

Biblical Hebraic Wedding Customs In the Time of Yahushua!

Taught by The RAMYK Moon 8 Day 8 Shabbat

Wedding of Benjamin and Tova Dornan



There are many customs appointed by Yahuwah as teaching tools. In a unique way, the Hebraic Wedding Ceremony (as opposed to any other cultural expression) is a detailed illustration of the Messiah's relationship to His bride.

The Shiddukhin - Arrangements preliminary to Betrothal

What is Shiddukhin?

Shiddukhin refers to the first step in the marriage process - the arrangements preliminary to the legal betrothal. It was common in ancient Israel of the father of the groom to select a bride for his son.

Biblical Example of Shiddukhin - [Genesis 24:1-4](#)

Notice in this passage Abraham - makes arrangements for his son Isaac's wedding. While the father usually had the responsibility in Abraham's life it was not possible. It was acceptable for the father to delegate this responsibility by designating a representative - called a shadkhan - marriage broker or matchmaker.

The next phase of this step was the - Ketubah

Ketubah means - "written" Written in Hebrew as - hbt. The ketubah was and still is today the - "marriage contract." The ketubah includes the provisions and conditions of the proposed marriage:

- The groom promises to support his wife to be.
- The bride stipulates the contents of her dowry - financial status.

We see this described in - [Gen. 24:52-53](#). Despite the fact that this was an "arraigned marriage", it appears that the consent of the bride was very much a part of the ketubah - ([Gen. 24:5](#)).

The Mohar - or Bridal Payment

This is sometimes called - the Bride price. It is a gift paid by the groom to the bride's family - but ultimately belongs to the bride. It changed her status and set her free from her parent's household. We see this illustrated in two Biblical examples:

- Isaac and Rebecca - [Gen. 24:53](#)
- Jacob and his wives - [Gen. 29:20,27](#)

The Mikveh - or Ritual Immersion

Although not mentioned in the narrative - to prepare for betrothal it was common for the bride and groom to separately take a ritual immersion. The ritual immersion - mikveh - taken from the Hebrew - was prior to actually entering into the formal betrothal period, and was symbolic of spiritual cleansing.

Illustrated in Messiah's Bride

The shiddukhin starts with the father's selection of a bride for his beloved son. So too - were we selected by the Father to be His Beloved Son's loving precious bride - ([Eph. 1:4](#)). As in the case of Isaac - there is also a matchmaker - ([II Cor. 11:10-12](#)). We also have a legal contract - a ketubah hbtk - which is the New Covenant itself in which:

- The groom promises love and care for His bride - and to give Himself for her . He also has paid the proper price for His bride - (His own life).
- The bride promises to pay her dowry - her financial status - that of her yielded life and to keep herself for Him - ([I Cor. 6:20](#)).

The Mohar - is also illustrated in our relationship to Yahushua - we are told in ([I Cor. 6: 19-20](#)) that we have been redeemed with a price. We are also told that our bride's price is not just silver and gold but His own life ([I Pet. 1:18-19](#))

Both bride and groom have undergone the waters of mikveh or immersion - Yahushua at the beginning of His ministry (Mat. 3: 13-17) and we His bride in the cleansing waters([Eph.5:26-27](#), [I Cor. 6:11](#)).

The Eyrusin - or Betrothal

What is Eyrusin?

The word eyrusin means - Betrothal. The period is also called - kiddushim - meaning "sanctification" or "set apart." This word really defines the purpose of the betrothal period - it is a time in which the couple are to set side to prepare themselves to enter into the covenant of marriage. The Hebraic understanding of betrothal has always been much stronger than our modern understanding of an engagement. The betrothal was so binding that the couple would need a religious divorce or (get) in order to annul the contract ([Deut. 24:1-4](#)). This option was only available to the husband, as the wife had no say in any divorce proceeding - this point will be very important when we view the spiritual implications later.

Aspects of the Betrothal

After the couple had undergone - Mikveh (immersion) , each separately, they would appear together under the Huppah - or canopy - and in public they would express their intention of becoming betrothed or engaged. From ancient times - the wedding canopy has been a symbol of a new household being planned - ([Ps. 19:5](#); [Joel 2:16](#)). While under the Huppah the couple participated in a ceremony in which some items of value were exchanged - such as rings, and a cup of wine was shared to seal the betrothal vows. After the ceremony - the couple was considered to have entered into the betrothal agreement. This period was to last for one year. During this time the couple was considered married - yet did not have sexual relations - and continued to live separately until the end of the betrothal. We see this time of betrothal illustrated in the gospels as reflected in the lives of Yoseph and Miriam - (see [Mat. 1:18-25](#)).

The Matan - or Bridal Gift

Following this betrothal ceremony the groom would return to his home to fulfill his obligations during the betrothal. But just prior to leaving he would give his wife to be a Matan - or bridal gift, a pledge of his love for her. Its purpose was to be a reminder to his bride during their days of separation of his love for her, that he was thinking of her - and that he would return to receive her as his wife.

The Couple's Responsibilities During the Betrothal

During betrothal the groom's responsibility was to focus on preparing a new dwelling place for his bride and family:

- In Biblical times this was most often done not by building a new home - but by simply adding additional rooms to the family's existing home.
- The Rabbi's determined that the place to which the bride was to be taken must be better than the place she had lived before.
- It was not the groom's duty to determine when the place he was preparing for the bride was ready - his father would make that determination and give the go ahead to receive his bride.

The bride also was to keep herself busy in preparation for the wedding day - specifically wedding garments were to be sewn and prepared.

