Shavuot (Pentecost) is the second major festival amongst the three pilgrimage festivals (Pesach/Passover being the first, and Sukkot/Tabernacles the third). Starting from the morrow after the high holy day Shabbat of the first day of Chag HaMatzah (Feast of Unleavened Bread) we are to count forty-nine days, seven groups of seven, with Shavuot occurring on the fiftieth day. This is why Shavuot (meaning weeks) is also known as the Feast of Weeks. The Greek name for this festival is “Pentecost”, which literally means “fifty count”. Shavuot is the day when we remember the giving of Adonai’s Torah at Mount Sinai. And, for believers in Messiah the day of Shavuot has extra special significance as it commemorates the time when Adonai poured out His Spirit (as seen in Acts 2) in accordance with the Brit Chadashah (New Covenant), which was prophesied in Yirmeyahu (Jeremiah) 31:31-33.

But, Shavuot (Pentecost) is not only the season when we remember that The Torah was given on Mt. Sinai, not only do we celebrate Shavuot to remember the season when Adonai’s Spirit was poured out in accordance with the Brit Chadashah (New Covenant), but we also celebrate Shavuot to remember something else that is very special to us. Something that is connected to both the giving of Torah and the giving of Adonai’s Spirit in a very special way... On this day of Shavuot we should also celebrate and remember our marriage to El Shaddai. It is the time where Adonai officially joined Himself to our people Yisra’el.

In our Shavuot love story the Chatan (Groom) swept his Kallah (Bride) off her feet and carried her off in eagle’s wings and brought her to His special place of betrothal under His chuppah, the large cloud that supernaturally covered Mt. Sinai. Throughout scripture Yisra’el and those in it’s commonwealth have been described as Adonai’s wife. On the first Shavuot Adonai (our husband) gave us a very special love letter... His Torah. And, in it He described His covenant of love. He loved His bride so much that He revealed Himself in an intimate way. He revealed His desires and His needs and He showed us exactly how we could love Him. His Torah was an expression of His love for His bride. As long as she stayed faithful as His wife He would make special provision for her needs and desires.

One of the aspects of a Jewish wedding is the “Ketubah”. It was the marriage contract that the Chatan (Groom) would give to his Kallah (Bride). In Hebrew “Ketubah” means
“writing”. The words of God, His Torah, was His Ketubah and His special writing of love that was given to His bride. In Shemot (Exodus) chapter twenty, the “Asarat HaD’varim” (aka Ten Commandments) was officially given to Yisra’el as a nation. It was so intimate to Him that He wrote it with His own hand. Shemot (Exo.) 31:18 says the following about Adonai, “When he had finished speaking with Moshe on Mount Sinai, Adonai gave him the two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone inscribed by the finger of God.”. The “Asarat HaD’varim”, The Ten words were simply the foundation of Adonai’s Ketubah. He continued to share the rest of His Torah (as we have today) with Moshe on Mt. Sinai and throughout the rest of Moshe’s life. Before Moshe died he wrote all the words of Adonai’s Torah and Ketubah in a book that would go in the ark along with the tablets. Devarim (Deut.) 31:24-26 states, “Moshe kept writing the words of this Torah in a book until he was done. When he had finished, Moshe gave these orders to the L’vi'im (Levites) who carried the ark with the covenant of Adonai: “Take this book of the Torah and put it next to the ark with the covenant of HaShem your God...”

At Mt. Sinai under the dome and covering of the great cloud Adonai asked for the hand of his Kallah (Bride), and she gave it. The Chatan gave his Kallah his Ketubah (His Torah), and the Kallah accepted it and submitted to it in obedience. In Shemot (Exodus) 24:7 we read, “He took the book of the covenant and read it in the hearing of the people, and they said, "All that HaShem has spoken will we do, and be obedient.". As the wife of Adonai, Yisra’el and its commonwealth are to be obedient to him in all things. This motivation has nothing to do with salvation, but it has everything to do with our relationship to the husband of Yisra’el. We are reminded of this in Ephesians 5:24 as it states, “so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands”.

