



Alma and Daniel

New North London Synagogue

Sunday 18 May, 2014 - 18 Iyar 5774

Welcome to our wedding!

We couldn't be more excited to embark on this journey together, and we're thrilled that you are here to share the day with us. The process of learning about the Jewish wedding ceremony in anticipation of today has been the highlight of all our wedding preparation.

We're excited to step into the chuppah, the beautiful wedding canopy today, which has been decorated by Daniel's mum Berit. Whether or not you've attended a Jewish wedding before, it's the first Alma and Daniel wedding for all of us! This booklet will introduce the different aspects of the ceremony. Alma's mum Chani has helped us and inspired us with the musical selections as well as the Hebrew poetry.

The poetry of the Song of Songs, the great biblical love song, runs through the entire ceremony. It is one of the most romantic and sensual of all the texts of the Hebrew Bible, and we chose *Ani le'dodi ve'dodi li – I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine*, a verse from the sixth chapter, as the guiding sentiment for our ceremony.

Opening

El Ginat Egoz – Into the Walnut Grove

Words: Song of Songs, 6:11, 7:12-13

Music by Sara Levi Tanai

Sung by Mima Millo

Piano: Ilan Lazarus

I went down into the walnut grove
To see the reeds in the stream
To see whether the vine had blossomed
And the pomegranates opened their buds.

Come my beloved, let's go out to the field
Let us sleep in the vineyards,
Rise up early in the villages,
We'll see whether the vine has blossomed
And other flowers are in bloom.

Erev Shel Shoshanim – Evening of Roses

Lyrics by Moshe Dor

Music by Yoseph Hadar

Arranged for choir by Chani Smith

The ‘Shmeisel Singers’ conducted by Joe Bunker with Ann Sadan

Alma’s nieces, Sivan and Lielle, have been looking forward to today for a long time. They will now enter the synagogue hall to *Erev Shel Shoshanim*, a Hebrew song also inspired by the words of the Song of Songs. Sivan and Lielle will sprinkle petals to fill our path to the chuppah with colour and love.

Evening of roses

Let's go out to the grove

Myrrh, spices and incense

Are a carpet for you to walk on

Night falls slowly

A rose-scented breeze is blowing

Let me quietly whisper a song in your ear

A love song

At dawn, a dove is cooing

Your hair is filled with dew

Your lips are like a rose to the morning

I shall pick it for myself

Night is falling slowly...

Mi Ban Siach – The One Who Understands Blessings

Music by Abie Rotenberg

Saxophone: Guy Sion

We know many of you have been practising *Mi Ban Siach*, and this is the moment to sing it! The song signals the moment when Daniel and his parents and then Alma and her parents walk towards the chuppah. Before the couple enter the chuppah they will each put on their *tallit* – prayer shawl, and then enter the chuppah together.

This medieval *piyut* (liturgical poem) is traditionally sung at weddings and is a favourite of Daniel's. Based on a commentary on the words ‘a rose among the thorns’ from the Song of Songs (2:2) it is somewhat obscure in meaning. We were delighted

to discover that among the very few commentaries on it in Jewish sources is one from Alma's great great grandfather, Rabbi Moshe Teomim of Horodenka (in what was then the Habsburg Empire). The Hebrew poet is unknown. We understand it as celebrating those who bless us, which is why we've asked you to serenade us with it. An approximate translation would be as follows.

*Mi ban siach,
Shoshan chochim,
Ahavat kallah mesos dodim
Hu yevarech et hechatan ve'et hakallah*

Who (among us) understands words (of the wedding blessings)?
He is like a rose among the thorns
(He knows) the love of a bride, the joy of lovers
He shall bless the groom and the bride.

Entering and Circling

Daniel and then Alma will circle each other, completing a total of seven circles recalling the seven days of creation in the Biblical creation story. Seven in Judaism represents completion, and these circles allow us to surround each other with love, signalling that we each bring our whole self to this union and receive the other completely. To accompany the circling we have chosen a song by the composer and teacher Reb Shlomo Carlebach. This will be sung wordlessly, allowing each circle to acquire it's own meaning. The words will be in our thoughts, however, as they describe being surrounded by angels on all sides.

Eirusin – Betrothal and Rabbi Wittenberg's Address

Wine is a prerequisite for any Jewish celebration. There are two cups of wine drunk as part of the wedding, the first accompanying the *Birkat Eirusin* – the betrothal blessing. This blessing affirms that the relationship between Alma and Daniel is permitted and exclusive.

