

What is the relationship between a Husband and a Wife?

By Yochanan Zaqantov

The Hebrew word for husband is Iysh (Aleph-Yod-Shin). It can also be for a man. It is reference number 376. This can be found in the NEHC on pages 60-69 and in the BDB on pages 35-36. It is from the word Enosh (Aleph-Nun-Vav-Shin) which is the Hebrew also for man.

Bereshit/Genesis 2:23-24

23 Then **the man** (**ha'adam** אָדָם) said, “This one at last Is bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh. This one shall be called **Woman** (**ishah** אִשָּׁה), For **from man** (**me'iysh** מֵאִישׁ) was she taken.”²⁴ Hence a **man** (**iysh** אִישׁ) leaves his father and mother and clings **to his wife** (**ba'ish'to** בְּאִשְׁתּוֹ), so that they become one flesh.

Here we see the meeting of Ish and his ishah. Adam and Chava meet and he takes her to him. Verse 24, appears to be a statement from Yehovah but some have stated that Adam could have said it since quotes are not in Hebrew and are purely arbitrary in this verse. In other words, Adam could have said this also.

We see that Ishah (Aleph-Shin-Hey) is the Hebrew word for woman. It is reference number 802, which is from Ish. It is found on page 175-178 of the NEHC and on pages 61 of the BDB.

We see that in this verse that we just read that her man or her husband would be ish'to and so we will focus on these places in the Tanakh so we can see what specifically does her husband/man do with her.

Bereshit/Genesis 16:3

3 So Sarai, Abram's **wife** (**eshet** אִשָּׁת), took her maid, Hagar the Egyptian—after Abram had dwelt in the land of Canaan ten years—and gave her to **her husband** (**iyshah** אִשָּׁה) Abram as concubine .

The difference in pronunciation is very similar to Ishah (Alpeh-Sin-Hey) and Iysh'ah (Aleph-Yod-Shin-Hey). The first way is of the woman and the second way is the making of Ish (Aleph-Yod-Shin) as denoting a feminine usage by adding the hey ending or belonging to the woman. Literally speaking “Her man” is what it is saying.

If we fully transliterate we can see the relationship. So the reason we are focusing on the belonging to one another is that it means they are in a relationship.

Iysh – Man/husband	Ishah – Woman/wife
Iyshah – her man/husband	Ish'to – his woman/wife

So lets look at places in Hebrew where Ish'to (His Woman or Wife)

Ester/Esther 5:14

¹⁴Then **his wife** (ish'to אִשְׁתּוֹ) Zeresh and all his friends said to him, “Let a stake be put up, fifty cubits high, and in the morning ask the king to have Mordecai impaled on it. Then you can go gaily with the king to the feast.” The proposal pleased Haman, and he had the stake put up.

His Wife as an advisor

Ruth 1:2

²The **man's** (ha'iysh הָאִישׁ) name was Elimelech, **his wife's** (ish'to אִשְׁתּוֹ) name was Naomi, and his two sons were named Mahlon and Chilion—Ephrathites of Bethlehem in Judah. They came to the country of Moab and remained there.

His Wife and Family follow the man where he goes.

Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 3:1

³[The word of Yehovah came to me] as follows: If a **man** (iysh אִישׁ) divorces **his wife** (ish'to אִשְׁתּוֹ), and she leaves him and marries another **man** (le'iysh לְאִישׁ), can he ever go back to her? Would not such a land be defiled? Now you have whored with many lovers: can you return to Me?—says Yehovah.

This repeats a law from Torah about marriage and applies this to the relationship of Yehovah with his people.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 24:1-4

24:1 A **man** (iysh אִישׁ) takes a **wife** (ishah אִשָּׁה) and possesses her. She fails to please him because he finds something obnoxious about her, and he writes her a **bill of divorcement** (sefer keritut סֵפֶר כְּרִיתוֹת), hands it to her, and sends her away from his house; ² she leaves his household and becomes the wife of another **man** (le'iysh לְאִישׁ); ³ then **this latter man** (ha'iysh הָאִישׁ) rejects her, writes her a **bill of**

divorcement (sefer keritut סֵפֶר כְּרִיתוֹת), hands it to her, and sends her away from his house; or **the man** (ha'iysh הָאִישׁ) who married her last dies. **4** Then the first **husband** (ba'lah 1167 בַּעֲלָהּ) who divorced her shall not take her **to wife** (le'ishah לְאִשָּׁה) again, since she has been defiled—for that would be abhorrent to Yehovah. You must not bring sin upon the land that Yehovah Eloheykha is giving you as a heritage.

This shows that a wife/woman may not remarry her first husband if she had married another man after him.

