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“Lo Tevoshi v’lo tikkalmi”
Establishing a woman’s agency and dignity as an essential part
of the Get-giving ceremony¹

Approved on June 5, 2023 by a vote of 22-0-0. Voting in favor: Rabbis Aaron Alexander, Jaymee Alpert, Adam Baldachin, Pamela Barmash, Emily Barton, Suzanne Brody, Nate Crane, Elliot Dorff, David J. Fine, Judith Hauptman, Barry Leff, Amy Levin, Daniel Nevins, Micah Peltz, Avram Israel Reisner, Tracee Rosen, Rachel Safman, Robert Scheinberg, Miriam T. Spitzer, Ariel Stofenmacher, Ellen S. Wolintz-Fields. Voting against: None. Abstaining: None.²

שאלה (Question)

May we develop our traditional Gett-Giving ceremony to include active participation by the woman receiving her Gett?

תשובה (Response)

Background: Motivating the Question

Despite individual efforts to involve women more fully in the Gett process (see below), the traditional Gett delivery ceremony renders the woman receiving her Gett entirely passive. The husband sets the process in motion, regardless of which spouse initiates the civil divorce. The wife has no voice of her own during the Gett-giving proceedings. Rather, she simply answers yes or no to the *Beit Din*’s questions. She must follow instructions about where and when to stand and what precise physical actions to perform. While some women might feel a sense of relief at having such specific directions, others report feeling confused, disempowered, and even traumatized when they received their Gett. They were shamed and confounded – the very opposite of dignity – at a critical moment in their personal and spiritual lives.

This passivity on the part of the woman is compounded by lack of familiarity. Divorce stands apart from other Jewish life-cycle events: in every other scenario, the rabbi meets with the family in advance, both to explain what to expect and to discover where the meaningful elements are to be found for those specific individuals. From *brit milah* to *b’mitzvah* to weddings, the rabbi forms a connection with the family to ensure not simply a halakhically rigorous ceremony but also a personally meaningful one.

¹We are grateful for the comments provided on earlier drafts by Rabbi Dan Shevitz, Rabbi Karen Reiss-Medwed, Rabbi Hal Rudin-Luria, and Rabbi Pamela Barmash.

² *The Committee on Jewish Law and Standards of the Rabbinical Assembly provides guidance in matters of halakhah for the Conservative movement. The individual rabbi, however, is the authority for the interpretation and application of all matters of halakhah.*

Consider the stark contrast with the traditional divorce ceremony. In many cases, the conversations an unaccompanied woman has about her Gett prior to the ceremony are logistical: how long will it take to get him to sign off? When can you be here? The woman often arrives at the place set for the ceremony by herself, where she is greeted by a *Beit Din* she will not have met before for a ceremony for which she is not prepared. She is not provided with a template or much context in advance. She is not offered time for her own reflections.

All of this is problematic for at least three reasons.

Firstly, women are often shocked by the contrast between the apparent equality they had under the *huppah* and their passivity in receiving their Gittin. We recognize that this equality is an illusion; the legal infrastructure of these traditional Conservative weddings will have not been egalitarian.³ Yet the inclusion of ceremonies such as exchange of rings, words spoken by bride to groom, mutual glass-breaking and even in some cases the recital of promises to each other - all will have gone to suggest to a woman that her status was in truth equal to that of her husband. To discover, on the conclusion of a marriage, that this was not the case only amplifies a woman's disillusionment with, and even anger at, a tradition that puts her at such a disadvantage.

Secondly, rabbis are missing an opportunity for connection. To the extent that individuals come to Judaism in different ways, for different reasons, and with very different needs, not having a woman-centered, empowering ceremony for Gett delivery means that rabbis miss a chance to walk with a woman during a major life event. Secrecy breeds a sense of failure: if it were not bad, why wouldn't we talk about it?

While the Gett is sometimes delivered around the same time as the civil divorce document, sometimes it is not given by the husband until years later, often prompted by his wish to remarry. In this case, the woman might be wondering why she has to relive this part of her life. Alternatively, the woman might have been asking for a Gett for years, and it is only when the husband decides that he is ready that she is able to receive it. Whatever the situation, this is precisely the moment at which our rich tradition should enter, but instead we leave her to stumble by herself in the dark. We should take advantage of every opportunity to connect or re-connect people with their Judaism in new and meaningful ways.

³Fortunately, it is already the case that couples can marry with a fully egalitarian ketubah - see Rabbi Pamela Barmash, "Egalitarian Kiddushin and Ketubah" <https://www.rabbinicalassembly.org/sites/default/files/2022-04/barmash-egalitarian-kiddushin-teshuvah-final.pdf> and Rabbi Pamela Barmash, "Egalitarian Divorce and Gittin" <https://www.rabbinicalassembly.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/barmash-egal-divorce-final.pdf> but for now, the women whom rabbis are presently guiding were married under the halakhic system described above.

