

PART II: THE GET PROCESS

a. Standard Get Ceremony

Please note that *get* procedures may vary based on the *beit din* you choose to enter; nonetheless, the ceremony delineated here reflects the standard process that takes place.

If you and your husband are able to agree on a time when you can both go to *beit din*, you will participate in the *get* ceremony. The procedure can take between 1-2 hours and goes as follows:

You enter the *beit din* and you and your spouse will be seated at tables on opposite sides of the room. Also present in the *beit din* will be three *dayanim* (rabbinical judges), the *mesader gittin* (the scribe who will write the *get*), and two *eidim* (male witnesses). We recommend bringing a family member or friend to be there with you for emotional support.

Items you might need when entering *beit din* are:

- (1) Photo identification
- (2) Your *ketubah*
- (3) Your civil marriage license, if you have one
- (4) *P'turin* from any previous *get*
- (5) Any documentation relating to a conversion, if relevant. If your parent converted, it is sometimes requested that their conversion documentation (if available) be provided as well

Information you must know before entering *beit din* are:

- (1) Every name you are referred to by others in any language/s, including nicknames
- (2) Your father's name, as well as if your father is a *kohen*, *levi*, or *yisrael*

The process begins with the officiating rabbi at the *beit din* asking the husband to list every single name that he is referred to by others; the rabbi will then ask the wife the same question. For Example: Say your name is Gabriella, your parents call you Gabby, your Hebrew name is Gabriella Liora, and your friends call you Gabs—you would list all of those names.

Next, the officiating rabbi will ask the husband if he is willingly giving the *get*. The husband will answer the rabbi in the affirmative by reading off of a script provided for him; this in itself is an entire process. Then, the husband will appoint the *mesader gittin* to write the *get* and the *eidim* to sign it and witness its delivery.

After this, the *mesader gittin* will begin writing the *get*. This can take around 30 minutes. During this time, you are free to scroll on your phone, read a book, or do anything you want. After the *mesader gittin* finishes writing the *get*, the officiating rabbi and *eidim* will read it over to ensure that it was written correctly.

The wife will then be asked if she is willfully accepting the *get*, and like the husband, will answer in the affirmative by reading off of a script provided. Then, the *mesader gittin* will fold the *get* and hand it to the husband. The wife and husband will stand facing each other. The wife will open her hands as if coins are about to fall into them, and the husband will lift the *get* over her hands. He will then say the following phrase:

הרי זה גיטך והתקבלי גיטך זה ובו תהיי מגורשת ממני מעכשיו והרי את מותרת לכל אדם

“This is your *get*, and accept this *get*, and you will then be divorced from me, from this very moment, and you are permissible to anyone.”

After saying this, he will drop the *get* into her hands. She will then clap her hands together to secure the *get*, tuck it under her arms like a purse and walk a few steps with it; doing so symbolizes ownership of the *get*. After completing this step, they will be officially divorced, according to Jewish law.

She will then place the *get* on the table, after which a zigzag slit is made in the *get* to show that it was given over properly and cannot be used by anyone else. The *get* is retained by the *beit din*, and this is done so that no one will scrutinize it later on to try to find inaccuracies, potentially voiding the validity of the *get*. Since the *get* itself is retained by the *beit din*, the proof of your divorce will come in the form of a *p'tur*. A *p'tur* is issued by a *beit din* as proof of divorce, generally only once the American civil divorce has been finalized. Unlike the *get* process, the *beit din* does not need your former spouse's cooperation in order to issue a *p'tur*. Often, people will request a *p'tur* shortly before remarriage in order to show the officiating rabbi that the divorce was conducted properly. **It is necessary that you save your *p'tur*.** You may need it for

proof of divorce should you move to Israel or remarry. Without the *get* (or *p'tur*), you cannot remarry in a Jewish ceremony.

b. *Adjustments to Get process: Alternative Ways to Structure the Get Ceremony*

1. How

In some cases, it's not safe, comfortable, or practical for both spouses to attend the *beit din* at the same time, such as if there is an order of protection. There are alternative structures that preserve the *halachic* integrity of the *get* while creating physical or emotional space.

This option is *shlichut*. In this process, the husband goes to *beit din* before the *get* is written, and then appoints someone else to give the *get* to the wife on his behalf. The wife will then go to *beit din* afterward to receive the *get*.

Also present in the *beit din* will be three *dayanim* (rabbinical judges), the *mesader gittin* (the scribe who will write the *get*), and two *eidim* (witnesses). You can also bring a family member, friend, or rabbi, to be there with you for emotional support. We have often found that women experience the *get* process more positively when accompanied by someone.

