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Appendix 23 – Wedding Program

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The wedding of

*M. Ann Penny*

and

*Gideon B. Ariel*



Sunday, October 17, 2004

*Two Cheshvan 5765*

The Ritz-Carlton

Dana Point, California

Dear Family and Friends,

Welcome to our wedding. We want all of you to know how fortunate and happy we are knowing you came from great distances to join us on this very special day. We feel so loved and blessed to have you here to help us celebrate. Thank you all for making this day complete.

We would also like to extend a very warm thank you to our brother-in-law, George R. Lentz, Jr., for our wedding logo. We love it, and are so happy that we could incorporate it into so many of our wedding pieces.

All our love,

*Ann and Gideon*

## *Processional*

The bride and groom are honored like a king and queen on their wedding day and therefore are accompanied to the *Chuppah* by family and close friends.

*Chuppah* holders

John D. Probe  
Stanley W. Simants  
Jeremy Wise  
Robert W. Wainwright

Rabbi

Stephen J. Einstein

Groom

Gideon B. Ariel,

Escorted by his  
Best Man

John F. Soja

Bride

M. Ann Penny

Escorted by her  
Brother  
and Sister

J. Marshall Penny, Jr.  
Barbara Penny Lentz

## *Ketubah*

The *Ketubah* is one of the oldest and one of the least romantic elements of Jewish weddings. It is a legal contract, pure and simple. In its traditional form, the *Ketubah* does not mention love or trust or the establishment of a Jewish home or even God. It is written in Aramaic, "the technical, legal language of Talmudic law, rather than in Hebrew, the language of the Song of Songs."

A traditional *Ketubah* is not a contract between bride and groom but a document signed by two witnesses who testify that the groom "acquired" the bride in the prescribed manner and that he agreed to support her. This is not a mutual agreement; the bride only has to willingly accept the groom's proposal of marriage. The *Ketubah* is then given to the bride as a surety of her rights and her husband's duty; it becomes her (not their) possession.

For the end of the first century of the Common Era (C.E.), the *Ketubah* was actually a very progressive document for its time because it provided women with legal status and rights in marriage. It is also credited with strengthening the Jewish family since it made divorce—otherwise an easily exercised male prerogative—a more costly decision. Since the second century, rabbis held that without a *Ketubah* "the union of husband and wife was unhallowed cohabitation," and it remained a crucial document for many generations. In 1306, when Jews were stripped of their belongings and expelled from France, the rabbinic authorities declared that until new *Ketubot* were delivered to the wives, there could be no conjugal relations. However, Jewish law does recognize the validity of marriage without the document. If witnesses testify that a Jewish couple is living together as husband and wife, a *Bet Din*, a court of rabbis, considers the traditional *Ketubah* to be in effect.

By and large, however, variations in the *Ketubah* were insignificant compared to the extent to which the text remained constant. The document still in use among traditional Jews shares a great deal with marriage contracts from the second century, C.E.

Although it was a great advance for its time, the traditional *Ketubah* does not address the realities of marriage in our day. It is very difficult for many couples and rabbis to use the traditional text and then affirm, as it declares, that the *Ketubah* is not to be regarded as an *Asmakhta*—"a mere formula." The elaborate economic arrangements for the dissolution of a marriage as spelled out in



a traditional *Ketubah* have become meaningless, and the changed aspirations, roles, and responsibilities of women and men find no expression in a contract that demands specific duties and responsibilities of the groom but asks the bride for nothing in return.

Since the early 1970s, brides and grooms, rabbis, and calligraphers have been experimenting with new *Ketubot*. One rabbi has called these documents *Brit Ketubot*—“covenant *Ketubot*”—an expression that acknowledges the difference between these new contracts and traditional *Ketubot* and also emphasizes the seriousness and mutuality of an agreement to marry.

