

## The Meaning of Hebrew Term מוֹחַמְדִּים (Mohamadim) In Song of Songs 5:16: An Exegetical Study

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### Abstract

The Hebrew term מוֹחַמְדִּים (mohamadim) in Song 5:16 phonetically has proximity with the name of Muhammad. On that basis, some Muslim writers and preachers have a conviction that the text contains a predictive prophecy about Muhammad. This study aimed to indicate what exactly the text says and whether the text inherently comprises a prophecy about Muhammad. Through the historical-grammatical method, this study specifically discusses of literal context, semantic, genre, and theology of the mentioned text. The following are the conclusions of the study: First, Song 5:16 is an account of God's love that explicated by the author through poetic form. This character of God is materialized at the level of a love relationship between the bride and groom. Second, the presupposition that the term mohamadim refers to the prophet Muhammad is flawed. Semantically, the Hebrew term mohamadim comes from the root mahmad, meaning "desirable, sweet." Conversely, in Arabic, the name Muhammad comes from the root hammd, which means "to praise" or "praiseworthy." Hence, the Hebrew term mohamadim has no semantic parallel with Muhammad. Third, the author did not mention locus such as Mecca or Medina where Muhammad or Islam emerged. The city of Jerusalem, where God built the temple as the worship center of Israel, is the locus mentioned by the author. Thus, text Song 5:16 and the entire corpus of the Scripture, whether expressed through poetry or narrative depicted God's love for human beings and vice versa.

### Keywords

mohammadim; muhammad; prophecy; scripture.



### I. Introduction

The Hebrew term מוֹחַמְדִּים (mohamadim) in Song 5:16 by some Muslim's scholars is considered as one of the predictive prophecies of prophet Muhammad in the Scripture. Scholarly works to corroborate this credence, for instance, disclosed by Hadrat Mirza Bashir-Ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad (Ahmad 2003, pp. 1-14). He insisted that the Song 5:10-16 consists of a predictive prophecy of prophet Muhammad. His argument is succinctly summarized through the following statement, "This prophecy promises a Prophet (Muhammad) who would be superior to others and would possess a rank higher than others" (Ahmad 2003, 7-55). The assertion that the prophet Muhammad, who has been prophesized by the Scripture, is a pivotal tenet for Muslims to continually propagate the presupposition that Scripture had prophesized the rise of Islam and Muhammad per se (Soroush 2000, pp. 323-334; cf. QS 33:40).

Another scholar, such as Jamal A. Badawi, reinforced a similar hypothetical argument. He argued that long before Islam emerged to existence Scripture has prophesized the prophet Muhammad as the founder of Islam (Badawi, 2005, pp. 9-11). Compared to Ahmad's standpoint, Badawi incorporated some other texts of the Scripture

to defend his argument (see, for example, Gen. 12:3; 17:4; Deut. 25:15-17) where he equated Muhammad with Moses (cf. Deut. 18:18). Moreover, he attested that the content of Habakkuk 3:3 is about the prophecy of Muhammad's migration from Mecca to Medina (Badawi, 2005, pp. 25-26). Christian most scholars have rejected the above two interpretations. Tony Costa, for instance, disaffirmed the above presupposition by making exegetical methods for some texts, which have been selected by Muslim scholars (cf. Deut. 18:15-20; John 14:16, 17, 26; 15:26; 16:7) (Costa 2016, pp 59-77; Athamania 1998, 84-102; Samir 1999, pp. 1-10; Beaumont 2015, pp. 145-162; Grafton 2014, pp. 1-11) . Through the same method, in his study on Song 5:10-16, Costa insisted that the text discussed God's love through poetic expression. His conclusion indirectly rejected the subjective approach of Muslim scholars to Biblical text (Costa 2016, p. 66).

