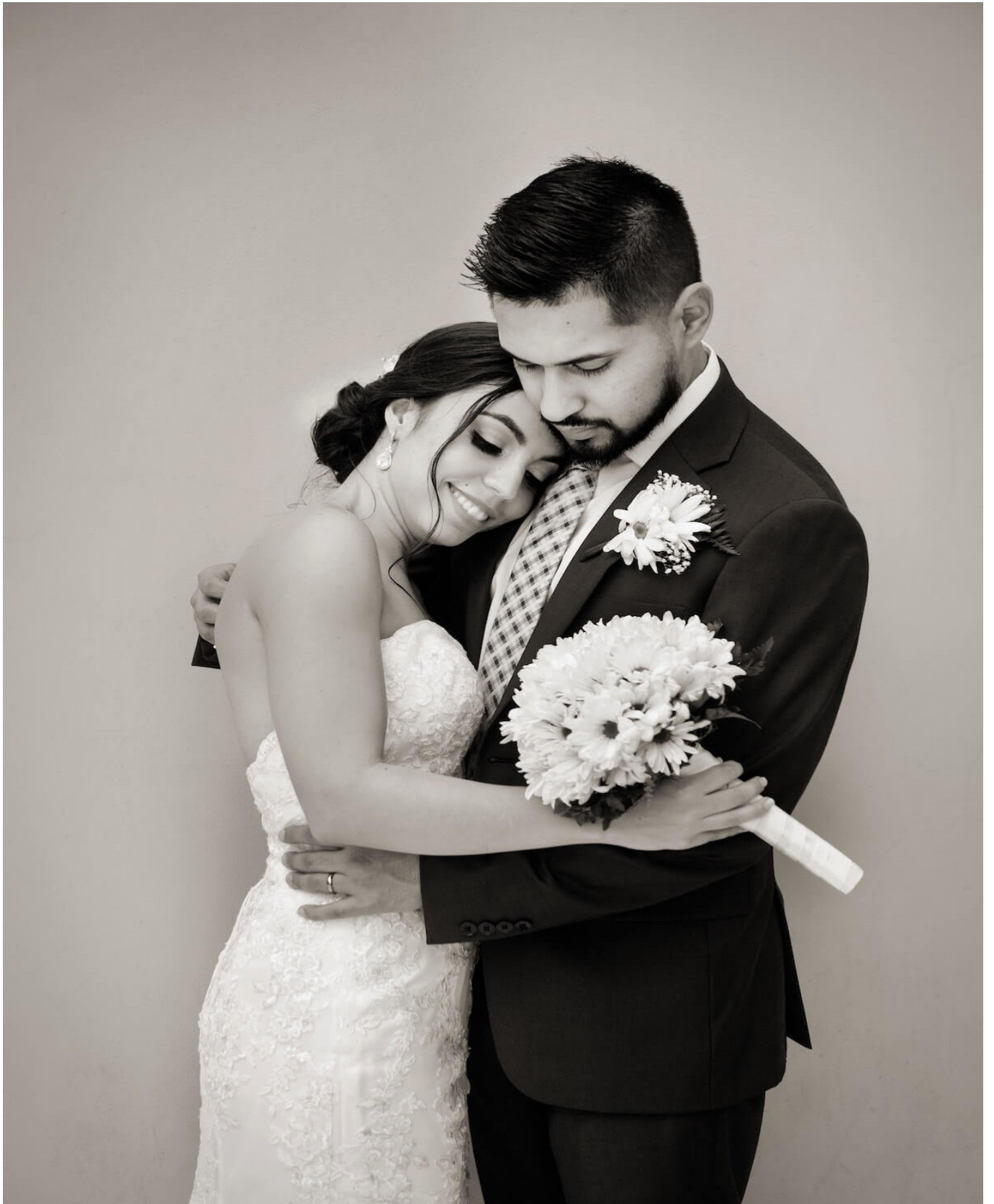


Mixed Marriages



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WELCOME

Congratulations to you and your partner on having decided to get married. This booklet is designed to give you some advice and explanation about ceremonies celebrating the union of mixed faith couples. It should be considered as a guide in planning your ceremony. Although it can not cover every possibility. It is intended to point out some of the more important issues that you will need to consider.





