

Partner 1 Name \_\_\_\_\_ Partner 2 Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Wedding \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ Location of Wedding \_\_\_\_\_

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## Aufruf

Literally meaning “going up” in Yiddish, typically the [Aufruf](#) is held on a Shabbat before the Wedding. The wedding couple are called up to face the congregation during services for a special community blessing.

## Bedeken

If someone is wearing a veil the veil can be lowered. If someone is wearing a kippah the kippah can be donned. There is biblical precedent for checking the faces of the couple before the ceremony to make sure you are marrying the person you are betrothed to. In modern times the ceremony represents a moment to stand before one another and see each other fully before beginning the ceremony.

## Breaking of the Glass

The ceremony concludes with one partner stomping on and [breaking glass](#). We do this during the ceremony to remind us, even during happy times, that the world is fractured, and we are responsible for helping to repair it.

## Circling

Some couples circle each other 7 times, some split it, 3 circles each and one together. The tradition comes from the biblical story that Joshua circled the walls of Jericho 7 times before they crumbled. It represents breaking down of any final barriers before entering the Chuppah together.

## Chuppah

Literally meaning “covering” in Hebrew. The [wedding canopy](#) represents the home you will build together. Open on all sides, some say it represents connection to community. It's temporary nature, open sides and covered top also reminds us that throughout life's twists and turns – you'll find protection only in one another and in God/The Spirit of the Universe.

## Exchange of Rings

There are both traditional and modern promises that may be stated while rings are exchanged. Rings are placed on the pointer finger during these vows, as it contains the artery which connects directly to the heart. After the vow has been spoken, it is moved to the ring finger. Potential readings include:

- I give you this ring as a sign of my friendship and fidelity.
- I give you this ring as a sign of my love, my loyalty and my friendship.
- With this ring I wed you and pledge my faithful love.
- I give you this ring as a sign of my love and welcome and accept you as my spouse.
- Ha-ray at m'koodeshet li (atah m'koodesh li) b't'va-at zo, b'ahavat olam. (Be thou consecrated unto me with this ring in abiding love.)
- Ha-ray at m'koodeshet li (atah m'koodesh li) b't'va-at zo, k'daht Moshe v'Israel. (Be thou consecrated unto me with this ring according to the laws of Moses and Israel.)
- Ani L'dodi, V dodi Li (I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine)

## HaMotzi

Literally meaning “the thanks” in Hebrew, [blessing over bread](#) before serving the meal.

## Horah

A [traditional Jewish dance](#) of celebration.

## Kabbalat Panim

Literally meaning “Greeting of Faces” in Hebrew, this is the opening of the reception of a wedding. Orthodox communities have the couple greeting their guests separately. Part of this tradition is the custom that the couple not to see each other before the wedding. This increases the anticipation and excitement of the event. In modern times, each couple should choose their own parameters of this temporary separation. You may choose to have a photographer capture the moment you first see each other, before the ketubah signing. This moment can be private or public.

## Ketubah Signing

[The Ketubah](#) is the marriage contract that specifies the commitments the couple makes to each other. It is signed prior to the wedding ceremony. There are many traditional and modern versions of ketubot (the plural of ketubah). It's important the ketubah represents the wedding couple. [Read this for tips to create an inclusive Ketubah](#) and [some sample text ideas for an inclusive Ketubah](#).

## Kiddushin

A betrothal ceremony where we can bless a glass of wine (or juice) to sanctify the moment and offer prayers of gratitude.

## Mezinka Dance

An Eastern European ceremony celebrating the marriage of the last child in a family. Seated on chairs in the center of the dance floor, the parents are presented with bouquets of flowers and circled by the company in a dance that celebrates the completion of their parental responsibility. The mother is often adorned with a ‘Krenzel’ of flowers on her head, literally meaning “crown” in Yiddish. Some families literally bring brooms and dust pans onto the dance floor to proverbially sweep the ‘Mezinka’ derived from the Yiddish word for “youngest child” out of the house.

## Mikvah

Literally meaning “[Ritual Bath](#)” in Hebrew, the wedding couple individually can choose to immerse themselves in the Mikvah for the purpose of spiritual purification. This is typically done just prior to the wedding or within 4-days of the ceremony.

## Sheva B'rachot

Literally meaning “seven blessings” שבע ברכות in Hebrew are also known as Birkot Nissuin ברכות נישואין (the wedding blessings). It is a common custom for these blessings to be pronounced by a Rabbi or to be divided among honored guests. The blessings are usually said over a cup of wine. If multiple people say the blessings, the cup is passed to the person pronouncing each blessing. In many traditions, when a person pronounces the blessing, they and/or the bride(s)/groom(s) drink from the cup, either after each blessing, or just after all seven. The number seven symbolizes creation and completion. As a couple joins together in love and marriage, they help each other to be more complete, more whole than they ever could have been alone. The blessings each speak about the creation of the world, humankind, love, the importance of marriage and longing for peace. Potential readings include:

- **Modern Adaption:** 1. May your marriage enrich your lives. 2. May you work together to build a relationship of substance and quality. 3. May the honesty of your communication build a foundation of understanding, connection and trust. 4. May you respect each other's individual personality and philosophy, and give each other room to grow and fulfill each other's dreams. 5. May your sense of

humor and playful spirit continue to enliven your relationship. 6. 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. 7. May you be "best friends," better together than either of you are apart.

