

Like 1

Tweet

Share



Rabbis for Religious Freedom & Equality in Israel



“The State of Israel... will guarantee freedom of religion and conscience...”
Israel's Declaration of Independence (May 1948)

Newsletters

Resources

Archives

Contact Us

Editorial

September 12, 2016
14 Elul, 5776

Dear Friends,
As rabbis we know people vote with their feet. If you refuse them what they need religiously or aesthetically, they'll go elsewhere. Denying couples the weddings they want and threatening them with the consequences of rabbinic intervention in marriage and divorce is causing Israelis to forgo marriage ceremonies and simply live together. The number of couples traveling outside Israel for wedding ceremonies, as well as those seeking Conservative and Reform ceremonies in Israel without registering their marriages rises even as the number of couples marrying with the *Rabbanut* declines

'WALL OF CONTENTION' YOUTUBE SERIES



No need to put a ring on it: 30% more Israeli couples forgo marriage

Yitzhak Tessler, *Ynet*, Aug. 30, 2016

[Click HERE for the full article](#)

A new study has shown that from 2012 to 2014, unwed Israeli Jews living together has jumped; however, Israeli Muslim couples getting traditionally married has increased.

A new study commissioned by Hiddush—an organization seeking to promote religious freedom—found that 30% more young couples prefer living together out of wedlock to tying the knot at the Rabbinate.

precipitously. The *Rabbanut* is actually driving Jews away from Judaism!

The ongoing controversy over praying access to the Kotel and promises made to Women of the Wall, as well as the Conservative and Reform Movements, has been concisely and accurately summarized in 4 engaging videos for Channel 10 by Israel Rozner. With the *Yamim Noraim* nearly upon us, these YouTube videos could provide an excellent and graphic program of the real situation regarding The Wall. We would love to know from you, at organizers@rrfei.org, what you are hearing from your congregants. Are they following the issue? Do they understand the controversy? Does it worry them? Do they care?

We look forward to hearing from you. Please take a look at our [group on Facebook](#): Rabbis for Religious Freedom and Equality in Israel.

B'yedidut,

Mark

The data, taken from the Central Bureau of Statistics, showed that during the years 2012–2014, the number of unwed Jewish couples living together jumped from 65,000 (or 5% of the total number of Jewish couples in Israel) to 84,000 (or 6.1%).

The trend toward a relationship untethered by tradition has been gaining prominence in Israel for some time. In 2007, 36,504 couples were married through the Rabbinat, while seven years later, in 2014, that number stood at 36,900. Taking into account the population growth, this shows that the number of couples getting married at the Rabbinat has gone down to less than 6.5%.

It is worth noting that while young Jewish couples are opting out of religious marriage, the number of Muslim couples getting traditionally married has gone up 5%, from 11,300 in 2013 to 11,900 in 2014.

Hidush President Rabbi Uri Regev believes these data point at a widening distance between Israel's Jewish population and the Rabbinat. "The Rabbinical institution is making marriage itself undesirable to Israeli couples, both by the torturous road to marriage and the concern of having to get divorced in Rabbinical courts. There is no greater enemy to Judaism than the Rabbinat and Rabbinical courts."

...

Dramatic Rise in Number of Israelis Rejecting Rabbinat's Marriage Monopoly

Judy Maltz, *Haaretz*, Aug. 30, 2016

[Click HERE for the full article](#)

Central Bureau of Statistics figures show a 29-percent increase in unmarried couples over two-year period.

In the latest sign of revolt against Israel's stringent marriage laws, new government figures show a dramatic rise in the number of Jewish couples who are choosing to live together rather than legalize their status under the chuppah.



