

JEWISH WEDDING TRADITIONS

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THE PRICE

The groom would offer a PRICE (mohar) for the bride, but his Father paid that price. Does that sound familiar? The dowry for a virgin was much more than that of any other woman. The payment was made as compensation for a worker. The family of the groom gained, but the family of the bride lost a member of their family who helped with the household. This is why they had a dowry, so that the father of the bride would receive the equivalent of her value that was lost due to her marriage. It wasn't so much a value placed on the woman, it was the value of the help being lost by her being removed. Most fathers would give the bride the dowry, so it was essentially an expensive gift to the bride, given indirectly. If the father kept some or all of the money he was considered unkind. If the bride, and the mother and father of the groom agreed on the PRICE, and all the other things spoken in the contract, they would give their approval.

It is a gift from the groom to the bride's family but ultimately only belongs to the bride. At that moment the bride comes under her fiancé's covering and changes her status in the community. Today when we exchange rings it represents the mohar, bridal payment. Yeshua paid that price when He died for us: **Rom. 5:8** *But Adonai demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, **Messiah died for us.***

In the following verses we again see the importance of a bridal payment, price.

Gen. 34:12 *"Ask me ever so much **bridal payment and gift, and I will give according as you say to me; but give me the girl in marriage.**"* The father of the bride and the groom would often negotiate the price they were to receive for their daughter. The more the father loved his daughter, the higher the price that was expected. When the price was agreed upon the bride and groom would be notified that the wedding was approved. Usually the bride would agree with the choice of her older, wiser parents.

Exod. 22:16-17 *"And if a man seduces a virgin who is not engaged, and lies with her, he must pay a dowry for her to be his wife. "If her father absolutely refuses to give her to him, he shall pay money equal to the dowry for virgins.* Even in the case of what we would arguably call rape, a price had to be paid for the virgins dowry rites.

Then we are reminded of just how important dowry rites were as recorded in the Book of Samuel.

1Sam. 18:25 *Saul then said, "Thus you shall say to David, '**The king does not desire any dowry except a hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to take vengeance on the king's enemies.**'" Now Saul planned to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines.*

1Cor. 6:20 *For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify Yah in your body."* As clearly stated in this very popular verse, Yah has paid a price for all His brides to be. He paid the ultimate price of His own Son's death. The bride was set apart from all others and wore a veil so everyone knew she was set apart for a groom. The Torah (instructions) that Yah gave to His bride was her veil. Her groom was gone, preparing a place for them and she was awaiting his return. In Hebrew she was called a me'kudeshet, meaning one who is betrothed.

1Cor. 7:23 *You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men.*

Prov. 31:10 *An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels.*

Matt. 13:45-46 *"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it."* Those who follow the Grooms instructions are like fine pearls in the eyes of our groom to come.

Jewish Wedding/Nicanor Gate

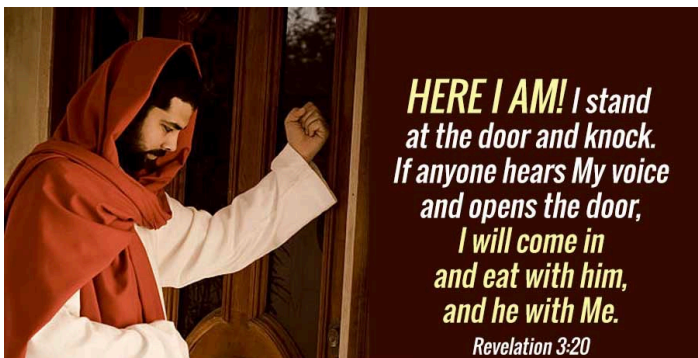
Let's get back on track. The groom was then invited to the home of the bride where she would be alone. Sometimes the father-in-law would also attend. The bride would prepare a BETROTHAL meal if she wanted to marry him. The groom would appear at the GATE (door) of the house and knock. If the potential bride was ready, the door would open slightly, it meant he could come in (Rev. 3:20, Luke 11:9-10). He could not come in unless she opened the door slightly.

