



the
SPIRITUAL
JEWISH
WEDDING
checklist

created by Micaela Ezra

dear friend,

Mazal tov on your upcoming wedding! I am so happy you have found your way here.

I have created this very brief "Spiritual Jewish Wedding Checklist" as a guide to use as you are planning your wedding.

It evolved after a conversation with Karen Cinnamon of Smashing The Glass, in response to the need for more soulful Jewish wedding inspirations and advice online.

So much of the organization (as essential as it is) can distract us from the true essence of the wedding day.

I hope these insights and suggestions, can help keep you on track as you navigate the process, and that as a result, the day is as meaningful for you and your guests, as it is beautiful.

I wish you an easy, joyful journey as you plan, and a sublime, euphoric wedding day!

With love and Blessings,

Micaela

For more information, or to reach out, please visit

www.micaelaezra.com

www.ahyinjudaica.com

ONE

The lead up.

What's it all about?

Get clear about what the meaning of the wedding is to you. Always have at the back of your mind the essence of what you're working toward. It can help you to hold things in perspective. This is a holy and sacred day, in which two halves of a soul are reunited and with G-d's blessing and participation. The rest is decoration.

How Do You Want to Feel?

Clearly define HOW YOU WANT TO FEEL at your wedding, and what you want your guests to feel. Include this in your vision boards - it may even just be words or quotes.

Find Your Center

Find what brings you back into alignment - yoga, running, meditation, dancing. Practice it to prepare for the wedding, the same way you go for a series of facials or undertake other physical preparations. You need the spiritual muscles built too.

Know when to step away from it all.

When it all gets too much, when you can't make the decision, when you're frustrated, anxious, when you're not In-joy - step away from the laptop, turn off the social media, gracefully opt to finish that heated conversation later and return to the step above.

Emotional Bodyguards

Identify your "emotional bodyguards" - the friends / family who make you feel your best, and will protect you both in the lead up and especially on the day. Let them know they have a special role to play. (These may or may not be your family or bridesmaids. Select a few people you can really rely on to observe you and take care of things on your behalf, throughout the day / night).

TWO

Experiencing the lead up with others.

Wedding Classes

Find a Rabbi, Rebbetzin, spiritual teacher or mentor, to teach you about the meaning behind marriage, the wedding ceremony and life as a husband / wife from a Jewish perspective.

Get to know the deep relevance of every wedding ritual so that you can partake in them with intention and the proper understanding.

Mikveh

If you're a bride are you going to the Mikveh before your wedding? Learn about this soulful ritual with a trusted teacher. Visit the Mikveh with your mother, mother-in-law to be, sisters, sister-in-laws to be, aunts and close friends. It can be as private or festive a celebration as you feel comfortable with.

Bridal shower & Bridal blessings

How else are you acknowledging the shift in soul and life stage? Gather with your tribe and sisterhood to celebrate in a meaningful way. What rituals can you incorporate into your shower to move it in soulful direction.

