

# A BRIDGE TO HOLINESS



PLANNING YOUR WEDDING



**THE TEMPLE**

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## MAZEL TOV AND WELCOME

It is a privilege and a pleasure to be able to help you plan your wedding or commitment ceremony. It is a moment of supreme holiness, *kedusha*, in the lives of a couple. Not accidentally, the mystics of our tradition sensed that the wedding itself was capable of raising all creation to a higher spiritual level, and we are blessed to be able to provide this positive experience to our members.

When two people get married in a Jewish context, it is more than two people celebrating and confirming their love. It is the replay in miniature of the covenant between God and Israel. At this moment, the two people are no longer themselves, but they become like Adam and Eve, cradled yet again in the Garden of Eden, hearing the liturgy tell them that their marriage may be the piece that brings about the days of the messiah. The shattering of the glass at the end of the ceremony clearly has its roots in ancient superstition, but we interpret it now as a *zecher l'churban* – a memory of the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem – a memory and an invocation that out of darkness there can be hope.

We are eager to help you plan your wedding ceremony, and we hope to help you in any way possible. Please keep in mind the following procedures that will help facilitate this act of *kiddushin*, this act of holiness.

Your wedding officiant will work with you to create a ceremony that is personal and meaningful for you and your family.

***Please note, it is important to speak with the officiating Temple clergy before choosing the date and start time of your wedding.*** Temple weddings do not take place on Shabbat (Friday night and Saturday during the day). It is also The Temple's policy that our clergy does not officiate with clergy of a different faith.

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## CHECKLIST TO PLAN YOUR WEDDING CEREMONY

- Establish Temple membership if you are not already a member
- Schedule a Wedding Intake Meeting (see page 5)
- Begin Pre-marital Counseling (see page 6)
- Make arrangements for the Huppah (see page 7)
- Order a Ketubah (see page 7)
- Have your Ketubah proofed by the Rabbi or Cantor (see page 7)
- Obtain a Georgia State Marriage License (see page 6)
- Select Two Witnesses for the Signing of the Ketubah (see page 8)
- Select the Processional and Recessional Music (see page 8-9)
- Provide Talit (Prayer Shawl), two Kiddush Cups and Glass to be Broken (see page 8)
- Purchase the Wedding Ring(s) (see page 7)
- Practice the Ring Blessings (see page 9-10)
- Write Vows to each other (optional)

## THE WEDDING INTAKE MEETING

Couples who would like to be married by a Temple rabbi or cantor should set up a preliminary meeting with Rabbi Peter Berg. Rabbi Berg will assist you in choosing the right Temple clergy to serve as the officiant. You can schedule a meeting with Rabbi Berg by calling Dianne Ratowky 404.873.1731 or [dratowsky@the-temple.org](mailto:dratowsky@the-temple.org).

If you have a pre-existing relationship with a particular member of the clergy, feel free to call that rabbi or cantor directly.

## INTERFAITH WEDDINGS

Your officiating rabbi will work with you to create rituals that are meaningful in an interfaith context. Please note that both The Temple and individual clergy have established certain guidelines and procedures to support interfaith couples in creating a Jewish wedding ceremony that is authentic for them. It is our goal to be inclusive of non-Jewish family and friends in attendance.

## SAME-SEX WEDDINGS

We at The Temple look forward to the day when all couples have equal access to civil marriage. While Georgia has not legalized same-sex marriage, we would be happy to celebrate a commitment ceremony and/or offer a blessing here at Temple after an out-of-state wedding.

## SUGGESTED READING

We will provide you with a copy of *The New Jewish Wedding, Revised* (Fireside: 2001) by Anita Diamant. This guide should be helpful to you in your planning.

## TIME OF THE CEREMONY

Please consult the clergy office regarding the precise timing of all ceremonies. For Saturday evening weddings, the clergy will designate the proper start time.

## USING THE TEMPLE FACILITIES

If you would like to utilize The Temple Sanctuary, Chapel or Schwartz Goldstein Hall, please be in touch with our Event Coordinator, Rita Zadoff, at 404.873.1731 or [rzadoff@the-temple.org](mailto:rzadoff@the-temple.org)

To see pictures and learn about room dimensions, please visit: [www.The-Temple.org](http://www.The-Temple.org).

