



*The Ten Sefirot*

## Shabbat, Israel, and Shekhinah

1) תני ר' שמעון בן יוחי, אמרה שבת לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא רבון העולמים לכל יש בן זוג, ולי אין בן זוג אתמהא. אמר לה הקדוש ברוך הוא כנסת ישראל היא בן זוגך. וכיון שעמדו ישראל לפני הר סיני אמר להם הקדוש ברוך הוא זכרו הדבר שאמרתי לשבת, כנסת ישראל היא בן זוגך, זכור את יום השבת לקדשו (שמות כ, ח).<sup>1</sup>

1) Rabbi Shim'on son of Yohai taught, "Shabbat said to the blessed Holy One, 'Master of the Universe! Everyone else has a partner, but I have no one! [Sunday has Monday, Tuesday has Wednesday, Thursday has Friday.]'

"The blessed Holy One replied, 'The Assembly of Israel is your partner.'

"And when Israel stood at the foot of Mount Sinai, the blessed Holy One said to them, 'Remember what I said to Shabbat: "The Assembly of Israel is your partner." Remember the Sabbath day לקדשו (le-qaddesho), to sanctify it—to marry it (Exodus 20:8).'"<sup>2</sup> [Rabbi Shim'on is playing on קדושין (qiddushin), "marriage."]

2) יותר משישראל שמרו את השבת – שמרה השבת אותם.<sup>3</sup>

2) More than Israel has kept Shabbat, Shabbat has kept Israel.<sup>4</sup>

3) רבי חנינא מיעטף וקאי אפניא דמעלי שבתא, אמר: בואו ונצא לקראת שבת המלכה. רבי ינאי לביש מאניה מעלי שבת, ואמר: בואי כלה בואי כלה.<sup>5</sup>

3) Rabbi Hanina would wrap himself [in a garment] and stand at sunset on Sabbath eve and exclaim, "Come, let us go out to greet Sabbath the Queen!"

Rabbi Yannai would put on his [special] clothes on Sabbath eve and exclaim, "Come, O bride! Come, O bride!"<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> בראשית רבה יא, ח.

<sup>2</sup> Bereshit Rabbah 11:8.

<sup>3</sup> אחד העם, שבת וציונות.

<sup>4</sup> Ahad ha-Am (Asher Ginzberg), "Sabbath and Zionism."

<sup>5</sup> תלמוד בבלי, שבת קיט ע"א.

<sup>6</sup> Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 119a.

4) לכה דודי לקראת כלה, פני שבת נקבלה.  
בואי בשלום עטרת בעלה, גם בשמחה ובצלה,  
תוך אמוני עם סגלה, בואי כלה, בואי כלה.<sup>7</sup>

4) Come, my friend, to greet the Bride! Let us welcome *Shabbat*.  
Come in peace, crown of Her Husband;  
in joy, too, and jubilation.  
In the midst of the faithful of the precious nation,  
come, O Bride; come, O Bride!<sup>8</sup>

5) ויברך אלהים [את יום השביעי].... ברכו באור פניו של אדם. לא דומה אור פניו של אדם כל  
ימות השבת כשבת.<sup>9</sup>

5) *God blessed [the seventh day]* (Genesis 2:3).... He blessed it with the light of  
a person's face. The light of a person's face all week long cannot be compared  
to how it is on *Shabbat*.<sup>10</sup>

6) פני שבת נקבלה.<sup>11</sup>

6) Let us welcome *Shabbat*. The face of *Shabbat* we will receive.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> לכה דודי.

<sup>8</sup> *Lekhah Dodi*.

<sup>9</sup> בראשית רבה יא, ב.

<sup>10</sup> *Bereshit Rabbah* 11:2.

<sup>11</sup> לכה דודי.

<sup>12</sup> *Lekhah Dodi*.

“Therefore the Holy People should constantly utter praise of their Lord, setting their aspiration to arrange for the upper world—who is master of the house, *husband of Elohim* (Deuteronomy 33:1)—*a bed, a table, a chair, and a lamp*, so that there is perfection every day, above and below.”<sup>134</sup>

“When Israel enacts the unification of the mystery of שמע ישראל (*Shema Yisra’el*), *Hear O Israel!* (Deuteronomy 6:4) with perfect intention, one radiance issues from secrecy of the upper world, and that radiance strikes a spark of darkness and scatters into seventy lights, and those seventy flash into seventy branches of the Tree of Life.”<sup>135</sup>

“Then that Tree wafts fragrances and aromas, and all the trees of the Garden of Eden waft fragrances and praise their Lord, for then *Matronita* is adorned to enter the canopy with Her Husband. All those supernal limbs unite in one desire, in one aspiration, to be one with no separation. Then Her Husband is arrayed for Her, to bring Her to the canopy in single union, to unite with *Matronita*.”<sup>136</sup>

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134. the Holy People should constantly utter praise... Thereby arranging all these aspects of *Shekhinah* for Her Husband, the upper world.