New *Ketubot* offer many choices to couples, starting with the content of the document. Some brides and grooms use the traditional Aramaic text but select or write an entirely different text in English. Many non-Orthodox couples, uncomfortable with any reference to silver *Zuzim* or *Kinyan* (ritual acquisition of the bride) in any language, purchase or commission a *Ketubah* that reflects their values and hopes in both Hebrew and English. One of the most fundamental changes on new *Ketubot* is not even what the document says, but who signs it. On the Orthodox document, only two official witnesses sign, and the text reflects this by referring to the bride and groom in the third person. On most new *Ketubot*, the couple signs, reflecting the first-person promises they make to each other; then the rabbi and witnesses add their signatures.

Nava, an Israeli artist, created the *Ketubah* we selected. We were attracted immediately to the bold, vibrant colors on the golden brown background. The theme incorporates symbolic representations of the twelve tribes arrayed on a map, bound on each side by the four directions, with a compass near the center. Since we both love to travel, the design intrigued us. However, merely loving to travel was too simplistic a concept for such a momentous event. Moses and the Israelites may have planned a simple, straightforward trip from Egypt to the Promised Land. But their trip, their lives, went very much astray. It seems unlikely that a journey from Egypt to Israel required the life span a whole generation. The journey was not an unknown path so surely there were changes in plans, mistakes in transit, and any or all manner of things to cause these Israelites to wander for such a long time. Our sages tell us that the generation that created the Golden Calf would not be allowed into the Promised Land. Therefore, the people wandered until a new generation was ready to

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assume their new land. Life is full of dedicated plans that change, quirks of fate that interrupt the journey, mistakes, missteps, or things that go bump in the night. Each of us journeys through life but this travel is on a scale grander than a simple vacation. An organized trip can have a destination but things don't always go as planned...suitcases are lost, hotels are full, unseasonable rain falls. Life, tripé, and destinations can be planned but rarely go according to the selected itinerary. Life's compass frequently directs us to places unintended. Gideon and I have had ideas and goals, have traveled in all the directions of the compass, and our lives have been bold, vibrant colors on the golden brown sands of life. It has been an amazing adventure and, like our ancestors, the journey has taught us much and oft times led us into quagmires. Our hardy forefathers and -mothers never gave up and we admire their perseverance. We hope the guidance and directions of our Israelite ancestors, reflected in our Ketubah, will continue to be a beacon for our lives.

### *Wedding Rings*

In Jewish law, a verbal declaration of marriage is not legally binding in and of itself. There must be also an act of *"Kinyan"*—a formal, physical acquisition. Without the groom's giving and the bride's acceptance of some object of nominal value — something *"Shaveh P'rutah"* literally, "worth a penny" — there is no marriage. Ever since the seventh century, a ring has been the traditional and preferred object of exchange.

According to Jewish law, the ring must be unpierced and free of precious stones to avoid any possible misrepresentation of its value and should belong to the groom. Only one ring—given by the groom to the bride—is required by law. It has become common in recent decades amongst the non-Orthodox, in a double-ring ceremony, for the bride's gift of a ring to her groom to be incorporated into the wedding ceremony.

For the most part, Jewish wedding rings are extremely simple pieces of jewelry. Even in the European communities of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when large, ornate marriage rings decorated with the towers of the Temple in Jerusalem were utilized by the bridal couple for their wedding celebrations, a simple ring was later substituted for everyday use.

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. The circle is an ancient symbol common to many cultures. In various times and places it has been a sign of perfection, completion, safety, and the female. The mystics who wrote the *Zohar* perceived the ring as a circle of light that revealed the "enveloping" sexual mystery of marriage.

While simple gold bands remain the traditional and most popular choice, embellishment with Hebrew letters has come back into fashion. It was once common for the words "*Mazel Tov*"—good luck—to be engraved inside the ring. Some couples choose the declaration, "*Dodi Li Va' Ani Lo*" ("I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine"). Hebrew names and/or the Jewish date of the wedding can be engraved inside.

The wedding band is customarily placed on the index finger of the bride's right hand during the ceremony. This is the most prominent finger and the easiest to see. An ancient belief is that a vein runs directly from the index finger to the heart.

