

Get Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What does the word Get mean?

A: The word "Get" means a "document".

Q: Is Jewish divorce a ceremonial ritual?

A: No, it is not. A divorce document (Get) is mandated by the Torah. From the Jewish perspective, the religious covenant of marriage can only be dissolved by a Get. It is written in a combination of Hebrew and Aramaic languages. Every Get has 12 lines and the text is standard. The only variables are the date and the names.

Q: What can I expect during the Get session?

- Prior to the Get session, the Rabbi will contact both parties and inquire about their names and that of their fathers, to determine how they should be. Jewish Law governing the writing of a Get is highly specialized, and only a Rabbi expert in this area can determine how names are written. During the get session, you will be asked to present an ID and a document (e.g. Marriage license, divorce paper etc.) that identifies you are indeed the parties as the married couple.
- The officiating Rabbi will ask the parties standard formal questions to verify that the Get is being executed on their behalf without coercion. No personal questions are asked about the nature of the marriage or the reasons for its dissolution.
- The husband, directed by the Rabbi, will appoint the scribe to write the Get and ask our witnesses to sign the Get.
- After the Get is written, checked by the Rabbi and signed by the witnesses, the wife receives the Get.
- The Get procedure is conducted in a private fashion. No outsiders are present.
- The procedure is not judgmental or adversarial. Many participants in the Get procedures have commented that they have appreciated the dignified and friendly atmosphere of the Get experience.

Q: Can the get be prepared for us to come in and come in to sign?

A: No. *There is no signing done by either the husband or wife!* That is a myth! There is however the handing over of the Get from Husband to Wife. Just as the placing of a ring created the bond of marriage, handing over the Get dissolves that bond.

Q: But I already have a civil divorce.

A: According to Jewish law, a marriage is not dissolved until a bill of divorce is exchanged between husband and wife. Most American Rabbis, and all Rabbis in Israel, will not officiate at a wedding if either party has been divorced without the benefit of a Get.

Q: If I don't observe other Jewish laws, why should this be different?

A: Regardless of one's personal convictions or practices, obtaining a Get is important. This simple procedure does more than just assure the couple that they will be free to remarry, should they so desire. It also prevents a tragic problem; a child born to a Jewish woman whose previous marriage did not terminate with a Get may be considered illegitimate. Any Jew, whether observant or non-observant, needs to share in the concern for Jewish unity and in providing their children with a clean slate for the future.

Q: What if I am not planning to get married or have children?

A: Our reply is a common-sense one: "never say never"!

Q: We were married in Israel. Is our Get being automatically reported to the Rabbanut and the Ministry of Interior in Israel?

A: No. You or someone on your behalf will take the certificate that you will receive to the Rabbanut and open a file. They put their stamp of approval on the Get certificate so that you can take the certificate to the Ministry of interior. They will register you as legally divorced.

Q: If the Get was sent from LA to be delivered in Israel, how do I get a Certificate of Divorce?

A: You will need to send your case number and two passport pictures along with approximately \$50.00 to the relevant Rabbanut office.

Q: We were married in Israel. Do we need a civil US divorce?

A: Probably. We suggest you consult an attorney.

Q: We have heard that the Get process is degrading to women!

A: Absolutely not. The process does not involve any act or comment that is degrading to anyone.

Q: Does a civil divorce have to be issued prior to a Get?

A: No, but it is advisable to have a mutual understanding and agreement as to how the issues of custody and or property will be settled. It may be desirable to include language about a Get agreement in divorce settlement documents. However, the language may not say that the court "compels" or "orders" either party to cooperate with the Get. However, the parties may commit themselves to cooperate with a Get by a set time as part of their overall negotiations. Consult the Rabbi before finalizing such clause.

Q: Who keeps the Get?

A: The Get starts off being the property of the Husband, and after handing over, becomes the property of the wife. The Get remains on file at the Beth Din, and the parties each receive a certificate certifying that a Get has been executed.

Q: Can I bring a friend or relative with me to the get session?

A: Yes, but you must inform the officiating Rabbi in advance and receive his approval.

Q: Can a Get be written without the consent of both parties?

No. A Get is written when it is clear that the parties are both willing participants in the procedure. It is the expectation of our tradition that parties that were once bound by sacred vows will respect each other and their tradition sufficiently to participate fully in the Get process. This cooperation allows both parties to move on with their new lives.

Q: What are the costs involved?

A: Costs may vary in different cases, but we strive to keep them at a bare minimum. The cost of a standard Get is \$450.00.

Q: Who pays for the Get?

In some cases, a divorce settlement agreement will specify which party is liable to pay for the Get. Where this is not the case, the parties are expected to discuss this point and inform the

RCC of who will be liable for payment. In many cases, the parties amicably agree to divide the cost of the Get.

Q: What if we are not sure about the divorce?

A: While our staff is not equipped to provide ongoing marital counseling, we will make every effort to assist couples who are prepared to consider reconciliation. However, when the decision to divorce is irrevocable, we will proceed promptly and with sensitivity to assist them in obtaining the Get as required by Jewish law.