, so everyone did what they thought was right for them.
- 16:18 Finally, the people asked God for a **king** like all the other nations had.
- 17:5 Eventually, Saul died in battle, and David became **king** of Israel. He was a good **king**, and the people loved him.
- 21:6 God's prophets also said that the Messiah would be a prophet, a priest, and a **king**.
- 48:14 David was the **king** of Israel, but Jesus is the **king** of the entire universe!

Word Data:

- Strong's: H4427, H4428, H4430, G09350, G09360

Song of Solomon References:

1:4; 1:12; 3:9; 3:11; 7:5

kiss

Definition:

A kiss is an action in which one person puts his lips to another person's lips or face. This term can also be used figuratively.

- Some cultures kiss each other on the cheek as a form of greeting or to say goodbye.
- A kiss can communicate deep love between two people, such as a husband and wife.
- The expression to "kiss someone farewell" means to say goodbye with a kiss.
- Sometimes the word "kiss" is used to mean "say goodbye to." When Elisha said to Elijah, "Let me first go and kiss my father and mother," he wanted to say goodbye to his parents before leaving them to follow Elijah.

Bible References:

- 1 Thessalonians 5:25-28
- Genesis 27:26-27
- Genesis 29:11
- Genesis 31:28
- Genesis 45:15
- Genesis 48:10
- Luke 22:48
- Mark 14:45
- Matthew 26:48

Word Data:

- Strong's: H5390, H5401, G27050, G53680, G53700

Song of Solomon References:

1:2; 8:1

know, knew, knowledge, known, unknown, distinguish

Definition:

Used in this sense the term “know” and “knowledge” mean generally to understand something. It can also mean to be aware of a fact. The expression “to make known” means to tell information.

- The term “knowledge” refers to information that people know. It can apply to knowing physical concepts or abstract concepts.
- To “know about” God means to understand facts about him because of what he has revealed to us.
- To “know the Law” means to be aware of what God has commanded or to understand what God has instructed in the laws he gave to Moses.
- Sometimes “knowledge” is used as a synonym for “wisdom,” which includes living in a way that is pleasing to God.
- The “knowledge of God” is sometimes used as a synonym for the “fear of Yahweh.”

Translation Suggestions

- Depending on the context, ways to translate “know” could include “understand” or “be familiar with” or “be aware of” or “be acquainted with.”
- In the context of understanding the difference between two things, the term is usually translated as “distinguish.” When used in this way, the term is often followed by the preposition “between.”
- The term “make known” could be translated as “cause people to know” or “reveal” or “tell about” or “explain.”
- To “know about” something could be translated as “be aware of” or “be familiar with.”
- The expression “know how to” means to understand the process or method of getting something done. It could also be translated as “be able to” or “have the skill to.”
- The term “knowledge” could also be translated as “what is known” or “wisdom” or “understanding,” depending on the context.
- Some languages have two different words for “know,” one for knowing facts and one for knowing a person and having a relationship with that person. The word for knowing facts should be used when translating this sense of the word “know.”

(See also: know-relationship, law, reveal, understand, wise)

Bible References:

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1844, H1847, H3045, H3046, H3318, G00500, G00560, G03190, G10970, G11070, G11080, G11100, G14920, G19210, G19220, G19870, G42670

Song of Solomon References:

1:8; 6:12

labor, labors

Definition:

Used in this sense, the term “labor” refers to the process of a woman giving birth.

- The phrase “in labor” is often used to describe a woman who is in the process of giving birth.
- The phrase “labor pains” refer to the pain which a woman experiences in the process of giving birth.
- In English, the word “labor” is used to describe the process of giving birth. Other languages may have a completely different word for this.
- Another way to translate the phrase “in labor” is “giving birth”

(See also: **labor pains**)

Bible References:

Word Data:

- Strong’s:

Song of Solomon References:

8:5

labor, labors, labored, laboring, laborer, work, hard work

Definition:

The term “labor” refers to doing hard work of any kind.

- In general, labor is any task which uses energy. It is often implied that the task is difficult.
- A laborer is a person who does any type of labor.
- Ways to translate “labor” could include “work” or “toil” or “hard work” or “difficult work” or to “work hard.”

(See also: hard)

Bible References:

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3021, H4399, H4522, H4639, H5647, H5656, H5998, H6001, H6089, G20380, G20400, G20410, G28720, G28730

Song of Solomon References:

7:1; 8:5

Lebanon

Definition:

Lebanon is a beautiful mountainous region located along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, north of Israel. In Bible times this region was thickly wooded with fir trees, such as cedar and cypress.

- King Solomon sent workers to Lebanon to harvest cedar trees for use in building God's temple.
- Ancient Lebanon was inhabited by Phoenician people, who were skilled builders of ships that were used for a successful trading industry.
- The cities of Tyre and Sidon were located in Lebanon. It was in these cities that a valuable purple dye was first used.

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Names)

(See also: cedar, cypress, fir, Phoenicia)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 4:32-34
- 2 Chronicles 2:8-10
- Deuteronomy 1:7-8
- Psalms 29:3-5
- Zechariah 10:8-10

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3844

Song of Solomon References:

3:9; 4:8; 4:11; 4:15; 5:15; 7:4

leopard

Definition:

A leopard is a large, cat-like, wild animal that is brown with black spots.

- A leopard is a kind of animal which catches other animals and eats them.
- In the Bible, the suddenness of disaster is compared to a leopard, which pounces suddenly on its prey.
- The prophet Daniel and the apostle John tell about visions in which they saw a beast that looked like a leopard.

(See also: How to Translate Unknowns)

(Translation suggestions: Translate Names)

(See also: **beast**, **Daniel**, **prey**, **vision**)

Bible References:

- **Daniel 7:6**
- **Hosea 13:7**
- **Revelation 13:1-2**
- Song of Songs 4:8

Word Data:

- Strong's: H5245, H5246

Song of Solomon References:

4:8

lion, lioness

Definition:

A lion is a large, cat-like, that has animal, with powerful teeth and claws for killing and tearing apart its prey.

- Lions have powerful bodies and great speed to catch their prey. Their fur is short and golden-brown.
- Male lions have a mane of hair that encircles their heads.
- Lions kill other animals to eat them and can be dangerous to human beings.
- When King David was a boy, he killed lions that tried to attack the sheep he was caring for.
- Samson also killed a lion, with his bare hands.

(See also: How to Translate Unknowns)

(See also: David, leopard, Samson, sheep)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 11:22-23
- 1 Kings 7:29
- Proverbs 19:12
- Psalms 17:12
- Revelation 5:5

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0738, H0739, H0744, H3715, H3833, H3918, H7826, H7830, G30230

Song of Solomon References:

4:8

love, beloved

Definition:

To love another person is to care for that person and do things that will benefit him. There are different meanings for "love" some languages may express using different words:

1. The kind of love that comes from God is focused on the good of others even when it does not benefit oneself. This kind of love cares for others, no matter what they do. God himself is love and is the source of true love.
    - Jesus showed this kind of love by sacrificing his life in order to rescue us from sin and death. He also taught his followers to love others sacrificially.
    - When people love others with this kind of love, they act in ways that show they are thinking of what will cause the others to thrive. This kind of love especially includes forgiving others.
    - In the ULT, the word "love" refers to this kind of sacrificial love, unless a Translation Note indicates a different meaning.
2. Another word in the New Testament refers to brotherly love, or love for a friend or family member.
    - This term refers to natural human love between friends or relatives.
    - The term can also be used in such contexts as, "They love to sit in the most important seats at a banquet." This means that they "like very much" or "greatly desire" to do that.
3. The word "love" can also refer to romantic love between a man and a woman.