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Links

www.gov.uk/marriages-civil-partnerships

[www. jessyjudaica.com](http://www.jessyjudaica.com)

<https://18door.org>



THE LAW

Across Europe the law may be different depending in each country. In many european countries all legally binding marriages have to take place and be registered at an appropriate administrative office such as a Town, or City Hall. In other places, it is possible to have a civil servant conduct such a ceremony at the same venue as the religious ceremony. In Scandinavian countries it may be possible for the civil

ceremony to be included within the religious ceremony. In some european countries it is possible to have a legally binding civil-partnership, instead of having a civil marriage. In most of these cases, a couple must first have a civil marriage, before a religious ceremony can take place. In countries where this is not possible, (such as Israel) a civil and legal ceremony may first have to take place in another country.

In most cases it will be accepted under international law. In the UK some venues are licensed for civil ceremonies which can then be followed by a religious one. It is usually possible to be married in a civil ceremony, some time prior to the religious ceremony. Couples will need to show proof to the civil authorities regarding their identity, status and that they are free to marry.



In a very few countries, such as Israel, the state only allows for religious ceremonies to be legally binding and there may be any civil marriages as an alternative. In such cases, only state recognised clergy can officiate to the exclusion of others. As a result mixed-faith couples often choose to have their legal and religious ceremonies in another country. Such marriages are accepted as valid and binding under international law. The location of a religious ceremony can be in any suitable venue. This can include family homes, clubs, galleries, on mountains, in castles, museums, zoos, boats, beaches, restaurants and hotels. The form of the ritual will be agreed in advance.





THE CEREMONY

Some couples want a ritual which is close to a traditional Jewish marriage ceremony. This is possible with the exception that a traditional wedding document (*ketubah*) is not used. A similar document for mixed faith couples exists and can be bought from many different websites. To see examples of the different styles of *ketubot*, look at <http://www.jessyjudaica.com> There are many other sites offering other examples. The groom will not be asked to say in Aramaic to the bride the traditional words, *“By this ring I betroth you to me according to the laws of Moses and Israel.”*

However, a couple may wish to make an alternative declaration when exchanging ring(s). All the other parts of Jewish wedding ceremony can be included, such as the 7 marriage blessings, the use of a wedding canopy (Chuppah,) and the breaking of a glass. Each ceremony is unique, original and an imaginative response to a couple’s situation. A couple will be able to have music of their own choice, played by musicians, or from a tape, or C.D. through a suitable P.A. system and loudspeakers. Check to ensure that any musicians, singers, or readers, don’t mind by being recorded if it is intended to video the ceremony.



THE OPTIONS

Depending on how many people are attending and who else might be involved in the ceremony, it might be necessary to have a microphone and loudspeakers. There is usually no problem with having your ceremony recorded for posterity, or to have a photographer present. However, some rabbis may object and a certain amount of discretion is called for, to ensure that it is not intrusive during the ritual. It may be wise, prior to the ceremony, to outline the course of events to any professionals, so that they can find a

good vantage point and know what to expect, particularly if they have not been to a Jewish wedding before. It is customary at Jewish ceremonies for men to wear a head covering known as a *kippah*, or *yamulka* and it is usual to have a basket on a table, with some *kippot* in them, near the entrance to the ceremony. This enables any non-Jews not to be put in an awkward, or embarrassing situation. A cloth *kippah* is better than a paper one, which can easily fall off. A clip attached to a *kippah* can be a good idea in case there is any wind.





STAGES OF A CEREMONY

When only a rabbi is officiating there can be up to 18 stages in the order of the ceremony as follows:-

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Arrival of guests | 10. Exchange of rings |
| 2. Processional | 11. Second reading* |
| 3. First blessing | 12. Rabbi's address |
| 4. The welcome | 13. Ketubah signing |
| 5. Second blessing | 14. 7 Marriage blessings |
| 6. First reading* | 15. Final blessing |
| 7. Wine blessing | 16. The Glass |
| 8. Consents | 17. Mazel-Tov |
| 9. Ring blessing | 18. Recessional |

* In a Jewish wedding, there are not usually any readings. However, it gives an opportunity for the non-Jewish side to be included and feel that their traditions

are also represented. These readings do not need to be religious texts, although they can be. Such readings are optional, but they do help the ceremony feel personal.



