

JEWISH WEDDING TRADITIONS

PT. 1 OF 4

In the following teaching I am going to do the best I can to share the thematic connections and analogies (symbolism) we find in scripture, with the actual traditions we have seen throughout history and even still see today in many Jewish or Messianic type wedding ceremonies. Hopefully, for those who have read the bible many times especially, the words scattered throughout our Living Word (still pictures) will come together as slides, and will disclose a beautiful movie of the love relationship between the Holy One of Israel (Elohim/ Yahveh), and the people He created. It is a beautiful love story that once revealed leaves an everlasting peace in the spirit and souls of all of Yah's children who are truly born again and married to the King Of Kings.

Marriage is a biblical term that can only be applied to a man and a woman who have accepted the wedding contract Yahveh gave to His bride at Mt. Sinai. It matters not what the world considers marriage, in the eyes of Yah marriage is only considered marriage when the man and woman agree to His wedding contract, known as the torah. If they accept this contract and adhere to it, the blessings associated with it are incredible. If the pagan secular and religious world accepts two people of the same sex as married partners it means nothing. They can proclaim whatever they desire all day, it means nothing to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They are only fooling themselves, and those doing so will be cursed accordingly whether they understand it or not. It is an abomination, and there are consequences for premeditated sinners of that nature. The wages of sin according to our Good Book is death, first spiritual, and them maybe even physical (Rom. 6:23).



THE LOVE STORY OF EXODUS

The Book of Exodus is a love story between Elohim and His bride, His people who accept His marriage covenant. The entire bible, from Genesis to Revelation is nothing but a Jewish wedding. From Yah's perspective, He married the Israelites at Mt. Sinai in the sense that He committed His life to them by covenant, as they did Him. Yah acquired them for Himself through the marriage covenant. This love story can be divided up into four parts:

1) We see the promises He makes to His bride to be in: **Exod. 6:6-8** *“Therefore, say to the people of Isra’el: ‘I am ADONAI. I will free you from the forced labor of the Egyptians, rescue you from their oppression, and redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgements. I will take you as my people, and I will be your Elohim. Then you will know that I am ADONAI, who freed you from the forced labor of the Egyptians. I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Avraham, Yitz’chak and Ya’akov — I will give it to you as your inheritance. I am ADONAI.’”*

2) In **Exod. 19:5-6** we see His proposal or engagement to His bride. *“Now if you will pay careful attention to what I say and keep my covenant, then you will be my own treasure from among all the peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you will be a kingdom of cohanim for me, a nation set apart.”* These are the words you are to speak to the people of Isra’el.”

3) In Exodus 20 the bride appears under the huppah (canopy..her husbands prayer shawl) of clouds, smoke, and thunder, and the ketubah (marriage contract) is read. Then a sign is given for all His brides to prove that they await His coming back for them. **Exod. 31:13** clearly tells the sign: *“Tell the people of Isra’el, ‘You are to observe my Shabbats; for this is a sign between me and you through all your generations; so that you will know that I am ADONAI, who sets you apart for me.”*

4) The love story concludes with the building of the Tabernacle, where the bride and groom enjoy an intimate relationship in the holy of Holies. As in Gen. 2:23 when Adam declared Eve to be bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, so did the Israelites become one with the flesh of the Almighty. **Gen. 2:23** *“The man-person said, “At last! **This is bone from my bones and flesh from my flesh.** She is to be called Woman [Hebrew: ishah], because she was taken out of Man [Hebrew: ish].”*

Exod. 19:5 *“Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is mine;”* **Exod. 19:8** *“And all the people answered together and said, All that Yahveh has spoken we will do! And Moses brought back the words of the people to Yahveh,”* This makes it clear as a bell, we are to obey His commandments, the covenant of marriage. The people back then accepted His commandments like we are too now. We are to share them with the rest of the world. We are to act as agents for the Most High, revealing the words of that marriage covenant. All those who obey His Torah are the chosen ones, not just the Jews. By living out the written words in the Torah we embody in our lives the living image of Yah. By living the Torah others can see who Yah is.