In Tz’fanyah (Zephaniah) 3:17 we read, “HaShem, your God, is in the midst of you, a mighty one who will save. He will rejoice over you with joy. He will rest in his love. He will rejoice over you with singing.”. Adonai loves His wife so much that He wanted to give her the very best. In Nechemyah (Nehemiah) 9:13 the Navi (Prophet) says of Adonai, “You came down also on Mount Sinai, and spoke with them from heaven, and gave them right ordinances and true laws, good statutes and commandments.”. In Devarim (Deuteronomy) 6:24 we read, “HaShem ordered us to observe all these laws, to fear HaShem our God, always for our own good, so that he might keep us alive, as we are today.”. Not only does Adonai make provision in His Ketubah (Torah) for His Kallah (Bride), but He also lays out His expectations for the marriage. Devarim (Deuteronomy) 10:12-13 states, “So now, Yisra’el, all that HaShem your God asks from you is to fear HaShem your God, follow all his ways, love him and serve HaShem your God with all your heart and all your being; to obey, for your own good, the commandments and regulations of HaShem which I am giving you today.”.

Also, in connection with the Torah and the Brit Chadashah (New Covenant) Adonai reminds Yisra’el that He is our husband. In Yermiyahu (Jeremiah) 31:31-33 He says, “Behold, the days come, says HaShem, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Yisra’el, and with the house of Yehudah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Mitzrayim (Egypt); which my covenant they broke, although I was a husband to them, says HaShem. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Yisra’el after
those days, says HaShem: I will put my Torah (Law) in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people”.

The Hebrew word for “husband” here is “ba’al”, not to be confused with the pagan god “Ba’al”. It is important to understand this word and to understand what the scriptural meaning of the word “husband” can mean. The word is used four times throughout the scriptures in this manner (Devarim/Deut. 21:13, Devarim 22:22, Yeshayahu/Isaiah 54:5, Yermiyahu/Jeremiah 31:31-33). The root of this word can also be translated in a few other ways, but the basic understanding of the word for “husband” (ba’al) here is; “to have dominion over”. Although this may not be popular to many in our modern society - it is what the Biblical text means. In addition, the root of “ba’al” is used eight times throughout the scriptures for the Hebrew word, “to marry”. A few examples of this are found in Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 62:4-5 where Adonai says of Yisra’el, “You shall no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall your land any more be termed Desolate: but you shall be called Heftzi-Bah, and your land Beulah [root: ba’al]; for HaShem delights in you, and your land shall be married [root: ba’al]. For as a young man marries [root: ba’al] a virgin, so shall your sons marry [root: ba’al] you; and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.”.

As in any of our marriages there can be tough times, and even times where we have felt like we have been betrayed. So too was it with Adonai. For a brief moment Adonai forsook His wife do to her not being faithful, but out of great love for her quickly called her back. In Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 54:5-9 we read, “For your husband is your Maker, Adonai-Tzva’ot is his name. The Holy One of Yisra’el is your Redeemer. He will be called the God of all the earth. For HaShem has called you back like a wife abandoned and grief-stricken; “A wife married in her youth cannot be rejected,” says your God. "Briefly I abandoned you, but with great compassion I am taking you back. I was angry for a moment and hid my face from you; but with everlasting grace I will have compassion on you," says HaShem your Redeemer. "For me this is like Noach’s flood. Just as I swore that no flood like Noach’s would ever again cover the earth, so now I swear that never again will I be angry with you or rebuke you.”.

There is a parable in the Talmud that describes some of this; “There once was a man who pledged his dearest faith to a maiden, beautiful and true. For a time, all passed pleasantly and the maiden lived in happiness. But then the man was called from her side; he left her; long she waited, but he did not return. Friends pitied her and rivals mocked her; tauntingly they pointed at her, and said, “he has left thee; he will never come back.” The maiden saw her chamber, and read in secret the letters which her lover had written to her, the letters in which he had promised to be ever faithful, ever true. Weeping she read them, but they brought comfort to her heart; she dried her eyes and doubted not. A joyous day dawned for her; the man she loved returned, and when he learned that others had doubted and asked her how she had preserved her faith, she showed his letters to him declaring her eternal trust.”.

