

Guidelines for wedding Ceremony

Setting the date for the wedding

In setting the date for the wedding there are many factors you should be considering: most of them are obviously of a personal nature but some of them are also of a religious nature.

You want to bear in mind the following information before setting the definite time for your wedding:

As for the day, any weekday is fine, although, in the times of the Mishna Wednesday was the favorite day of the week. In our community we are very careful not to allow any wedding on Mosae Shabbat (Saturday night). This is an explicit prohibition in the Shulchan Arukh meant to keep the holiness of Shabbat intact.

As for the dates, there are certain days and periods of time in the Hebrew calendar that is not customary to get married:

Between Pesach and Lag baOmer and during the 3 weeks between 17 of Tamuz and 9 of Av, etc.

In case of doubt, it is always advisable to consult with a Rabbi before setting the final date.

The Ketubah

Ketubah literally means “a document” and it states:

1. The date and place on which the wedding is taking place.
2. The names of the bride and the groom and their fathers.
3. The practical obligations of the husband towards his wife.
4. The details of the marriage’s insurance policy in favor of the bride that every Jewish husband is bound to provide to his wife.

The Ketubah has today also an additional meaning: it is the main document which records your Jewish marriage, a kind of the “Jewish marriage license” that in the future will serve to witness for your children and grandchildren their status and Jewishness, anywhere in the world. To illustrate: when in our community we have a wedding between a member of our community and a member of a different community it is customary to ask from the non member to produce his or her parents Ketubah and or a rabbi’s letter witnessing their Jewishness.

Since the text of the Mashadi Ketubah differs from most other Ketubot, the Ketubah needs to be filled out by a Rabbi who is familiar with the customs and traditions of our community, to make sure that the inclusion and writing of the Hebrew, English and Persian names, which demands a great deal of expertise, is correct. A set of the appropriate Mashadi Ketubah would be provided by the Community at no cost. If the couple wishes to have a customize Ketubah they should contact a Sofer (Scribe or artist) who will work with them the desired design. The Sofer usually contacts one of the Rabbis of the community to help provide him the correct text and names. In this section we have included the text of the Mashadi Ketubah. We have also included the names and telephone numbers of two Sofer who are familiar with these works and procedures.

In case the couple chooses a Rabbi from other community to officiate their wedding, a Rabbi from the community should be consulted regarding the text and writing of the Ketuba, according to the Mashadi traditions.

Signing the Ketubah

At the groom's reception, before the Chupa begins, the ceremony of the Ketubah takes place. The Rabbi reads and explains the Ketubah to the groom and to all the present there. Sometimes the Ketubah is signed under the Chupah but most of the times it is signed at the Ketubah ceremony, after it has been read aloud. The Ketubah has to be signed by two legitimate witnesses. Choosing them is not an easy task. The witnesses, for example, can not be relatives of the groom or the bride or relative among themselves. This includes also some non blood relatives. The officiant Rabbi, therefore, is the ultimate responsible for choosing or authorizing the witnesses, which is the most critical element that affects the Halakhic validity of the Ketubah.

At the Ketubah ceremony the Marriage License is also filled out. After completed, it should be given to the officiant Rabbi and it will be then his responsibility to mail it to the City Clerk. You will receive your Marriage Certificate from them by mail, normally in two or three weeks.

The marriage license

A couple intending to marry in New York State must apply in person for a marriage license to any town or city clerk in the state. The marriage license is the legal permanent record of the marriage. Once the marriage license is issued you have normally 60 days for your wedding Ceremony to take place. At the time of your wedding the officiant Rabbi will fill out the bottom of the document, ensuring the license is completed accurately, in full and signed at the time of marriage. Besides the Rabbi, two witnesses must sign the marriage license as well. There are not Halakhic restrictions for these two witnesses. In our community it is customary to ask the parents of the bride and groom to sign. The couple is responsible for bringing the Marriage License –with its envelope- to the Rabbi before the ceremony starts. Within 5 days after the marriage ceremony, it is the sole responsibility of the Rabbi to submit the marriage registration (normally by mail) to Vital statistics. The Marriage License form becomes the permanent legal record of the marriage event. The information recorded on the registration of your marriage is used to produce Marriage Certificates, when ordered.

To get more information about the procedure for obtaining the Marriage License and a Certificate of the marriage registration in New York State, we suggest you visit the following Website:
http://www.health.state.ny.us/vital_records/married.htm

Selecting the “Mesadder Kidushin”

Another element to take into consideration for your wedding is to select the officiant rabbi that will perform your wedding (the officiant Rabbi is known as the “Mesadder Kidushin”). The Mesadder Kidushin is a Rabbi which is familiar with the traditions and customs of the Mashadi wedding ceremony. The couple should inform the rabbi of their intention to have him as their Mesadder Kidushin (a mailed invitation would not suffice) and they should meet with him

once or twice in order to learn all the details of the wedding ceremony. With the Mesadder Kidushin the couple should arrange or consult all features and technical details of the religious ceremony, and even some of its aesthetics aspects, like songs, etc.

Mikveh

The Mikveh is the ritual bath that allows a Jewish woman to enter into her marriage in a pure state. The woman is showered and all articles such as rings, bandages, hairpins and even nail polish are removed. This is to assure that there is no barrier between the water and all of her body parts. Her hair is then combed, and her body checked to be free of loose hair. Then the bride-to-be is dunked in a bath and is blessed after completely coming to an upright position. The blessing is, "Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, King of the universe who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us concerning the immersion." This should be done as close to the date of the wedding as possible.

To prepare the bride for the Mikveh you can call Rabbanit Coty Bitton at 516 3824398 or any other competent Rabbanit. (See also Chatan and Kallah classes)