



**Information for Couples Marrying
outside the Rabbinate**

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How do we do it?
What does it mean?
Is it a good idea?

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We've decided to get married!

What next? Do we have to get married through the Rabbinates?

The only official option for marriage in Israel is a religious wedding. Marriage and divorce for Israeli citizens and residents are conducted solely according to their religious law (each person according to their religious affiliation). This process is controlled solely by the official religious institutions recognized by the state. For Jews, this means the Orthodox Halakhah and the religious institution of the Rabbinates, together with the rabbinical courts.

As a result, couples who do not wish to marry in accordance with religious law or through the Rabbinates, or who cannot do so in accordance with the Halakhah, are unable to marry officially in Israel.

So there is no civil marriage in Israel?

Correct. Unfortunately, there is no option of civil marriage in Israel.

Why is the lack of civil marriage in Israel a problem?

The absence of an officially-recognized option for civil marriage is a serious human rights violation. Moreover, it causes particular harm to various groups: Couples who cannot marry in accordance with religious law; couples who do not want religious interference in their lives and do not want a religious marriage; and couples who do want a religious marriage, but not through the Rabbinates.

Who suffers because of the religious monopoly over marriage in Israel?

To start with, many couples can't get married in Israel because religious law doesn't allow it

Religious law does not permit every couple that wishes to marry to do so. Most people know that Jewish religious law does not allow Jews to marry non-Jews. So, for example, a Jewish man who wishes to marry a Muslim woman cannot do so; neither can a Jewish woman marry a Christian man. Mixed-faith couples thus suffer because of the religious monopoly over marriage in Israel.

But even when both partners are Jewish, the Halakhah does not always allow them to marry. **One example of Jewish couples that cannot marry are a Cohen (a Jewish man held to be of priestly descent) and a divorced woman.** In the past, such couples formed the majority of Jewish partners unable to marry. Today, however, this category also includes **hundreds of thousands of immigrants from the Former Soviet Union whose Jewish status is questioned, or who are not considered Jewish by the rabbinical courts.** Since they are not considered Jewish, they and their children cannot marry through the only officially-recognized mechanism in Israel. Another group are those who **underwent a conversion to Judaism that is not recognized by the rabbinical courts,** who are also not considered Jewish by the Rabbinate.

Couples from the LGBT+ community are also unable to marry in accordance with religious law. In recent years, a growing number of couples from this community wish to formalize their relationship in order to start a family.

In addition to all the groups mentioned above, **there are also couples who can marry in accordance with the Halakhah – i.e. the Rabbinate would allow them to do so – but who do not want to do so.**

Some people may be surprised to learn that **some observant Jewish couples do not want to marry through the Rabbinate.** Some of them see the Rabbinate as a corrupt, oppressive, and chauvinistic institution and do not wish to use its services. Others do not have any objection to the Rabbinate, but want to shape a more egalitarian wedding ceremony. These couples hold a private religious ceremony undertaken in accordance with the Halakhah that is binding in a religious sense ("*private Kiddushin.*") Unlike the Rabbinate's ceremonies, however, these weddings often have an egalitarian character, including legal mechanisms that can help avoid situations where the husband refuses to grant a divorce (*get*) to the wife if the couple decide to separate. Most of these couples do not subsequently have a civil marriage outside Israel because they do not want to

be recorded as married in Israel's Population Registry. On the contrary – they are concerned that such registration will oblige them to use the rabbinical establishment if they need a divorce. These couples are mainly interested in a religious wedding without being regarded as “married” by the state authorities.

Lastly, **some couples want to shape their own wedding ceremony in a way that is consistent with their way of life. These are usually secular couples who want to have a meaningful ceremony in accordance with their worldview.** These ceremonies sometimes include traditional and religious elements, but are not conducted by a rabbi from the Rabbinate. In most cases, these ceremonies are fully egalitarian and may be conducted by a woman or a man.

So what if we can't or don't want to marry through the Rabbinate, but we do want our surroundings or the state to recognize our relationship. What options do we have?

There are many different options. If you are mainly interested in receiving the legal rights of a married couple, and you want the state to give you these rights, you can choose not to marry at all and instead to live as a common law couple. Today, such couples enjoy very similar rights to those of married couples.

If it is important to you that your identity card will state that you are married, you can marry in a civil ceremony outside Israel and then register your marriage in Israel. Although Israel does not allow civil marriage in Israel, it does allow the registration of couples as married in the Population Registry on the basis of documents showing that they had a civil marriage outside the country. This solution entails costs for overseas travel and the arrangement of a civil marriage. Registration of marriage in Israel provides the couple with all the benefits of a married couple. However, it is important to remember that if the couple is Jewish, they will still have to go through the Rabbinate if they later wish to divorce (see below for further details).

