

## **Glenn & Juli's Wedding Introduction/Opening Blessing:**

B'ruchim Haba'im! Welcome all those who have come to share in this *simcha*, this celebration, this union of two individuals.

Glenn, Juli, welcome to your *chuppah* – the marriage canopy under which you will become husband and wife. Before you entered this *chuppah*, you circled each other seven times, symbolizing the strength of your union, and providing a mystical means of protection for one another and the partnership you share.

The *chuppah* is a symbol of home – the home you will create together in your marriage. You both know the significance of home. As your wedding rings declare, “home is wherever I’m with you.” In *this* home, this temporary dwelling under which we stand now, the walls are open, extending warmth, welcome, and shelter in all directions. In fact, this *chuppah* is kind of like a *sukkah*! This week we celebrate the Jewish holiday of Sukkot, when we construct temporary dwellings outdoors and eat, drink, and *enjoy* the sacred changing of seasons. At Sukkot are taught to welcome guests – *ushpizin* – into these temporary homes to celebrate with others the elements of our natural world.

Glenn, Juli - take a moment to look around you. Everyone here tonight is a *part* of your marriage. They are your *ushpizin*. They are here as guests to celebrate with you tonight, and they will also help shape the home (pause) that will be your shelter for years to come.

As your close friend and someone who has watched your relationship unfold over many years together, it is truly my honor to officiate this ceremony. About a year ago, you sat me down at Coral Tree Café in Brentwood and asked me not only to be a part of *this* day, but the preparation for your marriage, as well. Juli, you asked me to be your mentor as you navigated the process of conversion, and over the last year it has been a privilege watching that process transform you both. It is a joy for me personally to culminate this full year underneath this *chuppah* with both of you.

In that joyous spirit, we begin this ceremony with the blessing for wine, a longtime symbol of joy and celebration in Jewish tradition...

### **Wedding Charge:**

Glenn, Juli, there is a wonderful story of a rabbi and her two students passing by a wedding as it is concluding. They overhear some guests leaving and commenting to each other on what a wonderful wedding it was – the food was fantastic. Other guests are overheard saying, what a wonderful wedding – the music was divine. Finally, some guests leave the wedding and turn to each other to say: “what a wonderful wedding – thank God those two got together.”

Tonight, I know that we’ll all leave this wedding saying how wonderful each aspect of it was – the food, the music, this gorgeous

setting. But most importantly, I know each of us will leave this wedding agreeing how lucky you two are to have found each other, and how wonderful it is that you decided to share your lives with one another.

Your story begins at UC Berkeley, at Sather Gate to be precise, where the UC Men's Octet, Glenn's a cappella group, would perform every Wednesday. Unbeknownst to Glenn, Juli, a self-professed "Octet Groupie," was nursing a bit of a crush. Yet you did not officially meet until January of 2006, where you approached Juli at a party, mistaking her for another good-looking girl in your Mass Com class. Despite the confusion, the two of you wound up hitting it off. Glenn, you quite literally took her breath away. Juli had an asthma attack that night and couldn't breathe – but Glenn, you took care of her and made sure she got home safely.

Your first official date that February took you to the Clark Kerr campus. Sitting on a bench overlooking Berkeley for several hours, you talked and got to know one another. You were struck by each other's honesty - by your common values. It was a beautiful night, and it wasn't a surprise to anyone that your relationship progressed quickly after that. Just a few months in, Glenn looked at you Juli and said, "This might freak you out, but I'm going to marry you." In response, you laughed, but as you said recently, somewhere deep down you knew that was true.

Last summer, Glenn picked out a ring, which was like a hot potato in his pocket. He could not wait to ask you to marry him. Despite his

plan for an elaborate proposal, he spontaneously proposed one day in August at your home. Juli, you went out of the room, heard a banging and clattering, then a very loud shout for you to stay where you were, and you feared the worst. But when you walked back into the room, there was Glenn, down on one knee, a ring in his hand and a declaration to spend the rest of your lives together.

You are each so incredibly “stoked” to be married to one another. Glenn, you love that Juli makes you feel like you are the best person in the world. Your fears and insecurities are nothing – with her support, you can do anything. She makes your life more meaningful, motivates you, and gives you purpose. She inspires you, and you are *honored* that she is going to be your wife.

Juli, you love that Glenn is feeler. You love that he makes people more comfortable, that he takes on the emotions of others; nurtures, protects, and provides for them. He makes you feel like you’re the cat’s meow, and as you told me emphatically, “I just *love* spending time with him!” Your values and morals are effortlessly in sync with one another, and Juli, your conversion to Judaism has only solidified your bond.

(pause)

Glenn, Juli – when you leave this *chuppah* tonight, you will leave here having committed your lives publicly to one another. You will dance and drink, and revel in the celebration of your marriage. But eventually, you will return to some semblance of normalcy, to work and

to expectations, to paying rent, dirty dishes, and taking care of your beloved pets, Gracie and Tibby.

What I charge both of you to do tonight is to take this incredible joy and holiness we each feel right now – and bring it into every day of your marriage. Infuse each day, each moment, with this feeling you have, standing under this *chuppah*, surrounded by those you love, as you consecrate your lives to one another. The most exciting, thrilling, and challenging parts are yet to come. As this *chuppah* reminds us, there may be moments of fragility and instability. Yet you have each other – a true partnership – where together, you are two halves making up one unstoppable whole.

Juli, you recently said: “I don’t know what the world is going to throw at us, but I’m confident at what we can throw at the world, together.” No truer, more inspiring words could be spoken about your future. Glenn, Juli, may your marriage be blessed with good health and happiness. May your home always be a place of love, compassion, patience, and laughter. May you continue to bless all those whose lives you touch, and may you always be blessed with the ability to take on the world, together.

*Kein Yehi Ratzon* and let us say, Amen!