Shofetim/Judges 21:21-22

²¹As soon as you see the girls of Shiloh coming out to join in the dances, come out from the vineyards; let each of **you** seize **a wife** (iysh ish'to אִישׁ אִשָּׁתוֹ) from among the girls of Shiloh, and be off for the land of Benjamin. ²²And if their fathers or brothers come to us to complain, we shall say to them, be generous to them for our sake! We could not provide any of **them with a wife** (iyah ish'to אִישׁ אִשָּׁתוֹ) on account of the war, and you would have incurred guilt if you yourselves had given them [wives].”

The Men may take women forceably to become their woman/wife.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 21:10-14

10 When you take the field against your enemies, and Yehovah Eloheykha delivers them into your power and you take some of them captive, **11** and you see among the captives a beautiful woman and you desire her and would take her **to wife** (le'ishah לְאִשָּׁה), **12** you shall bring her into your house, and she shall trim her hair, pare her nails, **13** and discard her captive's garb. She shall spend a month's time in your house lamenting her father and mother; after that you may come to her and possess her, and she shall be **your wife** (le'ishah לְאִשָּׁה). **14** Then, should you no longer want her, you must release her outright. You must not sell her for money: since you had your will of her, you must not enslave her.

We see that it was permissible to take a woman captured in both these cases and make them a wife/woman. Thus, making her his wife/woman.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 24:5

⁵When **a man** has taken **a bride** (iysh ishah אִישׁ אִשָּׁה), he shall not go out with the army or be assigned to it for any purpose; he shall be exempt one year for the sake of

his household, to give happiness to **the woman** (ish'to אִשְׁתּוֹ) he has married (leqach to take לָקַח).

When the man has taken his wife he is to spend time with her his first year and not go out away from her. It does not mean he can't provide for her but he must be with her.

Numbers 5:12, 14-15, 30

¹²Speak to the Israelite people and say to them: If **any man's** (iysh iysh אִישׁ אִישׁ) **wife** (ish'to אִשְׁתּוֹ) has gone astray and broken faith with him ¹³in that **a man** (iyah אִישׁ) has had carnal relations with her unbeknown to **her husband** (iyshah אִישָׁהּ), and she keeps secret the fact that she has defiled herself without being forced, and there is no witness against her—

¹⁴but a fit of jealousy comes over him and he is wrought up about **the wife** (ish'to אִשְׁתּוֹ) who has defiled herself; or if a fit of jealousy comes over one and he is wrought up about **his wife** (ish'to אִשְׁתּוֹ) although she has not defiled herself— ¹⁵**the man** (ha'iysh הָאִישׁ) shall bring **his wife** (ish'to אִשְׁתּוֹ) to the priest. And he shall bring as an offering for her one-tenth of an *ephah* of barley flour. No oil shall be poured upon it and no frankincense shall be laid on it, for it is a meal offering of jealousy, a meal offering of remembrance which recalls wrongdoing.

19 The priest shall adjure **the woman** (ha'ishah הָאִשָּׁהּ), saying to her, “If no **man** (iysh אִישׁ) has lain with you, if you have not gone astray in defilement while married to **your husband** (iyshekh אִישְׁךָ), be immune to harm from this water of bitterness that induces **the spell** (ham'ararim 779 curse הַמְאָרָרִים). ²⁰ But if you have gone astray while married to **your husband** (iyshekh אִישְׁךָ) and have defiled yourself, if **a man** (iysh אִישׁ) other than **your husband** (iyshekh אִישְׁךָ) has had carnal relations with you”—²¹ here the priest shall administer the curse of adjuration to **the woman** (ha'ishah הָאִשָּׁהּ), as the priest goes on to say **to the woman** (le'ishah לְאִשָּׁהּ)—“may Yehovah make you a curse and an imprecation among your people, as Yehovah causes your thigh to sag and your belly to distend; ²² may this water that induces **the spell** (ham'ararim 779 curse הַמְאָרָרִים) enter your body, causing the

belly to distend and the thigh to sag.” And **the woman** (ha’ishah הַאִשָּׁה) shall say, “Amen, amen!”

³⁰or when a fit of jealousy comes over **a man** (iysh אִישׁ) and he is wrought up over **his wife** (ish’to אִשְׁתּוֹ): **the woman** (ha’ishah הַאִשָּׁה) shall be made to stand before Yehovah and the priest shall carry out all this ritual with her.

A test of infidelity for the Wife/woman should she have been unfaithful or not. She will receive punishment for unfaithfulness and immunity if not unfaithful.

