

**Shekinah:** "Shekhina (Shekina, Shechina, Shakti, Sh'kina, and Shekinah) though known by many names, is referred to as the Goddess of the Angels. She is the liberating Angel, manifesting her male aspect as that of Metatron. Representing compassion in its purest form, despite being, officially the female side of God. Shekhina is visible and audible as a feminine entity in her own right. Described as a beautiful being of light whose most important function is to intercede with God on behalf of her children."

<http://kimbasangels.com/namemenu4.html>

Divine spirit שְׂכִינָה

<http://www.morfix.co.il/en/%D7%A9%D7%9B%D7%99%D7%A0%D7%94>

Translations of שְׂכִינָה

*noun*

■ divine presence

■ omnipresence

■ godhead

■ holy inspiration

<https://translate.google.com/#auto/en/%D7%A9%D7%9B%D7%99%D7%A0%D7%94>

# Shekhinah

**Shekinah**, **Shechinah**, **Shechina**, or **Schechinah** (Hebrew: שכינה), is the English spelling of a grammatically feminine Hebrew name of God in Judaism. Wikipedia:Citation needed The original word means the *dwelling* or *settling*, and denotes the dwelling or settling of the Divine Presence of God, especially in the Temple in Jerusalem.

## Etymology

*Shekinah* is derived from the Hebrew verb שכן. In Biblical Hebrew that Semitic root means literally *to settle*, *inhabit*, or  *dwell*, and is used frequently in the Hebrew Bible. In

Mishnaic Hebrew the noun is often used to refer to birds' nesting and nests. ("Every bird nests [*shekinot*] with its kind, and man with its like, Talmud Baba Kammah 92b <sup>[1]</sup>.) and can also mean "neighbor" ("If a neighbor and a scholar, the scholar is preferred" Talmud Ketubot 85b <sup>[2]</sup>).

The word for Tabernacle, *mishkan*, is a derivative of the same root and is used in the sense of dwelling-place in the Bible, e.g. Psalm 132:5 ("Before I find a place for God, *mishkanot* (dwelling-places) for the Strong One of Israel.") and Numbers 24:5 ("Your dwelling places, Israel," where the word for "your dwelling places", transliterated, is mishkenotecha). Accordingly, in classic Jewish thought, the Shekinah refers to a dwelling or settling in a special sense, a dwelling or settling of Divine Presence, to the effect that, while in proximity to the Shekinah, the connection to God is more readily perceivable.

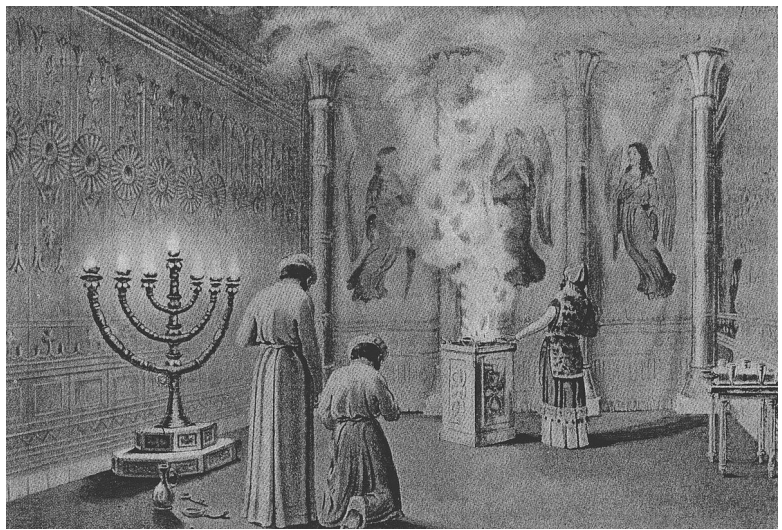
Some Christian theologians have connected the concept of Shekinah to the Greek term "Parousia", "presence" or "arrival," which is used in the New Testament in a similar way for "Divine Presence".<sup>[3]</sup>

## Meaning in Judaism

The Shekinah is held by some to represent the feminine attributes of the presence of God (*Shekinah* being a feminine word in Hebrew), based especially on readings of the Talmud.<sup>[4]</sup>

## Manifestation

The Shekinah is referred to as manifest in the Tabernacle and the Temple in Jerusalem throughout Rabbinic literature. It is also reported as being present in the acts of public prayer, ("Whenever ten are gathered for prayer, there the Shekinah rests" Talmud Sanhedrin 39a); righteous judgment ("when three sit as judges, the Shekinah is with them." Talmud Berachot 6a), and personal need ("The Shekinah dwells over the headside of the sick man's bed" Talmud tractate Shabbat 12b; "Wheresoever they were exiled, the Shekinah went with them." Megillah 29a).