Some couples want the groom to walk up the aisle as the bride is walking down, in order to lift her veil up. The rabbi's welcome address is an opportunity to mention by name members of the families and special guests, as well as the countries that other guests may have travelled from. It is also an opportunity to remember those who can't be at the ceremony, either because they are unable to be there, or because they are deceased and to mention them by name if they are emotionally significant to either the bride, or the groom. It is also important to work out what the bride and groom wish to say to each other when they

When the rabbi gives his address, he may wish to speak about the couple and what has attracted them to share their lives together and to get married. Many rabbis ask couples to email with examples of the special qualities that they have discovered about each other that has led them to make this special commitment to each other. It also helps to have a few practical examples. Just as attention is given to the start of the ceremony, so must it be given to the end. The couple must be know where they will be going when they walk off, hand in hand. Guidance may be given to everyone else, so that they know what is expected of them.

STAGES OF A CEREMONY

When there is a rabbi officiating with someone else there can be about 14 stages in the order of ceremony as follows:-

1. Arrival of guests
2. The processional
3. Opening blessing from both officiants
4. The welcome by one officiant
5. The Introduction by the other officiant
6. Non-jewish liturgy, might include prayers, readings homily, 5-10 minutes.
7. Exchange of consents
8. Blessing over rings
9. Exchange of rings
10. Jewish liturgy, blessing over wine, 7 wedding blessings, etc.
11. Final blessing from both officiants
12. Rabbi's Address
13. The glass
14. Recessional





The structure of the ceremony is to ensure that there is an equal balance between the two traditions so that they mirror each other and can share the key moments. The details of the contents is flexible and can be adapted to fit the needs of each couple. This might include signing of a church register, or a *ketubah*. It may not always be possible to combine two religious traditions. Instead, it may be possible that they take place one after another, with, or without a break inbetween. If there is also a secular civil ceremony in which the couple are legally married, this can make a lot of demands on the couple and their guests to go through three ceremonies one after the other.

Amongst other technicalities to be considered are preparations before the start of the ceremony. The cortege needs to be lined up in the right order, the officiants needs to be prepared and when everyone is ready a cue given for the music to begin. The same applies at the end of the ceremony. There should be clarity so that everyone, including the guests know where to go. For ceremonies held outside, it is important to have an alternative venue for the ceremony inside if the weather is not suitable. This can include such conditions as rain, strong winds, high temperatures, high pollen count, soggy ground, too much noise from surrounding events, lack of privacy, or security concerns.

MORE OPTIONS

Wine in a kiddush cup is used as part of the wedding ritual and this is usually provided by the rabbi. Some families have a treasured heirloom which they wish to use, or one of the wedding gifts to the couple can be a kiddush cup that is used for the first time at the wedding. The glass that is smashed by the groom at the end of the ceremony is usually also provided by the rabbi. It may be in the form of a tumbler, beaker, or brandy glass, rather than a wine glass.

The ring that the groom gives to the bride, should be his property, until he gives it to her in the ceremony. It should be worth more than the smallest coin of the country in which the wedding takes place. This is to encourage even the poorest to get married. The ring should be a plain metal band, without jewels, or holes in it.





The *ketubah* is a Jewish marriage document. There are many different texts that reflect on the diversity of human relationships and the understanding that each couple share about the meaning of their marriage. The *ketubah* is usually signed by two people, but where space allows, others may also sign it. The couple and rabbi may also sign the document, but they are not obliged to do so. These documents may not be accepted by many rabbis and there is not an obligation to have one, but they can be of historical and sentimental value. Many are beautifully illustrated and genuine works of art, for which there are collectors.