Following our study over the past year, and discussion with several wise rabbinic teachers, we have agreed with Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg that he will say a modified version of the traditional text. The reason for this is that the traditional blessing refers to a set of laws called '*arayot*', which are considered forbidden relationships. These include one Biblical verse that has been traditionally understood to prohibit intimate unions between two men. While this is not our understanding of this verse, the traditional interpretation has been a source of distress for many Jews, and we therefore have chosen to alter the blessing, while remaining true to its original intent.

Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg will recite the blessing for wine and the *Birkat Eirusin* after which the couple will both drink from the cup of wine. The text of the blessing in transliteration and translation is found below.

Baruch Ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha'olam, asher kidshanu bemitzvotav vetzivanu al ha'tohar be'chayey ishut, ve'hitir lanu et ha'nesuim ve-ha'nesuot lanu al yedey chuppah ve'kiddushin. Baruch ata Adonai, mekadesh amo Israel al yedey chuppah ve'kiddushin.

You abound in blessing, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the Universe, who has commanded us concerning purity in the intimate realm, and has sanctioned exclusive intimacy within marriage by the ceremony of chuppah and kiddushin. You abound in blessing, Adonai, who blesses the People of Israel through chuppah and kiddushin.

Kiddushin – Sanctification

In our ceremony, we will both give and receive rings under the chuppah, as a symbol of our mutual love and respect. Each of us will place a ring on the other's finger and say in Hebrew: *'Behold, you are consecrated to me with this ring, according to the laws of Moses and Israel.'* For us, this mutual act is reflected in the words, *I am my beloved's – my beloved is mine*, from Song of Songs. This is why we chose it to be a key feature of both our invites and the wedding ceremony. Following the exchange of rings, this verse will be sung by a small ensemble of friends and family.

Dodi Li – My Beloved is Mine

Song of Songs 2:16; 8:5; 6:3

Music by Steve Sher

Singers: Michal Ish-Horowicz, Ann Sadan, Joe Bunker, Micah Smith

Flute: Sarah Grabiner

Guitars: Yonatan Smith and Micah Smith

My beloved is mine and I am my beloved's
Who browses among the roses
Who is she that comes up from the desert
In clouds of myrrh and frankincense?
My beloved is mine and I am beloved's.

The ketubah is the Jewish marriage contract. Alma's dad, Rabbi Daniel Smith will read the text and explain each element of the marriage contract.

We have created the text of our ketubah by weaving together several different strands from different times and places, while trying to stay true to the traditional textual intent.

We have included an additional paragraph containing our shared wish to build a Jewish home filled with learning, love and hospitality. The phrases we've chosen are from a prayer found in Talmud Brachot 17a (lit by the light of learning - *mu'ar bi-me'or Torah*) and from Pirkei Avot 1:5 (a home open wide to all - *bayit patu-ach lirvacha*).

As this is a legal document, we have chosen to use Hebrew rather than Aramaic.

The final line is intended for our witnesses, Rabbis Shoshana Boyd Gelfand and Chaim Weiner whose signatures at the bottom of the ketubah guarantees its validity.

Ketubah - Marriage Contract

On the first day of the week, on the eighteenth day of the month of Iyar, in the year 5774 from the creation of the world according to the traditional way of counting, here in London,

We witness that the bride, Alma Miriam bat Chana ve-Amnon Daniel said to the groom Daniel ben Vered ve-Micha Aryeh: "You are consecrated to me with this ring according to the laws of Moses and Israel, and you will be my friend and partner in covenant, and I will cherish, respect and support you in the way of Jewish women, who cherish, respect and support their husbands faithfully,"

And the groom, Daniel ben Vered ve-Micha Aryeh said to the bride Alma Miriam bat Chana ve-Amnon Daniel: "You are consecrated to me according to the laws of Moses and Israel, and you will be my friend and partner in covenant, and I will cherish, respect and support you in the way of Jewish men, who cherish, respect and support their wives faithfully."

The groom accepted a ring from the one that his heart has chosen, and the bride accepted a ring from the one that her heart has chosen, in order to sanctify their marriage and to symbolise their love.

The bride and groom took upon themselves all the responsibilities of this marriage covenant as prescribed by the Torah and the Sages of blessed memory. They also accepted the conditions of this ketubah, that all silver, gold, jewellery, clothing, furniture and all their possessions, shall be in joint ownership.