Translation Suggestions:

- Unless indicated otherwise in a Translation Note, the word "love" in the ULT refers to the kind of sacrificial love that comes from God.
- Some languages may have a special word for the kind of unselfish, sacrificial love that God has. Ways to translate this might include, "devoted, faithful caring" or "care for unselfishly" or "love from God." Make sure that the word used to translate God's love can include giving up one's own interests to benefit others and loving others no matter what they do.
- Sometimes the English word "love" describes the deep caring that people have for friends and family members. Some languages might translate this with a word or phrase that means "like very much" or "care for" or "have strong affection for."

- In contexts where the word “love” is used to express a strong preference for something, this could be translated by “strongly prefer” or “like very much” or “greatly desire.”
- Some languages may also have a separate word that refers to romantic or sexual love between a husband and wife.
- Many languages must express “love” as an action. So for example, they might translate “love is patient, love is kind” as, “when a person loves someone, he is patient with him and kind to him.”

(See also: **covenant**, **death**, **sacrifice**, **save**, **sin**)

Bible References:

- **1 Corinthians 13:7**
- **1 John 3:2**
- **1 Thessalonians 4:10**
- **Galatians 5:23**
- **Genesis 29:18**
- **Isaiah 56:6**
- **Jeremiah 2:2**
- **John 3:16**
- **Matthew 10:37**
- **Nehemiah 9:32-34**
- **Philippians 1:9**
- Song of Songs 1:2

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **27:2** The law expert replied that God’s law says, “**Love** the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind. And **love** your neighbor as yourself.”
- **33:8** “The thorny ground is a person who hears God’s word, but, as time passes, the cares, riches, and pleasures of life choke out his **love** for God.”
- **36:5** As Peter was talking, a bright cloud came down on top of them and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my Son whom I **love**.”
- **39:10** “Everyone who **loves** the truth listens to me.”
- **47:1** She (Lydia) **loved** and worshiped God.
- **48:1** When God created the world, everything was perfect. There was no sin. Adam and Eve **loved** each other, and they **loved** God.

- 49:3 He (Jesus) taught that you need to **love** other people the same way you love yourself.
- 49:4 He (Jesus) also taught that you need to **love** God more than you **love** anything else, including your wealth.
- 49:7 Jesus taught that God **loves** sinners very much.
- 49:9 But God **loved** everyone in the world so much that he gave his only Son so that whoever believes in Jesus will not be punished for his sins, but will live with God forever.
- 49:13 God **loves** you and wants you to believe in Jesus so he can have a close relationship with you.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0157, H0158, H0159, H0160, H2245, H2617, H2836, H3039, H4261, H5689, H5690, H5691, H7355, H7356, H7453, H7474, G00250, G00260, G53600, G53610, G53620, G53630, G53650, G53670, G53680, G53690, G53770, G53810, G53820, G53830, G53880

Song of Solomon References:

1:2; 1:3; 1:4; 1:7; 2:4; 2:5; 2:7; 3:1; 3:2; 3:3; 3:4; 3:5; 3:10; 4:10; 5:8; 7:6; 7:12; 8:4; 8:6; 8:7

marriage, marry, married, wedding

Definition:

The term “marriage” refers to the formal union between a man and a woman in which they are joined together in a publicly recognized, and often legally recognized, relationship.

- The marriage relationship originated with God. God instituted the marriage relationship and he initiated the first marriage between Adam and Eve.
- God instituted marriage for several reasons. Some of the reasons that God instituted marriage are so that children would have a healthy and secure environment in which to be raised, so that people would have a visual earthly demonstration of his relationship with his covenant people and so that men and women who are married to each other can help each other and complement the others strengths and weaknesses.
- In a marriage ceremony (called a “wedding”) the bridegroom is the **man** who will marry the bride (the **woman**).
- The Bible teaches that marriage should not be prohibited.
- God strictly prohibits adultery in both the Old and the New Testament.
- The New Testament teaches that people who believe in Jesus should not marry unbelievers.
- Jesus taught that there will be no marriage in heaven.

Translation Suggestions:

Use the term that your language uses to refer to the marriage relationship between a man and a woman.

(See also: bridegroom, bride, adultery, Eve, Adam)

Bible References:

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H2859

Song of Solomon References:

3:11

myrrh

Definition:

Myrrh is an oil or spice that is made from the resin of a myrrh tree that grows in Africa and Asia. It is related to frankincense.

- Myrrh was also used to make incense, perfume, and medicine, and to prepare dead bodies for burial.
- Myrrh was one of the gifts that the learned men gave to Jesus when he was born.
- Jesus was offered wine mixed with myrrh in order to ease the pain when he was crucified.

(See also: frankincense, learned men)

Bible References:

- Exodus 30:22-25
- Genesis 37:25-26
- John 11:1-2
- Mark 15:23
- Matthew 2:11-12

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3910, H4753, G34640, G46660, G46690

Song of Solomon References:

1:13; 3:6; 4:6; 4:14; 5:1; 5:5; 5:13

noble, nobleman, royal official

Definition:

The term “noble” refers to something that is excellent and of high quality. A “nobleman” is a person who belongs to a high political or social class. A man “of noble birth” is one who was born a nobleman.

- A nobleman was often an officer of the state, a close servant to the king.
- The term “nobleman” could also be translated by, “king’s official” or “government officer.”

Bible References:

- 2 Chronicles 23:20-21
- Daniel 4:36
- Ecclesiastes 10:17
- Luke 19:12
- Psalm 16:1-3

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0117, H1419, H2715, H3358, H3513, H5057, H5081, H6440, H6579, H7261, H8282, H8269, G09370, G21040

Song of Solomon References:

6:12; 7:1

oil

Definition:

Oil is a thick, clear liquid that can be taken from certain plants. In Bible times, oil usually came from olives.

- Olive oil was used for cooking, anointing, sacrifice, lamps, and medicine.
- In ancient times, olive oil was highly prized, and the possession of oil was considered a measurement of wealth.
- Make sure the translation of this term refers to the kind of oil that can be used in cooking, not motor oil. Some languages have different words for these different kinds of oil.

(See also: **olive**, **sacrifice**)

Bible References:

- **2 Samuel 1:21**
- **Exodus 29:2**
- **Leviticus 5:11**
- **Leviticus 8:1-3**
- **Mark 6:12-13**
- **Matthew 25:7-9**

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2091, H3323, H4887, H6671, H7246, H8081, G16370, G34640

Song of Solomon References:

1:3; 4:10

oversee, overseer, keeper

Definition:

The term “overseer” refers to a person who is in charge of the work and welfare of other people. In the Bible, often the term “keeper” means “overseer.”

- In the Old Testament, an overseer had the job of making sure the workers under him did their work well.
- In the New Testament, this term is used to describe leaders of the early Christian church. Their work was to take care of the spiritual needs of the church, making sure the believers received accurate biblical teaching.
- Paul refers to an overseer as being like a shepherd who takes care of the believers in a local church, who are his “flock.”
- The overseer, like a shepherd, keeps watch over the flock. He guards and protects the believers from false spiritual teaching and other evil influences.
- In the New Testament, the terms “overseers,” “elders,” and “shepherds/pastors” are different ways of referring to the same spiritual leaders.

Translation Suggestions

- Other ways to translate this term could be “supervisor” or “caretaker” or “manager.”
- When referring to a leader of a local group of God’s people, this term could be translated with a word or phrase that means “spiritual supervisor” or “someone who takes care of the spiritual needs of a group of believers” or “person who oversees the spiritual needs of the Church.”

(See also: **church**, **elder**, **pastor**, shepherd)

Bible References:

- **1 Chronicles 26:31-32**
- **1 Timothy 3:2**
- **Acts 20:28**
- **Genesis 41:33-34**
- **Philippians 1:1**

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H5329, H6485, H6496, H7860, H8104, G19830, G19840, G19850

Song of Solomon References:

1:6; 8:11; 8:12

palm

Definition:

The term “palm” refers to a type of tall tree with long, flexible, leafy branches extending from the top in a fan-like pattern.

