

13 – Mishpatim & Joshua 10 – Outline

The Ancient Jewish Wedding and the Calendar

1. We started this journey talking about Sukkot as the finalization of a wedding to God. Why are we now talking about a wedding at Mt. Sinai?
 - a. Shavuot is the second stage of a wedding, Sukkot the third
2. Application of the ancient Jewish wedding to the calendar
 - a. Shiddukhin
 - i. when the children are young, usually the groom’s father picks a young girl for him
 - ii. Passover/Unleavened Bread – God is the Father. He sets aside Israel as a bride for His Son, Yeshua.
 - b. Erusin (also called “Kidushin”)
 - i. when the pair come of age, they get to decide whether they are willing to go through with it; the ceremony includes a huppah and marriage contract
 1. after erusin, the two separate, the groom to prepare a home, the bride to focus on personal preparations
 - ii. Shavuot – the cloud on Sinai is the huppah, the 10 commandments are the ketubah; the enacting of the covenant is followed by a celebratory meal
 - c. Nissuin
 - i. groom shows up to retrieve his bride; they enter the huppah again to finalize the vows; consummation of the marriage; he whisks her away to her new home
 - ii. Sukkot – connected to the Incarnation, the arrival of the Groom; Sukkot is a time of special intimacy in the simplicity of the sukkah
 - iii. R’Raskin: “...our Sages tell us that, in truth, Mt. Sinai was the betrothal of the Jewish people, the engagement party, or the ‘erusin’ of the Jewish people. But the nissuin, the actual marriage, will take place when Moshiach will come.”
(https://www.chabad.org/multimedia/video_cdo/aid/2577593/jewish/Parshah-Mnemonics-Behar.htm 16m)

Mishpatim

Mishpatim Summary

Engaging the Commandments as We Mature

1. Keep in mind
 - a. “mitzvah” is likely from “tzavta,” “to attach/join.” The commandments are means by which we are joined to God.

- b. we can flip back and forth in our attitude toward doing commandments depending on our mood, our focus, how busy we are, etc.
 - i. in general, as we mature, we should be spending more and more time relating the commandments in more mature ways
- 2. When we are young
 - a. the sages liken the taking on of the Torah to a bar or bat mitzvah (https://www.chabad.org/multimedia/video_cdo/aid/1768505/jewish/Marrying-G-d.htm, 6:20m)
 - b. at 12 or 13, we relate to rules mostly like they are fences that hem us in; having little life experience or understanding of the rules' purpose, we do them out of duty
- 3. Commandments as revelations of the Creator's mind and will
 - a. a higher level view: each commandment is a snippet of God's mind and will
 - b. we gain some understanding of God's mind and align ourselves to His will through them
- 4. Commandments are about love and reflect our true nature
 - a. we recognize that at the heart of all of God's commandments is love
 - b. since God is love and we are made in His image, our essence is also love
 - i. therefore, we don't have to go against our "nature" to do God's commandments
 - ii. the commandments are a mirror to us
- 5. Commandments are the seeds God gives us by which we bear the living Word
 - a. Hosea 2:19-20: "And I will **betroth** you to Me forever. I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and in **justice**, in steadfast love and in mercy. I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness. And you shall know the LORD."
 - i. a cord by which we are married to God is justice, "mishpat" in this verse
 - b. through the commandments we live out a marriage to God
 - i. marriage includes fertility
 - ii. as Mary bore the Living Word, so must we (though there is only one Son of God, of course)
 - 1. the commandments are like seeds in need of a physical body to be present in the lower world, the physical realm; the bride gives this body
- 6. Final Thought: When we see the mitzvot in more mature ways, we want to beautify them, but in a balanced way that is life-giving. Yeshua helps us find that balance.

The Pilgrimage Festivals: 1-2-3

- 1. Exo 23:14-17: "Three times in the year you shall keep a feast to me. You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread. As I commanded you, you shall eat unleavened bread for seven days at the appointed time in the month of Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt. None shall appear before me empty-handed. You shall keep the Feast of Harvest, of the firstfruits of your labor, of what you sow in the field. You shall keep the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you gather in from the field the fruit of your labor. Three times in the year shall all your males appear before the Lord GOD."

2. There is a fundamental 3-step pattern that is not only at the root of the calendar, but it's at the root of salvation and, thus, all of the Word and the world
3. Chana Weisberg: "'One' implies that there exists only a single reality and suggests absolute conformity. 'Two' indicates divisiveness and disparity, as in two opposing, rival approaches. 'Three' finds an underlying unity between disparate entities."