A wedding canopy called a *Chuppah* is usually required for a wedding. There are no specific dimensions, although as a minimum it should cover the bride and groom. Nowadays they also cover the parents of the bride and groom and the rabbi. Details about the different styles of *Chuppah* can be found on the website. At least one table will be required placed at the back of the *Chuppah* for the wine, kiddush cup and glass. It can also be used to sign the *Ketubah*, if this is to be done during the ceremony. If there are going to be more than 80-100 guests, then a microphone will be required and loudspeakers to ensure that everyone can hear the officiants.

INCLUSIVENESS

W If you have non-Jewish guests attending your wedding, it is important to make sure that they feel included and are not just passive on-lookers. This can be done, by reminding men that they should have their heads covered during the ceremony, either by asking them to bring a hat, or by providing kippot. It is also a help to make clear whether there will be mixed seating, or not. Some people provide a printed, Order of Service giving the major stages of the ceremony and a short explanation. This is especially helpful if most of the ceremony will be in Hebrew. Your rabbi may also make some explanatory comments. Guidance should also be given as to whether photos and videos can be taken during the ceremony and what will happen after the ceremony. The aim should be to make all your guests comfortable and that they should enjoy the experience of being there. Particular attention should be given to guests who are elderly, infirm, pregnant, or with young children and those with physical, or mental handicaps. Make sure that guests are able to get to the venue and return to their hotels, or homes, particularly if they do not speak English, or have had

a long journey to be with you. Much of what is now considered essential at a Jewish wedding, was unheard of even thirty years ago. Customs that were considered normal then are now largely forgotten. Even amongst traditional Jews who usually shun any changes, there have been some subtle changes, or additional clauses added to the ketubah. During the early medieval period, the groom would place a tallit (prayer shawl), or veil over the bride, as a symbol of consummating the marriage. It was only in the 16th century in eastern Europe, that the innovation of using a portable canopy as the chuppah became the accepted for the same act.



You may be asked to give some undertaking as to which religion you will bring up any children. However, not all rabbis require this. According to Jewish law, the child of a Jewish mother is Jewish. In the UK Progressive rabbis and in the USA, Reform rabbis,) will recognise as Jewish, any child with at least one Jewish parent, who is brought up in a Jewish home and receives a Jewish education. Such a child must also be brought up in a Jewish home and receive a Jewish education. Israel's, *Law of Return*, recognises that all Jews have an automatic right to citizenship and to live in Israel. The civil authorities have shown themselves to be reasonably flexible in this matter, regarding those who are not strictly Jewish. For example, a non-Jewish partner, or child of a Jewish man and non-Jewish woman, or in cases where Jewish status is either not

However, the religious authorities are more rigorous in their application and understanding of Jewish law. Attitudes are liable to quickly change and not always for the better. Sometimes parents have found it difficult to accept the choices made by a son, or daughter, or feel unsure about the rabbi who is going to officiate at their ceremony. In such cases, a rabbi will be open to meeting parents of the couple to discuss any problems or difficulties. If both parents believe that their religion is equally

important, then it seems only right that both religions are practised in an equal and positive atmosphere, at home. Being a knowledgeable and active member of the Jewish community is part of the inheritance that Jewish children can receive. It allows them to identify with the community, its culture, history and language and to make Judaism an enjoyable and sustaining part of their lives.



INTERMARRIAGE

One of the a problems that all religions face nowadays is how to reconcile inherited tradition with the demands of their communities. Most faiths begin with a presumption that they must guard the knowledge of what has been received through divine revelation and historical experience. People are expected to conform, or change their behaviour to fit in with what is usually labelled Tradition. This is often accepted as being beyond question. Yet as Fiddler on the Roof showed, even in the shtetl, tradition was of limited value when it came to facing new challenges. The opposite is of greater help. Religious leaders could start off with being honest about the realities of people's lives. While, religion could adjust to these fresh situations.

The rabbinic authorities of the past are not a helpful guide to finding solutions to problems in the present. Partly this is because, not all knowledge is within Judaism. Increasingly it is necessary to learn from outside and to take into account the insights of other disciplines. Working single parents, multiple step-parents, and gay parents are beyond the remit envisaged in rabbinic codes. Not everything inherited from the past is of value today. However, providing there are good reasons for doing so, some of it can be discarded.