- The palm tree in the Bible usually refers to a type of palm tree that produces a fruit called a “date.” The leaves have a feather-like pattern.
- Palm trees typically grow in places that have a hot, humid climate. Their leaves stay green all year long.
- As Jesus was entering Jerusalem riding on a donkey, the people laid palm branches on the ground in front of him.
- Palm branches signified peace and the celebration of a victory.

(See also: donkey, Jerusalem, peace)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 6:29-30
- Ezekiel 40:14-16
- John 12:12-13
- Numbers 33:9

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3712, H8558, H8560, H8561, G54040

Song of Solomon References:

7:7; 7:8

peace, peaceful, peacemaker

Definition:

The term “peace” refers to a state of being or a feeling of having no conflict, anxiety, or fearfulness. A person who is “peaceful” feels calm and assured of being safe and secure.

- In the Old Testament, the term “peace” often means a general sense of a person’s welfare, wellness, or wholeness.
- “Peace” can also refer to a time when people groups or countries are not at war with each other. These people are said to have “peaceful relations.”
- To “make peace” with a person or a group of people means to take actions to cause fighting to stop.
- A “peacemaker” is someone who does and says things to influence people to live at peace with each other.
- To be “at peace” with other people means being in a state of not fighting against those people.
- A good or right relationship between God and people happens when God saves people from their sin. This is called having “peace with God.”
- The greeting “grace and peace” was used by the apostles in their letters to their fellow believers as a blessing.
- The term “peace” can also refer to being in a good relationship with other people or with God.

Bible References:

- 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3
- Acts 7:26
- Colossians 1:18-20
- Colossians 3:15
- Galatians 5:23
- Luke 7:50
- Luke 12:51
- Mark 4:39
- Matthew 5:9
- Matthew 10:13

Examples from the Bible stories:

- 15:6 God had commanded the Israelites not to make a **peace** treaty with any of the people groups in Canaan.
- 15:12 Then God gave Israel **peace** along all its borders.
- 16:3 Then God provided a deliverer who rescued them from their enemies and brought **peace** to the land.
- 21:13 He (Messiah) would die to receive the punishment for other people's sin. His punishment would bring **peace** between God and people.
- 48:14 David was the king of Israel, but Jesus is the king of the entire universe! He will come again and rule his kingdom with justice and **peace**, forever.
- 50:17 Jesus will rule his kingdom with **peace** and justice, and he will be with his people forever.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H5117, H7961, H7962, H7965, H7999, H8001, H8002, H8003, H8252, G02690, G15140, G15150, G15160, G15170, G15180, G22720

Song of Solomon References:

8:10

perfect, complete

Definition:

In the New Testament, the term “perfect” means to be mature in our Christian life. To perfect something means to work at it until it is excellent and without flaws. Old Testament sacrifices needed to be “perfect” or “complete,” that is, without blemish.

- Being perfect and mature means that a Christian is obedient, not sinless.
- The term “perfect” also has the meaning of being “complete” or “whole.”
- The New Testament book of James states that persevering through trials will produce completeness and maturity in the believer.
- When Christians study the Bible and obey it, they will become more spiritually perfect and mature because they will be more like Christ in their character.

Translation Suggestions:

- This term could be translated as “without flaw” or “without error” or “flawless” or “without fault” or “not having any faults.”

(See also: blemish)

Bible References:

- Hebrews 12:2
- James 3:2
- Matthew 5:46-48
- Psalms 19:7-8

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3632, H3634, H4359, H8003, H8503, H8537, H8549, H8552, G01990, G26750, G26760, G36470, G50460, G50470, G50480, G50500

Song of Solomon References:

5:2; 6:9

Pharaoh, king of Egypt

Definition:

In ancient times, the kings who ruled over the country of Egypt were called pharaohs.

- Altogether, over 300 pharaohs ruled Egypt for more than 2,000 years.
- These Egyptians kings were very powerful and wealthy.
- Several of these pharaohs are mentioned in the Bible.
- Often this title is used as a name rather than as a title. In these cases, it is capitalized and written as “Pharaoh.”

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Names)

(See also: egypt, king)

Bible References:

- Acts 7:9-10
- Acts 7:13
- Acts 7:21
- Genesis 12:15
- Genesis 40:7
- Genesis 41:25

Examples from the Bible stories:

- 8:6 One night, the **Pharaoh**, which is what the Egyptians called their kings, had two dreams that disturbed him greatly.
- 8:8 **Pharaoh** was so impressed with Joseph that he appointed him to be the second most powerful man in all of Egypt!
- 9:2 So the **Pharaoh** who was ruling over Egypt at that time made the Israelites slaves to the Egyptians.
- 9:13 “I will send you to **Pharaoh** so that you can bring the Israelites out of their slavery in Egypt.”
- 10:2 Through these plagues, God showed __Pharaoh __ that he is more powerful than **Pharaoh** and all of Egypt’s gods.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H4428, H4714, H6547, G53280

Song of Solomon References:

1:9

plea, plead, please, beg, implore

Definition:

The terms “plead” and “pleading” refer to urgently asking someone to do something. A “plea” is an urgent request.

- Pleading often implies that the person feels in very great need or strongly desires help.
- People can plead or make an urgent appeal to God for mercy or to ask him to grant something, either for themselves or someone else.
- Other ways to translate this could include “beg” or “implore” or “urgently ask.”
- The term “plea” could also be translated as “urgent request” or “strong urging.”
- Make sure it is clear in the context that this term does not refer to begging for money.

Bible References:

- 2 Corinthians 8:3-5
- Judges 6:31
- Luke 4:39
- Proverbs 18:17

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1777, H2603, H3198, H4941, H4994, H6279, H6293, H6664, H6419, H7378, H7379, H7775, H8199, H8467, H8469, G11890, G17930, G20650, G38700

Song of Solomon References:

7:8

pomegranate

Definition:

A pomegranate is a kind of fruit that has a thick, tough skin filled with many seeds that are covered with edible red pulp.

- The outer rind is reddish in color and the pulp surrounding the seeds is shiny and red.
- Pomegranates are very commonly grown in countries with a hot, dry climate, such as Egypt and Israel.
- Yahweh promised the Israelites that Canaan was a land with abundant water and fertile soil so that food was plentiful there, including pomegranates.
- The construction of Solomon's temple included bronze decorations in the shape of pomegranates.

(See also: bronze, Canaan, Egypt, Solomon, temple)

Bible References:

- 2 Kings 25:16-17
- Deuteronomy 8:7-8
- Jeremiah 52:22-23
- Numbers 13:23-24
- Numbers 20:5

Word Data:

- Strong's: H7416

Song of Solomon References:

4:3; 4:13; 6:7; 6:11; 7:12; 8:2

praise, praised, praiseworthy

Definition:

To praise someone is to express admiration and honor for that person.

- People praise God because of how great he is and because of all the amazing things he has done as the Creator and Savior of the world.
- Praise for God often includes being thankful for what he has done.
- Music and singing is often used as a way to praise God.
- Praising God is part of what it means to worship him.
- The term to "praise" could also be translated as to "speak well of" or to "highly honor with words" or to "say good things about."
- The noun "praise" could be translated as "spoken honor" or "speech that honors" or "speaking good things about."

