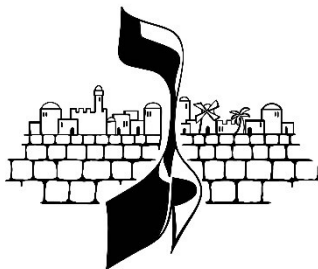


ברכת רבקה
Birkat Rivka

Highlights of the
Jewish Wedding &
Sheva Berachot



In Honor of the Wedding of
Rivka Bracha & Mordechai Hillel Djavaheeri
Rosh Chodesh Tammuz, 5777
June 25th, 2017

Table of Contents

Introduction	5	Basics of Kiddushin and Nissuin	16
Purpose	5	At the Wedding	18
Acknowledgements	5	The Rabbi – Mesader Kiddushin.....	18
Derashot	7	Leading Up to the Chuppah Ceremony.....	19
Getting The Better End of the Deal.....	7	King for a Day	19
The Start of Every Jewish Marriage.....	7	Fasting	19
“Buying” a Wife	8	Badeken	20
Invei HaGefen beInvei HaGefen.....	9	Location of the Chuppah	21
Standing on the Shoulders of Giants	9	Candles	21
Grape Vines Over Other Fruits.....	10	Standing Under the Chuppah.....	22
Har Sinai.....	11	The Audience.....	22
Candles & Music	11	Kiddushin/Erusin (Betrothal)	23
The Chattan’s Derasha. I I		How to do Kiddushin .	23
Breaking the Glass	12	Birkat Erusin (Kiddushin)	26
Birkat Rivka	13	Intermission Between Kiddushin & Nissuin	28
Children and Beyond	13	Purpose.....	28
Sheva Berachot	14	Reading the Ketubah....	29
Kiddushin	15	Shevua Chamurah (Serious Oath).....	31
Waiting Until It’s Right	15	Nissuin (Completing the Marriage).....	31
Halachot	16	Definition of Chuppah	31
An Overview of the Jewish Wedding Ceremony.....	16		

Yichud Room	32	Beit Chattanim (The Chattan's House)...	44
Tallit.....	33	Minyan	45
Minyan for Nissuin & Sheva Berachot	34	Panim Chadashot...	46
Honoring Attendees with Berachot	35	Seudah (Meal)	50
Honoring Non-Jews	36	Musical Chalices	51
Wine.....	36	When Lacking Components.....	52
The Text of Sheva Berachot	37	Work and Other Activities	53
Besamim.....	39	Calculating the Seven Days	53
Finishing Touches to the Chuppah	39	A Year of Bliss.....	54
Birkat Kohanim.....	39	Shanah Rishonah	54
Breaking the Glass	39	Learning Torah and Setting a Tone	54
Ashes.....	41	Peru uRevu (Having Children).....	55
The Wedding Feast	41	Birkat HaMazon (Ashkenaz)	56
Simchat Chattan veKallah ..	42	Birkat HaMazon (Edot HaMizrach/Sepharadim)..	59
Seven Days of Simcha	42	Sheva Berachot.....	63
Sheva Berachot Meals...43			
Obligation or Option	43		
Shehasimcha Bimono	43		

Introduction

Purpose

“אמר ר' יוחנן וקשין לזווגן כקריעת ים סוף” (סוטה ב.)

Orchestrating a wedding can be as complex as splitting the sea, both for the families as well as the rabbi. People have questions: “Can we do this? How about that? What’s this thing I saw them doing at last night’s wedding?” Certainly, it pays to be familiar with the issues, to know what to ask, how to ask, and where to look. From the erudite yeshiva bachur, to the “kvelling” mother, to the beginner salivating for the juicy and sweet taste of Torah and Mitzvot, there is ample substance to study, in depth in the Beit Midrash, at the dining room table, and while waiting idly at a Chuppah. Coupled with the Halachot are short Derashot bearing meaningful messages regarding the Jewish marriage.

Though each sentence can host a page of citations in a footnote, the choice was made to condense to the location in Shulchan Aruch, as well as any relevant contemporary Poskim, with a sprinkling of Persian traditions. By no means is the content comprehensive in breadth or depth: it’s merely a taste of a delectable and practical slice of the cake from our wedding with Hashem that we call Torah.

Acknowledgements

Let this small booklet serve as a token of gratitude to all who have invested in us thus far, including our friends, family, Rebbeim, Morot, and parents, each fulfilling a

different part of Hashem's mission to prepare us for our future. In particular, we owe an unending debt of appreciation to my dear Chavruta and his wife, Ike and Shira Sultan, without whom we would never have crossed paths. Be'ezrat Hashem, the Torah learning from this pamphlet should serve as a merit for all of them, especially Daniel Refael ben Mazal.

Finally, as a side project to being in yeshiva, completing college, planning a wedding, and preparing for marriage, this work is yet incomplete and most probably host to a variety of errors. Kindly send errors, along with any observations and insights, to mordechai.djavaheri@gmail.com.

ראש חודש תמוז, תשע"ז

מרדכי הלל ג'וואהרי

Derashot

Divrei Torah to share, especially when asked to say something at a Sheva Berachot and completely unprepared.

Getting The Better End of the Deal

The Start of Every Jewish Marriage

When Avraham Avinu was searching for a final resting place for his cherished and beloved partner in life, Sarah Immenu, he met with a shrewd businessman by the name of Ephron. The property in question, Me'arat HaMachpelah, was located in Chevron, which is swampy and of little use in agrarian society. Thus, the price should have been affordable, but Ephron tagged it for a whole of four hundred silver Shekalim, a fortune at the time! The crooked Ephron tried to rip off Avraham, didn't try to bargain. Instead, Avraham made sure to pay in full. (Bereshit 18)

It is most peculiar that, of the three methods of performing Kiddushin, the one that every Jewish marriage begins with is money, Kiddushei Kessef.¹ What's even more peculiar is that the Gemara (Kiddushin 2a) derives the very institution of Kiddushei Kessef from conversation with Ephron in the purchase of Me'arat HaMachpelah. Isn't it strange, that every Jewish marriage begins with a

¹ Rambam Hilchot Ishut 1:2 and 3:21

concept learned from such a sad tale of business, at the hands of such a scoundrel like Ephron?

HaRav Yisroel Chesir, a HANC rebbe who had great influence on me over the years, once explained that from this very transaction we see exactly the right attitude each party must have when entering a marriage. Ephron thought Avraham Avinu was such a sucker for willing to pay a fortune for a useless and muddy excuse for a property. In his eyes, it was worthless, and he was getting the better end of the deal. At the same time, Avraham Avinu made sure to pay full price for Me'arat HaMachpelah, because every inch of Eretz Yisrael is priceless! What are four-hundred silver shekalim in comparison to a piece of the holiest land on Earth?! As such, they both not only went into the deal each thinking he got the better end of it, but they also continued that way. By extension, every Jewish marriage must operate under the same nature, that each party truly has received the better end of the deal.

“Buying” a Wife

Consequently, one might fall under the impression that the Torah objectifies women – after all, they’re bought and “purchased” with money, just like property. It’s essentially a business transaction! HaRav Eli Piolet, a former rebbe in Yeshivat Sha’alvim, points out that it highlights the tremendous and integral underpinnings in marriage: this is the first time we find a purchase of land in Eretz Yisrael in Tanach, and on it we base the very fabric of our holiest interpersonal relationship. The Torah

tells us that we should feel the same way about our marriage as we do for Eretz Yisrael – priceless.

By the same token, HaRav Hershel Schachter, Posek of OU Kosher and Rosh Yeshiva of YU, quotes from Rav Shamshon Refael Hirsch², that indeed, the Goyim are right that the Jews “buy their wives” like land, but keep in mind that she remains his as his most valued possession in the world. This purchase was the final step in a lifelong journey and partnership in the joint service of Hashem for Avraham Avinu and Sarah Immenu. With that in mind, every Jewish marriage picks up where that of our perpetually venerated father and mother left off.

Invei HaGefen beInvei HaGefen

Standing on the Shoulders of Giants

תנו רבנן, לעולם ימכור אדם כל מה שיש לו וישא בת
תלמיד חכם וישא בתו לתלמיד חכם. משל לענבי הגפן
בענבי הגפן דבר נאה ומתקבל. (פסחים מט.)

The Chachamim compare a good match to intertwining grape vines and implore of one to make every effort possible to seek out a fine family and suitor committed to perpetuating Torah-true values. Grape vines cannot stand

² From his commentary to Bereishit 23:19. There, he also notes how peculiar it is that the only two narratives of monetary transactions recorded in Tanach are Avraham Avinu’s purchase of Me’arat HaMachpelah, and Yirmiyahu HaNavi’s purchase of a field in the context of a prophecy regarding the Babylonian conquest of Eretz Yisrael and destruction of the Beit HaMikdash. The two events effectively bookend our nation’s residence in our land. See also the next Derasha.

on their own, but rather need a base, a trellis, something to lean on, wrap around, and grow. Likewise, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach exclaims, Chazal praise such a couple for building their home on the bedrock of our ancestors.³

Grape Vines Over Other Fruits

Though there are plenty of other succulent fruits of Eretz Yisrael to compare to, they specifically chose grapes, because grapes are the only fruit that produce juice that's more valuable than its fruit. Usually, the fruit, the parent, is more significant than its juice, its offspring, but wine is ultimately chief to the grape.⁴ Correspondingly, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach elaborates, we bless the couple that their offspring should not only be as exemplary as the parents, but also reach even greater heights than the parents did!

Alternatively, regular fruit juices spoil after some time; wine is the only fruit juice that improves with fermentation. As such, Hashem should bless the new

³ Shalmei Simcha page 71. Similarly, Chazal compare cheering a Chattan veKallah to *rebuilding* the ruins of Yerushalayim, as opposed to new construction. The latter requires hiring an architect and drawing up new plans, while the latter demands filling the shoes and designs of the previous structure. We therefore inform the new couple **צאי לך בעקבי הציאן**: they should build their Bayit Ne'eman with the guidelines of our holy tradition of our ancestors and not **כרצון איש ואיש**. (Maor Yisrael, Derashot page 308)

⁴ Even the Beracha on wine (HaGefen) is more specific and, thereby, significant than the Beracha on grapes (HaEtz), while all other fruit juice Berachot are more general (Shehakol).

couple with a happier and more wholesome marriage as time goes on.⁵

Har Sinai

Candles & Music

The pomp and circumstance of the Chuppah ceremony correspond well to the magnificent and stunning reception of the Torah on Har Sinai. Ashkenazim walk down the aisle holding candles, to symbolize the holy inferno that rested on Har Sinai, and we have a Chuppah over our heads just like the clouds over Har Sinai and the mountain held over their heads like a barrel. Also, the band plays music, instead of the thunder and lightning that accompanied the giving of the Torah.

The Chattan's Derasha

There is a common practice for the Chattan to deliver a Derasha at the Chosson's tish, which Rav Nachman MiBreslov compares to the giving of the Torah. Many have the custom to interrupt the Chattan as he speaks, which Rabbi Nachman says corresponds to the shattering of the Luchot. Rav Mordechai Gifter suggests that perhaps it's a message to the Chattan that if he shapes up, she'll be

⁵ Shalmei Simcha ibid.

an Ezer, but, if he doesn't, there will be Shevirat HaLuchot.

Breaking the Glass

We temper the giddiness by smashing a glass, according to the Maharshal, just like Moshe Rabbeinu halted the celebratory mood by smashing the Luchot. The Midrash Tanchuma pins the failure of the first giving of the Luchot on the razzle dazzle fanfare of Mattan Torah. The second time around, there were no fireworks, and the Luchot were given quietly with Tzeniut that made them a lasting pillar of the world.

Rav Yosef Dov HaLevi Soloveitchik explained that breaking the glass is message to the new couple to live a private life, without public displays of affection or pursuit of honor, in order to maintain their married life. Tzeniut, is not just about how women dress; rather, it's a way of life, emulating Hashem's behavior as a *Kel Nistater*, a Hidden God, behind the scenes.⁶

⁶ MiPninei HaRav page 273, Divrei HaRav page 229. For an extensive list of Har Sinai imagery and symbolism present at a Chuppah, see Tashbetz Kattan 264-265.

Birkat Rivka

Children and Beyond

וַיְבָרְכוּ אֶת רִבְקָה וַיֹּאמְרוּ לָהּ אַחֲתֵנוּ אֵת הַיְי לְאֵלֶיךָ רִבְקָה
וַיִּירֶשׁ זְרַעְךָ אֵת שְׁעַר שַׁנְאִיו: (בראשית כד:ס)

As she departed with Eliezer on her way to marry Yitzchak Avinu, Rivka Immenu was blessed by her family with a Beracha, Birkat Rivka, to bear thousands and tens of thousands of offspring, who will overcome their adversaries. The Beracha charges Rivka with being the medium for a similar Beracha which Avraham Avinu received after the Akeidah (Bereshit 22:17).

With biological offspring in mind, the Natziv explains the two components of the Beracha, numbers and success, to represent quantity and quality of descendants.

Although, the Keli Yakar argues the Beracha can't be about biological descendants, because they're already covered by Avraham's Beracha. Moreover, the numbers of children grow exponentially over generations beyond the tens of thousands she was blessed with. Rather, the Beracha was that she should do Chessed for tens of thousands, who will in turn come to her aid. She should have and use the means to provide for the multitudes, as they will pay her children back in double by assisting in overcoming enemies and challenges.⁷

⁷ HaEmek Davar and Keli Yakar Bereshit 24:60.

Sheva Berachot

Man's charge in this world is to recognize the Kavod of Hashem as the one and only God, Creator of the World, and Avraham Avinu was the first to do so.

The Chachamim (Masechet Kallah I:I) found Rivka's Beracha to be a source in the Torah for Sheva Berachot, or at least Birkat Erusin, and as elaborated above her Beracha was an extension of Avraham Avinu's.

Thus, under the Chuppah, where we celebrate the continued transmission of that recognition to the coming generation and continuity of mankind, we begin by reciting the Beracha of "SheHaKol Bara Lichvodo" – that everything was created for Hashem's honor, something Avraham Avinu understood better than anyone else, and then "Yotzer Ha'Adam" – that Hashem created man, to recognize that honor. Following those is the longer "Asher Yatzar et HaAdam," which highlights the creation of man's partner in perpetuating that recognition to future generations.