The Jewish Wedding ceremony is a picture of what happened at Mt. Sinai. Once it has been pointed out, it is a most beautiful living love story.

There were three types of marriage in scripture. All were between a man and a woman..

- 1) When Adam went into Eve they were accepted as married in the eyes of Yahveh. This was the most primitive type of marriage.
- 2) A contract marriage when the parents of a potential bride and groom arranged for their like-minded son or daughter to get married.
- 3) When the parents of the groom paid money for the bride.

THE WEDDING

In days of old it was the Groom who was the main focus at any wedding, not the bride. In today’s wedding traditions it is customary to have all the focus on the beautiful bride and everything pertaining to her and her brides maids, gown, ring, etc., but until not that many years ago everything centered around the groom. The focus of our spiritual wedding was back then and should still be today, on the Groom to be.



The chuppah, (huppah) or canopy, used at many Jewish weddings is a tallit, which the bride and groom take their wedding vows under. This canopy is representative of the cloud covering of Exod. 19:5-7 where Yah tells Israel that she will be His “treasured possession”. The huppah also represents the temple which is where we will all go one day for the marriage supper of the lamb. We see in Ps. 19:1-7 how the chuppah is compared to the shek'hinah glory" or glory of the sun.

Always keep in mind that this wedding ceremony is supposed to mimic the wedding ceremony that is to come when Yeshua returns for His bride.

For many Jewish weddings there is a contract signed by the bride and groom, called a “ketubah”. This contract-covenant (confess with your mouth Rom. 10:9), sets out the terms of their marriage just like Yah’s covenant with His people. As it was at Mt. Sinai, (Exod. 20), Yah provided one copy for the people and one copy of the covenant for Himself in the ark of the covenant. In some cases they had one copy for the bride and groom, one for the Father-in-law, and one sealed record for the judicial system (government). As in any wedding, we likewise find Yahveh’s wedding ring for the people who take on His covenant, in **Exod. 31:12-17**

“And Yahveh spoke to Moses saying, But as for you, speak to the sons of Israel, saying, You shall surely

observe My sabbaths; for **this is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations**, that you may know that I am Yahveh your Elohim who sanctifies you. Therefore you are to observe the sabbaths, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; **for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people**. For six days work shall be done, but on the seventh day there is a sabbath of complete rest, holy to Yahveh; whoever does any work on the sabbath day shall surely be put to death. **So the sons of Israel shall observe the sabbath, to celebrate the sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the sons of Israel forever; for in six days Yahveh made heaven and earth, but on the seventh day He ceased from labor, and was refreshed"**

The wedding ring was/is considered an "outward sign" for those who follow the covenant, like "the keeping of His sabbath"-Shabbat. This sign has been given throughout the ages for all to see.

The bride/bridegroom theme is repeated throughout the book of Exodus. The subject is first addressed when Yah promises Israel that He would *"take them to be His people."* In essence, He was formally entering into a betrothal or engagement relationship with His intended bride, Israel. This is based on the use of the Hebrew word, *lek* (take). This word, though most often meaning simply to "take something", has also been used in the Tenakh in reference to a man "taking" a woman to be his bride. Thus, in chapter six, Yah promised to marry Israel. The next step in the revelation of the bride/bridegroom theme is revealed in chapter 19. The location was Mt. Sinai. The event was the giving of the Torah.

It is possible to interpret this scene as a divine wedding according to several pieces of evidence. The first was the mikveh, or immersion, that Jewish people customarily have before their wedding. In this account there are two places in which Israel, like a bride, went into a mikveh. First, according to the Brit Hadasha (Renewed Testament). **1Cor. 10:1-2** *"our fathers all passed under the cloud and all passed through the sea and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea"*. Thus, according to Rabbi Sha'ul of Tarsus, the bride Israel was immersed under the cloud while passing through the sea. Second, according to Exodus 19, Yah instructed Moshe to tell the people to be consecrated and wash their garments. Many interpret this to mean that here they also were immersed in a mikveh. Another symbol of the wedding was the cloud over the mountain functioning as a canopy or chuppah to which the groom was beckoning His bride.