Rev. 3:20 *'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.*

Luke 11:9-10 *"So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. "For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened.*

Another beautiful thematic connection we see in Rev. 3:20 is in regards to the Nicanor Gate in the Temple of old. We know that the temple doors or the doors of the tent of meeting were only open to the public on the sabbath (seventh day), new moon, and on Yom Kippur (Ezek. 46:1). **The people knew what "standing at the door" meant in Hebrew traditions, it was a well known idiom.** When the people stood before the threshold of the Nicanor gate as it was opened for the public, it was common for them to make oaths and swear their allegiance to Yah. These were People of the Way.

As for "cup" used in Jewish weddings, there are actually two cups of wine used. The first is used in the



etrothal part of the wedding ceremony. After the rabbi recites the benedictions over this first cup, the bride and groom sip from it. A second cup is filled after the Ketubah has been read. It is over this cup that the rabbi recites the seven blessings. The bride and groom are then given of this cup to sip from. The first cup seals the marital agreement and the second, the actual union. As a final act of the wedding ceremony, a final cup is used, but this one is empty. It is wrapped in a napkin and placed under the groom's foot. The rabbi signals the groom, the groom crushes the glass, and everyone shouts "Mazaal tov"!

The bride would prepare a feast for the two of them. The groom would then pour a cup of wine and

offer it to her. If she accepted the cup, it meant she agreed upon the conditions of the marriage.

Matt. 26:27-29 *And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave [it] to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins. "But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."*

At this point, the couple were legally betrothed. They would then feed each other of the feast and drink of the same cup of wine. Then they made arrangements for the wedding.

After the meal the groom would always leave GIFTS with his bride to be. They were not allowed to see each other again until the appointed time of the wedding ceremony. The reason he gave her gifts ("mattan" in Hebrew), was because he was to be gone away for a long time (perhaps one to two years) until their home was prepared. These gifts were a constant reminder to her of him. The gifts were to keep the bride focused on the groom in his absence.

Acts 2:38 *Peter [said] to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Yeshua Hamashiach for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Every time the bride would look at or use these gifts she would be reminded of her groom. **Rev. 3:20** 'Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.*

Luke 11:9-10 *"So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. "For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened.*

FOOD FOR THOUGHT IN REGARDS TO TODAYS MARRIAGES

What is witchcraft?

"Witchcraft is the manipulation, domination, or control of anyone by any means other than the Ruach Hakodesh (Holy Spirit)."

With that perfect description of witchcraft in mind, I want you to think about a most common tradition in marriages around the world that is a demonstration of witchcraft without people even realizing it.

I realize that the thought of this will upset many people, but sometimes the truth hurts. Let's have a look at it. The man gets down on his knees and opens a little box with a beautiful dazzling ring inside. He presents, in some cases literally shoves the dazzling jewelry in her face as he says the magic words: "will you marry me?". The man is actually enticing, manipulating, his girlfriend into saying "yes" by dangling a shiny object in front of her. Put yourself in the position of this woman. It would be very difficult to say "no" when the sparkle hits her eyes. It is very common, and has been a common tradition for hundreds of years. It just goes to show that we need to be very careful how we do things. We of course never want what we do to be associated with witchcraft in any way.

JEWISH WEDDING AND LAST SUPPER PROPHETIC THEMATIC CONNECTION

When we study what occurs during a Jewish Wedding ceremony, we will see a direct prophetic thematic connection with what Yeshua did when He participated with the disciples during the Last Supper. In the following very brief explanation I will take a moment and compare the ancient Hebrew Betrothal (Jewish Wedding), to what transpired between Messiah Yeshua and His disciples at the Last Supper.

Now do you remember what Yeshua did during the Last Supper? **Mark 14:23-25** *Also He took a cup of wine, made the b'rakhah, (blessing..benediction) and gave it to them; and they all drank. 24 He said to them, "This is my blood, which ratifies the New Covenant, my blood shed on behalf of many people. 25 Yes! I tell you, I will not drink this 'fruit of the vine' again until the day I drink new wine in the Kingdom of God."* (CJB)

During the Jewish wedding ceremony, the groom would NOT drink from the Betrothal cup, but rather



he would pass the cup to the prospective bride to be ...and if she accepted the cup from his hand AND DRANK FROM THE CUP...this was the equivalent of her acceptance of the groom's wedding proposal! In other-wards it was the equivalent today of a man saying to his wife "Will you marry me?"