It is permissible to use our intelligence and conscience to pick and choose. The observance of ritual and customs only has value if it enhances the religious life of those involved. The idea that Judaism is something fixed and unchangeable is an illusion. If unacknowledged it can lead to the conclusion that we are wiser, more understanding that the God we worship.

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The observance of ritual and customs only has value if it enhances the religious life of those involved. The idea that Judaism is something fixed and unchangeable is an illusion. If unacknowledged it can lead to the conclusion that we are wiser, more understanding that the God we worship. Religions no longer have control over what adherents think, or the way they behave. Statements may be put out by religious authorities which however worthy, or supported by religious law have little impact. This effects, amongst others, Christianity and Islam, as much as it effects Judaism. The result of entrenched religious views not being matched by

actuality of people's daily existence, leads both sides to react with disaffection, hypocrisy or, hysteria. Rabbis can not on the one hand complain about people leaving their communities, while on the other hand they are either unable, or unwilling to meet their religious needs.

It is hardly surprising if people abandon a community, when they are left feeling rejected, or treated insensitively over their choice of long-term partner. Rabbinical interpretation of Jewish law is not the criteria by which a significant part of the community expresses their religious identity. Instead they rely on a combination of memory, symbolism and solidarity.





Like many other times in history, new forms of religious expression have to be developed to sanctify special times that reflect upon our experiences. While they may be based on ancient customs they may also include other contemporary secular values, such as pluralism, anti-discriminatory attitudes, sexual equality, tolerance and democracy.

Most religious authorities recognise that the number of Jews with non-Jewish partners are increasing, but the majority are unwilling to adapt. One might wonder how many mixed faith couples do there need to be, before such attitudes change? Many couples want a religious ceremony, at which at least a rabbi, (but sometimes also a priest, or pastor,) officiates and which contains elements that both faiths recognise as part of a wedding ceremony. If interfaith dialogue is to be taken seriously, then the consequences must be greater than occasional encounters, educational courses and academic papers. It must effect and change theology, the prayer book, and our lives. Deuteronomy 7:1 only bans unions with seven defeated pagan tribes who can no longer be

identified. The rest of the Bible is more ambivalent. Ezra and Nehemiah speak out strongly against it. Ruth, long considered the originator of Davidic line, (including the Messiah) is not Jewish. Yet, she marries two Jewish men without converting to Judaism. The implication given, is that the Messiah may not be Jewish. Esther is able to save her community, because she has intermarried with King Ahasuerus. Each year at Purim we happily celebrate this story. More significantly, Moses the greatest prophet of Judaism, marries out not once, but twice. Jewish commentators have offered unconvincing apologetic explanations, mainly in the midrashim, for such behaviour. Rabbinic tradition has, by and large been against mixed faith marriages on the grounds that it may lead to idolatry. Today, such fears are misplaced, since the major world religions are monotheistic in nature.

Survival of the Jewish people is a particularly important concern for a post Holocaust generation.. Fortunately, the State of Israel is now in a very strong and secure position.



The number of Jews in the world is greater than the population of many European states. If someone from Norway marries someone from Switzerland, no-one worries about their children's sense of identity, or the survival of those communities. Anxiety about whether parents will have Jewish grandchildren is an unhelpful question. It implies that having children is the definition of a successful marriage, which is rarely the case. Grandparents are often more concerned that any grandchildren should be healthy, happy and can grow up in a safe environment. Judaism can certainly contribute to this, but it does not have a monopoly.