(See also: **worship**)

Bible References:

- **2 Corinthians 1:3**
- **Acts 2:47**
- **Acts 13:48**
- **Daniel 3:28**
- **Ephesians 1:3**
- **Genesis 49:8**
- **James 3:9-10**
- **John 5:41-42**
- **Luke 1:46**
- **Luke 1:64-66**
- **Luke 19:37-38**
- **Matthew 11:25-27**
- **Matthew 15:29-31**

Examples from the Bible stories:

- 12:13 The Israelites sang many songs to celebrate their new freedom and to **praise** God because he saved them from the Egyptian army.
- 17:8 When David heard these words, he immediately thanked and **praised** God because he had promised David this great honor and many blessings.
- 22:7 Zechariah said, "**Praise** God, because he has remembered his people!"
- 43:13 They (disciples) enjoyed **praising** God together and they shared everything they had with each other.
- 47:8 They put Paul and Silas in the most secure part of the prison and even locked up their feet. Yet in the middle of the night, they were singing songs of **praise** to God.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1319, H7121, H8416, G29800, G38530

Song of Solomon References:

6:9

pure, purify, purification

Definition:

To be “pure” means to have no flaw or to have nothing mixed in that is not supposed to be there. To purify something is to cleanse it and remove anything that contaminates or pollutes it.

- In regard to Old Testament laws, “purify” and “purification” refer mainly to the cleansing from things that make an object or a person ritually unclean, such as disease, body fluids, or childbirth.
- The Old Testament also had laws telling people how to be purified from sin, usually by the sacrifice of an animal. This was only temporary and the sacrifices had to be repeated over and over again.
- In the New Testament, to be purified often refers to being cleansed from sin.
- The only way that people can be completely and permanently purified from sin is through repenting and receiving God’s forgiveness, through trusting in Jesus and his sacrifice.

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “purify” could be translated as “make pure” or “cleanse” or “cleanse from all contamination” or “get rid of all sin.”
- A phrase such as “when the time for their purification was over” could be translated as “when they had purified themselves by waiting the required number of days.”
- The phrase “provided purification for sins” could be translated as “provided a way for people to be completely cleansed from their sin.”
- Other ways to translate “purification” could include “cleansing” or “spiritual washing” or “becoming ritually clean.”

(See also: **atonement**, **clean**, **spirit**)

Bible References:

- **1 Timothy 1:5**
- **Exodus 31:6-9**
- **Hebrews 9:13-15**
- **James 4:8**
- **Luke 2:22**
- **Revelation 14:4**

Word Data:

- Strong's: H1249, H1252, H1253, H1305, H1865, H2134, H2135, H2141, H2212, H2398, H2403, H2561, H2889, H2890, H2891, H2892, H2893, H3795, H3800, H4795, H5343, H5462, H6337, H6884, H6942, H8562, G00480, G00490, G00530, G00540, G15060, G25110, G25120, G25130, G25140

Song of Solomon References:

6:9; 6:10

purple

Definition:

The term “purple” is the name of a color that is a mixture of blue and red.

- In ancient times, purple was a rare and highly valuable color of dye that was used to dye the clothing of kings and other high officials.
- Because it was costly and time-consuming to produce this dye, purple clothing was considered a sign of wealth, distinction, and royalty.
- Purple was also one of the colors used for the curtains in the tabernacle and temple, and for the ephod worn by the priests.
- Purple dye was extracted from a kind of sea snail by either crushing or boiling the snails or by causing them to release the dye while still alive. This was an expensive process.
- Roman soldiers put a purple royal robe on Jesus before his crucifixion, to mock him for his claim to be King of the Jews.
- Lydia from the town of Philippi was a woman who made her living by selling purple cloth.

(Translation suggestions: Translate Names)

(See also: **ephod**, **Philippi**, **royal**, **tabernacle**, **temple**)

Bible References:

- **2 Chronicles 2:13-14**
- **Daniel 5:7**
- **Daniel 5:29-31**
- **Proverbs 31:22-23**

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0710, H0711, H0713, G42090, G42100, G42110

Song of Solomon References:

3:10; 7:5

queen

Definition:

A queen is either the female ruler of a country or the wife of a king.

- Esther became the queen of the Persian empire when she married King Ahasuerus.
- Queen Jezebel was the evil wife of King Ahab.
- The Queen of Sheba was a famous ruler who came to visit King Solomon.
- A term such as “queen mother” usually referred to the mother or grandmother of a ruling king or the widow of the previous king. A queen mother had much influence; Athaliah, for example, influenced the people to worship idols.

(See also: **Ahasuerus**, **Athaliah**, **Esther**, king. **Persia** **ruler**, **Sheba**)

Bible References:

- **1 Kings 10:10**
- **1 Kings 11:18-19**
- **2 Kings 10:12-14**
- **Acts 8:27**
- **Esther 1:17**
- **Luke 11:31**
- **Matthew 12:42**

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1404, H1377, H4410, H4427, H4433, H4436, H4438, H4446, H7694, H8282, G09380

Song of Solomon References:

6:8; 6:9

quench, quenched, unquenchable

Definition:

The term “quench” means to put out or stop something that is demanding to be satisfied.

- This term is usually used in the context of quenching thirst and means to stop being thirsty by drinking something.
- It can also be used to refer to putting out a fire.
- Both thirst and fire are quenched with water.
- Paul uses the term “quench” in a figurative way when he instructs believers to not “quench the Holy Spirit.” This means to not discourage people from allowing the Holy Spirit from produce his fruits and gifts in them. Quenching the Holy Spirit means preventing the Holy Spirit from freely manifesting his power and work in people…

(See also: fruit, gift, Holy Spirit)

Bible References:

- 1 Thessalonians 5:19
- Ezekiel 20:47
- Isaiah 1:31
- Jeremiah 21:12

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1846, H3518, H7665, G07620, G45700

Song of Solomon References:

8:7

robe, robed

Definition:

A robe is an outer garment with long sleeves that can be worn by a man or a woman. It is similar to a coat.

- Robes are open in the front and are tied shut with a sash or belt.
- They can be long or short.
- Purple robes were worn by kings as a sign of royalty, wealth, and prestige.

(See also: **royal**, **tunic**)

Bible References:

- **Exodus 28:4-5**
- **Genesis 49:11-12**
- **Luke 15:22**
- **Luke 20:46**
- **Matthew 27:27-29**

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0145, H0155, H0899, H1545, H2436, H2684, H3671, H3801, H3830, H3847, H4060, H4254, H4598, H5497, H5622, H6614, H7640, H7757, H7897, H8071, G17460, G20670, G24400, G47490, G40160, G55110

Song of Solomon References:

5:3

rod

Definition:

The term “rod” refers to a narrow, solid, stick-like tool that was used in several different ways. It was probably at least a meter in length.

- A wooden rod was used by a shepherd to defend the sheep from other animals. It was also thrown toward a wandering sheep to bring it back to the the flock.
- In Psalm 23, King David used the terms “rod” and “staff” as metaphors to refer to God’s guidance and discipline for his people.
- A shepherd’s rod was also used to count the sheep as they passed under it.
- Another metaphorical expression, “rod of iron,” refers to God’s punishment for people who rebel against him and do evil things.
- In ancient times, measuring rods made of metal, wood, or stone were used to measure the length of a building or object.
- In the Bible, a wooden rod was also referred to as an instrument to discipline children.

(See also: staff, sheep, shepherd)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 4:21
- 1 Samuel 14:43-44
- Acts 16:23
- Exodus 27:9-10
- Revelation 11:1

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H2415, H4294, H4731, H7626, G25630, G44630, G44640

Song of Solomon References:

5:14

sandal

Definition:

A sandal is a simple shoe with a flat sole that is held onto the foot by straps that go around the foot or ankle. Sandals are worn by both men and women.

- In ancient Israel, a sandal was sometimes used to confirm a legal transaction, such as the selling of property. One person would take off a sandal and give it to the other person to show that the transaction was legal and binding.
- John said that he was not worthy to even untie Jesus' sandals, which was a normal task for the servant or slave with the lowest status in a Jewish household.

Bible References:

- Acts 7:33
- Deuteronomy 25:10
- John 1:27
- Joshua 5:15
- Mark 6:7-9

Word Data:

- Strong's: H5274, H5275, H8288, G45470, G52660

Song of Solomon References:

7:1

seal, sealed, unsealed

Definition:

When referring to an action, the term “seal” means to close an object with something (usually called a “seal”) that makes the object impossible to open without breaking the seal. When referring to an object, the term “seal” refers to something that was made of wood or metal or stone that was formed into a design so that it could be used to stamp something (make an imprint on it).