See above, note 123. “Master of the house” means Master of *Shekhinah*. See above, p. 35, n. 101.

Moses is called איש האלהים (*ish ha-elohim*), *man of God* (Deuteronomy 33:1; Psalms 90:1), which is understood midrashically as “husband of God” (able to command Him) and kabbalistically as “husband of *Shekhinah*” (united with Her). Here, Rabbi Shim’on applies this title to the upper world. See above, note 94. In 2 Kings 4:9 (interpreted here), Elisha is called איש אלהים (*ish elohim*), *a man of God*.

135. When Israel enacts the unification... When the people of Israel recite the *Shema* with full intention, declaring the oneness of God, they unify the *sefirot*. A ray of light issues from the highest realm and strikes a spark of darkness, scattering into seventy lights, which generate seventy branches of the central *sefirah*, *Tif’eret*, symbolized by the Tree of Life. The seventy branches correspond to the seven *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Shekhinah*, whose core is *Tif’eret*.

“A spark of darkness” renders בוצינא דקרדינותא (*botsina de-qardinuta*), “a lamp of impenetrable darkness.” The spark is so potentially brilliant that it overwhelms comprehension. This blinding light is the impulse of emanation flashing from *Ein Sof* and proceeding to delineate the various *sefirot*. See below, p. 560, n. 35.

The opening verse of the *Shema* in Deuteronomy reads: *Hear, O Israel! YHVH our God, YHVH is one*. On the significance of the *Shema*, see *Zohar* 1:12a, 18b; 2:43b (*Piq*), 160b–162a, 216b; 3:162a, 195b, 203b–204a, 236b, 262b–263a, 264a–b, 268a; *ZH* 48a, 56d–58d (*QhM*); Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:971–74. On the connection between the number seventy and the *Shema*, see *Zohar* 2:160b.

136. Then that Tree wafts fragrances... *Tif’eret*, symbolized by the Tree of Life, emits aromas, along with all the trees of the Garden of Eden (corresponding to the various powers of *Shekhinah*), as the Bride (*Shekhinah*) is adorned in preparation for marrying *Tif’eret*. The sefirotic male limbs (from *Hesed* through *Yesod*) converge in preparation for this union.

On *Matronita* as a title of *Shekhinah*, see the Glossary.



"Therefore we arouse Her, saying שמע ישראל (*Shema Yisra'el*), *Hear, O Israel!* (Deuteronomy 6:4)—Adorn Yourself! Behold, Your Husband is near You in His array, ready to meet You.<sup>137</sup>

"YHVH our God, YHVH is one (ibid.)—in one unification, in one aspiration, without separation; for all those limbs become one, entering into one desire. As soon as Israel says *one*, arousing six aspects, all those six become one. This mystery is ו (vav), one extension alone, with no other attachment, expanded by all, one.<sup>138</sup>

"At that moment, *Matronita* prepares and adorns Herself, and Her attendants escort Her to Her Husband in hushed whisper, saying 'Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom forever and ever!' This is whispered, for so must She be brought to Her Husband. Happy are the people who know this and compose the supernal arrangement of faith!<sup>139</sup>

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137. we arouse Her, saying שמע ישראל (*Shema Yisra'el*), *Hear, O Israel...* The opening words of the *Shema* are now understood to mean: *Listen, Shekhinah!* Prepare and adorn Yourself, for Your Husband, *Israel* (namely *Tiferet*, whose full name is *Tiferet Yisra'el*, "Beauty of Israel"), is ready to join You!

138. YHVH our God, YHVH is one... The rest of the first line of the *Shema* completes a verse of six words: שמע ישראל יהוה אלהינו (Shema Yisra'el YHVH Eloheinu YHVH ehad), *Hear O Israel! YHVH our God, YHVH is one.* By reciting the complete verse, Israel actualizes the unification of the six *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Yesod*, centered in *Tiferet*. This sixfold unity is symbolized by the letter ו (vav) in the name יהוה (YHVH), whose numerical value is six and whose shape is one extended line, seamless ("with no other attachment").

On the sixfold unification, see BT *Berakhot* 13b, where the recitation of the first line of *Shema* is described as enthroning God "above, below, and over the four directions of heaven."

139. At that moment, *Matronita* prepares... Now that *Tiferet* is unified with the *sefirot* surrounding Him, *Shekhinah* prepares to join Him under the canopy. Her

angelic retinue escorts Her, whispering the next line of the *Shema*, which is whispered simultaneously by Israel below.