Finally, the document that legalized the wedding was the ketubah, the marriage contract. This is the written document, which in essence, defines the terms of the marriage and describes how the marriage can be a blessed one. The bride then took on the NAME of the groom. Accordingly, it is my belief that the Torah itself served as the marriage ketubah. The Torah summed up on two sets of two tablets of stone. One for the husband and one for the wife. This ketubah was secured for eternity in a special place called the Ark Of The Covenant. The husband promised to provide and take care of the bride forever, and the bride promised to obey and forsake all others. The two witnesses called forth to witness the covenant were the Heaven and the earth. They witnessed the wife make her vows: *"all the words which Yahveh has spoken we will do"* (Exod. 24:3). Then the 70 elders of Israel (the Sanhedrin at that time), ate and drank with the Husband, Bridegroom, and Creator. The wife provided her contribution to her marriage covenant, a type of property brought by a bride to her husband at a marriage: the gold, silver, bronze, fabrics, oils, and precious stones for the construction of the ark and the dwelling of the husband among them.

Yahveh called out His bride from Egypt and invited them to His wedding. He gave them the wedding contract (ketubah) on Mt. Sinai which they all accepted and promised to honor. One copy for Him, one copy for them. Their copy was put in the ark of the covenant. They took on His name and were headed for the "Promised Land" where He would look after them. He was the "WAY" and they were His "People Of The Way". Part of the Name of the Husband "EL" was taken by His wife; and so they were/are called Yahudim (Israel). This name was corrupted over the years by translators and was changed to "Judah", then "Jude", and then "Jew". Yahveh speaks of His covenant never ceasing, reminding His wife of the marriage:

Isa. 54:5 "For your husband is your maker, Yahveh Tzva'ot (Yah of Hosts), is His name"

Years later they abandoned Him by going into Babylon and taking on the sins (idols) of the pagans. According to torah law, the only way a bride could get a divorce was if the groom died. Yeshua died at Calvary so the bride had another chance to become His again. His ketubah was His Torah, same as before, and He promised them eternal life in His Kingdom of Heaven, if they were obedient. Again they took on His name (Nazarenes), "People Of The Way", and were to follow Torah forever. Those brides who have been following His Torah will be gathered up when the groom returns again for the second time. Like at all weddings, there is a rehearsal. The first wedding it seems was a rehearsal, the second wedding is the real thing.

Our Adonai is a jealous Adoni. He is similar in a way, to any groom. He wants His bride safe and protected, kept pure and holy.

When we take a close look at the Jewish Wedding traditions of old, we will see some amazing analogies in regards to many passages and prophesies in our Hebrew Bible. If and when we can understand the traditions of old, we will see a new light shine on many scriptures most of us are familiar with. We will see prophesies that have already happened and we will see others that are about to happen. A close look at the customs involved in the traditional Jewish wedding will reveal many new things to those willing to allow the holy

spirit to work threw them. In this teaching I will show you how the customs involved in the Jewish wedding ceremony of old relate to words spoken in many parts of our Good book, especially prophetic words.

The three phases of the Jewish wedding consisted of: the betrothal phase, the wedding phase, and the celebration phase. Let us start out by familiarizing ourselves with some very well known verses that many people use regularly yet don't truly understand. Most of us are familiar with many verses that I will use in this teaching, yet few of us have ever had revealed the deeper meanings that stare us in the face.

Matt. 24:42-44 *“Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day Yah is coming. “But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into. “For this reason you be ready too; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will. Messiah tells us to be alert and ready because we don't know the hour of His return.*

Let us begin.

In Old Testament times, only rich men, or men of royalty had more than one wife. The outstanding factor here was the price of a bride under normal conditions. The average man would have to pay the equivalent of 1 1/2 years wages to get married, it was not taken lightly.

It was the parents who chose the mate for their son. The primary reason for this was that the bride became part of the clan. The parents chose someone who would best fit into their clan and work harmoniously with her mother-in-law and sisters in law. Sometimes the father would use the services of a matchmaker. This matchmaker (shadkhan) was usually an expert in finding the right bride for the son. It was more than just the marriage of two people, it was also the uniting of two different families, clans, for various spiritual, financial, political and traditional reasons. Many people lives were and would be at stake here for generations to come.