Over three thousand years ago our people were married to Adonai at Mt. Sinai, with His Torah being His Ketubah, His letter to His bride in which He promised to be ever faithful, and ever true. This is why we are called “The People Of The Book”. The TeNaKh (Torah, Prophets, and Writings) contains Adonai’s love letters to us, and in
them we have hope. According to Jewish tradition Yisra’el left Mitzrayim in the year 2448. In 2011 and based on the Jewish calendar year of 5771, this would make it our 3323rd wedding anniversary! Baruch HaShem! Each year at our anniversary we reaffirm our commitment and love to our Master and to the husband of Yisra’el, and we have great hope in His soon return when Adonai will at a future date reaffirm His wedding vows to His bride.

Any bride that loves her husband takes her anniversary seriously. It doesn’t matter how long one has been married, the anniversary is not forgotten and great importance is placed upon it being celebrated. This is one indicator of the health of the marriage. If we fail to see the importance of Shavuot and don’t treat it as important time with Adonai, than it says something about our love and dedication to Him. The yearly wedding anniversary should be a special time that both husband and wife set aside time to celebrate their union and their love.

In fact, our Mt. Sinai anniversary in connection with the giving of Adonai’s Spirit was all about His love. It was not only about His love for us, but it was also about our love for Him. For Adonai recognizes that we love Him when we seek to guard His Ketubah (His Torah). The word “know” when used in the scriptures was often used in a very intimate sense and in such a way that was only saved for husband and wife. In Yochanan Alef (1John) 2:3-5 we read, “This is how we know that we know him: if we keep his commandments. One who says, "I know him," and doesn't keep his commandments, is a liar, and the truth isn't in him. But whoever keeps his word, God’s love has most assuredly been perfected in him. This is how we know that we are in him". Also, Yochanan Alef (1John) 5:3 says, “For loving God means obeying his commands. Moreover, his commands are not burdensome”.

Furthermore, the Representative of Adonai, Yeshua The Messiah, tells us in Yochanan (John) 14:15-16 “If you love me, you will keep my commands; and I will ask the Father, and he will give you another comforting Counselor like me, the Spirit of Truth, to be with you forever.”. Also, in Yochanan (John) 14:21 Yeshua says, “Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me, and the one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and reveal myself to him.”. And, Yeshua again for a third time tells us how important it is for those whom claim to love him to keep His commandments, but this time he goes even a step further to tell us that his commandments and words are no different than the words and commandments of His Father, the one whom gave Torah at Mt. Sinai. Furthermore, he intentionally connects these things with the giving of The Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit), which would shortly be given on Shavuot (Pentecost). We find all of this in Yochanan (John) 14:23-26 where Yeshua says, "...If someone loves me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. Someone who doesn't love me doesn't keep my words — and the word you are hearing is not my own but that of the Father who sent me. I have told you these things while I am still with you. But the Counselor, the Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit), whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything: that is, he will remind you of everything I have said to you.”.

It is through our Shavuot experience and the giving of Adonai’s Spirit (as seen in Acts 2) that we are enabled to be faithful and to honor Adonai’s Ketubah. It is through Messiah
Yeshua that we are able to re-establish our love connection with God and keep it. Romans 8:38-39 states, “For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Messiah Yeshua our Lord.”. The bringing of Adonai’s wife back unto Himself was and will only be accomplished through the work of Yeshua The Messiah. For Yochanan Alef (1John) 4:9-10 tells us, “Here is how God showed his love among us: God sent his only Son into the world, so that through him we might have life. Here is what love is: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the kapparah (atonning sacrifice) for our sins.”.

And, the whole point of this sacrifice was so that Adonai could show His love for us and to draw us back to His Ketubah, back to His Torah, as the prophecy of the Brit Chadashah (New Covenant) says, “… this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Yisra’el after those days, says HaShem: I will put my Torah (Law) in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people”. If we have been joined to the Husband of Yisra’el, and we have joined our heart to His Ketubah, let us rejoice before Him and take great joy in the day of our anniversary, the day of Shavuot.

Chag Sameach!

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