This research does not intend to study the detail of all texts selected by Muslim scholars, nor does investigate their subjective interpretation of Song 5:16. Conversely, this paper investigates the Song 5:16 as one of the main reference texts of some Muslim scholars who affirm that prophet Muhammad has been prophesized by Scripture. Hence, this study aims to prove whether Song 5:16 inherently contains a predictive prophecy about the prophet Muhammad (Pfandl 2010, pp. 97-102). More specifically, by using the historical-grammatical method, this paper attempts to attest whether the conclusion and presupposition of Muslim writers are the results of an objective and profound investigation of the text. Through an exegetical approach, the following is the chronology of the discussion. First, the introduction, it is focusing on the background of the problem. Second, specifically, study the genre, and structure of the text. Third, investigation of literal context. Fourth, text analysis, including translation, structure, and syntax, and interpretation. Lastly, the conclusion.

## II. Review of Literature

### 2.1 Genre, Theme, and Structure

The book of Song in the Old Testament canon is part of *ketuvim* (writings) (Bade 1991, pp. 151-162; Beckwith 1991, pp. 358-395), including Job, Psalms, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes. Those books are categorized as *poetic literature* due to the style or language expression (*genre*) (Beckwith, 1985; Walton 1991, pp. 20-22; Klingbeil 2005, pp. 91-98). The poetic genre in those books is conveyed in the form of parables, symbols, songs, or figures of speech, such as metaphors, paradoxes, and hyperboles (Cohen 1996; Berlin 1986, pp. 273-284). The book of Song was written by Solomon at the beginning of his reign as a king, around 950 BC before idolatry (1 Kgs. 11:1-8) (Andrew 2010, p. 846). Francis Landy indicated that the main theme of this book is expressed through the metaphorical form to depict a profound relationship between God and human beings which is based on the principle of "love" (Landy 1979, pp. 516-520). This picture materialized by the author through the relationship between bride and groom, which is constituted upon the genuine love of two parties. In line with that idea, M. H. Segal argued that the love relationship between bride and groom is imagery to depict the relationship between God and man in the garden of Eden before sin (Segal 1962, pp. 470-471, 479-480).

The interpretation of biblical scholars on the book of Song, as poetic literature, prevalently institutes a *typological approach*, which means what is shown by the text, that human love symbolizes the love of God (Rowley 1952, pp. 189-234; Snaith 1993, p. 68). In other words, the genuine love of God is represented by the true love of human beings. Thus, the love relationship between God and His people is a *proto-type* and paragon of the

relationship between husband and wife in marriage. To this point, Thi Ly Tran argued from a different angle, that the content of Song of Songs is more than just the theme of “love.” He asserted that the theme of love must be incorporated with the language of love. He reinforced his argument by pointing out several Hebrew terms which is related to the idea of *love* in the Song of Songs, such as *ahab* (“love”), *hesed* (“kindness”), *raham* (“compassion”), or *reah* (“companion”) (Tran 2010, pp. 19-70). Thus, the theme of love, according to Tran, is transformative for human life, both in the context of God’s love for human beings, and vice versa, human love for God as well as for fellow humans (Tran 2010, pp. 238-245).

Based on the above thematic focus, Biblical scholars try to construct a chiasmic structure of the book. Unfortunately, there is no consensus among scholars to determine the turning point or center of the macro chiasmic structure of the book. Richard M. Davidson, for instance, indicates the disparation of scholars’ proposal for Song of Songs (Davidson 2003, 44-67). He indicated that Edwin Webster's chiasmic structure put Song 4:16-6:3 as the centre of the structure (Webster 1982, p. 73-93). In this case, Webster's proposal is parallel with the structure proposed by J. Cheryl Exum and William Shea (Shea 1980, pp. 378-396; Exum 1973, pp. 47-49). Although Davidson does not explicitly state the structural similarities of Exum and Shea compared to Webster, however J. Paul Tunner indicates that Exum and Shea’s proposal is similar to Webster's on one point, namely Song 4-6 is the turning point of the structure (Shea 1980, pp. 378-396). The following is the proposal of Webster (Davidson 2003, 44-67),