Alas, Kevod Hashem cannot be fully understood as long as Yerushalayim is in ruins, so we recite "Sos Tasis" in hopes of its immediate restoration to its former glory.

Marked with the venom of the Snake through the sin of Adam and Chavah and the Golden Calf, we then recite "Sameach Tesamach," beseeching Hashem to return us to our pure and untainted status of Adam and Chavah in Gan Eden, the intended purpose of Creation.

Finally, we pray to reach the threshold of the ultimate Simcha in the restored Yerushalayim, in full recognition of Hashem's rulership of the world.⁸

Kiddushin

Waiting Until It's Right

וַיְהִי־לִיב בֵּין רַעֲי מִקְנֵה־אַבְרָם וּבֵין רַעֲי מִקְנֵה־לוֹט וְהַפְּנִנְוּ
וְהַפְּרִזִּי אֲזַ יֵשֵׁב בְּאַרְצָ: (בראשית י:ז)

Driven by avarice, Lot's shepherds grazed their herds on Kenaani fields, but they were admonished and rebuked by Avram's shepherds. Rashi elaborates how the quarrel was rooted in an unscrupulous decision on Lot's shepherds' account, as they would say: "Eretz Yisrael is already promised to Avram, and he has no children, so Lot, his nephew will inherit him! Therefore, it isn't stealing, since it ultimately belongs to Lot, anyway," they posited. Avram's shepherds wouldn't hear of it, and the Torah bolsters their rebuttal by concluding that the Kenaani and the Perizi nations are still in the land, to indicate that Avram had not yet received it.

The state of an engaged couple is very much the same. They think to themselves: "Keeping boundaries made sense before we got engaged, because touching is such a bribe! It can cloud one's judgement, so it made sense to keep a distance before engagement, because we didn't know yet if it's the right person. Don't want to be

⁸ Based on Beit Yaakov (Ketubot 8a).

prematurely drawn to a person who might ultimately not be the right one.”

But once engaged, they might rationalize: “Ok, we’ve already chosen each other, already decided that this is the person, what’s the difference between this stage I’m in now and the one I’ll be in after the wedding? All that happens in between is an inconsequential ceremony – walk down an aisle, dance for a little bit, a Beracha here, a ring there – practically speaking, we already committed to each other, so why keep the safeguards so strong?!”

Making such calculations without halachic grounds for it is simply incorrect: they’re not married. Avraham Avinu had already been promised Eretz Yisrael but he didn’t rationalize: “These people are just temporary owners squatting on land that will be ours, so there’s no harm in eating from our own land!” The land does not yet belong to him, so he doesn’t act like it does already.

Avraham and his shepherds knew better, and the engaged couple should too.

Halachot

An Overview of the Jewish Wedding Ceremony

Basics of Kiddushin and Nissuin

Every Jewish marriage begins with two Halachic steps, **Kiddushin**, also known as **Erusin**, the man’s act of

designating his new partner in life as his bride to be, and **Nissuin**, the act of bringing her physically or symbolically into the husband's domain. Although there are three ways to accomplish Kiddushin, the custom is to give an object of monetary value, specifically a plain ring, as the means of betrothing the bride. Without Kiddushin, the colloquially "engaged" couple is simply committed to eventually marry, but with no Halachic implications to their status. If they were to break up, the former fiancé would not require a Get, while a couple that breaks up after Kiddushin absolutely does.

Effectively, the couple is married already from the moment of Kiddushin and on, but they may not live together until Nissuin. Until several generations ago, these two steps would happen up to a year apart, to give the couple time to prepare themselves financially for the new stage of their lives, but, nowadays, we do them back to back at the wedding. We still entertain some form of noticeable division between the two by reading the Ketubah under the Chuppah and sometimes hearing inspiring words of Torah and gratitude to Hashem.

Nissuin is accomplished by entering the Chuppah, which, in the simplest sense, means bringing the bride into the groom's domain, his home, together with the understanding that this is the means of completing their marriage. At the same time, there exist a few competing definitions and flavors of Chuppah, such as covering the bride with her veil (known as Badeken), standing under the Chuppah canopy, spreading out a Tallit over the couple's heads, or being secluded together in a room designated for them. Ashkenazim and Sepharadim have differing customs regarding which routes to take, but, at

the end of the day, there's equal reason to celebrate. Preceding the Nissuin and during the seven days of feasting that follow, we make Sheva Berachot to bless the new couple with a holy and happy marriage.

At the Wedding

First, the rabbi recites the two Berachot of Bore Peri HaGefen and Erusin, both bride and groom take a drink, then the groom declares the canonical proposal in Hebrew and puts the ring on the bride's finger. The Ketubah is read and the rabbi may even share a Torah thought. Then, Sheva Berachot are recited, the glass is shattered, and the couple is danced out of the room.

The Rabbi – Mesader Kiddushin

אמר רב יהודה: כל שאינו יודע בטיב גיטין וקידושין לא יהא
לו עסק עמהן (קידושין ו).

As the Halachot of making and breaking a marriage are an intricate and, in general, high risk field of expertise, every Jewish wedding is orchestrated by an erudite rabbi, a **Mesader Kiddushin**, who is well versed in them. If care is not taken in seeking out a qualified Mesader Kiddushin, the marriage could very well be null and void, which can have many ramifications in the immediate future with respect to living together and down the line in more upsetting circumstances.

The same way one goes to a specialist over a general practitioner for anything more than a standard checkup, it is imperative to appoint someone who knows *these* Halachot (Shulchan Aruch, Even HaEzer 26-65 in

addition to how to write a Kosher Ketubah) superbly well, and not just any shul or yeshiva rabbi, whose general or even specific training may not be adequate justification for him to run the show. The shelves of the Beit Midrash are brimming with discussions in Halacha attempting to determine the marital status of couples whose marriages were not orchestrated by the right people; it is better to be definitely and happily married than a complicated chapter in a great rabbi's book.⁹

Leading Up to the Chuppah Ceremony

King for a Day

The wedding day is soul cleansing and awe inspiring, like Yom Kippur and Mattan Torah blended together. The Chachamim teach us that the Chatten and Kallah's sins are forgiven, and they have the saintly ability to accomplish wonders with their prayers. It's incumbent upon them to spend the day in self-introspection, doing Teshuvah, engaging in Tefillah for others, and giving Tzedaka.¹⁰

Fasting

There is a longstanding holy Ashkenazi tradition for the couple to fast on their wedding day, potentially as a means of focusing on the opportunity to do Teshuvah and prepare oneself on this momentous day. The common

⁹ See Yalkut Yosef (Sova Semachot 5:I)

¹⁰ Shalmei Simcha chapters 18-19

Sepharadi Minhag nowadays is not to fast, however; though, some communities did have this custom. Regardless, there are certain days, such as Rosh Chodesh, on which it's prohibited to fast, so a Rav should be consulted to confirm what the couple should do.¹¹

Badeken

In Europe, the custom was for the Chattan to approach the Kallah in the synagogue courtyard the morning of the wedding and cover her face with a veil, similar to how Rut asked Boaz to spread his coat over her “**וּפְרִשְׁתָּ כְּנָפֶךָ עָלַי**” (Rut 3:9).¹² Nowadays, Ashkenazim do this at the wedding right before the Chuppah ceremony begins.

After the Chattan's tish, the Chattan is paraded to the Kallah, who is sitting on a thronelike chair, surrounded by family and friends. The Chattan approaches her and covers her face with her veil, while the honorable members of the community bless her with the Beracha given to Rivka Immenu by her family when she left home with Eliezer to marry Yitzchak Avinu: “**אֲחַתְּנוּ אֶת הָיְי לְאַלְפֵי**”

¹¹ Shulchan Aruch (Even HaEzer 61:1, 65:3). See Nefesh HaRav page 251. Ben Ish Chai (Shanah Rishonah, Shoftim 13) writes that the custom in Baghdad was for only the Chattan to fast. Yabia Omer vol. 3 Even HaEzer 6.

¹² In some communities in Europe, the Chattan didn't cover her face himself, which leads one to question whether it accomplishes Nissuin, if one can appoint a Shaliach to effect Nissuin, and if one needs to appoint witnesses. See Dagul Mervava (Yoreh Deah 342:1), Nefesh HaRav page 278, Belkvei HaTzon page 266, Ginat Egoz page 100, Shalmei Simcha page 165

”רַבְּבָה וַיִּירֶשׁ זֶרְעֵךְ אֶת שְׂעָר שְׂנְאָיו” (Bereshit 24:60).
Sefaradim do not have this custom.¹³

HaRav Hershel Schachter blesses the couple with a century to spend together following their wedding, and advises that neither the Badeken, nor the Chuppah, is the place to start a conversation and keep everyone waiting.

Location of the Chuppah

As a sign that their children should be as many as the stars, Ashkenazim have the custom to perform the Chuppah outside.¹⁴ Nowadays, many have accepted practice to perform a wedding ceremony in the sanctuary of a synagogue, but great care must be taken to respect the holiness of the location, especially with respect to one's dress and kissing relatives. It is therefore highly recommended to celebrate elsewhere.¹⁵

Candles

Many of the customs practiced at the wedding are symbolic of receiving the Torah on Har Sinai (Mattan Torah). For example, while walking down the aisle with

¹³ Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 147:3, Yalkut Yosef (Sova Semachot 6:1-2)

¹⁴ Shulchan Aruch (Even HaEzer 61:1), Belkvei HaTzon page 265 and MiPninei HaRav page 277. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach used to insist on this custom, cold rain or warm shine, unless the Ashkenazi Minhag HaMakom is already not unilateral. (Shalmei Simcha page 158)

¹⁵ Yabia Omer vol. 3 Even HaEzer 10, Yalkut Yosef (Sova Semachot 6:9,12-13). See Nefesh HaRav page 257

the Chattan and Kallah, Ashkenazim carry candles, to symbolize the flames that were present at Mattan Torah.¹⁶

Standing Under the Chuppah

Among Ashkenazim, there is a custom for the couple to stand with their backs facing the audience and another custom to stand specifically facing the audience, while others have the custom for them to stand facing East towards Yerushalayim.¹⁷ It's proper for the Kallah to stand at the right of the Chattan; though, according to Kabbalah, the opposite is preferred. Some say that after the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash, one need not be concerned at all.¹⁸

The Audience

As the Chattan and Kallah walk down the aisle to perform the Mitzvah of building a Jewish home and transmitting those values to future generations, one should stand, as

¹⁶ Sepharadim don't have this custom, however, and there is little reason to mimic other communities. Moreover, there's certainly reason to be vigilant regarding fire-safety. When officiating over a wedding at which candles were brought down the aisle, Rav Ovadia had them extinguished under the Chuppah. (Yalkut Yosef (Sova Semachot 6:3)). Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach liked the idea of carrying candles inside glass, fire safe tubes. (Shalmei Simcha). See the Derasha on page 13.

¹⁷ Nefesh HaRav page 257, MiPninei HaRav page 274, Yalkut Yosef (Sova Semachot 1:6:5). Rav Yitzchak Hutner started a tradition that the Chattan should face the audience and not the Mesader Kiddushin, so people should realize the Chattan is performing the marriage and the Mesader Kiddushin is just a spectator facilitating the process, unlike a minister officiates at a Catholic wedding. (HaRav Hershel Schachter and HaRav Mordechai Willig)

¹⁸ Yalkut Yosef (Sova Semachot 1:6:5), who writes that Rav Ovadia always followed the first view. HaRav Hershel Schachter does, as well.

with any passerby on the way to perform a Mitzvah. Many maintain that for this reason, one should also stand from Birkat Erusin through Sheva Berachot. Certainly, the awe of the Shechinah present at such a serious event should be reason enough to stand in silence and not engage in irreverent conversation.¹⁹

Kiddushin/Erusin (Betrothal)

How to do Kiddushin

Though there exist three methods of betrothing a Jewish woman: money (*Kesef*), contract (*Shtar*), and cohabitation (*Biah*), the Chachamim decreed that anybody who engages in cohabitation as a means of effecting Kiddushin be flogged, as it's outright inappropriate.²⁰

Kesef requires that the man give the woman money, or an object of value, worth at least a *Perutah* (half a barley corn's weight in silver, $\frac{1}{40}$ of a gram) and proposing with the words "*Harei At Mekudeshet Li BeTabaat Zo KeDat Moshe ve Yisrael*" ("By [accepting] this ring, you will be betrothed to me according to the Torah of Moshe and Yisrael"). If she accepts the ring, they're married!²¹

Alternatively, he could write out the words on a piece of

¹⁹ MiPninei HaRav page 277, Yabia Omer vol. 6 Even HaEzer 8 who adds that it's also a function of the Chattan's new status of king, Yalkut Yosef (Sova Semachot 6:19-20), Rav Mordechai Eliyahu (Hilchot Shidduchim and Chatunah, by R' Shmuel Eliyahu). Though the Minhag in America seems to be to sit during the Chuppah ceremony.

²⁰ Shulchan Aruch (Even HaEzer 26 and 33)

²¹ Shulchan Aruch (Even HaEzer 27). If using money, substitute "Matbe'a," instead of "Taba'at."

paper and hand it to her. If she accepts it, it would accomplish the same thing.²²

Remarkably, the Rambam writes that the custom is to only use *Kesef* for Kiddushin. Additionally, since Kiddushin takes the basic form of a monetary transaction, there cannot be any lack of understanding on the bride's part in terms of what she's getting, or else the entire transaction could be ineffective. For example, if he gives her a brilliant diamond ring that seems quite valuable but it in fact turns out to be the opposite, the mistaken transaction would be null and void, and they would not be married. Therefore, the custom developed to only use a plain ring without a stone, to avoid any potential misunderstanding or misappraisal and ensure the success of the Kiddushin.²³ They're more than welcome to

²² Shulchan Aruch (Even HaEzer 32)

²³ Shulchan Aruch (Even HaEzer 31), Yalkut Yosef (Sova Semachot 7:14-16), see MiPninei HaRav page 275.