(https://www.chabad.org/theJewishWoman/article_cdo/aid/472297/jewish/What-the-Number-Three-Teaches-Us-about-Parenting-Dos-and-Donts.htm)

- a. oneness, separation, reunification
 - i. oneness means you either just have one thing, or one thing dominates everything else
 - ii. separation usually implies not just two but *opposites*
 - iii. three brings the two together in a way that makes *peace* between them
4. Examples:
 - a. Eve is separated from Adam; the two come back together
 - b. When was the world created? Rabbi Eliezer: the world was created in Tishrei; Rabbi Yehoshua: the world was created in Nissan; Rabbeinu Tam: In Tishrei, it came into God's mind to create the world, and in Nissan He actually does it.
 - c. Marriage:
 - i. Shiddukhin – parents dominate the will of the children
 - ii. Erusin – parents release the children to their own choice; the bride and groom also separate at this point, though technically married
 - iii. Nissuin—the couple finally comes together, and they return to the groom's home, but as adults now
 - d. Days 1-3 of Creation
 - i. Day 1: Light and dark are distinct from each other, but they are still obvious, lacking physical clothing – no real choice here; we would choose light
 1. but the stage is set for separation
 - ii. Day 2: separation of waters above and below, creation of the spiritual and physical realms
 1. now that the "realm of separation" is created, a place that seems to function without God's involvement, there is the potential for real choice and, thus, separation from God
 - iii. Day 3: sends a wonderful message: "Even though you're going to turn headlong into physicality and darkness and separate from Me, when you call out to Me, I will put boundaries on those physical waters that are drowning you, and I will teach you how to really live."
 1. live like the plants, always oriented to the spiritual dimension, even as they are always anchored in the darkness
 2. through God's bringing order and teaching us about life, we are reunited with Him
 - e. The Pilgrimage Festivals
 - i. Unleavened Bread: a lopsided unity – God shows Himself powerful, and Israel must conform (having little choice)

- ii. Shavuot:
 1. acceptance of the covenant leads quickly to a separation from God via the golden calf incident
 2. much about Shavuot is “divided:” two tablets, two loaves offered, tongues of fire in Acts 2 are “cloven,” it begins the dry season (the separation of heaven and earth)
- iii. Sukkot:
 1. Yom Kippur shows us the means by which we are reunified – the blood of the Lamb presented in the heavenly Holy of Holies
 2. Sukkot is connected to the Incarnation.
 3. other imagery of connection: the Four Species, the 70 bulls, the communal joy of the sukkah
- 5. 3 Types of Marriage – from the Lubavitcher Rebbe
 (https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/2090/jewish/The-Mathematics-of-Marriage.htm)
 - a. the singular marriage: one dominates the other
 - b. the twosome marriage: the two preserve their identity, but together (a relationship of individuals)
 - c. the three-dimensional marriage: the two keep their identities but throw their energies into creating a third reality that encompasses them, the marriage

Yeshua

1. The 3-step pattern in Yeshua
 - a. one with God before coming to earth
 - i. John 1:1-2: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.”
 - ii. being in the presence of God is a place of clarity
 - b. He came to earth and suffered death
 - i. a degree of separation from God
 - ii. He was tempted – choice
 - iii. in the grave, He went to a place of even deeper separation
 - c. He was resurrected
 - i. reunited with His own body
 - ii. reunited with His disciples
 - iii. elevated to the right hand of God
 - iv. will return to bring peace on Earth

Joshua 10

1. the “Southern Campaign”
 - a. Israel rapidly takes the southern portion of the Land
 - b. Gibeon is attacked, and Israel must come to their aid because of their covenant
 - c. God stops the sun and moon so Israel can finish the battle
 - d. the door is opened to capture the rest of the southern kings, one by one
2. the power of faithfulness to covenant

- a. Israel marched all night to protect these people who had tricked them, resulting in: miracle, victory, life, the elevation of God's name, the elevation of Joshua, eventually the swift taking of the whole south
 - b. God wants us to behave honorably and generously with each other, as Israel does here
3. when we suspend natural law and human logic, God does too
- a. they marched all night and fought the whole next day for a crafty people
 - i. they stepped out in miracle, and God made it happen

Transcript (not exact)

Welcome to Beth Tikkun and our ongoing study of the Torah in the light of the spiritual seasons of the year. This week we are in portion Mishpatim, Exodus 21-24. As a reminder, there is a link to an outline below the video. This one might be a good one to go through with the outline. Before we get to the portion, let's do a little review and open up an idea I've been alluding to but haven't dug into much yet.

