

A Nontraditional Jewish Wedding Ceremony With A Sand Ceremony

Knot Note: Some names and information have been redacted for the couple's privacy.

Welcome

Please rise for the bride.

Thank you; please remain standing and take a moment to greet those around you, wishing peace be upon them. Thank you...you may now be seated.

Dearly beloved, my name is Gary Rozman and I'd like to warmly welcome you here today. We are gathered to celebrate the wedding of Melissa and Daniel. You have come here to share in this formal commitment they make to one another, to offer your love and support to this union, and to allow Melissa and Daniel to start their married life together surrounded by the people dearest and most important to them.

I'm fortunate to have known the Groom for many years. During our childhood, he was like the little brother I never had. And now as a young man, his wedding holds deep personal meaning for me. More to the point, watching him grow up provided the opportunity to get to know him, and that insight makes one very thing very clear: in Melissa he has found his soul mate. For him she is both the alpha and the omega; yin to his yang. That she completes him, I am absolutely sure. Thus I've been most happy to learn over these last few years that she is equally fulfilled by him. Bride, every time I see you I'm more convinced of Groom's wisdom. I know I speak for every one of his friends and family members here today by saying how much we look forward to having you in our lives, and to many years of watching the family you forge here grow. I feel profoundly blessed to perform the mitzvah of marriage for you both.

Matrimony is perhaps the greatest and most challenging adventure of human relations. No ceremony can create your marriage; only you can do that – through love and patience; through dedication and perseverance; through talking and listening, helping and supporting and believing in each other; through tenderness and laughter; through forgiveness, learning to appreciate your differences, taking care to make the important things matter, and letting go of the rest. What this ceremony can do is witness and affirm the choice you make to stand together as partners in life.

Bride and Groom have been together for quite some time. They started their relationship as two carefree college students and have withstood the challenges of facing the real world...and real jobs...learning financial responsibility, learning that friendships and relationships change, but no matter what, their love is constant, and strong.

Today they have come before us to publicly affirm that love and commitment. They share this moment with you knowing that your best wishes go forward with them and strengthen them as they begin their lives as husband and wife.

Declaration of Support

Bride and Groom would like to acknowledge their parents, whose love and support are an essential part of who they are today. They thank you for the lifetime of support, and for teaching love and respect the way it was meant to be taught: by example. Bride's parents celebrated their 35th anniversary this past March and Daniel's parents celebrated their 35th anniversary this past July; I would like to wish them each 35 more.

Reading of the Notes

Melissa and Daniel have written notes to express how they feel about each other, which I will read now...

[Reads notes]

Thank you both. Friends, I feel compelled to add one something here based on my own observation. I found myself in the unique position of having been privy to the contents of these declarations for some time, while the bride and groom were kept in the dark about what the other had written. Though I received many drafts over the long stretch of time spent planning for this ceremony (some even as late as this week...tsk tsk : -) and though there were many changes, in each version, over and over again, I noticed one often repeated theme; an element that spoke of enormous devotion and magnificent love: for a dog. Named Muffin. Well, let me just say, I happen to have one too, and will even admit to being a bit dotting when it comes to my dog, but compared to these two, I'm like a dead-beat dad. Ladies and gentlemen, if they devote just half as much attention to their marriage as they do to that terrier, we've got nothing to worry about!

Sand Ceremony

Bride and Groom, have chosen to commemorate their union through the Sand Ceremony, which symbolizes the eternal marital relationship. They will pour separate containers of sand into a common vessel. Each grain in their respective containers represents a unique and separate moment, decision, feeling or event that helped shaped them into the unique individuals they are today. As they pour the sand from two containers into one, the independent individuals merge into an inseparable pair. Melissa and Daniel, just as the grains of sand can never again be divided into their individual containers, so will you be forever joined.

Exchange of Vows

Bride, do you take Groom to be your lawfully wedded husband, forsaking all others, till death parts you?

“I do.”

Then please repeat after me:

“I, [Bride’s Name]
take you [Groom’s Name]
to be my husband,
to have and to hold,
for better or for worse,
in sickness and in health,
to love and to cherish;
from this day forward.”

Daniel, do you take Melissa to be your lawfully wedded wife, forsaking all others, till death parts you?

“I do.”

Then please repeat after me:

“I, [Grooms’s Name]
take you [Bride’s Name]
to be my wife,
to have and to hold,
for better or for worse,
in sickness and in health,
to love and to cherish;
from this day forward.”

Exchange of Rings

In the spirit of shared love and in full agreement, you will now confirm your intentions for the well-being of your marriage with the exchange of rings.

May I have the rings please?

Rings are a symbol of the never-ending circle of love. Love has no beginning and no end, no giver and no receiver, for each is the giver and each is the receiver. May they always remind you of your vows of fidelity and undying devotion.

Groom, as a token of your love, place the ring upon your bride’s finger and repeat after me:

“Bride, I give you this ring as a symbol of my love and faithfulness.”

Bride, please place the ring upon his finger and repeat after me:

“Groom, I give you this ring as a symbol of my love and faithfulness.”

Blessing of the Hands

Bride and Groom, please take one another by the hand. These are the hands of your best friend, young and strong and full of love for you, that are holding yours on your wedding day, as you promise to love each other today, tomorrow, and forever. These are the hands that will work alongside yours, as together you build your future. These are the hands that will passionately love you and cherish you through the years, and with the slightest touch, will comfort you like no other. These are the hands that will hold you when fear or grief fills your mind. These are the hands that will countless times wipe the tears from your eyes; tears of sorrow, and tears of joy. These are the hands that will tenderly hold your children. These are the hands that will help you to hold your family as one. These are the hands that will give you strength when you need it. And lastly, these are the hands that even when wrinkled and aged, will still be reaching for yours, still giving you the same unspoken tenderness with just a touch.”

Breaking of the Glass

Before we conclude, I'd like to take a moment to point out a fortuitous coincidence. Earlier this week our hemisphere passed from summer into fall. The Equinox, I've always thought, is the perfect metaphor for marriage. Like partners in a relationship, the night and day are wedded to one another, two halves comprising one whole, each defined by the other. But only on the Equinox are night and day the same length, perfectly balanced. Bride and Groom, my wish for you as embark on your new lives is that you find your own balance. Be there equally for another, during each day of your togetherness (and, don't forget to provide occasional companionship at night, either ; -)

Once again, I'd like to express my humble gratitude to the bride and groom for allowing me to be part of their special day. I thank everyone here for their kind attention, and would especially like to acknowledge the bridal party for their participation. After the pronouncement, Daniel will take part in a long standing tradition, the Breaking of the Glass. Over the millennia many interpretations have been offered regarding the significance of the act – some say that it represents a breaking with the past, and a headlong stride into the future, or the shattering of two single lives and their transformation into a couple. I, however, dismiss these meanings and prefer another approach. When the glass breaks, it simply means the long speech is over, and the party begins.

Without further ado, by the power vested in me by the great State of New York, it is my privilege and pleasure to pronounce you husband and wife. Kiss!

By Reverend Gary Rozman, RevRoz.com