See Sefer HaChinuch 552 who describes Kiddushin as a means of demonstrating their commitment an action and the use of a ring as a constant reminder of it.

Though the Minhag in Baghdad even a century ago was to use a silver coin, the Ben Ish Chai (Shanah Rishonah, Shoftim 7-8) writes in favor of using a ring. The Minhag in Shiraz was also to use a silver coin (*Outcaste, Jewish Life in Southern Iran*, by Laurence Loeb, page 203, and confirmed with me by Mr. Nasser Lalehzari, who himself used a silver coin ("sekeh") and lived in Shiraz until the year 2000), but my grandmother, Mahin Mahfar, told me that she received both the colloquial "sekeh kiddush" and a ring under the Chuppah. Indeed, it seems that the Minhag in Tehran was not as uniform, as Mr. Asher Asherian, of the same generation as my grandmother, related that he used a ring at his wedding in Tehran, and Rav Eliyahu Ben Chaim told me he never saw this in Tehran, when he arrived a couple decades later.

purchase whatever jewelry they fancy for an engagement ring and the like, just not for the Chuppah ceremony.

Furthermore, Kiddushin is fundamentally the act of the groom taking the bride, not the other way around or both ways. Hence, a double ring ceremony under the Chuppah would undermine the very mechanics of Kiddushin and be prohibited. Doing so is also violation of the Torah's mandate not to imitate non-Jewish practices.²⁴

Most importantly, for the Kiddushin to work, the ring must belong to the groom, i.e. it cannot be a borrowed ring.²⁵ The Mesader Kiddushin should confirm this with the Chatten before and during the Chuppah.

Also, as with any act of major significance, the Kiddushin must be done in the presence of two appointed Halachically acceptable witnesses (meaning, they are sufficiently observant, not related to the couple or each other, etc.). The Mesader Kiddushin should ensure that they see the Kallah's face to ascertain her identity and see the giving of the ring.²⁶

²⁴ Iggerot Moshe (Even HaEzer vol. 3 Siman 18 and 25, vol. 4 Siman 32:2). Depending on who's officiating and how they perform the Kiddushin, Rav Moshe holds it could even be null and void. See Gray Matter vol. 1 page 73 for a full discussion of the effectiveness, not the permissibility of the ceremony, as well as Minchat Asher (vol. 1 Siman 72, vol. 2 Siman 98). See also footnote 17.

²⁵ Shulchan Aruch (Even HaEzer 28:19-20). Though he does present a series of parameters outlined by the Rosh in which a borrowed ring would work, Rav Ovadia rules that, based on the dissenting view of the Rashba, it would be a Safek Kiddushin. (Yabia Omer vol. 6 Even HaEzer 6:7)

²⁶ Shulchan Aruch (Even HaEzer 42:2-5), See Nefesh HaRav page 266 and Shalmei Simcha page 203. There's a complicated debate whether the

Birkat Erusin (Kiddushin)

Before handing the ring to the bride, we recite a Beracha thanking Hashem for the holy framework of the Jewish marriage, customarily over a cup of wine. Ideally, one should have a Minyan of men, including the Chatten and the two witnesses, present at the Kiddushin. If one cannot attain a cup of wine or a Minyan, he may still do Kiddushin (but keep in mind the latter is necessary for Nissuin).²⁷

סַבְרֵי מְרַנְן. ועונים: לחיים.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
וְצִנְנוּ עַל הָעֵרִיּוֹת וְאָסַר לָנוּ אֶת־הָאֲרוּסוֹת, וְהִתִּיר לָנוּ אֶת־
הַנְּשׂוּאוֹת לָנוּ עַל יְדֵי חֲפָה בְּקִדּוּשֵׁינוּ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, מְקַדֵּשׁ
עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל יְדֵי חֲפָה בְּקִדּוּשֵׁינוּ:

הֲרִי אֶת מְקַדְּשֵׁת לִי בְּטַבְעֵת זוֹ כְּדַת מִשָּׁה וְיִשְׂרָאֵל

Much ink has been spilled to determine the nature of this Beracha. A prevalent approach is that one might have thought that once they're Halachically engaged, the couple would be permitted to relax their boundaries with respect to physical intimacy, especially in the times when Kiddushin and Nissuin happened a year apart. To dispel such misconceptions, the Chachamim instituted an oddly lengthy Beracha that details the continued prohibition of

witnesses need to see her face under the Chuppah or can suffice with knowing who she is under the veil, but it's well beyond the scope of our discussion. HaRav Eliyahu Ben Chaim is stringent in this matter.

²⁷ Shulchan Aruch (Even HaEzer 34:2,4)

engaging in physical intimacy with one's bride until Nissuin. The Beracha highlights the holiness of the Jewish people and their marriages but that we are still prohibited from our fiancés and only permitted to our wives through the Chuppah that follows Kiddushin.²⁸

Usually, the Mesader Kiddushin recites the Berachot, so as not to embarrass Chattanim who don't know how to do it themselves.²⁹ He should first instruct the Chattan and Kallah to listen intently and only speak to answer Amen, not Baruch Hu uVaruch Shemo, as he will be saying the Berachot on their behalf. The same is true for all of the Sheva Berachot.³⁰

²⁸ Ramban Ketubot 7a s.v. "וצונו"

²⁹ Shulchan Aruch (Even HaEzer 34:1), Yalkut Yosef (Sova Semachot 6:16). Since the Rambam holds that it's a Birkat HaMitzvah, the Chattan should ideally appoint the Mesader Kiddushin as his messenger to say the Beracha in his place, as it's his Mitzvah to marry this woman. (Yalkut Yosef (ibid 6:16)) HaRav Eliyahu Ben Chaim recommends that any Chattan who can, should say his own Birkat Erusin, but for my own wedding, he said I should honor HaRav Schachter, the Mesader Kiddushin, with the Beracha instead.

Most peculiarly, the Ben Ish Chai (Shanah Rishonah, Shoftim 1) claims it's a Birkat HaNehenin on the bride, but this opinion is not found in Rishonim. (Halichot Olam)

³⁰ Ben Ish Chai (Shanah Rishonah, Shoftim 2), Yabia Omer vol. 7 Even HaEzer 17, Yalkut Yosef (Sova Semachot 6:17).

HaRav Hershel Schachter is fond of quoting the story about Rav Mordechai Eliyahu who officiated at the Baba Sali's daughter's wedding, at which the Baba Sali threatened to leave when the former instructed the Chattan not to answer Baruch Hu uVaruch Shemo, as the Abuchatzzeira Family Minhag was indeed to say it even when hearing a Beracha with intention to fulfill an obligation. ("Hilchot Shidduchim and Chatunah" by R' Shmuel Eliyahu)

There's also a great discussion whether the Kallah should answer Amen to Birkat Erusin: since Erusin isn't her Mitzvah, she shouldn't interrupt

After the Berachot, the Chattan and Kallah each take a sip. The Sepharadi Minhag is that the Mesader Kiddushin takes a sip first, but Ashkenazim have varying customs.³¹ Then, the Chattan says “*Harei At...*” and does Kiddushin.

Intermission Between Kiddushin & Nissuin

Purpose

In the times of the Chachamim and up until a number of centuries ago, the custom was to give the couple time to prepare themselves financially for the new stage of their lives. Though the custom has since changed to do Erusin and Nissuin back to back at the wedding, we still make an effort to pause symbolically in between to demonstrate the distinction between them. For this reason, we should really use two different cups of wine, one for Birkat Erusin and one for Sheva Berachot, but the current custom is to use one and just add some wine or water in between uses.³² Additionally, since a wedding is ripe for

between HaGefen and drinking. In addition to the above, see Belkvei HaTzon page 269 and Shalmei Simcha page 180.

³¹ Reb Chaim Soloveitchik used to intentionally spill a drop onto his hand so he could drink it, but his son, the Brisker Rav, and grandson, Rav Yosef Dov, did not have this practice. (Yabia Omer vol. 5 Even HaEzer 10:7, Nefesh HaRav page 260, and Belkvei HaTzon page 271) Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach would only be careful about this when officiating at a Sepharadi wedding. (Shalmei Simcha page 183)

³² Shulchan Aruch (Even HaEzer 62:9), Yalkut Yosef (Sova Semachot 10:1). HaRav Hershel Schachter explains that the refilling of the cup is itself equivalent to using a second cup.

opportunity to share meaningful and inspiring words of Torah or for any speeches the family is looking to make, a rabbi often gives a Derasha under the Chuppah.

Reading the Ketubah

As a means of guaranteeing financial security for the bride and her descendants during the marriage and after it, the husband gives her a Ketubah stating his commitment to their marriage and supporting her. It's so critical that the Chachamim went as far as instituting that a couple not live together without a Ketubah, to guarantee the security of the wife.³³ Therefore, one should ensure that his Ketubah is valid by drafting a trained rabbi to write it. Because the pressure at a wedding can be palpable and there's much room for error, it's best to fill out the Ketubah prior to the wedding.³⁴

The Mesader Kiddushin should also explain to the Chattan what he's committing himself to in a language he understands.³⁵

Ashkenazim approach the obligation to write a Ketubah as a Torah requirement, or, at least, one which requires payment of a sum measured in the Torah's currency, while Sepharadim take the approach that it is an institution of the Chachamim based on a preexisting common custom. As such, Ashkenazim write the words “**דחזו ליכי מדאורייתא**” (Aramaic for “that is entitled to you from the Torah”) in their Ketubot, though it is simply not true for

³³ Shulchan Aruch (Even HaEzer 66:1)

³⁴ But leave the date out until the Chuppah. Shalmei Simcha page 174

³⁵ Yalkut Yosef (Sova Semachot 9:17)

Sepharadim. As such, a Sepharadi Ketubah that contains those words is null and void, and an experienced rabbi should be contacted immediately to rectify the matter.³⁶

In the spirit of creating a meaningful pause between Erusin and Nissuin, the Minhag developed to read the Ketubah out loud at this stage of the Chuppah ceremony.³⁷

For the Chosson to lawfully commit himself to all that it says in the Ketubah, he must make a “Kinyan” (acquisition)³⁸ in front of two halachically acceptable witnesses, who then sign the Ketubah. Some have the practice of signing the Ketubah before the Chuppah, at the Chosson’s tish; however, since the couple is not even married yet, it would seem like a farce to sign such a document before the Chuppah takes place. Therefore, many have the custom to do the Kinyan upon reading the

³⁶ Shulchan Aruch (Even HaEzer 66:6), Yabia Omer vol. 3 Even HaEzer 12. Yalkut Yosef (Sova Semachot 5:11) says that if there no other Ketubah at the wedding, they should just erase the word “**מדאורייתא**” and continue.

Most strikingly, many Ketubot from 19th-20th century Iran contain problematic text. After uncovering this find in not only my great grandfather and name sake, Mordechai Djavaheri’s Ketubah from exactly a century ago in Esfahan, as well as my mother’s maternal grandmother, Malek Yousefzadeh’s Ketubah from Kashan, but also a series of them on display from a variety of cities in central-northern Iran, such as Esfahan, its suburb, Golpayegan, Mashad, and Yazd, in the Yeshiva University Museum in April of 2014, I called HaRav Eliyahu Ben Chaim, and he claimed that they had been copying their Ketubot out of a common edition of the Rambam that had printing mistake in his Ketubah boilerplate (Hilchot Yibum veChalitza 4:33, see Frankel edition, **שינויי נוסחאות**).

³⁷ Tosafot, Pesachim 102b s.v. “**שאינן**”, Belkvei HaTzon page 268

³⁸ by lifting a handkerchief, pen, etc. belonging to the bride, Mesader Kiddushin, or witnesses.

word “veKanina” in the Ketubah under the Chuppah, and then signing it upon completion.³⁹

After the witnesses and the Chattan sign, the Chattan gives it to the Kallah or someone else to hold it on her behalf.⁴⁰

Shevua Chamurah (Serious Oath)

The Sepharadic custom is for the Chattan to take an oath, written in the Ketubah, to fulfill its obligations. After this part of the Ketubah is read, the Chattan shakes the hand of the Mesader Kiddushin to oblige himself.⁴¹

Nissuin (Completing the Marriage)

Definition of Chuppah

Conceptually, Kiddushin makes a woman married and only lacking entrance into the husband’s domain, and Nissuin finishes the process by bringing her in. Though the methods of Kiddushin are clearly defined in the Mishnah and Gemara, the exact definition of “Chuppah,” the mechanism of accomplishing Nissuin, is not. As such, there are four fundamental opinions to fulfill:

³⁹ Yalkut Yosef (Sova Semachot 5:12, 9:11, 21), Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach adds that the entire purpose of reading the Ketubah out loud is so that the Edim know what they’re signing on and the husband knows what he’s agreeing to, so it makes sense to only sign it after reading it aloud. (Shalmei Simcha page 289-290)

⁴⁰ Yalkut Yosef (Sova Semachot 9:25), Shalmei Simcha page 291 agrees and adds that some wait until after Sheva Berachot to hand it over.

⁴¹ Yalkut Yosef (Sova Semachot 9:11, 24)

1. **Rambam:** Yichud (Seclusion) of the couple.
2. **Ran:** Bringing the bride into the groom's domain.
3. **Mordechai:** Covering her with the veil during the Badeken
4. **Many Others:** Standing under the canopy/Spreading out a Tallit over their heads

Later Rabbanim determined that the essential Halacha is that Chuppah is accomplished by the couple eating together privately after saying Sheva Berachot under the Chuppah.⁴²

Yichud Room

In effort to perform Chuppah as close to Sheva Berachot as possible, Ashkenazim rush the couple from the canopy to a private room, called a Yichud Room, where they are secluded and eat together. Sepharadim do not generally perform a Yichud room but rather wait until they go home after the wedding to be secluded. The reason being that Sheva Berachot are not “Birkot HaMitzvah,” the type of Berachot one makes prior to performing a Mitzvah action, but rather “Birkot HaShevach,” praises to Hashem-type Berachot, which do not have to be performed immediately before an action.⁴³

⁴² Hilchot Ishut 10:I. Shulchan Aruch (Even HaEzer 55:I) and commentaries, Yabia Omer vol. 5 Even HaEzer 9, Yalkut Yosef (Sova Semachot 6:7). See also Yabia Omer ibid 6:4.

