

The Wedding of Peter & Shane!

Welcome/invocation

Members of this community, friends and family, welcome. We have gathered here today to celebrate Peter and Shane, and their commitment to one another. As we come together to create a community of spirit, united by our affection and love for Shane and for Peter, let us awaken to that which is sacred around us and within us, and may our presence be a blessing.

At this time of great joy, Shane and Peter would like us to pause for a moment of silence to honor and remember their departed loved ones whose spirit is with us as we celebrate today.

Havdalah

In Judaism it is traditional to mark the end of the Sabbath with a brief set of blessings called *havdalah*, "separation." We bless wine, fragrant spices which recall the pleasures of Shabbat, and a braided candle which represents the intertwining of Sabbath and week; we bless God Who distinguishes between sacred moments and ordinary time.

Baruch Atah, Adonai, eloheynu melech ha'olam, borei p'ri hagafen.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, creator of the fruit of the vine.

Barich Atah, Adonai, eloheynu melech ha'olam, borei minei b'samim.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, creator of all the spices.

Baruch Atah, Adonai, eloheynu melech ha'olam, borei m'orei ha-esh.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, creator of the light of fire.

Baruch Atah, Adonai, eloheynu melech ha'olam, hamavdil bein kodesh l'chol: bein or l'choshech, bein yom ha-shvi'i l'sheshet y'mei ha-ma'aseh. Baruch Atah, Adonai, hamavdil bein kodesh l'chol.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, ruler of the universe, who separates sacred from profane, light from darkness, the seventh day of rest from the six days of labor. Blessed are You, who separates sacred from profane.

Wine

In Judaism, wine is a symbol of joy. We bless wine at every festive occasion, to remind ourselves that life is sweet and that we sanctify our days by celebrating what is joyful. Today Shane and Peter will share one cup, to signify their coming-together as a family.

Baruch Atah, Adonai, Eloheynu melech ha'olam, borei p'ri hagafen.

Blessed are You, Adonai, Source of all being, creator of the fruit of the vine.

Shane and Peter, as you have shared the wine from a single cup, so may you share contentment, peace, and fulfillment from the cup of life. May you find life's

joys heightened, its bitterness sweetened, and each of its moments hallowed by true companionship and love.

Reading

I'd like to call upon Shane's niece Jaime to offer a reading from Corinthians.

Homily

Once upon a time there was a boy, who met a girl, and they fell in love.

You can tell a lot about people by how they tell their stories, the narratives that shape and inform their lives. Peter and Shane told their story, so succinctly it was almost a haiku, on their "save the date" cards: once upon a time there was a boy, who met a girl, and they fell in love. And he asked, and she said yes—so here we all are under the harvest moon celebrating those two lives and their twining-together.

The two of you had a long way to travel before finding one another. From Brooklyn to Britain, your lives are reflected in the friends and family members who have gathered here today to bear witness to your union. When you met, each had experienced loss. But your friendship, and your romance, changed both of your lives; being together, you told me, is like coming home.

In many of the ways that matter, you began your journey together when they met, became friends, began dating. When you started to think in terms of "we." When you realized that you had a story together which differed from either of your individual stories, a narrative in which your togetherness is the protagonist, a tale that's more than the sum of its parts.

As all the best stories are. You can take a story apart, break it down into plot and character, but the ones that stick with us—the stories that matter—have a certain *je ne sais quoi*, an ineffable quality that makes them magical. Shane and Peter’s story has that magic.

Today begins a new chapter of that story. We’re here to bear witness to the historic event unfolding beneath this chuppah; we’ll preserve the moment the best ways we can, in our memories and our photo albums, maybe with a pressed leaf or flower in a beloved book...but what matters most is how the two of you tell the story of this day—and how you create the story of your life together from here on out.

I know you’ll write a story filled with good humor and grace, with deep affection, and with a palpable sense of wonder at the miracle enacted whenever two people find one another and make a shared life.

There’s a Jewish mystical teaching that each human being contains a holy spark. That spark is a tiny fragment of divine light, which streamed into our world at the time of creation. When two people become beloved to one another, when they join their lives together mindfully and with loving intent, their two sparks join together and create a light greater than the sum of its parts, and in a kind of cosmic ripple effect a wave of joy moves through the world.

Shane and Peter, your sparks shone forth from your faces the moment I met you, and it’s been clear to me from the start that yours is, and will continue to be, a joyful story.