- A** 1. 1:2-2:6 banter and Praise  
2. 2:7-3:5 The maiden
  
- B** Interlude 3:6-11  
  
1. 4:1-7 The youth  
2. 4:8-15 The youth
  
- C** 4:16-6:3 The Maiden
  
- B'** 1. 6:4-10 The youth  
2. 6:11-7:10 The youth
- A'** 1. 7:11-8:3 The Maiden.  
2. 8:4-14 Praise and banter

On this chiasmic structure, Davidson agrees with Webster for one point, namely pericope 5:9-16 begins with the question “What is your beloved more than another beloved?” (vs. 9) and that question is answered by the bride in vv. 10-16. Likewise, chapter 6 begins with a question “Where has your beloved gone?” (vv. 1, 10) and that question is answered by the bride in vv. 2-3; 11-12 and encloses with a conclusive statement in vs. 13. In contrast to the structure of Shea and Webster, Davidson incorporates 4:16 and 5:1 as the turning point of the structure. The rationale is that those two pericopes containing the bride’s invitation (4:16) and it is followed by the response of the groom (5:1) (Landsberger 1954, pp. 203-216). Consequently, the two questions in the prologue and epilogue stand as the inclusion of the whole discourse of the pericope.

The discrepancy of various proposals mentioned by Davidson, intelligibly has its rationale and arguments. However, most biblical scholars agree that chapter 5 existed in the center of the structure. This paper specifically diagnoses the microstructure of the

discourse in the Song 5:9-6:1, as far as chapter 5:16 is the focus of the study. This text begins with a rhetorical question “What *is* your beloved more than *another* beloved” (vs. 9) and it ends up with another rhetorical question “Where has your beloved gone” (6:1). Thus, the first question of the bride is regarded as a *prologue* and the second question stands as the *epilogue* of the entire corpus of Song 5:9-6:1.

## 2.2 Literary Context

The Song 5:10-16 is an integral part of the macrostructure of the book. Edwin Webster locates chapters 4:16-6:3 as the focus of its message (Webster 1982, pp. 73-93). At the end of chapter 4, the author used the term “beloved” (v. 16) in the context of the description of a bride's longing for her beloved, and the same term is used in the epilogue (6:3). The term “beloved” is translated from Hebrew דוד (*dod*, “beloved, lover”), which in the grammatical form it occurs in *construct suffix first person*, namely דודי (*dodi*, “my beloved”). In chapter 5 this term appears seven times with the same form (vv. 2, 4, 5, 6 (2x), 8, 10, 16). However, in verse 9 the term emerges in different grammatical forms, namely דודך (*dodek*, “your beloved” 2x) and מִדּוּד (*midod*, “from another beloved”). The difference of this grammatical form depends on the context, in verses 2-8 it is used in the context of the bride's longing to meet the groom. In verses 9-16 the term is used in the context of the bride's praising of the groom before the “daughter of Jerusalem.”

Song 5:9-6:1 begins with a rhetorical question to distinguish “your beloved” from “another beloved” (vs. 9) in response to the previous statement, “If you find my beloved, that you tell him I *am* lovesick!” (vs. 8). This idea reinforces the rationale of a woman to long for her beloved due to his excellence compared to “another beloved” (vs. 9). The rhetorical question in the *prologue* (vs. 9) is repeated in the *epilogue* which is focused on the deficiency of “your beloved” compared to “my beloved.” The text says, “Where has your beloved (דודך) gone, O most beautiful among women? Where has your beloved turned, that we may seek him with you?” (6:1). The two questions on the *prologue* and *epilogue* serve as the *inclusio* for the bride's statement in vv. 10-15. This depiction ends up with the conclusion in vs. 16, וְכֵן הוּא כֹּלֵם מְחֻמְדִּים (“and he is wholly desirable”). The use of the Hebrew term כֹּל (*kol*, “all, total, all together”) serves as the conclusion of all physical descriptions about the groom (vv. 10-15) (Holladay 1988). A physical picture of the groom on vv. 10-15 is as follows:

- vs. 10 “My beloved (דודי) *is* white and ruddy.”
- vs. 11 “His locks (קנציה) *are* wavy.”
- vs. 12 “His eyes (עיניו) *are* like doves.”
- vs. 13 “His cheeks (לחייו) *are* like a bed of spices.”
- vs. 14 “His hands (ידיו) *are* rods of gold.”
- vs. 15 “His legs (שוקיו) *are* pillars of marble.”