⁴³ Shulchan Aruch (Even HaEzer 55:I-3, 57:I, 64:5) and commentaries, MiPninei HaRav page 276, Yabia Omer vol. 5 Even HaEzer 8, Yalkut Yosef (Sova Semachot 12:I). See also Yechaveh Daat 5:62 where Rav

Tallit

As a mode of accomplishing Nissuin, Sepharadim have the custom for the Chattan to put on a new Tallit with a Beracha (if it's still day) and Shehechyanu (if it's new) and then draping it over both himself and his bride.

Ovadia argues that performing Yichud at the wedding would require the bride to cover her hair from then on.

Rav Moshe Feinstein is said to have inferred from the Gemara that as long as the bride is wearing her gown, she has a "Shem Betulah," and does not have to cover her hair. Printed in a prepublication copy of Iggerot Moshe vol. 9 in honor of the wedding of a granddaughter of Rav Moshe Tendler; I also heard from HaRav Binyomin Schubert, former Menahel of HANC and Talmid of Rav Moshe Feinstein, that at his wedding, Rav Moshe told him to do as such, after first making sure that his wife's family didn't have a specific custom regarding the matter.

However, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach opposes Rav Moshe's position and requires her to cover her hair from after the Chuppah and on, but he also says it's not worth quarreling about. (Shalmei Simcha page 343)

In favor of the more stringent opinion, Rav Mordechai Eliyahu held that a woman must cover her hair from Kiddushin and on. (Hilchot Shidduchim and Chatunah, by R' Shmuel Eliyahu)

Not convinced by Rav Ovadia, HaRav Hershel Schachter (Belkvei HaTzon page 268) believes that it would be too long of a Hefsek to make Sheva Berachot under the Chuppah and only perform Yichud hours later. Therefore, when attending the weddings of his Sephardic students, he only agrees to recite Birkat Erusin but not Sheva Berachot. Despite his stringent opinion, on one such occasion, at Birkat HaMazon of Rav Ike Sultan's wedding, HaRav Schachter was passed the microphone by a microphone to say one of the Sheva Berachot, and he did! Immediately afterwards, we asked him why he said the Beracha, and he said he was relying on Chacham Ovadia. As it seems, he was willing to let go of his stringent opinion in order not to embarrass anyone.

Regarding a "Fake Yichud Room," see Ein Yitzchak vol. 3 page 347, where Rav Yitzhak Yosef argues against it.

While saying Shehechyanu, the Chattan should also have in mind the momentous occasion of the wedding.⁴⁴

The widespread custom of all Jewish communities up until a few centuries ago was for the Chattan to wear a Tallit under the Chuppah. The Ashkenazim did it for the entire ceremony, while the Sepharadim commonly did it only for Nissuin/Sheva Berachot, before reading the Ketubah. Many Ashkenazim have relinquished the Minhag, and, today, only those of German descent have retained it.⁴⁵

Minyan for Nissuin & Sheva Berachot

Most importantly, the Chachamim prohibited one from engaging in physical intimacy with his wife before saying Sheva Berachot, which we do at the Chuppah, and requires a Minyan. In uniquely extreme circumstances, Ashkenazim permit performing a Chuppah without a Minyan, while Sepharadim prohibit it.⁴⁶

Only the details of Sheva Berachot unique to the Chuppah ceremony are covered here. See page 45 for the bulk of the Halachot.

⁴⁴ As well as his new wife, suit, apartment, and wedding gifts. Yalkut Yosef (Sova Semachot 8:1-2)

⁴⁵ See "Chuppat Tallit" by Rav Binyamin Shlomo Hamburger (Kovetz *Ohr Yisroel* vol. 14 page 199) for an extensive treatment of this topic. Thanks to Rav David Roth for the source. See also Ben Ish Chai (Shanah Rishonah, Shoftim 12)

⁴⁶ Shulchan Aruch (Even HaEzer 62:4) and commentaries there, Yabia Omer vol. 2 Even HaEzer 6

Honoring Attendees with Berachot

Usually, the Mesader Kiddushin says Birkat Erusin, and various individuals are honored with acting as witnesses to the various components of creating the marriage. Though there is substantial reason to honor one person with the saying of all of the Sheva Berachot, or, at least, the first six⁴⁷, the custom is to honor numerous distinguished scholars of Torah and other individuals of stature who are in attendance each with the opportunity to bless the new couple with one of the Sheva Berachot.⁴⁸

Since the very nature of the Berachot is to bless the couple, it would be inappropriate for the Chatten to make them himself. In fact, the Rambam was enraged when he witnessed a Chatten do so.⁴⁹

Each of the honorees should position himself close to the Chuppah, to minimize downtime after being called up.⁵⁰ He should also have in mind to say the Berachot on behalf

⁴⁷ Usually, one must begin a Beracha with the words “Baruch Atah Hashem,” but, in a series of Berachot (*Beracha HaSemuchah LeChavertah*), only the first of the series needs to open with those words. Logically, therefore, if one says a Beracha from the middle of the series without saying the ones that preceded it, he would be in violation of the Halacha to start with “Baruch Atah Hashem.”

⁴⁸ Yabia Omer vol. 4 Even HaEzer 7, vol. 5 Even HaEzer 12. Yalkut Yosef (Sova Semachot 6:8) adds that the Mesader Kiddushin should ask all honorees to position themselves as close as they can to the Chuppah, so wasted time interruptions are minimized when they are called up. Rav Mordechai Eliyahu was stringent, however, to not distribute them unless necessary. (“Hilchot Shidduchim and Chatunah” by R’ Shmuel Eliyahu)

⁴⁹ Yabia Omer (ibid), Yalkut Yosef (Sova Semachot 10:6)

⁵⁰ Yalkut Yosef (Sova Semachot 10:7)

of the Chattan and Kallah, who should themselves listen intently and speak only to answer Amen.⁵¹

Honoring Non-Jews

If necessary, one could honor a non-Jewish government official or employer present at the Chuppah, by appointing him to sign the marriage license, as long as he is an American citizen, regardless of gender. Alternatively, the honorable individual could “hold the Ketubah” during the Chuppah, a Halachically meaningless act in and of itself, but, when told that “the couple can’t go home tonight without this,” he will surely understand the gravity of the responsibility.⁵²

Wine

Unlike by Birkat Erusin, a cup of wine is necessary to say Sheva Berachot over.⁵³ Ideally, for Sepharadim, whoever said each of the Birkat HaGefens should also take a sip of the wine before handing it to the Chattan and Kallah, but, if it will make people uncomfortable, he may refrain.⁵⁴

⁵¹ See page 21

⁵² HaRav Hershel Schachter and HaRav Aryeh Lebowitz

⁵³ If wine is not available, a different alcoholic beverage may be used, but one cannot say the Berachot with other beverages. Shulchan Aruch (Even HaEzer 62:1), Yabia Omer vol. 5 Even HaEzer 10:6

⁵⁴ Yabia Omer vol. 5 Even HaEzer 10:7, Yalkut Yosef (Sova Semachot 10:12). See Nefesh HaRav page 260

The Text of Sheva Berachot

1. *Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech HaOlam,
Bore Peri HaGefen*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְרֵי הַגֶּפֶן:

2. *Baruch Atah... SheHaKol Bara Lichvodo*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהִכֵּל בְּרָא לְכַבּוּדּוֹ:

Everything was created for Hashem's honor, even the animals and the birds. We highlight this as everyone gathers to celebrate and aid in joining the Chattan and Kallah, like Hashem did for Adam and Chavah.

3. *Baruch Atah... Yotzer HaAdam*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, יוֹצֵר הָאָדָם

Man is the elite and choice product of creation, created by Hashem.

4. *Baruch Atah... Asher Yatzar Et HaAdam BeTzalmo,
BeTzelem Demut Tavnito, VeHitkin MImmenu
Binyan Adei Ad, Baruch Atah Adonai, Yotzer
HaAdam*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר יָצַר אֶת־הָאָדָם
בְּצַלְמוֹ, בְּצֶלֶם דְּמוּת תַּבְּנִיתוֹ, וְהִתְקִין לוֹ מִמֶּנּוּ בְּנֵן עֲדִיעֵד.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, יוֹצֵר הָאָדָם:

Man is created in the likeness of Hashem ("BeTzelem Elokim") and has the power to give birth to offspring through the partner granted to him by Hashem.

5. *Sos Tasis veTagel Akarah beKibutz Baneha
LeTochah BeSimcha, Baruch Atah Adonai,
Mesameach Tzion beVaneha*

שׁוֹשׁ תְּשִׁישׁ וְתַגֵּל עֲקָרָה בְּקִבּוּץ בְּנֵיהַ לְתוֹכָהּ בְּמַהֲרָה בְּשִׂמְחָה.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, מְשַׂמַּח צִיּוֹן בְּבְנֵיהָ:

Before engaging in our own celebrations, we must always have Yerushalayim and its future restoration in mind.

6. *Sameach Tesamach Re'im Ahuvim, KeSimchacha
Yetzircha BeGan Eden Mikedem*

שִׂמַּח תְּשַׂמַּח רְעִים אֲהוּבִים כְּשִׂמְחֶךָ יְצִירְךָ בְּגַן עֵדֶן מִקְדָּם.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, מְשַׂמַּח חֲתָן וְכֻלָּה:

The couple should be successful with happiness and a good heart, like Adam and Chavah pre-sin.

7. *Baruch Atah... Asher Bara Sasson veSimcha Chattan
veKallah, Gilah, Rinah, Ditzah, veChedvah, Ahavah,
Achvah, Shalom, veReiut, Meherah Adonai Eloheinu
Yishama beArei Yehudah u'veChutzot Yerushalayim
Kol Chattan veKol Kallah, Kol Mitzhalot Chattanim
meChupatam u'Ne'arim MiMishteh Neginatam,
Baruch Atah Adonai, Mesameach Chattan im
HaKallah*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִלְּךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר בָּרָא שְׁשׁוֹן
וְשִׂמְחָה, חֲתָן וְכֻלָּה, גִּילָה רְנָה דִּיצָה וְחֻדוּהָ, אֲהַבָּה וְאַחֻוּהָ,
שְׁלוֹם וְרַעוּת, מְהֵרָה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יִשְׁמַע בְּעָרֵי יְהוּדָה
וּבְחֻצוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַיִם, קוֹל שְׁשׁוֹן וְקוֹל שִׂמְחָה, קוֹל חֲתָן וְקוֹל
כֻּלָּה, קוֹל מִצְחָלוֹת חֲתָנִים מְחַפְּתִים, וְנִעְרִים מְמַשְׁתָּה נְגִינָתָם,
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, מְשַׂמַּח הַחֲתָן עִם הַכֻּלָּה:

Besamim

The Rambam records the Minhag to say the Beracha on Besamim between HaGefen and Shehakol Bara Lichvodo. Some Sepharadim maintain the custom, but Syrians do it between HaGefen and Birkat Erusin.⁵⁵

Finishing Touches to the Chuppah

Birkat Kohanim

The Sepharadic custom is to call up Kohanim under the Chuppah to bless the Chattan and Kallah with Birkat Kohanim.⁵⁶

Breaking the Glass

Just as the devastating distress of a family that celebrates a wedding after loss of a close loved one is not forgotten, for us, a people forever coupled with our Creator, our love for Hashem would be questionable if we made a wedding and didn't note that Hashem's home on Earth, the Beit HaMikdash, lies in ruins and constant defilement. To temper the Simcha, the custom developed to break a glass under the Chuppah, to catch our breath and remember

⁵⁵ Rambam Hilchot Ishut 10:4. Perhaps the Syrian Minhag has roots in the Siddur Rav Saadia Gaon (cited in the Frankel shoulder notes *ibid*) that says to do it both at Erusin and Nissuin.

⁵⁶ Yalkut Yosef (Sova Semachot 8:5), Nissuin Kehilchetam 12:67

that, as exhilarating as the moment may be, the Simcha is still incomplete.⁵⁷

Though the custom began with the sudden shattering of an expensive and rare glass, our custom is to break something of negligible value instead, since we wrap it up for safety anyway. Shattering an expensive glass does less to calm people down if it's wrapped up and they can't tell what it is, in any case.

Different customs existed over the generations regarding at which point in the ceremony to break the glass, but the common contemporary custom is to do it at the very end of the Chuppah. With the impetus of the development of the custom in mind – to mourn our incomplete joy and to keep our emotions in check – the fact that it's inappropriate to shout “Mazal Tov!” or for the Chattan to flex his muscles and make a spectacle of it is obvious. Therefore, it's best that the Mesader Kiddushin have the Chattan break the glass while he is saying the words of the

⁵⁷ See Berachot 30b and Tosafot *ibid.* 31a s.v. “אִיִּיתִי” and commentaries. Others explain that it's simply a means to make sure things don't get out of hand. Regardless, the choice of glass over pottery bears significant symbolism: While if pottery breaks, it cannot be repaired, glass can always be reconstituted and reborn after being melted down. Glass, which is formed by the blowing of man into it, can always be reconstructed no matter how many or how miniscule the shards when shattered, even more so man, who carries a Neshama blown into him by HaKadosh Baruch Hu, can achieve a complete Teshuvah, no matter how many or how severe the sin. Additional parallels can be found between the contrast between glass and pottery and between Am Yisrael and the other nations of the world.