The Ancient Jewish Wedding and the Calendar

In our exploration through the calendar and the Torah portions so far, we started out by connecting the fall feasts, including Sukkot, to the FINALIZATION of a wedding, a wedding to God. At Sukkot and throughout the winter, the bride is stepping up to be the mature bride. And so we have been focusing our studies of the Torah portions on how it is that the bride puts away her old life, finds her new identity within the marriage, and steps up to express herself within that marriage from a heart of love for her groom. The bride comes to a place of producing fruit from the seed the groom has placed within her. These are stages of maturity, and so as we are drawing nearer to the end of the calendar and the end of the yearly cycle, we have been focusing on what it means to be mature. Last week, our topics included how we go deep in Torah study and some characteristics of being masters of time.

As we have been exploring together, one question that might come up is why we are now talking about a wedding to God at Mt. Sinai, which happens in the late spring at Shavuot, if the marriage doesn't happen until Sukkot in the late fall? Are there two marriages? Do we get divorced and then remarried in the fall? What's going on? Is the marriage in the spring or the fall? As with so many questions like this, the answer is "yes." It's both.

Let me explain how it can be both. Shavuot is the second stage of marriage, and Sukkot is the third. In order to understand how marriage to God is being pictured in the calendar, we need to understand a bit about the ancient Jewish wedding. In short, the ancient wedding has three stages, and WITH EACH OF THE THREE PILGRIMAGE FESTIVALS, we experience another stage of the wedding. And we repeat this every year as a newly reborn person, reborn to a higher level. One important way we approach Passover, Shavuot, and Sukkot is through the lens of this ancient 3-part marriage ceremony.

So let's briefly talk about these three phases of the ancient Jewish wedding. (It's a bit different now, by the way, as today parts 2 and 3 are done together as a single ceremony.) You may have heard the Jewish wedding described before, but you probably haven't heard it connected to the calendar as we will connect it today. The three stages of weddings in times past are shiddukhin, erusin, and nissuin. These are not difficult to understand. Very briefly, the first stage, shiddukhin, happens when two children are very young, when the groom's parents select a bride for their son. In the calendar, this is happening at Passover and Unleavened Bread. Unleavened Bread is a time when Israel is just an infant and child, just learning to walk as the counting of the omer begins. Because God is so powerful here in the Passover story, Israel has little free will. At Passover, it's God the Father and Israel the child. At this first pilgrimage festival, God the Father sets aside Israel as a future bride for His Son, Yeshua.

We come to step 2. When the two come of age, they will be given a choice as to whether or not they want to go through with the marriage. If both agree, then they will proceed with the second phase of the marriage process, erusin, which is also called kidushin. Erusin involves a HUPPAH and the presentation and acceptance of the MARRIAGE CONTRACT, and this is what we are seeing at Mt. Sinai: the cloud is the huppah, and the 10 Commandments are the summary of the marriage contract. We will also see a celebratory meal here connected to erusin. At this point, the two are engaged but do not yet live together or even consummate the marriage. Instead, the groom goes to prepare a house for the bride alongside his parents' home while the bride focuses on personal preparations.

The third stage, nissuin, happens when the groom shows up to retrieve his bride with much fanfare and romance. The two again enter the huppah to finalize their vows before the groom whisks the bride away to her new home. This is when the marriage reaches a new level of intimacy as the marriage is finally consummated. All of this is being pictured in many ways during the fall mo'edim. Sukkot is connected to the incarnation of Yeshua, Yeshua Who tabernacled among us; the Incarnation is the arrival of the Groom to take His bride. Those who have done Sukkot recognize that it is a time of special intimacy in the sukkah. We could even call it a romantic time.

R'Raskin: "...our Sages tell us that, in truth, Mt. Sinai was the betrothal of the Jewish people, the engagement party, or the 'erusin' of the Jewish people. But the nissuin, the actual marriage, will take place when Moshiach will come."

(https://www.chabad.org/multimedia/video_cdo/aid/2577593/jewish/Parshah-Mnemonics-Behar.htm 16m)

Once the wedding is finalized, the bride sets about learning how to be the bride. And that has been our main topic since we began this study, how it is that the bride steps up in increasing independence and maturity to be the bride.

