

## *Selected Wedding Rituals – by Gail McCabe*

### *Wine Rituals*

*A The couple fill each other's cup, then raise their glass to each other and drink fully*

Bride and Groom have chosen to celebrate their commitment to their love and friendship with a Wine Ritual. Tradition dictates that the couple share a glass of wine drinking from the same cup. But Bride & Groom have chosen the reading from The Prophet for the instruction to “fill each other's cup, but drink not from one cup.” And what is The Prophet's meaning . . .

Bride and Groom believe that by filling a glass for each other they represent their intention to nurture and fulfill each other's need for emotional and physical sustenance ... by drinking the wine from two cups, they represent their intention to provide freedom and space for each other. In this way, they can both taste life as a unique and personal experience at the same time that they are assured of each other's support and commitment.

*B The cups are filled and waiting on the table for the wine ritual*

Officiant: This cup of wine symbolizes the cup of life. We know that life can be bitter and it can be oh so sweet. As you share the cup, you undertake to share all that the future may bring. All the sweetness that life's cup may hold for you, should be sweeter because you drink it together; whatever drops of bitterness it may contain should be less bitter because you share them.

By sharing this cup of wine, you express symbolically, your willingness to share together the sweetness of life as well as the bitter. For only when taken together can we ever know and appreciate what is sweet and what is bitter. These two are inseparable unto each other; just as you two, Bride and Groom, have pledged to be faithful and inseparable from each other.

Bride and Groom, as you have chosen to mingle your lives, so now do you mingle your love... the two becoming as one through the sharing of wine from a single cup.

Optional version, Bride and Groom say together or separately: We have pledged ourselves to each other before this gathering; exchanged our vows of love and support for each other. Now, let us drink from the loving cup for the joy of this union.

Partner: Just as we share this cup together, let us drink deeply of life together

Partner: Just as we share in the fruits of the vine, let us share always the fruits of the bonds we have made together today.

## *Remembrance of Loved Ones*

There are many words and places in the ceremony where loved ones can be remembered. Often a candle is lit prior to the ceremony or during the ceremony in silence or with words. Acknowledgements can be made in the program if preferred.

*A* There are those who were close to Bride and Groom who have died but whom we remember today, because they played an important part in the lives of Bride and Groom and their families. Their spirits touched us during their lives and touch us still in memory and in the influences they have upon us. Let us remember them in a moment of silence.

*B* you may have noticed that both Bride and Groom are wearing yellow roses for this afternoon's ceremony. The yellow rose represents joy, gladness, friendship, delight, the promise of a new beginning and deeply held memories. The yellow rose is also the favorite flower of the Bride's youngest sister, who should have been at this wedding today, and who lives on in the memories of all who knew her. Katy played a vital role in bringing Bride and Groom together, and her presence is greatly missed.

## *Flower Ritual*

### *A Ritual for Couple and Families*

There are many possibilities for words and gifts in this ritual. For example, couples have given the gift of trees in creative ways. It is also possible to revise the wording to reflect a blended family or separated parents and to omit the reference to children the couple may have.

Bride and Groom wish to acknowledge the significant role their parents have played in preparing them for this day. Both sets of parents, Gail and Paul, and Angus and Adelia have enjoyed long and happy marriages. They gave their children happy and secure childhoods and went on to offer support and advice, as Bride and Groom grew to adulthood. The memories of the love and understanding which they passed to their children are very much alive here today, and those values will, in turn, be passed on by Bride and Groom to the children they will have together.

In recognition of your part in their growth from seedlings to full bloom, they have chosen a gift of flowers which they will present to you now.

*(Bride and Groom present the flowers to their parents. Groom holding the flowers as Bride passes them to the parents)*

*~ A Water Ritual ... filling the Vessel of Life ~*

**Officiant:** We will now enact a water ritual that began much earlier today when we saw Bride and Groom's mothers fill the small vessels of water you see before you. These vessels brimming over represent the separate families and histories of Bride and Groom. For indeed, they have come separately today before you to become joined as one. In this ceremony, Bride and Groom will mingle their past histories as they fill the Vessel of Unity and Life today. (Bride and Groom take a vessel in hand)

**Officiant:** Above you , below you, forever surrounding you, shall be the pledges you make to each other today -- a pledge of truth and purity and of constant friendship. The passion and fire of your spirits and the deepest ocean of love your souls have to give. It is the pledge of all that is within you. The only true pledge that one heart can offer another. (Bride and Groom join hands)

**Officiant:** You are now as Bride and Groom offering yourselves, and all of your experiences to each other, towards the creation of your future, and to all that is yet to come. (Bride and Groom pour their individual vessels into the Vessel of Unity and Life, symbolizing the union of two becoming one).