May you be blessed in your life together. May you always have access to the pleasure you take today in each others’ presence. May you go to bed every night glad to be beside one another, and wake every morning grateful again to

have found one another. May you know all the blessings of love, conversation, and companionship that marriage can provide. And as you coauthor a life together, may you enjoy ins and outs, ups and downs, changes and revisions, plot twists and character developments, and most importantly of all, happy endings.

Rings

To the naked eye, a ring is perfect and unbroken, without beginning or end. May the spirit of community created in our coming together today be equally perfect and unbroken, an endless source of joy in Peter and Shane's lives.

[Shane prompted by Rachel, as ring is placed on Peter's finger]

I join my life with yours today without hesitation.

Harei atah m'kudash li b'taba'at zo k'dat Moshe v'Yisrael. Be consecrated to me with this ring as my husband in keeping with the heritage of Moses and Israel.

[Peter prompted by Rachel, as ring is placed on Shane's finger]

I join my life with yours today without hesitation.

Harei at m'kudeshet li b'taba'at zo k'dat Moshe v'Yisrael. Be consecrated to me with this ring as my wife in keeping with the heritage of Moses and Israel.

These rings are tangible reminders of an intangible connection between Shane and Peter, created by their friendship and strengthened by every day they share.

May these rings always represent the blessing that each of you brings to the other's life.

Seven Blessings

At the heart of every Jewish wedding are the *sheva brachot*, the Seven Blessings:

Baruch atah, Adonai, eloheynu melech ha'olam, borei p'ri hagafen.

Blessed is the creation of the fruit of the vine.

Baruch Atah, Adonai, eloheynu melech ha'olam, shehakol bara lichvodo.

Blessed is the creation which embodies glory.

Baruch Atah, Adonai, eloheynu melech ha'olam, yotzer ha-adam.

Blessed is the creation of the human being. Blessed is the design of the human being. Developing our wisdom we may become God-like. We are assembled from the very fabric of the universe and are composed of eternal element. Blessed be and blessed is our creation.

Sos tasis v'tagel ha-akarah, b'kibbutz baneyah litocha b'simcha.

Rejoice and be glad you who wandered homeless. In joy have you gathered with your sisters and your brothers. Blessed is the joy of our gathering.

Sameach t'samach re'im ha-ahuvim, c'samech'cha y'tzirecha b'gan eden mikedem.

Bestow happiness on these loving mates as would creatures feel in Eden's garden. Blessed be the joy of lovers.

Baruch atah, Adonai, eloheynu melech ha'olam, asher bara sason v'simcha, chatan v'kallah, gilah rinah, diza v'ched'vah, ahavah v'achava, v'shalom v're-ut, m'heyra Adonai eloheynu yishma b'arei y'hudah u'vchutzot y'rushalayim, kol sason v'kol simcha, kol chatan v'kol kallah, kol bitzhalot chatanim m'chupatam, un'arim mimsh'teh n'ginatam. Baruch atah, Adonai, m'sameach chatan im hakallah.

Blessed is the creation of joy and celebration, lover and mate, gladness and jubilation, pleasure and delight, love and solidarity, friendship and peace. Soon may we hear in the streets of the city and the paths of the fields the voice of joy, the voice of gladness, the voice of lover, the voice of mate, the triumphant voice of lovers from the canopy and the voice of youths from their feasts of song. Blessed blessed blessed is the joy of lovers, one with each other.

(transl. Hirschhorn & Cooper)

Closing

Yishru shalom, tovah uvrachah, heyn v'chesed v'rahamim beyneynu, beyn kol yoshvey teyveyl. May the blessings of peace and kindness, graciousness, goodness, and compassion, flow among us and all the peoples of the world.

We will close by reciting the *shehecheyanu*, the Jewish blessing which sanctifies time, and which reminds us to exult in happy occasions. I ask those who know the Hebrew to join me in reciting it:

*Baruch atah, Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha'olam, shehecheyanu v'kiy'manu v'higiyanu
lazman hazeh.*

And now please repeat the English translation of that blessing after me:

(phrase by phrase)

Blessed are you, Adonai our God, Source of All, who has kept us alive, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this moment.

Breaking of the Glass

In a moment, Shane and Peter will end their wedding ceremony with the Jewish tradition of smashing a glass. Explanations for this practice abound. Some say we break the glass in order that this marriage be as difficult to sunder as these shards would be to make whole again. Some say it's to remind us that even in our moments of greatest joy, somewhere in the world there is sorrow. Some say it's to scare away evil spirits, or to start off the marriage with a bang! Regardless, the appropriate response to the breaking glass is *mazal tov*, which means congratulations and good luck.

...MAZAL TOV!