The groom recites the "*Haray Aht*" statement (Be consecrated to me as my wife with this ring, according to the law of Moses and Israel). In a double-ring ceremony, the bride will recite the "*Haray Ahtah*" statement (consecrating the groom as her husband). The rings are later transferred to the third finger of the left hand.



## *Bedecken (Veiling of the Bride)*

Jewish tradition calls for the bride to be veiled. The *Bedecken*, which translates as "veiling", involves the groom's veiling of the bride immediately before the ceremony. The custom is said to be based upon the Biblical story in which Jacob, intending to marry Rachel, unknowingly marries her older sister, Leah.

## *Chuppah*

The wedding ceremony takes place beneath the *Chuppah* (wedding canopy.) The bridal canopy is a multifaceted symbol: it is a home, a garment, a bedcovering, and a reminder of the tents of nomadic ancestors. The fact that the *Chuppah* is open on all sides recalls the tent of the Biblical Abraham, a paragon of hospitality, who had doors on all four sides of his dwelling so that visitors would always know they were welcome.

In Talmudic times, the groom's father set up a royal purple tent in the courtyard of his home where the marriage would be finalized by consummation. Over time, *Nissuin* became a symbolic act, which the groom accomplished by covering the bride with a garment—a veil or his *Tallit* and the word *Chuppah* became identified with the act of 'covering' or 'taking' the bride.

Long after tents vanished from the Jewish landscape, wedding ceremonies were held out of doors in the hope that the marriage would be blessed by as many children as "the stars of the heavens." Some kind of covering was employed to create a more modest and sanctified space, separated from the "marketplace." During the sixteenth century, probably in Poland, a portable canopy held aloft by four poles came into vogue, and over time the word *Chuppah* became identified more with this canopy than with its legal function of *Nissuin*.



The *Chuppah* should be a temporary, handmade structure. Trees do not count nor are *Chuppot* made entirely of flowers strictly kosher. Despite the fact that the canopy has a legal function, there are no *Halakhic* requirements about its dimensions, shape, or decoration. Its appearance is entirely a matter of taste, another opportunity for personal expression and *Hiddur Mitzvah*—the beautification of piety.

Recently the use of a prayer shawl as a canopy has made a big comeback. Marrying under *Tzitzit*, which are reminders of the *Mitzvot*, is seen as an affirmation of the couple's commitment to a shared Jewish life. Obviously, in order to function as a *Chuppah*, a *Tallit* needs to be a full-sized garment, one that covers two-thirds of the body. The *Chuppah* is hung securely from four poles and it is a special honor to be asked to hold a *Chuppah* pole.

Our *Chuppah* is Gideon's new *Tallit*. Over the years, Ann has admired the beautiful *Tallitot* which Robin Einstein has made for her family. On a recent trip to Israel, Robin directed us to the weaver in Jerusalem. Accompanied by our dear friend, Yariv Oren z"l, we visited the small shop located outside the walls of Jerusalem, not far from the *Kotel*, where Gideon selected the special cloth to be used, the design, and the style of lettering. Because of the circumstances, using Gideon's *Tallit* as our *Chuppah* has special significance for us. Additionally, we are honored that four of our friends will share our joy by holding the poles supporting our *Chuppah*.

## *Circling of the Groom*

Beneath the *Chuppah*, the bride circles the groom seven times. The number seven has many symbolic meanings in Judaism, including the seven days of creation and seven blessings (*Sheva Brachot*) in the wedding ceremony. There is also a mystical teaching that the bride, in circling seven times, enters seven spheres of her husband's innermost being.

## Wedding Ceremony

The wedding service consists of two parts separated by the reading of the *Ketubah*. The first part is Betrothal (*Erusin*) and the second is Nuptials (*Nissuin*).

Although some elements are much older, the Jewish wedding began to take its current shape during the eleventh century. Before that, marriage was accomplished in two distinct rituals, separated by as much as a year. The first of these was betrothal, or *Erusin* (also called *Kiddushin*), from the same root as the word *Kadosh*, meaning "holy." After their betrothal, the bride and groom were considered legally wed, and a *Get*, the formal bill of divorce, was necessary to dissolve the contract. The marriage, however, was not consummated until after the next ceremony, *Nissuin*—"nuptials."