The context of comparison words of the bride in vs. 9 is anticipated in vs.1 that is, “drink and imbibe deeply, O lovers.” (Landsberger 1954, pp. 203-216). The term “love” is a translation of the Hebrew דוד (*dod*), and Septuagint translates it as ἄδελφοί. This reinforces the presupposition that the bride's description in chapter 5 focuses on a loving relationship. Thematically, vs.10 opens with the excellence of “my beloved” (דודי) and it closes (6:1) with the deficiency picture of “your beloved” (דודך). The materialization of the comparison in vv. 10-16 focuses on the physical aspect. According to Longxi, physical beauty in this text is imagery for the moral qualities of the groom (Longxi 1987, pp. 193-217), otherwise in 6:2-3 the picture focuses on the actions of the groom. Thus, the content

of the whole pericope (5:9-6:1) is all about the picture of both physical beauty and moral qualities of the groom. From a larger context, Duane Garrett insisted that the phrase “he is lovely/ desirable” (*mohamadim*) refers to the quality of “words” and “actions” as indicated in chapter 1:2 (Garrett 2004, p. 112). However, Graham S. Ogden and Lynell Zogbo on the other hand, view deeper than just the expression of words and actions. They argued that all these physical pictures are symbolic descriptions of the moral character of a person, either of God or a human being (Odgen, Zogbo 1997, p. 167).

### III. Result and Discussion

#### 3.1 Translation and Semantic View

The genre of Songs 5:16 is the same as the genre of the entire book, namely poetry. Songs 5:9-6:3 contains the compliment of the bride about the groom (5:9-6:3). In the poetic genre often authors, like Solomon, form the semantic synonym of some terms (Freedman 1977, pp. 10-13). For instance, in Songs 5:16 the author said, “His mouth is most sweet, yes, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem!” (NKJV). The context indicates that this declarative statement is addressed to the “daughters of Jerusalem.” The term “sweet” (מִתְקִים) in this text is synonymous with “lovely” (מְחַמְדִּים) either in Hebrew phonetic or in semantic aspect. The difference is that “sweet” serves to describe “his mouth” while “lovely” describes “beloved” or “my friend.”

The picture about the groom in vs. 16 is different from the picture of him in vv. 9-15. The reason is that vs. 16 emphasized the verbal aspect of the groom, that is “His mouth is most sweet.” The comprehensive of the groom’s character is pictured by the statement “he is *altogether* (Heb. כֹּל, *col*) lovely.” If this idea is connected to Songs 6:2-3 and 5:9-15 it simply indicates the author’s presupposition that the excellence of the bridegroom is not only of his physical quality but also his words as well as his actions. Thus, *physical* perfection (vv. 9-15), *sweet words* (vs. 16), and *perfect action* (6:2-3) is a symbolic description of the groom's perfect character. It means the statement “he is *altogether* lovely” on vs. 16 stands as the conclusion of the whole depiction of the bridegroom in the whole pericope (5:9-6:3). The following is the translation and construction of vs. 16 in three different Biblical versions:

**Table 1.**

BHS	חִפּוֹ מְחַמְדִּים וְכָלֹ מִתְקִים זֶה דֹדִי וְזֶה רְעִי בְנוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם:
LXX	φάρυγξ αὐτοῦ γλυκασμοὶ καὶ ὄλος ἐπιθυμία οὗτος ἀδελφιδός μου καὶ οὗτος πλησίον μου θυγατέρες Ἱερουσαλημ
NKJV	His mouth <i>is</i> most <i>sweet</i> , Yes, he <i>is</i> altogether <i>lovely</i> . This <i>is</i> my beloved, and this <i>is</i> my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem!