When the wife arrives, she will be asked if she willingly accepts the *get*, and will answer in the affirmative by reading off of a script provided for her. Then, she and the husband's *shaliach* (proxy) will stand facing each other. The wife will open her hands as if coins are about to fall into them, and the *shaliach* will lift the *get* over her hands. He will then say the following:

הרי זה גיטך והתקבלי גיטך זה ששלח לך בעלך [שם בעלך] ובו תהיי מגורשת מבעל [שם בעלך] מעכשיו והרי אתי
מותרת לכל אדם וגט זה בפני נכתב ובפני נחתם."

"This is your *get*, and accept this *get*, which your husband sent to you, and now you shall be divorced from him, from this very moment, and you are permissible to anyone; this *get* was written and signed in my presence."

After saying this, he will drop the *get* into the woman's hands. She will then clap her hands together to secure the *get*, tuck it under her arms like a purse and walk a few steps with it; doing so symbolizes ownership of the *get*. After completing this step, she will be officially divorced, according to Jewish law.

2. When

A *shaliach* process is often done when the husband and wife are in different locations, making a traditional *get* ceremony logistically complicated. For instance, a *get* can be given in one city or country and then received in another city or country. In this case, two *batei din* would be convened, one for the issuing of the *get* and the other for its receipt.

However, you may also request a *shaliach* process if you do not feel safe being in one room with your former spouse. The *get* can be arranged with the husband and wife in different locations entirely, or even with the husband and wife in different rooms.

In the event that you have an order of protection against your former spouse, or vice versa, we suggest speaking to your attorney about opportunities to build a “carve-out” provision into the order, allowing the *get* ceremony if you are comfortable doing so; otherwise, the *shaliach* process can be a good alternative option. A “carve-out” provision means that both you and your former spouse can be in a room together for the *get* without it being considered a violation of the order of protection.

In certain circumstances, when the standard ceremony is not practical, alternative halachic formats can be used to facilitate the giving of a *get*.

One such option is *kitvu u'tenu*, in which the husband authorizes the *sofer* and *eidim* to write and deliver the *get* on his behalf. Unlike the standard procedure, this authorization does not need to take place inside a *beit din* so if distance, scheduling constraints, or personal preference make in-person attendance difficult, it can be arranged wherever the husband is located. Some *batei din* may request a brief phone call or videoconference at the time of signing, simply to confirm identity and intent. Once the authorization is completed, the written directive is sent to the *beit din* or *mesader gittin*, who will carry out the writing and delivery of the *get* in accordance with the husband's instructions. *Kitvu u'tenu* is often used when the husband is cooperative but unable or unwilling to participate in a full ceremony, or when no local *beit din* is readily accessible.

A second option is the *nechpaz* procedure. A *nechpaz* is a shortened, expedited version of the *get* ceremony and is used when the husband comes to *beit din* but cannot remain for the full duration. The *beit din* gathers the necessary identifying information and the husband formally appoints the *sofer* and *eidim*. The whole procedure takes about fifteen minutes. Once the essential authorizations are completed, the husband may leave and the *beit din* finishes the remaining steps of writing and delivering the *get* without him.

While both *kitvu u'tenu* and *nechpaz* are less common than a standard ceremony, *dayanim* have noted that they can be valuable tools for ensuring that the *get* process proceeds smoothly when

time, travel, or other extenuating circumstances limit the husband's ability to participate in the typical way.

c. *Life after Divorce*

Adjusting to life post-divorce can be difficult and stressful, and also an opportunity to build a bright new chapter in your life.

Post-Divorce Jewish Law

There are several elements of Jewish law that apply post-divorce. First, Jewish law requires former wives to wait 92 days after receiving a *get* before remarrying. The Talmud writes this requirement so that there would be no ambiguity over whom the father is, in case of a pregnancy. Following a divorce, one can date and remarry, but a woman may not marry a man with the status of a *kohen*. Finally, once the divorce has been concluded, a former husband and wife may no longer be in *yichud*, or alone in a room together. Being in *yichud* and/or being physically intimate following a divorce can complicate the validity of the *get* process. (Note: Due to this law, a *get* can only be given once the husband and wife are living separately. The only exception to this would be if your home has separate sections with different entrances, which would allow you to be considered as if you are living separately. You can consult with the person facilitating your *get* to find out if a specific living arrangement would work well.)

As written above, since the *get* itself is retained with the *beit din*, the proof of your divorce will come in the form of a *p'tur*, and is generally only received only after the American civil divorce has been finalized. **It is necessary that you save your *p'tur*.** You may need it for proof of divorce should you move to Israel or remarry. Without the *get* (or *p'tur*), you cannot remarry in a Jewish ceremony.