Christian artistic depiction: "The Shekinah Glory Enters the Tabernacle"; illustration from *The Bible and Its Story Taught by One Thousand Picture Lessons*; Charles F. Horne and Julius A. Bewer (Ed.), 1908

### Absence of the Temple

The Talmud expounds a Beraita (oral tradition) which illuminates the manner in which the Kohen Gadol (High Priest) is to sprinkle the blood of the bull-offering towards the Parochet (Curtain) separating the Hekhal (sanctuary) from the Kodesh Hakodashim (Holy of Holies):

[And so shall he do in the midst of the Tent of Meeting] that dwells (*shokhen*) among them in the midst of their impurities (Leviticus 16:16). Even at a time when the Jews are impure, the Shekinah (Divine Presence) is with them.

A certain Sadducee said to Rabbi Chanina: Now [that you have been exiled], you are certainly impure, as it is written: "Her impurity is [visible] on her hems." (Lamentations 1:9). He [Rabbi Chanina] said to him: Come see what is written regarding them: [The Tent of Meeting] that dwells among them in the midst of their impurities. Even in a time that they are impure, the Divine Presence is among them.

—Talmud Tractate *Yoma* 56b

## Jewish sources

### Hebrew Bible

The noun *shekina* does not occur in the Hebrew Bible, although the verb *shakan*, and other terms from the root *škn* do occur. There is also no occurrence of the noun in pre-rabbinic literature such as the Dead Sea Scrolls. It is only afterwards in the targums and rabbinical literature that the Hebrew term *shekinah*, or Aramaic equivalent *shekinta*, is found, and then becomes extremely common.<sup>[5]</sup> McNamara (2010) considers that the absence might lead to the conclusion that the term only originated after the destruction of the temple in 70AD, but notes 2 Maccabees 14:35 "a temple for your habitation", where the Greek text (*naon tes skenoseos*) suggests a possible parallel understanding, and where the Greek noun *skenos* may stand for Aramaic *shekinta*.<sup>[6]</sup>

### Targums

In the Targums the addition of the noun term *Shekinah* paraphrases Hebrew verb phrases such as Exodus 34:9 "let the Lord go among us" (a verbal expression of presence) which Targum paraphrases with God's "shekinah" (a noun form).<sup>[7]</sup> In the post-temple era usage of use of the term *Shekinah* may provide a solution to the problem of God being omnipresent and thus not dwelling in any one place.<sup>[8]</sup>

## Talmud

The Talmud also says that the Shekhinah rests on man neither through gloom, nor through sloth, nor through frivolity, nor through levity, nor through talk, nor through idle chatter, but only through a matter of joy in connection with a precept, as it is said, But now bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him. [2Kings 3:15] [Shabbat 30b]

The Shekinah is associated with the transformational spirit of God regarded as the source of prophecy:

After that thou shalt come to the hill of God, where is the garrison of the Philistines; and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a band of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery, and a timbrel, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they will be prophesying.

And the spirit of the LORD will come mightily upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man.

—1 Samuel 10:5–6<sup>[9]</sup>

The prophets made numerous references to visions of the presence of God, particularly in the context of the Tabernacle or Temple, with figures such as thrones or robes filling the Sanctuary, which have traditionally been

attributed to the presence of the Shekinah. Isaiah wrote "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, and his train filled the Temple." (Isaiah 6:1). Jeremiah implored "Do not dishonor the throne of your glory" (Jeremiah 14:21 <sup>[10]</sup>) and referred to "Thy throne of glory, on high from the beginning, Thy place of our sanctuary" (Jeremiah 17:12 <sup>[11]</sup>). The Book of Ezekiel speaks of "the glory of the God of Israel was there [in the Sanctuary], according to the vision that I saw in the plain." (Ezekiel 8:4)