Pasuk “אם אשכחך” (Tehillim 137:5-6) or the band is playing the song slowly.⁵⁸

Ashes

In the same spirit of mourning over the Beit HaMikdash, the Ashkenazim maintain an age-old custom to place ashes prior to or following the Chuppah ceremony on the head of the Chattan in the place where he normally puts his Tefillin. The Sepharadim no longer observe it, though, and suffice with breaking the glass alone.⁵⁹

The Wedding Feast

Following the Chuppah are dancing and celebrations with food and drink. After the meal, Birkat HaMazon and Sheva Berachot are recited. The Chattan and Kallah should ensure to eat a kazayit of bread, according to Rav

⁵⁸ Shulchan Aruch (Orach Cham 560:2 and Even HaEzer 65:3) and commentaries; Ben Ish Chai (Shanah Rishonah, Shoftim II), Yabia Omer vol. 4 Even HaEzer 9. Perhaps it would be appropriate to make a brief announcement to the audience explaining the significance of this age-old custom beforehand, as well. Others suggest that the custom developed from an interest in ending the Chuppah ceremony on a positive note, while Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, who was not pleased with the custom, proposed that, since we break the glass to fulfill the obligation of remembering Yerushalayim in a moment of agony, once we do it, we can return to the regular programming: a festive and joyous wedding! Mazal Tov! (Shalmei Simcha page 212)

⁵⁹ Shulchan Aruch *ibid*, Yalkut Yosef (Sova Semachot 6:6), Nefesh HaRav page 256, MiPninei HaRav page 276. The Gemara elsewhere tells how they decreed not to adorn the Chattan and Kallah with a crown (Atarot Chattanim), and the Minhag in Europe, as told by Rav Soloveitchik was not wear any fancy jewelry, as the exact definition of Atarot is unclear. (Nefesh HaRav *ibid*)

Ovadia, in order for Sheva Berachot to be recitable, but Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach disagrees.⁶⁰

Simchat Chattan veKallah

Even the most pious of Chachamim, who were, of course, diligent in their study of Torah and scrupulous in their time management, would dance and do tricks to gladden, delight, and cheer the new couple.⁶¹ As such, all who encounter the wedding procession are obligated to pause their learning to participate in the Simcha, and then return to their learning. To demonstrate the unbelievable magnitude of this Mitzvah, the Midrash tells of Izevel the Wicked Queen, who, though her flesh was eaten up and blood licked up by dogs, her hands and feet remained unmutilated, because, whenever she encountered a wedding procession while riding in her royal chariot, she would disembark to dance and sing for the new couple and fulfill this Mitzvah.⁶²

Seven Days of Simcha

Sheva Brachos is like jet lag without flying, and, if you're marrying a girl from Los Angeles, it's jet lag

⁶⁰ As the entire Seudah is being made in their honor. See Yalkut Yosef (Sova Semachot I6). Shalmei Simcha page 323

⁶¹ The Gemara (Ketubot 17a) tells of R' Yehuda ben R' Ilay who would dance with a Haddas in front of them. See Shabbat 33b and I50b and Ben Yehoyada ibid. for a better picture of just how holy of a Neshama he possessed.

⁶² Tur, Shulchan Aruch, and commentaries Even HaEzer 65:1.

Sheva Berachot Meals

For the week following the wedding, the couple feasts and rejoices with their friends and family, all the while entertaining the opportunity to relive the Chuppah experience by adding a special opening to the Zimmun and reciting Sheva Berachot at the end of Birkat HaMazon. To do so, the following four components are critical and each will be elaborated on below: *Panim Chadashot* (new faces), a *Minyan* of ten men, a *Seudah* (meal), and *Beit Chattanim* (the house of the couple).

Obligation or Option

These meals are not obligatory, but it is a once in a lifetime opportunity to pray for the new couple and praise Hashem in the context of their wedding. If it's too expensive or too much of a hassle, they are not obligated to celebrate with others every night.⁶³

Shehasimcha Bimono

Whenever His children celebrate a wedding, Hashem also celebrates in heaven, specifically the fifth of seven, known as *Maon*. Therefore, whenever there's a Zimmun of three at a Sheva Berachot meal, the special, modified opening for the Zimmun is used, with the added phrase "*SheHaSimcha Bimono*."⁶⁴ See pages 56 and 59 for the

⁶³ Rav Pealim vol. 4 Even HaEzer 6, quoted in Yalkut Yosef (Sova Semachot 17:fn.1) and Shalmei Simcha page 345

⁶⁴ Shulchan Aruch (Even HaEzer 62:13), Shalmei Simcha page 349, Yalkut Yosef (Sova Semachot 17:11)

appropriate texts for Ashkenazim and Sepharadim, respectively.

Beit Chattanim (The Chattan's House)

After the Chuppah ceremony, the custom was to take the couple from the synagogue courtyard/hall to their new home and eat, drink, sing, and rejoice with them there for the seven days. This was the standard practice in even mid-twentieth century Shiraz.⁶⁵ With this fundamental parameter in place, the Chachamim instituted that Sheva Berachot should be said in the couple's new home, or, at least, wherever they primarily reside.

In a generation of large restaurants and catering halls and small young couples' apartments in Washington Heights, hosting the many dozens of guests at a Sheva Berachot meal every night for six nights is often unrealistic. Instead, the celebration "overflows" into a restaurant or gracious family member or friend's home.

For Ashkenazim, it's simple: if there's a Seudah with Panim Chadashot and a noticeable quantity of food, drink, and joy in honor of the new couple, regardless of location, Sheva Berachot are recited, as the venue becomes an extension of their home.⁶⁶

These Halachot for Sepharadim are a little more complicated and complex. As a rule, they follow the

⁶⁵ *Outcaste, Jewish Life in Southern Iran*, by Laurence Loeb, page 204

⁶⁶ Shalmei Simcha page 347. HaRav Eliyahu Ben Chaim also takes this position.

Shulchan Aruch to require Beit Chattanim in a more literal sense, but with varying degrees of definition.

HaRav Mordechai Eliyahu defines Beit Chattanim as the primary location of Simcha in which the Chattan is at least sleeping or in his parents' house, but nowhere else.⁶⁷

For Rav Ovadia, Beit Chattanim literally means the Chattan and Kallah's new home and nothing else, even to the exclusion of their parents' homes. However, he allows one to at least make HaGefen and Asher Bara when not feasting in Beit Chattanim. If there are Ashkenazim present at Sepharadi Chattan's Sheva Berachot, they should preferably refrain from reciting all Sheva Berachot, unless they are individuals of note, such as the Chattan's rabbi from yeshiva. However, if they do recite the Berachot, there is no reason to stop them and one should answer Amen.⁶⁸

Minyan

In order to make all seven Sheva Berachot at the conclusion of a meal, one requires a Minyan, including the

⁶⁷ Kitzur Shulchan Aruch with addenda of HaRav Mordechai Eliyahu I49:fn. 8. If, on the last day, the entire entourage is invited somewhere, he does allow them to make Sheva Berachot, though. ("Hilchot Shidduchim and Chatunah" by R' Shmuel Eliyahu)

⁶⁸ Yalkut Yosef (Sova Semachot I7:6, 22-23). HaRav Avraham Yosef, chief rabbi of Cholon, clarified for me that, within his father's position, if the couple does not yet have an apartment and is living in one of their parents' homes, the home would have a status of Beit Chattanim and be license to recite Sheva Berachot, as long as they have a private living space. (Moreshet.co.il)

For additional approaches, see Shemesh uMagen vol. 3 Even HaEzer 24-26 and Aseh Lecha Rav vol. 5 Siman 38-39

Chattan and Panim Chadashot.⁶⁹ Even though with respect to Zimmun, Sepharadim can count one child towards three or ten, as long as he knows we're praying to Hashem, for the purposes of Sheva Berachot, the Minyan must be made of ten adult Jewish males.⁷⁰

Additionally, even if there is a proper Minyan of adult men present, women and children may not recite any of the Sheva Berachot.⁷¹

Panim Chadashot

One of the requirements to say all of the Sheva Berachot is Panim Chadashot, new faces, at the meal. There are at least two fundamental approaches in defining Panim Chadashot, depending on whether the focus is on the Chattan and Kallah or on the guests.

Makeup Opportunity

The experience of a wedding, symbolic of receiving the Torah on Har Sinai, precipitates the saying of Sheva Berachot at the Chuppah. For those who missed the Chuppah, partaking in a festive post Chuppah celebration offers them the opportunity to reenact the wedding ceremony and, thereby, make Sheva Berachot. Thus, the opinion of the Rambam is that anyone who didn't hear Sheva Berachot at the Chuppah counts as Panim Chadashot, as the focus is on the guests' experience of the ceremony. Along the same lines of guest focus, the Rosh argues that Panim Chadashot are defined as those who

⁶⁹ Shulchan Aruch (Even HaEzer 62:4)

⁷⁰ Kaf HaChaim (Orach Chaim 199:31), Yabia Omer vol. 3 Even HaEzer II:6

⁷¹ Yabia Omer vol. 3 Even HaEzer II:10

have not yet taken part in the wedding meal, seemingly also because the guests' participation in the celebration is still untapped. Once they eat at a subsequent Sheva Berachot meal, they can append Sheva Berachot to Birkat HaMazon.

The two opinions within this approach differ in that, according to the Rambam, one who chats during the entire Chuppah ceremony or only arrives after the Chuppah and leaves before Sheva Berachot at the end of the meal, still counts towards Sheva Berachot the next day, as he hasn't joined in on the Chuppah yet, while according to the Rosh, once he eats at the meal that follows, he'll lose his status. On the other hand, the Rosh would still count someone who leaves right after the Chuppah as Panim Chadashot on a later night, while the Rambam would not.

[Making the Chattan and Kallah Happy](#)

Tosafot takes an alternative approach: instead of the focus being on the experience of the guests, it's on the Chattan and Kallah. Panim Chadashot are defined as people for whom the family puts out more food. If the guests aren't going to engender feelings of joy and happiness, measurable in how they're received by the host in terms of additional quantities of food, then they don't count as Panim Chadashot. Some variant opinions in Tosafot don't actually hold by this measuring stick, but rather consider anyone for whom the hosts would *potentially* serve more food, but not that they have to.

Practically, this position would not allow one to include a waiter or random passerby as Panim Chadashot, which is relevant for Ashkenazim, not Sephardim.⁷²

Lifespan

Another manifestation of their debate can be found in the lifespan of the Panim Chadashot status: according to the Rambam and Rosh that it's all about experiencing the Chuppah and making up the missed opportunity, it only takes one meal to make it up. After one Sheva Berachot meal, they are no longer Panim Chadashot. On the other hand, for Tosafot, the focus is on engendering feelings of joy in the couple by the guests' presence, so the status lasts an entire day.

Shabbat, Yom Tov, Chol HaMoed, and Rosh Chodesh

Based on a Midrash, the Rishonim develop the idea of Shabbat counting as Panim Chadashot. For the approach that increasing the joy of the new couple propagates an opportunity to recite Sheva Berachot, especially if one puts out more food in their honor, then Shabbat, a day on which we enjoy even more food than usual, also serves as an opportunity to make Sheva Berachot as a substitute for the Panim Chadashot component.

By this very logic, Seudah Shelishit, which in our society often consists of just bread with dips, salads, and/or desserts, would not warrant saying Sheva Berachot; as such, Sephardim cannot make Sheva Berachot at Seudah Shelishit without Panim Chadashot. However, the Rama tells us that the custom in Europe was for the Chatten to

⁷² Shalmei Simcha page 353, Yalkut Yosef (Sova Semachot 17:24)

share words of Torah at Seudah Shelishit, an event which itself made up for the lack of Simcha inducing impetus such as food. Therefore, Ashkenazim can make Sheva Berachot at Seudah Shelishit even without actual Panim Chadashot, if the Chattan shares words of Torah.⁷³

Alternatively, the Ramban writes that Shabbat is Panim Chadashot in as much as the probability of there being *actual* Panim Chadashot in attendance (presumably, because everyone is available) is high enough on Shabbat for it to be fair to generalize that Shabbat is Panim Chadashot. Perhaps this is reason to believe that the Chattan's Derasha at Seudah Shelishit suffices to supplement Panim Chadashot. More people will attend to hear it, and, without it, Seudah Shelishit would not be a well populated event.

Halacha

Shulchan Aruch sides with the Rosh that it all depends on partaking in the meal, but some Acharonim are stringent for the Rambam, as well as Tosafot.⁷⁴

⁷³ Shulchan Aruch (Even HaEzer 62:8), Yalkut Yosef (Sova Semachot 17:28). Remarkably, HaRav Mordechai Eliyahu (Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 149:fn.10) derives from the Ben Ish Chai's language (Shanah Rishonah, Shoftim 15) that Seudah Shelishit does indeed count as Panim Chadashot, but Rav Ovadia argues back Safek Berachot LeHaKel. (Halichot Olam)

⁷⁴ Shulchan Aruch (Even HaEzer 62:7-8), Shalmei Simcha page 354. Rav Yitzchak Yosef offers an alternative approach to defining Panim Chadashot, with either the focus on gladdening the Chattan and Kallah enough to pass the threshold of reliving the wedding or on the Panim Chadashot themselves being happy and making up the missed opportunity. The former fits with the Rosh and the latter with the Rambam. Essentially, it's the same as the above, by moving the Rosh into Tosafot's camp. Yalkut Yosef (Sova Semachot 17:fn. 25).

How Many

For Ashkenazim, one new face is sufficient to make Sheva Berachot, while Sepharadim need two.⁷⁵ They themselves should be adult males, not women or children.⁷⁶

Seudah (Meal)

The custom of the Geonim in Bavel and even a few Sepharadic communities spanning the past millennium was to make Sheva Berachot with just a cup of wine but no Seudah, morning and night, *before* the meal, as it was the accustomed time to visit and entertain the new couple. Later Chachamim argue against it based on the Gemara and established that Sheva Berachot should not be made outside the context of a meal with bread.⁷⁷

How Many People Need to Eat Bread

Different opinions exist with respect to how many of the ten men have to eat bread or anything at all. For Sepharadim, at least seven men must eat bread, and the remaining three should preferably eat an ounce of

He also offers a Safek Sefekah to allow one who ate at the wedding feast but missed the Chuppah to still count as Panim Chadashot, like the Rambam. (ibid 17:26)

⁷⁵ Yabia Omer vol. 3 Even HaEzer II:I-5, Rav Hershel Schachter

⁷⁶ Yalkut Yosef (Sova Semachot 17:25)

⁷⁷ Ramban, Ketubot 7b s.v. “ופלי פנים חדשות”. Remarkably, this custom lasted until the latter half of the twentieth century in Iran, as HaRav Eliyahu Ben Chaim, Rosh Yeshiva in YU and Chief Rabbi of the Mashadi community related to me that they used to make Sheva Berachot in shul on Shabbat, but he was strongly opposed. HaRav Shlomo Shoub, Rav of Shaare Torah in Great Neck, shared with me that when the Persians first came from Iran to America, on the first Shabbat Sheva Berachot in his shul, they told him after Mussaf to make Sheva Berachot. In a cunning and non-confrontational way, he abolished the Minhag by telling them to wait until Kiddush so they would forget about it and then by not reminding them.

something, even a salad or dessert. Some Ashkenazim are more lenient and can make Sheva Berachot if even only three people eat bread.