Accordingly they both entered into this covenant of love and companionship, a covenant of peace and friendship. They aim to achieve a shared fulfilment of their emotional, intellectual, physical and spiritual needs, and to create a Jewish home filled with integrity, lit by the light of learning and open wide to all.

This has taken place in our presence and all is valid and binding.

We have chosen to include the mutual kiddushin. As part of the formulation, we have also included 'friend and partner in covenant - *'chaveri / chaverti ve-ish / eshet briti'*. This phrase is found in several of the Syrian and Palestinian ketubot from the 10th and 11th century. Several of these texts contain language that is much fuller in terms of mutuality than the text that later became the one predominantly used today.

For the property clauses, we have employed a gender-neutral rendering. We appreciated that the traditional ketubah was in touch with reality and concerned with the practical aspects of marriage and divorce. We wanted to retain this practical focus and at the same time ensure that it reflected the reality in which we live.

We are grateful to Rabbis Jonathan Wittenberg, Chaim Weiner, Gordon Tucker, Aryeh Cohen, and Daniel Smith (Alma's dad) and most of all to Alma's mum Chani for their expert help in creating this ketubah.

Shmoneh Brachot– Eight Wedding Blessings

To complete a Jewish wedding, the couple must receive blessings from the assembled guests. There are seven blessings that are traditionally said to a couple on their wedding day. These will be sung to us by Daniel's father Micha.

In the Jewish tradition, the number seven is a symbol of perfection or completion. We count seven days of creation, culminating in Shabbat - a day of holiness. We also count seven weeks between Passover and Shavuot; seven years of the agricultural cycle, and seven cycles of seven years to the Jubilee year - the year of freedom to all.

Seven Traditional Wedding Blessings

1. Blessed are You, Lord our God, Sovereign of the universe, Who creates the fruit of the vine.
2. Blessed are You, Lord our God, Sovereign of the universe, Who created all things for divine glory.
3. Blessed are You, Lord our God, Sovereign of the universe, Who fashions the human being.
4. Blessed are You, Lord our God, Sovereign of the universe, Who fashioned the human being in the divine image, patterned upon Your image and likeness, and Who brought forth from that person a partner and an everlasting home. Blessed are You, Lord, Who fashions the human being.
5. Let the once barren mother smile and laugh, joyful at the happy gathering of her children within her. Blessed are You, Lord, Who gladdens Zion with her children.
6. Make these two beloved friends happy, supremely happy, just as You gladdened Your first couple, in the Garden of Eden of old. Blessed are You, Lord, Who gladdens bride and groom.
7. Blessed are You, Lord our God, Sovereign of the universe, Who created joy and gladness, bride and groom, laughter and singing, dancing and delight, love and family, peace and friendship. Quickly, Lord our God, let there be heard in the cities of Judah and the courtyards of Jerusalem, the sound of joy and gladness, the voice of groom and bride, the voice of newly marrieds heard from their wedding canopies and the voice of young people singing loudly at their wedding feast! Blessed are You, Lord, Who brings happiness between husband and wife.

Translation by Rabbi Steve Cohen

Eighth Blessing

While the number seven symbolises perfection in this world, the number eight, symbolises a different kind of perfection, which goes beyond the present moment and the cyclical order. The rabbis taught (*Talmud Arakhin 13b*) that King David's lyre had seven strings. However, in a future world where peace and harmony will reign, it will acquire an additional one and have eight strings.

For our chuppah we have chosen to have eight blessings. For us, the additional blessing adds this kind of completion to the traditional seven, going beyond the present moment, celebrating the multiple forms of love in our world, and requesting that God opens our hearts to all true lovers. The words and music for the prayer have been adapted for our wedding and the blessing will be sung by Alma's mother Chani. At the end of the eighth blessing we will drink from the second cup of wine. At this point the legal requirements of the wedding will have been fulfilled and we will move into closing blessings.

Baruch Ata Adonai, Eloheinu Mekor Hachayim, Hamedab 'keinu ze la-zo ve-zo la-ze bikdusha yetera, bechiba u-ve'emuna. Zakeinu le-ahavat nefesh ke-ahavat Yehonatan ve-David ve-ahavat chessed ke-Rut ve-Naomi, ve-ta'amod lanu zechut avot ve-imahot she-banu et olamcha be-ahava. Petach levaveinu ve-yipatchu she'areinu lechol ha'ohavim be'emet, venirveh kulanu melo hakos simcha ve-chedva. Baruch Ata Adonai, Ha-marbeh ahava ba'olam.