The two ceremonies differ in function and feeling. *Kiddushin* is a legal contract involving the precise formulas and transactions of *Ketubah* and *Kinyan*. *Nissuin* is a far less tangible process, sealed not with documents but with actions. Betrothal designates the bride and groom for each other only, but nuptials give them to each other. *Kiddushin* forges the connection between bride and groom; *Nissuin*, which can also mean "elevation," connects husband and wife with God.

After nearly ten centuries and despite the fact that both *Kiddushin* and *Nissuin* are now carried out beneath the *Chuppah*, Jewish weddings still show the seam where the two ceremonies were joined. The presence of two cups is a reminder of the time when two separate occasions with two separate recitations of *Kiddush*, the prayer of sanctification over wine. The separation of *Erusin/Kiddushin* and *Nissuin/Chuppah* came to an end during the eleventh century for a number of practical reasons. First, two separate ceremonies meant two separate banquets, which imposed financial difficulties on all but the wealthiest. Second, the Middle Ages were perilous times for Jews, and an intervening year might bring deportation or death to one of the parties. If a betrothed groom disappeared, his bride became *Agunah*, a woman who was unable to marry. Finally, since many grooms lived with the bride's family before *Chuppah*, the ceremonies were combined to remove the obvious and understandable temptations of couples who had been promised to each other but were forbidden to touch.

The Betrothal Ceremony begins with a welcome to the people gathered and a prayer for God's



presence and blessing over the marriage. The blessings are recited and the bride and groom drink from a cup of wine, symbolizing the joy and abundance they hope to share in their lives.

During the Ring Ceremony, the bride and groom exchange rings as their acknowledgement of the mutuality of marriage. In Jewish law, a verbal declaration of marriage is not legally binding. There must be an act of exchange of some object of known value, such as a ring. The groom's giving and the bride's acceptance a ring is the central act of *Kiddushin*. While there are no wedding vows or "I do's" in the Orthodox Jewish wedding liturgy, they are included in Reform ceremonies.

The ring ceremony completes betrothal/*Kiddushin/Erusin*. At this junction, it has been customary, almost since the beginning of the combined betrothal-and-nuptials wedding, to make a clear separation between the two ceremonies.

*Nissuin*, the second "half" of the wedding, consists of the *sheva b'rachot* (literally, seven blessings) and *Yichud* (seclusion). Set to ancient and evocative melodies, the blessings are the liturgical core of the wedding. Actually, it is perfectly legal to get married without these blessings, but reciting the *sheva b'rachot* is one of the customs that has taken on the force of law. It just doesn't feel like a Jewish wedding without them.

The Sheva B'rachot thank God for....

Creating the fruit of the vine

Creating the universe

Creating human beings

Creating human beings in God's image so they can create life

The re-establishment of Israel

Causing bride and groom to rejoice

Creating joy and gladness, bride and groom, laughter and song, dancing and jubilation, love and harmony, peace and friendship

These blessings show that the marriage is not just a transaction or contractual relation but a sanctification of two souls to a Jewish way of life. The bride and groom drink wine from the same cup after the blessing to show that they have begun their life together.



## *The Pronouncement*

The *Sheva Brachot* conclude the marriage service. Some rabbis make their remarks at this point, but most simply end with the official pronouncement that the bride and groom are now husband and wife. The ceremony concludes with the "priestly benediction" asking that God's presence and peace surround the couple.



## *The Broken Glass*

The Broken Glass may be the best-known element of the Jewish wedding. It is entirely customary and essentially nonreligious. It is a very ancient practice encrusted with generations of interpretation. Few symbols can be given single, simple explanations, but the breaking of a glass at the end of the ceremony may be the most kaleidoscopic of all wedding symbols. The broken glass is a joyous conclusion that encourages merriment at the *Seudat Mitzvah*—the meal of rejoicing—to follow.

The custom dates back to the writing of the Talmud. "Mar bar Rabina made a marriage feast for his son. He observed that the rabbis present were very happy. So he seized an expensive goblet worth 400 *Zuzim* and broke it before them. Thus, he made them sober." Rabina's point was, where there is rejoicing, there should be trembling. By the Middle Ages, synagogue facades in Germany were inlaid with a special stone for the express purpose of smashing a glass at the end of weddings.

However, the interpretation of the act had changed somewhat by the fourteenth century; it was seen as a reminder of the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. Thus, even at the height of personal joy, communal sadness is recalled. This interpretation remains resonant, although it has been broadened to include all of the losses suffered by the Jewish people. The shattered glass is also seen as a reminder that although the wedding has provided a taste of redemption, the world is still in exile, broken and requiring our care.

The glass is not only a reminder of sorrow but also an expression of hope for a future free from all violence. A broken glass cannot be mended; likewise, marriage is irrevocable, divorce notwithstanding. It is a transforming experience that leaves individuals forever changed. It is a covenant between two people and also between a couple and God. In Judaism, covenants are "cut": at Sinai the tablets are broken, at a circumcision the flesh is marked. At a wedding the glass "cuts" the covenant. The fragility of glass also suggests the frailty of human relationships. Even the strongest love is subject to disintegration. In this context, the glass is broken to "protect" the marriage with an implied prayer, "As this glass shatters, so may our marriage never break."

The making of loud noises is also an ageless method for frightening and appeasing demons,

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who, it was widely believed, were attracted to the beautiful and fortunate—people such as brides and grooms.

The breaking of a glass also has sexual connotations. It is a symbolic enactment of breaking the hymen, which explains why it was considered important that the groom “accomplish” the deed. Any failure was an embarrassing portent of impotence, and if the bride stepped on the glass, the groom’s traditional role as paterfamilias was threatened. In a more general way, the breaking glass prefigures the intensity and release of sexual union, which is not only permitted to married couples but also required of them.

Finally, the glass signals the end of the ceremony. The silence and hush of mythic time under the *Chuppah*—when the bride and groom stood as Adam and Eve, when redemption was almost tangible—ends with an explosion. People exhale, shout “*Mazel tov!*” clap their hands, embrace, talk, sing. Breaking the glass returns life to historical time where the world is still in *Galut*—“exile”—although a little less broken as a result of the marriage. The sound of breaking glass is greeted by shouts of “*Mazel tov!*” and a chorus of “*Siman tov umazel tov*” as the couple departs from under the *Chuppah*.





## *Yichud*

After they leave the *Chuppah*, bride and groom traditionally are afforded a few minutes of privacy in *Yichud*—seclusion. *Yichud* is an echo of ancient days when a groom would take the bride to his tent to consummate the marriage. Although consummation has not immediately followed *Chuppah* for centuries, these moments of private time have remained as a symbolic consummation—a demonstration of the couple's right to privacy. (Physical consummation in the few minutes allowed for *Yichud* would be entirely out of keeping with the Talmud's insistence that conjugal sex involve mutual consent, gentleness, patience, and joy.)

The word *Yichud* comes from the Hebrew root meaning both aloneness and togetherness. No matter how much the bride and groom are partners in marriage, they will always be individual selves. No matter how alone either may feel, they will always have each other. *Yichud* provides a time to exhale, embrace, and let what has happened be absorbed. It is an important respite from the strain of being the center of attention for a whole day. It is an island of privacy and peace before the public celebration begins.

## *Wedding Feast*

This is the *Suodat Mitzvah* (celebration) that accompanies the fulfillment of a religious act. Judaically, it is considered an obligation and a good deed to rejoice heartily at a wedding.

*With loving memory, we remember on this day*

OUR BELOVED PARENTS:

Mary Louise Penny

J. Marshall Penny, Sr.

Tova Goldberg Ariel

Moshe Ariel

GIDEON'S DAUGHTER:

Geffen Olympia Ariel

GIDEON'S MENTOR AND  
DEAR FRIEND OF GIDEON AND ANN

Yariv Oren