The Panim Chadashot themselves don't necessarily have to eat at all for Sheva Berachot to be recited, but those Sepharadi attendees who recite the Sheva Berachot must be one of those who ate bread. Ashkenazim allow one to recite Sheva Berachot even without eating.⁷⁸

Presence of Chattan and Kallah

Before Birkat HaMazon, the custom is to seat the Chattan and Kallah together, though it's not necessary to do so. If the Chattan and Kallah were both present and ate bread at the beginning of the meal, the guests may make Sheva Berachot, even if one or the other left in the middle. If, however, one of them was not present at the beginning or didn't eat, Sheva Berachot may not be recited. Ashkenazim do not require them to eat bread, though.⁷⁹

Musical Chalices

In order not to cram many Mitzvot into one medium (*Ein Osin Mitzvot Chavilot Chavilot*), we use two cups of wine when making Sheva Berachot after Birkat HaMazon, as Birkat HaMazon and Sheva Berachot are two separate

⁷⁸ Yabia Omer vol. 3 Even HaEzer 11:6-9, Rav Mordechai Eliyahu ("Hilchot Shidduchim and Chatunah" by R' Shmuel Eliyahu). Rav Soloveitchik himself once said all the Sheva Berachot even without eating, potentially because he was Panim Chadashot. (Nefesh HaRav page 278). Shalmei Simcha page 355-356.

⁷⁹ Yabia Omer vol. 6 Even HaEzer 9, Rav Mordechai Eliyahu *ibid*. Shalmei Simcha page 323, 355. Though Rav Ovadia is in favor of seating them together, as a Minhag with lofty foundations, Rav Yitzchak Yosef prefers the Kallah be in earshot of those making the Berachot so she can answer Amen. (Yalkut Yosef (Sova Semachot 17:32))

Mitzvot. First, the one making the Zimmun holds his cup through the Birkat HaMazon, then, Sheva Berachot, from Shehakol Bara Lichvodo through Asher Bara, are recited over the second cup. Finally, the one who lead the Zimmun says HaGefen for everybody, he and the one who said Asher Bara take a sip, and then they mix the two cups together before giving to the couple to take a sip. Sepharadim argue that these two Mitzvot are tightly connected: Birkat HaMazon at a Seudah for the Chattan and Kallah precipitates Sheva Berachot. Therefore, there *should* only be one cup, but the tradition for generations has been not so.⁸⁰

When Lacking Components

If three or more adults, including the Chattan, eat together, but are lacking Panim Chadashot or a Minyan, though, they cannot recite all of the Sheva Berachot, they may still begin Birkat HaMazon with Shehasimcha Bimono and conclude with HaGefen first and then Asher Bara with only one cup.⁸¹ Nevertheless, Ashkenazim refrain from doing so if there are no non-relatives/invited guests among the three.⁸² Without a Seudah, they may not make Sheva Berachot, and regarding Beit Chattanim, see page 44.

⁸⁰ Shulchan Aruch (Even HaEzer 62:9), Shu"t Chazon Ovadia vol. 2 Siman 48, Yabia Omer vol. 9 Even HaEzer 22, Yalkut Yosef (Sova Semachot 17:7)

⁸¹ Shu"t Chazon Ovadia vol. 2 Siman 48, Yalkut Yosef (Sova Semachot 17:8)

⁸² Shulchan Aruch (Even HaEzer 62:7), Yabia Omer vol. 2 Even HaEzer 6:6, vol. 3 Even HaEzer 11:9

Work and Other Activities

By function of his temporary status of royalty⁸³ (*Chattan Domeh LeMelech*), and as a means of rejoicing with and solidifying his relationship with his bride, the Chattan is obligated to spend the week of Sheva Berachot at home with his wife. There is certainly Halachic ground to permit the husband to go to work, if not going entails a major financial loss, and the Kallah is willing forgo her rights to his time, as it's ultimately her entitlement.⁸⁴ Another function of being Domeh LeMelech is the Ashkenazi custom for the Chattan not to go anywhere alone during the seven days of Sheva Berachot.

Calculating the Seven Days

The seven days of Sheva Berachot begin with Sheva Berachot under the Chuppah, not the couple's Yichud (seclusion), and end seven Halachic days later at sunset. For example, for a Sunday wedding in the summer, where the Chuppah will take place while the sun is still out, the last day will be Shabbat, while, for a Sunday wedding in the winter, where the Chuppah will take place after sunset, the last day will be Sunday. At the same time, with respect to omitting Tachanun and not going to work, one should

⁸³ Just as king does not go to work or travel alone, so, too, a Chattan may not do either.

⁸⁴ The prohibition on doing work is no worse than on Chol HaMoed (*הויא עליה כרגל*). See Shulchan Aruch (Even HaEzer 64:I) and commentaries. Yabia Omer vol. 4 Even HaEzer 8

do so up until seven days from when the couple was secluded.⁸⁵

A Year of Bliss

Shanah Rishonah

The Rambam counts a unique Mitzvah for the Chattan to spend the first year of his marriage at home spending time and rejoicing with his new wife.⁸⁶

Learning Torah and Setting a Tone

To lay the foundations of a Jewish home, a bastion of Torah and Chesed, the Chattan should set up regular times for studying Torah, whether by attending Shiurim, finding a study partner, or learning independently. It's his wife's responsibility to encourage him and support him in the endeavors that will ultimately shape their home and family.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Shulchan Aruch (Even HaEzer 62:6), Yabia Omer vol. 5 Even HaEzer 8 and Yalkut Yosef (Sova Semachot 3:17, 17:12-17). Rav Ovadia makes heavy use of Safek Berachot LeHakel to avoid making Sheva Berachot beyond the seventh day. As such, if the last day of Sheva Berachot is Shabbat and Seudah Shelishit goes past the end of Shabbat, he argues not to make Sheva Berachot, against the Shevet HaLevi. However, he does permit making them during Bein HaShemashot, and if the meal finished after Bein HaShemashot, to still open with Shehasimcha Bimono. On the other hand, if they davened Arvit before sunset and then performed the Chuppah (Even though they've already accepted the next day, the seven days are counted from the previous day, with respect to Sheva Berachot.) Shalmei Simcha page 374.

⁸⁶ Sefer HaMitzvot (Mitzvat Aseh 214)

⁸⁷ Yalkut Yosef (Sova Semachot 11:9)

Peru uRevu (Having Children)

It goes without saying that one of the critical components of a marriage is transmitting the Torah values on to the next generation. Every Jewish man has the obligation to bring children into this world, and his wife has responsibility of assisting. The couple would be remiss if children weren't on their radar, and they should speak to a competent Halachic authority if they seek to delay it and determine the Halachically permissible way of doing so.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ Shulchan Aruch (Even HaEzer 1)

Birkat HaMazon (Ashkenaz)

שיר המעלות, בשוב יי את שיבת ציון היינו כחלמים: אז מלא שחוק פינו
ולשוננו רנה, אז יאמרו בגוים הגדיל יי לעשות עם אלה: הגדיל יי לעשות
עמנו, היינו שמחים: שובה יי את שביטנו פאפיקים בנגב: הזרעים בדמעה
ברנה יקצרו: הלוף לף ובכה נשא משך הזרע, בא יבא ברנה, נשא אלמתי:

המזמן אומר: רבותי נברך:

המסובים עונים: יהי שם יי מברך מעתה ועד עולם:

המזמן חוזר: יהי שם יי מברך מעתה ועד עולם:

המזמן אומר: דוי הסר וגם חרון. ואז אלם בשיר ירון. נחנו
מעגלי צדק. שעה ברכת בני ישורון, בני אהרן. ברשות מרון
ורבותי נברך (בעשרה: אלהינו) שהשמחה במעונו שאכלנו
משלו:

המסובים עונים: ברוך (בעשרה: אלהינו) שהשמחה במעונו
שאכלנו משלו ובטובו חיינו:

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, הזן את העולם כלו, בטובו
בחן בחסד וברחמים, הוא נותן לחם לכל בשר, כי לעולם
חסדו. ובטובו הגדול תמיד לא חסר לנו ואל יחסר לנו מזון
לעולם ועד, בעבור שמו הגדול, כי הוא אל זן ומפרנס לכל
וימטיב לכל ומכין מזון לכל בריותיו אשר ברא. כאמור, פותח
את ידך ומשביע לכל חי רצון. ברוך אתה יי, הזן את הכל:

נודה לך יי אלהינו, על שהנחלת לאבותינו ארץ חמדה טובה
ורחבה, ועל שהוצאתנו יי אלהינו מארץ מצרים, ופדיתנו
מבית עבדים, ועל בריתך שחתמת בבשרנו, ועל תורתך
שלמדנתנו, ועל חקיקה שהודעתנו, ועל חיים חן וחסד
שחוננתנו, ועל אכילת מזון שאתה זן ומפרנס אותנו תמיד,
בכל יום ובכל עת ובכל שעה:

לחנוכה ולפורים: על הנסים ועל הפרקון ועל הגבורות ועל התשועות ועל
המלחמות שעשית לאבותינו בימים ההם בזמן הזה.

לחנוכה: בימי מתתיהו בן יוחנן כהן גדול חשמונאי ובניו כשעמדה מלכות
יְוֹן הִרְשָׁעָה עַל עַמּוֹךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל לְהַשְׁכִּיחַם מִתּוֹרַתְךָ וּלְהַעֲבִירָם מִחֻקֵּי רְצוֹנְךָ
וְאַתָּה בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ הַרְבִּים עֲמַדְתָּ לָהֶם בְּעַת צָרָתָם רַבְתָּ אֶת רִיבָם דָּנַתְּ אֶת דִּינָם
נִקְמַתְּ אֶת נַקְמָתָם מִסִּרְתָּ גְבוּרִים בְּיַד חֲלָשִׁים וְרַבִּים בְּיַד מַעֲטִים וְטַמְאִים
בְּיַד טְהוּרִים וְרַשָּׁעִים בְּיַד צַדִּיקִים וְזָדִים בְּיַד עוֹסְקֵי תוֹרַתְךָ וְלִךְ עֲשִׂיתָ שָׁם
גְּדוּל וְקְדוּשׁ בְּעוֹלָמְךָ וְלַעֲמֶךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל עֲשִׂיתָ תְּשׁוּעָה גְּדוּלָה וּפְרוֹן כְּהִיּוּם הַזֶּה
וְאַחַר כֵּן בָּאוּ בְּנֵיךָ לְדַבְרֵי בֵיתְךָ וּפְנּוּ אֶת הַיְכָלְךָ וְטָהְרוּ אֶת־מִקְדָּשְׁךָ וְהִדְלִיקוּ
נֵרוֹת בְּחֻצְרוֹת קִדְשֶׁךָ וְקָבְעוּ שְׁמוֹנֵת יָמֵי חֲנֻכָּה אֵלּוֹ הַהוֹדוֹת וְלַהֲלֵל לְשִׁמְךָ
הַגְּדוֹל.

לפורים: בימי מרדכי ואסתר בשושן הבירה כשעמד עליהם המן הרשע בקש
לְהַשְׁמִיד לַהֲרוֹג וּלְאַבֵּד אֶת־כָּל־הַיְהוּדִים מִנְּעַר וְעַד זָקֵן טוֹף וְנָשִׁים בְּיוֹם אֶחָד
בְּשֶׁלֶשֶׁה עָשָׂר לְחֹדֶשׁ שָׁנַיִם עָשָׂר הוּא חֹדֶשׁ אֲדָר וּשְׁלֵלָם לְבוֹז וְאַתָּה בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ
הַרְבִּים הִפְרַתְּ אֶת עֲצָתוֹ וְקַלְקַלְתָּ אֶת מַחֲשַׁבְתּוֹ וְהַשְׁבֹּתָ לּוֹ גְּמוּלוֹ בְּרֵאשׁוֹ
וְתָלוּ אוֹתוֹ וְאֵת בְּנָיו עַל הָעֵץ וְעֲשִׂיתָ עִמָּהֶם נִסִּים וּנְפִלְאוֹת וְנוֹדָה לְשִׁמְךָ
הַגְּדוֹל סֵלָה.