**Officiant:** As the waters of past lives and families flow together, so will present and future lives be intermingled the one with the other. Two vessels empty into one, two hearts and lives come together in one.

*Including the Gathering in the Ceremony*

*Ritual of Good Intentions*

*This is an excellent ceremony that can include a large gathering when combined with an invocation and questions to the guests for support.*

Now to all of you gathered here today. You are the people with whom \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_ want to share their joy as they enter into marriage. They hope that in the years ahead your love will be a continuous source of strength for them.

As you came in, you were given a crystal to be used as a token for your part in the ceremony. I ask you now to hold the crystal fast in your hand. Now, together, will you all make a silent wish for \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_, as a sign of your blessings for

their marriage and your commitment to be a source of continuing strength, wisdom and support to them?

~ *A moment's silence* ~

Having thus brought your wishes for \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_ into the tangible world, will you please keep the crystal safe and place it in the glass bowl by the doors after the ceremony. In that way, \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_ can keep your good intentions safe in their home for years to come.

### *Sea Glass Ritual ~ good intentions revised to fit the family*

Family and friends, as you entered the garden, you were presented with a vase of Sea Glass with the request that you take a piece for your part in the ceremony. Please hold the Sea Glass in your hand now. It is only a simple piece of glass, but it has great value. Ellie and her family spent most of their summers on Cape Cod.

For years, the family has collected Sea Glass as they walked along the beaches and bays, talking and laughing and enjoying the beauty of the ocean. It wasn't long after meeting \_\_\_\_ that \_\_\_\_ joined in this tradition. As they travel together, the search has expanded to the shores of Lake Ontario, Atlantic Canada and the New England coastline. The Sea Glass you are holding in your hand represents precious memories and has been prominently displayed in \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_'s home. It may have been collected by \_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_, by one of \_\_\_\_'s siblings, by her late parents, \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_ or by \_\_\_\_'s parents, \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. It is therefore irreplaceable. The holding of this simple treasure in your hand represents the union of the \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_ families.

At the end of the ceremony, you will be asked to return the Sea Glass to its vase. It will be displayed again in \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_'s home made richer by your touch for a lasting memory of this day.

### *Sharing of Bread*

In this ritual, the couple acknowledges the support of friends and family over the years by making a blessing over the bread, which they indicate represents the love and strength they have received from their real and created families. While any bread can be used, a *Panforte* (sweet, heavy Italian fruitcake made with nuts and dried fruits) or *Challah* (traditional Jewish bread made with eggs and saffron)

work very well, since they are already imbued with traditions of abundance and fruitfulness.

Once the bread is blessed or dedicated to the gathering, it can be cut at the offering table and carried on platters throughout the room to be offered as a token to all present. As everyone eats their bread some suitable words or reading are offered.

### *Wine and Blessings*

Likewise, wine can be used as an offering to the couple from the guests or family or to the guests by the couple. These rituals are accompanied with words and the pouring of wine into goblets or small glasses. The size of the gathering often dictates the possibilities and sometimes only the wedding party itself or the immediate families participate in these rituals of union.

### *Celtic Well-Wishing (Benediction)*

The well-wishing is a blessing made for the couple by the gathering speaking in unison. This is also an excellent opportunity for a large gathering to participate in wishing the couple well:

Now, I ask that all of you join with me in giving our sincere support to our newlywed couple, by reciting the Well-wishing Verse that appears on the back cover of your Programme. This Celtic blessing will mark the end of the ceremony and the beginning of a new chapter in Name and Name's lives together.

Now, on the count of three, let them hear us as one voice: one, two, three...

*The peace of the running water to you,  
The peace of the flowing air to you,  
The peace of the quiet earth to you,  
The peace of the shining stars to you,  
And the love and the care of us all to you.*

Name and Name -- go now in peace and joy and continue to search for all that is good and beautiful in this life.