**Abstract**

*Tikkunei haZohar* (hereinafter: *TZ*) is a kabbalistic work that constitutes a division of the Zohar. Evidently composed in the early fourteenth century in Spain by an anonymous author, it comprises approximately seventy commentaries on the word *bereshit*—commentaries that are rich in kabbalistic symbolism. *TZ* has had a definitive influence on the development of kabbala and Hasidism.

In this study, *TZ* is described as a work endowed with literary qualities that make it difficult to read and study. In reference to *TZ*, Tishby writes: “Its associative thinking, which skips in dizzying leaps from idea to idea and from symbol to symbol, burdens understanding.” Several scholars (Goldreich, Giller, Liebes) have proposed explanations of the origin of this literary character. Goldreich showed that *TZ* was written using the *Shem Hakotev* magic scholastic technique, i.e., “automatic writing,” and even pointed to the existence of associative sequences in the author’s way of thinking.

This study, [כן?] “The Associative Interpretative Methods of the Author of *Tikkunei haZohar*” deals with literary characteristics of the exegesis in *TZ*. Its aim is to offer reading tools that will make the exegesis in this work easier to understand. The tools proposed here are helpful in identifying the organizing fundamentals of the commentary text and molding *TZ* into a thematically cohesive work.

The study has three parts. Part 1 comprises “readings” of exegetic texts in *TZ*. In Part 2, the components of the *TZ* exegetic text are placed in a “catalogue.” Part 3 offers “insights and assessments” on the literary nature of the exegesis in *TZ*. The sections of the study nourish and complement each other in a way that allows the literary nature of TZ to be observed from several perspectives.

The study is based on the visual presentation of *TZ* texts in a new pagination that differs from that of the print editions. The texts of the *tikkunim* and the commentaries that are given “readings” in Part 1 of the study are partitioned into short lines and divided into segments. The pagination, the partitioning, and the segmentation reflect and underscore aspects of order and structure in the form and style of the text—making the theme and the content of the tikkun or commentary decidedly easier to understand. The study, exemplifying this pagination in detail, discusses the ways in which it was designed, puts it to use, and bases itself on it.

As exegetic texts in *TZ* are read in Part 1 of the study, connections between the ideas and symbols in the text are elucidated and attention is called to aspects of “theme,” “content,” “style,” and “form.” In Chapter 1, one commentary on Tikkun 13 is read. Each sentence or sentence fragment in the text is given individualized attention that seeks answers to several questions: Why is this sentence or sentence fragment phrased as it is? How does its content connect with the totality of the content of the commentary? And how does its content promote optimal expression of the idea of the commentary? The reading also gives special attention to the literary structures that are embedded in the commentary and that give the commentary its shape. In Chapter 2, such a reading is pledged to a longer commentary, Tikkun 31, one of the seventy tikkunim of which *TZ* is composed. In both of these readings, the thematic cohesion of all contents of the commentary or the tikkun is noted and the meaning of the unifying idea and the way it is expressed are discussed.

Part 1 of the study concludes with a survey of additional texts—Tikkun 45, a commentary in Tikkun 18, and a segment of Tikkun 5—from a more general perspective. The readings of these texts point to the consistent presence of certain literary phenomena as well as especially creative and appealing literary phenomena, which come to light in the readings of these texts precisely due to their manner of presentation: pagination, division into lines, and segmentation.

Even as the reading of the tikkunic commentary yields patterns of order, structure, and cohesion, also interspersed in it are literary comparisons of exegetic texts from various locations in *TZ*. They demonstrate the way details of a large conceptual picture are scattered among commentaries that are far apart in the work; they give indication of the gleaning and filling-in that the reader must perform. The appendices of the study also offer a comparison of the print version with manuscript versions, making a further contribution to the painstaking study that the reader must perform.

The commentary texts that receive “readings” bind together a wealth of details from physical reality, the divine pyre, and religious ritual. They link nature, its fundaments, shades, and creatures; the body with its organs and parts; the psyche and its levels; the Sabbath and its prayers; Biblical characters; the ten sefirot and the four letters of the Tetragrammaton. Although creativity and vitality are evident in the texts, the conceptual content expressed by the motifs and symbols is hard to decode. It is the interest of this study to pinpoint the difficulties that burden comprehension and suggest ways of alleviating them. Such is the aim of the study from Part 1 onward: As the readings take place, they dwell on textual phrasings that impede understanding, “associative” wordings that may mislead the reader. The road along which the author of *TZ* expresses his ideas is strewn with potholes. Accordingly, straying from the convention in traditional interpretation, this study turns its attention not only to the “content” but also, especially and contrarily, to understanding the additional aspects of the text—its “theme,” “style,” and “form.”

Part 2 of the study, the “catalogue,” centers on style. Here the tikkunic text is reduced to its basic constituents, which are sorted, defined, and then examined for the way they function in expressing the idea in the commentary. In this part of the study, the tikkunic exegetic text is unpacked into three levels of elements—“words,” “sayings,” and “segments”—and a chapter is devoted to each. The words that take part in the tikkunic exegetic text are sorted into four families: “quotation words,” “symbolization words,” “connective words,” and “linguistic picture-words.” The sentences and sentence fragments that are composed of the sorted words are also separated into four families—“quotation sayings,” “connective sayings,” “pictorial sayings,” and “framework sayings.” These are not sortings of language (human language at large) but classifications specifically tailored to the “language” of tikkunic exegesis. This catalogic sorting yields regular patterns of phrasing in tikkunic exegesis; their use significantly abets our understanding of the tikkunic exegetic text as “associative.”

The “catalogue,” namely, the definition and terminology of the elements of the tikkunic exegetic text, is a tool that facilitates understanding. By wielding it, one may discuss the way each sentence or sentence fragment in the text functions in accordance with its family “membership,” appreciate its contribution to understanding the idea behind the commentary, and see how this contribution is made. Once the reader has a more lucid understanding of the roles of the sentences and sentence fragments in expressing the exegetic idea, one may also observe the ways the segments of the commentary are shaped, detect and discern the various characteristics of the segments—of what sentences and sentence fragments they are composed—and, in turn, understand the roles of the segments as stages toward understanding the idea behind the tikkunic commentary.

Part 3 of the study, based on the impressions gained from the two previous parts—the “readings” and the “catalogue”— offers “insights and assessments” as to the literary nature of *TZ*. Various topics are discussed and demonstrated in these chapters: the possibility that “laconic” (extremely abridged and concise) writing is the characteristic under which the phenomena that shape the text as “associative” are gathered. Also weighed is the possibility that the tikkunic exegetic style moves along an axis between creative-art phrasing with lyrical aspects and the expression of an idea as a systematic logical process of proposition, proof, and conclusion. Another possibility mulled is the scanty use of organizing elements in *TZ*, on the one hand, and the abundant use of allusive nouns and pronouns in this work, on the other, as a writing mechanism that allows what is expressed in the kabbalistic ideas communicated in *TZ* to be masked—like divulging and concealing a secret.