These two options do not necessarily have to include a Jewish wedding ceremony. If it is important to you to have a public ceremony in Israel (whether or not it is Halakhically binding), you can choose to have a ceremony that is run by a body other than the Rabbinate.

This booklet does not discuss the first two options and focuses solely on the third. We will examine the options available to couples who want to have an unofficial wedding ceremony in Israel and explain the consequences of each choice. This will help each couple to choose the most appropriate option.

The Halakhic validity of a wedding ceremony that is not conducted by a rabbi from the Rabbinat

The Jewish wedding ceremony

A Jewish wedding ceremony includes two parts: *Kiddushin* (sanctification) and *Nisuin* (marriage). *Kiddushin* includes the giving of a ring by the man to the woman, accompanied by the declaration: “You are hereby sanctified to me with this ring in accordance with the religion of Moses and Israel.” Through this action, the man “acquires” the woman. The woman’s consent to the act of *Kiddushin* is expressed by extending her finger to receive the ring. In addition, the *Kiddushin* ceremony must take place before two Halakhically-acceptable witnesses. *Nisuin* means the actualization of *Kiddushin* through life together. This part of the ceremony requires the couple to stand together beneath the *Chuppah* (canopy), symbolizing their joint life – again, in the presence of two Halakhically-acceptable witnesses.

Is a wedding ceremony conducted by someone other than a rabbi from the Rabbinat valid in Halakhic and religious terms?

In other words: if a couple marry according to the Halakhic rules of the ceremony, but not through a rabbi from the Rabbinat, will they be considered married in religious terms?

Possibly. The Halakhah confines marriage to a ceremony between a Jewish man and a Jewish woman. In other words, a wedding ceremony for a Jewish and non-Jewish partner, or for two partners of the same sex, will not be considered Halakhically valid, even if it follows all the ceremonial rules.

If couples who are not permitted to marry according to the Halakhah nevertheless have a Halakhic ceremony, the marriage is considered valid. So if you are not allowed to marry according to the Halakhah but you go ahead with a Halakhic wedding ceremony, you will be considered married Halakhically.

In principle, there is no need for a rabbi from the Rabbinat to be present in order for the *Kiddushin* to be valid. Even if the act of *Kiddushin* takes place without prior registration at the Rabbinat, and without the presence of a rabbi from the Rabbinat, it may well be considered Halakhically binding – as long as it was conducted according to the required rules and the ceremony as described above.

In reality, however, things are a bit more complicated. At the end of the day, the rabbinical court decides whether a *Kiddushin* ceremony was valid or not. Its decision varies from case to case according to the circumstances and according to the considerations it decides to apply in each instance, including Halakhic and policy considerations, among others.

So the rabbinical court can determine whether a wedding ceremony held in accordance with the Halakhic rules is valid or not?

If the ceremony was held in accordance with the Halakhah, the court cannot claim otherwise. However, if it finds various flaws in the *Kiddushin* process, it can determine that the ceremony was not performed properly, and accordingly is invalid. For example, if the court rules that the witnesses at the ceremony were not acceptable (for example – witnesses who do not observe Shabbat), it may determine that the marriage was invalid.

What happens if the rabbinical court is uncertain whether or not the ceremony was conducted properly?

If the rabbinical court doubts the validity of a marriage, or if it has conflicting evidence concerning the validity of the ceremony, it can rule that this is a case of “doubtful *Kiddushin*” or “doubtful marriage.”

“Doubtful *Kiddushin*” refers to a situation in which it is impossible to confirm for certain that the *Kiddushin* ceremony was conducted according to the Halakhah, but it is also impossible to state categorically that this was not the case. This is a problematic state of affairs. On the one hand, this

determination prevents the couple from marrying others; on the other, if they wish to divorce, it is not clear whether the rabbinical court will rule that a divorce (*get*) is to be imposed, since some rabbis argue that this cannot take place in the case of “doubtful *Kiddushin*.”

As is clear from the above, a declaration of “doubtful *Kiddushin*” regarding a partner who wishes to separate is highly problematic, since they are liable to find themselves unable to remarry and unable to force their partner to grant a divorce.

How does a couple get divorced?

Divorce for a couple who married in a Halakhically-valid ceremony not conducted by a rabbi from the Rabbinate

In this context a distinction should be made between couples who were recorded as married in the Population Registry and those who were not recorded as such.

As we explained above, if you got married in a private ceremony outside the Rabbinate, the state does not recognize your wedding ceremony. In order to register as married, you will need to have a civil marriage outside Israel and only then to go to the Population Registry in order to register as married.

If you registered as married then if you wish to dissolve the marriage you will be subject to Israeli divorce law. Assuming you are both Jewish, Israeli law states that you are subject to rabbinical law or Jewish law, and the only court empowered to hear your divorce case is the rabbinical court.