Bereshit/Genesis 25:21

²¹Isaac pleaded with Yehovah on behalf of **his wife** (ish’to אִשְׁתּוֹ), because she was barren; and Yehovah responded to his plea, and **his wife** (ish’to אִשְׁתּוֹ) Rebekah conceived.

A man may ask Yehovah on behalf of his wife for her to bear children.

These are some of the things that a man may do with his wife as well as his wife may do with him. So what about her husband or iysh’ah and what does she do to him.

Bereshit/Genesis 16:3

³So Sarai, Abram’s wife, took her maid, Hagar the Egyptian—after Abram had dwelt in the land of Canaan ten years—and gave her to **her husband** (iyshah אִישָׁה) Abram as **concubine** (le’ishah לְאִשָּׁה).

We see that the wife/woman may give another woman to him to be his wife also.

Bamidbar/Numbers 30:8-9,11-15

⁸and **her husband** (iyshah אִישָׁה) learns of it and offers no objection on the day he finds out, her vows shall stand and her self-imposed obligations shall stand. ⁹But if **her husband** (iyshah אִישָׁה) restrains her on the day that he learns of it, he thereby annuls her vow which was in force or the commitment to which she bound herself; and Yehovah will forgive her. ¹¹ So, too, if, while in **her husband’s** (iyshah אִישָׁה) household, she makes a vow or imposes an obligation on herself by oath, ¹²and **her husband** (iyshah

(אִשָּׁה) learns of it, yet offers no objection—thus failing to restrain her—all her vows shall stand and all her self-imposed obligations shall stand.

¹³But if **her husband** (iyshah אִשָּׁה) does annul them on the day he finds out, then nothing that has crossed her lips shall stand, whether vows or self-imposed obligations. **Her husband** (iyshah אִשָּׁה) has annulled them, and Yehovah will forgive her.

¹⁴Every vow and every sworn obligation of self-denial may be upheld by **her husband** (iyshah אִשָּׁה) or annulled by her husband. ¹⁵If **her husband** (iyshah אִשָּׁה) offers no objection from that day to the next, he has upheld all the vows or obligations she has assumed: he has upheld them by offering no objection on the day he found out.

Her husband may relieve her of her vows only on the day he here of it first.

Shemu'el Alpeh/1 Samuel 1:23

²³**Her husband** (iyshah אִשָּׁה) Elkanah said to her, “Do as you think best. Stay home until you have weaned him. May Yehovah fulfill His word” So **the woman** (ha'ishah הָאִשָּׁה) stayed home and nursed her son until she weaned him.

The husband allows his wife to do what she sees best in her matters. He does not always think for her.

So we see in these cases the husband has authority over his wife but she is not without choices and her husband must be listening to her needs and letting her make choices too.

What about some other things for Iysh and Ishah?

A wife may take the initiative.

Shemot/Exodus 4:24-26

24 At a night encampment on the way, Yehovah encountered him and sought to kill him. **25** So Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son's foreskin, and touched his legs with it, saying, “You are truly a bridegroom of blood to me!” **26** And when He let him alone, she added, “A bridegroom of blood because of the circumcision.”

Tzapporah took and circumcised her son when his life depended on it. No other explanation is given.

Shofetim/Judges 13:22-23

22 And Manoah said to his wife, “We shall surely die, for we have seen a divine being.” **23** But his wife said to him, “Had Yehovah meant to take our lives, He would

not have accepted a burnt offering and meal offering from us, nor let us see all these things; and He would not have made such an announcement to us.”

When her husband was worried she gives him sound reasoning.

Mish'lei/Proverbs 31:10-31

10 What a rare find is a capable **wife** (**eshet אִשָּׁה**)! Her worth is far beyond that of rubies. 11 **Her husband** (**ba'lah 1167 בַּעֲלָהּ**) puts his confidence in her, And lacks no good thing. 12 She is good to him, never bad, All the days of her life. 13 She looks for wool and flax, And sets her hand to them with a will. 14 She is like a merchant fleet, bringing her food from afar. 15 She rises while it is still night, And supplies provisions for her household, The daily fare of her maids. 16 She sets her mind on an estate and acquires it; She plants a vineyard by her own labors. 17 She girds herself with strength, And performs her tasks with vigor. 18 She sees that her business thrives; Her lamp never goes out at night. 19 She sets her hand to the distaff; Her fingers work the spindle. 20 She gives generously to the poor; Her hands are stretched out to the needy. 21 She is not worried for her household because of snow, For her whole household is dressed in crimson. 22 She makes covers for herself; Her clothing is linen and purple. 23 **Her husband** (**ba'lah בַּעֲלָהּ**) is prominent in the gates, As he sits among the elders of the land. 24 She makes cloth and sells it, And offers a girdle to the merchant. 25 She is clothed with strength and splendor; She looks to the future cheerfully. 26 Her mouth is full of wisdom, Her tongue with kindly teaching. 27 She oversees the activities of her household And never eats the bread of idleness. 28 Her children declare her happy; **Her husband** (**ba'lah בַּעֲלָהּ**) praises her, 29 “Many women have done well, But you surpass them all.” 30 Grace is deceptive, Beauty is illusory; It is for her fear of Yehovah that **a woman** (**ishah אִשָּׁה**) is to be praised. 31 Extol her for the fruit of her hand, and let her works praise her in the gates.