## Meaning in Hassidic Judaism

Hassidic Judaism regards the Kabbalah, in which the Shekinah has special significance, as having scriptural authority. Wikipedia:Citation needed The word *Matronit* is also employed to represent this usage. Wikipedia:Citation needed

## Sabbath Bride

This recurrent theme is best known from the writings and songs of the legendary mystic of the 16th century, Rabbi Isaac Luria. Here is a quotation from the beginning of his famous shabbat hymn:

"I sing in hymns  
to enter the gates  
of the Field  
of holy apples.  
"A new table  
we prepare for Her,  
a lovely candelabrum  
sheds its light upon us.  
"Between right and left  
the Bride approaches,  
in holy jewels  
and festive garments..."

A paragraph in the Zohar starts: "One must prepare a comfortable seat with several cushions and embroidered covers, from all that is found in the house, like one who prepares a canopy for a bride. For the Shabbat is a queen and a bride. This is why the masters of the Mishna used to go out on the eve of Shabbat to receive her on the road, and used to say: '*Come, O bride, come, O bride!*' And one must sing and rejoice at the table in her honor ... one must receive the Lady with many lighted candles, many enjoyments, beautiful clothes, and a house embellished with many fine appointments ..."

The tradition of the Shekinah as the Shabbat Bride, the *Shabbat Kallah*, continues to this day.

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## Jewish prayers

The 17th blessing of the daily Amidah prayer said in Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform services is "Blessed are You, God, who returns His Presence (*shekinato*) to Zion."

The Liberal Jewish prayer-book for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur (*Machzor Ruach Chadashah*) contains a creative prayer based on Avinu Malkeinu, in which the feminine noun *Shekinah* is used in the interests of gender neutrality.

## Yiddish song

The concept of Shekinah is also associated with Holy Spirit in Jewish tradition, such as in Yiddish song: *Vel ich, sh'chine tsu dir kummen* "Will I, Shekinah, to you come".<sup>[12]</sup>

## Christianity

In addition to the various accounts indicating the presence or glory of God recorded in the Hebrew Bible, many Christians also consider the Shekinah to be manifest in numerous instances in the New Testament.

The public domain *Easton's Bible Dictionary*, published in 1897, says,

Shekinah – a Chaldee word meaning resting-place, not found in Scripture, but used by the later Jews to designate the visible symbol of God's presence in the Tabernacle, and afterwards in Solomon's temple. When the Lord led Israel out of Egypt, he went before them "in a pillar of a cloud." This was the symbol of his presence with his people. God also spoke to Moses through the 'Shekinah' out of a burning bush. For references made to it during the wilderness wanderings, see Exodus 14:20; 40:34-38; Leviticus 9:23, 24; Numbers 14:10; 16:19, 42.

It is probable that after the entrance into Canaan this glory-cloud settled in the tabernacle upon the ark of the covenant in the most holy place. We have, however, no special reference to it till the consecration of the temple by Solomon, when it filled the whole house with its glory, so that the priests could not stand to minister (1 Kings 8:10–13; 2 Chr. 5:13, 14; 7:1–3). Probably it remained in the first temple in the holy of holies as the symbol of Jehovah's presence so long as that temple stood. It afterwards disappeared.

—[13]

References to the Shekinah in Christianity often see the presence and the glory of the Lord as being synonymous,<sup>[14]</sup> as illustrated in the following verse from Exodus;

And Moses went up into the mount, and the cloud covered the mount. And the glory of Jehovah abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud. And the appearance of the glory of Jehovah was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel.

—Exodus 24:15–17 ASV

## Lord

### Spirit

The Shekinah in the New Testament is commonly equated to the presence or indwelling of the Spirit of the Lord (generally referred to as the Holy Spirit, or Spirit of Christ) in the believer, drawing parallels to the presence of God in Solomon's Temple. In contradistinction with the Old Testament where the Holy of Holies signified the presence of God, from the New Testament onwards, it is the Holy Spirit that reminds us of God's abiding presence. Furthermore, in the same manner that the Shekhinah is linked to prophecy in Judaism, so it is in Christianity:

For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit.

