

United Synagogue **MARRIAGE AUTHORISATIONS** contain keys to clues in genealogical research. The document has to be obtained by the bride and groom from the Office of the Chief Rabbi before a religious marriage can take place. Certain documents to prove the Jewish ethnicity of each of the parties have to be produced, namely the Ketubah or religious marriage certificate of each of their parents. Or in the case of a convert to Judaism (Proselyte) their Certificate of Conversion.

The Certificate itself is divided into a number of lines. In the printed part of the form shown in italics the Hebrew is script, the completed form has Hebrew written in the cursive or modern style. The following example is from 1884

<i>Date of Application</i>	Date in English that the Application was made		
<i>Date of Marriage</i>	Date in Hebrew of the impending marriage		
	Date in English of the impending marriage		
חתן (tr. Bridegroom)	Name of Bridegroom in Hebrew		
	Name of Bridegroom in English		
<i>Address</i>	Where the Bridegroom is living		
<i>Native of</i>	Where the Bridegroom was born	<i>Certificate?</i>	Name of person who produced certificate
<i>Married before?</i>		<i>Related to Bride?</i>	
<i>Brothers (if any)</i>	Names of brother in Hebrew. This was for the purposes of <i>Yibbum</i> ¹		
<i>Reside in</i>	Place brothers reside		
כלה (tr. Bride)	The name of the Bride in Hebrew. Before the name of the bride there is a description of her status ²		
	מבי (tr. from the home of) ⁴		The name of the bride in English including any previous surname she may have had
<i>Address</i>	Where the bride is living		
<i>Native of</i>	Where the Bride was born	<i>Certificate?</i>	Name of person who produced certificate
<i>Married before?</i>			
<i>Synagogue</i>	The name of the Synagogue where the marriage will take place		
<i>Place of Celebration</i>			
<i>Hour</i>			
<i>Name of Celebrant</i>			
<i>*** Special Remarks</i>			
		<i>Signature</i>	Of Bridegroom

Tr. = translation from the Hebrew

FOOTNOTES

¹If the groom is a convert to Judaism he may have the following prefix before his Hebrew name *ger* meaning Convert and written in Hebrew גר or he may have the suffix after his Hebrew name, *ben Avraham Aviynu*, meaning the son of Abraham our Father and written בן אברהם אבינו

²Yibum – Traditionally if a man dies without children it is the obligation of his eldest unmarried brother to marry the widow. The brother and widow may relinquish these responsibilities by going through a form of divorce called *Chalitzah*. Therefore brothers need to be identified. Yibum has been banned in Ashkenazi communities for a thousand years but it used to be practised in Sephardi communities until they moved to Israel in 1948. Sometimes it is recorded if they are unavailable or likely to refuse to do their duty if necessary, in which case such phrases as not present לא יהיו or not amenable לא אתנו might be used..

If a groom is a widower you will see the word Alman אלמן before his Hebrew name

³The normal prefix to the name of a first time bride regardless of the physical reality is usually

- Virgin, Betula בתולתא or בתולה or it could be
- Widow, Armalta ארמלתא (Aramaic) or the Hebrew form Almana אלמנא
- Divorcee, Gerusha גרושה
- Important Person, Givirta גבירתא
- Convert, Giyorta גיורתא or Giyoret גיורת or as a Convert she might also have the following after her Hebrew name, daughter of Abraham our Father (bat Avraham aviynu) בת אברהם אבינו alternatively, daughter of Sarah our Mother (bat Sarah Immeinu) בת שרה אמנו

* Most of the prefixes start with the Hebrew script letter ה meaning 'the'

⁴When the bride comes from her father's home the Authorisation reads MiBei Avuha מבי אבוקה . When the bride's father is not alive it reads MiBei Nasha מבי נשא (the first word in these phrases, מבי , MiBei, is printed in Hebrew script in the previous column) or it simply gives her one hundred מאה silver coins instead of the usual two hundred מאתיים silver coins