THREE

The Physical Checklist

1. Rabbi / Officiant - make sure you meet and discuss in depth what the mood and spirit is that you want to convey. Go through the wedding ceremony step by step with them in detail to make sure everything you want is included.
2. A Chazan - do you want a cantor singing through the ceremony?
3. Guests who may participate in ceremony (usually as part of reading the Sheva Brachot - Seven Blessings)
4. Select two witnesses minimum (some have custom for more) to sign the Ketubah. Jewish tradition is that they should keep Shabbat.
5. Chuppah - will you include a family heirloom such as a grandfather's Talit? Could it be custom made?
6. Kippot - may be custom printed.
7. Groom & Bridal Party Kippot (may be different to the guests).
8. Wedding bands - who will receive a ring under the chuppah (according to Jewish custom only the woman needs to). Will the groom also receive his ring during the ceremony, or afterward?
9. Kiddush cup to drink from under the chuppah.
10. Kiddush cup to smash under the chuppah (consider if you want this made into something afterward like a mezuzah or sculpture etc - it may affect the glass you choose).
11. Smash bag (and make sure someone is nominated to keep track of this after the ceremony).
12. Kosher wine for ceremony.
13. Table to put the wine / kiddush cup / smash cup.
14. Ketubah
15. Beautiful pen for ketubah signing (also makes a great groom's gift!)
16. Ketubah stand if you want it displayed.
17. Talit for the groom (great groom's gift!) - he may use this under the chuppah. A beautiful Sephardi custom is to drape the Talit over the head of the bride and groom while blessings are recited.
18. Talit bag for the groom (check out www.ahyinbyme.com) - a beautiful gift with the talit.
19. The ceremony programme - a special opportunity for the bride and groom to make the ceremony unique with a thank you message, personal anecdotes and explanations of the spiritual meaning behind some of the wedding rituals.
20. Incorporate Hebrew names / dates and meaningful quotes in your invitation, programme and anywhere else you can think of!
21. Music for the ceremony and reception. How can you infuse Jewish music into the night to affect the mood? From traditional Horah, to nostalgic Israeli music and modern Hebrew tunes. There are beautiful Chasidic niggunim as well. Don't be afraid to research and push your band / instrumentalists.
22. Yichud room - make sure there is a private room for bride and groom to spend 7 minutes in after the ceremony. Make sure there is food and something to drink waiting, especially if you have fasted.
23. Challah at the reception. Nominate someone to say the blessing over the bread.
24. Books for the tables with "Grace after Meals". If this is too traditional, consider creating notecards with a brief, alternative but "Jewishly-rooted" mention of gratitude to The Creator for the blessing of nourishment. This could also be included at the bottom of the menu.
25. Tehilim / Psalms book - if you choose to read Tehilim on the day of your wedding, you can find a Hebrew-English version in white / blush / any color of the rainbow and have it personalized (another great gift for bride or groom).
26. Tzedakah - is there a way to incorporate the Jewish mitzvah of giving into your wedding experience.
27. Date of your wedding - does it fall on a holiday (eg Chanukah) or during a particular time in the Jewish calendar that speaks to you? Can that add something unique to your wedding?

FOUR

Checklist for Additional Events

Shabbat Dinner

1. Candlesticks (two for the bride) and candles.
2. Table with candles for guests to light (can be as simple as allowing for 1 - 2 tea lights per person)
3. Matches
4. Head scarf if you choose to cover your hair. (This doesn't only have to be if you're religious, it can also help to shift your state of mind in the moment).
5. Kiddush cup
6. Kosher wine
7. Siddur
8. Challah cover (check out www.ahyinjudaica.com)
9. Challah board
10. Challah knife
11. Honey & honey dish for dipping (there's a Jewish custom that newlyweds only dip their challah in honey for the first year of marriage)
OR
Salt dish for dipping challah in salt.
12. Books or notecards for Grace after Meals.
13. "Phone bags" - little linen bags or boxes for people to drop their phones into, to encourage guests to disconnect during the shabbat meal. Can include a cute note or quote on the bag about this.

Aufruf / Call up for the groom in Synagogue:

1. Talit & Talit bag for groom. (www.ahyinjudaica.com)
2. Sweets to throw at groom after he makes the Aliyah (goes up) to the Torah.
3. If you are planning to have many guests in the synagogue who are not familiar with the services, consider printing note cards for the chairs that mention a thank you with a brief explanation of the service and the weekly parsha.

FIVE

On the Day.

Carve out time to Center

Continue your practice of getting into alignment. Let go of the externals. Move into your soul place and allow your nominated "emotional bodyguards" to take care of the physical details.

Bedeken / Ketubah Signing

Are you having a Bedeken? Who will be there? Who will be present at the Ketubah signing? What will each of these ceremonies look like? Make sure you think about what mood and details you want, and outline them so they can be executed on the day.

To eat or not to eat?

Are you fasting? (Common tradition for bride and groom since the wedding day is like a Yom kippur, the holiest of holy days, for the two getting married). Discuss with your Rabbi.

