

Shavua Tov

Weekly  Parsha

A Rood Awakening! Torah Commentary
By Glenn McWilliams

Torah Portion: *Yitro* יתרו "Jethro"

Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, sheik of Midian, heard about all that God had done for Moses and His people Israel when He brought Israel out of Egypt

Vayishma Yitro chohen Midyan choten Moshe et kol-asher asah Elohim le-Moshe ule-Yisra'el amo ki-hotsi Adonay et-Yisra'el miMitsrayim

Scripture for study: *Shemot (Exodus) 18: 1-20 – 20:26*

Throughout our lifetimes we make many decisions and commitments – buying a car, choosing a college to attend, deciding which job offer to accept, determining when it is time to retire, deciding to buy or sell a home, pondering the right place to locate an elderly parent, when it is time to move to the land... All of these decisions require a great deal of thought, research, prayer, and commitment. But of all the decisions and commitments we make in a lifetime, possibly the biggest and most important of all is that of marriage. The weightiness of this decision is reflected in a story I heard recently.

A nutritionist was speaking at a local congregation, listing the long-term effects of junk and processed foods on the human body. The nutritionist asked the congregation, "Do you know which food causes us the greatest distress and has the longest-lasting effects on our bodies?" While everyone quietly pondered the question, an elderly gentleman in the corner confidently yelled out, "WEDDING CAKE!"

Indeed, there are many commitments made in a lifetime, but few of them are as long-lasting and life-changing as marriage. Marriage is not something that is to be entered into lightly. When we enter into marriage, it is to be with the thought of committing our life, our entire life, to serving another person. When we marry, we are committing to remain faithful and loyal to another being for the rest of our lives. Once we enter into the covenant of marriage, we become accountable to our spouse to live up to our end of the agreement.

The fact that the very first commandment given to man involves marriage demonstrates that marriage is of primary significance to the Creator.

“So Elohim created man in his own image, in the image of Elohim created he him; male and female created he them. And Elohim blessed them, and Elohim said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth...” (Genesis 1:27-28)

Some may argue, given the current low moral standards of our modern culture, that to multiply requires only animal sex and not marriage. This may indeed be true in today’s culture, but in the Torah, sexual intercourse is one of three means of marriage. The Torah teaches,

“And YHWH ELOHIM caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which YHWH ELOHIM had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and they were not ashamed.” (Genesis 2:21-25)

“And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from YHWH.” (Genesis 4:1)

“And if a man entice a maid that is not betrothed, and lie with her, he shall surely endow her to be his wife.” (Exodus 22:16)

“If a man find a damsel that is a virgin, which is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they be found; Then the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel’s father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife; because he hath humbled her, he may not put her away all his days.” (Deuteronomy 22:28-29)

There are two other means of marriage demonstrated in the Torah besides intercourse. The second means of marriage we witness in the Torah is that of giving a token of something precious. The first example of this is witnessed in the story of Abraham securing a wife for his son Isaac. Concerned that Isaac neither marry a Canaanite woman from the land of their sojourning nor leave the land of his heritage, Abraham sends his servant to the land of his kindred to find a fitting wife for Isaac. When the servant is sure that he has found the right damsel, he blesses her with a precious token.

“And the man wondering at her held his peace, to wit whether YHWH had made his journey prosperous or not. And it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden earring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold...” (Genesis 24:21-22)

“Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, The thing proceedeth from YHWH: we cannot speak unto thee bad or good. Behold Rebekah is before thee, take her, and go, and let her be thy master’s son’s wife, as YHWH hath spoken. And it came to pass, that, when Abraham’s servant heard their words, he worshipped YHWH,

bowing himself to the earth. And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah: he gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things.” (Genesis 24:50-53)

The third means of marriage demonstrated for us in the Torah is that of a contracted marriage. Jacob provides us a very clear example of a marriage by contract.