- A seal was marked with a design to show who it belonged to.
- Seals were used to mark different objects for the purpose of showing that the thing belonged to the owner or had come from the owner or was approved by the owner.
- Seals were used to indicate the authenticity of something as deriving from the owner or being approved by the owner or belonging to the owner in some way.
- Sometimes a seal was put on the top of a ring so that the owner of the ring could press the seal down into something and make an imprint on it.
- Sometimes seals were attached to a string or cord and worn around the neck.
- Melted wax was used to seal letters or other documents that needed to be protected. When the wax cooled and hardened, the letter could not be opened without breaking the wax seal. The person who received the letter would see the unbroken seal and know that no one had opened it.
- A seal was put on the stone in front of Jesus’ grave in order to keep anyone from moving the stone.

(See also: **Holy Spirit**, **tomb**)

Bible References:

- **Exodus 2:3**
- **Isaiah 29:11**
- **John 6:27**
- **Matthew 27:66**
- **Revelation 5:2**

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H2368, H2560, H2856, H2857, H2858, H5640, G26960, G49720, G49730

Song of Solomon References:

4:12; 8:6

seek, search, look for

Definition:

The term “seek” means to look for something or someone. In the past tense, the verb is “sought.” This term is sometimes used figuratively, meaning to “attempt” or “make an effort” to do something or to ask for something.

- To “seek” or “look for” an opportunity to do something can mean to “try to find a time” to do it.
- To “seek Yahweh” means to “spend time and energy getting to know Yahweh and learning to obey him.”
- To “seek protection” means to “try to find a person or place that will protect you from danger.”
- To “seek justice” means to “make an effort to see that people are treated justly or fairly.”
- To “seek the truth” means to “make an effort to find out what the truth is.”
- To “seek favor” means to “urgently ask for favor” or to “do things to cause someone to help you.”

(See also: **just**, **true**)

Bible References:

- **1 Chronicles 10:14**
- **Acts 17:26-27**
- **Hebrews 11:6**
- **Luke 11:9**
- **Psalms 27:8**

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0579, H1156, H1239, H1243, H1245, H1556, H1875, H2470, H2603, H2658, H2664, H3289, H7125, H7592, H7836, H8446, G03270, G15670, G19340, G20520, G22120

Song of Solomon References:

3:1; 3:2; 5:6; 6:1

Sharon, Plain of Sharon

Definition:

Sharon was the name of a flat, fertile area of land along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, south of Mount Carmel. It is also known as the "Plain of Sharon."

- Several cities mentioned in the Bible were located on the Plain of Sharon, including Joppa, Lydda, and Caesarea.
- This could be translated as "the plain called Sharon" or "Sharon Plain."
- People who lived in the region of Sharon were called "Sharonites."

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Names)

(See also: Caesarea, Carmel, Joppa, the sea)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 5:16-17
- Acts 9:35
- Isaiah 33:9

Word Data:

- Strong's: H8289, H8290

Song of Solomon References:

2:1

shepherd, herder, pastor

Definition:

A “shepherd” is a person who takes care of sheep. In the Old Testament, this word can also refer to a “herder” who takes care of other kinds of domestic livestock such as goats or cattle.

- As a verb, the term “shepherd” means to lead sheep (or other livestock) to places with good food and water, protect them from wild animals, keep them from getting lost and other duties necessary to keep livestock alive and healthy.
- In the Bible, this term is often used figuratively to refer to taking care of the needs of people (not only animals), both physical and spiritual.
- In the Old Testament, God was called the “shepherd” of his people because he took care of them. In the New Testament, Jesus called himself the “good shepherd,” and in other places Jesus is called the “great shepherd” of the Church.
- The term “shepherd” is also used in the New Testament to refer to a person who is a spiritual leader over other believers. The word translated as “pastor” is the same word that is translated as “shepherd.” Elders and overseers are also called shepherds.

Translation Suggestions

- The noun “shepherd” can be translated as “person who takes care of sheep” or “sheep tender” or “sheep caregiver.”
- When referring to someone who cares for livestock other than sheep, the term can be translated as “herder,” “tender of livestock” or “person who takes care of livestock.”
- When used as a verb, the term “shepherd” could be translated as “take care of sheep” or “watch over sheep.”
- In some contexts, the term “shepherd” could be translated as “leader” or “guide” or “caregiver.”
- When used figuratively, the noun “shepherd” could be translated in different ways, including “spiritual shepherd” or “spiritual leader” or “one who is like a shepherd” or “one who cares for his people like a shepherd cares for his sheep” or “one who leads his people like a shepherd guides his sheep” or “one who takes care of God’s sheep.”
- When used figuratively, the verb “shepherd” could be translated as to “take care of” or to “spiritually nourish” or to “guide and teach” or to “lead and take care of (like a shepherd cares for sheep).”

(See also: sheep, **livestock**, **pastor**)

Bible References:

- **Genesis 13:7**

- Genesis 49:24
- Luke 2:9
- Mark 6:34
- Mark 14:26-27
- Matthew 2:6
- Matthew 9:36
- Matthew 25:32
- Matthew 26:31

Examples from the Bible stories:

- 9:11 Moses became a **shepherd** in the wilderness far away from Egypt.to
- 17:2 David was a **shepherd** from the town of Bethlehem. At different times while he was watching his father's sheep, David had killed both a lion and a bear that had attacked the sheep.
- 23:6 That night, there were some **shepherds** in a nearby field guarding their flocks.
- 23:8 The **shepherds** soon arrived at the place where Jesus was and they found him lying in a feeding trough, just as the angel had told them.
- 30:3 To Jesus, these people were like sheep without a **shepherd**.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H6629, H7462, H7469, H7473, G07500, G41650, G41660

Song of Solomon References:

1:8

shield

Definition:

A shield was an object held by a soldier in battle to protect himself from being injured by the enemy's weapons. To "shield" someone means to protect that person from harm.

- Shields were often circular or oval, were made of materials such as leather, wood, or metal, and were sturdy and thick enough to keep a sword or arrow from piercing them.
- Using this term as a metaphor, the Bible refers to God as a protective shield for his people. (See: Metaphor)
- Paul talked about the "shield of faith," which is a figurative way of saying that having faith in Jesus and living out that faith in obedience to God will protect believers from the spiritual attacks of Satan.

(See also: **faith**, **obey**, **Satan**, **spirit**)

Bible References:

- **1 Kings 14:26**
- **2 Chronicles 23:8-9**
- **2 Samuel 22:36**
- **Deuteronomy 33:29**
- **Psalms 18:35**

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2653, H3591, H4043, H5437, H5526, H6793, H7982, G23750

Song of Solomon References:

4:4

silver

Definition:

Silver is a shiny, gray precious metal used to make coins, jewelry, containers, and ornaments.

- The various containers that are made from silver include silver cups and bowls, and other things used for cooking, eating, or serving.
- Silver and gold were used in the building of the tabernacle and the temple. The temple in Jerusalem had containers made of silver.
- In Bible times, a shekel was a unit of weight, and a purchase was often priced at a certain number of shekels of silver. By New Testament times there were silver coins of various weights that were measured in shekels.
- Joseph's brothers sold him as a slave for twenty shekels of silver.
- Judas was paid thirty silver coins for betraying Jesus.
- If your culture does not have silver you could translate this term as "precious metal"

(See also: tabernacle, temple)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 18:9-11
- 1 Samuel 2:36
- 2 Kings 25:13-15
- Acts 3:6
- Matthew 26:15

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3701, H3702, H7192, G06930, G06940, G06950, G06960, G14060

Song of Solomon References:

1:11; 3:10; 8:9; 8:11

soldier, warrior

Definition:

The terms “warrior” and “soldier” both can refer to someone who fights in an army. But there are also some differences.