Mishpatim

Summary

With that introduction, let's turn now to portion Mishpatim. If your Bible has headings, you'll probably see headings in this portion like "sundry laws." "Mishpatim" means "judgments" or

“ordinances.” This portion is second only to Ki Teitzei in number of commandments, having 53 mitzvot. A big portion of the Oral Torah is devoted to working out how to practically do these 53 commandments. Subjects here include the treatment of indentured servants, laws about justly handling physical harm and property destruction, laws about how different classes of people should treat each other, and laws about the mo’edim. These are laws that bring people into unity in a community. After enumerating many commandments, God then promises to make the way open for conquering the Land. Moses communicates what God has said to the people, and they answer with one voice, “All the words that the Lord has spoken we will do.” Moses writes everything down that he has so far received, and this is important because included in what he writes at this point would be the commandment to not make idols. After writing, Moses has an unusual 12-part altar built at the base of the mountain, and he has young men from the nation bring burnt offerings and peace offerings of oxen. Remember the Levites have not yet been designated as the priestly tribe, so it would seem Moses saw fit to have young men from all 12 tribes bring these first national offerings to the Lord, the offerings from which they get the blood of the covenant. The blood from these sacrifices is then divided in half, half being splashed against the altar and half set aside to sprinkle on the people – in other words, half to the Lord and half to the people. Before they are sprinkled, however, Moses reads out what he has written, the Book of the Covenant, and the people again say, “All that the LORD has spoken we will do,” and they add, “and we will be obedient.” Moses then sprinkles the blood on the people, saying, “Behold the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words.” Finally, Moses, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, along with seventy elders of Israel, go up the mountain and have a celebration meal with God. And they see Him. At the end of the portion, Moses leaves Aaron and Hur in charge and goes up the mountain, taking Joshua with him, staying 40 days to receive the first set of tablets and continue receiving the Torah from God.

A couple of points stick out right away here. First of all, it is being made very clear to everyone that not only is Israel entering into an agreement with God as a nation, but also that each tribe and each person is personally entering into that agreement. The 12 tribes bring the sacrifices of the covenant, and the blood of the covenant literally touches every person in the nation. When they answer Moses, it is all of the people answering. Again, it’s another extraordinary scene recorded here unlike anything that has happened before or since. It is solemn and dramatic, and as we read it, we can’t help but think ahead a bit to how quickly they will violate the covenant with the incident of the golden calf. But for the people in that moment, they must have had such a mixture of emotions – mostly wonder and joy and excitement but also some apprehension. “What are we getting ourselves into?” Right? But isn’t that exactly what is going through the mind of every bride and groom on their wedding day?

Engaging the Commandments with Maturity

I want to spend much of our time today on the verses in this portion that directly address the mo’edim and the calendar. But before we get to that, let me say a few words about commandments in general, since this great compilation of commandments is what especially marks this portion. Much of humanity’s legal and social law comes from this little Torah portion, these few words written in a certain book made from certain hides 3,300 years ago.

Remember that as we read these early stages of Israel's salvation from the slavery of Egypt, we are reading on multiple levels because we are in the final stages of the yearly salvation cycle. What I'd like to do now is look at several levels for approaching God's commandments.

We should be always growing in how we approach God's commandments. The reality is, however, that as we go about our day and week and year, we can approach the mitzvot in a variety of ways. It's not like we have a smooth transition from one way of seeing the commandments to the next. Our attitude toward doing God's commandments can depend on our mood in a given moment, our focus, how busy we are, our health, whatever else is happening in life. But in general, as we mature, we want to spend more and more time relating to the commandments in mature ways.

As we begin, let me point out that one of the most common words we use for God's commandments is "mitzvah." We say there are 613 "mitzvot." This Hebrew word is used about 300 times in various forms in the Torah. The root of "mitzvah" is often given as a root that means to "ATTACH" or "JOIN," "tzavta." A mitzvah, a commandment, joins us to God. That's a foundational understanding for approaching God's commandments.

When we are young, however, we don't look at commandments as opportunities to be joined to the law-giver. How do we see rules and commands when we are young? The sages liken the taking on of the Torah to a bar or bat mitzvah. At 12 or 13, a girl or boy becomes an adult and takes personal responsibility for his or her walk with the Lord according to His commandments. How does a twelve-year-old look at rules? Mostly they see them as fences that hem them in, often unnecessarily. A twelve-year-old's brain has much more development to go through, and they have little life experience. It's often hard for teens to grasp the wisdom of rules. I would say teens mostly DO follow the rules, but they do so more from duty than from understanding that following the rules is how we live the fullness of life intended for us.