- **Humanistic Adaption:** 1. Wondrous is the eternal unfolding of the seasons which has brought us to this joyous occasion. 2. We speak of gratitude and wonder in our hearts for all the love that surrounds you. 3. Gratifying are the passages of life that bring both joy and sorrow and offer challenge and opportunity. 4. Radiant is the spirit of humankind that illuminates our world more than the stars in the heavens. 5. Empowering is the potential in human beings to combine love, wisdom and courage and to forge a better life for themselves and their loved ones. 6. Precious is the love of family, friends, and community. 7. Blessed is the happiness of the bride and groom, joy and gladness, pleasure and exaltation, love and harmony, peace and friendship. We rejoice with this bridegroom and bride.
- **Same-Gender Reconstructionist Adaption:** 1. We acknowledge the Unity of all, expressing our appreciation for life's sweetness. 2. We acknowledge the Unity of all, realizing that we are deeply interconnected. May you find comfort in your similarities and celebrate the qualities which make you different. May you be inspired each day by the abundance and diversity of the natural world. 3. We acknowledge the Unity of all, recognizing and appreciating the blessing of being human. All people have the capacity for love, generosity, kindness and compassion. May you express these qualities freely with each other and be blessed to receive them throughout your lives together. 4. May rejoicing resound throughout the world. May we envision a world in which persecution and oppression cease and all people and animals learn to live together in peace with each other and in harmony with their environment. 5. From the Source of all, we call forth an abundance of love to envelop this couple. May you be for each other true partners, companions and best friends. 6. We acknowledge the Unity of all, and we highlight today joy and gladness, partner one and partner two, delight and cheer, love and harmony. May we all witness the day when the dominant sounds through the world will be the sounds of happiness, laughter and celebration. 7. Blessed be this marriage. May the partner one and partner two rejoice together.
- **Traditional Adaption:** 1. Blessed are you, our Lord our G-d, who created the fruit of the vine. Bless the two of you who come out of long traditions of struggling to find out what it is to be human. May you be full of the wine of life. 2. Blessed are you, Our Lord our G-d, G-d who shapes the universe. All things created speak of your glory. May you carry gratitude and wonder in your hearts for all the blessings that surround you and for the love of those that care for you. 3. Blessed are you, Ruler of the Universe, who fashions each person. Bless the two of you. May you know it all—joy and struggle, beauty and sorrow, sweat, tears, solitude, companionship, laughter and ecstasy. May your marriage be strong enough to support you to experience whatever you must as you come to know yourselves and each other and to discover the entire range of your humanity. 4. Blessed are you, Our G-d, the Foundation of every life, who fashioned humanity in Your likeness, and prepared for us a shape and form in your image, from one generation to the next and for all eternity. May you respect each other's individual personality and philosophy, and give each other room to grow and fulfill each other's dreams. 5. Blessed are you, our Ruler. Zion will surely celebrate and exult in the coming together of her children. Blessed are You G-d, who brings joy to Zion through her children. 6. Blessed are you G-d. Let these loving friends enjoy the bliss you gave to the first {people} in the Garden of Eden in the days of old. Blessed are you, the Presence who dwells with {partner 1} and {partner 2} in delight. 7. Blessed are You G-d, Source of the universe, who has created each of these two people, their delight and their happiness, their rejoicing and singing and dancing and festivity, love and friendship, peace and pleasure. Oh God, may the voices of this celebration be heard in the streets of our cities and the hills of our countryside. May the words of this couple go out with gladness from their wedding Chuppah, and may the music of their friends and guests surround them. Blessed are You G-d, who brings joy to the hearts of this couple.

## Siman Tov u'Mazal Tov

A [common song at Jewish weddings](#). It is a musical way of wishing the couple well.

## The Tish

The wedding couple present a teaching on the week's Torah portion while friends and family, eat, drink and heckle them.

## Yihud

Time for the wedding couple to spend together, by themselves, immediately after the ceremony.

## (Sample) Ceremony Order

[Every ceremony can be uniquely curated to meet the needs of the couple and family in attendance](#). This is simply a sample of a ceremony procession and order to help us start to create something that works for you by incorporating some of the rituals mentioned above.

1. Some type of music begins signaling to the guests the ceremony is about to begin.
2. Rabbi Kahn walks to the Chuppah or where the ceremony will take place.
3. Attendants and Flower children walk down the aisle.
4. Partner one walks with chosen family by their side (grandparents, children or parents).
5. Partner two walks with chosen family.
6. Family/Attendants/Parents stay standing to the side of the Chuppah. Partners circle each other.
7. Rabbi Kahn begins with a blessing for beginnings. Partners read part of the Ketubah together.
8. Exchange rings and vows and Rabbi Kahn provides words of love. Families read the Seven Blessings
9. Breaking of the glass, "Mazel Tov!"
10. Guests shower couple with love, song and joy as they exit the ceremony.

## (Sample) Timing

Each ritual that you choose to incorporate can be timed according to your venue needs. Here is a sample of timing for a ceremony that incorporates both a private Ketubah ceremony for the immediate family followed by the wedding ceremony.

- 9:45am Invited guests arrive and mingle with each other while the couple experiences a "first look" at each other or take family photos.
- 10:00am "Ketubah" (marriage contract and collection of written vows) signing in closed room for chosen family and invited witnesses.
- 10:15am Civil Document Signing.
- 10:30am Couple asks the family to give a bit of space, so Rabbi Kahn can provide a few private words of blessing to the couple. Guests move towards the area where the ceremony will take place.
- 11:00am couple meets the Rabbi under the Chuppah for the ceremony.
- 11:30am couple leaves the ceremony together followed by the family and Rabbi Kahn.

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*Want a quick video explanation to send to friends or family interested in learning more before they arrive for your big day? Let me know. I have a vast resource of books, Facebook groups, blogs, booklets, tips, guides and videos to share.*

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