The significance of this is that a marriage between Jewish partners registered with the Population Registry can only be dissolved by the rabbinical court system, even if the couple did not marry through the Rabbinate. It is important to bear this in mind when deciding to hold a private wedding ceremony followed by a civil marriage abroad. If your goal is ideological and you wish to avoid using the services of the rabbinical courts in the event of divorce, this goal is **not** secured by this process.

If you did not register as married, the situation is more complicated. Since you are not recorded as married in the state's Population Registry, then ostensibly as far as the state is concerned you are free to marry another partner without any process of separation. However, as we have already discussed, it is certainly possible that you **will** be considered married in Halakhic terms, if all the relevant Halakhic components were included in your wedding ceremony. In this situation, you will be unable to remarry until you obtain a proper Halakhic divorce (*get*) between you.

It is possible that partners who are not religiously observant may not be disturbed by this state of affairs and may not consider themselves to be restricted in forming new relationships. It is absolutely possible that if such partners wish to marry a new partner, even through the Rabbinate, they may not face any obstacle, since the Rabbinate will not be aware of the previous ceremony. However, it can be assumed that the majority of couples who have a Halakhic private ceremony will seek to continue in the same manner, and accordingly they will need to find a way to secure a Halakhic divorce.

A further problem that is liable to emerge in such a situation is when one of the partners refuses to cooperate and seeks to exploit this complex legal situation to their own advantage. If this partner contacts the state rabbinical court (for example by submitting a claim to recognize the private marriage), this is liable to lead to difficult legal complications. If the state rabbinical court learns that the couple married in a private Halakhic ceremony, it is reasonable to assume that their names will be added to the list of persons not permitted to marry. The ramification of this is that they will be unable to remarry unless they secure a religious divorce (*get*) from the state rabbinical court. **In other words, this situation creates the potential for one partner to refuse to grant a divorce to the other, just as is the case in "regular" marriage through the Rabbinate.**

Do couples have to get divorced through the rabbinical courts?

While marriage does not require the involvement of a religious body according to the Halakhah, divorce does require such involvement. The reason for this is that religious law requires the handing of the divorce (*get*) from the husband to the wife, including scrutiny of the process by a religious court. However, this scrutiny does not have to be undertaken by a rabbinical court or one under state auspices – it can also be undertaken by a private rabbinical court.

A number of independent rabbinical courts are active in Israel. Some of them belong to the Haredi community, others are identified with Religious (Orthodox) Zionism, and the Masorti (Conservative) movement also operates a rabbinical court. Some of these courts, particularly the Haredi ones, process divorce cases (arrangements for a *get*) alongside their other areas of involvement.

So, as we explained above – if you registered as married at the Population Registry, the only way you can divorce is through the rabbinical courts. But if you did not do so, but you are Halakhically married and it is important to you to end the partnership in a Halakhic manner, you can turn to these courts in order to arrange your divorce.

When the relationship ends by mutual consent, the arrangement of a divorce through one of the private rabbinical courts appears to offer an appropriate solution. **However, when the couple are not in agreement, the situation is more complex, since the private rabbinical courts have no way of forcing a person who does not wish to do so to appear before them or to cooperate in granting a divorce (*get*).**

What is the legal situation of couples who married in a private wedding ceremony?

Can we register as married at the Population Registry?

Registration of couples as married at the Population Registry entitles them to all the rights granted to married couples in Israel.

If you married in a private wedding ceremony in Israel, and then had a civil marriage abroad, you can register as married with the Population Registry on the basis of your civil marriage. In this case, the question as to whether the private ceremony was performed in accordance with the Halakhah does not arise, since the registration is based on the civil marriage.

What about couples who did not have a civil marriage abroad?

It depends.

If your ceremony was not Halakhically valid, then in any case you will not be able to register as married at the Population Registry.

If the ceremony was Halakhically valid and you had a private ceremony because you are not permitted to marry in accordance with the Halakhah (for example, a Cohen and a divorced woman), the state may recognize your marriage and agree to register you as married at the Population Registry. The Supreme Court has ruled in a series of cases that if the reason for marrying outside the Rabbinat was because the partners were not permitted to marry in accordance with the Halakhah, it will agree to recognize the marriage and will instruct the Interior Ministry to register the marriage.

If you married in a Halakhically-valid private wedding, but not through the Rabbinat, for ideological reasons, **the court will almost certainly not agree to register you as married at the Population Registry.** The Supreme Court has determined in a series of rulings that in such cases it will not agree to recognize the marriage.

The ramifications of not registering the marriage at the Population Registry

If you did not register as married, then in most cases you will at least be recognized as a common law couple for civil purposes. In other words – the state authorities will treat you as a common law couple and your legal rights will be those granted to such couples in the State of Israel.