We see an example with Abraham when he chose a wife from his people for Isaac. His people (symbolic of the worldly), were the guests in the parable of the wedding (Matt. 22:1-14).

Sometimes the groom would suggest to his father a particular women and the father would decide what to do. We see an example of this in **Jgs. 14:1-3** *Then Samson went down to Timnah and saw a woman in Timnah, one of the daughters of the Philistines. 2 So he came back and told his father and mother, “I saw a woman in Timnah, one of the daughters of the Philistines; now therefore, get her for me as a wife.” 3 Then his father and his mother said to him, “Is there no woman among the daughters of your relatives, or among all our people, that you go to take a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines?” But Samson said to his father, “Get her for me, for she looks good to me.”*

Frequently people married at a very early age, a fact that made the parents choice a practical matter. The age for marriage started at 13 for boys and 12 for girls.

In Hebrew culture a women is accepted as being under the authority of a man, from cradle to grave. She is under her fathers authority until she marries. When she gets married she comes under the covering of her husband. If her husband dies, then she comes under the covering of her husbands brother, or in some cases, she comes under her fathers covering again. If she marries again, she comes under the authority of her new husband. If she is a concubine, she is under the covering of him. Hebrew tradition says you can have a concubine or a wife, both require a written agreement.

SHIDDUKHIN (ERUSIN)

The first step to a Jewish wedding is the betrothal period called the shiddukhin, or shitre Erusin. This initial first step was the arrangements made before the betrothal. The ersin shiddukin is a form of prenuptial agreement where the bride lays out her inventory, so to speak, of things she will contribute to add to her husbands estate. The price of a bride was usually considered fifty silver shekels, or one and one quarter pounds of silver as revealed in Deut. 22:28-29. If the man changed his mind he was held to that agreement and it cost him dearly to get out of it. It was a major lifetime agreement that no one walked away from.

The Father chooses the bride. The bride is separated (set-apart/remnant) from the others (guests) who have spots (proclaimed christians who don't follow torah), until the wedding supper. Then the guests will be sent home because they have no proper attire (robe of righteousness..torah).

KETUBAH

Next, a ketubah (wedding contract) was written explaining the conditions and provisions proposed for the marriage; this would have been the marriage contract. The ketubah has five sections to it, mirroring the five books of the torah. Once both parties agreed to the contract it was time for the betrothal ceremony. To prepare for the betrothal ceremony, it was common for the bride and groom to separately take a ritual immersion in water (mikveh). After the mikveh the couple met publicly under a huppah to declare their engagement. The huppah, or chuppah, was a canopy like structure made out of the grooms tallit (prayer shawl). Located on the corners of the tallit are the tzitzit (fringes, Num.15:37-41). When the woman placed herself under the huppah, she was placing herself under the care of her future husband, her spiritual authority. It was also symbolic of being under the blood of the lamb, for marriage is a blood covenant.

You might say that the original ketubah was made with Adam, the Abraham, written down for Moses,

and then made clear again in Jeremiah 31.

When the bride of Israel circled Mt. Sinai it was the origin of what occurs at a Jewish wedding when the bride circles the huppah seven times as part of the ceremony. As the bride circles the huppah where her groom stands, she is symbolically thinking seriously about whether or not she should spend the rest of her life with this man under the huppah. When she enters under the huppah to stand with her groom she is symbolically acting as Moses did when he went up the mountain as a representative of the people assembled below. Moses represented them just as the bride represents Moses at the time Yah handed down the Ten Commandments, the wedding contract. After the ceremony the groom hands the bride the folded up huppah and she then keeps it in her possession, just as the Israelites received (kept) the Ten Commandments, the wedding contract at Mt. Sinai when they became His bride.



