

*On the day that Moses finished setting up the Tabernacle, he anointed and consecrated it and all its furnishings... (Num. 7:1)*

The word **kalot**, finished, can also be read **kallat**, bride of. This suggests that on the day of the setting up of the Tabernacle, Israel was like a bride entering under the wedding canopy. --- Rashi, based on **Midrash Tanchuma** 26. Rashi may actually have had a different text of the Torah from ours, with the word **kalot** lacking a **vav**; thus, it could have been read precisely as **kallat**, "bride of.")

Israel's prophets imagined the people to be the bride bound to God in a sacred relationship. *I accounted to your favor the devotion of your youth, your love as a bride; how you followed Me in the wilderness, in a land unsown.* (Jer. 2:2) The rabbis built upon this imagery: "*On the day of his wedding...* (Song of Songs 3:11) This alludes to the revelation at Sinai which was, as it were, a wedding ceremony (between God and Israel), as is borne out by the text: *Betroth them today and tomorrow.*" (Exod. 19:10) --- **Midrash Numbers Rabbah** 12:8

*Moses commanded us the Torah, an inheritance* (Hebrew: **morasha**) *of the congregation of Jacob.* (Deut. 33:4) Read not **morasha**, as an inheritance, but **me'orasah**, as a betrothal. --- Talmud, **Berakhot** 57a

Just as a bride is adorned with twenty-four different kinds of ornaments, so a Torah scholar must be proficient in the twenty-four books (of the Bible). Just as a bride keeps herself modestly secluded, and only reveals her face when she is about to enter under the **chuppah**, so must a Torah scholar be as retiring as this bride, but be renowned for his good deeds, just as this bride makes herself known.

--- **Midrash Exodus Rabbah** 41:5

At Sinai, the Torah, the marriage contract between God and Israel, was presented. Some read it and hear its melody of love; others, however, see only law but remain deaf to its message of love...Those who have identified the Torah with law alone, those portray Judaism as a religion obsessed with law to the exclusion of love and emotion, fail to hear the music...but to those who hear the music, observance of...Torah is an expression...also of love for the Giver of the Torah. --- Rabbi Byron Sherwin, Toward a Jewish Theology

A king had a young daughter. As long as she was a small child, the king would converse with her wherever he might find her. But once she became an adolescent, the king decided that it was dishonorable to speak with her in public. Instead, he ordered the erection of a pavilion for the purpose of talking with his daughter. Similarly, when Israel was still in its infancy, it beheld God's presence in Egypt, at the Sea of Reeds and at Mount Sinai. But once it had received the Torah and reached the status of God's chosen nation, God deemed that to continue to address it in public was unbecoming. With maturity, intimacy was to be expressed circumspectly.

Hence God ordered the building of the Tabernacle in order to communicate with Moses from within, as (the final verse of our parashah affirms): *When Moses went into the Tent of Meeting to speak with Him, he would hear the Voice addressing him from above the cover that was on top the Ark of the Covenant between the two cherubim; thus He spoke to him.* (Num. 7:89) --- **Pesikta de Rav Kahana**, I, pp. 3-4