- Usually the term “warrior” is a general, broad term to refer to a man who is gifted and courageous in battle.
- Yahweh is figuratively described as a “warrior.”
- The term “soldier” more specifically refers to someone who belongs to a certain army or who is fighting in a certain battle.
- Roman soldiers in Jerusalem were there to keep order and to carry out duties such as executing prisoners. They guarded Jesus before crucifying him and some were ordered to stand guard at his tomb.
- The translator should consider whether there are two words in the project language for “warrior” and “soldier” that also differ in meaning and use.

(See also: **courage**, **crucify**, **Rome**, **tomb**)

Bible References:

- **1 Chronicles 21:5**
- **Acts 21:33**
- **Luke 3:14**
- **Luke 23:11**
- **Matthew 8:8-10**

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0352, H0510, H1368, H1416, H1995, H2389, H2428, H2502, H3715, H4421, H5971, H6518, H6635, H7273, H7916, G46860, G47530, G47540, G47570, G47580, G49610

Song of Solomon References:

3:7; 4:4

Solomon

Definition:

Solomon was one of King David's sons. His mother was Bathsheba.

- When Solomon became king, God told him to ask for anything he wanted. So Solomon asked for wisdom to rule the people justly and well. God was pleased with Solomon's request and gave him both wisdom and much wealth.
- Solomon is also well known for having a magnificent temple built in Jerusalem.
- Although Solomon ruled wisely in the first years of his reign, later on he foolishly married many foreign women and started worshiping their gods.
- Because of Solomon's unfaithfulness, after his death God divided the Israelites into two kingdoms, Israel and Judah. These kingdoms often fought against each other.

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Names)

(See also: **Bathsheba**, David, Israel, **Judah**, **kingdom of Israel**, **temple**)

Bible References:

- **Acts 7:47-50**
- **Luke 12:27**
- **Matthew 1:7-8**
- **Matthew 6:29**
- **Matthew 12:42**

Examples from the Bible stories:

- **17:14** Later, David and Bathsheba had another son, and they named him **Solomon**.
- **18:1** After many years, David died, and his son **Solomon** began to rule. God spoke to **Solomon** and asked him what he wanted most. When **Solomon** asked for wisdom, God was pleased and made him the wisest man in the world. **Solomon** learned many things and was a very wise judge. God also made him very wealthy.
- **18:2** In Jerusalem, **Solomon** built the Temple for which his father David had planned and gathered materials.
- **18:3** But **Solomon** loved women from other countries.…When **Solomon** was old, he also worshiped their gods.

- 18:4 God was angry with **Solomon** and, as a punishment for **Solomon's** unfaithfulness, he promised to divide the nation of Israel into two kingdoms after **Solomon's** death.

Word Data:

- Strong's: H8010, G46720

Song of Solomon References:

1:1; 1:5; 3:7; 3:9; 3:11; 8:11; 8:12

soul, self

Definition:

The term “soul” can either refer generally to the non-physical part of a person or refer specifically to a person’s awareness of themselves as a person distinct from others.

- In the Bible, the terms “soul” and “spirit” may be two different concepts, or they may be two terms that refer to the same concept.
- When a person dies, his soul leaves his body.
- In contrast to the body, the “soul” can be spoken of as the part of a person that “relates to God.”

Translation Suggestions:

- The term “soul” could also be translated as “inner self” or “inner person.”
- In some contexts, “my soul” could be translated as “I” or “me.”
- Usually the phrase “the soul” can be translated as “the person” or “he” or “him,” depending on the context.
- Some languages might only have one word for the concepts “soul” and “spirit.”
- In Hebrews 4:12, the figurative phrase “dividing soul and spirit” could mean “deeply discerning or exposing the inner person.”

(See also: **spirit**)

Bible References:

- **2 Peter 2:8**
- **Acts 2:27-28**
- **Acts 2:41**
- **Genesis 49:6**
- **Isaiah 53:10-11**
- **James 1:21**
- **Jeremiah 6:16-19**
- **Jonah 2:7-8**
- **Luke 1:47**
- **Matthew 22:37**

- **Psalms 19:7**
- **Revelation 20:4**

Word Data:

- Strong's: H5082, H5315, H5397, G55900

Song of Solomon References:

1:7; 3:1; 3:2; 3:3; 3:4; 5:6; 6:12

sword, swordsmen

Definition:

A sword is a flat-bladed metal weapon used to cut or stab. It has a handle and a long, pointed blade with a very sharp cutting edge.

- In ancient times the length of a sword's blade was about 60 to 91 centimeters.
- Some swords have two sharp edges and are called "double-edged" or "two-edged" swords.
- Jesus' disciples had swords for self defense. With his sword, Peter cut off the ear of the high priest's servant.
- Both John the Baptist and the apostle James were beheaded with swords.

Translation Suggestions

- A sword is used as a metaphor for God's word. God's teachings in the Bible exposed people's innermost thoughts and convicted them of their sin. In a similar way, a sword cuts deeply, causing pain. (See: Metaphor)
- One way to translate this figurative use would be, "God's word is like a sword, which cuts deeply and exposes sin."
- Another figurative use of this term occurred in the book of Psalms, where the tongue or speech of a person was compared to a sword, which can injure people. This could be translated as "the tongue is like a sword that can badly injure someone."
- If swords are not known in your culture, this word could be translated with the name of another long-bladed weapon that is used to cut or stab.
- A sword could also be described as a "sharp weapon" or "long knife." Some translations could include a picture of a sword.

(See also: How to Translate Unknowns)

(See also: James (brother of Jesus), John (the Baptist), tongue, word of God)

Bible References:

- Acts 12:2
- Genesis 27:40
- Genesis 34:25
- Luke 2:33-35

- **Luke 21:24**
- **Matthew 10:34**
- **Matthew 26:55**
- **Revelation 1:16**

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0019, H1300, H2719, H4380, H6609, H7524, H7973, G31620, G45010

Song of Solomon References:

3:8

tent, tentmaker

Definition:

A tent is a portable shelter made of sturdy fabric that is draped over a structure of poles and attached to them.

- Tents can be small, with just enough space for a few people to sleep in, or they can be very large, with space for an entire family to sleep, cook, and live in.
- For many people, tents are used as permanent dwelling places. For example, during most of the time that Abraham's family lived in the land of Canaan, they dwelled in large tents constructed from sturdy cloth made of goat hair.
- The Israelites also lived in tents during their forty-year wanderings through the desert of Sinai.
- The tabernacle building was a kind of very large tent, with thick walls made of cloth curtains.
- When the apostle Paul traveled to different cities to share the gospel, he supported himself by making tents.
- The term "tents" is sometimes used figuratively to refer generally to where people live. This could also be translated as "homes" or "dwellings" or "houses" or even "bodies." (See: synecdoche)

(See also: **Abraham**, **Canaan**, curtain, **Paul**, **Sinai**, **tabernacle**, **tent of meeting**)

Bible References:

- **1 Chronicles 5:10**
- **Daniel 11:45**
- **Exodus 16:18**
- **Genesis 12:9**

Word Data:

- Strong's: H0167, H0168, H2583, H3407, H6898

Song of Solomon References:

1:5; 1:8

terror, terrorize, terrify, dread, panic

Definition:

The term “terror” refers to a feeling of extreme or intense fear. To “terrify” someone means to cause that person to feel very afraid.

- A “terror” is something or someone that causes great fear or dread. An example of a terror could be an attacking enemy army or a plague or disease that is widespread, killing many people.
- These terrors can be described as “terrifying.” This term could be translated as “fear-causing” or “terror-producing.”
- The judgment of God will someday cause terror in unrepentant people who reject his grace.
- The “terror of Yahweh” could be translated as “the terrifying presence of Yahweh” or “the dreaded judgment of Yahweh” or “when Yahweh causes great fear.”
- Ways to translate “terror” could also include “extreme fear” or “deep dread.”