Rabbi Mark H. Levin
RRFEI Editor in Chief

[facebook](#)

[email](#)

Resources

- [Vision of Hiddush and Rabbis for Religious Freedom](#)
- [Hiddush resources](#)
- [Courts - religious & secular](#)
- [Conversion](#)
- [Death & burial - ancient & now](#)
- [Diaspora-Israel](#)
- [Diversity & inclusivity among Jews](#)
- [Diversity & inclusivity in relations with non-Jews](#)
- [Economic opportunity](#)
- [Education](#)
- [Gender](#)
- [Kashrut](#)
- [Marriage & divorce](#)
- [Mikvaot](#)
- [Shabbat transportation for poor & inform](#)
- [Western Wall](#)
- [Women](#)

Contact us

email: organizers@rrfei.org
Phone (US): [646-334-5636](tel:646-334-5636)
Phone (Isr): [054-779-1179](tel:054-779-1179)

Not yet a member?

[Please register here »](#)

According to figures published this week by the Central Bureau of Statistics, the number of unmarried Jewish couples in Israel totaled 84,000 in 2014 – an increase of 29 percent from two years earlier. During this same period, the number of Jewish couples marrying in Israel fell by 6.5 percent.

"Israel's official, state empowered religious establishment arouses disgust among Jewish Israeli couples considering marriage," wrote Rabbi Uri Regev, the executive director of Hiddush – an organization that advocates for religious freedom in Israel – in an analysis of these statistics. "This is due to the needless tribulations many couples experience at the hands of the Rabbinate on their paths to marriage, and due to their fear of being required to conduct their divorces via the state rabbinical courts. Israel's Chief Rabbinate and rabbinical courts are Judaism's greatest enemy."

...

The Kotel Compromise: An Opportunity not to be Missed

Natan Sharansky, *Tablet Magazine*, Sept. 06, 2016

[Click HERE for the full article](#)

How a failure to come to an agreement to allow equal access to the holy site for the non-Orthodox would reverberate across world Jewry



Every few years, a controversy erupts in Israel that strikes at the heart of what it means to be a Jew. These debates, between the Israeli Orthodox establishment on one side and those seeking greater recognition for liberal strands of Judaism on the other, typically end in vague formulations and nondecisions, as we postpone our moment of reckoning for a few more years. Because theological agreement between the two sides is impossible, and because political realities further undermine consensus, we have instead become accustomed to living with conflict: one people divided by one religion.

The latest round in our ongoing drama, involving the sensitive issue of prayer at the Kotel, might seem to be yet

another iteration of this familiar story. In fact, however, the case of the Kotel is unique—both in the historic nature of the compromise reached and in the destructive consequences of its looming failure.

To understand why this compromise was so significant, we must first understand the nature and seriousness of the conflict. Although for millennia Judaism played a central role in forging and unifying our people, today American and Israeli Jews—who together constitute more than 85 percent of world Jewry—find themselves increasingly divided on religious matters. According to the latest studies, more than 60 percent of American Jews are members of non-Orthodox communities, while half of Israelis identify with Orthodoxy and only 5 percent with non-Orthodox movements. And while Israel's official religious body refuses to recognize liberal Jewish practices, the state itself continues to insist that Israel should be a home for each and every Jew, whether or not they are ready to adhere to Orthodox standards.

...

Rabbis for Religious Freedom and Equality in Israel represents a broad spectrum of Jewish belief and practice, and champions the values of religious freedom and equality fundamental to World Jewry, in partnership with Hiddush for the realization of these principles in Israel and the Diaspora.

Rabbis for Religious Freedom and Equality in Israel

Website: WWW.RRFEI.ORG | Email: organizers@rfe.org | Tel. [US] [646-334-5636](tel:646-334-5636); [Israel] [054-779-1179](tel:054-779-1179)

[Click to view this email in a browser](#)

If you no longer wish to receive these emails, please reply to this message with "Unsubscribe" in the subject line or simply click on the following link: [Unsubscribe](#)

Freedom of Religion for Israel
182 East 95th St., Suite 24G
New York, New York 10128
US

[Read](#) the VerticalResponse marketing policy.

vertical DELIVERED BY
response
Try It Free Today!