On whispering this line, see BT *Pesahim* 56a: "Rabbi Shim'on son of Lakish said, '...[Upon his death bed] Jacob wished to reveal to his sons the end of days, but *Shekhinah* departed from him [depriving him of inspiration]. He said, "Perhaps, Heaven forbid, there is a blemish in my bed [i.e., someone unfit among my children], like Abraham, from whom issued Ishmael, or like my father Isaac, from whom issued Esau." His sons answered him, "*Hear, O Israel!* [i.e., Jacob]. *YHVH is our God, YHVH is one*—just as there is only *one* in your heart, so there is only *one* in our heart." At that moment our father Jacob opened and exclaimed, "Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom forever and ever!" Our rabbis said, "How should we act? Should we recite it [i.e., "Blessed be the name..."]? But Moses our teacher did not say it [i.e., this line does not appear in the passage from Deuteronomy]. Should we not recite it? But Jacob said it!" They ordained that it should be recited in a whisper."

See *Zohar* 1:234a–b; Vol. 3, p. 418 and nn. 573–75. Below, Rabbi Shim'on offers a different reason for whispering.

"The Fifteenth of Av stands joyously over the daughters of Israel. All other days adorn Her. Therefore it is written: *that you shall take from them* (Exodus 25:3).<sup>175</sup>

"Just as they unite above, so She unites below in the mystery of *one*, to be with them above, one corresponding to one. The blessed Holy One, one above, does not sit upon His Throne of Glory until She becomes, by mystery of *one*, like Him, to be one with one.<sup>176</sup>

"Mystery of Sabbath: She is Sabbath—united in mystery [135b] of *one*, so that mystery of *one* may settle upon Her.<sup>177</sup>

"Prayer for the entrance of Sabbath, for the Holy Throne is united in mystery of *one*, arrayed for the supernal Holy King to rest upon Her. When Sabbath enters She unites and separates from the Other Side, all judgments removed from Her. She remains unified in holy radiance, adorned with many crowns for the Holy King. All powers of wrath and masters of judgment all flee; no other power reigns in all the worlds. Her face shines with supernal radiance, and She is adorned below by the Holy People, all of whom are adorned with new souls.<sup>178</sup>

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by Oral Torah, which derives (or is "taken") from the Written Torah (symbolizing *Tif'eret*), which was dictated to Moses.

175. **The Fifteenth of Av...** This festival of love and marriage fittingly symbolizes *Shekhinah*, the blessed Holy One's beloved, and She presides over the daughters of Israel as they dance in the vineyards and find their mates. See above, note 168.

"All other days" may refer to the Ten Days of *Teshuvah*, or to all the other days of year. The plural wording *from them* refers to the various days, especially the holidays enumerated above, from all of which *Shekhinah* (*the offering*) is to be taken. See above, note 162.

176. **Just as they unite above...** The six holidays mentioned above (Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, *Sukkot*, *Pesah*, *Shavu'ot*, and the Fifteenth of Av) parallel the six *sefirot* from *Hesed* through *Yesod*. As these six *sefirot* join in preparation for union with *Shekhinah*, She too joins below with Her six angelic camps. When both the male divinity (the blessed Holy One) and *Shekhinah* (pictured as His throne) have each attained individual oneness, the couple unites.

On the meaning of the phrase "the mystery of *one*," see above, notes 143–44. On the

six holidays and the six *sefirot*, see above, notes 161–62.

In the second half of the eighteenth-century, kabbalists introduced this passage (extending below to "Then, beginning of prayer..." at note 179) into the Sephardic liturgy for Friday evening as a prelude to *Barekhu*. It is known by its opening word: כגוונא (*Ke-Gavna*), "Just as (they unite)." See Hallamish, *Hanhagot Qabbaliyyot be-Shabbat*, 246–51.

177. **Mystery of Sabbath: She is Sabbath...** The mystery is that Sabbath Eve represents *Shekhinah*, seventh of the primordial days (the seven lower *sefirot*). Unified with Her angelic camps, She is prepared to marry the blessed Holy One. This holy time is their wedding celebration.

On Sabbath as the divine wedding, see *Zohar* 3:94b–95a, 105a.

178. **Prayer for the entrance of Sabbath...** The following description serves as an introduction to the opening prayer of the Friday evening service, which is expounded below.