In Hebrew (BHS) the term מְחַמְדִּים (*mohamadim*) appears in plural form, derived from Hebrew root מְחַמֵּד (*mohemad*) and plural form of this term appears only in Song 16:5. In contrast, the root מְחַמֵּד with its variants, occurs fourteen times in the Old Testament (cf. 1 Kgs. 20:6; 2 Chr. 36:19; Isa. 65:10; Lam. 1:7, 10, 11(2x); 2:4; Isa. 24: 16, 21, 25; Hos. 9:6, 16; Joel 4:5) (Brown, Driver, Briggs 2007, pp. 554-555). This term is translated in different ways in the English version, such as “sweet” (Songs 5:16, NKJV), “pleasant” or

“desirable” (1Kgs. 20:6; NAS/NKJV), and “precious” or “valuable” (2 Chr. 36:19, NKJV, NAS) (Holladay 1988, p. 190).

In contrast to the English translation, Septuagint (LXX) renders the term with **ἐπιθυμία**. This term is translated into various English meanings, such as “desire, longing,” (Wilbur, William 1957, p. 74) and in negative connotation, it can be rendered as “lust, craving, evil desire” (e.g., 1Tim. 6:9) (Timothy, Fridberg, Miller 2005, p. 185). In addition, the Greek term **ἐπιθυμία** is not the only translation for **מִחְמָדִים** in LXX. There are some other distinct translations, for instance, in 2 Chr. 36:19 the term **מִחְמָדִים** is translated by LXX with **ὄραϊος** meaning “ripe.” In the book of Isaiah (cf. 64:10) the term **מִחְמָדִים** is translated as **ἔνδοξος** meaning “more honorable.” To sum, the Hebrew term **מִחְמָדִים** has various meanings either in English or Septuagint (Greek). The different translation and meaning of the terms simply depend on the literal context and genre of the text.

### 3.2 Structure and Syntax

Songs 5:16 consists of three main phrases and each phrase has the main idea represented by the usage of three adjective words, namely “sweet, lovely, beloved one.” The last sentence on section A1 “and this is my friend” stands as the description of “this is my beloved one,” as indicated on the following structure:

**Table 2**

<b>A</b>	His mouth is most sweet ( <b>מִחְמָדִים</b> ).
<b>B</b>	He is altogether lovely ( <b>מִחְמָדִים</b> ).
<b>A1</b>	This is my beloved one ( <b>דוֹדִי</b> ). And this is my friend ( <b>רֵעִי</b> ), oh daughter of Jerusalem.

The comprehensive description of the groom in Song 5:16 serves as the conclusion of the bride's compliment to the groom in verses 10-15, as indicated in the central section of the structure above, namely “He is altogether lovely” (B). The complete description about the groom in this *verbless clause* is characterized by the using of *particle conjunction* **כֹּל** (“all together”). In the structure, the adjective word “sweet” (**מִחְמָדִים**) serves to describe noun “mouth” (A). Thus, the term “sweet” is not parallel to “lovely” (**מִחְמָדִים**) in the structure, due to the object of section B is “everything about him” (**כֹּל**). This statement does not refer to a specific object as made in the previous pericope, namely “mouth, hair, eyes, cheeks, hands, or feet” (vv. 10-15). Hence, the idea of “everything” about the groom is represented by the term **מִחְמָדִים** (“lovely, precious”) which is reinforced by the plural-masculine form of the word.