Moreover, the expression of some values within it can be extremely problematic. (Agunot and Mamzerim would be a topical examples.) It has also been suggested that education will be the answer to weddings for mixed faith couples, but as *Fiddler on the Roof* also showed, there is little evidence that education can resist the power of hormones, genes, opportunity, or demography. Over the last 20 years, experience has been

gained, working with mixed-faith couples, which has included offering religious ceremonies to families from the UK, Western Europe, USA, Israel, Poland, Russia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Pakistan, India, Japan, Thailand, Zambia and some from Islamic countries. There is a need for a small group of rabbis who are prepared to celebrate mixed faith unions, civil partnerships, commitment ceremonies, as well as baby-naming, coming of age, burial, or cremation ceremonies. The benefit of such rituals can be judged by whether those involved find them to have been a significance experience for them. Such work has included co-officiating with Christians, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Buddhists, Agnostics and Atheists. It is important for every couple to have the wedding that they want and not what others may insist that they have. It can also be important for a couple to support one another and work together, marking out clear boundaries for family and friends. Suggestions and advice are welcome, but it must be the couple together who ultimately make the decisions.

DEATHS & BIRTHS

Not all Jews are members of synagogues, but when there is a death, a rabbi may need to be found quickly to officiate at a funeral. If you are Jewish, then there should be no problem in being buried in a Jewish cemetery. If you wished to be buried next to your spouse, you may need to reserve the adjoining plot. Most, although not all, Liberal, or Reform rabbis will also conduct cremations. Your local community will be able to advise you. From a traditional point of view, cremations are not accepted. However, many Holocaust survivors opted to be cremated, perhaps keenly identifying with so many who died in

However, this may be hard on children and a surviving spouse. There is always the option to be buried in a civil, or non-denominational cemetery, although not all rabbis are prepared to officiate in such grounds. If you have not already done so, it is advisable to draw up a will, with the aid of your legal advisor and to leave clear instructions about end of life care, organ donation, etc. In the UK this can be done through the use of an *Enduring Power of Attorney*.

(<https://www.gov.uk/enduring-power-attorney-duties>)



It is a good idea to be discuss with your partner what you want, if and when you have children, before the event occurs. Couples can be surprised by what their partners want if they choose to have a religious ceremony that celebrates the birth of a child, the giving of a name and welcoming the child into the community. It is best to be clear to know what you each expect and have agreed to, prior to your wedding.



WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

A couple should arrange to meet with the rabbi, either in person, or on-line, as soon as possible to discuss the options. If this is not possible because of time, or distance then other arrangements can be made. However, it is of considerable help for all concerned to meet a few times prior to the ceremony taking place. When the date, time and location for the religious ceremony is known, it is worth ensuring that the rabbi is available before you confirm make any other reservations. It is also important to ensure that a civil ceremony is also possible on the appropriate date. Reservations are accepted by the rabbi in the order in which they are received. A deposit is payable, which is non-refundable. It is normal to meet with the rabbi several times, before the ceremony takes place.



You are strongly advised to take out insurance to cover any accident, or unforeseen loss, or misadventure on the day that the ceremony takes place. Although every care is taken, unexpected situations may arise which make it impossible for the ceremony to take place

because of unexpected circumstances, such as Covid-19. The last meeting between the rabbi and couple will take place 6-8 weeks before the ceremony. You must be married in a legal ceremony, before the religious ceremony takes place, unless the law of the land allows for it to happen during the

ceremony. Each wedding you attend is unique and different. This reflects the religious outlook, culture and personality of the officiants and the couple getting married. Couples will benefit by talking to each other about what is important to them and how much tradition and custom they want in their wedding.



Honorariums

Fees for ceremonies within the UK.

Within the M25 ring: £850.

Outside the M25 £1000, plus expenses.

Fee for ceremonies within the EU.

1500 euros, plus travelling expenses.

Fees for ceremonies in Switzerland.

2200 CHF, plus travelling expenses.

Fees for others locations by agreement.

Important Note

*No couple should be deprived of the services of a rabbi due to their financial situation.
If there are good reasons, fees can be adjusted to suit all circumstances.*

For payments in Pounds Sterling Bank account details

Bank: Nationwide

Address: 798 High Street, Finchley, London,
N12 9QX, United Kingdom.

Account Name: Mr G D Hall

Account No: 29421300

Sort Code : 07-01-16

IBAN: GB11 NAIA 070116294213 00

SWIFT - BIC: NAIAGB21





**For payments in Euros
Bank account details**

Bank : KBC Bank, Ireland plc.

