



Stephanie and Leke

30 Tishrei 5762

October 6, 2002

To our dear family and friends,

We are honored and elated that you, our close family and friends, have come from near and far to celebrate with us during this most momentous of life transitions.

Today celebrates the relationship we have built with each other — as well as our relationships with God, our parents, grandparents, close friends and family. Surely, we would not have become the people we are – and, thus, drawn to each other — without being shaped, in ways both direct and subtle, by our relationships with so many of you.

We particularly want to express our love and gratitude to those most special people in our lives — our parents — who have taught us so much, loved and supported us, and prepared us for this day.

Stephanie and Zeke

I.

Festivities Before the Ceremony

TENAIM

Tenaim are a set of conditions stating that our families will continue to love and support Stephanie and Zeke through their marriage and lives together. On Friday evening, just prior to Shabbat, the *tenaim* were signed. Michael Brown and Susan Green, Stephanie's step-parents, served as witnesses during the *tenaim* ceremony. After the *tenaim* were signed, the mothers of the bride and groom broke a plate, symbolizing the verse *ve'gilu bi-re'adah* (rejoice in trembling). The breaking of the plate serves as a reminder of the fragility and care that must be taken with relationships, and balances the joy of this occasion with its seriousness.

KABBALAT PANIM

Today's celebration begins with the *kabbalat panim*, literally the "receiving of faces." During this time, several festivities take place, to which everyone is invited.

Hatan's Tisch & Hakhnassat Kallah

Zeke will greet friends and family in the **Creole Room** for his *Hatan's Tisch* (Groom's Table), where he will "attempt" to deliver words of Torah, only to be interrupted by those around him with songs and toasts. Stephanie will be seated in the **Gold Room** where all are encouraged to sing, dance, and otherwise "entertain the bride" for her *Hakhnassat Kallah*. We encourage all of you to experience one or both of these traditions.

At the conclusion of the *Hatan's tisch*, Zeke will be danced in by our guests to meet his bride-to-be. This will be the first

time he has seen Stephanie in seven days! (Zeke and Stephanie have chosen to follow the traditional custom of not seeing each other for the entire week leading up to the wedding ceremony.)

Bedeken

Upon seeing Stephanie, Zeke will place a veil over her face, which she will not remove until they have been wed. Literally meaning "checking," the tradition for the *bedeken* comes from the Biblical story of Jacob, Rachel, and Leah. Jacob arrived at his wedding believing that he was to marry Rachel. But Rachel's father secretly switched his daughters so that Jacob actually married Leah, who was so heavily veiled that Jacob was unable to recognize her. Since then, Jewish grooms have "checked" their brides prior to the marriage ceremony, just to make sure!

II.

Chuppah—The Wedding Ceremony

The Jewish wedding ceremony is often referred to as the *Chuppah*, because it takes place under a ritually symbolic wedding canopy of the same name (*chuppah*). The wedding canopy represents the new home that Stephanie and Zeke will create together. Just like Abraham and Sarah's tent in the desert, our *chuppah* is open on all four sides, demonstrating that the couple's new home will be open to all who wish to enter and be a part of their lives. We are honored to include special family and friends beneath the *chuppah* as Stephanie and Zeke begin their new lives together. Our *chuppah* has particularly special meaning — it was made by joining the *talitot* (prayer shawls) of Stephanie and Zeke's maternal grandfathers, Irvin Goldman and Calmun Myerowitz, both of blessed memory.

The processional music accompanying Stephanie as she walks down the aisle has been written by Zeke, and will be sung by Sarah Silverman and Matt Singer, friends of the bride and groom. The words have been adapted from a traditional Jewish prayer: *Lecha Dodi Likrat Kalah...Bo-ee, Bo-ee Kalah* — “Come, my beloved, to greet the bride...Enter, Enter, O Bride.”

As Stephanie arrives at the *chuppah*, she will circle around Zeke seven times, representing the seven days of creation. The number seven also reflects the seven times the phrase “when a man takes a wife” appears in the Bible.

The wedding itself consists of two ceremonies: *kiddushin* (the betrothal) and *nissuin* (the marriage). Although in modern times these two rituals are performed consecutively, in ancient times they took place as much as a year apart. Today, the use of two cups of wine during the ceremony reminds us of the historical separation between these two rituals.

KIDDUSHIN

Kiddushin begins with two blessings over the first cup of wine. The first blessing is symbolic of joyous celebration. The second blessing praises God for sanctifying this marriage. Stephanie and Zeke will share this cup of wine under the *chuppah* just as they will share their lives together in their home. The cup used during the blessings under the *chuppah* belonged to Zeke's maternal great-grandfather, Israel Myerowitz, of blessed memory.

The central act of *kiddushin* is the giving of a ring. According to Jewish law, for any contract to be binding, there must be a transfer of an object of value from one party to the other. Since the 17th century, a ring has been the preferred object of exchange. The ring must be made of a single piece of pure, unadorned metal. Before placing the ring on Stephanie's right index finger, Zeke will recite the ancient Hebrew verse of marriage: “Behold, you are consecrated unto me with this ring according to the laws of Moses and Israel.”

READING OF THE KETUBAH

The *ketubah* is the Jewish marriage contract, which will be read in Aramaic and English between the *kiddushin* and *nissuin* ceremonies. An Aramaic legal text that has remained largely unchanged for nearly 2000 years, the *ketubah* speaks of the groom's obligations and commitments to the bride. By design, it was a progressive document that protected a woman's rights. Zeke and Stephanie's *ketubah* will be read in both Aramaic and English.

After the *ketubah* is read, Stephanie will give Zeke a ring as a gift, a modern addition to the traditional wedding ceremony. She will recite a Biblical verse from the Book of Hosea (2:21-22): “I will betrothe you to me forever, I will betrothe you to me in righteousness, in justice, in kindness, and in mercy. I will betrothe you to me in faithfulness, and you shall know God.”

