

Am Segulah – Messiah’s Bride Body

We (by virtue of being grafted in), as part of Israel in *Parashat Yitro*, were offered the opportunity to become a “*My own treasure (peculiar treasure or am segulah), a kingdom of kohanim and a holy nation*” (*Ex. 19:5-6*), the response by all of Israel was “*Everything Adonai has spoken, we will do (kol asher-diber Adonai naase)*”. The proposal was great, the one making the promise was reliable, and I believe our Jewish people intended to obey everything when it came to doing everything *Adonai* had said. The generation of our people that left Egypt was willing to obey their new Master, without reservation. This is always true at any wedding – the bride is ready to honor, cherish, love, and obey her husband-to-be! This commitment is one that must also be in our innermost being still today. Will we in *Kol Simcha* implicitly and explicitly obey whatsoever He asks us to do. In next week’s *Parsha* we read: “*All the people said: ‘All the words Adonai has spoken, we will do and we will obey’*” (*Ex. 24:7*) “*HaAm Vayomru Kol Asher-Diber Adonai Naase VeNishma.*” This is ***our congregational Scripture*** which is displayed in our Bulletin since 1992.

In chapter 19 of the book of *Exodus*, we observe a very moving scene where the Groom (*Yah*) tells His would-be bride, Israel, how much He loves her. One of the words He calls her is (in English) “beloved treasure.” Some versions use the phrase peculiar treasure. But the Hebrew word is *segulah*, סְגֻלָּה. It is a very picturesque word. In ancient times it was used in Ugaritic (Canaanite) literature to describe what a king would think concerning the possessions he may have gained when he conquered another people. He would have many new valuable objects, but only a few choice ones would he classify as *segulot* (plural of *segulah*). These he considered the most prized possessions which he treated with special care and kept under special protection. *Rashi*, a major Hebrew commentator, explains this word in like manner:

Segulah means a cherished treasure, the same as (Ecclesiastes 2:8), ‘and treasures of kings’ costly vessels and precious stones which kings store up. In the same manner shall you be unto Me a cherished treasure more than other peoples.

Accordingly, the *King of Kings* who possesses all of the earth, stated in *Exodus 19:5*, that He considers only Israel to be His special, valued and loved possession – His *am segulah*. We see here that *Yah* had already coined a term of endearment for His would-be bride, Israel.

While He was speaking such loving words, He also outlined for Israel what their marriage would be like. To begin, *Yah* mentioned that He already had the *ketubah* ready. Then, He told Israel that He had a special purpose for their relationship. Therefore, this marriage would have goals and direction. *Yah* said that Israel would be a *kingdom of kohanim*. One of the main functions of the priesthood was to lead others into an understanding of *Yah*’s role on the earth and to help them worship and serve Him. In this context, the entire nation of Israel is to be dedicated to leading the world toward an understanding and acceptance of *Yah*’s mission in the worship and adoration of the King.

Stated in another way, it was a responsibility of the *kohen* to act as His representative to others. Similarly, according to *Ex. 19:5*, Israel was to be *Yah*’s representative for and to other nations. This would fulfill the ultimate promise of the Covenant with Abraham that he would be a blessing to all nations.

But Israel would be ***A Special Nation Among Other Nations*** a different kingdom. The new nation of *B’nei Israel* also have a King: *Yah* Himself (though this would change later in their history). *Yah* even told them that they would be a *holy nation*. The word *holy (kadosh)*, does not imply some ethereal religious status. It simply means that this bride was to be ***different from and separate from*** all the other nations.

Summarizing what the Eternal One was telling Israel, His bride, we see that not only would Israel enjoy the unique status of being *Yah*’s special beloved people, but they also would have both the privilege and responsibility to ***show-and-tell*** the nations of the world who *Yah* really is. In short, Israel was/is to be

a nation among the other nations of the world serving as a perpetual witness and testimony of the one true *Elohim*. How this would actually transpire is the object of much debate, but the fact of the calling is certain.

Imagine how it would have been if, on the night of your wedding engagement, your potential spouse told you in lovingly endearing terms exactly what His eternal plans for your marriage would be – glorious, meaningful, and praiseworthy plans! But this is exactly what *Yah* is telling Israel. He described, in most definite terms, what their marriage would be like. Since *Yah* is the One who formulated this marriage, in one way or another, these plans will ultimately be carried out with Israel.

Parashat Yitro speaks of the divine wedding between *Yah* and Israel. We all know that when a wedding is over, everyone looks forward to the banquet! This portion does not discuss the banquet. But, perhaps, we may see a hint of it in other parts of the *Torah*. (If so, then we are witnesses that the *ketubah* provides for it!) The last of the seven Holy Days written about in Leviticus chapter 23 is *Succot*. It is a time that all Israel is to live in little temporary houses for a week. According to Zechariah, the prophet, when *Adonai* returns to earth to set up His Kingdom, He will command that all nations celebrate *Succot*. *Succot* is a time of intense rejoicing and feasting, characteristic of a wedding banquet.

Commenting on these end-time events, the book of *Revelation 19:9* talks about the *marriage supper of the Lamb*. Messianic Jewish commentator and my friend, Daniel Juster, comments, “*I believe Succot is the marriage supper of the Lamb and the inauguration of the King and His Queen?*” If so, then all who are in Messiah, the bride, will be there rejoicing with our Groom. *Even so, come Yeshua, Amen!*

I, Yeshua your Lord, take you, Kehilat Kol Simcha, to be my lawfully wedded wife, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better or worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, for all eternity.

We, Kol Simcha, your bride, take you, Yeshua, to be our lawfully wedded husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better or worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, for all eternity.

But it will always be for better, and it will always be in health! *Shabbat Shalom!*