Here is a woman who takes hold of the household and even runs a business of affairs that leaves time for her husband to pursue other things. She is not always home and under his thumb but a taking the initiative to care for her family.

Shemot/Exodus 21:7-10

7 When a man sells his daughter as a slave, she shall not be freed as male slaves are. 8 If she proves to be displeasing to her master, who designated her for himself, he must let her be redeemed; he shall not have the right to sell her to outsiders, since he broke faith with her. 9 And if he designated her for his son, he shall deal with her as is the practice with free maidens. 10 If he marries another, he must not withhold from this one her food, her clothing, or her conjugal rights. 11 If he fails her in these three ways, she shall go free, without payment.

Some will look at this and see the context is that if the woman is a slave and he marry another he must provide her Food, clothing, and sexual relations. A man who takes a woman is provide for her since she is no longer considered as a slave and thus is as a wife. Therefore the statement her is addressed to any woman who is made a wife. Since she goes free without payment she is no longer a slave.

Mish'lei/Proverbs 5:18

18 Let your fountain be blessed; Find joy **in the wife** (me'eshet מֵאִשֶּׁת) of your youth—19 A loving doe, a graceful mountain goat. Let her breasts satisfy you at all times; Be infatuated with love of her always.

A man should be in love with his wife as he was from her youth. She should not be discarded because she is no longer young.

Mish'lei/Proverbs 18:22

22 He who finds **a wife** (ishah אִשָּׁה) has found happiness and has won the favor of Yehovah.

The man who finds a wife should see he has received favor from Yehovah. A wife is a blessing.

A wife should be caring for her husband also.

Mish'lei/Proverbs 12:4

4 A capable **wife** (eshet אִשָּׁה) is a crown for **her husband** (ba'lah בַּעֲלָהּ), But an incompetent one is like rot in his bones.

The woman who cares not for her husband and provides not for him causes problems for him.

Mish'lei/Proverbs 19:13

13 A stupid son is a calamity to his father; The nagging of **a wife** (ishah אִשָּׁה) is like the endless dripping of water.

The nagging of the wife is irritating to the husband.

Mish'Lei/Proverbs 21:9

9 Dwelling in the corner of a roof is better than a contentious **wife (me'eshet מְאִשֶׁת)** in a spacious house.

A contentious wife is one who exhibits wearisome tendency to arguing and disputing her husband. She is one who works against her husband. Other examples given in Proverbs are:

Mish'lei/Proverbs 21:19

19 It is better to live in the desert Than with a contentious, vexatious **wife (me'eshet מְאִשֶׁת)**.

Mish'lei/Proverbs 27:15

15 An endless dripping on a rainy day And a contentious **wife (eshet אִשָּׁה)** are alike;

A wife is to be supportive and give advice and even provide counsel to her husband but not work against him.

Song of Songs is a perfect example of the relationship of a man to a woman and how they look at one another.

Song of Songs 1:13-16

13 My beloved to me is a bag of myrrh lodged between my breasts. 14 My beloved to me is a spray of henna blooms from the vineyards of En-gedi. 15 Ah, you are fair, my darling, Ah, you are fair, With your dove-like eyes! 16 And you, my beloved, are handsome, Beautiful indeed! Our couch is in a bower;

The desires for each other as young lovers are shown.

Song of Songs 2:16-17

16 My beloved is mine and I am his who browses among the lilies. 17 When the day blows gently and the shadows flee, Set out, my beloved, Swift as a gazelle or a young stag, for the hills of spices! (For the mountains divide)

Again the desire shows for each other. I encourage husbands and wives to read the Song of Songs together.

In the end we see that a husband has a responsibility to provide for his wife and care and love her. He must not lose sight of her beauty long after its outward signs have left. He must give her the space to be a contributor to the household and listen to her words when

she speaks. The wife should listen to her husband, as he should show care for her. She follows him where he goes but is an adviser and helper to him. She is not under his thumb to serve him like a servant but a helper to build him up as he should build her up. The relationship between iysh and ishah is very important that Yehovah looks upon his people in the caring way a husband sees his wife.