

“If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am only for myself, what am I? If not now, when?”

Pirki Avot, 1:14, Hillel



If I am not for myself, who will be for me. This Brit Ahavah, covenant of love, is the first such ceremony in Omaha and one of few like this in the entire country. “I am my beloved and my beloved is mine.”

Who will be for me. We wish to thank our families, friends, and spiritual leaders who have stood by us during the preparation for our Brit Ahavah. We are honored to be part of such a caring community.

If I am only for myself, what am I? We are proud to be standing before you today. Our Brit Ahavah allows family and friends to share with us in the celebration as we present ourselves to the Jewish community as a couple on this day.

If not now, when? The State of Nebraska as well as the other 49 states do not recognize our marriage or allow us to share the 1049 legal rights that heterosexual married couples receive. Ceremonies like ours are a step towards those rights. We are creating a Jewish home. We will work within our families and communities to foster the traditions of faith, learning, tzedekah, and Tikkum olam.

I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall serve as a sign of the covenant between Me and the world - Genesis 9:13



**Michael David Silverman
and
David Scott Greenbaum**

***Brit Ahavah*
Covenant of Love**

***6 June 1999
22 Sivan 5759***

***Temple Israel
Omaha, Nebraska***

Honored Participants

Rabbi Aryeh Azriel • Cantor Jennifer Blum • Amy Greenbaum

Susan Silverman • James Silverman • Lorraine Silverman

Ann Osborne • Stacy Greenbaum

Derek Hogan • Greg Greenberg • Mobeen Shirazi
Mark Brookstein • Phill Mulnick • Mark Sanford

“From every human being there rises a light that reaches straight to heaven. And when two souls that are destined for each other find one another, their streams of light flow together and a single brighter light goes forth from their united being.”
-- Ba'al Shem Tov

The Ceremony

A Jewish ceremony is filled with symbols and traditions, and we hope that this program helps convey the meaning behind the traditions you will witness. We thank you for sharing in our joy in this celebration of our love and commitment to one another.

Prior to entering the sanctuary, we participated in a Ketubah ceremony, where both of us ceremonially signed the Ketubah.

The Ketubah

The Ketubah, or marriage contract, outlines our responsibilities and obligations to each other as a married couple. The traditional egalitarian text was adapted to honor the uniqueness of the relationship. A portion of the Ketubah will be read during the ceremony. The Ketubah is considered a legal binding document within the Jewish community and reminds each of us that this commitment is not entered into lightly.

The Chuppah

The ceremony is held under a tallis (prayer shawl) called a Chuppah, which symbolizes the Jewish home we are about to establish. Open on all sides, the Chuppah recalls the tent of Abraham which welcomed guests from all directions. So too our home will always be open to all.

The rings

The rings used during the ceremony are made of metal and do not contain any gems. The rings are unpierced, symbolizing that they cannot be broken.

The breaking of the glass

As a last act in the ceremony, the glass we used to drink the wine will be shattered. According to one tradition, even in times of joy, the suffering and pain in our world must be remembered. We must not forget the imperfections in the world and our obligation to repair them. Another tradition holds that the sound of the glass shattering disrupts the plans of those who would do the couple harm. Finally, the destruction of the glass seals the relationship and makes the commitment irrevocable. The sound heralds to the world the beginning of our life together.

Sheva B'rachot

The Sheva B'rachot, or seven blessings, place the ceremony within the context of Jewish history. The number seven is abundant within Jewish tradition. Not only was the world created in seven days, but marriage is a seven day a week commitment. The first blessing thanks God for the fruit of the vine. The second blessing praises God for having done the work of creation. The third blessing is over individual human life. The fourth blessing extols God's creation of human beings in the image of, and after the likeness of the Holy One. The fifth blessing creates a Jewish home and places us within the unbroken chain of Jewish existence. The sixth and seventh blessings end with references to the couple under the chuppah.