## PRE-MARITAL COUNSELING

In addition to wedding planning, all couples are required to participate in pre-marital counseling sessions. The Temple clergy are trained in a pre-marital counseling technique called PREPARE/ENRICH. Alternatively, couples may choose to meet with a therapist. The Temple clergy will assist out-of-town couples with finding the names of local therapists. The State of Georgia gives a discount on the marriage license fee with a letter certifying at least 6 hours of premarital counseling.

## GENETIC TESTING

Jews of Ashkenazi (Eastern European) descent are at increased risk for passing down a gene for tragic genetic diseases to their children. We recommend that couples test for common genetic disorders, including but not limited to Bloom's Syndrome, Canavan Disease, Cystic Fibrosis, Familial Dysautonomia, Fanconi Anemia Type C, Gaucher Disease Type 1, Glycogen Storage Disorder Type 1a, Maple Syrup Urine Disease, Mucopolysaccharidosis IV, Niemann-Pick Disease Type A, Tay-Sachs Disease. About 25% of the Ashkenazi Jewish population is a carrier for at least one Jewish genetic disease.

There are several ways to get tested: visit [Jscreen.org](http://Jscreen.org) (in connection with Emory) for an at-home testing kit, consulting your OB/GYN or physician or call the Jewish Genetic Disease Consortium at 866.370.4363. Please ask your officiant about communal funding that may be available.

## OBTAINING A GEORGIA WEDDING LICENSE

Wedding licenses should be obtained in the Georgia county in which you reside. Alternatively, the license can be obtained from the county in which the wedding will take place.

If the bride and groom live out of state, but the wedding will be in Georgia, the license should come from the county where the wedding will take place. The Temple is located in Fulton County.

Both the bride and groom will need to appear before the Fulton County Probate Court in person. Please bring with you:

1. Valid Driver's License or Passport
2. Cash for the license

*(The fee varies by county. It is currently \$61 in Fulton County OR \$26 with a certificate for marriage counseling from the clergy.)*

For more information, please consult [www.fultoncountyga.gov](http://www.fultoncountyga.gov). There is no waiting period and no blood test required.

# JEWISH RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

## THE HUPPAH (WEDDING CANOPY)

The Temple has several *huppot* available for use. The *huppah* represents the Jewish home, and it is the traditional locale of the Jewish wedding. There are several options for a *huppah*. The first is a free-standing *huppah*. Another option is to have four friends carry in or hold a *huppah* made of a large *tallit* with poles. This has the added advantage of helping you include friends in the ceremony. In either case, the *huppah* should be at least seven feet high to be able to accommodate all participants. For extra special *huppot* that will surely become family heirlooms, try [www.huppah.com](http://www.huppah.com).

## THE KETUBAH (JEWISH WEDDING CONTRACT)

Though originally a Jewish legal document, Reform Judaism sees the *ketubah* as a spiritual document that attests to the covenantal relationship between husband and wife. We will be happy to provide you with a *ketubah*, and we have several different ones available.

You may wish to have a *ketubah* created by a Jewish artist, or you can purchase a ready-made *ketubah* from a Judaica dealer. You may also want to try various web sites, such as

- [www.ketubah.com](http://www.ketubah.com)
- [www.e-ketubah.com](http://www.e-ketubah.com)
- [www.kosherketubahs.com](http://www.kosherketubahs.com)
- [www.ajp.com](http://www.ajp.com)

Whenever possible, the English translation of the Aramaic or Hebrew text should be egalitarian, with equal responsibilities for both partners. As part of the information for your *ketubah*, you will likely need to know your Hebrew names and the Hebrew names of your parents. Please consult with the clergy for any guidance in this area.

## THE RINGS

In Jewish law a verbal declaration of marriage is not legally binding in and of itself. There must also be an act of *kinyan* – a formal acquisition. This is done through the exchange of rings. The ring is typically unpierced and free of stones to avoid any possible misrepresentation of its value. Jewish wedding rings are typically simple – a band made of a single pure metal, with no holes breaking the circle, represents the wholeness achieved through marriage and a hope for an unbroken union.

