

Mazal Tov! The Rituals and Customs of a Jewish Wedding  
by Rabbi Dr Michael Shire. Frances Lincoln 2003.

In this, the third of Michael Shire's collaborations with the publishers Frances Lincoln, the author turns his attention to the subject of marriage in Jewish tradition, and specifically the rituals and customs associated therewith.

For those interested in the subject but ignorant of the detail, and especially for those preparing to get married under a chuppah, Mazal Tov! is a repository of much useful information, elegantly arranged and described with admirable clarity.

Michael Shire also includes a small selection of readings on the themes of Covenant, Love (Ahava [sic]) and Holiness that may be of use to those who wish to add material of their own to their wedding; there is however a complete liturgy as well as two sample ketubbot (marriage contracts), one traditional the other modern.

Throughout, the text is beautifully illustrated with ketubbot from previous centuries and many pages are also bordered with beautiful illuminations. Of special note are the illustrations from an eighteenth century English manuscript called Liturgical Selections which is of cultural as well as aesthetic value. This is a text that all Jewish bibliophiles, and many others, will be happy to have on their shelves.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh