

Weekly Teaching

June 7, 2019

"I remember the devotion of your youth, how as a bride you loved me and followed me through the desert, through a land not sown." (Jeremiah)

"To take someone else's hand and begin a journey together into the undiscovered country called the future: that is marriage, love sanctified by the mutual gift of trust." (Rabbi Jonathan Sacks)

Next month, Roseanne and I will celebrate our oldest daughter's wedding.

As parents we treasure the simchas, the joyous occasions, that we are able to celebrate with our children.

When I officiate at simchas I always make a point of thanking the family for the gift of sharing their simcha with me.

Whatever is wrong with the world...whatever darkness might threaten us...the gift of the simcha is what most effectively lets God's light back into our lives.

At every baby naming and Bar/Bat Mitzvah, we ask God to bless the child with a life "imbued with Torah; brought to the chuppah (wedding canopy); and a life of good deeds."

At Temple Sholom, when we bless the Bar or Bat Mitzvah, I have a Tallit (prayer shawl) lifted over the child as they receive the priestly blessing by which we ask God to always watch over them, and grant them, happiness, health and peace.

The Tallit is a symbol of God's sheltering presence, but I also note that it is a symbol of the chuppah we hope our child will someday be blessed to stand under with their own soul-mate.

Having officiated at many weddings, and having had the joy of my own wedding, I thought I was ready to embrace with a spiritual calm my own daughter's wedding.

However, the depths of emotions I have felt have been somewhat startling to me.

Four years after I got married, Roseanne and I went to the theatre to watch Steve Martin's remake of the movie "Father of the Bride".

I had enjoyed watching the original Spencer Tracy movie with my mother z'l when I was a child, and I was looking forward to Steve Martin's "wild and zany" take on the part of the father.

At the time, Roseanne was pregnant with our first child, and I was impacted by a short sweet scene ([click here to watch](#)) in which the father is playing basketball one-on-one with his adult daughter.

Recalling past memories in conversations, and then instead of seeing his adult child, he sees first his young daughter and then his teen daughter.

I felt back then my throat tightening, and yet, the scene didn't do enough justice to how emotional the process is when your daughter is formally leaving your own home to begin the process of creating her own home with, God willing, children of her own.

The wedding feels like the end of a book, much more than the end of a chapter.

But, while I can admit to bittersweet feelings, I am truly overjoyed.

Roseanne and I wish we could share the wedding with everyone who we feel is part of our communal family. Fortunately there is a custom that lets us share a sweet taste of the upcoming joy of bride and groom.

This custom by which the wedding couple is called up to the bima for a special communal blessing prior to the wedding is called *Aufruf* (pronounced "oof-roof"), which is a German word meaning "calling up".

The custom is biblically based from the time of King Solomon, and it's a really powerful way to share in the simcha with everyone.

On June 28, which is also our 32nd wedding anniversary, we will have an *Aufruf* for my daughter Naomi and future son-in-law Cody at Temple Sholom. Roseanne and I are thrilled to invite the community to celebrate with us at this special Musical Shabbat Service beginning at 8:00 pm, followed by a dessert reception.

Everyone grants me the gift of sharing in their own family's simcha, and now we are sharing our simcha with all of you.

May we only have simchas to celebrate!

Shabbat Shalom,

Rabbi Mitch

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