“And Laban had two daughters: the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. Leah was tender eyed; but Rachel was beautiful and well favored. And Jacob loved Rachel; and said, I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy younger daughter. And Laban said, It is better that I give her to thee, than that I should give her to another man: abide with me. And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her...And it came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him; and he went in unto her...And it came to pass, that in the morning, behold, it was Leah: and he said to Laban, What is this thou hast done unto me? Did not I serve with thee for Rachel? Wherefore then hast thou beguiled me? And Laban said, It must not be so done in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn. Fulfill her week, and we will give thee this also for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years.” (Genesis 29:16-20, 23, 25-27)

Thus we witness three distinct means of marriage in the Torah: intercourse, the exchange of a token, and contract. Regardless of which means to marriage is chosen, the outcome is still the same. From the point that one enters into marriage, life becomes bound to another person. Thus we must enter into such a lifelong, binding relationship with great care, consideration, thoughtfulness, and prayer.

For those who may be new to my Torah teaching, it may seem strange that I begin this portion speaking about marriage. But this is precisely what this week’s portion is all about. It is unfortunate that the book of Exodus has been reduced to “The Book of the Law.” Yes, this is the portion where the children of Israel stand around the base of Mount Sinai and hear the Law being given, but to read this portion or this book in this unenlightened fashion is to miss the very heart of the portion and the book! The book of Exodus, from its very outset, is a love story that culminates in a beautiful wedding ceremony. This same love story is told to us in the sixteenth chapter of the prophet Ezekiel.

“Again the word of YHWH came unto me, saying, Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations, and say, Thus saith Adonai ELOHIM unto Jerusalem; Thy birth and thy nativity is of the land of Canaan; thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite. And as for thy nativity, in the day thou wast born thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to supple thee; thou wast not salted at all, nor swaddled at all. None eye pitied thee, to do any of these unto thee, to have compassion upon thee; but thou wast cast out in the open field, to the loathing of thy person, in the day that thou wast born. And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live. I

have caused thee to multiply as the bud of the field, and thou hast increased and waxen great, and thou art come to excellent ornaments: thy breasts are fashioned, and thine hair is grown, whereas thou wast naked and bare. Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I sware unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith YHWH ELOHIM, and thou becamest mine. Then washed I thee with water; yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil. I clothed thee also with broidered work, and shod thee with badgers' skin, and I girded thee about with fine linen, and I covered thee with silk. I decked thee also with ornaments, and I put bracelets upon thy hands, and a chain on thy neck. And I put a jewel on thy forehead, and earrings in thine ears, and a beautiful crown upon thine head." (Ezekiel 16:1-12)

Within this graphic and romantic narrative we witness the very history of YHWH's relationship with Israel being described as a love story. Israel is born in Canaan and cast into the field of Egypt, where no one seems to care. When YHWH passes by, or passes over, Israel is living in the pollution of Egypt's immorality and idolatry, but YHWH declares life to His chosen child. In Egypt the young girl grows into womanhood, and it is then that she comes of age and comes out. At Sinai YHWH covers her nakedness and enters into the marriage covenant with His newly chosen bride. From this point on in the narrative we witness YHWH washing His bride with Torah and glorifying her with jewels and raiment. Let us now return to the narrative in the book of Exodus and follow this love story from its very beginning – not at Sinai, but in Egypt.

Our love story begins while Israel is still in her pollution. While she is yet in bondage, YHWH begins to woo His would-be bride by sweet-talking her, assuring her, and trying to win her confidence and her heart with bold and unconditional promises.

"And YHWH said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey..." (Exodus 3:7-8)

"Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am YHWH, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: and I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you an Elohim: and ye shall know that I am YHWH your Elohim, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I am YHWH." (Exodus 6:6-8)

I want to emphasize that up to this point in the story there is nothing meritorious said about Israel. We hear no reports of the children of Israel keeping the Sabbath, keeping kosher, circumcising their children, praying daily, or doing any other good deed. There is nothing in the narrative that would cause one to believe that Israel is doing anything worthy of the Eternal

One's attention or favor. All the Torah reports about the children of Israel is that they are suffering and crying out for deliverance. I mention this not to speak *lashon hara*¹ about Israel, but to demonstrate the nature of the love that YHWH shows Israel.

Remember, we are reading a love story. Over the next several chapters we witness this boasting lover begin to fulfill His promises, thereby winning the trust and affection of His would-be bride. Eventually the Eternal One frees His love interest from her bondage with a great and outstretched hand. YHWH does what He has promised and brings her to Himself. Here at Mount Sinai, the Holy One bends down on one knee and proposes to His recently redeemed sweetheart, and she accepts.

“Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.” (Exodus 19:4-6)

“And all the people answered together, and said, All that YHWH hath spoken we will do.” (Exodus 19:8)

There are several details that we need to take note of at this point in the story. First, let us realize that the children of Israel are now a free people. This is important to understand, because what we witness in this proposal is a conditional invitation. When YHWH is wooing the children of Israel, they are in bondage in Egypt. YHWH does not make this conditional offer to the children of Israel while they are in bondage, but only after He has unconditionally redeemed them and secured their freedom. While the children of Israel are slaves in Egypt, YHWH deals with them unconditionally. Once they are free and able to make a free choice, then and only then does the Holy One make them His conditional offer.

Here we must remember the lesson of the two trees in the Garden of Eden. Man was created not only to be the image of Elohim in the world, but to love and worship the Creator. For love to be love, it must be freely given. By placing the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden and then prohibiting its fruit to Adam and Eve, YHWH gave Adam and Eve the ability to make a choice. Every time Adam and Eve walked by the tree of knowledge of good and evil and did not eat of its fruit, they demonstrated their love and obedience to their Creator. Had there been no choice, there would have been no means by which to express their love.

The same may be said of Israel. Had YHWH made this proposal to the children of Israel while they were yet in bondage, they might have felt as though there were no real choice to be made. Given in bondage, this offer might have appeared more as coercion than love: “Serve Me, or die here in Egypt.” Thus YHWH redeems and delivers the children of Israel from their bondage, and then proposes this conditional invitation to Israel only when they are free to decide for themselves whether or not to accept. Even in an arranged marriage the Torah teaches that the bride is not to be forced, but must agree to the arrangement. We see evidence of this in the above-mentioned story of Rebekah. After the jewels were exchanged, Abraham's servant sought to return immediately with Isaac's bride. Her parents, however, had other intentions.

“And they did eat and drink, he (the servant) and the men that were with him, and tarried all night; and they rose up in the morning, and he said, Send me away unto my master. And her brother and her mother said, Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten; after that she shall go. And he said unto them, Hinder me not, seeing YHWH hath prospered my way; send me away that I may go to my master. And they said, We will call the damsel, and enquire at her mouth. And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go.” (Genesis 24:54-58)

Here we learn that according to the Torah, a bride must willingly bind herself to her husband; she must not be coerced against her will. It is important that we understand this principle when we consider Israel entering into the covenant with YHWH at Sinai. The children of Israel accept YHWH’s proposal freely and willingly. There is no coercion or threat of punishment involved. The children of Israel are a free people when they agree to become betrothed to their Redeemer, Deliverer, and Elohim.

Here we should understand that being betrothed, or as we say today, engaged, has the same level of accountability as marriage. During the time of betrothal, the bride was already considered a married woman committed to but one man. To violate the betrothal was considered the same as adultery.

“And the man that committeth adultery with another man’s wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbor’s wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.” (Leviticus 20:10)

“If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto an husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her; Then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die; the damsel, because she cried not, being in the city; and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbor’s wife: so thou shalt put away evil from among you.” (Deuteronomy 22:23-24)

Thus we must wonder at those who would teach that Israel was under bondage to the Law. How pitiful a marriage it must be when one or the other spouse considers their covenant of marriage to be bondage! I could never imagine introducing my wife as the “ball and chain” I married. This is the teaching of many Christians who talk of the Sinai covenant as being “in bondage.”

This is certainly not the attitude we see expressed in the book of Exodus. The children of Israel, completely in awe of the phenomenal display of faithfulness, power, and love by their Deliverer and Redeemer, willingly bind themselves to YHWH ELOHIM with a loving and joyful heart. The evidence of this reality is seen in the fact that the children of Israel accept YHWH’S proposal without even hearing the details of the covenant. We likewise see the love of YHWH for the children of Israel expressed in the details of the proposal. YHWH again woos the hearts of the children of Israel by telling them that if they will indeed hearken to His voice and keep His covenant, they shall be a peculiar treasure unto Him. The Hebrew word translated as “a

peculiar treasure” is the word *segulah* (Samech, Gimmel, Lamed, Hey). *Segulah* means “a valued treasure.” This word is used specifically of a treasure so precious to the king that he entrusts it to no one, but keeps it securely in his own hand. We may here recall the words of Yeshua,

