If you are Jewish and going through a divorce, in addition to any steps you take to obtain a civil divorce, it is critically important to also arrange for a Jewish divorce, or *get*.

This brochure is designed to help you understand the need for a Jewish divorce and outlines the procedure followed at the Jewish court (Beth Din) in issuing the *get*.

**Divorce Under Jewish Law**

The family unit is of primary importance in Jewish tradition, and Judaism values greatly the institution of marriage. Nevertheless, the Torah recognizes that for a variety of reasons, marriages sometimes do not work out and need to be ended.

The Torah states that in such event, “he shall write for her a bill of divorce and place it in her hand.” *(Deuteronomy 24:1)*

That bill of divorce is referred to as a *get*.

**Why the Get Is Important**

In order to end a Jewish marriage, Jewish law (*halacha*) requires that the husband give and the wife receive a *get*. Unless one of them is deceased, under Jewish law both husband and wife require a *get* in order to remarry.

In addition, without the *get*, the woman’s offspring from any subsequent union may bear the stigma of illegitimacy (*mamzerut*). This stigma remains in place for future generations.
Dignified Proceeding

The Beth Din of America is careful to treat every person with sensitivity and compassion, and tries to make the get proceeding as smooth and as comfortable as possible for the parties. We provide a dignified and private environment for the administration of the get and scrupulously preserve the privacy of the parties.

The standard get process is conducted in English, Hebrew or, if necessary, in the spoken language of the parties. It takes approximately one hour. If English or Hebrew is not the spoken language of both parties, please tell the Beth Din in advance, so that we can make special arrangements to ensure that the rabbis at the get procedure speak with the parties in their language.

In addition, if the parties need any other special accommodations, please contact the Beth Din. The Beth Din will attempt to accommodate any such needs.

The Get Process

- The get is then written by the scribe using a feather quill. The get is 12 lines long and is written in a combination of Hebrew and Aramaic in the same script that we use for the writing of Torah scrolls. Essentially, it is a letter from the husband to the wife that states that she is free to remarry anyone she wishes.
- The two authorized witnesses read the get and then sign their names to it.
- The wife is asked some standard questions to confirm that she is willingly accepting the get. These questions, too, are furnished with a prepared script in English. The get is then folded by the scribe, and the husband holds the get over his wife’s hands, declares that he is giving it to her for the purpose of divorce, and then places the get in his wife’s hands in the presence of the witnesses. Once the wife has received the get, the couple is considered divorced under Jewish law.
- The get itself is cut into by the supervising rabbi and it is retained in the Beth Din files. After the civil divorce is finalized, the Beth Din issues a certificate (the patur) to each party, indicating that a get has been given and accepted and that each party is free to remarry.

Fees

A standard get costs approximately $500. Additional fees may apply for special services. The Beth Din will inform the parties of these costs prior to initiating such services.

Fees may be subsidized or waived based on financial need, or other compelling circumstances. The cost of a get should not be a factor in deciding whether to arrange a get, and the Beth Din will never decline to arrange a get solely because of a party’s inability to pay.

Contested Get Cases

The Beth Din specializes in the resolution of get cases involving a recalcitrant spouse who refuses or is reluctant to give or receive a get. When necessary to solve or avoid an agunah situation, we will even travel to people’s offices and homes in order to make sure that a get is provided.

For more information about contested get cases, please contact the Beth Din.