

# ASK U. - The Kollel Institute

## **Cradle to Grave:** Bar Mitzva - Wedding

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### **I. Bar & Bat Mitzvah**

1. At eleven and one day a girl's vows are inspected; at twelve and one day they are valid. At twelve and one day a boy's vows are inspected; at thirteen and one day they are valid . . .

*Mishnah Niddah 5:6*

2. A girl from the day she is born until her twelfth birthday is considered a minor...

*Maimonides Laws of Marriage 2:1*

3. A boy from the day he is born until his thirteenth birthday is considered a minor...

*Maimonides Laws of Marriage 2:1*

4. If he has not grown two (pubic) hairs even if he reaches the age of majority he is considered a minor...(Ramo) However we are not particular regarding the hairs and anyone who has reached the age of majority is assumed to be an adult and we assume that the hairs have grown.

*Shulchan Aruch 55:5*

5. R. Joseph said: Originally, I thought, that if anyone would tell me that the halachah agrees with R. Judah, that a blind person is exempt from the precepts, I would make a banquet for the Rabbis, seeing that I am not obliged, yet fulfil them. Now, however, that I have heard R. Hanina's dictum that he who is commanded and fulfils [the command] is greater than he who fulfils it though not commanded; on the contrary, if anyone should tell me that the halachah does not agree with R. Judah, I would make a banquet for the Rabbis.

*Talmud Kiddushin 31a*

6. The daughter as well, on the day when she becomes obligated for mitzvot, even though it is not customary to have a festive meal, she should view it as a day of *simcha* wearing *Shabbat* clothing and, if at all possible, she should try to wear a new garment with the blessing of *Shehechyanu* intended for the day as well. There are those who customarily celebrate birthdays and this is laudatory and this custom is followed in our home.

*Ben Ish Chai on Deuteronomy, Parshat Re 'eh par. 17*

7. R. Elazar ben Simeon said: A man must see to the needs of his son until he is 13, from there onward he must say: "Blessed is He who released me from the responsibility for this one (*Baruch she-p'tarani me'onshah shel zo*)."

*Medrash Rabbah Genesis 63:10*



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### **II. Marriage**

#### A. Aufruf

King Solomon realized that G-d loved kindness so when he built the Temple he built two gates, one for grooms and one for mourners...The Jews would go on Shabbat and sit at those gates and if someone entered the groom's gate they would realize that he was a groom and the crowd would say "May He who resides in this Temple gladden you with sons and daughters"...Since the day the Temple was destroyed our rabbis instituted that grooms and mourners would go to the synagogue where the people would see the groom and celebrate with him...

*Midrash Pirkei D'Rabbi Elazar 17*

#### B. Fasting on the wedding day

R. Hama b. Hanina stated: As soon as a man takes a wife his sins are removed.

*Tamud Yevamos 63b*

#### C. Tenaim - See appendix A for text

After the acceptance of the contract (via 'Kinyan') the document is read aloud and a vessel is broken to show that now...they cannot back out of the deal.

*Aruch HaShulchan EH 50:24*

#### D. Kesuba

1. Why did the Rabbis institute the Kesuba? So that it would not be a minor matter in his (the husband's) eyes to divorce her.

*Talmud - Yevamos 89a*

2. One is prohibited to be married for even one moment without a Kesubah

*Talmud Bava Kamma 89a*

#### E. Bedeken - Placing the veil

1. Some say that 'Chuppah' is achieved when the groom places the cloth [veil] over the bride's head.

*Code of Jewish Law EH 65 (Ramo)*

2. Isaac went out to pray in the fields toward evening-time, he lifted his eyes and saw that behold, camels were approaching. Rivka lifted her eyes and saw Isaac and she descended from the camel. And she (Rivka) said to the servant, "Who is that man in the field, walking toward us?" And the servant said, "He is my master (Isaac)," and she took the veil and covered herself.