The statement of section A1 is the specific description of the groom which is parallel with section A. In section A1 phrase “beloved one” serves to describe “my friend.” In this section, author places the “daughter of Jerusalem” as the addressee of the whole discourse about the groom both in vs. 16 as well as in vv. 10-15. Thus, the phrase **בְּנוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַיִם** (“daughter of Jerusalem”) grammatically functionate as a *genitive appositional* which appears only in the book of Songs (1:5; 2:7; 3:5; 5:8; 5:16; 8:4) (Stinespring 1965, 133-141). J. Andrew Dearman contended that the phrase “daughter of Jerusalem” is the same as “daughter of Zion” which is referring to the “citizens of Jerusalem” (Dearman 2009, 151-152; Tanner 1997, pp. 151-152). This phrase has been mentioned by the author in vs. 8 saying, “I swear ye, *daughters of Jerusalem*.” Thus, the terms “sweet” (**מִחְמָדִים**) in section A and “lovely” (**מִחְמָדִים**) in the section B, as well as “beloved one” (**דוֹדִי**) in vs. 16 are all about symbolic pictures of groom’s moral character (God) by the inhabitants of Jerusalem (Israel).

### 3.3 Interpretation

The content of Songs 5:9-6:3 is all about the bride's compliment for the groom (Osborne 1991, 183-188; Pfandl, Rodriguez 2005, 168-169). This kind of compliment is also expressed in another pericope such as in Songs 4:1-16, and the bride and groom praised each other found in 2:8-17. Thus, through poetic expression, the author explains something in figurative expression about a certain object, fact, or action. In Hebrew construction figurative expression mostly use Hebrew prepositions such as כִּי "ke" (to or like) (Arnold, Choi 2003, pp. 109-110). For instance, "like gold" (vs. 11); "like a dove" (vs. 12); "like a bed of spices" (vs. 13), "like a cedar" (vs. 15). Even though vs. 16 does not use the same explicit preposition word, however, the idea is obvious that the description of the kindness and quality characteristic of the groom is represented by term "lovely" (מְהֻלָּלִים) or "sweet" (מְתֻקִּים).

The prepositional phrase implicitly confirms the theological aspect of the book of Songs, namely the poetic expression of the book intended to emphasize the profound relationship between God and His people (Delitzsch 1877, Schwab 2008, pp. 740-741). This relationship is materialized by the analogy of a loving relationship between a bride and groom. J. Paul Tanner termed such a loving relationship which is expressed in poetic language, as "physical consummation" (Tunner 1997, pp. 146-147). Thus, Solomon used the term מְתֻקִּים ("sweet") in the context of Song 5:9-16 is a comprehensive description of God's love for Israel as His bride. God's love for His people became a key theme throughout the Bible, both in the Old Testament (cf. Ex. 19:4-6) and the New Testament (cf. John 3:16). Accordingly, Solomon materialized such a loving relationship through the profound relationship between the bride and groom. This formula deliberately addressed to God's people aimed to remind them how great the love God for His faithful people is.

Song 5:9-16 intended to depict the love relationship between bride and groom which is expressed in a poetic genre (cf. 1: 2-17; 4:1-15; 6:4-13). Theologically, the poetic genre in the book of Songs is intended to depict a profound relationship between God and man. Although the discourse of Songs 5:9-16 specifically focuses on the depiction of the groom's quality character, however, the language of this main text is metaphoric in nature. Thus, the Hebrew term *mohamadim* in the statement "he is altogether lovely" or "he is totally lovely" (cf. 2:3) explicates God's love for his people (Odgen, Zogbo 1997, p. 168). Consequently, the term *mohamadim* in this text serves as a keyword to describe God's character qualities. It means the relationship between God and His people is grounded in the love of God.

### 3.4 Synthesis

The interpretation of Muslim scholars who assume that the Hebrew term *mohamadim* in Songs 5:16 is a Biblical prophecy of the prophet Muhammad is strikingly contradictory to the content and context of the text. The conviction of Muslim scholars is merely based on the assumption that the terms *mohamadim* and *muhammad* have phonetic similarities. This conviction was rejected for three rationales. First, as far as semantic parallel is concerned, the term *mohamadim* in Hebrew comes from the root *mahmad* meaning "desirable, desirable thing" and it is not related to the personal name of Muhammad (Costa 2016, p. 65). In Muslim, the name *Muhammad* comes from the Arabic root *hammd*, which means "to praise" or "praiseworthy." Consequently, the term *mohamadim* has no semantic parallel to the name *Muhammad* (Sabir, Nawaz, Zakir, Naeem, Anjum 2014, pp. 118-119; Anton 1968, p. 160). Thus, Songs 5:16 does not contain a predictive prophecy about the prophet Muhammad.