At a higher level, we begin to understand that the commandments are more than just rules. They are snippets of God's mind and will. The Tanya says that "when a person knows and grasps in his mind a Torah commandment, he therefore grasps and holds and encompasses with his mind the divine wisdom and will...which makes for a wonderful union." The commandments are a means of understanding God's mind and aligning ourselves with God's will.

Higher still, as we mature, we begin to realize that God's commandments are about love, and they are reflections of mankind's inner nature. They aren't just rules, and they aren't just snippets of God's mind. They aren't boundaries imposed on us that we struggle to do only by fighting against our nature to bend our will to match God's will. On the contrary, THE COMMANDMENTS ARE AN EXPRESSION OF OUR TRUE NATURE; they are a mirror to us. Our deep nature is love. We are made in God's image, and God is love. And these commandments are how we express love. God's law is not imposing a structure on us from the outside that makes us chop off half of who we are to fit into that box. The Torah is giving us the key for crafting the outside that matches our inside. Anything we have to chop off to conform to the

commandments is not really a part of who we are. And this is a very different way of relating to the commandments than the first way of immaturity, though that first way is a necessary stepping stone.

Let's keep going even a bit deeper with our perspective on the Torah. It's more than a set of rules imposed on us from the outside, more than snippets of God's mind, and more than a mirror of our true nature. The commandments are the means by which we become co-creators with God and are united to Him. How is this so? The following idea grows out of a teaching that Grant has shared with Beth Tikkun. It's a bit deep, and I can't remember how much I have added to it. Let's just say that if you disagree with any part of this idea, we'll just chalk that up to me not being able to restate it properly.

As we have been saying, the commandments are an integral part of being married to God. When men put on tefillin, we repeat the following verses from Hosea 2: "And I will betroth you to Me forever. I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy. I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness. And you shall know the LORD" (Hosea 2:19-20). Notice that the first cords that bind us to God in marriage are righteousness and justice. The word translated "justice" here is "mishpat," the name of our Torah portion.

Through the commandments we live out our marriage with God, and PART OF MARRIAGE IS THE FERTILITY. In a way, we bear His children in the world; and that which we bear in the world can be described as the "Living Word," like God's own Son is described. What we bear in our marriage with God is the Living Word. We are all being given the chance to bear the Living Word, like the human mother Mary did. Now, don't read more into that than I'm saying. There's only one Son of God, Yeshua. But if we are married to God, then we must also bear the Living Word somehow as Mary did.

How do we do that? He gives us the light of truth embedded in the SEED of the Torah commandments. The seed is alive on the inside with truth, what we call THE SPIRIT OF THE LAW, but that seed needs a dark place in which it can take root and form into its final intended form. The seed is a tiny spiritual thing that basically lacks a physical expression in the world. That's where we come in. We are the soil that receives the seed. We take those seed commandments, internalize them, and make a way for them to come into the physical realm through our acting out of those commandments. When we do that, what we've done is we have taken the Word from God that lacked a body, incubated it, and we've figured out how to put a body on it, how to act it out in the lowest realm. This is what the bride does, and without us doing what the bride does, the Word that started as a seed cannot be fully birthed into this lowest realm, the realm of action. God needs us to receive the seed of the Word and craft a body for it. In that way, we become co-creators with Him. Together, we give birth to the Living Word.

I know that's rather deep and it went by quickly. But I think it's a profound way of seeing the commandments. They aren't just rules. They aren't just reflections of God's mind or our inner being. They are seeds that He implants in us so that we can bring them into being in His

creation. And when we are doing this, we are drawn to Him and He to us. We are producing together as Husband and wife.

The last point I'll tack on here is that when we are seeing the mitzvot in more mature ways, we want to make our observance beautiful. We want the details of the performing of the mitzvah to be not only right but personalized and as perfect as we can make it, without losing the life of it, of course. In Yeshua, with His example, we are kept from tipping into imbalance in this area so that our beautification of the mitzvot will be life-giving rather than life-consuming.

The Pilgrimage Festivals: 1-2-3

Let's move now to the main topic for today for parsha Mishpatim. I want to look at a fundamental and very important three-step progression we can see in the verses that address the mo'edim in this portion. In chapter 23, we are given three annual mo'edim that are made distinct by the commandment to come to Jerusalem for each of them. They come to be known as the three pilgrimage festivals. The passage begins with "Three times in the year you shall keep a feast to Me," and it ends with, "Three times in the year shall all your males appear before the Lord God." The three pilgrimage festivals are Unleavened Bread, Shavuot, and Sukkot.