*Shekhinah* (the Throne) is arrayed for Her royal Husband. During the week, She is vulnerable to demonic forces and powers of



"Then, beginning of prayer, blessing Her with joy and beaming faces, saying, 'Bless אַתָּ (et) YHVH, who is blessed!'—et YHVH, precisely, to open by addressing Her with blessing.<sup>179</sup>

"The Holy People are forbidden to begin addressing Her with a verse of judgment, such as *Yet He is compassionate*... (Psalms 78:38), for She has already separated from mystery of the Other Side and all masters of judgment have withdrawn and disappeared from Her. Whoever arouses this below stimulates a similar arousal above, and the Holy Throne cannot be adorned with the crown of holiness. For whenever those masters of judgment are aroused below—those who had been removed and had all gone to hide away in the dusty chasm of the great abyss—they all return to occupy their places, and the holy place who seeks tranquility is oppressed by them.<sup>180</sup>

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harsh judgment, but now all of these flee. Israel, by welcoming Sabbath, joins in adorning Her, and they themselves are adorned with additional souls issuing from Her.

The image of an additional soul derives from BT *Beitsah* 16a, in the name of Rabbi Shim'on son of Lakish: "On Sabbath eve the blessed Holy One imparts an additional soul to a human being. When Sabbath departs it is taken from him."

See *Zohar* 1:48a; 2:88b, 136b, 204a–205b; 3:95a, 173a, 288b (IZ); Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Mishqal*, 111, 114; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 3:1230–33; Ginsburg, *The Sabbath in the Classical Kabbalah*, 121–36.

On Sabbath as queen and bride, see BT *Shabbat* 119a: "Rabbi Hanina would wrap himself in a garment, stand toward evening as Sabbath entered, and say, 'Come, let us go out to meet Queen Sabbath!' Rabbi Yannai would don his garments as Sabbath entered and say, 'Come, O Bride! Come, O Bride!'"

On the King sitting on His Throne on Sabbath eve, see *Zohar* 3:178a, 296a (IZ). On demonic forces disappearing then, see *Midrash Tehillim* 92:5; *Zohar* 1:14b, 48a; 2:88b; 3:288b (IZ).

179. Then, beginning of prayer... Then, the Sabbath evening prayer begins with *Barekhu* (Bless). Rabbi Shim'on interprets the wording "Bless אַתָּ (et) YHVH" as a

reference first to *Shekhinah* (known as et) and then to Her partner, *Tiferet* (YHVH).

Grammatically, the word אַתָּ (et) is usually an accusative particle with no clear independent sense. However, already in rabbinic times, Naḥum of Gimzo and his disciple Rabbi Akiva taught that the presence of et in a biblical verse amplifies the apparent meaning. Here, as often in the *Zohar*, אַתָּ (et) alludes to *Shekhinah*, who comprises the totality of divine speech, the entire alphabet from א (alef) to ת (tav). See BT *Pesahim* 22b, *Ḥagigah* 12a–b; *Zohar* 1:15b, 247a; 2:81b, 90a; 3:190b (on this prayer).

On the image of "beaming faces," see *Bereshit Rabbah* 11:2, on the verse *God blessed the seventh day* (Genesis 2:3): "He blessed it with the light in a person's face. On Sabbath the light in a person's face is different than on all other days of the week." See *Mekhilta*, *Bahodesh* 7; *Tanhuma* (Buber), *Bereshit* 25.

180. The Holy People are forbidden... In the weekday evening service the *Barekhu* is preceded by a verse from Psalms: *Yet He is compassionate, He purges iniquity and does not destroy, and often restrains His wrath and does not arouse all His rage*. However, on Sabbath eve, when harsh judgment is eliminated, this verse is inappropriate and must not be recited. Anyone who does so arouses judgment below, thereby arousing demonic

קמו

ספר

ויקהל

הזהר

לשון הקדש

כל העם, ואזני כל העם אל ספר התורה.

אמר רבי שמעון, כאשר מוציאים ספר תורה בצבור לקרוא בו, נפתחים שערי שמים של רחמים ומעוררים את האהבה למעלה, וצריך לו לבן אדם לומר כך.

ברוך שמו של אדון עולם, ברוך כתרך ומקומך, יהיה רצונך עם עמך ישראל לעולם, וישע ימינך הראה לעמך בבית מקדשך, ולהושיט לנו משוב אורך, ולקבל תפלתנו ברחמים. יהיה רצון לפניך שתאריך לנו חיים בטובה, ולהיות אני (עבדך) נמנה בין הצדיקים, לרחם עלי ולשמור אותי ואת כל אשר לי ואשר לעמך ישראל. אתה הוא זון לכל ומפרנס לכל, אתה הוא שליט על הכל, אתה הוא השולט על המלכים, והמלכות שלך היא. אני עבד של הקדוש ברוך הוא, שמשתחוה אני לפניו ומלפני כבוד תורתו בכל עת ועת. לא על אדם אני בוטח ולא על בן אלהים (פירוש: מלאך) (נ"א ולא על מלאך השמים) אני סומך, אלא באלוהי השמים, שהוא אלוהים אמת ותורתו אמת, ונביאיו אמת, ומרבה לעשות טובות ואמת. בו אני בוטח, ולשמו הנכבד הקדוש אני אומר תשבחות. יהיה רצון לפניך שתפתח לבי (בתורתך) בתורה, ותתן לי בנים זכרים שעושים רצונך, ותשלם משאלות לבי ולב כל עמך ישראל לטוב ולחיים ולשלום (אמן).