Like other common law couples, couples who marry in a private ceremony but do not register at the Population Registry are liable to encounter difficulties when they need to prove their relationship. In the case of married couples, the partners' identity cards provide evidence of marriage. In the case of common law couples, the authorities may ask you to provide documents, affidavits, or other evidence proving your relationship.

We should note in this context that various organizations and private attorneys draft agreements for common law couples and issue certificates or affidavits confirming that the partners are living together. However, **these documents and affidavits are not considered official documents in Israel**, and at best they can help couples to prove their relationship in their contacts with authorities and institutions that demand proof of such a relationship.

We married in a private ceremony but we didn't register as married. What are our rights?

Alimony

According to the Halakhah, a married woman is entitled to alimony from her husband by virtue of the husband's undertaking in the *Kiddushin* ceremony to provide for his wife. The husband bears this obligation to provide alimony until he grants his wife a divorce (*get*).

A woman who has a private marriage not based on a Halakhic ceremony will be entitled to alimony from her partner – not on the basis of the husband's undertaking in the *Kiddushin* ceremony, but in accordance with the implicit contractual obligation between couples who maintain a joint life – a similar situation to that of common law couples.

Distribution of assets on the termination of the partnership

There are two systems in Israel that regulate the financial relationships between couples: the Financial Relationships between Spouses Law, 5734-1973, and the "property regime" (*hilkhat shituf*), a legal rule developed by the Supreme Court. Both systems begin from the assumption that the family assets belong to both partners equally, and on the termination of their joint life should be divided equally. There are various differences between these two systems, but in general it can be stated that, in most cases, the question whether the distribution is undertaken according to the law or according to the property regime will not have any significant ramifications.

In order to determine which financial regime will apply to you, we need to return to the question of registration at the Population Registry.

A couple registered as married at the Population Registry (for example, a couple who had a private ceremony combined with a civil marriage outside Israel) will be subject to the arrangement in the Financial Relationships Law. By contrast, a couple who did not register as married at the Population Registry (for example, a couple who had a private ceremony only, even if this ceremony was Halakhically valid) will almost certainly be subject to the property regime.

Inheritance

The Inheritance Law relates both to married couples and to couples who are not married but who maintain a joint household (common law couple). The law determines that if the partners maintain a joint household, they will be considered each other's heirs, as if they were married. In other words, in terms of inheritance law married couples and common law couples are subject to the same provisions. The only difference is that common law couples will need to prove to the court that they are indeed common law couples.

But what happens if the couple had a private wedding? Are they considered married or common law partners according to the Inheritance Law?

To date, there is no clear answer to this question. When presented with this issue, the courts have determined that in order for couples to be considered married for the purposes of the Inheritance Law, they must have had a wedding ceremony proving their desire to formalize their relationship. In all probability such a ceremony will be accepted even if the marriage was not registered at the Population Registry. The result of this is that couples who had a private wedding ceremony will be entitled to inheritance just like other married couples, but they will need to prove to the court that they had a private wedding.

What will our children's legal status be?

Parents' duties and rights regarding their children are not determined by the relationship between the parents but by virtue of parenthood itself. Accordingly, the question as to whether the parents are married, or how they married each other, is irrelevant when it comes to the children.

The legal and Halakhic status of a child born to Jewish parents not in a relationship with any other person, and who married through a private *Kiddushin* ceremony, is the same as the status of any other child born to Jewish parents, whether or not they were married by the Rabbinate and whether or not they were registered as married by the Rabbinate.

To prevent any possible doubt, we must emphasize that children born to parents who married in a private ceremony outside the Rabbinate are not *mamzerim* ("bastards.") According to the Halakhah, a *mamzer* is a person who was born to a married woman by her relationship with another

man other than her husband. If the woman who married in a private *Kiddushin* ceremony was single at the time she married, i.e. she was not married to another man, the couple's children will not be considered *mamzerim*.

For the purposes of payment of child support, Israeli law states that a person is liable to pay child support to his or her children in accordance with the relevant religious law. Jewish religious law obliges the father to pay child support whether or not he was married to the child's mother. Accordingly, the issue of marriage is completely irrelevant in determining the payment of child support. A child whose parents married in a private ceremony will be entitled to receive child support from their father just like a child whose parents had a "regular" Halakhic marriage.

The question how or whether the parents married is also irrelevant in terms of **the issue of parental custody arrangements following separation**. When there is no custody agreement between the parents, these arrangements are determined by the Family Affairs Court or the rabbinical court according to the principle of the best interests of the child. This principle is determined according to various considerations, but the question of the parents' marital status is not part of these considerations.

Is there any risk in having a private wedding ceremony?

In principle, a person who holds a private **Halakhic** wedding ceremony and does not "ensure the registration of the marriage" performed for themselves or which they performed for others, thereby commits a criminal offense liable to a penalty of up to two years' imprisonment. This criminal offense, the penalty for which was increased in October 2013, has never been enforced, and it is doubtful that it ever will be.