Part of my reason for digging into this pattern of 1-2-3 here is not just to help us understand the mo'edim and the calendar, but to help us understand a pattern that runs much deeper than the calendar. As we unravel the mysteries of the seasons, we are learning about a great many elements of the Word and the world. We are learning how to read the Word better because we are seeing the underlying structure of it, and the same with the world. The underlying structure of the Word is Yeshua, Salvation. And the underlying structure of the world is also Yeshua. All of it was made through Him, and all of it is telling the story of salvation. And that story can be told on a very basic level as three steps. So we are doing more right now than exploring three steps in a calendar. We are exploring three steps in all of reality. When you become deeply sensitive to it, you will begin to see these three steps everywhere you look, particularly in the Bible. Let's walk through the progression of 1, 2, 3 in Jewish thought.

Chana Weisberg has a succinct description of this 3-part progression. She says this: "'One' implies that there exists only a single reality and suggests absolute conformity. 'Two' indicates divisiveness and disparity, as in two opposing, rival approaches. 'Three' finds an underlying unity between disparate entities."

I like to summarize what Chana Weisberg is saying here as 1) oneness, 2) separation, and 3) reunification. Once again, one means either you only have one thing alone or you have one thing that is so powerful that everything else is simply forced to live in that thing's reality; there's no free will with one. Two is a point of separation, but it doesn't just make two, it makes opposites that may seem like they can't really exist together. Three brings the split of two back together but in a way that makes peace between the two. Three is not like returning to the initial oneness. It's a finding of how the two that separated from each other actually are meant to fit together as compliments, two halves.

The story of Adam being split into two and then coming back together with Eve is one example of this pattern.

Here's another example from Jewish history. Rabbi Eliezer said the world was created in Tishrei, the 7th month. Rabbi Yehoshua said that it was created in Nissan, the 1st month. After a lengthy debate involving many rabbis, no firm resolution was reached. It would seem that they can't both be true, so which is it? Eventually, along comes Rabbeinu Tam who says that in Tishrei it came into God's mind to create the world, and in Nissan He actually does it. I think the Jewish teachers love this kind of reconciliation more than any other kind of Torah debate.

We have actually looked at one example of this pattern already today in the three steps of the ancient Jewish marriage. Step 1, shiddukhin, happens when the boy and girl are young and the groom's parents pick a future wife for him. It's a decision that is made for the children when they have no choice because they are too young. They are simply living in their parent's world. This is a kind of oneness because one side is so powerful that the other side lacks a real choice. Step two brings in the idea of choice and separation. In the second step of marriage, the two are old enough to make their own decisions, to sign off on the deal or not. The parents have to give them the freedom to make that choice. They have to release them to their choice. This stage of marriage, somewhat paradoxically, also involves the separation of the two young people as they go separate ways to prepare to be married. So, we see separation in multiple ways with step two. Step 3, nissuin, is the coming back together of that which was separated. In the third step of marriage, not only do the couple come together finally, but they also return to the groom's home to live alongside the parents. When they return, though, they do so as adults who are no longer simply living in their parents' reality. They have more choice now, and they are choosing to support the family and the parents as they get old.

This pattern is actually set right at the beginning of creation. Let's take Days 1, 2, and 3 from Genesis 1 as another example. We should expect to see some kind of reflection of this pattern right here at the beginning of the Torah. Days 1 to 3 are days for SETTING THE STAGE for the higher forms of life and for man in particular. The way I want to look at these days is to gauge each day's potential in relation to mankind even though mankind has not been created yet. That will make more sense as we go through them.

On Day 1, light is created and separated from the darkness. The light is pronounced "good." Day 1 is the foundation for the creation of a REALM OF LIGHT and A REALM OF DARKNESS, but we aren't there yet. This is just naked light and naked darkness. When light and dark are obviously what they are, when they don't yet have any covering of physicality, there is no real choice yet; the choice is too obvious, too transparent. Grant has often said that an obvious Satan worshiper is not much of a danger to most people. It's the wolves in sheep's clothing that are the real danger. At this point, if mankind is shown light and darkness, he will choose the light, which is called "good." There's still a clarity here that removes choice, so truth dominates.