NISUIN

The *nissuin* ceremony consists of *sheva brachot* (seven blessings), which are recited over the second cup of wine. These blessings sanctify God, celebrate the creation of humanity, and rejoice in the union of two people by marriage. Many of our family members will be honored with the recitation of the 7 blessings.

BREAKING OF A GLASS

At the end of the ceremony, Zeke will break a glass under his foot. This most widely known element of the Jewish wedding ceremony reminds us that even in our moment of greatest joy, we should be sensitive to the suffering that still exists in the world.

III.

Post-Ceremony Celebrations

YICHUD

After the ceremony, the couple will proceed to the *yichud* (togetherness) room, where they will spend their first moments alone together as husband and wife. The entrance to the room will be guarded by Justin and Jessica Green, Stephanie's cousins, to ensure that no one disturbs Zeke and Stephanie in their first moments together as a married couple!

SEUDAT MITZVAH

A Jewish wedding would not be complete without a festive meal, and during this meal it is considered a *mitzvah* (commandment) to rejoice with the bride and groom. This means eating and drinking and toasting, but more importantly singing and DANCING! Don't be shy – we want everyone to come and dance with us – especially those of you for whom this is your first experience at a traditional Jewish wedding!

It is also considered a *mitzvah* to invite all who are hungry to join in the celebratory wedding meal, much like the commandment to invite the poor for a Passover *seder*. In modern times, many fulfill this commandment by making a donation to a food pantry or other charitable organization. In honor of their wedding, Stephanie and Zeke have made a contribution to Mazon: A Jewish Response to Hunger.

BIRKAT HAMAZON

At the conclusion of the meal, we will gather together to say *Birkat Hamazon*, Grace After Meals. The text can be found in the booklets on the tables. At the conclusion of *Birkat Hamazon* it is traditional to sing the *sheva brachot* (seven blessings) that were recited during the wedding ceremony.

Honored Participants

Processional

Groomsmen:

Craig Dushey, *Chuppah Bearer*
Robert Hoo, *Chuppah Bearer*
Humberto Ruiz, *Chuppah Bearer*
Matthew Singer, *Chuppah Bearer*

Flower Girl:

Beatrix McCarthy, *Cousin of the Bride*

Grandmother of the Groom

Ferdi Vanderhoek, *escorted by her niece Rachel Van Dam*

Grandmother of the Bride:

Bella Goldman, *escorted by her son, Gary Goldman*

Step-Grandparents of the Bride:

Ruth and Bill Hammond & Irving Brown

Step-Parents of the Bride:

Michael Brown & Susan Green

Groom's Attendants:

David Green, *Brother of the Bride*
Samuel Myerowitz-Vanderhoek, *Brother of the Groom, Best Man*
Matt Myerowitz-Vanderhoek, *Brother of the Groom, Best Man*

Bride's Attendants:

Katy Myerowitz-Vanderhoek, *Sister of the Groom*
Erika Lobenstein, *Step-Sister of the Bride*
Carol Riegelman, *Maid of Honor*

The Groom:

Ezekiel Myerowitz-Vanderhoek
escorted by his parents
Rachel Myerowitz & Jacques Vanderhoek

The Bride:

Stephanie Fay Green
escorted by her parents
Linda Green & Howard Green

Ceremony

Mesadrei Kedushin (Co-Officiants):

Rabbi Steven Friedman

Laurie Hahn

Witnesses:

Brian Gondos

Jonathan Stern

Reciters of Sheva Brachot (Seven Blessings):

Mark Levine

Jenni-Stone Levine

Gary Goldman

Toby Hazan

David Green

Erika Lobenstein

Yoram Tal

Molly Levine

Meyer Myerowitz

Rachel Van Dam

Sam Myerowitz-Vanderhoek

Jay Green

J.J. Levine

Carol Riegelman

Ushers:

Henry Green

Matthew Green

Robyn Green

Simmi Singh

Nicole Totah

Stacy Winitt

Special Thanks

We have been particularly blessed by the special deeds of a few certain individuals, without whom this day would not have been as meaningful. Our deepest gratitude to Laurie Hahn, who has taught us, learned with us, counseled us, and invested so much of herself in preparing to co-officiate today. Our warmest thanks to Rabbi Steven Friedman, for traveling all the way from New York to inspire us with his Torah.

Zeke would like to thank (in no particular order): a certain cousin for honoring us by accepting his honors, another cousin for deciding his cousin's wedding was worth the trip from Nigeria, his brothers Matt and Sam for being best men-always, his friend Simmi for being the head instacaleefeta (even though said title was omitted from this program), his friends Bob and Humberto for being the best friends a freak could want, his friend Craig for sending in his measurements promptly, his friend Matt who (together with Jordan) took me to the party that fateful Saturday night that resulted in marriage to the birthday girl (and for constructing the cubicle enabling Zeke to save \$\$ for plane ticket to this event), his parents for the lessons about torah and schorah, his aunt Molly for that crocombouche and those candied rose petals, the first aforementioned cousin again, anyone else who may be offended by not being personally thanked, and his sister Katy for being, quite simply, the best sister in the world.

Stephanie would like to thank (in a very particular order!): 1) Precious, for being just that. 7) Tobes, for showing up to every bridal shower across the country. 2) Shmarol, for being my best-friend-since-high-school. 9) David, for going first. 5) Dad, for relenting on the tuxedo issue. 3) Susan, for convincing Zeke about the merits of the "R" word. 6) Lauren, for being the best glamour queen. 4) Erika, for staying cool when they pump the imaginary brake. 8) The Vortex, for sucking me in. 10) Mom, for the guest list you honed when I was 12.