Leaving aside the theoretical criminal offense, it is important to take into account some potential complications in the unfortunate event that your relationship turns sour. You must be aware that if you married in a private ceremony and did not subsequently have and record a civil marriage in the population registry, the couple are considered to be single from the state's perspective. Accordingly, either partner can effectively marry another partner. There is no formal registration that will prevent the case of your partner marrying someone else.

Women considering marrying in a private ceremony should take into account that if the ceremony is Halakhically valid, they will be required to obtain a divorce (*get*) – otherwise they will not be able to remarry in Israel in a Halakhic ceremony. Even if a woman with this status enters into a new relationship without marrying, any children born from the new relationship are liable to be considered *mamzerim*, and accordingly will be unable to marry Jews in Israel.

Organizations and individuals active in the field

Okay – you’ve convinced me! So who can perform a wedding ceremony and who should I choose?

There are quite a few organizations and individuals in Israel who perform wedding ceremonies outside the auspices of the Rabbinat. Each such organization or individual who performs weddings may have their own reasons for doing so. The goals of the wedding ceremony may vary accordingly, as will the character of the ceremony.

In order to choose the right organization or individual, couples wishing to have a wedding ceremony should begin by asking themselves what goals they want to achieve and what kind of ceremony they prefer. Do you want your marriage to be recognized by the state? Or do you definitely **not** want it to be recognized, so that you will not have to get a divorce through the Rabbinat if you decide to end your marriage? Do you want an egalitarian ceremony? Do you want a Halakhic ceremony? Do you want to have a say in the content of the ceremony? Would you like the ceremony to be conducted by a woman?

In order to help you decide, we will list the relevant organizations active in this field in Israel and summarize their main features. We have organized the information in four tables. The first table details each organization, who it marries, and the cost. The second details aspects relating to the ceremony itself. The third discusses the agreements that accompany the ceremony, and the fourth summarizes the ramifications of the ceremony.

Organizations and individuals active in performing weddings and which couples they marry

* Couples not able to marry according to the Halakhah: a Jew and a non-Jew; a Cohen and a divorced woman; a Cohen and a woman who converted to Judaism; a couple below the age of marriage; a couple who are not single; same-sex couples.

Organization	Description	Do women as well as men perform weddings?	Who can marry?	Does the organization require proof of the criteria?	Price (as of 1 Jan. 2018)	Does the venue have to be kosher?
Orthodox rabbis	Orthodox rabbis who hold ceremonies that are Halakhic but not under the auspices of the Rabbinat	No	Jews only, who do not wish to marry through the Rabbinat. A ceremony will not be performed for a couple that is not permitted to marry according to the Halakhah*	Varies. Some rabbis accept an affidavit from the couple relating to some aspects. Some rabbis adopt a lenient approach to the Orthodox demands (for example – they do not require an Orthodox conversion)	Varies: some perform ceremonies voluntarily, some ask for reimbursement of their travel expenses, and some request payment	Not usually required
Mavoi Satum	An association established to combat the phenomenon of women whose husbands refuse to grant them a divorce in Israel	Yes, as the couple chooses.	Jews only. A ceremony will not be performed for a couple that is not permitted to marry according to the Halakhah*			
Masorti (Conservative) movement	A Jewish stream that combines loyalty to tradition with an openness to the modern world and to democratic and humanist culture	Yes	Jews by birth or by Halakhic conversion who are single and of marrying age. Same-sex couples are also married (commitment ceremony)	In most cases a declaration is accepted, but sometimes they check the Population Registry. In the case of conversion, the matter is checked with the converting court. For a divorced person, they will ask to see the <i>get</i>	NIS 1,700 Special consideration is shown to couples with limited means	Depends on the rabbi performing the ceremony. Sometimes ensuring vegetarian or dairy food will be considered sufficient

Organization	Description	Do women as well as men perform weddings?	Who can marry?	Does the organization require proof of the criteria?	Price (as of 1 Jan. 2018)	Does the venue have to be kosher?
Reform (Progressive) movement	The umbrella organization of Reform communities in Israel. This is a religious, cultural, and community stream that seeks to nurture and strengthen Jewish identity and the place of Jewish tradition in personal and public life.	Yes	Jews who meet the legal requirements (minimum age and single status). The movement marries a Cohen and a divorced women or convert and also marries same-sex couples. If a partner is not Jewish, conversion is offered	The couple's declaration is sufficient to determine Jewish status. The legal requirements are checked in the partners' ID cards and in the Population Registry	NIS 1,500 If the ceremony is over half an hour from the rabbi's home, travel expenses are added	Not required
Havaya Israeli Life Cycle Ceremonies	A secular center that holds Israeli life cycle ceremonies based on Jewish tradition and culture	Yes	Couples who cannot marry through the Rabbinate (including same-sex and mixed-faith couples) as well as those who do not wish to do so. Most of the couples are secular. A ceremony will not be performed for individuals registered as married to another partner or for minors.	The organization checks the ID card and the extract of registration at the Interior Ministry	NIS 1,650 – NIS 2,000	Not required
Tmura – Israeli Judaism	Tmura –is part of the Institute for Secular Humanitarian Judaism, a cultural Jewish center that promotes Israeli, Zionist, secular, proactive, and	Yes	The organization marries anyone interested in an Israeli, Jewish, secular, and humanitarian wedding. This includes couples who do not want to marry through	Declaration by the couple	NIS 1,500 – NIS 1,800	Not required