—2 Peter 1:21 ASV

### Glory

Where references are made to the Shekinah as manifestations of the glory of the Lord associated with his presence, Christians find numerous occurrences in the New Testament in both literal (as in Luke 2:9 which refers to the "glory of the Lord" shining on the shepherds at Jesus' birth)<sup>[15]</sup> as well as spiritual forms (as in John 17:22, where Jesus speaks to God of giving the "glory" that God gave to him to the people).<sup>[16]</sup> A contrast can be found in the Book of Samuel where it is said that Ichabod, meaning "inglorious," was given his name because he was born on the day the Ark of the Covenant was captured by the Philistines: "The glory is departed from Israel" (1 Samuel 4:22 KJV).

### Divine Presence

By day the LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night.

—Exodus 13:21

### Islam

Arabic: سكينة *sakīnah* is mentioned six times in the Quran, in chapters 2, 9 and 48.<sup>[17]</sup>

Their prophet said to them: "The sign of his kingship is that the Ark will come to you in which there is *tranquility* from your Lord and a relic from the family of Moses and the family of Aaron, borne by the angels.

Al-Qurtubi mentions in his famous exegesis, in explanation of the above-mentioned verse, that according to Wahb ibn Munabbih, Sakinah is a spirit from God that speaks, and, in the case of the Israelites, where people disagreed on some issue, this spirit came to clarify the situation, and used to be a cause of victory for them in wars. According to Ali, "Sakinah is a sweet breeze/wind, whose face is like the face of a human". Mujahid mentions that "when Sakinah glanced at an enemy, they were defeated", and ibn Atiyyah mentions about the Ark of the Covenant (at-Tabut), to which the Sakina was associated, that souls found therein peace, warmth, companionship and strength.

Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj Nishapuri says in his Sahih al-Bukhari, that a certain man (during the time of Muhammad), was reciting the sura al-Kahf from the Quran by his tethered horse, and as he was reciting, a cloud engulfed him, which was encircling and descending, whose sight caused his horse to jump and move, and so when morning came he went to Muhammad and informed him of what occurred, to which Muhammad replied that it was the Sakinah that descended for the Quran.

According to Sunni traditions, when Muhammad was persecuted in Mecca and the time came for him to emigrate to Madinah (Medina), he took temporary refuge with his companion Abu Bakr in the cave of Thawr. Seeking to be hidden from the Makkans who were looking for him, it was at Thawr where God brought down His *sakina* over them, protecting them from their enemies. According to Sufism, it was at Thawr that Abu Bakr was blessed with divine secrets whose transmission from him to the latter generations formed the Naqshbandi path of Sufism. It was this experience that led the second Caliph Umar to say that all the good Umar did cannot stand as an equivalent to Abu Bakr's sole virtue of companionship with Muhammad at the Thawr cave.

Muhammed's grandson Hussein ibn Ali named one of his daughters Sakina. She tragically perished in a Syrian prison during the imprisonment of Hussein's family members, mostly women and children, who survived the Battle of Karbala. She was the first person in the history of Islam to have been given the name Sakinah. It is currently a popular female name in most Islamic cultures.

## Contemporary scholarship

### Raphael Patai

Main articles: Raphael Patai and The Hebrew Goddess

In the work by anthropologist Raphael Patai entitled *The Hebrew Goddess*, the author argues that the term Shekhinah refers to a goddess by comparing and contrasting scriptural and medieval Jewish Kabbalistic source materials. Patai draws a historic distinction between the Shekhinah and the Matronit.

In the bestselling thriller *The Torah Codes* <sup>[18]</sup> by Ezra Barany, the storyline refers to the Shekhinah as a goddess and one of the characters is even named Patai. In the appendix are essays by Rabbi Shefa Gold, Zvi Bellin, and Tania Schweig about the Shekhinah. <sup>[19]</sup>

### Comparative religion

- The Qur'an mentions the Sakina, or Tranquility, referring to God's blessing of solace and succour upon both the Children of Israel and Muhammad. Interestingly, Sakina, or Sakina bint Husayn, was also the name of the youngest female child of Husayn ibn Ali, ostensibly the first girl in recorded history to be given the name.
- "*Shekhinah*", often in plural, is also present in some gnostic writings written in Aramaic, such as the writings of the Manichaeans and the Mandaeans, as well as others. In these writings, *shekinas* are described as hidden aspects of God, somewhat resembling the *Amahrāspandan* of the Zoroastrians. <sup>[20]</sup>

### Gustav Davidson

American poet Gustav Davidson listed Shekhinah as an entry in his reference work *A Dictionary of Angel*, stating that she is the female incarnation of Metatron.

### Branch Davidians

Lois Roden, whom the original Branch Davidian Seventh-Day Adventist Church acknowledged as their teacher/prophet from 1978 to 1986, laid heavy emphasis on women's spirituality and the feminine aspect of God. She published a magazine, *Shekinah*, often rendered *SHEkinah*, in which she explored the concept that the Shekinah is the Holy Spirit. Articles from *Shekinah* are reprinted online at the Branch Davidian website. <sup>[21]</sup>

## References

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- [3] Neal DeRoo, John Panteleimon Manoussakis, *Phenomenology and Eschatology: Not Yet in the Now By*, Ashgate, 2009, p.27.
- [4] Eisenberg, Ronald L. *The JPS Guide to Jewish Traditions*. The Jewish Publication Society, 2004. ISBN 0-8276-0760-1
- [5] Martin McNamara *Targum and Testament Revisited: Aramaic Paraphrases of the Hebrew Bible* 0802862756 2010 p.148 "Whereas the verb shakan and terms from the root škn occur in the Hebrew Scriptures, and while the term shekinah/shekinta is extremely common in rabbinic literature and the targums, no occurrence of it is attested in pre-rabbinic literature."
- [6] McNamara (2010) p148.
- [7] Paul V.M. Flesher, Bruce D. Chilton *The Targums: A Critical Introduction* 900421769X 2011 - Page 45 "The first comprises the use of the term "Shekinah" (.....) which is usually used to speak of God's presence in Israel's worship. The Hebrew text of Exodus 34:9, for instance, has Moses pray, "let the Lord go among us" which Targum ..."
- [8] Carol A. Dray *Studies on Translation and Interpretation in the Targum to ...* 9004146989 2006 - Page 153 "The use of the term Shekinah, as has been noted previously,<sup>61</sup> appears to provide a solution to the problem of God being omnipresent and thus unable to dwell in any one place. This is not the only occasion in TJ Kings when the Targumist ..."
- [9] <http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+10%3A5%E2%80%93936&version=KJV>
- [10] <http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah+14%3A21&version=ESV>
- [11] <http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah+17%3A12&version=ESV>
- [12] Ruth Rubin *Voices of a people: the story of Yiddish folksong* p234
- [13] <http://www.ccel.org/e/easton/ebd/ebd/T0003300.html#T0003331>



- [14] Zechariah and Jewish Renewal (<http://www.ao.net/~fmoeller/shekinah.htm>) Fred P. Miller
- [15] Acclamations of the Birth of Christ, by J. Hampton Keathley, III, Th.M. ([http://bible.org/page.asp?page\\_id=982](http://bible.org/page.asp?page_id=982)) at bible.org (retrieved 13 August 2006)
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- [17] 2/248 9/26, 9/40, 48/4, 48/18, 48/26.
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- [20] Jonas, Hans, *The Gnostic Religion*, 1958, p. 98.
- [21] General Association of Branch Davidian Seventh-Day Adventists (<http://www.the-branch.org/index.php>), page found 2010-09-14.

## External links

- The Shekhinah in Judaism (<http://www.chabad.org/k2473>)
  - Hymn to the Sabbath by Rabbi Isaac Luria, the 16th century Kabbalist ([http://kheper.net/topics/Kabbalah/Sabbath\\_Hymn.htm](http://kheper.net/topics/Kabbalah/Sabbath_Hymn.htm))
  - Extensive collection of studies on the feminine aspect of the Shekinah/Holy Spirit as it relates to men and women both being created in the image and likeness of the Godhead, and Christ being the literally begotten Son of God ([http://the-branch.org/Studies\\_by\\_Lois\\_I\\_Roden](http://the-branch.org/Studies_by_Lois_I_Roden))
  - The Autiot of the Shekinah (<http://psyche.com/psyche/lex/shekinah.html>) by Carlo Soares
  - Shekinah Retreat Centre (<http://www.shekinahretreatcentre.org/>). A Mennonite bible camp, in Saskatchewan, Canada, that is named after the word Shekinah.
  - Jewish Encyclopedia (1906) (<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/13537-shekinah>)
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