

# A MESSIANIC JEWISH WEDDING With Optional Ceremony For Receiving a Non-Jewish Bride Into Israel

by Michael Rudolph

This paper presents a thoroughly New Covenant wedding liturgy, with an optional ceremony whereby a non-Jewish bride of a Jewish groom may become a proselyte to Israel in the example of Ruth. The ceremony was used to marry my son David to his bride Harumi, July 30, 1988.

It is not my purpose herein to defend the elements of a traditional Jewish wedding<sup>1</sup> or the practice of New Covenant proselytization.<sup>2</sup> The approach throughout has been to maintain the wedding traditions passed on to us by traditional Judaism, to select those which are consistent with the New Covenant, and to replace those which are not. The resulting liturgy retains all of the beauty and folk-majesty of the Ashkenaz wedding while, at the same time, introduces bold innovations to assure that the celebration is Yeshua centered.

Since our communities are mostly English-speaking, English rather than Hebrew forms the basis for the liturgy. Where Hebrew is used, it is translated from the English, rather than vice-versa. Most parts of the service are spoken rather than sung, the exceptions being:

- (a) The processional and celebration music
- (b) The blessings over the bread and wine
- (c) The seven wedding benedictions
- (d) The Aaronic blessing

A singable English-language adaptation of the "seven benedictions" is included that can be sung to one of the traditional melodies.

In a departure from tradition, the betrothal agreement utilizes both a *k'tubah* and verses from the Holy Scriptures. It is strongly urged that only a New Covenant *k'tubah* be used; if one is not available, the Holy Scriptures themselves should be thought of as the *k'tubah*, and a Bible may be signed accordingly. In another departure from tradition, this time from modern tradition, no recessional is employed. Instead, a joyous celebration with congratulations and dancing begins under the *chupah* as soon as the new couple is introduced as husband and wife.

It is sincerely hoped that the outline which follows will be a joy and a blessing to all who use it.

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<sup>1</sup> Hyman E. Goldin, Hamadrikh / The Rabbi's Guide (New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1956).

<sup>2</sup> M. Rudolph, "Proselytes to Israel in a Messianic Jewish Congregation" (unpublished, August 6, 1988).

**WEDDING OF  
DAVID RUDOLPH AND HARUMI KONDO  
Performed At Melech Yisrael  
Toronto, Canada  
JULY 30, 1988**

PRE-PROCESSIONAL

Ushers seat guests (Front rows reserved for immediate family)

PROCESSIONAL<sup>5</sup>

1. *Chupah* Holders<sup>6</sup> (Set up and hold *chupah*)
2. *Rav* (Stands under and to rear of *chupah*, facing guests)
3. Best Man and other attendants of groom

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Rav M.<sup>7</sup>: *Barukh haba b'shem (Adonai)*!<sup>8</sup>

He who is supremely mighty;  
He who is supremely praised;  
He who is supremely great;  
May he bless this bridegroom and bride!  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!<sup>9</sup>

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4. Groom escorted by parent(s); groom faces *rav* under *chupah*.
5. Maid of Honor and other attendants of bride

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<sup>5</sup> Music is usually played for the processional.

<sup>6</sup> See Psalms 19:5 and Joel 2:16 for biblical references to the *chupah*.

<sup>7</sup> The notation Rav M. is an abbreviation for *rav m'shiychiy*, which means messianic teacher. Although this term is usually distinguished from the term *rabiy* (rabbi) by its different historical use and derivation, it is also important to note that it lacks the objectionable personalized connotation "my master."

<sup>8</sup> Throughout this paper, the transliteration (*Adonai*) is derived from Y'ya.

<sup>9</sup> Goldin, P. 16.

Rav M.: *B'rukhhah haba-ah b'shem Adonai!*

Mighty is our God;  
Yeshua our Messiah;  
Praiseworthy is the bridegroom;  
Praiseworthy and beautiful is the bride!  
Blessed is she who comes in the name of the Lord!

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6. The bride is escorted by parents.

7. Groom faces bride, offers his right arm and escorts her under the *chupah*.

8. Bride circles groom 7 times counter-clockwise<sup>10</sup>, after which she stands to groom's right, and both she and groom face the rabbi.

9. Parents and escorts take their seats.

### BETROTHAL<sup>11</sup>

Rav M.: (Betrothal blessings)

*Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheynu melekh ha-olam;  
borey p`riy hagafen.*

Blessed are you O Lord our God, king of the universe,  
Who has created the fruit of the vine.

