Our wedding day is a collection of Jewish traditions. The ceremony is comprised of distinct parts. We have created this program to enhance your understanding of these customs. We hope you enjoy!

## Ketubah

The ketubah is a marriage contract that is required by Jewish law. It attests to the commitments and obligations Karen and Ariel make to each other as a married couple. It is one of the oldest elements of Jewish weddings, dating back over two thousand years. Prior to the ceremony, the ketubah was signed by Karen and Ariel, and witnessed by Rabbi Irwin Goldenberg, Jacob Oksman and Lisa Berman.

## Bedeken

After the ketubah has been signed, Ariel will place the veil over Karen’s face. This custom is based on the biblical story of Jacob, who was tricked into marrying a veiled Leah, rather than her sister Rachel.

## The Chuppah

Karen and Ariel will be married under a wedding canopy known as the chuppah, which symbolizes the home they will build together. The chuppah rests on four poles, yet has no walls, reflecting the idea that family and friends will always be welcome.

## Hakafot

Traditionally, the bride circles (hakafot) the groom seven times. Two interpretations of the significance: (1) Just as the book of genesis describes the creation in seven days, Karen and Ariel are creating their new household in seven circles; (2) Seven is the number of times the phrase “when a man takes a wife” occurs in the torah. As Karen and Ariel are building this home together, they will each circle each other three and a half times.

## Kiddushin

The kiddushin begins with the recitation of opening blessings and the blessing over the wine. Karen and Ariel will share a cup of wine, a Jewish symbol of happiness and the sanctification of a joyous time.

## Exchanging of the Rings

Following these blessings, Karen and Ariel will exchange rings. According to Jewish law, the rings must be solid metal, devoid of any cuts or stones. As the rings are circles with no beginning and no end, they symbolize that Karen and Ariel’s love is never-ending. Karen and Ariel will borrow Alina and Moysey Brio’s original unadorned wedding bands for this ceremony.

## Sheva Brachot

The sheva brachot (seven blessings) comprises most of the wedding liturgy. These seven blessings symbolize the seven days of creation. The blessings represent the joy of creation both in the ancient times and the newest creation, which occurs under the chuppah. Some of the special people in our lives will be reading these blessings.

## The Breaking of the Glass

At the conclusion of the ceremony, Ariel will break a glass by stepping on it. Tradition says that this represents the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem. Another modern interpretation says that the broken pieces of the glass remind us that life is fragile and even in times of great joy, we must not forget our people’s journey Throughout history. Finally, one more interpretation says that Karen and Ariel’s marriage will last as long as it takes to reassemble the glass - an impossible feat. the sound of the glass breaking is greeted with shouts of “mazel tov” - a wish for good fortune to the newly married couple.

## Yichud

Immediately after the ceremony, Karen and Ariel will adjourn to a private room for several minutes of yichud (seclusion) to share their first moments together as husband and wife.