On Day 2, the waters above are divided from the waters below. It is the day of creation most focused on separation. It is understood that on Day 2 the spiritual and physical realms are created, and NOW we have the potential for man to really have the choice to go a separate way. The physical realm is called the realm of separation. It is a place where the darkness masks God in such a way that it looks like it FUNCTIONS ON ITS OWN, without God. So this is a critical point when the creation is capable of giving man a real choice to separate from God.

Day 3 sends a wonderful message. It's a day that teaches about the process of reunification. Our pattern is oneness, separation, and reunification. On Day 3, the seas are given boundaries, allowing for dry land to appear, and the plants are created on that land. The message of Day 3 is this, "Even though you're going to turn headlong into physicality and darkness and separate from Me, when you call out to Me from that darkness, I WILL PUT BOUNDARIES ON THOSE PHYSICAL WATERS BELOW that are drowning you, and I will bring order to that chaos. And once I have brought order, I will teach you how to really live, how to have life. And that life is like the plants. The plants are always oriented upward to the light. They are always receiving from the spiritual realm, yet they remain anchored in the darkness below. In this way, they are able to transcend and rise above the lower realm even as they stay rooted in it. It's quite a picture. Again, it's God's poetry, and it's marvelous. And through God's process of bringing order and teaching us life, we are reunited with Him.

Let's take our last example of this fundamental pattern of oneness, separation, and reunification from parsha Mishpatim, where we read about the three pilgrimage festivals.

How does Passover show us a kind of lopsided unity, a unity where one side simply dominates everything else and there isn't a lot of choice? What we're interested in in this story is God's relationship with Israel. In the Passover story, there's a great deal of unity between God and the people, but it's not so much a unity based on choice. It's a unity based on God being hugely powerful and the people being especially weak. God is the rescuer. The people are basically pulled out of Egypt by God's powerful arm. They are newborn babes. The people don't have a huge amount of choice at this point. They must simply conform to God's will.

How does Shavuot show us separation, opposing sides? Taking on the Torah rather quickly results in separation when the people stumble and break the covenant with the golden calf. Once you agree to the covenant, you need to keep your end of the deal or else you suffer the curses of the Torah and the breaking of the relationship with God. And we see that it is not long before Israel breaks the covenant. This falling after taking on the covenant is what Paul calls the Torah's "ministry of death," and it is meant to lead eventually to a better view of ourselves and repentance. It is part of God's plan because what He is really after is the rejoining that follows. The imagery of separation is very strong here at Shavuot. There are right and left tablets. There are two loaves of bread that are offered at Shavuot. Even the tongues of fire that settle on the disciples in Acts 2 at Shavuot are described as cloven flames, separated, divided in some way. Shavuot also occurs near the end of spring, the beginning of the dry season in Israel. The summer in Israel is described as the SEPARATION of heaven and earth because there is so little rain during that season. The fields and wilderness areas turn yellow and shrivel up. This is a

reflection of the separation we experience connected to receiving the Torah at Shavuot and stumbling with it.

Lastly, let's turn to Sukkot and reunification. After the separation of the summer, we go through an intense 10-day period of repentance early in the 7th month, culminating in Yom Kippur. Yom Kippur shows us the basis by which we are reunified with God: it is by the blood that is brought into the Holy of Holies on that day. We are told in Hebrews that the true substance of this blood is that of Yeshua's blood, and it is Yeshua, Himself, Who brings that blood into the heavenly Holy of Holies. Yom Kippur is followed five days later by Sukkot, which is the beginning of bringing that reunification down into the physical realm. Truly Sukkot is a time of intimacy with both God and our communities. One of the main elements of Sukkot is the four species that are brought together and waved before the Lord. Tradition equates these four to four kinds of people in the community who, at this time, are all recognized as necessary parts of the community. At the temple, 70 bulls are sacrificed over the course of Sukkot, one for each nation of the world. Sukkot is a joyous time of getting together in the sukkah. Everything about it fits the third stage of reunification.

This 3-step progression is the root pattern of the entire salvation pattern. Let me repeat that if it is the root of the salvation pattern, then it is the root pattern of all of creation.

To close this section, I'd like to share some thoughts from the Lubavitcher Rebbe that apply the 3-step pattern to marriage. He says that there are three types of marriages: the singular marriage, the twosome marriage, and the three-dimensional marriage. In the first, one of the pair simply dominates the other. In the second, they both preserve their distinctions as individuals. They share everything and deeply affect each other, but they do so on their own terms. This is not so much a union as it is a relationship between individuals. In the third type, the two collaborate to create a third reality which encompasses and suffuses them both while still preserving their differences. The marriage, itself, becomes a third element in this type of marriage. There are two individuals who are working together to craft a marriage life together.