Organization	Description	Do women as well as men perform weddings?	Who can marry?	Does the organization require proof of the criteria?	Price (as of 1 Jan. 2018)	Does the venue have to be kosher?
	egalitarian Judaism based on humanitarian values. The organization also runs an Israeli leadership training program and trains secular-humanitarian rabbis		the Rabbinat as well as those who cannot, including same-sex couples. The definition of "Jewish" is broad and also includes Israeli citizens who consider themselves Jews.			
Celebrities	Figures from the world of entertainment or other public figures who perform wedding ceremonies	Yes	Mainly secular couples who cannot or do not want to marry through the Rabbinat, including same-sex and mixed-faith couples	No criteria, but couples are sometimes rejected due to personal incompatibility with the celebrity	NIS 1,800 – NIS 5,000	Not required

The Ceremony

Organization	Style of ceremony	Couple's involvement in planning the ceremony	Egalitarian (women's involvement/ ring)	Witnesses
Orthodox rabbis	Traditional Halakhic ceremony	Halakhic ceremony. The format is fixed, but depending on the officiating rabbi, the couple may be involved	Ordinary Halakhic ceremony	Halakhic witnesses. The rabbis do not always check how the witnesses observe Shabbat
Mavoi Satum	Halakhic ceremony, including condition in the <i>Kiddushin</i> and a pre-nup agreement. If the couple wishes, an egalitarian element is added to the ceremony	The couple is completely free to plan the ceremony within Halakhic limits, including condition in the <i>Kiddushin</i> and a pre-nup agreement preventing <i>get</i> refusal and <i>agunah</i> status	As the couple chooses	Two observant men. Depending on the officiant, two women witnesses may be added
Masorti (Conservative) movement	Traditional ceremony: engagement blessing, ring (usually mutual), reading part of the <i>Ketubah</i> , Seven Blessings, breaking the glass. The rabbi usually makes a speech to the couple	The officiant meets with the couple to plan the ceremony. The extent of involvement depends on the couple and the rabbi	Women can recite all the blessings. Inclusion of a ring from the woman to the man depends on the rabbi	Jews – not necessarily men; not related to each other or to the couple
Reform (Progressive) movement	Traditional ceremony including personal, couple, and family content, such as reading personal comments to each other before <i>Kiddushin</i> or adapting the wording of the <i>Ketubah</i>	Ceremony is planned with the full involvement of the couple, through dialogue with the rabbi they have selected	Egalitarian ceremony	Two witnesses, one of each sex, not related to the couple
Havaya Israeli Life Cycle Ceremonies	The ceremony includes all the traditional Jewish components as chosen by the couple: <i>Chuppah</i> , wine. Rings, <i>Ketubah</i> emphasizing values (drafted by the couple with the officiant's help), blessings, breaking the glass	Couple is very involved, studying the various components of the ceremony in detail and discussing content, symbols, and meanings. The couple chooses the components they consider important and the way the symbols will be manifested	Egalitarian ceremony	The guests are the witnesses; it is suggested that witnesses (a man and a woman) also sign the <i>Ketubah</i> . If the couple wants Halakhic witnesses, they received the necessary instructions
Tmura – Israeli Judaism	The ceremony has an Israeli, Jewish, secular, and humanitarian character, inspired by ancient and	The couple plan the ceremony with the officiating rabbi,	Egalitarian and mutual ceremony	In addition to the witnesses who sign the <i>Ketubah</i> , all the guests

Organization	Style of ceremony	Couple's involvement in planning the ceremony	Egalitarian (women's involvement/ ring)	Witnesses
	modern ceremonies in Jewish culture. The ceremony is prepared together with the couple, reflecting their values and lifestyle, and including: <i>Chuppah</i> , mutual <i>Kiddushin</i> , humanitarian blessings, breaking the glass, poems, and reading part of the <i>Ketubah</i> . The ceremony manifests the couple's values and includes personal statements by both partners	including personal statements and comments by family and friends		constitute a wedding community that witnesses the ceremony
Celebrities	Varies. The ceremonies are usually based on elements of the Halakhic ceremony in various permutations according to the personality of the officiating celebrity and the couple	The couple and the officiant usually meet several times before the ceremony to determine its form. The officiant offers various options	The ceremony is usually egalitarian and mutual	Depends on the officiant. In most cases there are no specific witnesses and the guests as a whole serve as the witnesses to the ceremony