You abound in blessing, Adonai our God, Source of Life, who makes us cleave to one another in great sanctity, in love and in trust. May we be devoted to each other like Jonathan and David. May we experience mutual loving-kindness like Ruth and Naomi. May we receive the merits of our ancestors, who built Your world with love. May our hearts and our gates be open to all true lovers, and may we all drink from the cup of joy and gladness. Blessed are You Adonai, who increases love in the world.

Birkat Kohanim – Priestly Blessing

The ark will be opened by our friends Kim and Jeremy. At this point Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg will give us, and the whole community, the priestly blessing, which would once have sounded in the Temple in Jerusalem. The source is Bamidbar (Numbers) 6:24-26.

*Yevarechecha Adonai veyishmerecha.
Ya'er Adonai panav elecha vikhunecha
Yisah Adonai panav elecha veyasem lecha shalom.*

May God bless you and keep you.
May the light of God's face shine upon you and be gracious to you.
May God face be lifted towards you and grant you peace.

Im Eshkachekh Yerushalayim– If I forget you, Jerusalem

Words from Psalm 137

Music by Reb Shlomo Carlebach

Sung by Noam Roth

It is traditional for this song to precede the breaking of the glass at Jewish weddings. It is a solemn moment to consider that in spite of the great happiness of today, and the immense joy of the couple, the world contains much pain, sorrow and brokenness. We as human beings are considered partners with the divine in creating the world, and it is important even on this happy day, not to forget our role in working towards healing and peace for the entire world.

*Im eshcachech Yerushalayim,
Tishkach yemini.
Tid'bak leshoni le-chiki im lo ezkereichi;
Im lo a'aleh et Yerushalayim al rosh simchati.*

If I forget you, Jerusalem,
Let my right hand forget its skill.
Let my tongue stick to the roof of my mouth if I don't remember you;
If I don't prefer Jerusalem above my chief joy.

Breaking of the glass!

Once Alma and Daniel have stomped on the glasses placed beneath their feet, the ceremony is over, and the dancing commences! We will need to sign the civil registry and after a little dancing, invite you to dance us to the *Yichud room* (*yichud* means seclusion in Hebrew), where we will spend a few moments just the two of us. We hope you enjoy the food provided and we'll come and celebrate with you afterwards!

L'chaim! To life!

Thank you!

Our profound gratitude to all of you who have come to celebrate with us.

In particular we want to thank our parents whose love and commitment to us has made it possible for us to be here today.

Thank you to Daniel's mum Berit for decorating the beautiful chuppah, to Alma's mum Chani for giving us the eighth blessing as well as for being our chief musical consultant and Hebrew expert throughout all our planning. Thank you to Daniel's dad Micha for giving us the seven blessings, and Alma's dad Danny for reading and explaining the *ketubah*.

A special thank you as well to Josh Baum, who created both the artwork for the wedding invite and our beautiful ketubah.

Thank you to all the wonderful Shmeisel Singers with Ann Sadan and each of the soloists, to Joe Bunker for conducting, Ilan Lazarus for playing the piano, Guy Sion for playing the saxophone, Sarah Grabiner for playing the flute, Yonatan and Micah Smith for playing guitars, and Mark Greenfield for playing the drum!

