

## **DURING THE ENGAGEMENT:**

All of the restrictions of yichud and physical contact between men and women are in full effect for an engaged couple until after the chupah.

An engaged couple may not live together in the same house even when there is no question of yichud.

It is an ancient and widely accepted custom for the groom to send gifts to the bride during their engagement. To avoid the danger of the gifts being mistaken for a form of kiddushin- a legitimate concern especially when a ring is given as a sign of commitment- the following precautions are recommended: No witnesses should be present at the time the gifts are given to the bride or when the groom gives the gifts to the messenger to give to the bride. The groom should not say that the gift is being given as a token of commitment or as an engagement present; rather it should be given simply as a gift.

Although it is a widespread custom to do so, it is improper to write a pasuk, or part of a pasuk, on a wedding invitation, since invitations are generally discarded.

## **THE PROPER TIME AND PLACE OF THE WEDDING:**

If two brothers or two sisters [or a younger sister and an older brother are engaged to be married at the same time, the older one must get married first. It is permitted, however, for a younger brother or sister to become engaged and married before their older sibling becomes engaged.

There is a custom followed by some people not to get married in the second half of the Hebrew month. If, however, this constraint will delay the wedding unnecessarily, many authorities agree that the custom should be sidestepped to avoid undue delay.

When scheduling a wedding, it is important to allow enough time to finish all the pre-chupah arrangements in time for the chupah to take place on the date which is written on the kesubah. Some poskim maintain that if the kesubah has a different date from when the kiddushin actually took place, the kesubah is invalid. At the very least, it is important to make sure that the legal transaction of the kesubah (kinyan) takes place before nightfall.

It is an ancient custom to perform the chupah ceremony under an open sky. Several poskim mention, however, that if the bride and groom insist on the chupah taking place inside, there is no reason to object and argue about it since it is not forbidden to do so.

## **THE DAY OF THE WEDDING:**

It is customary for the bride and groom to fast on the day of their wedding [except on the days when it is forbidden to fast, until after the chupah. They are allowed to rinse their mouth or brush their teeth, even with toothpaste.

If the chupah is delayed well past nightfall and the bride and groom are hungry, they may break their fast before the chupah, provided that no alcoholic beverages are consumed.

A bride and groom who find it very difficult to fast do not have to fast at all, but they should eat only a limited amount of food.

If the day of the wedding falls on a day when the Torah is read, the groom must be called up to the Torah. His "obligation" supersedes anyone else's, such as a bar mitzvah or a person whose parent's yahrtzeit is that day.

Traditionally, the bride and groom recite aneinu and add the viduy supplication at the conclusion of their Minchah prayers. The groom, however, should not forgo davening with a tzibbur for this or any other reason.

*(Rabbi Daniel Neustadt, torah.org. For final rulings, consult your Rav.)*