(See also: **adversary**, **fear**, **judge**, **plague**, Yahweh)

Bible References:

- **Deuteronomy 2:25**
- **Exodus 14:10**
- **Luke 21:9**
- **Mark 6:48-50**

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0367, H0926, H0928, H1091, H1161, H1204, H1205, H1763, H2111, H2113, H2189, H2731, H2847, H2851, H2865, H3372, H3707, H4032, H4172, H4288, H4637, H6184, H6206, H6343, H6973, G16290, G16300, G22580, G44220, G44260, G54010

Song of Solomon References:

3:8

thorn, thorn bush, thistle

Definition:

Thorn bushes and thistles are plants that have prickly branches or flowers. These plants do not produce fruit or anything else that is useful.

- A “thorn” is a hard, sharp growth on the branch or stem of a plant. A “thornbush” is a type of small tree or shrub that has many thorns on its branches.
- A “thistle” is a plant with prickly stems and leaves. Often the flowers are purple.
- Thorn and thistle plants multiply quickly and can cause nearby plants or crops to not be able to grow. This is a picture of how sin keeps a person from producing good spiritual fruit.
- A crown made of twisted thorn branches was placed on Jesus’ head before he was crucified.
- If possible, these terms should be translated by the names of two different plants or bushes that are known in the language area.

(See also: crown, fruit, spirit)

Bible References:

- Hebrews 6:7-8
- Matthew 13:7
- Matthew 13:22
- Numbers 33:55

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0329, H1863, H2312, H2336, H4534, H5285, H5518, H5544, H6791, H6796, H6975, H7063, H7898, G01730, G01740, G46470, G51460

Song of Solomon References:

2:2

Tirzah

Definition:

Tirzah was an important Canaanite city that was conquered by the Israelites. It was also the name of a daughter of Gilead, a descendant of Manasseh.

- The city Tirzah was located in the region occupied by the tribe of Manasseh. It is thought that the city was about 10 miles north of the city of Shechem.
- Years later, Tirzah became a temporary capital city of the northern kingdom of Israel, during the reigns of four kings of Israel.
- Tirzah was also the name of one of Manasseh's granddaughters. They asked to be given a portion of the land since their father had died and he had no sons to inherit it as would normally be the custom.

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Names)

(See also: **Canaan**, **inherit**, **kingdom of Israel**, **Manasseh**, **Shechem**)

Bible References:

- **Numbers 27:1**
- **Numbers 36:11**
- Song of Songs 6:4

Word Data:

- Strong's: H8656

Song of Solomon References:

6:4

tongue, language

Definition:

The term “tongue” refers to the organ inside a person’s mouth that is used to speak. The term is often used figuratively to mean “language” or “speaking.” There also several other figurative meanings as well.

- In the Bible, the most common figurative meaning for this term is “language” or “speech.”
- Sometimes “tongue” may refer to a human language spoken by a certain people group.
- Other times it refers to a supernatural language that the Holy Spirit gives believers in Christ as one of the “gifts of the Spirit.”
- In the book of Acts, the expression “tongues” of fire refers to “flames” of fire, presumably shaped like tongues.

Translation Suggestions

- Depending on the context, the term “tongue” can be translated as “language” or “supernatural language.” If it is not clear which one it is referring to, it is better to translate it as “language.”
- When referring to fire, this term could be translated as “flames.”
- The expression “my tongue rejoices” could be translated as “I rejoice and praise God” or “I am joyfully praising God.”
- The phrase, “tongue that lies” could be translated as “person who tell lies” or “people who lie.”
- Phrases such as “with their tongues” could be translated as “with what they say” or “by their words.”

(See also: gift, Holy Spirit, joy, praise, rejoice, spirit)

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 12:10
- 1 John 3:18
- 2 Samuel 23:2
- Acts 2:26
- Ezekiel 36:3

- **Philippians 2:11**

Word Data:

- Strong's: H3956, G11000, G12580, G20840

Song of Solomon References:

4:11

veil, veiled, unveiled

Definition:

The term “veil” usually refers to a thin piece of cloth that is used as a head covering, to fully or partially cover the head or face.

- Moses covered his face with a veil after he had been in the presence of Yahweh, so that the brightness of his face would be hidden from the people.
- In the Bible, women wore a veil to cover their head, and often their face as well, when they were in public or in the presence of men.
- The veils that women in the Bible wore over their face may have been made of thin material which could be partly seen through and may have only covered part of the face so that the women’s eyes were not covered.
- The verb to “veil” means to cover something with a veil.
- In some English versions, the word “veil” is used to refer to the thick curtain that covered the entrance into the most holy place. But “curtain” is a better term in that context, since it refers to a heavy, thick piece of cloth.

Translation Suggestions

- The term “veil” could also be translated as “thin cloth covering” or “cloth covering” or “head covering” or “head covering.”
- In some cultures, there may already be a term for a veil for women. It may be necessary to find a different word when it is used for Moses.

(See also: Moses)

Bible References:

- 2 Corinthians 3:12-13
- 2 Corinthians 3:16
- Ezekiel 13:18
- Isaiah 47:1-2
- Song of Songs 4:3

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H4304, H4533, H4555, H6777, H6809, H7196, H7479, G03430, G25710, G25720

Song of Solomon References:

4:1; 4:3; 6:7

vine

Definition:

The term “vine” refers to a plant that grows by trailing along the ground or by climbing trees and other structures. The word “vine” in the Bible is used only of fruit-bearing vines and usually refers to grape vines.

- In the Bible, the word “vine” almost always means “grapevine.”
- The branches of the grapevine are attached to the main stem which gives them water and other nutrients so that they can grow.
- Jesus called himself the “vine” and called his people the “branches.” In this context, the word “vine” could also be translated as “grapevine stem” or “grape plant stem.” (See: Metaphor)

(See also: grape, vineyard)

Bible References:

- Genesis 40:9
- Genesis 49:11
- John 15:1
- Luke 22:18
- Mark 12:3
- Matthew 21:35-37

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H5139, H1612, H8321, G02880, G02900, G10090, G10920

Song of Solomon References:

2:13; 6:11; 7:8; 7:12

vineyard

Definition:

A vineyard is a large garden area where grapevines are grown and grapes are cultivated.

- A vineyard often has a wall around it to protect the fruit from thieves and animals.
- God compared the people of Israel to a vineyard that did not bear good fruit. (See: Metaphor)
- Vineyard could be also translated as “grapevine garden” or “grape plantation.”

(See also: grape, Israel, vine)

Bible References:

- Genesis 9:20-21
- Luke 13:6
- Luke 20:15
- Matthew 20:2
- Matthew 21:40-41

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1612, H3754, H3755, H8284, G02900

Song of Solomon References:

1:6; 1:14; 2:15; 7:12; 8:11; 8:12

watchtower, tower

Definition:

The term “watchtower” refers to a tall structure built as a place from which guards could look out for any danger. These towers were often made of stone.

- Landowners sometimes built watchtowers from which they could guard their crops and protect them from being stolen.
- The towers often included rooms where the watchmen or family lived, so that they could guard the crops day and night.
- Watchtowers for cities were built higher than the city walls so that watchmen could see if any enemies were coming to attack the city.
- The term “watchtower” is also used as a symbol of protection from enemies. (See: Metaphor)

(See also: **adversary**, **watch**)

Bible References:

- **1 Chronicles 27:25-27**
- **Ezekiel 26:3-4**
- **Mark 12:1-3**
- **Matthew 21:33-34**
- **Psalm 62:2**

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H0803, H0971, H0975, H1785, H2918, H4026, H4029, H4692, H4707, H4869, H6076, H6438, H6836, G44440

Song of Solomon References:

4:4; 5:13; 7:4; 8:10

wheat

Definition:

Wheat is a type of grain that people grow for food. When the Bible mentions “grain” or “seeds,” it is often talking about wheat grain or seeds.