“And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand.” (John 10:28-29)

The sheep of YHWH’S fold were clearly *segulah* to Him. How do we become *segulah* to the Father? According to the Torah, we become *segulah* by heeding YHWH’s voice and following or keeping His covenant. It should not surprise us that just prior to teaching his *talmidim*² that they are *segulah*, Yeshua proclaims:

“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.” (John 10:27)

Clearly Yeshua is teaching the Torah. By heeding the voice of YHWH we become *segulah*, a precious and peculiar treasure to our Redeemer, Deliverer, and Elohim.

After this beautiful proposal and acceptance, we witness the preparations for the wedding. So that you may see the ceremony very clearly, I will use the analogy of a typical Jewish wedding. Prior to a Jewish wedding, the bride would go to the *mikveh*, or ritual bath, to purify herself. Afterward she would put on her wedding apparel. A *chuppah* or canopy, representing a house, would be prepared. The groom would enter under the *chuppah* and would wait for his bride to come. With music and fanfare the bride would come and circle the *chuppah*, contemplating the life-long commitment she is solemnizing by this ceremony. The bride enters the *chuppah*. The *ketubah*, or wedding contract, which contains the details of the covenant, is read. Then something precious is given as a token of the covenant. Finally the husband and wife consummate the covenant through a moment of intimacy. We should note here that within this wedding ritual all three forms of marriage are represented. A contract is made, something precious is exchanged, and finally the marriage is consummated by intercourse.

As we read the story of YHWH and Israel as recorded in the book of Exodus, we see a very similar scene. We have already described the betrothal; now let us look at the actual wedding ceremony. First, we see that the bride washes and puts on her wedding apparel.

“And YHWH said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to day and to morrow, and let them wash their clothes, and be ready against the third day: for the third day YHWH will come down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai.” (Exodus 19:10-11)

“And Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and sanctified the people; and they washed their clothes.” (Exodus 19:14)

Next, we see the preparation of the *chuppah* or canopy, and the groom entering under the *chuppah*.

“And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud.” (Exodus 19:16)

“And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because YHWH descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly... And YHWH came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount.” (Exodus 19:18,20)

The bride then encircles the *chuppah*.



“And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it.” (Exodus 19:12)

“And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with Elohim; and they stood at the nether part of the mount.” (Exodus 19:17)

Then Moses, representing the bride, enters into the *chuppah* with the groom.

“And YHWH came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and YHWH called Moses up to the top of the mount; and Moses went up.” (Exodus 19:20)

Next is the public reading of the *ketubah*. The Ten Commandments and the revelation of the Torah are the *ketubah*. It is clear that all the children of Israel heard the voice of YHWH at the same time.

“And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not Elohim speak with us, lest we die.” (Exodus 20:18-19)

We must recognize how important this event is. Most religions are founded on a revelation given to one prophet, much as was the case with Moses at the burning bush. The prophet must then go and gain followers by persuading them that his encounter, theophany, or vision was in fact authentic and relevant to the community. At Sinai, however, YHWH ELOHIM appears to all of the children of Israel! The whole community witnesses the same wondrous event at the exact same time, thereby making this event stand out from all other events. Here we witness YHWH communicating directly to each individual member of the community at the same time.

There is no intermediary on this occasion. There can be no question as to what is happening or whom the message is for. All of the children of Israel, including all of the mixed multitude, witness the exact same thing at the exact same time; thus we should note that while YHWH is dealing with a people and a nation, He is still addressing each individual.

We should realize that as members of the covenant we are accountable to YHWH, both collectively as a people and also as individuals. In other words, we cannot abdicate our personal responsibility to keep the Torah under the pretence that we are keeping the Torah as a people. Each of us must keep the Torah individually, for then and only then does the body of Israel keep the Torah. We must understand that this is not an "either/or" situation, but a "both/and" covenant.

We should also note that when the Ten Commandments are given, there is very little talk of punishment or reward. The negative words are quite vague, lacking any specificity, and serve more to reveal the jealous nature of our spouse rather than the consequences of violating the commandments.

"Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I YHWH the Elohim am a jealous Elohim, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." (Exodus 20:5)

"Thou shalt not take the name of YHWH thy Elohim in vain, for YHWH will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." (Exodus 20:7)

The only mention of anything that can be called a reward concerns the honoring of one's father and mother, and is outlined in the fifth commandment.

"Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which YHWH thy Elohim giveth thee." (Exodus 20:12)

Again we may question whether this is meant to be understood as a promised reward from YHWH, or simply the consequence and natural outcome of honoring one's parents. In simple words, parents tend not to kill or exile respectful, obedient children. We may deduce from this clear lack of reward and punishment that the motivation for entering into such a covenant is something other than the fear of punishment (going to hell) or the desire for gain (going to heaven). I would suggest that the absence of reward and punishment is to inform us that the only motive for entering into this eternal covenant is LOVE!

The rest of the wedding ceremony lies outside the boundaries of our portion, but for the sake of understanding this concept, let us continue on with the ceremony. After the reading of the *ketubah*, we see the giving of the token of the covenant.

"And YHWH spake unto Moses, saying, Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my Sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am YHWH that doth sanctify you. Ye shall keep the Sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every

one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to YHWH: whosoever doeth any work in the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel forever: for in six days YHWH made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed." (Exodus 31:12-17)

While YHWH clearly commanded the children of Israel to keep the Sabbath when they first entered the wilderness, here we witness YHWH declaring that the keeping of the Sabbath is the very sign or token of the covenant. The Sabbath is the wedding ring that we are to wear as a sign of our love and faithfulness.

Thus far we have witnessed two of the three means of biblical marriage. We have witnessed the contract of marriage in the reading of the Ten Commandments and the revelation of the Torah, and we have seen the exchange of a token of the covenant. This leaves the third means of biblical marriage – the consummation of the marriage through intimacy. As the children of Israel erect the tabernacle, we should recognize the intimate place behind the veil in the Holy of Holies to be the wedding chamber where YHWH meets with His bride. This intimacy is evidenced in the final chapter of the book of Exodus.

"Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of YHWH filled the tabernacle." (Exodus 40:34)

"For the cloud of YHWH was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout their journeys." (Exodus 40:38)

How powerful this revelation is! I regret that as a Christian pastor for twenty years, I neither saw this reality nor understood its significance. The wedding and the marriage imageries are played out in numerous ways throughout the Torah, as well as in the Writings and the Prophets. Understanding that as the people of Israel we are the very wife of YHWH is extremely significant in how we live our lives and carry out our calling. Understanding our relationship with our Redeemer and Deliverer as a marriage should help and encourage us to remain faithful to YHWH ELOHIM. Understanding the book of Exodus as a love story rather than an account of the receiving of "The Law" should remove any sense that keeping Torah is a ball and chain around our soul. We keep the Torah out of love for the One who has delivered us out of bondage, whether this be bondage to Pharaoh or bondage to sin.

For those who have indeed crossed over into this covenant, it is important to realize that we did so out of our own free will. Yeshua set us free. We do not keep the Torah to escape hell, nor to gain heaven. Our only motivation for keeping the Torah is our love for the One who has already delivered us. It is only as a free people that YHWH calls us to His covenant. For love to be love, it must be freely given, and therefore may have no strings attached.

It is peculiar to me that so many of our brethren in the Christian Church continue to use the threat of hell or the promise of heaven as a motivation for obedience. This is not what YHWH desires. If we are serving YHWH to escape hell or gain heaven, then we are serving out of love for ourselves and not out of love for YHWH or His Messiah. Our redemption, deliverance, and freedom have been bestowed upon us unconditionally through the life, death and resurrection of Yeshua the Messiah. Now, as a free people, YHWH asks us to enter into covenant with Him - to give our whole heart, soul, and strength in love to Him and to the awesome task of being His wife - bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh. In other words, YHWH is asking us to embody Him in the world through obedience to His self-revelation, the Torah. There is no coercion; there are no threats. We have been given the promise that if we agree to be His faithful spouse, to heed His voice, and to keep His covenant, we shall be unto Him *segulah*, His precious, peculiar, and most valued treasure.

SHAVUA TOV!

¹ Evil speech.

² disciples