About the cover

The cover artwork was designed to express the approach of this series of essays which interprets popular media, primarily film and music, through the looking glass of Jewish philosophy. The intent of the essays is not to explain a particular pop-media piece *per se*, but rather to utilize its power to explain Jewish Philosophy. In this sense the media serves as an *articulation* of Jewish Philosophy whereby recondite ideas are brought to life in the “language” of modern man. Jewish philosophy seeks to understand man’s world within the context of the Creator; as such the cover art rests on a backdrop of deep sky blue, *tekhelet*, the color of God’s throne, upon which the entire creation rests. The blue is rendered chaotic through graphic noise, thus giving expression to the unfinished and imperfect nature of creation. Upon this amorphous substrate is the text of the creation narrative, written in the typeface of a traditional Torah scroll, indicating that it is with reference to the ancient lore that we seek to derive meaning. Scattered around the page are ten circles modifying the base color, representing the ten *sefirot*. The *sefirot* are mystical lenses through which divine emanations reach the world and through which man perceives divinity. There is another circle, in a very light *tekhelet*, around the word “*bereishit*” (beginning), symbolizing the *sefirah* of “*keter*” – God’s crown itself. Overlaying these religious symbols are the more familiar symbols of film and music: the director’s clapperboard, treble and bass symbols, and a guitar. The guitar is replicated three times; three representing permanence in Jewish thought. The guitar is no ordinary guitar but the 1950’s Fender Telecaster used to record Led Zeppelin’s Stairway to Heaven, a permanent classic in the music world and the subject of one of the essays in this series.
Stairway To Heaven – In a Revealed Light
A Kabbalistic Approach to Led Zeppelin’s Classic Song

What turns a piece of art into a classic? What makes a song endure the vicissitudes of time and personal taste such that even after decades it still retains the title of “most-played track in radio history”? Something about the song resonates within all who hear it; nevertheless its deep message has remained sealed to the uninitiated. Indeed, the Zeppelin fan magazine “In the Light” refers to “the epic ‘Stairway to Heaven’, [as a song] the meaning of which is an enduring Zeppelin mystery.”

To unlock the meaning hidden within any esoteric text a key is essential. Looking at the inside drawing of the album cover (the illustration can be seen on wikipedia), the key is revealed. It is a drawing of a lone individual at the bottom of an ominous mountain looking upward questioningly for help, for guidance on her quest. At the top of the mountain stands a looming cloaked figure with a staff in one hand and a lamp in the other - a shepherd, a guide through the darkness of the surrounding night. At the center of the lamp, the source of the light, is a golden star. Yet this is no ordinary star, it is the Star of David - symbol of the philosophy of ancient Israel.

The song’s lyricist Robert Plant explains the creation of “Stairway to Heaven” as being an almost metaphysical experience: “It was done very quickly. It was a very fluid, unnaturally easy track. There was something pushing it, saying ‘you guys are okay, but if you want to do something timeless, here’s a wedding song for you.’”

The description of “Stairway to Heaven” as a “wedding song” is most enigmatic given that the song has nothing to do with wedding songs - traditional or otherwise. However, by applying the Kabbalistic metaphor of “wedding”, used to depict the union of man and God, the description is demystified. Spiritually striving man is represented in feminine form in that she receives from God. God, as the absolute source of all, is represented in masculine form in that He gives to humanity. As will be developed, “Stairway to Heaven” tells the story of “a lady” - mankind fulfilling its spirituality - climbing heavenward to unite with her Creator. As such, it is most appropriate that the visionary of this song referred to it as “a wedding song”.

It is the intention of this book to present a cogent and comprehensive interpretation of the song based on the mystical philosophy of Kabbalah. Let us look at the words, the music, the concepts, that make up the composition of art known as “Stairway to Heaven” in the light of this wisdom. (Please refer to the full lyrics in your copy of the album or at lyricwiki).
To read the rest of the text please visit the following link:
http://www.divreinavon.com/stairway.htm
In The Light magazine, Theolyn Brock.