*Genesis 24:63-66*



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### F. Processional

1. And he brought her to the man.<sup>21</sup> R. Jeremiah b. Eleazar said: This teaches that [G-d] acted as wedding escort to Adam. Here the Torah teaches a maxim of behaviour, that a man of eminence should associate himself with a lesser man in acting as best man, and he should not take it lightly. *Talmud Berachos 61a*

2. It also seems that another reason why [the escorts carry two candles] is that the word ‘candle’ twice in Gematria equals ‘Pru Urvu’ (Be fruitful and multiply). *Mateh Moshe 3 Hachnasas Kallah 2 (cited in The Jewish Wedding: Zinner)*

3. Song for groom: May the one who is powerful above all, the One who is blessed above all, the One who is great above all, the One who is supreme above all, bless the groom and bride.  
Song for Bride: May the one who understands the speech of the rose among the thorns, the love of a bride, the joy of the beloved ones, bless the groom and bride.  
*(Sources cited in The Jewish Wedding: Zinner pages 58-59)*

### G. The ‘Kittel’

Some follow the custom that the groom wears a white garment (Kittel) when standing under the Chuppah.  
*Yalkut Minhagim pg. 176 (Cited in Rite and Reason: Gelbard)*

### H. Circling the groom

1. A woman encompasses a man  
*Jeremiah 31:21*

2. R. Tanhum stated in the name of R. Hanilai: Any man who has no wife lives without joy, without blessing, and without goodness.... In the West it was stated: Without Torah and without a [protecting] wall...Raba b. ‘Ulla said: Without peace...  
*Talmud Yevamos 62b*

## **Introduction - Kiddushin/Erusin vs. Nisuin**

### *I. Kiddushin - Erusin*

1. What is the meaning of the term of the rabbis (“Kiddushin”)? That she is prohibited to the world like a consecrated object.  
*Talmud Kiddushin 2b*

2. Some opinions say that if he effects the ‘Kiddushin’ (Erusin) with something most people cannot appraise and whose value people often misjudge significantly, such as precious gems and



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diamonds and the like and he says “Be betrothed to me with this gem which is worth fifty zuz” that an appraisal is required...Some say that even if he uses a gem and doesn’t say that it is worth fifty zuz, that it still requires an appraisal and therefore our custom is to use a ring without a gem.  
*Code of Jewish Law EH 31:2*

3. How does one effect ‘Kiddushi’ with money? He gives to her, before two witnesses, a ‘Prutah’ or the value of a ‘Prutah’ and says ‘You are hereby betrothed to me with this’. Some say that he should add the words “according to the Law of Moses and Israel.”  
*Code of Jewish Law EH 27:1*

4. If someone performs a ‘Kiddushin’ without witnesses, or with just one witness, it is invalid.  
*Code of Jewish Law EH 34:2*

5. It is the custom to say this blessing (of erusin) over a cup of wine  
*Code of Jewish Law EH 34:2*

### J. Chuppah

1. The common custom in our time is to use as ‘Chuppah’ a space with a garment spread above it on poles, and we bring the bride and groom there in public where he performs the ‘Kiddushin’ (initial marriage), and the blessings of ‘Erusin’ (initial marriage) and ‘Nisuin’ (full marriage) are recited after which they are escorted to their home where they eat in seclusion in a private place. This is the method of ‘Chuppah’ which is practiced in our time.  
*Code of Jewish Law (& Ramo) EH 65*

2. Some say that the Chuppah should be held under the open sky as a sign that their children should be like the stars of the heaven.  
*Code of Jewish Law (& Ramo) EH 61:1*

### K. Reading the Ketuba

The blessings for ‘Erusin’ and for ‘Nisuin’ are recited over two cups of wine (and the custom is to separate between them by reading the Ketuba)  
*Code of Jewish Law EH 62:9 (Ramo)*

### L. Sheva Brachos - The seven blessings at the wedding

It is required to say the blessings of ‘nisuin’...this refers to six blessings, and if there is wine, we bring a cup or wine, make a blessing on the wine and arrange that the blessings be said over the wine. In this way, it comes out that there are seven blessings.  
*Code of Jewish Law EH 62:1*



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### M. Breaking the glass

1. What is meant by ‘rejoice with trembling’? — R. Adda b. Mattena said in the name of Rab: In the place where there is rejoicing there should also be trembling...Mar the son of Rabina made a marriage feast for his son. He saw that the Rabbis were growing very merry so he brought a precious cup worth four hundred zuz and broke it before them, and they became serious. R. Ashi made a marriage feast for his son. He saw that the Rabbis were growing very merry, so he brought a cup of white crystal and broke it before them and they became serious. The Rabbis said to R. Hamnuna Zuti at the wedding of Mar the son of Rabina: please sing us something. He said to them: Alas for us that we are to die!

*Talmud Brachos 30b, 31a*

2. If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand be forgotten

*Psalm 137*

3. ...And a bridegroom who is getting married puts some ash on his head at the place of his Tefillin. There are also places with the custom to break a glass at the Chuppah...All of this is done in order to remember Jerusalem as it is written “May my tongue cleave to my cheek if I do not remember you, if I do not elevate (the sadness of) Jerusalem over my many joys”.