Yeshua

Let's turn our thoughts now to Yeshua. How does Yeshua show us the 3-step pattern we've been talking about? Regarding oneness, we are told that Yeshua had a kind of oneness with God before He came to this world. John 1 says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God" (John 1:1-2). Being in the presence of God, being one with God, is a place of supernal light and clarity where sin is unimaginable. But, step 2, Yeshua empties Himself and comes to earth, the place of separation, where He experiences some degree of separation from God. In the fog of this world, Yeshua will be tempted. And we believe that this was a real temptation. He had a real choice here in this lowest realm. And His choice was to suffer even further separation, death on a cross. While in the grave, He descends to a place of even more extreme separation. This all leads to step 3, reunification. First, He is reunited with His own body at His resurrection, then with His disciples, and finally He is raised to sit at the right hand of God. And He will further return to bring a

reunification to the whole earth, between all men and God, and between man and his fellow man.

Joshua 10

Finally, let's turn now to Joshua 10. In this chapter, we read about the Southern Campaign, how Israel rapidly takes all of southern Israel. In the last chapter, Gibeon had deceived Israel into making a covenant with them, that they should live. In this chapter, Gibeon's neighbors decide that they can't allow that example to go unpunished, so they get together to attack Gibeon. The Gibeonites send a message to Israel pleading for help based on the covenant, and Joshua comes running to help them. Israel marches all night from Gilgal and defeats the five southern kings. This is the famous battle where God rains down hail on Israel's enemies and where Joshua, in the sight of Israel, calls out, "Sun, stand still at Gibeon, and moon, in the Valley of Aijalon" (Joshua 10:12). And it happens! The defeat of these five southern kings opens the doorway to defeating all the southern kings, which Israel does quickly at this point.

We are reading now in the Torah about the covenant God makes with Israel and with humanity through Israel. In this chapter in Joshua, Israel has likewise made a covenant with a Gentile nation, the Gibeonite Hivites. And they take their covenant with Gibeon seriously, deadly seriously. The result of Israel's steadfast faithfulness to this covenant with a Gentile people is miracle and victory and life. God's Name is elevated in this chapter, and Joshua is too. And the crux of the action rests upon Israel being true to the covenant they made with a people who tricked them but who are now, nevertheless, yoked to them.

What we read about in this single chapter is the entire southern campaign of the conquering of the Land. A vast southern territory is here vanquished, and quickly. The second-to-last verse of this chapter emphasizes how swiftly southern Israel was captured: "And Joshua captured all these kings and their land at one time, because the LORD God of Israel fought for Israel" (Joshua 10:42). Israel acted faithfully when the world would have made some excuse, "Sorry, we're too far away from you to help. We can't get there in time." Israel makes no excuses. They march all night then fight all day, and longer than a day. And God is with them. And what God does here is deal the critical blow against the southern Canaanite kings with the defeat of these five kings. Without these kings, the remaining southern kings don't have so many left to combine forces with to come against Israel, and Israel is able to pick them off one at a time in succession. We see much good coming from Israel's faithfulness to this covenant.

We won't see such a miraculous victory again in the book of Joshua. God stops the sun here, when Israel is protecting the Gibeonites. God so wants us to behave honorably and generously with each other as Israel does here with the Gibeonites. The covenant of Torah not only teaches us how we relate to God but, of course, it also teaches us how we relate to each other. In fact, much of the Torah is explicitly about how we deal with each other honorably and faithfully.

Israel ignored their physical limitations to march all night and then fight all day. And they did so when the world would have said, "Don't bother with those crafty people." WHEN WE TAKE

THAT LEAP OF FAITH TO STRETCH THE LAWS OF NATURE, and when, in order to do what's right, we ignore the logic of the world, God does the same. God will suspend the laws of nature for us if we just take that first step into miracle on our own for the sake of righteousness and love.

We'll leave it there today. Thank you all for listening. I have posted an outline of this teaching below the video. May Adonai make us into a cherished bride who produces the fruit of the Living Word in this world. May He unlock for us the keys to understanding this beautiful world He has given us, and may we more and more see Yeshua in it. And may He make us into the people He wants us to be. Shalom.