Kabbalistic thought refers to a mystical “lady”, known as the Shekhinah, who dually represents both God’s immanent presence and Knesseset Yisrael - man spiritually striving for union with God Himself (see G. Scholem, Kabbalah, p.111-112). This lady, representing man reaching for the divine (Knesseset Yisrael), is referred to as God’s “wife” (Zohar Vayikra 20b) and “bride” (Zohar Tzav 34b). “Lurianic customs came on the whole...to bring about or to symbolize the mystical “sacred marriage” (hazivvug ha-kadosh) between God and His Shekhinah” (G. Scholem, Kabbalah, [Jerusalem: Keter, 1974], p.194).

Under the symbolic aspect of “the marriage of the King and Queen,” the Sabbath was enriched by a wealth of new customs ... all of which were intended as meditations on the Shekhinah in her aspect as God’s mystical bride” (G. Scholem, Kabbalah, p.195). The Shekhinah, is explicitly referred to as “bride” in the description of how R. Yannai would done his robes on Shabbat eve and exclaim, “Come thou, O bride, Come thou, O bride” (Talmud Baba Kama 32b; Talmud Shabbat 119a).

The Talmud (Taanit 26b) explains the verse in Song of Songs (3:11), “On the day of His wedding” as referring to the giving of the Bible, a time when God was unified with His people in a perfected state. “The Holy One, blessed be He, went forth to meet them; like a bridegroom who goes forth to meet the bride” (Pirkei DeRebbi Eliezer [New York: Sepher-Hermon Press, 1981], Ch.41, p.322).

“While outwardly the Song of Songs is simply a beautiful love song, it actually is the most profound song of unification of Zer Anpin [God] and his Bride [the Shekhinah]” (R. A. Kaplan on Bahir [Maine: Weiser, 1979], #174, p.180).


See R. A. Steinsaltz commentary to “The Seven Beggars” in Beggars and Prayers [New York: Basic Books, 1979], p.181. See also Zohar (Prologue 8a; Teruma 145a; Vayikra 4a; Ki Tazria 42b, 44b, 55a).

These are purely convenient conventions utilized to denote spiritual concepts in physical terms. God is neither masculine nor feminine. Furthermore, both male and female human beings have the capacity to receive from God and as well as give to other human beings.

The intention is not to probe the motivations of Robert Plant, especially given that he himself states that the song was somehow supernaturally “pushed” on him. His description provides the latitude for the reasoned interpretation presented herein.

http://lyricwiki.org/Led_Zeppelin:Stairway_To_Heaven
If you enjoyed this essay, feel free to forward the following link to your friends: http://www.divreinavon.com/stairway.htm

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Praise for “Stairway To Heaven – In a Revealed Light”

I was very much moved to have read the lyrics and then Mois Navon’s interpretation of Led Zeppelin’s hit song “Stairway to Heaven”. For me it expressed a very moving religious journey, and Mois’s interpretation was creative, legitimate and deeply inspiring. I truly believe that the words of the song are informed with many spiritual and mystical truths which deserve to be disseminated to the widest audience possible.

Rabbi Dr. Shlomo Riskin  
Chief Rabbi of Efrat, Israel  
Chancellor, Ohr Torah Stone

I have found Mois’s interpretation of Stairway to Heaven to be thought provoking and inspiring, as well as stimulating and entertaining. His interpretation … provides a creative and hither-to unconsidered manner with which to view this classic piece.

Rabbi Binny Freedman  
Director, Isralight International  
Rosh Yeshiva and Dean of Oraya Yeshiva

About the author

Mois Navon has successfully bridged the secular and the religious, the modern and the traditional, into a cohesive and complementary whole. Growing up on the beaches of California as an avid surfer, it wasn’t until his years studying for a degree in Computer Engineering at UCLA that he honed his logical reasoning and analytical thinking. During this time he was also introduced to the Arts which inspired a personal journey to spirituality. While obtaining a minor in Art History, he learned that man speaks profoundly in the language of symbol. Raised in a traditional home, it didn’t take long before he began to find philosophical depth in the symbols of the Torah and build logical constructs in essay form. From that time on he dedicated himself to delving into Jewish Thought, writing prolifically and teaching passionately on the subject. His journey brought him to Israel where he obtained rabbinic ordination, and where he continues to write and teach – all while maintaining a notable career as a Computer Engineer.