ואסור לקרוא בספר התורה רק

לשון הזהר

דכתיב (נחמיה ח') ובפתחו עמרו כל העם, (ספ) ואזני כל העם אל ספר התורה.

אמר רבי שמעון, כד מפקין ספר תורה בצבורא למקרי בה, מתפתחון תרעי שמיא דרחמי ומעוררין את האהבה לעלא, ואבעי לה לבר נש למימר הכי.

ברוך שמה דמארא עלמא, בריך כתרך ואתרך, יהא רעותך עם עמך ישראל לעולם, ופורקן ימינך אחזי לעמך בבית מקדשך, ולא מטויי לנא מטוב נהורך ולקבלא צלותנא ברחמין. יהא רעוא קדמך דתוריד לן חיון בטיבוי, ולהוי אנא (עבדך) פקידא בגו צדיקנא, למרחם עלי ולמנטר יתי וית כל די לי ודי לעמך ישראל. אנת הוא זון לכלא ומפרנס לכלא, אנת הוא שליט על כלא, אנת הוא דשליט על מלכיא ומלכותא דילך היא. אנא עבדא דקדשא בריך הוא, דסגידנא קמה ומקמי דיקר אוריתא בכל עדן ועדן. לא על אנש רחיצנא ולא על בר אלהין (נ"א ולא על מלאכא דשמיא) סמיכנא, אלא באלהא דשמיא, דהוא אלהא קשוט ואוריתא קשוט ונביאיה קשוט, ומסגא למעבד טבון וקשוט. בה אנא רחיץ ולשמה וקירא קדישא אנא אמר תושבחן. יהא רעוא קדמך דתפתח לבאי (באוריתך) באוריתא. ותיחב לי בנין דכרין דעבדין רעותך. ותשלם משאלין דלבאי ולבא דכל עמך ישראל לטב ולחיון ולשלום (אמן). ואסיר למקרי בספרא דאוריתא בר חד



"With the Torah scroll, one voice and utterance should be heard."<sup>196</sup>

"The arrangement to be prepared by the Holy People on this day and all other days for the Torah scroll: they must arrange a throne called 'a reader's desk,' and that throne should have six steps to ascend and no more, as is written: *There were six steps to the throne* (2 Chronicles 9:18)—and one step above, on which to place the Torah scroll, displaying it for all."<sup>197</sup>

"When the Torah scroll is lifted onto there, the whole people should arrange themselves in awe and fear, trembling and quaking, all below, intending in their hearts as if they were now standing at Mount Sinai to receive the Torah. They should listen and incline their ears. None of the people, nor anyone else, is permitted to open his mouth with a word of Torah, and certainly not with any other word. Rather, all of them in awe, as if they had no mouth, as has been established, for it is written: *As he opened it, all the people stood up* (Nehemiah 8:5); *and the ears of all the people were attentive to the Torah scroll* (ibid., 3)."<sup>198</sup>

[Rabbi Shim'on said, "When the Torah scroll is taken out to be read in public, heavenly gates of compassion are opened and love is aroused above."<sup>199</sup> One should then say the following:

Blessed is the name of the Master of the universe, blessed is Your crown and Your place. May Your will accompany Your people Israel forever. Show the redemption of Your right hand to Your people in Your Temple, bring us some of the goodness of Your light, and receive our prayer compassionately. May it be Your will to prolong our life in goodness, and may I be counted among the

Torah (apparently corresponding to *Netsah*, *Hod*, and *Yesod*), on the new moon a fourth is added, corresponding to *Shekhinah* (symbolized by the moon), who is illumined by *Tiferet* (symbolized by the sun). This additional person and additional illumination are signified by *musaf*, the "additional" offering and prayer for the new moon.

196. **With the Torah scroll...** When the Torah is chanted in the synagogue, only one person (either the person called up to the Torah or the congregational Torah reader) should chant it aloud, while the person standing next to him (the other of the two people) should remain silent. The single "voice and utterance" of the Torah reader ensures that the sefirotic couple, *Tiferet* and *Shekhinah* (known respectively as Voice and Utterance), will unite. See above, note 124.

