

CD-1098 Transcription

Recording of the wedding of Marc Tanenbaum and

Georgette Bennett. 6 June 1982.

[organ music to 8:20]

[organ and singing in Hebrew from 8:20 to 9:47]

M: Oh God, supremely blessed, supreme in might and glory,  
guide and bless this bride and groom. [10:00] *Barukh ata*  
*Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha-olam, bo'rei p'ri hagafen. Baruch*  
*ata adonai eloheinu melech ha'olam asher kid'shanu*  
*b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu* [Hebrew]. (pause) Remember always  
that this was the very first thing you did in your new life  
together, to drink [11:00] from the same cup. This first  
cup of wine may be said to represent life's happiness, of  
which we hope you will have a great portion. Remember to  
share that happiness with each other, just as you have  
shared this first cup of wine. And you will find that the  
happiness of life will grow and life's joys will be doubly  
gladdening.

M1: A dear and precious friend, Marc, together with your many  
colleagues, I've long admired you as a great creative  
spirit [12:00] on the American scene; as a brilliant and

dedicated spokesman for the Jewish community; and as one who has contributed richly to the upliftment of the moral and ethical climate in our community. But I must confess that I admire most of all, of all your accomplishments, a good sense and good judgment and wisdom that you chose in the choice of a most beautiful, the most radiant, the most charming and lovely bride you have [chosen?]. I know that there are many emotions stirring the hearts of all those who are privileged to share the sacred, beautiful moment in your lives. [13:00] But if brevity is the soul of eloquence at all times, it is particularly true of wedding addresses. It is not very kind to keep a bride and groom standing for too long under the *chuppah*. And so I will spare you all the beautiful sentiments that [prompt?] our hearts at this time towards you, and will only remind you of that which you already know, Marc and Georgette: that in Jewish tradition, the home is known as a *miqdash me'at* -- as a small sanctuary. As a holy place. Just as communities erect sanctuaries to which they bring the best and noblest in them, so too do individuals build private sanctuaries, [14:00] as you are doing today. You're building a small sanctuary, a holy place. And I would like to remind you that Moses, when the first sanctuary ever erected by the children of Israel was concluded, blessed the children of

Israel. And I should like to invite this blessing to you as you are establishing a beautiful home in the community.

Moses first blessed the children of Israel -- [Hebrew] May it be God's will that His divine presence reside in the home that you have put together in love and devotion, one to the other. [Hebrew] May the blessedness and the grace and the love of the Lord our God accompany you all the days and years of your lives. Amen. [15:00]

M: And now, Marc, in the presence of this assembly, do you take Georgette to be your wife, and do you promise to love, honor, and cherish her throughout life? If so, answer "I do."

MARC: I do.

M: Georgette, do you of your own free will and consent take Marc to be your husband, and do you promise to love, honor, and cherish him throughout life? If so, answer "I do."

GEORGETTE: I do. (laughter)

M: Now, Marc and Georgette, you have prepared certain sentiments that you wish to address to each other. I [16:00] invite you now to do so, Georgette.

GEORGETTE: This is written to Marc on our wedding day. Today I'm starting my life all over again. I stand here not an innocent girl but a knowing woman. It's because of what I know that I'm standing here with you. I've tried love

before; I know its pains, its joys, what's false, what's real. I found with you a bedrock of love, planted solid in the earth, soaring light through the air, floating buoyant on warm waters. Earth, air, water: the elements of life, and fire to ignite us into being. You nurture the woman in me, [17:00] and though there's a score of years between us, I'm glad I grew up in time to find you, in time to start my life all over again, in time to be here with you.

MARC: I guess this is our first dialogue. And Georgette speaks as a radio-TV commentator, and I'm going to turn out to be a rabbi preacher. Each of us is born male and female. The mystical book of the Zohar tells us: And at the moment of birth, a split prevails. The male and female into exile are thrust, and if they're worthy of one another, [18:00] marriage reunites the male and female into one soul, into one being. Georgette, my love, you and I have been through our separate exiles, and we have experienced glory and despair along the journeys of our past. And our pains and challenges have made us ready for the healing of love -- real love, unconditional love, a love that turns a person into two and two into one. I have never known, nor have ever loved, a woman like you, Georgette: [19:00] radiant with life and sunshine and beauty, so filled with the gift of giving pleasure and fun, almost childlike. So

intelligent and flaring with creative artistry, so accomplished as a super-professional, the best in her business. So loyal in friendship and caring and filled with trust. And with all these virtues, none exaggerated, like all humans, none of us are without faults and shortcomings. For if you seek a faultless mate, tradition tells us you will remain without any mate forever. For love eventually draws a veil over all [20:00] our human shortcomings and leaves uncovered our essential truth. To love and be loved as much as we do each other is the highest bliss on earth. And that truth we now know as our marriage hopefully ends our exiles and reunites us into one whole being, radiant and in jubilant hope, as we hold hands, facing together the excitement and promise of our lives together into our world of many, many blessed tomorrows. [21:00]

M: And now, Marc, place the ring upon the finger of your bride in token of wedlock, and recite the appropriate declaration.