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, king of the universe, who has sanctified us in Messiah Yeshua, and has commanded us concerning forbidden connections, and has forbidden to us those who are merely betrothed, but has allowed to us those lawfully married to us through *chupah* and betrothal.<sup>12</sup>

Blessed are you, O Lord, who bless your people through *chupah* and betrothal.

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<sup>10</sup> Aryeh Kaplan, Made in Heaven / A Jewish Wedding Guide (New York: Moznaim Publishing Corporation, 1983). Traditional sources record several possible meanings for the bride circling the bridegroom, as well as three variations in the number of revolutions prescribed. The author's reason for the circling is to publically proclaim the bride's intention to submit to her husband in obedience to Ephesians 5:22-23, thereby witnessing to a biblical relationship between the husband and the wife.

<sup>11</sup> If a betrothal is entered into in advance of the wedding, it is not conducted under a *chupah*.

<sup>12</sup> Goldin, pp. 16-17.

1. The bride & groom taste first goblet of wine.

Rav M.: (Reads the *K'tubah* - Nuptial Agreement)

2. The *K'tubah* is agreed to and signed.

Rav M.: (Reads Covenant Scriptures that pertain to the Nuptial Agreement)

<u>De 6:4-9</u>	Loving God
<u>1 Co 13:1-13</u>	Love
<u>1 Ti 5:8</u>	Supporting family
<u>Pr 22:6</u>	Bringing up children
<u>1 Co 7:3-5</u>	Giving of self
<u>Ep 5:22-33</u>	Wives & husbands

3. The Scriptures are agreed to and signed.

Rav M. (To groom):

David, do you, of your own free will and consent, take Harumi to be your wife; and do you promise to love, honor and cherish her throughout life?

Groom: I do.

Rav M. (To bride):

Harumi, do you, of your own free will and consent, take David to be your husband, and do you promise to love, honor and cherish him throughout life?

Bride: I do.

Rav M.: (To groom)

David, you will now betroth your bride, in the presence of these witnesses, by placing this ring upon the third finger of Harumi's left hand, and say to her in Hebrew:

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*Harey at m'kudeshet liy b'taba-at zo k'dat Mosheh v'yisrael, b'shem Yeshua haMashiach.*

Behold, you are betrothed to me with this ring, in accordance with the law of Moses and Israel, in the name of Yeshua the Messiah.

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Rav M. (to Bride):

Harumi, you will now accept the covenant betrothal offered to you by David in the presence of these witnesses, by placing this ring upon the third finger of his left hand, and say to him:

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Behold, I am betrothed to you with this ring, in accordance with the law of Moses and Israel, in the name of Yeshua the Messiah.<sup>1</sup>

Rav M.: (Explains "The Lord's memorial bread and wine" as inviting God to be a covenant party to the betrothal. Explains the relevance of Hos 2:16-23 and 2 Co 11:2.)

4. The memorial bread and wine are taken by the bridegroom and the bride (Mt. 26:26-28).

### BRIDE'S COVENANT WITH ISRAEL (Optional)

Rav M. (To Bride):

Harumi, you have expressed your desire and intention, not only to marry David who is an Israelite, but also to join the nation of Israel covenantally as a Messianic proselyte. Such a step is also a marriage of sort, in that it is a covenant undertaking which is irreversible, and your destiny will be linked to the people of Israel forever. It is a serious step, not to be taken lightly, for you are proclaiming to God, Israel and the world that you are joining yourself to Israel physically as well as spiritually, and that this connection and commitment is independent of your salvation, and will last your whole life.

Harumi, you are a believer in Yeshua and are therefore already grafted into and the recipient of all the benefits of the covenant which God made with our father Abraham. If you join Israel as a Messianic proselyte you will be taking upon yourself all of the obligations of the covenant as well. Do you understand all of this?

Bride: Yes I do.

Rav M.: Harumi, becoming a Messianic proselyte to Israel is not necessary in order to marry David. Do you believe that you are called by God to join yourself to Israel in this way?

Bride: Yes I do.

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<sup>1</sup> A double ring ceremony is a relatively new innovation, and not universally adopted within Judaism.

Rav M.: Long ago, a Moabitess named Ruth, a woman honored to have a book of the Bible named after her and who is in the physical lineage of Yeshua, offered herself covenantally to Israel with these words:

"Your God will be my God, and your people will be my people."

Sometime later, Israel responded in the affirmative by permitting her marriage to an Israelite named Boaz. Harumi, you have already received the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob through your acceptance of and faith in Yeshua. Are you now also offering yourself covenantally to Israel in the example of Ruth?

Bride: Yes.

Rav M.: Then turn to David who is an Israelite and repeat the covenant words of Ruth:

"David, your God is my God, and your people will be my people."

Bride: (Repeats covenant promise of Ruth)

Rav M.: David, do you believe that God has genuinely called Harumi, not only to be your wife, but also to be a Messianic proselyte to Israel?

Groom: Yes I do.

Rav M. (To David):

Then turn to Harumi and repeat after me:

"Harumi, as a representative of Israel and as your husband-to-be, I accept you into the lineage of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as a Messianic proselyte to Israel, and let my marriage to you today be the sealing of this covenant on the part of Israel. May you, from this day forward, be known in Israel as "Hadassah bat Tzion -- Esther, daughter of Zion."

### HUPPAH (MARRIAGE)

Rav M.: (Chants the seven marriage benedictions)

1. Bride & Groom taste second goblet of wine.
2. Groom breaks glass.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> As with other traditions, there are several explanations offered for the breaking of the glass. The author's reason for including a breaking of the glass is its significance that, just as the broken glass will never reconstitute itself into a whole vessel, so also is the joining of a man and woman as one

3. Groom cloaks his *tallit* over himself and his bride.

Rav M.: May you who blessed our ancestors, bless this bridegroom and bride, and henceforth prosper the ways upon which they walk. May they always find grace and favor in the eyes of those who meet them. May they aspire to build a praiseworthy house among God's people. May peace reign in their home, and may contentment and happiness be in their hearts all the days of their lives.<sup>14</sup>

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May the Lord bless you and keep you,  
May the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you.  
May the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.  
In the name of the Prince of Peace, Yeshua our Messiah, amen.

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*Y'varech'cha Adonai v'yishm'recha*  
*Ya-eyr Adonai panayv eyleycha vichunecha*  
*Yisa Adonai panayv eyleycha*  
*V'yaseym l'cha shalom.*

4. The groom removes the *tallit* from the bride and places it upon himself.

Rav M. (To Groom):

You may kiss your bride.

Rav M. (To Guests):

It is now my pleasure to present to you, Mr. and Mrs. David Rudolph.

### CELEBRATION - NO RECESSIONAL

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flesh a permanent change, and neither the man nor the woman can ever return to his or her former state.

<sup>14</sup> Adapted from Goldin, pp. 21-22.

SEVEN BENEDICTIONS<sup>15</sup>  
(Singable Messianic Lyrics)

1. Praised be thou O Lord our God  
King of the universe  
Who sent us Yeshua our Messiah.
  
2. Praised be thou O Lord our God  
King of the universe  
Who created all things to his glory.
  
3. Praised be thou O Lord our God  
King of the universe  
Who has created man.
  
4. Praised be thou O Lord our God  
King of the universe  
  
Who has made man -- in his image  
After his likeness -- and after himself  
Who prepared from man -- a perpetual fabric  
  
Praised be thou O Lord our God  
Who has created Man.
  
5. May the nation -- who is childless  
Be glad -- and rejoice  
When its children -- are gathered back in joy  
  
Praised be thou O Lord  
Who gladdens Zion in her children.
  
6. May you gladden -- these beloved ones  
As you gladdened -- thy creatures  
In the garden of Eden -- in time of Yore  
  
Praised be thou O Lord  
Who gladdens the bridegroom and bride.
  
7. Praised be thou O Lord our God  
King of the universe

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<sup>15</sup> Adapted from Goldin, pp. 20-21.



Who hast created joy and gladness  
Joy and gladness, bridegroom and bride  
Who hast created joy and gladness  
Joy and gladness, bridegroom and bride.

Re-joicing, song and delight  
Love and brotherhood and peace  
Rejoicing, song and delight  
Peace and fellowship.

Soon may there be heard in the cities of Judah  
And in the Streets of Jerusalem

The-voice of joy, the voice of gladness  
Voice of the bridegroom, voice of the bride.

The jubilant voice of bridegrooms  
In their nuptial canopies  
And of youths from their feasts of song

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Praised be thou O Lord  
Who gladdens the bridegroom and the bride.