Address: Sandwith Street, Dublin 2,
Ireland

Account Name: Mr Guy Hall

Account No: 11547729

Sort Code: 990270

IBAN: IE68ICON99027011547729

SWIFT - BIC: ICONNIE2D

**For payments in Swiss Francs
Bank account details**

Bank : Raiffeissen Schweiz
Genossenschaft

Address: Raiffeisenplatz,
CH-9001 St. Gallen, Switzerland..

Account Name: M. Guy David Hall

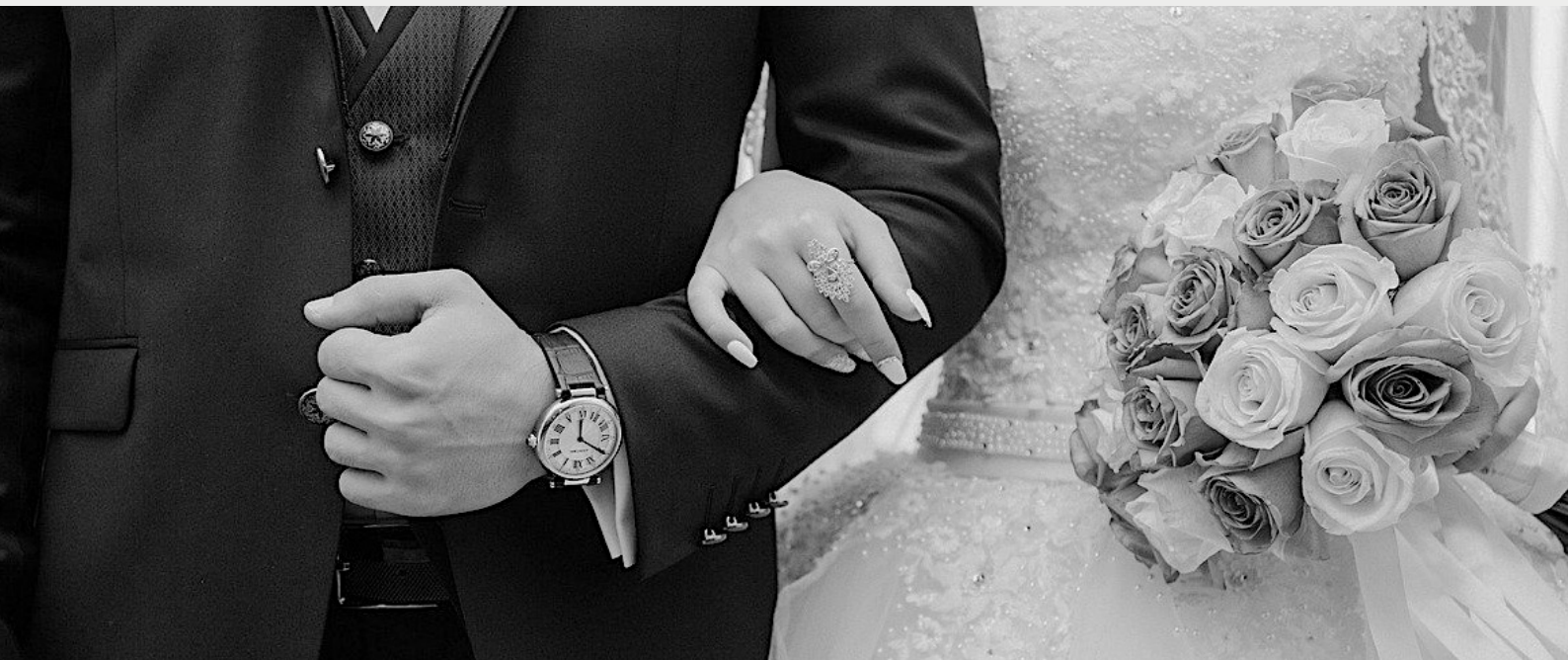
Account No: 26274478

Sort Code: 80808

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SWIFT - BIC: RAIFCH22XXX

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