## BEDECKEN (VEILING THE BRIDE)

The custom of ceremonially “veiling the bride” comes from the story of Jacob, when he was deceived into marrying Leah instead of his intended bride, Rachel. To ensure against future confusion, the custom arose of the groom veiling the bride. The ceremony of *bedecken* is now more about intention and equality, time for a couple to look into one another’s eyes and ensure that they are ready to marry one another.

# JEWISH RITUALS AND TRADITIONS (CONT.)

## **SHEVA BRACHOT (SEVEN BLESSINGS)**

The traditional seven blessings for a wedding relate to major Jewish themes: creation, the Garden of Eden, redemption, and Jerusalem. They are often chanted in Hebrew and then read in English translation. One of the blessings is over the fruit of the vine, and after the *sheva brachot* are said, the couple drinks from the same kiddush cup.

## **BREAKING THE GLASS**

There are many interpretations for the breaking of a glass at the end of a Jewish wedding. It is a reminder that even in times of joy, there is sorrow. It is a reminder of the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem and our hope for redemption. A different interpretation of the glass-breaking is the hope that the marriage will last as long as it would take to put the broken glass back together.

## **YICHUD**

Immediately after the ceremony, the couple goes to a separate room to spend their first few moments as a married couple together away from the rest of the activity.

## **WITNESSES**

You will need two witnesses for the ketubah. The witnesses must be adult Jews not related to either bride or groom or to each other. Witnesses must be 13 years of age or older. For interfaith weddings, the clergy will provide you with alternative options.

## **JEWISH MUSIC**

The music you choose for your wedding can be as important as choosing your wedding attire, photographer, or first dance! Since it is one of the first, if not the first element that your family and guests will experience, it is important to take care in selecting your processional and recessional music. Whether or not you choose to have a cantor sing with the rabbi during the ceremony, Cantor Hartman is available to assist you as you make your selections and choices.

Since you are planning a Jewish wedding, we recommend music with Jewish themes and strongly prefer that you stay away from selections such as "Here Comes The Bride" or works that are typically played in a church service such as those by Bach, for example.

The repertoire of wonderful Jewish music is vast and will set the tone for your Jewish wedding ceremony. Traditional processionals include Jewish song texts with love themes such as:

- *Dodi Li*
- *Erev Shel Shoshanim*
- *Erev Ba*

*(music continues on the next page)*



## JEWISH RITUALS AND TRADITIONS (CONT.)

Popular joyous recessional songs enjoyed are:

- *Siman Tov*
- *Heveinu Shalom Aleichem*
- *Chatan Kallah Mazal Tov*

Our cantor has recordings of various settings of each of these selections and will be pleased to share them with you to assist in your choices.

Cantor Hartman is also available to guide your choice of instrumentation and can help with suggested musicians. It is typical for your wedding musicians to play thirty minutes prior to the start of your processional, as your guests arrive and are seated. Some couples are comfortable leaving the choice of the pre-nuptial concert to the musicians, while others prefer to provide a list of titles for the musicians to play. Either way, our cantor can guide this aspect of your wedding as well, and can be in touch with your musicians to help them plan your musical menu.

### ORDER FOR PROCESSIONAL

There is no legal requirement for marching down the aisle. You are free to choose any setup that works for you. Many couples ask about the order of the processional. Unless your caterer, wedding consultant, or etiquette manual has a better idea, here's one that works every time (i.e., the couple always gets to the *huppah* and they always get married!)

- *Huppah* holders with *huppah* (when applicable)
- Clergy
- Maid of honor with best man
- Grandparents
- Groom walked down by parents
- Bride walked down by parents

### VOWS

#### HUSBAND TO WIFE:

*Ha-ray at me-ku-de-shet li*

*b'ta-ba'at zoh*

*k'dat Mo-she v'Yisra-eil*

הָרִי אֶת מְקַדְשֵׁת לִי

בְּטַבְעֶת זוֹ

כְּדַת מֹשֶׁה וְיִשְׂרָאֵל

With this ring you are consecrated unto me as my wife in accordance with the traditions of Moses and the Jewish people.

