The Talet under the Hupa

Immediately after the ceremony of the giving of the ring (qiddushin) the groom wears a Talit (a prayer shawl). The custom is to use a new Talit, usually given to the groom by the bride. If it is still daylight time, the groom should recite two blessings: lehit'atef betsitsit and Sheheheyanu. If it's already nighttime, he would recite only one blessing: Sheheheyanu.

According to rabbi Obadia Yosef, if the Hupa takes place during the day, the groom wears the Talit in the same way he wears it every morning: first, covering his head with it ('atifa) and then, placing it on his shoulder. If the wedding takes place during the night, then the groom does not need to cover himself with the Talit.

After that, and in both cases, the talit is placed over (or "on", depending on the custom) the heads of the groom and the bride (Yalqut Yosef p. 136).

Before wearing the Talit, the groom pronounces the blessing Sheheheyanu. This is a blessing of praise to HaShem for the privilege of being able to live a particular new happy occasion. When the groom says this blessing for his new Talit, he has to bear in mind that he is also giving gratitude to HaShem for the merit of his new wife, his new home, etc.

Why does the groom use a Talit during the Hupa?

Rabbi Obadia Yosef mentions many reasons (and pesuqim, see Yalqut Yosef p. 132). One of them is that the Tora mentions the Mitsva of Tsitsit, next to the Mitvsa of marriage (Debarim 22:12, marriage; 22:13, Tsitsit). It is interesting to notice that, because of this reason, whereas in Sephardic and German Jewish communities it is customary that a Jewish boy wears the Talit once he becomes Bar-Mitzva (or even before), in Eastern European Jewish communities it is customary for the

Jewish man to begin wearing the Talit only after he gets married.

In his book “Made in Heaven” Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan mentions a very original reason. He explains that the Talit is given to the groom by the bride as a token of reciprocity for receiving a ring from him. “Just as the wedding ring symbolizes that she is bound to him, to the exclusion of all other men, the Talit symbolizes that he is bound to her, to the exclusion of all other women” .

After the groom wears the Talit and recites Sheheheyanu, the Ketuba is read.

Tomorrow, BH, we will begin to explain what a Ketuba is.