Prayer

Some brides and grooms have the tradition of reciting specific Tehilim (psalms) on the day of the wedding. If you're curious, ask a Rabbi which Psalms or other prayers are appropriate for you.

Most importantly, consider what you want to pray for personally and *in your own words* - take time under the chuppah for this. Ask friends and family if there is anything they need you to pray for on their behalf - for example to fall pregnant / for healing / to find their beshert etc.

Giving Blessings

The bride and groom can give blessings as they are considered to have a clearer connection to G-d on the day of the wedding. Take a moment to give blessings to your guests throughout the night.

Your Bodyguards

We have a belief that the bride and groom exist in a most angelic and regal state on the day of the wedding and for seven days after, and are therefore not meant to be left alone. Have someone accompany you wherever you need to go, at least for the day / night of the wedding, if not for the week following.

SIX

The Beginning.

Your wedding day sets a tone, but it is just the beginning. Over the coming years you will write your own spiritual story together. It will unfold as you grow together, shaping the experiences of your children, grandchildren and generations to come.

Shalom Bayit - Peace in the home

This is one of the most essential tenants of Judaism and is to be upheld above all else. Always do whatever is necessary to keep peace within your relationship and your home. This could at times require deep personal work, self introspection or guidance from a trusted mentor. It will require you to come back to the feelings of absolute love from the day of your wedding, *over and over again*, and to remember that there is a Divine force who joined you on that day and is also a part of your marriage.

Jewish Essentials

Get creative and find Judaica that speaks to you - Objects you aesthetically relate to. Incorporate them into your home in a way that feels true to your style.

Your wedding is an opportunity for people who love you to purchase meaningful gifts that will become heirlooms in your family.

Some pieces you should consider to register for are:

- Challah cover (www.ahyinjudaica.com)
- Kiddush cup
- Shabbat Candlesticks
- Menorah
- Seder Plate & Matzah cover
- Mezzuzot

Commit to something together.

Your wedding is a beautiful opportunity to set new intentions for the life you want to create. Commit to something that will bring light and Jewish Spirituality into your home. It shouldn't be too ambitious, just a simple practice that will continue to reconnect you to one another and the optimism of your wedding day.

This could include hosting a Shabbat dinner on a regular basis for friends, continuing Jewish learning together (even online), lighting Shabbat candles every week, doing an act of Chesed (kindness and service) together in your community - the list is endless. Make it meaningful to you.

What you give is what you get.

The famous Jewish Mystic, the Baal Shem Tov, said *"From every human being there rises a light that reaches straight to heaven. And when two souls that are destined to be together find each other, their streams of light flow together, and a single brighter light goes forth from their united being."*

Never lose sight of the fact that you have been brought together for a Divine reason. You will bring healing to one another and to the world around you. Always have in mind how you can be of service, and how your being together can make a unique and beautiful contribution.



"Family & friends, tradition & heritage, spiritual introspection & learning, creating & appreciating beauty, compassion & thoughtfulness - these are the building blocks of my life. They are what enliven me. They motivate me when I wake up and they fill my days.

- Micaela

About

Micaela Ezra is an illustrator, textile designer and writer, who shares spiritual ideas through word, text and design. She is the founder of AHYIN, a boutique collection of contemporary Judaica objects, created with holistic intentions. Micaela's most recent illustration work can be seen in "The Universe has Your Back" 52 card inspirational deck, made in collaboration with #1 New York Times best selling author, Gabrielle Bernstein.

More of her writing on spiritual, Jewish topics can be found at <https://www.ahyinbyme.com/blog/>

Micaela lives in Manhattan with her husband Miguel and their precious daughters Aliyah Monet and Charlie Eden.



AHYIN

by micaela ezra

SMASHING
the GLASS

MAZAL TOV

Wishing you the greatest blessings
for your wedding, and your lives.

Created by Micaela Ezra for Smashing the Glass

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