*(continues on next page)*

## JEWISH RITUALS AND TRADITIONS (CONT.)

### WIFE TO HUSBAND

(If she is giving him a ring):

*Ha-ray a-ta me-ku-dash li*

*b'ta-ba-at zoh*

*k'dat Mo-she v'Yis-ra-eil*

הָרִי אֶתָּה מְקֻדָּשׁ לִי  
בְּטַבְעֶת זוֹ  
כְּדַת מֹשֶׁה וַיִּשְׂרָאֵל

With this ring, you are consecrated unto me as my husband in accordance with the traditions of Moses and the Jewish people.

**For an interfaith service, the Bride and Groom each say:**

*Ani l'dodi v'dodi li*

I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine.

Some couples choose to write their own vows in addition to the traditional recitation. The clergy will help guide you if you choose this option.

### TZEDAKAH

We encourage you to think about helping those in need as you plan your wedding. MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger - asks American Jews to give 3% of the cost of a *simcha* – *brit* or baby-naming, Bar/Bat Mitzvah, wedding – to help fight world hunger. They distribute that money to various agencies across the country and the world. They have been amazingly successful. Do consider contributing to MAZON in honor of your wedding. Sharing one's joy, symbolically, with the hungry is one of the most powerful Jewish actions that we can perform.

MAZON, the Jewish Hunger Fund  
1990 S. Bundy Dr, Ste 260, L.A. CA 90025-5232  
310.442.0020  
[www.mazon.org](http://www.mazon.org)

# IMPORTANT LOGISTICS

## **SPIRITUALLY-APPROPRIATE ATTIRE**

Everyone looks beautiful at a wedding – that’s the way it should be! If a wedding ceremony is going to happen on the *bima* of The Temple, there is a special aura of sanctity that accompanies it. In order to preserve modesty, some women choose to cover their shoulders during the ceremony.

## **REFRESHMENTS BEFORE THE CEREMONY**

In order to safeguard the dignity of the wedding, we strongly request that **no** alcoholic drinks be served **before** the ceremony.

## **PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEO**

Photography and/or video can help you remember this sacred moment in your lives, but it can also be a distraction. We urge you to insist that your photographer observe the following guidelines:

Video is permitted from the side of the *bima* or from the balcony (when the wedding is at The Temple). In other locations, please inform the videographer to be as unobtrusive as possible. The video spotlight should be either “on” or “off” but not turned on and off repeatedly during the ceremony.

Photography is permitted at the following times: during the signing of the *ketubah*; the veiling of the bride; during the processional; at the shattering of the glass; and during the recessional. At other times, the photographer may be in the back or balcony without a flash. In order to maintain the sanctity and dignity of the ceremony, please ask your photographer to refrain from “flash” photography at any other time. Non-flash photography is permitted if the photographer is not obtrusive.

## IMPORTANT LOGISTICS (CONT.)

### CHECKLIST FOR THE DAY OF THE WEDDING

- Ketubah
- Special Pen to Sign the Ketubah (archival and fine point)  
Please ensure a room has been designated in which to sign the Ketubah.
- Georgia State Marriage License
- Glass to Break (with a cloth or napkin)  
Your caterer must provide a shot glass or glass wrapped in a white linen napkin. This will be smashed at the end of the ceremony. You can also purchase a special glass in our Temple gift shop that will be inserted into a *mezuzah*.
- Two Kiddush Cups
- White Wine  
Please arrange a small table, covered with a white tablecloth, under the *huppah*. On the table, you will need to fill the two cups with wine before the ceremony. White wine is acceptable. A beautiful touch is for the cups to be what you would use for *kiddush* in your own homes, or a family heirloom.
- Talit Prayer Shawl (optional)
- Ring(s)
- Havdalah Set (optional) for Saturday evening weddings
- Small room for the couple immediately following the ceremony (*yichud*)
- Microphone

## CLERGY & ADMINISTRATIVE CONTACTS

We are eager to help you as you proceed in this joyous time of your life. Please feel free to contact us by phone (404.873.1731) or email, and also accept our warmest *mazal tov!*

If there are special family circumstances, such as divorce, children from a previous marriage, etc. please consult the clergy for input.

### CLERGY

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### ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

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Executive Director

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