197. **The arrangement to be prepared...**

The Torah should be chanted from a special reader's desk on a raised platform or pulpit. The six steps leading to the pulpit correspond to those leading to the throne built by King Solomon. The phrase "one step above" refers to the reader's desk itself. See *Zohar* 3:164b.

198. **When the Torah scroll is lifted...** The people should listen in awe as the Torah is chanted.

The context in Nehemiah describes Ezra's public reading of the Torah. Verse 5 reads in full: *Ezra opened the scroll in the eyes of all the people, for he was above all the people; as he opened it, all the people stood up*. See BT *Sotah* 39a, where *all the people stood* is interpreted to mean that they were silent.

199. **love is aroused above** The love between the divine couple is stimulated by Israel's worship.

righteous, so that You may have mercy upon me and protect me and all that is mine and that of Your people Israel.

You are the one who nourishes all and sustains all; You are ruler of all, You rule over kings, and kingdom is Yours. I am a servant of the blessed Holy One, before whom I bow. Not in a human do I put my trust, nor in a son of God, but only in the God of heaven, who is God of truth and acts abundantly in goodness and truth. In Him do I trust, and to His holy and glorious name I utter praises. May it be Your will to fulfill the desires of my heart—and the heart of all Your people Israel—for good, for life, and for peace.”<sup>200</sup>

“Only one person is allowed to chant the Torah, and all should be silent and hear from his mouth, as if they were receiving it at that moment from Mount Sinai. Another should stand next to the one reading and be silent, so that only one utterance exists, not two. The holy tongue is one—one and not two; if there are two with the Torah scroll, the mystery of faith is diminished, along with the glory of Torah.”<sup>201</sup>

200. One should then say the following... This prayer—the only one innovated in the *Zohar*—was incorporated into the Torah service for Sabbath morning under the influence of Isaac Luria, though opinions differ as to whether Luria intended it to be recited only on Sabbath or also on weekdays, or perhaps only on weekdays.

The prayer is known by its opening words *Berikh shemeih* (Blessed is His name). Due to its prominent place in the liturgy, it has become the *Zohar*'s most famous passage. Remarkably, the prayer (together with the preceding paragraph: “Rabbi Shim'on said...”) is a later addition to the *Zohar*, as indicated already by Cordovero (*Or Yaqar*) and as evidenced by the fact that it appears in none of the following manuscripts: C9, M5, M9, Ms24, N10, N41, O17, P2, R1, T1, V5, V7, V18, nor in the text accompanying *Or Yaqar*. In O2 a bit of it is inserted by a later copyist, while in the Cremona edition it appears in a smaller, different font. The passage appears in full in the Mantua edition and in nearly all subsequent editions (those that are based on Mantua). In a fifteenth-century kabbalistic manuscript containing various compositions (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, heb. MS 835, 114b), this prayer is attributed to Nah-

manides. Nevertheless, because of the prayer's historical, cultural, and religious significance—and because it is so widely known—I have included it here, placing the entire passage in brackets.

“A son of God” renders literally בר אלהין (*bar elahin*), which can convey the idiomatic meaning “angel.” See Daniel 3:25, 28. Here, though, this wording probably represents a polemic against Christian belief. The Paris manuscript (referred to in the preceding paragraph) reads instead בר נש (*bar nash*), “a human being.”

The clause “and acts abundantly in goodness and truth” derives from *Targum Onqelos*, Exodus 34:6, where it renders the biblical ורב חסד ואמת (*ve-rav hesed ve-emet*), and *abounding in kindness and truth* [or: *faithfulness*].

On this prayer, see Frankel, “Tefillat u-Vaqqashat ‘Berikh Shemeih’”; Hallamish, *Ha-Qabbalah*, 122, 289.

201. Only one person... Rabbi Yitshaq is the speaker (as before the bracketed passage). He explains that only the congregational Torah reader (or the person called up to the Torah) should chant from the scroll, while the other of the two people should stand silently next to him. The unique status



"Now, you might say, 'This is deception!' Not so! Rather, the supernal angels are holier than us, absorbing greater holiness, and if we did not obtain and draw upon ourselves these sanctifications, we could not be companions with them and the glory of the blessed Holy One would not be consummated above and below simultaneously. We therefore strive to be their companions, so that the glory of the blessed Holy One will be exalted above and below simultaneously.<sup>57</sup>

"The *Qedushah* at the end is in Aramaic translation, as we have established, and this can be recited even by an individual—those words in translation—but words of the holy language in *Qedushah* may be recited only in the presence of ten, because *Shekhinah* unites with the holy language, and every *Qedushah* accompanied by *Shekhinah* may be uttered only in the presence of ten, as is written: *I will be sanctified in the midst of the Children of Israel* (Leviticus 22:32)—the *Children of Israel* actually embody the holy language, not other nations who possess another language.<sup>58</sup>

"Now, you might say, 'What about the sanctification of the *Qaddish*, which is in Aramaic translation—why isn't that recited individually? Come and see: This

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See BT *Hullin* 91b: "The ministering angels do not utter song above until Israel sings below." See *Zohar* 1:40a (*Heikh*), 90a (ST), 231a; 2:164b; 3:66a, 190b; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 91.