ועל הכל יי אלהינו אנחנו מודים לך ומברכים אותך, ותברך
שְׁמֶךָ בְּפִי כָל חַי תָּמִיד לְעוֹלָם וְעַד, כִּפְתוּב, וְאַכְלֵת וּשְׁבַעְתָּ
וּבְרַכְתָּ אֶת יי אֱלֹהֶיךָ עַל הָאָרֶץ הַטְּבָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָךְ. בְּרוּךְ
אַתָּה יי, עַל הָאָרֶץ וְעַל הַמָּזוּן:

רחם נא יי אלהינו על ישראל עמך, ועל ירושלים עירך, ועל
צִיּוֹן מְשֻׁכָּן כְּבוֹדְךָ, וְעַל מַלְכוּת בֵּית דָּוִד מְשִׁיחֶךָ, וְעַל הַבַּיִת
הַגְּדוֹל וְהַקְּדוֹשׁ שֶׁנִּקְרָא שְׁמֶךָ עָלָיו. אֱלֹהֵינוּ, אָבִינוּ, רַעֲנוּ וּזְנַנּוּ
פְּרָנסֵנוּ וְכַלְכְּלֵנוּ וְהַרְוִיחֵנוּ, וְהַרְוּחַ לָנוּ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִהֵרָה מִכָּל
צָרוֹתֵינוּ. וְנָא אַל תִּצְרִיכֵנוּ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ לֹא לִיָּדֵי מִתְּנַת בְּשׂוֹר וְדָם
וְלֹא לִיָּדֵי הַלְּוָאֲתָם. כִּי אִם לִיָּדֶךָ הַמְּלֵאָה, הַפְּתוּחָה, הַקְּדוּשָׁה
וְהַרְחֵבָה, שְׁלֵא גְבוּשׁ וְלֹא נִכְלָם לְעוֹלָם וְעַד:

בשבת מוסיפים: רצה והחליצנו יי אלהינו במצותיך ובמצות יום השביעי
הַשְּׁבִעִת הַגְּדוֹל וְהַקְּדוֹשׁ הַזֶּה כִּי יוֹם זֶה גְּדוֹל וְקְדוֹשׁ הוּא לְפָנֶיךָ לְשַׁבַּת בּו
וְלַנּוּחַ בּוּ בְּאַהֲבָה כְּמִצְוֹת רְצוֹנְךָ וּבְרִצּוֹנְךָ הַנִּיחַ לָנוּ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׁלֵא תִהְיֶה צָרָה
וְיִגוֹן וְאִנְחָה בְּיוֹם מְנוּחָתֵנוּ וְהָרָאנוּ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּנַחֲמַת צִיּוֹן עִירְךָ וּבְבִנְיָן
יְרוּשָׁלַיִם עִיר קִדְשֶׁךָ כִּי אַתָּה הוּא בַעַל הַיְשׁוּעוֹת וּבַעַל הַנַּחֲמוֹת:

בראש חודש יום טוב וחול המועד: אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו. יעלה ויבוא
וְיַגִּיעַ. וְיִרְאֶה וְיִרְצֶה וְיִשְׁמַע. וְיִפְקֹד וְיִזְכֵּר זְכָרוֹנוֹ וּפְקוּדוֹנוֹ וּזְכָרוֹן אֲבוֹתֵינוּ.
וְזָכְרוֹן מְשִׁיחַ בֶּן דָּוִד עֲבָדְךָ. וְזָכְרוֹן יְרוּשָׁלַיִם עִיר קִדְשֶׁךָ. וְזָכְרוֹן כָּל עַמְּךָ בֵּית
יִשְׂרָאֵל. לְפָנֶיךָ. לְפִלְטִיטָה לְטוֹבָה. לְחַן וּלְחֶסֶד וּלְרַחֲמִים. לְחַיִּים וּלְשְׁלוֹם בְּיוֹם:
בְּרֵאשׁ חֹדֶשׁ - רֵאשׁ הַחֹדֶשׁ: בַּפֶּסַח - חַג הַמִּצּוֹת: בְּסוּכוֹת - חַג הַסֻּכּוֹת: הַזֶּה.
זְכָרְנוּ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ בּוֹ לְטוֹבָה. וּפְקַדְנוּ בּוֹ לְבָרָכָה. וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ בּוֹ לְחַיִּים. וּבְדַבְּרֵי
יְשׁוּעָה וּרְחֻמִּים חוֹס וְחַנּוּן וְרַחֵם עָלֵינוּ וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ. כִּי אֱלֹהֶיךָ עֲיָנֵנוּ. כִּי אַל מִלְךָ
חַנוּן וְרַחוּם אַתָּה:

ובנה ירושלים עיר הקדש במהרה בימינו. ברוך אתה יי, בונה
ברחמיו ירושלים. אמן:

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, האל אבינו, מלכנו,
אדירנו, בוראנו, גואלנו, יוצרנו, קדושנו קדוש יעקב, רוענו
רועה ישראל. המלך הטוב והמטיב לכל, שבכל יום ויום הוא
הטיב הוא מטיב הוא ייטיב לנו. הוא גמלנו הוא גומלנו הוא
יגמלנו לעד לחן ולחסד ולרחמים ולרוח, הצלה והצלחה,
ברכה וישועה, נחמה, פרנסה וכלכלה, ורחמים וחסים ושלוש
וכל טוב, ומפל טוב לעולם אל יחסרנו. אמן:

הרחמן הוא ימלך עלינו לעולם ועד. הרחמן הוא יתברך
בשמים ובארץ. הרחמן הוא ישתבח לדור דורים, ויתפאר בנו
לעד ולנצח נצחים, ויתהדר בנו לעד ולעולמי עולמים.
הרחמן הוא יפרנסנו בכבוד. הרחמן הוא ישבר עלנו מעל
צוארנו והוא יוליכנו קוממיות לארצנו. הרחמן הוא ישלח
לנו ברכה מרבה בבית הזה ועל שלחן זה שאכלנו עליו.
הרחמן הוא ישלח לנו את אליהו הנביא זכור לטוב ויבשר
לנו בשורות טובות ישועות ונחמות. הרחמן הוא יברך את
אבי מורי בעל הבית הזה ואת אמי מורתי בעלת הבית הזה,
אותם ואת ביתם ואת זרעם ואת כל אשר להם, אותנו ואת
כל אשר לנו, כמו שנתברכו אבותינו אברהם יצחק ויעקב,
בפל, מפל, כל, כן יברך אותנו כלנו יחד בברכה שלמה, ונאמר
אמן. במרום ילמדו עליהם ועלינו זכות שתהא למשמרת
שלוש, ונשא ברכה מאת יי, וצדקה מאלהי ישענו, ונמצא חן
ושכל טוב בעיני אלהים ואדם.

בשבת: הרחמן הוא ינחילנו יום שכלו שבת ומנוחה לחיי העולמים.

הרחמן הוא יזכנו לימות המשיח ולחיי העולם הבא. מגדיל
בשבת ובי"ט: מגדול ישועות מלכו ועשה חסד למשיחו
לדוד ולזרעו עד עולם. עשה שלום במרומו הוא יעשה שלום
עלינו ועל כל ישראל ואמרו אמן: יראו את יי קדושו פי אין
מחסור ליראיו: כפירים רשו ורעבו ודורשי יי לא יחסרו כל
טוב: הודו ליי כי טוב פי לעולם חסדו: פותח את ידך
וימשיב על כל חי רצון: ברוך הגבר אשר יבטח ביי והיה יי
מבטחו: נער היתי גם זקנתי ולא ראיתי צדיק נעזב וזרעו
מבקש לחם: יי עז לעמו יתן יי יברך את עמו בשלום.

For the plain text of Sheva Berachot, see page 63, and for the transliterated text, see page 37.

Birkat HaMazon (Edot HaMizrach/Sepharadim)

אֲבָרְכָה אֶת יְהוָה בְּכָל עֵת תְּמִיד תְּהִלְתּוֹ בְּפִי: סוֹף דְּבַר הַכֹּל נִשְׁמַע אֶת
הָאֱלֹהִים יְרָא וְאֵת מִצְוֹתָיו שָׁמַר כִּי זֶה כָּל הָאָדָם: תְּהִלַּת יְהוָה יְדַבֵּר פִּי וַיְבָרֵךְ
כָּל בָּשָׂר שֵׁם קֹדֶשׁוֹ לְעוֹלָם וְעַד: וְאֶנְחִנוּ נְבָרֵךְ יְהִי מַעֲתָה וְעַד עוֹלָם הַלְלוּיָהּ:
וַיְדַבֵּר אֵלַי זֶה הַשְּׁלַחַן אֲשֶׁר לִפְנֵי יְהוָה:

אם המסובים שלושה או יותר חייבים לזמן ככתוב כאן

וַיֹּאמֶר הַמְזַמֵּן בְּרִשְׁוֹתְכֶם וַיֵּשׁ אֹמְרִים: הֵב לָן וְנִבְרֵךְ לְמַלְפָּא עֲלָאָה
קְדִישָׁא:

והמסובים עונים: שמים

וְאֹמֵר הַמְזַמֵּן: בְּרִשְׁוֹת מַלְפָּא עֲלָאָה קְדִישָׁא וּבְרִשְׁוֹתְכֶם נְבָרֵךְ
(בַּעֲשֵׂרָה וַיֹּתֵר: אֱלֹהֵינוּ) שְׁהַשְּׂמִיחָה בַּמַּעֲוֹנוֹ שְׁאַכְלָנוּ מַשְׁלוֹ:

והמסובים עונים: בָּרוּךְ (בַּעֲשֵׂרָה וַיֹּתֵר: אֱלֹהֵינוּ) שְׁהַשְּׂמִיחָה בַּמַּעֲוֹנוֹ
שְׁאַכְלָנוּ מַשְׁלוֹ וּבִטְוִבוֹ חַיֵּינוּ:

והמסובים עונים: בָּרוּךְ (אֱלֹהֵינוּ) שְׁאַכְלָנוּ מַשְׁלוֹ וּבִטְוִבוֹ חַיֵּינוּ:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הָאֵל הַזֶּן אוֹתָנוּ וְאֵת
הָעוֹלָם כָּלוֹ בְּטוֹבוֹ, בָּחַן בְּחֶסֶד בְּרִיּוֹחַ וּבְרַחֲמִים רַבִּים, נָתַן
לָחֶם לְכָל בָּשָׂר. כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד: וּבִטְוִבוֹ הַגָּדוֹל, תְּמִיד לֹא
חָסַר לָנוּ, וְאֵל יַחֲסֵר לָנוּ מִזֶּן תְּמִיד לְעוֹלָם וְעַד. כִּי הוּא אֵל זָן
וּמַפְרִינֵס לְכָל, וְשִׁלְחָנוּ עֲרוּךְ לְכָל, וְהִתְקִין מַחֲיָה וּמִזֶּן לְכָל
בְּרִיּוֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר בָּרָא בְּרַחֲמָיו וּבְרוּב חֶסְדָּיו, כְּאֹמֵר. פּוֹתַח אֵת
יְדָךְ. וּמִשְׁבִּיעַ לְכָל חַי רְצוֹן: בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה הַזֶּן אֵת הַכֹּל:

נוֹדָה לָךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, עַל שֶׁהִנְחַלְתָּ לְאַבּוֹתֵינוּ אֶרֶץ חֲמֵדָה
טוֹבָה וּרְחֵבָה, בְּרִית וְתוֹרָה, חַיִּים וּמִזֶּן. עַל שֶׁהוֹצֵאתָנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ
מִצְרַיִם, וּפְדִיתָנוּ מִבֵּית עַבְדִּים. וְעַל בְּרִיתְךָ שֶׁחַתַּמְתָּ בְּבִשְׂרָנוּ.

ועל תורתך שלמדנתנו. ועל חקי רצונך שהודעתנו. ועל חיים
ומזון שאַתָּה זן ומפְרַנס אותנו:

בחנוכה ופורים אומרים כאן על הניסים:

על הניסים ועל הפרקן ועל הגבורות ועל התשועות ועל הנפלאות ועל
הנחמות שעשית לאבותינו בימים ההם בזמן הזה.

בחנוכה אומרים: בימי מתתיה בן יוחנן כהן גדול חשמונאי ובניו כשעמדה
מלכות יון הרשעה על עמך ישראל לשכחם תורתך ולהעבירם מחקי רצונך
ואתה ברחמיך הרבים עמדת להם בעת צרתם רבת את ריבם דנית את דינם
נקמת את נקמתם מסרת גבורים ביד חלשים ורבים ביד מעטים וטמאים
ביד טהורים ורשעים ביד צדיקים וזדים ביד עוסקי תורתך לך עשית שם
גדול וקדוש בעולמך ולעמך ישראל עשית תשועה גדולה ופרקן כהיום הזה
ואחר כך באו בניך לדביר ביתך ופנו את היכלך וטהרו את מקדשך והדליקו
נרות בחצרות קדשך וקבעו שמונת ימי חנכה אלו בהלל גמור ובהודאה,
ועשית עמהם נסים ונפלאות ונודה לשמך הגדול סלה:

פורים אומרים: בימי מרדכי ואסתר בשושן הבירה כשעמד עליהם המן
הרשע בקש להשמיד להרוג ולאבד את כל היהודים מנער ועד זקן טף ונשים
ביום אחד בשלשה עשר לחדש שנים עשר הוא חדש אדר ושללם לבו
ואתה ברחמיך הרבים הפרת את עצתו וקלקלת את מחשבתו והשבות לו
גמולו בראשו וטלו אותו ואת בניו על העץ ועשית עמהם נסים ונפלאות
ונודה לשמך הגדול סלה:

על הכל יהוה אלהינו אנחנו מודים לך ומברכים את שמך
כאמור ואכלת ושבעת. וברכת את יהוה אלהיך על הארץ
הטובה אשר נתן לך: ברוך אתה יהוה על הארץ ועל המזון:

רחם יהוה אלהינו עלינו ועל ישראל עמך. ועל ירושלים
עירך. ועל הר ציון משכן כבודך ועל היכלך. ועל מעונך. ועל
דבירך. ועל הבית הגדול והקדוש שנקרא שמך עליו. אבינו
רענו זוננו. פרנסנו כלכלנו. הרויחנו הרוח לנו מהרה מכל
צרותינו. ונא אל תצריכנו יהוה אלהינו לידי מתנות בשר
ודם. ולא לידי הלואתם. אלא ליך המלאה והרחבה.
העשירה והפתוחה. יהי רצון שלא נבוש בעולם הזה. ולא
נכלם לעולם הבא. ומלכות בית דוד משיחך תחזירנה
למקומה במהרה בימינו:

בשבת מוסיפים:

רצה והחליצנו יהוה אלהינו במצותיך ובמצות יום השביעי. השבת הגדול
והקדוש הזה כי יום גדול וקדוש הוא מלפניך. נשבות בו וננוח בו ונתענג בו

קְמָצוֹת חֲקֵי רְצוֹנָךְ. וְאֵל תְּהִי צָרָה וַיִּגּוֹן בְּיוֹם מְנוּחָתָנוּ. וְהִרְאֵנוּ בְּנִחְמַת צִיּוֹן
בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ. כִּי אַתָּה הוּא בַעַל הַנְּחָמוֹת וְהַגֵּם שְׂאֲכָלְנוּ וְשִׁתִּינוּ חֲרָבָן בֵּיתְךָ
הַגָּדוֹל וְהַקְּדוֹשׁ לֹא שָׁכַחְנוּ. אֵל תִּשְׁכַּחְנוּ לְנֶצַח וְאֵל תִּזְנַחְנוּ לְעַד כִּי אֵל מִלֶּךְ
גָּדוֹל וְקְדוֹשׁ אַתָּה:

בראש חודש ביום טוב ובחול המועד מוסיפים:

אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, יַעֲלֶה וַיְבֹא, וַיִּגַּיעַ וַיִּרְאֶה וַיִּרְצֶה, יִשְׁמַע וַיִּפְקֹד וַיִּזְכֹּר,
זְכוּרֵנוּ וְזָכוֹרֵנוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, זָכוֹרֵנוּ יְרוּשָׁלַיִם עִירְךָ, וְזָכוֹרֵנוּ מְשִׁיחַ בֶּן דָּוִד עֲבָדְךָ,
וְזָכוֹרֵנוּ כָּל עַמְּךָ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל לְפָנֶיךָ, לְפִלְטָה, לְטוֹבָה, לְחַן, לְחֶסֶד וּלְרַחֲמִים
לְחַיִּים טוֹבִים וּלְשָׁלוֹם בְּיוֹם:

בראש חדש: ראש חֲדָשׁ הַזֶּה,

בפסח: חג המצות הַזֶּה, בְּיוֹם (טוב) מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה,

בשבועות: חג השבועות הזה, בְּיוֹם (טוב) מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה,

בראש השנה: הזכרון הזה, בְּיוֹם (טוב) מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה,

בסוכות: חג הסוכות הַזֶּה, בְּיוֹם (טוב) מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה,

בשמיני עצרת: שמיני, חג עצרת הזה, בְּיוֹם (טוב) מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה,

לְרַחֵם בּוֹ עֲלֵינוּ וּלְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ. זָכְרֵנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בּוֹ לְטוֹבָה, וּפְקַדְנוּ בּוֹ לְבִרְכָה,
וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ בּוֹ לְחַיִּים טוֹבִים, בְּדַבַּר יְשׁוּעָה וְרַחֲמִים. חוֹסֵי וְחֹנְנֵי, וְחַמְלֵי וְרַחֲמֵי
עֲלֵינוּ, וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ כִּי אֵלֶיךָ עֵינֵינוּ, כִּי אֵל מִלֶּךְ חַנוּן וְרַחוּם אַתָּה.