Accompanying Documents

Organization	<i>Ketubah</i>	Pre-nuptial agreement	Agreement preventing refusal to grant a <i>get</i>
Orthodox rabbis	Standard in accordance with the Halakhah	Depends on the rabbi	Depends on the rabbi
Mavoi Satum	Yes	Recommended	Obligatory
Masorti (Conservative) movement	Yes, with several options: the Rabbinic version, a <i>Ketubah</i> prepared by the couple or the rabbi, and three versions prepared by the movement, as chosen by the couple	Recommended	Obligatory with some rabbis
Reform (Progressive) movement	The couple draft the <i>Ketubah</i>	Recommended	Recommended
Havaya Israeli Life Cycle Ceremonies	Usually a mutual non-financial <i>Ketubah</i> instead of the traditional version	Not discussed. The differences between common law couples and marriage are explained	Recommended but not obligatory
Tmura – Israeli Judaism	The <i>Ketubah</i> is a statement of mutual commitment to a shared future and the couple's love, drafted together with the couple. There is no mention of a financial agreement	Not discussed	Not discussed
Celebrities	Usually yes, not in a Halakhic format but drafted together with the couple reflecting their mutual commitment	Not usually discussed	Not usually discussed

Ramifications of the Ceremony

Organization	Condition in the <i>Kiddushin</i>	Halakhically valid?	Get required?	Recommendation re. civil marriage / registration at Interior Ministry	Is a certificate provided?
Orthodox rabbis	Depends on the rabbi. Some rabbis do not believe that the condition is valid so do not include it; others do	Yes	Yes	Varies according to the officiant	No
Mavoi Satum	Obligatory	Yes	Yes	The organization explains the options to the couple and helps them decide. In all cases publication of the marriage is recommended	Yes
Masorti (Conservative) movement	Probably will be adopted in the future	Depends on the Rabbinat's position concerning the validity of the ceremony	Depends on the Rabbinat's position concerning the validity of the ceremony	As the couple chooses. The organization presents both options. The couple must announce their choice before the wedding	Written confirmation provided on the movement's letterhead, stating the place of the wedding, date, and officiant
Reform (Progressive) movement	Recommended	Depends on the Rabbinat's position concerning the validity of the ceremony	Depends on the Rabbinat's position concerning the validity of the ceremony	The movement does not have a uniform recommendation. Each officiant recommends according to their individual position	"Chuppah and Partnership Certificate" since 2017
Havaya Israeli Life Cycle Ceremonies	If the ceremony is Halakhic. Some rabbis recommend the condition in the <i>Kiddushin</i> and an agreement arranging separation, jurisdictional authority, and mutual respect	The vast majority of ceremonies are not Halakhic in the traditional sense. If the couple want a Halakhic ceremony, the officiant discusses the	Depends whether the ceremony is Halakhic and on the agreement and the legal status of the couple (married / common law). If the case comes before the Rabbinat then naturally it also depends on the rabbinical court's decision	The organization recommends common law rather than married status. It is also recommended that the couple sign a joint life affidavit and a joint life agreement	"Joint Life Certificate" since June 2017 for couples who sign a partnership affidavit. The organization states that the certificate is recognized by the Ministry of Housing and is included in the "Kol Zchut" website as proof of the

Organization	Condition in the <i>Kiddushin</i>	Halakhically valid?	<i>Get</i> required?	Recommendation re. civil marriage / registration at Interior Ministry	Is a certificate provided?
		ramifications with them and ways to “mar” the Halakhic status (e.g. by the bride sanctifying the groom) in order to minimize the risk of <i>agunah</i> status. Naturally suitable Halakhic agreements are also recommended			relationship of common law couples
Tmura	Not relevant	Not examined	Not examined	The organization recommends that couples do not have a civil marriage and do not register	Possibility is being considered
Celebrities	No The ceremony is not Halakhically valid	Depends – usually not	Varies	Not discussed	No

Organizations that hold marriage ceremonies outside the Rabbinat

Several organizations in Israel hold marriage ceremonies outside the framework of the Rabbinat.

This section reviews these organizations. The information is taken from the organizations' websites and from discussions with their representatives.

