

Adorning The Bride Tikkun Leil Shavu'ot in the Zohar

Rabbi Shim'on was sitting engaged in Torah on the night when the Bride is joined with Her Husband.⁴ For we have learned: All those Companions initiated into the bridal palace need—on that night when the Bride is destined the next day to be under the canopy with Her Husband⁵—to be with Her all night, delighting with Her in Her adornments in which She is arrayed,⁶ engaging in Torah, from Torah to Prophets, from Prophets to Writings, midrashic renderings of verses and mysteries of wisdom: these are Her adornments and finery.⁷

She enters, escorted by Her maidens, standing above their heads. Adorned by them, She rejoices with them the whole night. The next day She enters the canopy only with them, and they are called “members of the canopy.” As soon as She enters the canopy, the blessed Holy One inquires about them,⁸ blesses them and crowns them with bridal crowns. Happy is their share!

Rabbi Shim'on and all the Companions were singing the song of Torah,⁹ innovating words of Torah, each one of them. Rabbi Shim'on and all the other Companions rejoiced.

Rabbi Shim'on said, “My children, happy is your share! For tomorrow the Bride will enter the canopy only with you. For all those arranging Her adornments tonight, rejoicing with Her, will be recorded and inscribed in the Book of Memory.¹⁰ The blessed Holy One blesses them with seventy blessings and crowns of the supernal world.”

Rabbi Shim'on opened, saying, “*Heaven declares the glory of God...* (Psalms 19:2). We have already established this verse, but at this time, when the Bride is aroused to enter the canopy the next day, She is arrayed and illumined with Her adornments, together with the Companions rejoicing with Her that whole night, while She rejoices with them. The following day, countless troops, soldiers and camps assemble with Her, and She waits together with all of them for each and every one who adorned Her this night.¹¹

⁴ **on the night that the Bride...** On the eve of *Shavu'ot* (Festival of “Weeks”), the celebration of the revelation of Torah, *Shekhinah* prepares to join Her groom, *Tiferet*.

⁵ **the next day...** The marriage between the masculine and feminine takes place on the day of *Shavu'ot*, when the Torah was actually given at Mt. Sinai. *Tiferet* is symbolized by the Written Torah, while *Shekhinah* is alluded to by the Oral Torah, and together they convey revelation.

⁶ **that whole night...** On other nights the Companions rise at midnight and study Torah until dawn, chanting to *Shekhinah*. On this night of *Shavu'ot* they adorn Her all night long. This all-night study ritual became known as *tiqqun leil shavu'ot*, “the *tiqqun* of the eve of *Shavu'ot*.”

The root *תקן* (*tnn*) appears throughout the *Zohar*, ranging widely in meaning: “mend, restore, correct, perfect, prepare, arrange, array, adorn, establish, institute.”

⁷ **these are Her adornments and finery** See *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* on 4:11

⁸ **inquires about them** See *Zohar* 3:98a: “Happy is the share of the Companions when the King asks the Consort who adorned Her in jewelry, polished Her crown and arrayed Her adornments.”

⁹ **singing the song of Torah** Torah is referred to as song in *BT, Eruvin* 18b; *Hagigah* 12b.

¹⁰ **the Book of Memory** The celestial book in which all human actions are recorded.

¹¹ **She waits...** For each Companion who adorned Her with a gem of Torah.

As soon as they join together, and She sees Her Husband, what is written? *Heaven declares the glory of God. Heaven*— the Groom entering the canopy.¹² מַסְפֵּרִים (*Mesapperim*), *Declares*—sparkles with the radiance of סַפִּיר (*sappir*), ‘sapphire,’ sparkling and radiating from one end of the universe to the other. *The glory of God*—glory of the Bride, who is called *God*, as is written: *God rages every day* (Psalms 7:12).¹³ Every day of the year, She is called *God*, but now that She has entered the canopy, She is called *Glory* as well as *God*, glory upon glory, radiance upon radiance, dominion upon dominion. Then, at the moment when *Heaven* enters the canopy, coming to illumine Her,¹⁴ all those Companions who adorned Her are designated there by name, as is written: *The sky proclaims the work of His hands* (Psalms 19:2). *The work of His hands*—masters of the covenant with the Bride, Her partners. Those masters of the covenant are called *the work of His hands*, as is said: *The work of our hands, establish it* (Psalms 90:17). This is the covenant sealed in a man’s flesh.¹⁵

[10a-b] Rabbi Shim’on said to the Companions, “Members of this wedding party, let each one of you adorn the Bride with one adornment.”

He said to Rabbi El’azar, his son, “El’azar, give one present to the Bride, for tomorrow when He enters the canopy¹⁶ He will gaze upon those songs of praise bestowed upon Her by initiates of the palace, preparing Her to stand before Him.”

Rabbi El’azar opened, saying, “*Who is this that ascends from the wilderness...?* (Song of Songs 3:6). *Who is this?*—sum of two sanctities, two worlds in one bond, one nexus.¹⁷ *Ascends*, literally, to become the holy of holies,¹⁸ for the holy of holies is *Who* and is joined with *This*, so that She *ascends*, becoming the holy of holies. *From the wilderness*—for in the desert She inherited the role of Bride, entering the canopy.¹⁹

¹² **the groom...** *Tiferet*, who is called *Heaven*. Several verses later in this psalm the sun is identified as a groom: *He [the sun] is like a groom coming forth from his chamber [or canopy]* (Psalms 19:6).

¹³ **God rages every day** אֵל (*El*), “God,” is a name of *Shekhinah*, who manifests the power of judgment and is angered daily by the evil of humanity.

¹⁴ **to illumine Her** The verse is taken to mean: *Heaven (Tiferet) illumines the glory of God (Shekhinah)*.

¹⁵ **The work... establish it...** The mark of circumcision, made by hand, is called *the work of our hands*. The interpretation of the verse is: May God *establish* (help us control and purify) *the work of our hands* (our sexual conduct).

¹⁶ **when He enters...** When *Tiferet* enters the canopy to be united with *Shekhinah*.

¹⁷ **Who is this?—sum of two...** *Who* is a name of *Binah*, the Divine Mother, whose nature can be questioned and explored, though She remains a mystery. *This [Zot]* is a name of *Shekhinah*, who is more revealed..

¹⁸ **Ascends, literally...** Hebrew, עולה (*olah*), which is also the name for the offering on the altar that is totally consumed by fire, that “ascends” to God. ..Here Rabbi El’azar indicates that *Shekhinah* ascends to *Binah*, the holy of holies, and is united with Her..

¹⁹ **in the desert She inherited...** *Shekhinah* is also called *Keneset Yisra’el*, “Assembly of Israel,” since She is the divine counterpart of the people, that aspect of God most intimately connected with them. At Mount Sinai on *Shavu’ot*, when the Torah was given to Israel, *Keneset Yisra’el* was wedded to *Tiferet*, the blessed Holy One.