Second, looking at the genre of the text, Song 5:9-6:3 is not a prophecy, otherwise, it is a poetic expression that consists of the bride's compliment to the groom. Through poetic genre, the author specifically mentions the locus where the Israelites live, namely "Jerusalem." According to Tony Costa, if the term *mohammadim* refers to the prophet Muhammad then the author should discuss specifically the locus where Muslims and Muhammad emerged, such as Mecca or Medina (Costa 2016, p. 66). The author, conversely it refers to the city of "Jerusalem" which occurs twice in Song 5 out of eight occurrences throughout the book of Song (1:5; 2:7; 3:5, 10; 5:8, 16; 6:4; 8:4) as the place of Israel's provenance. Thus, the text does not discuss the prophecy of Muhammad (Waardenburg 1979, pp. 248-250; Coward 1989, pp. 92-93; Piryns 1979, p. 173; Whitson 1971, 122), but about the relationship between God and Israel as His people who lives in Jerusalem.

Third, from the context of Biblical theology, the book of Song, as well as Song 5:9-6:3, discussed a profound relationship between the bride to the groom and vice versa. The primary purpose of the poetic expression of the book intend to describe a love relationship between God and His people. The inhabitants of Jerusalem are described as God's people, hence they are the main addressee of God's message of the book. In that context, both biblical theology as a whole and the theology of Song, in particular, aimed to proclaim God's love for His people. His love in the Old Testament is materialized through the sacrificial system (cf. Gen. 22:8; Lev. 1-6; 23) and it is climaxed through the sacrifice of Jesus in the New Testament (Eph. 1:7; John 3:16; Rom. 5:8; Tit. 2:14).

#### IV. Conclusion

After investigating the literal context, semantics, genre, and theology of the text, the following are the conclusions of the research. First, the use of the Hebrew term "lovely" (מְדֻמָּדִים) in Song 5:16 does not serve to make predictive prophecies of the prophet Muhammad. This term serves as an adjectival word to picture the nature of God's character. The character of God is materialized by the author at the level of a love relationship between bride and groom. Thus, the character quality of the groom in the text is a symbolic picture of God's character. Similarly, the bride who praises the groom is the symbol of Israel as God's people.

Second, the presupposition that the term *mohamadim* in Songs 5:16 is ascribed as a Biblical prophecy about the prophet Muhammad strikingly contradicts the entire corpus of the text. That presupposition is grounded solely on the phonetic parallels of words *mohamadim* and *Muhammad*. In terms of semantic aspect, the word *mohamadim* in Hebrew comes from the root *mahmad* meaning "desirable, sweet, desirable thing" and it has no relation to the name of prophet Muhammad. In Muslim, the name *Muhammad* comes from the Arabic root *hammd*, which means "to praise" or "praiseworthy." Thus, the Hebrew term *mohamadim* has no semantic affinity to the name *Muhammad*.

Third, from the genre form of the book, Song 5:9-6:3 contains no prophecy about a person. Moreover, Solomon does not mention specifically a locus like the city of Mecca or Medina, which relates to the origins of Muhammad and Islam. Instead, the author calls the city "Jerusalem." King Solomon, as the author of the Song of Songs, built the temple in Jerusalem as the central worship of true God. Thus, theologically Song 5:9-6:3 contains metaphorical expressions about God's love for Israel and vice versa. Israel who inhabited Jerusalem is the people of God, hence they were the addressee of the message delivered by God through the author of the book.



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