Illustrated in Messiah's Betrothal to His Bride

As the betrothal includes the blessings of the wine under the huppah, one of the last of Yahushua's actions was to bless the cup of the New Covenant - the cup of the ketubah hbtik - that contract of marriage. He too stated that He would not taste again until a later time, when he would drink at the wedding feast. The image of our betrothal also answers the question of whether believers can lose their salvation. The Scripture points to the fact that we are betrothed to the Messiah - we are in that engagement period prior to the wedding:

- As in any betrothal - the promise is so sure of our wedding that it would take a religious (get) divorce to nullify the contract.
- This divorce (get) is only available to the husband.
- This too is promised by Yahuwah in [Hosea 2:19-20](#) - He promises that He will betrothal His people to Himself - forever. Would Yahuwah ever divorce His people - ([Malachi 2:16](#)) - certainly it is not in His character to divorce.
- The lesson or implications are quite clear - we are secure in our Messiah's contract with us - we cannot break it - and He promises that He will not break it - ([Jn. 10:28](#)).

How is Messiah fulfilling His betrothal obligations? What was the duty of the bridegroom during the period of the betrothal? To prepare a household for his bride to be. Is this not what He (Yahushua) said He would be doing? ([Jn. 14:1-3](#)). He is fulfilling His part of the betrothal.

Where is the Matan - or bridal gift of love from Messiah - if indeed we are His betrothed. Remember the word Matan ntm means gift or pledge - in Greek the word is Charismata - gift. In ([Eph 1:13-14](#)) Paul tells us that this pledge or gift - is the Holy Spirit - a promise of love and that He will return for us. Interestingly this pledge was given at Shavuot (Pentecost) - [Acts 2:1-4](#). Could He also be telling us not only of His love but just how He is fulfilling ([Jer 31:33](#))?

But what of His bride - what is she to be doing? During this one year period - the bride would consecrate herself - and prepare holy garments for the upcoming marriage. Paul puts this preparation in very clear terms - ([Eph 5:25-27](#)). The bridegroom is making preparations to return for His bride - we need to ask ourselves are we as

His betrothed keeping our garments clean? Are we arrayed in our bridal attire, and keeping our ketubah hbt - covenant promises and vows?

The Nissuin - Marriage Itself

The culminating step in the Process of the Hebraic Wedding

The final step in the wedding process is called - Nissuin - the word comes from the Hebrew verb - hsn (nasa) - which means , "to carry." This is a graphic description - as the bride would be waiting for her groom to come - to carry her off to her new home. The period of the betrothal - was a time of great anticipation - as the bride waited for the arrival of her betrothed. One of the unique features of the Biblical Hebraic wedding was the time of the groom's arrival - it was to be a surprise:

- The bride took the betrothal seriously - expecting the at the end of the year long period of the betrothal.
- She knew the approximate timing - but the exact hour or day was uncertain.
- It was the father of the groom who would give the final approval for the marriage to begin.

The coming of the Bridegroom and the Wedding Begins

Since the time of his arrival was a surprise - the bride and her bridal party were always to be ready - this is the background of Yahushua's parable ([Mat. 25:1-13](#)). It was customary for one of the groom's party to go ahead of the bridegroom, leading the way to the bride's house - and shout - "Behold, the bridegroom comes." This would be followed by the sounding of the shofar. At the sounding of the shofar the entire wedding processional would go through the streets of the city to the bride's house. The groomsmen would again set up the huppah:

- Again the couple would say a blessing over the cup of wine.
- The ceremony finalized the promises and vows.

The pinnacle of this joyful celebration was the marriage supper:

- It was much more than just a sit down dinner for all the guests.
- It included seven full days of food, music, dance and celebration - ([Jn. 14:10-12](#)).
- After the festivities the husband was free to bring his bride to their new home to live together as husband and wife in the full covenant of marriage.

Messiah's Wedding - Still to Come

Yahushua - told His disciples - that He did not know the day or hour of His return ([Mat. 24:32-36](#)) - this is not so much to say He does not have all knowledge - but as with any Hebraic bridegroom - He must wait for His Father to give the word that the set time has come.

As we noted before - in a traditional Hebraic wedding - one of the groom's men would go before the arrival of the groom and shout - Behold the groom comes - should we expect anything less with the coming of our heavenly bridegroom? But where do we see such an event? - if we look to ([I Thess 4:16-18](#)) we see that just prior to our Master's return - there will indeed be a shout - from one of the ruling angels - what might this angel shout, could it be - "Behold the groom comes?"

We also saw that after this joyful proclamation of the groom's men there was in a traditional Hebraic wedding the joyful sounding of the shofar. Will this happen when our Master returns to receive His bride? If we continue reading the description of our Master's future wedding in ([I Thess 4:16-18](#)) we see there also - the sounding of the shofar in announcement of His return.

At the sounding of the shofar the entire wedding processional would go through the streets of the city to the bride's house - but where is this wedding processional at Yahushua's coming wedding - again it is clearly pictured for us in ([1 Thess 4:16-18](#)) - where all of Yahushua's wedding party is gathered together for the great wedding feast.

The pinnacle of the Hebraic wedding was the joyful celebration of the marriage supper - this too is a facet of our Master's soon coming wedding ([Rev 19:7-9](#)).

One last question needs to be raised - who is the bride of ?

The best solution then is - to affirm the fact that Yahuwah has always had one bride - His chosen people Israel. Yet this one bride is currently made up of 2 sister wives that are learning to come together as echad in this age. So while there is only one bride, she is made up of two houses, or sister wives making Yahuwah a practioner of plural marriage.