MARC: *Harei at m'kudeshet li b'tabaat zo k'dat Moshe v'Yisrael.* Behold, thou art betrothed unto me with this ring, in accordance with the laws of Moses and of Israel.

M: And now, bride, place your ring upon the finger of your bridegroom and repeat after me the words I now say. *Harei -*

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GEORGETTE:        *Harei* --  
M:        -- *atah* --  
GEORGETTE:        -- *atah* --  
M:        -- *m'kudash* --  
GEORGETTE:        -- *m'kudash* --  
M:        -- *li* --  
GEORGETTE:        -- *li* --  
M:        -- *b'tabaat* --  
GEORGETTE:        -- *b'tabaat* --  
M:        -- *zo* --  
GEORGETTE:        -- *zo* --  
M:        -- *k'dat* --  
GEORGETTE:        -- *k'dat* -- [22:00]  
M:        -- *Moshe* --  
GEORGETTE:        -- *Moshe* --  
M:        -- *v'Yisrael.*  
GEORGETTE:        -- *v'Yisrael.*  
M:        Behold --  
GEORGETTE:        Behold --  
M:        -- thou art wed unto me --  
GEORGETTE:        -- thou art wed unto me --  
M:        -- with this ring --  
GEORGETTE:        -- with this ring --  
M:        -- as my husband --

GEORGETTE: -- as my husband --

M: -- according to the laws --

GEORGETTE: -- according to the laws --

M: -- of Moses and Israel.

GEORGETTE: -- of Moses and Israel.

M: As by these rings you symbolize your marriage bond, may their meanings sink into your hearts and bind your lives together in devotion and in faithfulness to one another. In ever-growing love may you build a true home in Israel, a home filled with the spirit of faith, of truth, and of the reverence of God. And now I read to you from the [23:00] ketubah from your marriage certificate, first from the Aramaic original and then from the English (inaudible).  
[Aramaic] [24:00]

This ketubah witnesses, before God and all those present, that on the first day of the week, the fifteenth of the month of Sivan in the year 5742, corresponding to the sixth day of June, 1982, the holy covenant of marriage was entered into in New York, New York, between the bridegroom Marc Herman Tanenbaum and the bride Georgette Francesca Bennett, and both declared, "Affirming our people's covenant with God, may we be consecrated to each other by this ring. Let our lives be intertwined forever. Let our

hearts be united in faith and in hope. Let our home be rich with wisdom and reverence. [25:00] Limitless is my love for you, and my devotion without end. I take you to be mine in love and in tenderness. I take you to be mine in faithfulness. May our hearts beat as one in days of joy as of trouble. May our life together be illumined by our people's heritage. May our home be built on Torah and loving kindness. May my love for you last forever." This covenant of marriage has been signed and sealed according to the laws and traditions that began with Abraham and Sarah and continued through Moses and the people of Israel. And now, bridegroom, I give you this certificate of your marriage to give to your bride, [26:00] to have and to hold for all time.

M2: Georgette and Marc, we've come now to that part in the service of Sheva Brachot, the seven blessings that are said at every Jewish wedding. Before these blessings are said, I would ask the friends and family that are gathered with you at this tender and sacred moment, and as both of you stand under the *chuppah*, to think of the countless generations of Jewish brides and Jewish grooms who have said and heard these blessings amid all circumstances and times, and in your own families -- the parents, the grandparents, your great-grandparents, the long line of Jewish brides and

Jewish grooms [27:00] that heard these blessings and brought you to the *chuppah* this day. *Baruch Ata HaShem Elokainu Melech HaOlam, Boreh Pri HaGafen.*

MARC: [Amen?]

M: *Barukh ata Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha'olam SheHakol Barah Lichvodo.*

MARC: Amen.

M: Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, who is the creator of the universe and has created the fruit of the vine. Blessed art thou O Lord our God, ruler of the universe, who has created all things for His glory.

CANTOR: *Baruch Ata Adonai Elohainu Melech HaOlam, [28:00] Yotzer Ha'Adam. Baruch Ata HaShem Elokainu Melech HaOlam, Asher Yatzar Et Ha'Adam Betzalmo, b'Tzelem Dmut Tavnito, VeHitkon Lo Mimenu Binyan Adei Ad. Baruch Ata Adonai Yotzer Ha'Adam [29:00] Sos Tasis VeTagel HaAkarah, BeKibbutz Bane'ha Letocha BeSimchaa. Baruch Ata Adonai, Mesame'ach Tzion BeVaneh. Sameach TeSamach Re'im Ahuvim, KeSamechacha Yetzircha BeGan Eden MiKedem. Baruch Ata Ha ata Adonai, MeSame'ach Chatan VeKalah. [30:00] Baruch Ata HaShem Elokainu Melech HaOlam, Asher Barah Sasson VeSimcha, Chatan VeKalah, Gila Rina, Ditzza VeChedva, Ahava VeAchava, VeShalom VeRe'ut. [31:00] MeHera, MeHera, MeHera Adonai Eloheinu BeArei Yehudah U'Vchutzot Yerushalayim, Kol Sasson*

*V'eKol Simcha, Kol Chatan V'eKol Kalah, Kol Mitzhalot  
Chatanim MeChupatam, U'Nearim Mimishte Neginatam. [32:00]  
Baruch Ata Adonai MeSame'ach Chatan Im Hakalah, Im Hakalah.*

(pause) [33:00]

M: The second cup of wine, from which you have just drunk together, may be said to represent those burdens that from a part of everyone's living. Remember to share them with each other just as you have shared this second cup of wine, and you will find that the burdens of life will become the lighter and the easier to bear. (pause)

M2: Rabbi [Nain?], Rabbi Rudin, (inaudible), Cantor [Lakuwitz?], Dr. Georgette Bennett, Rabbi [Matelba?], family and friends of the newlyweds, I have the incomparable [34:00] distinction of speaking about these two extraordinary persons who today honor us by sharing with us this awesome and festive occasion. Firstly, my credentials for being here: I am the Puerto Rican branch of Georgette's family. I'll explain that later. Also, while coincidental, I would nevertheless like to dedicate my people's Puerto Rican Day Parade today on Fifth Avenue, with Technicolor trumpet-blowers and joyous horses, as an overture to the spiritual and intellectual symphony beginning today for Georgette and Marc. I count as one of the more important occasions of my life the friendship of

Dr. Bennett -- Georgette. [35:00] I met her when we were both in the upper management of the police department. It was the early 1970s; organizational and conceptual reforms were essential. Police Commissioner Pat Murphy assembled a team dedicated to that end. Georgette was a unique and invaluable member of that team. Her contributions are many. But outstandingly, if one of her monumental contributions can be considered more outstanding than another, it is the police department's unisex hiring and promotion practices. In the future, not too distant perhaps, when the Police Commissioner is a woman, it will be due in great measure to the efforts of Georgette. As I said, I met [36:00] her then for many hours of discussion and laboring for reforms on an extensive scale, but with some regard for women and minorities, Georgette and I concluded that our mutual respect and concern established a bond of such familial affection that we should thenceforth be as brother and sister: a grand occasion for me indeed. Georgette has continued to quest for reform -- a professorship in [the city?] university teaching young, inquiring minds; her TV news commentaries; her consultant's role in dealing with societal problems -- her entire life has been dedicated to the betterment of our city. Beyond this, her essential role is as a role model, surely a role model for today's

aspiring woman. [37:00] And yet even beyond that, a role model for us all, who would seek to reach into the bramble bush of the present to pluck the blossoms of tomorrow.

Thank you, Georgette.

I, of course, do not know Rabbi Tanenbaum as well as I do Georgette. I met him a few short years ago one morning, while shaving and listening to news radio station WINS. I was then, and continued to be, amazed at his incisive analysis of the condition of humankind. He has that rare gift of delving into the glorious as well as inglorious nature of the human condition -- delving and defining monumental complexities in unavoidably understandable terms. Who has not been moved by his comments on nuclear disarmament, the problems of refugees, world hunger, and similar concerns? His is a voice [38:00] of the universal conscience. He is to me, and I believe to all of us, a big brother to whom we look for guidance as we move down the darkened alleys and by-ways of an increasingly complex midnight world. He is there to command that the [bullying?] shadows of unreason, hatred, fear, and ignorance step forward so that we may do battle with them. Thank you, Marc.

And now, here we are celebrating the union of these two people. What a marvelous relationship this will be, and how marvelously we will benefit from the magnification of their efforts to (inaudible). Georgette, Marc, thank you each and both for being.

M: Georgette and Marc, as this traditional Jewish marriage service [39:00] draws now toward its close, it is my privilege to address a few words to you. Marc, you and I have been friends for a long time, and we have been drawing together on this very pulpit, preaching to this congregation some two and a half decades ago. And I learned to admire you and to have great affection for you. And I cherish your friendship. Now I hope I have a new friend in Georgette. And I would speak, therefore, for all your friends, and their number [40:00] -- to coin a trite saying, their number is legion. I would speak for all your friends in praying that the benediction that was read yesterday morning in the synagogue and the portion of the Torah shall be fulfilled for you in all of its meanings. It is a great benediction. *Yevarekhe kha Adonia veyish merekha*: May the Lord bless you and keep you. And the ancient rabbi say that the meaning of that first verse of the benediction is that -- may your physical comforts be multiplied, and may you be [41:00] preserved and kept

safely from all illness. And then there is the second verse of the benediction: the verse that begins with the words "*ya'er Adonai panav eleykha*": May the Lord literally make his face become illumined toward you. And the ancient rabbi said "*ya'er*," that first word, [*zem ol?*] Torah. That represents the light of the Torah, so that the blessing would mean, "For you, may you in your life together engage in the pursuit of the intellectual and the spiritual. [42:00] And may you engage in the desire to know more Torah and to live in accordance with its teachings." And then the third and last verse of that priestly benediction concludes, "*veyasem lekha shalom*." [audio cuts out at 42:21]

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