In the same manner the acceptance of the cup and the drinking of the wine (the "blood of the Covenant"), by the bride, was the equivalent of the bride saying, "Yes, I will marry you."

During a Hebrew betrothal ceremony ONLY THE PROSPECTIVE BRIDE would drink from the Betrothal cup. The groom did NOT drink of it.

When we look at the Last supper, Messiah Yeshua DID NOT DRINK FROM THE CUP HIMSELF but offered the cup to His disciples only! "*Also He took a cup of wine, made the b'rakhah, and gave it to them; and they all drank*".

Yeshua probably ate the Last Supper just before the sun went down at Passover and had the Seder service immediately afterwards. If He ate the seder service with His disciples, He would not have drank from the cup of redemption. He said He will only do so

when He returns for the wedding supper of the lamb. Some day Yeshua will return and raise His cup and drink at the "Wedding Supper of the Lamb" (Mark 14:25).

THE WOMAN AND THE TEN SILVER COINS PARABLE

Luke 15:8-10 (written in red) "*Or what woman, if she has **ten silver coins** and loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? "When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin which I had lost!' "In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of Yah over one sinner who repents."* Here we see a beautiful picture of who the lady was in the story about the ten silver coins. Many have wondered why she made such a fuss after finding her lost coin. Now you know. Silver represents redemption. We could even compare it to a saved person who has backslidden and then returned. Once a bride, then lost, then a bride once more.

A betrothed woman was bought with a price and was therefore set apart for the groom only. She would not know the exact hour that her groom was coming to get her, but she had to make sure that she was always prepared, day or night, for when her groom would come and sweep her off her feet. In public, from the moment she was betrothed, she wore a veil over her head. By this, the people knew that she was set aside, for her groom only. Traditionally the groom would come at night, so the bride always made sure she had her lamp lit and lots of extra oil.

Deut. 4:13 "*So He declared to you **His covenant** which He commanded you to perform, that is, the Ten Commandments; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone*". His covenant is our marriage vow with Yah. The ten silver coins connect directly to the ten commandments and the price of the bride. The lost coin could be a thematic connection, referring to those who have not been keeping the sabbath day. Maybe the woman had not been keeping the sabbath and she turned from her ways and returned to the ten commandments.

Ps. 12:6 *The words of Yahveh are pure words; As silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times*".

Ps. 119:72 *The law of Your mouth is better to me Than thousands of gold and silver pieces.*

Yah gave them the instructions on how to go about with the wedding celebrations by means of His Feasts. They were called the Feasts of Yah. These Feasts celebrated on earth are rehearsals for the final Feast at the end of days when the Master will come to take His bride to His wedding chamber in the Heavens.

THE WEDDING COMPARED TO OUR SALVATION WALK

It is easy to see how our salvation walk compares to the initial step in the Hebrew wedding tradition. When we accept Yeshua into our lives we drink of the cup of the betrothal meal and accept Yeshua as our groom. He offer's us salvation. If we have faith in His Torah, the wedding contract, and follow it as our instruction manual, we have eternal salvation. The previously listed verses are symbolic of our individual Salvation walk as potential brides for our groom Yeshua. He stands at the door and knocks on the hearts of all His children, waiting to see if they will allow Him to come in and offer His wedding proposal (Rev. 3:20). Yeshua offers us His wedding contract (ketubah) and if we agree to the terms He laid out at Mt. Sinai, we will open the

door of our heart to Him when He knocks. We open the door and we sup with Him the glass of wine, making us officially betrothed to Him. We drink the wine and are engaged, as it is commonly called today. He leaves us with His gifts of the Spirit and goes away to prepare a place for us. Every day of our lives we are reminded of our groom by the beautiful gifts of the spirit He made available to us. We await the return of our groom. He will come back when His father says it's time to get the bride. We know that some day this exact act will take place and we will go with Him to His Father's house.

ENGAGEMENT PERIOD..WEDDING CHAMBER



The moment the wedding contract (ketubah), was signed by both parties they were officially married. Today, when the bride accepts the groom's wedding proposal they become officially engaged, not married. During the engagement period, the bridegroom had certain privileges. If war was declared, he was exempt from military duty (Deut. 20:7). The bride was protected specifically under the Mosaic Law the moment she was engaged (Deut. 22:23-29).

The groom then went to prepare a place where they could be together for the rest of their lives. This was usually an addition to the father's house. The groom would construct a home and the father would supervise. The addition to the father's house was sometimes called "the little mansion". When the father would feel the home had everything the young couple would require for marriage, he would then tell the son, "**IT IS FINISHED**". Although the son actually built the home, it was built according to the

father's **INSTRUCTIONS** (John 14:1-4). Only the father could release the son to go get the bride.

Mark 13:32 *"But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father [alone]."*

Acts 1:6-7 *So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Yahveh, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs (special period of time) which the Father has fixed by His own authority;"*

When the Israelites became betrothed to Yah they were told to cleanse themselves and have a mikveh according to Yah's instructions. **They were baptized.**

Exod. 19:10 *Yahveh also said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments;"*

The wedding chamber Yah prepared for His bride was the Sabbath. This was a special day every week when the bride would spend time with her groom. She would put aside all her cares and spend the day in intimate fellowship with her husband Yahveh. She was to *"remember the sabbath day and keep it holy"*. While the groom was preparing a wedding chamber, the bride had many responsibilities. After the engagement ceremony the bride returned to her parents' home and prepared for her wedding by making her wedding garments. She was to use the gifts to prepare and look after herself till the groom came to get her. She saved all her money and she would bring it to the groom when they got together. Without this dowry, they could not get married. The groom would give her money towards her dowry and she would not dare lose it (Luke 15:8-10). Traditionally it included ten pieces of silver. Silver represents redemption. These coins were to be looked after. She could not dare lose them. By keeping the ten pieces of silver safe, she showed her love and respect for her groom.

THE THRESHOLD

One of the most well known traditions after a wedding is when the groom carries his bride over the threshold of their home. When the groom carries his bride over the threshold of the door of their home, it is symbolic of the blood on the doorpost of the home symbolized for Passover. It is representing the blood covenant of marriage. When a man does this he is symbolically saying he and his wife are coming under the covenant of the bridal contract given out at Mt. Sinai. Life is in the blood. Yeshua, the Living Word, Torah, represents the life (blood) of the covenant. The covenant with Yah gives life. When a man and a woman are married they have children, who are life. Like the seeds of a fruit tree crop are planted and the fruit produced,



so to are the children the fruit of the seed sown between a man and a woman.

In ancient times it was common practice to use a door threshold to make a covenant between two people or families. The people would take an animal and cut it in half. They would place the two halves on either side of the doorway with the blood flowing across the threshold. The threshold (bottom front step area) of the home, would actually have a little groove all the way across and a small basin area on one side where the blood of a sacrifice could be poured. The blood of a sacrifice was normally poured in the basin and it drained across the door threshold.

By crossing over this threshold the guest would understand that he was in agreement with whatever the covenant with that family was. They were in agreement with each other. The home owner was essentially creating a covenant with his guest. This is one of the reasons the Jews never entered into the homes of the Gentiles (goyim).

The two individuals, or groups, would state whatever their covenantal agreement was to each other and then both walk through the threshold, completing the action. Then they would speak out loud that if they broke the covenant they would be like the two halves of the sacrifice, dead, broken, and torn apart because of their actions. "May we be like the animals we just killed" if we break this covenant.

It was also common practice for those who were not in agreement with the covenantal practices of others, to trample down the sacrifice

on the threshold of the door of the home.

When someone invited another person into their home, they would sometimes make and display a sacrifice at the threshold of their home in order to designate the god or goddess their tribe was in covenant with. These pagans worshipped their gods in the entranceway of their homes. So, if for example you were invited over for a meal, they may sacrifice an animal to a specific pagan deity on the threshold of the door, so the blood of the animal ran across the threshold of the door. Upon entering (crossing over) the door threshold one would be acknowledging their god and be in agreement with the covenant of this belief. In this manner the home owners thought that their god would protect them and the one entering. They would sacrifice according to the priority they gave your company. It could be a small sacrifice or a very expensive sacrifice.