57. **This is deception** . . . How can Israel bribe the angels in the early part of the service by praising them in order to be admitted through the upper gates? Rabbi Shim'on explains that this apparent deception is justified because Israel is not as holy as the angels and needs their assistance in order to gain admission to the higher realms, become their companions, and draw holiness down to earth. Thereby, God is glorified.

On the simultaneous sanctification of God by both Israel and the angels, see the end of the preceding note.

58. **The *Qedushah* at the end is in Aramaic** . . . The *Qedushah de-Sidra*, recited near the end of the service, includes an Aramaic paraphrase of *Holy, holy, holy is YHVH of Hosts* . . . and related verses. (See above, note 54.) According to Rabbi Shim'on, the Aramaic rendering may be recited by an individual, whereas the original Hebrew may be recited only in a quorum of ten.

On the question of who may recite the Hebrew and Aramaic lines of *Qedushah de-Sidra*, see *Zohar* 2:132b–133a; Angelet, *Livnat ha-Sappir*, 32c; Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy*, 404, n. 23; Ta-Shma, *Ha-Nigleh she-ba-Nistar*, 58; Scholem. Cf. *Sha'arei Teshuvah* (*Teshuvot ha-Ge'onim*), 55. On the question of who may recite the *Qedushah* of *Yotser* (above, note 56), see also *Massekhet Soferim* 16:9; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 72–73 (and Wolfson's discussion there, n. 12); idem, *Maskiyot Kesef*, 24–25; Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy*, 59, 402, n. 20.

On the requirement for a minyan in order to recite *Qedushah*, see BT *Berakhot* 21b (quoting the verse in Leviticus). The phrase "Aramaic translation" renders תרגום (*targum*), "translation," which in rabbinic literature often refers to an Aramaic translation of the Bible. Some have argued that the fact that the *Zohar* refers to Aramaic simply as *targum* indicates that the author lived when this language was no longer widely spoken and was known as a language of biblical translation. See *Zohar* 1:9a–b, 88b–89a (ST); 2:132b–133a; Tishby, *Wisdom of the Zohar*, 1:75. Cf., however, M *Yadayim* 4:5; BT *Shabbat* 115a–b.



*Qedushah* is not like other *Qedushot*, which we triple. Rather, this *Qedushah* ascends on all sides above and below, in all aspects of Faith, smashing locks and seals of iron and evil shells, so that the glory of the blessed Holy One will be exalted above all. We must recite it in the language of the Other Side, and respond with mighty power: 'Amen! May His great Name be blessed,' so that the power of the Other Side will be broken and the glory of the blessed Holy One be exalted above all. And when, by this *Qedushah*, the power of the Other Side is broken, the blessed Holy One ascends in glory and remembers His children and remembers His Name. Since the blessed Holy One is exalted in His glory by this *Qedushah*, it must be uttered only in the presence of ten.<sup>59</sup>

"By this language, the Other Side is subdued against his will, his power broken and the glory of the blessed Holy One exalted. It smashes locks, seals, mighty chains, and evil shells, and the blessed Holy One remembers His Name and His children. Happy are the Holy People, to whom the blessed Holy One gave the holy Torah, by which to attain the world that is coming!"

Rabbi Shim'on said to the Companions, "You are worthy of the world that is coming! Since we have begun words of the crown of supernal Kingdom, I myself will speak on your behalf, and the blessed Holy One will grant you a reward in

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59. What about the sanctification of the *Qaddish*... Since that prayer is completely in Aramaic, why does it require a quorum of ten? Because, Rabbi Shim'on explains, the *Qaddish* is more potent than other *Qedushot* (sanctifications), which include the triple formulation *Holy, holy, holy* and stimulate only three of the ten *sefirot* (*Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*). The sanctifying power of *Qaddish* arouses all the divine forces and smashes the powers of evil. It is recited in the "foreign, alien" language of Aramaic (rather than in the holy tongue of Hebrew) because this corresponds to the alien Other Side. Furthermore, the congregational response "Amen! May His great Name be blessed" must be uttered powerfully in order to help break the demonic power and exalt the glory of God. Even though it is recited in Aramaic and not in the holy tongue, the *Qaddish* requires a quorum of ten, corresponding to all ten *sefirot*.