*Code of Jewish Law OC - 560:2 (also EH 65:3)*

### N. Yichud / Seclusion

The act of seclusion is the act of ‘bringing to Chuppah’ which effects the ‘Nisuin’ (full marriage)..

*Code of Jewish Law (& Ramo) EH 65*

### **Wedding Ceremony Order**

1. Procession
2. Circling of the groom
3. Blessing
4. The first cup of wine
5. Kiddushin blessing
6. The Ring Ceremony - Kiddushin / Erusin
7. Reading of the ketubah (marriage contract)
8. Seven blessings and the second cup
9. The breaking of the glass
10. Seclusion (yichud)



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### O. The celebration

1. Our Rabbis taught: How does one dance before the bride? Beth Shammai say: The bride as she is.<sup>1</sup> And Beth Hillel say: 'Beautiful and graceful bride'! ...They tell of R. Judah b. Ila'i that he used to take a myrtle twig and dance before the bride and say: 'Beautiful and graceful bride.'

2. It is a good deed to gladden the groom and bride, to dance before them, and to say that she is beautiful and graceful, even if she isn't...

*Code of Jewish Law EH 65:1*

### P. Sheva Brachos - The week of the wedding

The benediction is said [at the celebration of the marriage] for a maiden seven [days] and for a widow one day...Our Rabbis taught: The blessing of the bridegrooms is said in the presence of ten [persons] all the seven days.

*Talmud Kesubos 7b*

One who marries a virgin must celebrate with her for seven days. He should not go out to work, not do business in the market, rather he should eat, drink, and celebrate with her...One who marries a non-virgin must celebrate with her for three days...

*Code of Jewish Law EH 64: 1-2*

### Q. Be Fruitful and Multiply

Mishna: A man shall not abstain from the performance of the duty of the propagation of the race unless he already has children. [As to the number]...Beth Hillel ruled: male and a female, for it is stated in scripture, male and female created he them. GEMARA. [This implies] if he has children, he may abstain from performing the duty of propagation but not from that of living with a wife. This provides support for a statement R. Nahman made in the name of Samuel who ruled that although a man may have many children he must not remain without a wife, for it is said in the Scriptures, It is not good that the man should be alone.

*Talmud Yevamos 61b*

### III. Divorce

When a man has taken a wife, and married her, and it comes to pass that she finds no favor in his eyes...then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house.

*Deuteronomy 24:1*

A woman can acquire her (release) in two ways. With a 'Get' and with the death of her husband.

*Mishna Kiddushin 1:1*



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### Appendix A - Text of the Tenaim

To Good Fortune!

“May it come up and sprout forth like a green garden. One who finds a wife finds a great good  
And obtains favor of G-d Who is good, Who endorses this union.”

May the One Who determines the ultimate from the outset bestow a good name and lastingness to the obligations and conditions which were discussed and stipulated to by the two parties, that is, from one side \_\_\_\_\_ who represents the groom \_\_\_\_\_ and from the second side \_\_\_\_\_ who represents the bride \_\_\_\_\_, that all the obligations of the groom toward the bride have been fulfilled, and likewise, all the obligations of the bride toward the groom have been fulfilled. Neither has any claims or demands on the other, but there remains yet to fulfill that the above-named groom marries the above named bride, through Chuppa and betrothal, in accordance with the law of Moshe and Yisrael, on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ in the year \_\_\_\_\_. They shall not run away nor conceal from each other anything with regard to their possessions, rather they should equally share authority over their possessions, in peace and tranquility, as is the way of those who are children of the Torah and who are in awe of G-d. All this was done with perfect understanding and due deliberation. We have effected the legal formality of binding agreement from both parties an all that is written and elaborated above, by an instrument that is legally appropriate for establishing a transaction,

AND EVERYTHING IS VALID AND CONFIRMED.