Abigael & Maarten Limper Adam & Louise Caplin Adam Francies Adam, Jessica, Ayla & Eitan Overlander-Kaye Alex Knapp Alexander Bodin Saphir Amelia Viney Anat Schwarz & Nate Dahan Andie Lucas André Reisel & Barend Bouman Andrew & Debbie Jacobs Andrew Levy Ann & Yoram Sadan Anna-Kaarina Ahti & Scott Anna-Karin & Stian Tobiassen Annie & John Higgs Anthony Phillips Anuja & Ramana Nanda & Anika Aviva Shafritz & Mike Fenster Ayala & Avi Sion Ben & Ilana Jackman-Overlander Ben & Tilla Crowne Ben Jacobs Benjamin Ellis Benjy Stanley & Leah Jordan Benny & Ditte Kirschner Berit Reisel Bette & Peter Fraser Brage & Silja Urstad Caroline & Michael Weber Chaim & Judy Weiner Chani and Danny Smith Channe Lindstrøm Christopher Burlinson & Pat Boulhosa Ciaran Stewart & Chloe Claire Samuel & Gal Farchi Clare Carlisle Micha Reisel & Sharon Weinberg Dalia Fleming Simon Fried Dalia Fleming Daniel & Barbara Eilon Daniel & Miri Radomski Daniel Orelowitz & Leanne Moses Daniel Vulkan Danny Newman Danny Friedman Dave Shaw David & Hannah Jacobs Debbie Danon & Eyal Israel Deborah Blausten Diane & Philip Greene Don & Jean Glazer Dorothea Magonet Edgar Shenkar & Angela Elana Friedman Ele Cushing Eleanor Engledow Eleanor Greene Eliana Zur-Spiro Frøydis & Ivar Bermann Gabriela Pomeroy Gabrielle & Richard Lobb Gemma Gluckman Gideon Reisel Gideon van Gelder Carolyn, Benjamin & Joshua Smith Gill & Robert Bernard Gro Shetelig Hagai & Sharon Weissler Hannah & Sam Eilon Hannah Sassoon Hannah Weisfeld & Peter Hurst Harris & Miriam Lorie Harry Marin Heather Wheat Helen Boldon & Phil Tromans Hilde Hummelvoll Howard & Danielle Moss Howard & Sarah Cooper Ilan Lazarus Isobel Genn-Bash and Rob Jacqueline & Sem van Gelder Jakob Melchior Jan & Bente Rødner Janet & Robert Brand Janine Carroll Janine Skouge Martin Jeffrey & Andrea Fisher Jem Stein & Rachel Whenstone Jeremy Sitruk Jessica Kochan Joanna Cohen Joanna Ish-Horowicz & David Renton Joe Bunker John & Ellie Bunker Josh Moritz Judith Ish-Horowicz & Patrick Bower Judith Elkan Judy & Gordon Smith Julie Shmueli Julie Temperley Karen Sennit Kari Holm & Jørgen Kiehl Kari-Britt & Erik Larsen Karin Shmueli & David Kaufman Kathleen & David de Magtige-Middleton Kim Copitch & Josh Lee Laura & David Janner-Klausner Lily Ickowitz-Seidler Linda & Colin Myer Linda & Peter Weber Lindsay Seftal Lindsey & Norm Taylor-Guthartz Liv & Jack London Liz & Tyronne Dunbar Liza Reisel & Guy Sion Marc & Amanda Finer Mark Greenfield & Donna Sherrington & Robin Maya Zosmer & Tom Dixon Meir & Liora Haran Micah Smith & Simone Caplin Michael Melchior Michael & Sue Casale Michael Gritzman Michal Aronzon Michal Ish-Horowicz & Sam Grant Mika & Alan Borthwick Mima Millo Miriam & Daniel Livshin Miriam Edelman Miriam & Harry Rødner Mitch & Myrna Wax Monica Lanyado & Sam Rodin Naomi Reisel Natalie Grazin & Sam Cohen, Eden & Blu Netta Chachamu Nicky Solomon & Jonathan Wittenberg Nikki Chowen & Joe Pickard Noam Roth Noga & Laurie Wilson Orlando De Lange Orni Millo Pat & Mary Howard Philip & Carole Rose Rachel Benjamin & Harry Davies Rachel Harrison Rachel Romain Rachel Rose Reid Rachelle & Bini Sacks Rami & Jila Aronzon Rein & Jenny Follestad Richard & Sandra Harris Richard Rothschild Pearson & Rachel Singer Rivka Isaacson & Nick Blain Ros Tobe Rosemary & Jeremy Harrod Rosie Connors Ruben & Natalie Rødner Rune Bjåstad & Anne Cathrine Crawford Ruth Lamb Rutie Borthwick Sam Klein Samuel Green Sandy & Michael Lerman Sarah Sekiziyivu Shana Boltin Sharon & Keith Price Sharon Rødner Sharon Tyler Shira Aronzon & Steinar Skarpnes Shiri & Bob Shlomit Raikin Shlomo Raikin Shoshana Boyd Gelfand & Jon Boyd Shoshi Ish-Horowicz Signe Bjåstad & Herman Bakke Siri Daasvand Sonia Leigh Sophia Bramble Sophie Silverstein Sophie & Robbie Duschinsky Søren Christensen Stephen, Miriam, Dan, Sarah & Joe Grabiner Sue & Benedict Roth Talya, Toby, Sivan & Lielle Greene Tamar Ish-Horowicz & Ofer Tami & Jeremy Schonfield Ronnie Eshel Thomas & Kristin London Uri & Hanna Smith Vincent Knowles Wanda Reisel & Wim Straver Yael Shafritz Yon Borthwick & Sarah Lamb Yoni & Missy Higsmith Zahavit & David Boyd Zoe Jacobs