

Ordained Minister and Rabbi

Wedding Ceremony

Welcome, family and friends. (Bride) and (groom) are happy that so many of you who mean so much to them are here to share and celebrate their wedding this day. Your role here today is not a passive one; you are encouraged not only to rejoice and honor the bride and groom on their wedding day, but also to remain a sustaining community for them. (Bride) and (groom), I bless you with these traditional Hebrew words along with an English interpretation.

B'ruchim ha-ba'im b'shame Adonai.

Blessed be you who have come here in dedication to all that is loving, good and sacred. We bless you and welcome you in joy.

Mi adir al ha-kol. Mi baruch al ha-kol. Mi gadol al ha-kol. y'vareich et-he-chatan v'et-ha-kalah.

May the Source of Life sustain you. May all that is noble and true in the universe, inspire your lives together, bring peace to you and to all humankind. Amen.

Explanation of the Chupah

We are here at a time of happiness to celebrate (bride) and (groom)'s love and the commitment they have made to marriage. They stand under a Chupah. It represents the promise of the new home they will create together. Its four sides are open, symbolizing the importance of hospitality, community and participation in each other's lives. (The members of their families stand at the wall and corners of their symbolic home; they are the foundation upon which the structure of their lives rests.)

Acknowledging Loved Ones

We would also like to take this moment to remember those who are no longer with us but whose lives and spirits have touched our hearts. Let us remember them now in a moment of silence.

Prayer of Gratitude/ Shechecheyanu or General Marriage Blessings

O most awesome, glorious and blessed G-d, grant your blessings to (bride) and (groom). May your home be a shelter against the storm, a haven of peace, a stronghold of faith and love. Please join in if you know this prayer of gratitude:

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech Ha-olam, shechecheyanu v'ki'yi-manu v'higi-anu lazman ha-zeh.

Blessed are You, Eternal our G-d, who has given us life, sustained us, and brought us to this joyous time. Let us say, Amen.

Readings, A Song, Music Interlude (Optional)

Exchange of Vows

(Bride) and (groom, please join your right hands and declare your intentions and vows in the presence of G-d and this gathering of family and friends.

Do you, (groom/bride), take (bride/groom) to be your wife/husband, promising to cherish and protect her/him, whether in good fortune or in adversity, for all the days of your life?

Exchange of Rings

The wedding rings are regarded as fitting symbols of marriage, for they are fashioned, like a circle to have neither beginning nor end. They are outward symbols of your inner spiritual bond. May their meaning sink into your hearts and bind your lives together by dedication and faithfulness to each other. {Truly, then, these rings celebrate the words of the Song of Songs: "Wear me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for love is infinitely strong...many waters cannot quench love; and no flood can sweep it away..."

(Groom/bride), as you place the ring on (bride's/groom's) finger, repeat after me:

With this ring, I pledge my love. I join my life with yours in kindness and compassion. I join my life with yours in faithfulness. This is my beloved, and this is my friend.

(Or)

Be consecrated to me as my wife/husband in the eyes of G-d. With this ring I join my life with yours. *Ani l'dodi v'dodi li*. I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine.

Candle Lighting/ Unity Candle

In the wedding liturgy, candlelight symbolizes the commitment of love these two people have declared today. Before you, you see three special candles. The two smaller candles symbolize the lives of the bride and groom. Until today, both have let their light shine as individuals in their respective families and communities. (Parents light smaller candles) Now they publicly proclaim their love in the new union of marriage. They light the large center candle from the smaller candles to create this new reality.

(The couple lights one large candle as these words are recited, or you can have music played)

From every human being there rises a light that reaches straight to heaven. And when two souls are destined to find each other, their two streams of light flow together and a single brighter light goes forth from their united being. (Baal Shem Tov)

Blessing over the Wine

The blessing over the wine, known as the Kiddush, is a part of many Jewish celebrations and holidays. The word Kiddush means sanctification or holiness, so as we recite this blessing, we sanctify this couple on their wedding day. This cup of wine is symbolic of the cup of life. As you share this cup of wine, you undertake to share all that the future may bring, may it be sweeter because you drink this wine together. Please join me in this prayer if you know it.

Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha-olam, borei pri ha-gafen.
Blessed are You, Eternal our G-d, Creator of the fruit of the vine. Let us say, Amen.

Seven Wedding Blessings (Sheva Brochot)

Historically, brides and grooms have been blessed with seven wedding blessings. In Jewish tradition, the number seven symbolizes creation and completion. As a man and woman join together in love and marriage, they help each other feel more complete. In the Hebrew version, these blessings praise G-d for creating the world, bride and groom, children, peace, humankind and the joys of marriage. Today (bride) and (groom) have chosen an adapted English version that reflects their own hopes and feelings.

1) *Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha-olam,*
Blessed is the creation that embodies glory.

2) *Baruch....., she-hakol bara lichvodo,*

Blessed is the creation of the human being.

3) *Baruch....., yotser ha-Adam,*

Blessed is the design of the human being, united in heart and the search for love.

4) *Baruch....., asher yatsar et ha-Adam b'tsal-mo,*

Let these loving friends rejoice. May their joy be as paradise on earth.

5) *Sos tasis v'tagail tsiyon, b'kibutz ba'ne-ha l'tochah b'simcha.*

Baruch atah Adonai m'sameach tsiyon b'vane-ha,

Blessed is the joy of our gathering. May rejoicing resound throughout the world as the homeless are given homes, persecution and oppression cease, and all people learn to live in peace with each other and in harmony with their environment.

6) *Baruch....., asher bara sasson v'simcha, Chatan v' Chalah,*

Blessed is the creation of joy and celebration, bride and groom, delight and love, peace and companionship.

7) *Baruch ata Adonai, m'sameach Chatan im ha-Kalah.*

Blessed are You, Eternal our G-d, who rejoices with the Bride and Groom. Amen

(Or) Modern English version of the Seven Blessings

May your marriage enrich your lives.

May you work together to build a relationship of substance and quality.

May the honesty of your communication build a foundation of understanding, connection and trust.

May you respect each other's individual personality and philosophy, and give each other room to grow and fulfill each other's dreams.

May your sense of humor and playful spirit continue to enliven your relationship.

May you understand that neither of you is perfect: you are both subject to human frailties; and may your love strengthen when you fall short of each other's expectations.

May you be best friends and lovers, better together than either of you are apart. Blessed are You, Eternal our G-d, who rejoices with the bride and groom. Amen.

Rabbi's Remarks

Pronouncement

Your friends and family, all of us here, rejoice in your happiness and we pray that this day marks only one of the many more blessings you will share in the days and years ahead. And now that you have spoken the words and performed the rites that unite your lives, we now, by the power of your love and the commitment you have made, declare your marriage to be valid and binding, and declare you, (groom) and (bride), husband and wife.

You may kiss the bride now... (or) You may both kiss now...

Closing Prayer/Benediction

This closing blessing is a part of both Christian and Jewish liturgy. Rabbis, Priests and Ministers have used this prayer to bless couples for over two thousand years.

Y'varech'cha Adonai v'yishm'recha.

May G-d bless you and keep you

Ya-air Adonai panav ay-lecha vi'chunekah.

May G-d's countenance shine upon you and be gracious to you

Yisa Adonai panav ay-lecha v'yasame l'cha shalom.

May G-d look upon you with favor and grant you shalom-peace. And let us say Amen.

Breaking of the Glass and Yichud

The traditional breaking of the glass is a joyous ceremony. The fragility of the glass suggests the fragility of human relationships. The glass is broken to protect this marriage with the implied prayer: "As this glass shatters, so may your marriage never break."

For (bride) and (groom), the shattering of this glass also symbolizes the breaking down of barriers between people of different cultures and faiths. May the day soon arrive when all people will live together in shalom, in peace.

As (groom, or bride and groom) break(s) the glass, I invite everyone to shout Mazal Tov!