In christian traditions the bride and groom give their vows as a replacement of the contract of Mt. Sinai. They presume to be having a marriage ceremony in the eyes of the God of the Bible, yet they intentionally replace the required wedding vows Yah made available for His contract marriage, with their own wants and desires as stipulated in their vows. This very act excludes them from being married scripturally in the eyes of the Great I Am.

During a traditional Orthodox wedding today, the groom has his tie untied until he is under the huppah with his betrothed wife. At that point he can tie a knot in his tie because they are bound together (knotted together) in the re-union of two souls under the wings of Yah. Tzitzit show that we are knotted to the Living God and during the ceremony we are knotted to our betrothed wife, in unity, echad, till death do us part. The root word of Tzitzit means “to look upon”. It is traditional for the bride to give her husband a tallit for their wedding so that each time that he looks at it, he will be reminded of her.

THE RING..THE SIGN OF THE COVENANT

The wedding ring is a man made tradition, a cultural thing. Not all people wear wedding rings on their finger to show they are married. When a man wears a ring on his finger it shows women wherever he goes that he is married. It shows that he loves his wife and that they should leave him alone.

If we look at the ring from a symbolic biblical perspective we would see it as explained in Exodus, the giving of the ring. **Exod. 31:12-17** *And ADONAI spoke to Moses, saying, 13 “But as for you, speak to the sons of Israel, saying, ‘You shall surely observe My sabbaths; for this is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am ADONAI who sanctifies you. 14 ‘Therefore you are to observe the sabbath, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people. 15 ‘For six days work may be done, but on the seventh day there is a sabbath of complete rest, holy to ADONAI; whoever does any work on the sabbath day shall surely be put to death. 16 ‘So the sons of Israel shall observe the sabbath, to **celebrate the sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant.**’ 17 “**It is a sign between Me and the sons of Israel forever; for in six days ADONAI made heaven and earth, but on the seventh day He ceased from labor, and was refreshed.**” The ring could be considered a sign of keeping the sabbath. The seventh day sabbath is a sign given as a token to those who accept Him as their groom. It is a sign of eternal love for the bride and groom. The only real difference is that the ring is supposed to be on our heart, the common practice is to display the physical ring on ones finger. The sabbath is Yah’s wedding ring given to the bride. It’s the sign that we are His bride for eternity. Every time we honor the sabbath we are remembering the covenant we made with Yah at Mt. Sinai.*

All the Feasts of Yah are considered gifts, referred to in the female gender because they are

considered to be gifts from the groom to the bride. **Even to this day we see the bridegroom giving gifts to his bride prior to the marriage ceremony. This is what we call the engagement ring. He gives us His Feasts, with the first one being the weekly sabbath, as our engagement ring.** Imagine if you gave your bride an engagement ring and you found out she is not wearing it? What if you came home one day and found your fiancé wearing somebody else's ring? How would you feel? This is what the SUNDAY type pagan christians have been doing for hundreds of years. They proclaim to be betrothed to Yahveh but they follow other gods of the so-called christian churches. They do not honour the wedding contract and are committing spiritual adultery even before they are married. They are not wearing His engagement ring (keeping the Feasts), which includes the weekly Feast on Shabbat, yet they claim to be His bride. The bride has been raped by another husband. The bride has been enticed to commit adultery with another man. In simple english, they are not, and have never been engaged to Him. They claim they are waiting for the wedding supper of the lamb, yet they have no idea who their groom is.

The ring is not for us to remember our wedding contract, but the ring could be considered as a sign to others that we are in covenant with somebody.

FINGER



According to the tradition of the Sages when looking at the human body, your right side is considered to be the spirit side and the left the truth side. We see this in the use of phylacteries and tefillin. That's why observant Jews wrap the tefillin around their left arm, a pouch of scripture by their heart, and a box of scripture (phylactery) on their forehead. They wrap the tefillin around their left arm and finish by lacing it in the fingers, wrapping it around the ring finger, which they say represents the covenant. They bind the covenant finger to the hand.

Although romance before marriage was not unknown in Old Testament times, it played a minor role in the life of teen-agers of that era. **They did not marry the person they loved; they loved the person they married. Love began at marriage.**

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