וּתְבַנֶּה יְרוּשָׁלַיִם עִירְךָ בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה בּוֹנֵה
יְרוּשָׁלַיִם וְאוֹמֵר בְּלַחַשׁ אֱמֵן:

אם בשבת שכח לומר "רצה והחליצנו" ונזכר לפני שהתחיל ברכת "הטוב
והמטיב" יאמר:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִלֶּךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁנִּתְּנָן שְׁבֻתוֹת לְמַנוּחָה לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל
בְּאַהֲבָה, לְאוֹת וּלְבְרִית. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, מִקְדָּשׁ הַשְּׁבֻת:

אם שכח לומר "יעלה ויבוא" בראש חודש ונזכר לפני שהתחיל ברכת "הטוב
והמטיב" יאמר:

בְּרוּךְ שֶׁנִּתְּנָן רָאשֵׁי חֲדָשִׁים לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל לְזָכוֹרֵנוּ

אם שכח לומר "רצה והחליצנו" וגם "יעלה ויבוא" בר"ח ושבת, ונזכר לאחר
שחתם "בונה ירושלים", יאמר:

ברוך אתה יהוה, אלהינו מלך העולם, שנתן שבתות למנוחה לעמו ישראל באהבה, לאות ולברית, וראשי חדשים לעמו ישראל לזכרון. ברוך אתה יהוה, מקדש השבת וישראל וראשי חדשים:

ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו מלך העולם לעד, האל אבינו מלפנו אדירנו. בוראנו. גואלנו. קדושנו. קדוש יעקב. רוענו רועה ישראל. המלך הטוב והמטיב לכל. שבכל יום ויום הוא הטיב לנו. הוא מטיב לנו. הוא ייטיב לנו. הוא גמלנו. הוא גומלנו. הוא יגמלנו לעד חן וחסד ורחמים ורינוח והצלחה וכל טוב:

הרחמן הוא ישתבח על כבודו. הרחמן הוא ישתבח בשמים ובארץ. הרחמן הוא ישתבח בנו לדור דורים. הרחמן הוא קרן לעמו ירים. הרחמן הוא יתפאר בנו לנצח נצחים. הרחמן הוא יפרנסנו בכבוד ולא בבזוי, בהתר ולא באסור, בנחת ולא בצער. הרחמן הוא יתן שלום בינינו. הרחמן הוא ישלח ברכה רוחה והצלחה בכל מעשה ידינו. הרחמן הוא יצליח את דרכינו. הרחמן הוא ישבור על גלות מהרה מעל צוארנו. הרחמן הוא יוליכנו מהרה קוממיות בארצנו. הרחמן הוא ירפאנו רפואה שלמה רפואת הנפש ורפואת הגוף. הרחמן הוא יפתח לנו את דו הרחבה. הרחמן הוא יברך כל אחד ואחד ממנו בשמו הגדול כמו שנתברכו אבותינו אברהם יצחק ויעקב בכל מפל כל. כן יברך אותנו יחד ברכה שלמה. וכן יהי רצון ונאמר אמן. הרחמן הוא יפוש עלינו סכת שלומו:

בשבת: הרחמן הוא ינחילנו עולם שכלו שבת ומנוחה לחיי העולמים.

בראש חודש: הרחמן הוא יחדש עלינו את החדש הזה לטובה ולברכה.

בראש השנה: הרחמן הוא יחדש עלינו את השנה הזאת לטובה ולברכה.

בסוכות: הרחמן הוא יזכנו לישוב בספת עורו של לותנו. הרחמן הוא ישפיע עלינו שפע קדשה וטהרה משבעה אשפיזין עלאין קדישין, זכותם תהא מגן וצנה עלינו. הרחמן הוא יקים לנו את ספת דוד הנופלת.

במועדים: הרחמן הוא יגיענו למועדים אחרים הבאים לקראתנו לשלום.

ביום טוב: הרחמן הוא ינחילנו יום שכלו טוב.

הרחמן הוא יטע תורתו ואהבתו בלבנו ותהיה יראתו על פנינו לבלתי נחטא. ויהיו כל מעשינו לשם שמים:

ברכת האורח: הרחמן הוא יְבָרֵךְ אֶת הַשְּׁלֶחַן הַזֶּה שְׂאֵכְלָנוּ עִלָּיו, וְיִסְדֵּר בּוֹ כָּל מַעֲדָנֵי עוֹלָם, וְיִהְיֶה כְּשֶׁלְּחָנוּ שֶׁל אַבְרָהָם אֲבִינוּ עִלָּיו הַשְּׁלוֹם. כָּל רֵעֵב מִמֶּנּוּ יֹאכַל, וְכָל צָמֵא מִמֶּנּוּ יִשְׁתֶּה, וְאֵל יַחֲסֹר מִמֶּנּוּ כָּל טוֹב לְעַד וּלְעוֹלָמֵי עוֹלָמִים, אָמֵן. הַרְחֵמֵנוּ הוּא יְבָרֵךְ אֶת בַּעַל הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה וּבַעַל הַסְּעֵדָה הַזֹּאת, הוּא וּבְנָיו וְאִשְׁתּוֹ וְכָל אֲשֶׁר לוֹ, בְּבָנִים שִׂיחָיו וּבְנִכְסָיו שִׂירְבוּ. בְּרַךְ יְהוָה חִילוֹ וּפְעָלֵי יָדָיו תִּרְצֶה, וְיִהְיֶה נִכְסֵינוּ וְנִכְסֵי מִצְלָחִים וְקָרוֹבִים לְעִיר, וְאֵל יִזְדַּקֵּק לְפָנָיו וְלֹא לְפָנָיו שׁוֹם דְּבַר חֲטָא וְהִרְהוֹר עוֹן, שֶׁשׁ וְשִׁמַּח כָּל הַיָּמִים בְּעֶשֶׂר וּכְבוֹד מַעֲתָה וְעַד עוֹלָם, לֹא יָבוֹשׁ בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה וְלֹא יִכְלַם לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא, אָמֵן כֵּן יְהִי רָצוֹן.

בסעודת חתן: הרחמן הוא יְבָרֵךְ אֶת הַחֲתָן וְהַכֻּלָּה, בְּבָנִים זְכָרִים שֶׁל קַיָּמָא, לְעַבְדוֹתָיו יִתְבָּרֵךְ. הַרְחֵמֵנוּ הוּא יְבָרֵךְ אֶת כָּל הַמְּסַבִּין בְּשֶׁלְּחַן הַזֶּה, וְיִתֵּן לָנוּ הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, כָּל מִשְׁאָלוֹת לִבְנוֹ לְטוֹבָה.

בסעודת מילה: הרחמן הוא יְבָרֵךְ אֶת בַּעַל הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה, אָבִי הַבּוֹ, הוּא וְאִשְׁתּוֹ הַיְלִדָת, מַעֲתָה וְעַד עוֹלָם. הַרְחֵמֵנוּ הוּא יְבָרֵךְ אֶת הַיֶּלֶד הַנוֹלָד, וְיִכְשֶׁם שְׂזַכֶּהוּ הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לְמִילָה, כִּף יִזְכֶּהוּ לְהַפְנֹס לַתּוֹרָה וּלְחַפָּה וּלְמִצְוֹת וּלְמַעֲשֵׂים טוֹבִים, וְכֵן יְהִי רָצוֹן וְנֹאמַר אָמֵן. הַרְחֵמֵנוּ הוּא יְבָרֵךְ אֶת מַעֲלַת הַסְּנֵדֵק וְהַמַּהֲלָה וְשְׂאֵר הַמִּשְׁתַּדְּלִים בַּמִּצְוָה, הֵם וְכָל אֲשֶׁר לָהֶם.

הַרְחֵמֵנוּ הוּא יַחֲיֵינוּ וְיִזְכֶּנּוּ וְיִקְרְבֵנוּ לְיָמוֹת הַמְּשִׁיחַ וּלְבִנְיָן בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ וְלַחַיֵּי הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא. מְגַדִּיל בִּשְׁבַת וּיּו"ט וּבַיּוֹם שֶׁמִּתְפַּלְלִים מוֹסֵף יֹאמַר: מְגִדוֹל יְשׁוּעוֹת מְלָכּוֹ. וְעֲשֵׂה חֶסֶד לְמִשִּׁיחוֹ לְדוֹד וּלְזָרְעוֹ עַד עוֹלָם: כְּפִירִים רָשׁוּ וְרַעֲבּוּ. וְדוֹרְשֵׁי יְהוָה לֹא יַחֲסְרוּ כָּל טוֹב: נַעַר הַיִּיטִי גַם זִקְנָתִי וְלֹא רֵאִיתִי צָדִיק נֶעְזֵב. וְזָרְעוֹ מִבְּקֵשׁ לַחֵם: כָּל הַיּוֹם חוֹנֵן וּמְלוֹה וְזָרְעוֹ לְבִרְכָה: מַה שְׂאֵכְלָנוּ יְהִי לְשִׁבְעָה. וּמַה שִּׁשְׁתִּינוּ יְהִי לְרַפּוּאָה. וּמַה שְׁהוֹתָרְנוּ יְהִי לְבִרְכָה כְּדַכְתִּיב וְיִתֵּן לְפָנֵינוּ וְיִיאַכְלוּ וְיוֹתָרוּ כְּדָבָר יְהוָה: בְּרוּכִים אַתֶּם לַיהוָה. עוֹשֵׂה שְׂמִים וְאַרְץ: בְּרוּךְ הַגֹּבֵר אֲשֶׁר יִבְטַח בִּיהוָה. וְהִיָּה יְהוָה מְבֹטָחוֹ: יְהוָה עֹז לְעַמּוֹ יִתֵּן. יְהוָה יְבָרֵךְ אֶת עַמּוֹ בְּשְׁלוֹם: עוֹשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרְוָמוֹ הוּא בְּרַחֲמָיו יַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם עֲלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:

Sheva Berachot

For the transliterated text, see page 37.

If missing any of the key components of Sheva Berachot: a minyan, Panim Chadashot, or Beit Chattanim, use one cup, first say HaGefen, and then only the sixth Beracha.

Otherwise, take a new cup, say the following first six Berachot and then the one who made the Zimmun should say HaGefen for everybody on the cup used for the Zimmun.

1. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהִפֵּל בְּרֵא לְכַבּוּדוֹ:
2. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, יוֹצֵר הָאָדָם:
3. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר יָצַר אֶת הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ, בְּצֶלֶם דְּמוּת תְּבַנִּיתוֹ, וְהִתְקִין לוֹ מִמֶּנּוּ בְּנֵן עַד־עַד. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, יוֹצֵר הָאָדָם:
4. שׁוֹשׁ תְּשִׁישׁ וְתַגַּל עֲקָרָה בְּקַבּוּץ בְּנֵיהַ לְתוֹכָהּ בְּמַהְרָה בְּשִׂמְחָה. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, מְשַׂמַּח צִיּוֹן בְּבִנְיָהּ:
5. שִׂמַּח תְּשַׂמַּח רְעִים אֲהוּבִים כְּשִׂמַּחְךָ יְצִירְךָ בְּנֵן עַד מִקֵּדָם. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, מְשַׂמַּח חֵתָן וְכֻלָּהּ:
6. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר בְּרָא שְׁשׁוֹן וְשִׂמְחָה, חֵתָן וְכֻלָּהּ, גִּילָה רְנָה דִּיצָה וְחֻדוּהַ, אֲהֵבָה וְאַחֻוּהַ, שְׁלוֹם וְרַעוּת, מְהֵרָה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יִשְׁמַע בְּעָרִי הַיְהוּדָה וּבְחֻצוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַיִם, קוֹל שְׁשׁוֹן וְקוֹל שִׂמְחָה, קוֹל חֵתָן וְקוֹל כֻּלָּהּ, קוֹל מִצְהָלוֹת חֲתָנִים מְחַפְּתִים, וְנוֹעָרִים מִמְשֶׁתֶּה נְגִינָתָם, בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, מְשַׂמַּח הַחֵתָן עִם הַכֻּלָּה:

Take the first cup and say HaGefen.

7. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְרֵי הַגֶּפֶן:

Then, the one who made HaGefen and the one who said the sixth Beracha drinks, mixes the two cups, and gives to the Chattan and Kallah.