Attested to \_\_\_\_\_, Witness  
Attested to \_\_\_\_\_, Witness

### Appendix B - Text of the Kesuba

On Tuesday, the 8<sup>th</sup> day of Tammuz, in the year 5611 from the Creation of the World, according to the calculation of the city of Atlanta, we witnessed how the young man Moshe, the son of Binyamin, said to the bride, Sarah, the daughter of Avraham, “Be my wife, according to the law of Moshe and Israel. I will serve, honor, sustain and provide for your needs according to manner that of Jewish men that faithfully serve, honor, sustain, and provide for the needs of their wives. I have given you the sum of 200 *zuz* of silver, according to the law of the Torah, and will provide food, raiment, and other basic needs, and live with you as is the custom of the entire world”. The maiden Sarah agreed [to the terms] and will become his wife, bringing along the dowry as provided for from her father’s house, either in silver or gold, jewelry, raiment, and furniture. Moshe, the bridegroom, has received the above dowry for 100 pieces of pure silver, and he has agreed to add on of his own another 100 pieces of pure silver—the entire sum being 200 pieces of pure silver. Thus did the Moshe, the bridegroom, declare: “The collateral of this deed of the *ketubah*, this dowry and addition of my own, I have taken upon myself and my inheritors after me [for the bride] to collect from all the possessions and property that I have anywhere under the heavens, that I have either already acquired or will acquire, either from real-estate or moveable property. All of the above will serve as collateral for payment of this *ketubah*, the dowry and addition of my own promised money, even if necessary to be paid from the very garment to be taken off from my shoulders, either during my lifetime [in the event of divorce] or after my passing, from this day onwards.” The payment of this *ketubah*, the dowry and the additional money Moshe has taken upon himself, with all the strictures of all *ketubahs* and additions that are customary among the daughters of Israel, which are made according to the ordinance of the Sages, and not as a mere *asmachta* [an agreement based on assumption that both sides concur] or a simple agreement to a blank form. We have made the act of acquisition [which makes the above document binding], from Moshe the son of Binyamin, the bridegroom, to Sarah the daughter of Avraham, the bride, according to all that has been written and stated above, by means of a instrument that is fit to perform the act of purchase.

All of the above is firmly established and binding.

[The two witnesses affix their signatures here]



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### **Appendix C - Blessings of the Wedding ceremony**

#### *Birchos Erusin - Blessing for Erusin*

Blessed are You L-rd our G-d, king of the universe, who made us holy and commanded us in regard to the forbidden relations, and forbade to us betrothed women, and permitted to us married women via chuppah and kiddushin, Blessed are You L-rd our G-d, king of the universe who sanctifies Israel via chupah and kiddushin.

#### *Sheva Brachos - The Seven blessings*

1. You are blessed, L-rd our G-d, the sovereign of the world, who created everything for his glory.
2. You are blessed, L-rd our G-d, the sovereign of the world, the creator of man.
3. You are blessed, L-rd our G-d, the sovereign of the world, who created man in His image, in the pattern of His own likeness, and provided for the perpetuation of his kind. You are blessed, L-rd, the creator of man.
4. Let the barren city be jubilantly happy and joyful at her joyous reunion with her children. You are blessed, L-rd, who makes Zion rejoice with her children.
5. Let the loving couple be very happy, just as You made Your creation happy in the garden of Eden, so long ago. You are blessed, L-rd, who makes the bridegroom and the bride happy.
6. You are blessed, L-rd our G-d, the sovereign of the world, who created joy and celebration, bridegroom and bride, rejoicing, jubilation, pleasure and delight, love and brotherhood, peace and friendship. May there soon be heard, L-rd our G-d, in the cities of Judea and in the streets of Jerusalem, the sound of joy and the sound of celebration, the voice of a bridegroom and the voice of a bride, the happy shouting of bridegrooms from their weddings and of young men from their feasts of song. You are blessed, L-rd, who makes the bridegroom and the bride rejoice together.
7. You are blessed, L-rd our G-d, the sovereign of the world, creator of the fruit of the vine.

### **Appendix D - Text of a Get / Jewish Divorce document**

On the \_\_\_\_\_ day of the week, the \_\_\_\_\_ day of the month of \_\_\_\_\_ in the year \_\_\_\_\_ from the creation of the world according to the calendar reckoning we are accustomed to count here, in the city \_\_\_\_\_, which is located on the river \_\_\_\_\_, and situated near wells of water, I, \_\_\_\_\_, who is also known as \_\_\_\_\_, the son of \_\_\_\_\_, who today am present in the city \_\_\_\_\_, which is located on the river \_\_\_\_\_, and situated near wells of water, do willingly consent, being under no restraint, to release, to set free and put aside you, my wife \_\_\_\_\_, daughter of \_\_\_\_\_, who are today in the city of \_\_\_\_\_, which is located on the river \_\_\_\_\_, and situated near wells of water, who has been my wife from before. Thus do I set free, release you, and put you aside, in order that you may have permission and the authority over yourself to go and marry any man you may desire. No person may hinder you from this day onward, and you are permitted to every man. This shall be for you from me a bill of dismissal, a letter of release, and a document of freedom, in accordance with the law of Moses and Israel.”

