

WELCOME TO THE WEDDING OF



MIRIAM  
SARAH BRECKNER

*and*

OLIVER  
RICHARD GEE

SUNDAY, 25TH JUNE, 2023  
STONE BARN, THE COTSWOLDS

*Our wedding takes place under the auspices of Edgware and Hendon  
Reform Synagogue and is conducted by Rabbi Mark Goldsmith.*

**We are so grateful and excited to (finally!) be able to share our special day surrounded by our family and friends. This brief guide explains the different elements of our ceremony and why they are meaningful to us.**

**We kindly ask that you refrain from taking photographs during the aisle procession and ceremony.**

### **BEDEKEN**

When Miriam enters with her parents, Ollie will meet her and place the veil over her. He will check that it is indeed Miriam to whom he is to be wed! This tradition, some say, has its roots in biblical times, when Jacob was tricked into marrying Leah rather than Rachel. As they approach the Chuppah together, it is a special moment to recognise their togetherness.

### **THE CIRCLING**

Miriam and Ollie will circle each other a total of seven times, three times each and then once together. The circles represent mutual protection and being central to each other's lives. The number seven is significant in Judaism for many reasons, namely corresponding to the seven days of creation thus symbolising the sense that they are about to create their own 'new world' together.

## **BLESSINGS AND PSALMS**

The wedding ceremony begins with biblical Psalms of joy. With words honoured by over two and a half thousand years of use we link ourselves with the joy felt by wedding parties throughout the Jewish past. Rabbi Mark will recite blessings to welcome everyone and to bless the Chuppah under which Miriam, Ollie and their parents are standing. A blessing is then said over a cup of wine, a symbol of sustenance and joy. As they sip the wine, their parents are sharing their joy with them and they are sharing their joy with each other.

## **THE RINGS**

Miriam and Ollie will then exchange rings, placing them on the other's index finger - a tradition likely developed so that the rings were in clear view of witnesses. The rings symbolise the concept of the two encompassing, protecting and providing for each other. It also sets their future relationship on a higher plane that aspires to goodness and spirituality. Once the rings have been accepted, Miriam and Ollie are considered married by Jewish law.

## **THE KETUBAH (Marriage Contract)**

Rabbi Mark will read aloud the Ketubah, the marriage contract, in front of all gathered - Miriam and Ollie's witnesses. This records in writing the mutual covenant that they make to cherish, respect and support each other.

### **SHEVA BRACHOT (Seven Wedding Blessings)**

A second cup of wine is poured and seven blessings are recited aloud by members of their family . The blessings express the hope that the bride and groom will rejoice together forever as though they are the original couple, Adam and Eve, in the Garden of Eden. After the blessings Miriam and Ollie both drink from the cup of wine and Rabbi Mark will pronounce them to be married.

### **BREAKING OF THE GLASS**

The ceremony concludes with Ollie stamping on a glass to shatter it. Everyone then spontaneously shouts "Mazel-Tov!!!" (meaning 'good luck' and also 'congratulations') and bursts into song, 'Siman tov u'mazel-tov y'heh lanu'- please feel free to sing and clap along!

### **SIGNING THE REGISTER**

Miriam and Ollie now sign the Ketubah and Register in front of witnesses and this act concludes the public marriage ceremony.

***Please now make your way to the Reception for canapés and drinks!***