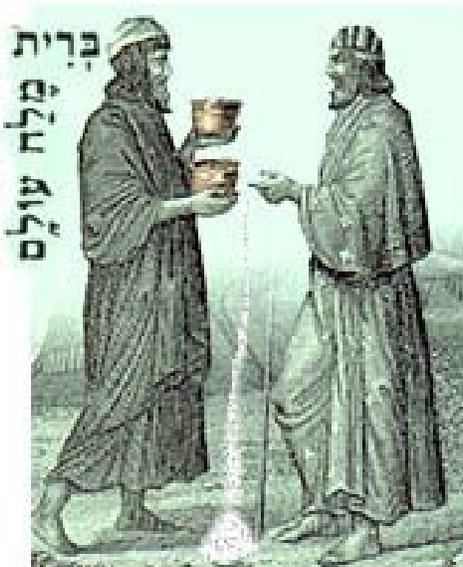


Covenant of Salt Numbers 18:19

All the heave offerings of the holy things, which the children of Israel offer unto the LORD, have I given thee, and thy sons and daughters with thee, by a statute for ever: it is a covenant of salt forever before the LORD unto thee and to the seed with thee.



An important thread in the fabric of life in the East is the covenant of salt. We find this covenant mentioned in the Old Testament:

All the heave offerings of the holy things, which the children of Israel offer unto the Lord, have I given thee, and thy sons and daughters with thee, by a statute for ever: it is a covenant of salt forever before the Lord unto thee and to the seed with thee. Numbers 18:19

And again:

Ought ye not to know that the Lord God of Israel gave the kingdom over Israel to David forever, even to him and to his sons by a covenant of salt?
II Chronicles 13:5

What is this covenant of salt? In the East, the taking of salt is a pledge, a promise of fidelity. If I come to your house and eat food with you which has been seasoned with salt, I can never betray you or do you harm. Even if you commit a crime and I am asked to testify, I cannot do it because I have eaten salt with you. Perhaps I may come to you and try to persuade you to do the right thing, but I would die before I would break the covenant of salt. In fact, the penalty for so doing, is death.

We find New Testament references to the covenant also. In Matthew 5:13 we find Jesus saying, “Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing , but to be cast out and be trodden under the foot of men.”

In the East we not only have salt in the form that is in America, but our salt also comes in large stone jars, twenty or thirty pounds in one jar. This jar stands on the floor on the kitchen, and is like brown rock salt. The top of the jar is covered with a stone slab. Every morning the kitchen floor is washed with water, and in the course of time, the bottom of the stone jar becomes soaked with water so many times that the salt in the bottom of the jar actually loses its saltiness. By the time the salt is used down to the part which the saltiness has been leached away, the remainder is simply thrown out into the street and it is trodden under foot.

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