Many also believe that this represents us stepping over the threshold into the earthly New Jerusalem where we will reign for a thousand years. We see this explained in:

1Ths. 4:16-17 *For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Messiah will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.* The husband carries his bride over the threshold (remember the threshold covenant), it is an incredible prophetic picture of Yeshua and His bride even for the secular world, they just don't know it. When we step over (never on) that threshold, we step into the House of Yah, the House Of Prayer.

LEVIRATE MARRIAGE

If the young wife lost her husband in war or in an accident, she remained in the family and was sometimes wed to her brother-in-law, or next of kin. This arrangement was known as "Levirate Marriage". Levirate marriage was the basis upon what was written in the story of Ruth and Boaz. Let's have a look at this custom as revealed to us in the Book of Deuteronomy and Ruth.

Deut. 25:5-10 *"When brothers live together and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the deceased shall not be married outside the family to a strange man. Her husband's brother shall go in to her and take her to himself as wife and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. "And it shall be that the first-born whom she bears shall assume the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out from Israel. "But if the man does not desire to take his brother's wife, then his brother's wife shall go up to the gate to the elders and say, 'My husband's brother refuses to establish a name for his brother in Israel; he is not willing to perform the duty of a husband's brother to me.' [8] "Then the elders of his city shall summon him and speak to him. And if he persists and says, I do not desire to take her,' then his brother's wife shall come to him in the sight of the elders, and pull his sandal off his foot and spit in his face; and she shall declare, 'Thus it is done to the man who does not build up his brother's house.' "And in Israel his name shall be called, 'The house of him whose sandal is removed.'*

These verses are all about the woman, who's husband died, having a support system set in place. Women depended on having children, especially boys, so that when they got older their sons would provide

everything they needed to survive in their old age. This was all about old age security. In days of old part of the community plan was for children to look after their parents when they got older. If one had no children the community then had to support them, so the burden was put on the community. It was normal to not desire the community to have to support the childless woman, so women were obliged to have children through the brother of their dead husband. The responsibility was put on the brother-in-law to give her children to look after her. This was all part of the "honor your father and mother idea". It was a very practical means of clans looking after their own kind. In today's world we have the exact opposite taking place, where the children are given inheritances and supported by the parents in their older age. It's all about a multi-generational community that looks after the children through to the elders so that all were provided for and honored in a proper way.

Ruth 3:13-14 *"Remain this night, and when morning comes, if he will redeem you, good; let him redeem you. But if he does not wish to redeem you, then I will redeem you, as Yah lives. Lie down until morning." So she lay at his feet until morning and rose before one could recognize another; and he said, "Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor."*

Ruth 4:1-12 *Now Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there, and behold, the close relative of whom Boaz spoke was passing by, so he said, "Turn aside, friend, sit down here." And he turned aside and sat down. And he took ten men of the elders of the city and said, "Sit down here." So they sat down. Then he said to the closest relative, "Naomi, who has come back from the land of Moab, has to sell the piece of land which belonged to our brother Elimelech. "So I thought to inform you, saying, 'Buy it before those who are sitting here, and before the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, redeem it; but if not, tell me that I may know; for there is no one but you to redeem it, and I am after you.'" And he said, "I will redeem it." [5] Then Boaz said, On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also acquire Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of the deceased, in order to raise up the name of the deceased on his inheritance." And the closest relative said, "I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I jeopardize my own inheritance. Redeem it for yourself; you may have my right of redemption, for I cannot redeem it." Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning the redemption and the exchange of land to confirm any matter: a man removed his sandal and gave it to another; and this was the manner of attestation in Israel. [8] So the closest relative said to Boaz, "Buy it for yourself." And he removed his sandal. Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You are witnesses today that I have bought from the hand of Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and Mahlon. "Moreover, I have acquired Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, to be my wife in order to raise up the name of the deceased on his inheritance, so that the name of the deceased may not be cut off from his brothers or from the court of his birth place; you are witnesses today." And all the people who were in the court, and the elders, said, We are witnesses. May Yah make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, both of whom built the house of Israel; and may you achieve wealth in Ephrathah and become famous in Bethlehem. [12] "Moreover, may your house be like the house of Perez whom Tamar bore to Judah, through the offspring which Yah shall give you by this young woman."*

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