On the correspondence between the three-fold formula *Holy, holy, holy* and the triad of

*Hesed*, *Gevurah*, and *Tif'eret*, see Jacob ben Sheshet, *Meshiv Devarim Nekho'im*, 151 (in the name of Isaac the Blind); *Zohar* 2:52a.

On the power of the response "Amen! May His great Name be blessed," see BT *Shabbat* 119b, in the name of Rabbi Yehoshu'a son of Levi: "Whoever responds with all his might: 'Amen! May His great Name be blessed'—his [heavenly] decreed sentence is torn up."

See *Zohar* 1:38b (*Heikh*), 62b; 2:165b–166a; 3:220a; Moses de León, *Sefer ha-Rimmon*, 69–71. On God remembering His children as a result of this response, see BT *Berakhot* 3a (per Munich MS 95), in the name of Rabbi Yose (quoting a teaching that he heard from the prophet Elijah): "When Israel enters the synagogues and houses of study and responds 'May His great name be blessed,' the blessed Holy One shakes His head and says, 'Happy is the king who is praised thus in his house! Woe to the father who has exiled his children, and woe to the children who have been banished from their father's table!'"

Elijah opened, saying, “Master of the worlds! You are one—but not in counting. You are higher than the high, concealed from the concealed. No thought grasps You at all. It is You who generated ten adornments—called by us the ten *sefirot*—by which concealed, unrevealed worlds, as well as revealed worlds, are conducted. By them You are concealed from human beings, while You are the one who binds and unites them. Since You are within, whoever separates one of these ten from another—it is as if he divided You.

“These ten *sefirot* proceed in order: one long, one short, one intermediate. It is You who conducts them, and no one conducts You—neither above nor below nor in any direction. You have prepared garments for them, from which souls fly to human beings. You have prepared various bodies for them—called bodies in contrast to the garments covering them. These bodies are named according to this arrangement: *Hesed*, right arm; *Gevurah*, left arm; *Tif'eret*, trunk of the body; *Netsah* and *Hod*, two legs; *Yesod*, consummation of the body, sign of the holy covenant; *Malkhut*, mouth—we call Her Oral Torah. *Hokhmah* is the brain, inner thought. *Binah* is the heart-mind, through which the [human] heart-mind understands.... The highest crown, *Keter Elyon*, is the royal crown, the skull..., inside of which is יהוה (*yod, he, vav, he*), path of emanation, sap of the tree, spreading through its arms and branches—like water drenching a tree, which thereby flourishes.

“Master of the worlds! You are the cause of causes, who drenches the tree with that flow—a flow that is like a soul for the body, life for the body. In You there is neither likeness nor image of anything within or without. You created heaven and earth, bringing forth sun, moon, stars and constellations. And on earth: trees, grass, the Garden of Eden, animals, birds, fish, and human beings. So that the beyond might be known—how above and below are conducted and how they become known.

“About You, no one knows anything. Apart from You, there is no union above and below. You are known as Lord of all. Every one of the *sefirot* has a name that is known, by which the angels are called, but You have no known name, for You pervade all names; You are the fullness of them all. When You disappear from them, all those names are left like a body without a soul.

“You are wise—not with a known wisdom. You understand—not with known understanding. You have no known place—just making known Your power and strength to human beings, showing them how the world is conducted by judgment and compassion..., according to human action.... But actually, You have no known judgment or compassion, nor any of these qualities at all.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Tiqqunei ha-Zohar*, Introduction, 17a–b. For a commentary on this passage, see Daniel C. Matt, *The Essential Kabbalah*, 171–73.



## Meditative Verses

(1) לך דמיה תהלה.

1) Lekha dumiyah tehillah.

*To You silence is praise.*  
(Psalms 65:2)

(2) כל הנשמה תהלל יה.

2) Kol ha-neshamah tehallal Yah.

*Let all that has breath praise Yah.*  
*Let every breath praise Yah.*  
(Psalms 150:6)

נשמה (Neshamah), Breath, soul, soul-breath, life-breath

(3) נר יקוק נשמת אדם חפש כל חדריו בטון.

3) Ner Adonai nishmat adam,  
hofeis kol hadrei vaten.

*The breath of a human is the lamp of YHVH,*  
*searching all the belly's chambers.*  
(Proverbs 20:27)

(4) שויתי יקוק לפני תמיד.

4) Shivviti Adonai le-negdi tamid.

*I set YHVH before me always.*  
(Psalms 16:8)

5) הרפו וידעו כי-אֲנֹכִי אֱלֹהִים.

5) Harpu u-de'u ki anokhi Elohim.

*Let go, and know that I am God.*

(Psalms 46:11)