- The wheat seeds or grains grow at the top of the wheat plant.
- After harvesting the wheat, the grain is separated from the stalk of the plant by threshing it. The stalk of the wheat plant is also called “straw” and is often placed on the ground for animals to sleep on.
- After threshing, the chaff surrounding the grain seed is separated from the grain by winnowing and is thrown away.
- People grind the wheat grain into flour, and use this for making bread.

(See also: barley, chaff, grain, seed, thresh, winnow)

Bible References:

- Acts 27:36-38
- Exodus 34:21-22
- John 12:24
- Luke 3:17
- Matthew 3:12
- Matthew 13:26

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H1250, H2406, G46210

Song of Solomon References:

7:2

wine, wineskin, new wine

Definition:

In the Bible, the term “wine” refers to a kind of fermented drink made from the juice of a fruit called grapes. Wine was stored in “wineskins,” which were containers made out of animal skin.

- The term “new wine” referred to grape juice that had just been taken from the grape and was not fermented yet. Sometimes the term “wine” also referred to unfermented grape juice.
- To make wine, grapes are crushed in a winepress so that the juice comes out. The juice eventually ferments and alcohol forms in it.
- In Bible times, wine was the normal drink with meals. It did not have as much alcohol as present-day wine has.
- Before wine was served for a meal, it was often mixed with water.
- A wineskin that was old and brittle would get cracks in it, which allowed the wine to leak out. New wineskins were soft and flexible, which meant they did not tear easily and could store the wine safely.
- If wine is unknown in your culture, it could be translated as “fermented grape juice” or “fermented drink made from a fruit called grapes” or “fermented fruit juice.” (See: How to Translate Unknowns)
- Ways to translate “wineskin” could include “bag for wine” or “animal skin wine bag” or “animal skin container for wine.”

(See also: **grape**, vine, vineyard, **winepress**)

Bible References:

- **1 Timothy 5:23**
- **Genesis 9:21**
- **Genesis 49:12**
- **John 2:3-5**
- **John 2:10**
- **Matthew 9:17**
- **Matthew 11:18**

Word Data:

- Strong's: H2561, H2562, H3196, H4469, H4997, H5435, H6025, H6071, H8492, G10980, G36310, G38200, G39430

Song of Solomon References:

1:2; 1:4; 2:4; 4:10; 5:1; 7:2; 7:9; 8:2

Yahweh, Yah

Definition:

The term "Yahweh" is God's personal name in the Old Testament. The specific origin of this name is unknown, but it is probably derived from the Hebrew verb meaning, "to be."

- Following tradition, many Bible versions use the term "LORD" or "the LORD" to represent "Yahweh." This tradition resulted from the fact that historically, the Jewish people became afraid of mispronouncing Yahweh's name and started saying "Lord" every time the term "Yahweh" appeared in the text. Modern Bibles write "LORD" with all capital letters to show that this represents God's personal name and to distinguish it from "Lord" which is a different Hebrew word.
- The ULT and UST texts always translate this term as "Yahweh," in agreement with the Hebrew text of the Old Testament.
- The term "Yahweh" never occurs in the original text of the New Testament; only the Greek term for "Lord" is used, even when quoting the Old Testament.
- In the Old Testament, when God spoke about himself, he would often use his name instead of a pronoun.
- "Yah" is a shortened form of the name Yahweh that occurs in poetry and praise (e.g. Hallelujah = "Praise Yah"), and in some Hebrew names (e.g. Zechariah = "Yah remembers").

Translation Suggestions:

- "Yahweh" could be translated by a word or phrase that means "I am" or "existing one" or "the one who is" or "he who is present."
- This name could also be written in a way that is similar to how "Yahweh" is spelled, or how it sounds in your language.
- Some church denominations prefer not to use the term "Yahweh" and instead use the traditional rendering, "LORD." An important consideration is that this may be confusing when read aloud because it will sound the same as the title "Lord." Some languages may have an affix or other grammatical marker that could be added to distinguish "LORD" as a name (Yahweh) from "Lord" as a title.
- In most cases it is good to keep the name Yahweh where it occurs in the text, but some translations may decide to use only a pronoun in some places to make the text more natural and clear.
- An introduction of a quote from Yahweh could be something like, "This is what Yahweh says."

(Translation suggestions: How to Translate Names)

(See also: God, Lord)

Bible References:

- 1 Kings 21:20
- 1 Samuel 16:7
- Daniel 9:3
- Ezekiel 17:24
- Genesis 2:4
- Genesis 4:3-5
- Genesis 28:13
- Hosea 11:12
- Isaiah 10:4
- Isaiah 38:8
- Job 12:10
- Joshua 1:9
- Lamentations 1:5
- Leviticus 25:35
- Malachi 3:4
- Micah 2:5
- Micah 6:5
- Numbers 8:11
- Psalm 124:3
- Ruth 1:21
- Zechariah 14:5

Examples from the Bible stories:

- 9:14 God said, “I AM WHO I AM. Tell them, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’ Also tell them, ‘I am **Yahweh**, the God of your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This is my name forever.’”
- 13:4 Then God gave them the covenant and said, “I am **Yahweh**, your God, who saved you from slavery in Egypt. Do not worship other gods.”
- 13:5 “Do not make idols or worship them, for I, **Yahweh**, am a jealous God.”

- 16:1 The Israelites began to worship the Canaanite gods instead of **Yahweh**, the true God.
- 19:10 Then Elijah prayed, “O **Yahweh**, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, show us today that you are the God of Israel and that I am your servant.”

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H3050, H3068, H3069

Song of Solomon References:

8:6

zeal, zealous

Definition:

The terms “zeal” and “zealous” refer to being strongly devoted to supporting a person or idea.

- Zeal includes having strong desire and actions that promote a good cause. It is often used to describe someone who faithfully obeys God and teaches others to do that too.
- Being zealous includes putting intense effort into doing something and continuing to persevere in that effort.
- The “zeal of the Lord” or the “zeal of Yahweh” refers to God’s strong, persistent actions to bless his people or to see justice done.

Translation Suggestions:

- To “be zealous” could also be translated by, “be strongly diligent” or “make an intense effort.”
- The term “zeal” could also be translated as “energetic devotion” or “eager determination” or “righteous enthusiasm.”
- The phrase, “zeal for your house” could be translated, “strongly honoring your temple” or “fervent desire to take care of your house.”

Bible References:

- 1 Corinthians 12:31
- 1 Kings 19:9-10
- Acts 22:3
- Galatians 4:17
- Isaiah 63:15
- John 2:17-19
- Philippians 3:6
- Romans 10:1-3

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H7065, H7068, G22050, G22060, G22070, G60410

Song of Solomon References:

8:6

Zion, Mount Zion

Definition:

Originally, the term “Zion” or “Mount Zion” referred to a stronghold or fortress that King David captured from the Jebusites. Both these terms became other ways of referring to Jerusalem.

- Mount Zion and Mount Moriah were two of the hills that the city of Jerusalem was located on. Later, “Zion” and “Mount Zion” became used as general terms to refer to both of these mountains and to the city of Jerusalem. Sometimes they also referred to the temple that was located in Jerusalem. (See: metonymy)
- David named Zion, or Jerusalem, the “City of David.” This is different from David’s hometown, Bethlehem, which was also called the City of David.
- The term “Zion” is used in other figurative ways, to refer to Israel or to God’s spiritual kingdom or to the new, heavenly Jerusalem that God will create.

(See also: Abraham, David, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Jebusites)

Bible References:

- 1 Chronicles 11:5
- Amos 1:2
- Jeremiah 51:35
- Psalm 76:1-3
- Romans 11:26

Word Data:

- Strong’s: H6726

Song of Solomon References:

3:11