

ONE TORAH FOR ALL

Zerubbabel ben Emunah
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Covenantal Relationship

B'reshit (Genesis) 15:18

In that day YHWH made a covenant with Avram, saying, "Unto your seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates."

What does it mean to enter into a covenantal relationship? Why would a person even want to enter into such a relationship in the first place? And, is there a difference between a covenant and a contract?

A covenant is a binding agreement between at least two parties; whereas, the word "contract" comes from its root word which means "to reduce in size." In the case of Avram, whose name was later changed by YHWH to "Avraham," part of the covenantal agreement that was made was that the offspring of Avraham would greatly increase in number. Thereby, this agreement that was entered into between YHWH and Avram that day so long ago is much more than a contract.

When one enters into a covenantal relationship of some kind, then there is nearly always a mutual benefit to all parties involved as well as being a common purpose to which the parties bind themselves in agreement to accomplish. One of the most common covenantal relationships is marriage.

The marriage covenant takes place when two people meet and as they get to know one another and discover that not only are their interests similar, but their goals in life are similar as well. So then discussion begins about joining together in a marriage covenant to meet those goals in life. This is the main aspect of any covenantal relationship: a common purpose.

Such was the case between YHWH and Avram. Their common purpose was to become a people set-apart to YHWH in order that He would have a people to have fellowship with. Now as amazing as this sounds, that YHWH would gain a benefit from having a relationship with any man or group of people, is nearly beyond comprehension considering the reality that YHWH is perfect and self-sustaining and self-existent and needs nothing outside of Him to exist. However, He desires to have fellowship with His highest creation, man, which is one of the

main purposes for which He created man in the first place. So both parties in this covenant are benefited.

Now as it is typical with covenants, not only is there a common purpose which is beneficial to both parties, but there are also conditions under which the parties are to labor to bring this common purpose to reality. The parties of the covenant agree to these conditions in order to accomplish them.

Shemot (Exodus) 19:8

And all the people answered together, and said, "All that YHWH has spoken we will do." And Moshe reported the words of the people to YHWH.

Moshe reported these particular words back to YHWH, as if YHWH didn't already know that the people had agreed to the terms and conditions of the covenant. But these words are recorded for our benefit, so that we would know without any doubt that both parties have agreed to abide by the covenant and all the terms and conditions of the covenant. This includes both its blessings and its penalties (curses).

On the one hand, YHWH agrees to be the Elohim of Israel if they will obey His Voice and then He will provide for all of Israel's needs. This includes giving Israel victory over all of her enemies. On the other hand, Israel agrees to hear and obey the Voice of YHWH and to keep and obey all of His commandments, ordinances, statutes and judgments; none of which are a burden to Israel, but rather a great blessing.

If either of the parties fail to stay within the agreed upon conditions, then the covenant is broken and needs repair. If the breach is great enough, then one of the parties will forfeit his life in order that new members might be brought into the covenant to fulfill it.

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 24:16

"The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers; every man shall be put to death for his own sin."

This covenantal relationship that Israel has entered into with YHWH, He takes very seriously as Israel should, but has not always. Because Israel has not always taken this covenant as seriously as she should, she has paid a very costly price over the years with generation after generation being disciplined, even unto death for their covenant breaking lives.

It is for this very reason that Mashiach Yeshua came, so that Israel (particularly the ten tribe northern kingdom) could be brought back into the covenant relationship with YHWH. The ten tribe nation of the north, Israel, had broken the covenant so seriously that YHWH completely removed them from the covenant. However, YHWH still loved Israel and desired to bring Israel back into this covenantal relationship with Himself. So, Mashiach came and died in Israel's place so that she would be able then to re-enter this covenantal relationship with YHWH.

In Mashiach then, one can and does find the means with which to actually keep the Torah of YHWH. Before Mashiach, Israel was still under obligation to keep the covenant; however, Israel was not able to do this because she lacked the power, strength and wisdom to do so. What Israel was shown by YHWH was that she was completely unable to keep this covenant in the power of her own flesh.

Ephesians 2:12

that you were at that time separate from Mashiach, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without Elohim in the world.

The house of Israel was removed from the covenantal relationship with YHWH because of its idolatry and chasing after other gods. Because of this spiritual whoring, YHWH gave them a bill of divorcement and sent them away. He scattered them throughout the nations. But YHWH still loved Israel. YHWH still had a covenant to keep with Avraham, Yitzchak and Ya'aqov. In the keeping of His side of the covenant that YHWH made, He chose to die in the form of a man in order that Israel might have the means to come back into the covenantal relationship with Him.

Ephesians 2:13

But now in Mashiach Yeshua you that once were far off are brought near in the Blood of Mashiach.

In Yeshua, and specifically by, through and in His Blood, we have been brought into a covenantal relationship with YHWH our Elohim. This covenantal relationship began with Avraham. It was continued through his son Yitzchak and then through his son Ya'aqov. Then it was made more specific through Moshe and to the whole nation of Israel at Sinai when YHWH brought them to the mountain and spoke in the hearing of all of Israel.