Havaya Israel Life Cycle Ceremonies

Havaya Israel Life Cycle Ceremonies is a not-for-profit center active since 2006 that holds wedding, Bar/Bat Mitzvah, birth, circumcision, mourning, and memorial services. The center has developed Israeli lifecycle ceremonies based on Jewish tradition and sources in order to meet the needs of Israelis who cannot or do not want to marry in Israel or to use the official religious services. Havaya's wedding ceremonies are "tailor made" to reflect the couple's desires, choices, and taste. They are inspired by the traditional Jewish wedding ceremony but also embody the principle of equality and mutuality between the partners.

Havaya has a legal unit that provides legal advice for couples planning to marry and arranges for the signing of affidavits for common law couples confirming that they are pursuing a joint life. After signing the affidavit the couple receives a "Joint Life Certificate" proving that the couple signed an affidavit and is pursuing a joint life. The organization's website lists 15 officiators of ceremonies and 10 attorneys as of December 2017.

Since 2015, Havaya has operated under the auspices of Israel Hofsheet.

<http://havaya.info/>

The Israel Movement for Reform (Progressive) Judaism

The Israel Movement for Reform (Progressive) Judaism is the umbrella organization of the Reform communities in Israel. Reform is a religious, cultural, and community stream of Judaism that seeks to nurture and strengthen the Jewish identity of Jewish people and the place of Jewish tradition in individual and public life. The movement seeks to achieve this by renewing Judaism and adapting it to the realities of modern life. The movement offers various Jewish ceremonies, and according to its website tens of thousands of Israel use its religious services to hold ceremonies.

The Reform movement maintains a website called “**A Couple’s Ring**” – **An Egalitarian Jewish Wedding**. The website invites couples to plan a meaningful and personal wedding ceremony based on the Jewish tradition and on full equality. The suggested ceremony is firmly rooted in Jewish tradition and in the Halakhah. It is held under a *Chuppah*, including the engagement blessing, *Kiddushin*, reading the *Ketubah*, the Seven Blessings, and breaking the glass. The couple are invited to shape the Halakhic parts of the ceremony, including the wording of the *Ketubah* and the blessings. At the end of the ceremony a Chuppah and Partnership certificate is issued. The Reform movement’s website lists 24 rabbis (men and women) who hold wedding ceremonies as of December 2017.

<https://www.reformjudaism.org.il/wedding>

The Masorti (Conservative) movement

The Masorti (Conservative) movement is a Jewish stream Jewish stream that combines loyalty to tradition with an openness to the modern world and to democratic and humanist culture. The movement runs wedding ceremonies for Jewish couples and for couples unable to marry through the Rabbinat for various reasons. The ceremony conducted by the movement’s rabbis is Halakhically binding, but it is not recognized by the authorities. Accordingly, the movement recommends that the wedding be accompanied by civil marriage so that the couple can be registered as married. The movement’s website lists 62 rabbis who hold wedding ceremonies as of December 2017.

<https://www.masorti.org.il/page.php?pid=26>

Tmura – Israeli Judaism Tmura

Tmura – Israeli Judaism Tmura is part of the Institute for Secular Humanitarian Judaism, a cultural Jewish center that promotes Israeli, Zionist, secular, proactive, and egalitarian Judaism based on humanitarian values. The organization also runs an Israeli leadership training program and trains secular-humanitarian rabbis.

The organization ordains secular-humanitarian rabbis through a four-year training process intended for participants with an MA degree or above who have active experience in secular Israeli culture. The rabbis (37 as of 2018) lead secular-cultural communities around Israel, run Shabbat and festival activities, lectures, Batei Midrash, study groups, and social action in the field of secular-humanitarian Judaism. Another important area of

their activities is running lifecycle ceremonies: weddings, Bar/Bat Mitzva, birth ceremonies, and mourning, including the development of content, materials, and ceremonial aspects consistent with the secular-humanitarian worldview. Tmura's rabbis have held thousands of weddings in Israel and abroad over the past few years.

www.israeli-judaism.org.il

Online platform for officiants running secular-Jewish weddings in Israel

Tkasim – The Portal for Secular Jewish Ceremony Officiants is a private website run on a voluntary basis that provides a free platform for officiants who run secular-Jewish lifecycle ceremonies in Israel. The website aims to encourage freedom of choice of suitable officiants. The website seeks to promote secular Judaism by creating a free culture of lifecycle ceremonies, including careful study and the reinterpretation of Jewish ceremonies. The website includes officiants for weddings, Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremonies, birth, and mourning. Any officiant who performs ceremonies in the spirit of free Judaism is invited to join. The conditions for inclusion are: proven experience in running ceremonies; an affinity to secular-humanitarian Judaism; acceptance of the website's ethical code; and an admissions process. Each officiant is required to pay a symbolic annual membership fee that helps covers the costs of the website. The website includes 24 officiants as of May 2018, including celebrities, Members of Knesset, and rabbis from the secular-humanitarian stream.

<http://www.tkasim.org.il/>