But now, we do not come to that mountain which was smoking and burning and the sound of the shofar, but to the mountain of grace and compassion through the Blood of Mashiach. It is the same covenant. Before it was written upon tablets of stone, but now it is written upon the hearts and minds of His people.

Yirmeyah (Jeremiah) 31:33

"But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days," says YHWH; "I will put My Torah in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their Elohim, and they shall be My people."

It is so very important that we note exactly what it is that YHWH is writing upon the hearts and minds of His people who are a part of this new covenant that He is making with the house of Israel. It is His Torah. It is the same commandments which He gave to Moshe on Mount Sinai in the wilderness. However, those commandments were written upon stone and scrolls, outside of a man. But now in the renewing of the covenant with Israel, YHWH will write these same commandments, not upon stone or scrolls, but upon the minds and hearts of His people;

whereas before, the commandments were external, now they are internal; thus, demonstrating the presence of His Spirit in the lives of His people.

This new covenant, actually renewed covenant, is for whosoever will come to Mashiach Yeshua and be grafted into Israel.

Yeshayah (Isaiah) 55:3

“Incline your ear, and come to Me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.”

This covenant is an eternal covenant. The only way to be a part of this eternal covenant is to come into it through Mashiach Yeshua. It is in this way that one can have and experience eternal life.

There are two aspects of this covenantal relationship that are of primary importance to each and every talmid of Yeshua.

Matithyah (Matthew) 22:37-39

37 And He said to him, “You shall love YHWH your Elohim with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.

38 This is the great and first commandment.

39 And a second like it is this, you shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

When one enters into this covenantal relationship with YHWH, one also enters into a covenantal relationship with all other fellow Israelites. This aspect of this covenant with YHWH is often overlooked or ignored.

To be in a covenantal relationship with YHWH also means that one is in a covenantal relationship with all of Israel. Therefore, when we are told that the second greatest commandment is to love one’s neighbor as oneself, then we know the nature of that relationship. And since all who are a part of Israel are in a covenantal relationship with one another, then don’t you think that it is high time that we start treating one another in such a way as to reflect this truth? To be sure!

When a person enters into a marriage covenant it is supposed to be until death. Furthermore, it is supposed to be a relationship of love and mutual respect, caring for and taking care of one another’s needs as well as working towards that common purpose.

Likewise, the covenantal relationship that we all share between us as talmidim of Yeshua should be every bit as caring and serving towards one another. When people get into the mode of attacking one another for whatever reason, then there is no understanding present of this covenantal relationship that we are in with one another through Mashiach Yeshua.

If a person would like to have a better understanding of what this covenantal relationship is supposed to look like between fellow Israelites, then please read Qorintyah Aleph (1st Corinthians) 13. This is known as the “love chapter.” This is a very good description of how we are to be treating one another and interacting among ourselves in this covenantal relationship. The sad thing is that it does not seem to be very common at this point. Hopefully, this will change as we grow and mature in our faith and we see the necessity of actually living this every day of our lives.

Now it is important for us to understand as well, the dynamics between the covenant which YHWH made with Avraham and the covenant made with Israel at Sinai known to us as the Torah.

Galatians 3:17

Now this I say: A covenant confirmed beforehand by Elohim, the Torah, which came four hundred and thirty years after, does not make void, so as to make the promise of none effect.

What Shaul is teaching us here is that the latter covenant, the Torah, does not make void or annul the former covenant given to Avraham in the form of a promise from YHWH. Since the former is not voided and still stands, and since the latter came after it and was instituted with the shedding of blood, then we know that both are standing together. The latter stands upon the former as its foundation, but does not nullify it in the least.

Likewise, the coming of Mashiach and the giving of a new covenant does not void the former one, but rather stands upon it as its foundation. The new covenant stands with the former covenants verifying them and showing them to be true.

Did not even Yeshua teach us this very thing?

Matithyah (Matthew) 5:17

“Do not think that I came to destroy the Torah or the prophets; I did not come not to destroy, but to verify.”

As we pointed out above, the new covenant is actually a renewed covenant. This renewed covenant is based upon the former covenants given at Sinai and even before to Avraham. The main difference between those covenants and this renewed one is the location where it is written.

After the death, resurrection and ascension of Yeshua, He gave His Spirit just as He had promised. It is part of the ministry of His Spirit to write this renewed covenant upon our hearts and in our minds. He is, in fact, doing that very thing even today. This is why we see the movement in our world today of all those returning back to Torah because His Spirit is drawing us and writing these things in our minds and upon our hearts.

But the one thing that we dare not miss is that this covenantal relationship includes all of our brothers and sisters in Mashiach. I implore you all to see and understand this truth and to implement it into your everyday living now. Let us treat one another according to the covenant we each are a part of.

ABBA YHWH, please open our eyes that we may see and do to one another in a fashion that is wholly pleasing to You; in the name of Yeshua our Mashiach.

Amein and Amein.

Zerubbabel ben Emunah
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