The third reason is that the traditional approach heightens, rather than reduces, the fear, shame, and stigma some women may feel about divorce. Shrouding the process in mystery robs a woman of the possibility of making meaning because she is focused instead on other - perhaps more worldly - issues: What will happen? What do I do? Who will be there? What do I wear?

While seemingly inconsequential, in fact these questions reflect our tradition's failure to prepare women for this life event. Her marriage has ended, she is embarking on a new life stage, and yet there is nothing to help her come to terms with this; instead, there is what feels to her like a performative and largely incomprehensible legal process that certifies she is, once again, eligible to be married (something that may be far from her mind/plans at the time).

It is not insignificant that it is women who face these issues. The history of traditional Judaism is replete with examples of ceremonies and requirements from which women are excluded; even the Biblical requirements to procreate are exclusively attached to men despite the necessity of women to fulfill this mitzvah. In this instance, where a woman is prohibited from remarrying unless her husband gives her permission to do so, she is once again the subject of the story but cannot be the agent of it.

With a divorce rate holding constant at 50%⁴, it is long past time to elevate the moment of the Gett delivery to one of dignity rather than shame. The marriage was sanctified through *kiddushin*; therefore, its dissolution should also be imbued with *kedushah*.

The Traditional Ceremony

The ending of a Jewish marriage is of great concern to halakhists from the Mishnah onwards. Their motivation is clear: absent a valid Gett, the marriage would remain in effect and the wife's subsequent children with another partner could be deemed the result of adultery. This situation will rebound halakhically on the children, branding them with the status of *mamzerim*, an outcome the Rabbinic tradition is stringent in trying to avoid. It is therefore of maximum importance to ensure that no critique can be made of a Gett once delivered. This gives rise to extremely specific and detailed rules about its wording, its format, its attestation and how and by whom it may be validly delivered.

In the earliest stages of divorce law, a woman was allowed to be an active participant in the Gett process, as we learn:

⁴ <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/dvs/national-marriage-divorce-rates-00-20.pdf>

הכל כשרין לכתב את הגט, אפילו חרש, שוטה וקטן. האשה כותבת את גטה, ונהאיש כותב את שוכרו, שאין קיום הגט אלא בחותמיו:

Anyone is qualified to write a Gett, including a deaf-mute, a person who cannot possess legal intent and a legal minor. A woman may write her Gett and a man may write his own receipt, since the legal validity of the Gett is only because its signatures are legally valid. (Mishnah Gittin 2:5)

It should be noted that Rambam⁵ does not take issue with the woman's participation in the process as set out above. By the time we reach the Shulhan Arukh, however, the ground has shifted considerably:

הכל כשרים לכתוב הגט חוץ מחמשה כותי ועבד וחש"ו אפי' האשה בעצמה אם אמר לה הבעל לכתבו יכולה לכתבו ותקנה אותו לבעלה וחוזר ונותנו לה

*Anyone is kosher as a scribe for a divorce document, except for five people: A non-Jew, a slave, a deaf-mute, a person who cannot possess legal intent and a legal minor. Even the woman herself, **if her husband would ask her to write it, can write it and cause her husband to acquire it, and he would go and give it to her.** (Shulhan Arukh Even Ha-Ezer 123)*

The Shulhan Arukh will go on to rule that if the form text⁶ of a Gett was written *lehathilah* by a deaf-mute, a person who cannot form legal intent and a minor, the Gett is to be ruled as kosher *b'diavad* provided a person with capacity was present with the writer of the form text.

In theory, therefore, the Mishnah provides some agency for a divorcing woman in terms of writing her own Gett, though that agency becomes curtailed over time. We see no such development, however, in agency being given to a woman in receiving her Gett. From the outset, she is required to be a passive recipient.

⁵ *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhoh Gerushin 3:15*

⁶ i.e., the text of the Gett minus the names of the parties, its legal purpose and the declaration of divorce, all of which are precisely what give the Gett its legal force.

The process of issuing and receiving a Gett coalesces halakhically into the *Seder Ha-Gett* found in the *Shulḥan Arukh*.⁷ This procedural guide includes all the rules about who can write the Gett and when, a script for the necessary declaration by the husband to the scribe to write it, how it should be witnessed, how it may be delivered by an agent (*shaliaḥ*), how the Gett should be written, on and with what, the care that must be taken over getting the names of the parties correct, how it should be signed by the witnesses, how the witnesses should give evidence of what they have seen and done, how the Gett should be given to the wife, and special rules for minor wives, and husbands who are at the point of death.

The requirements from the *Seder Ha-Gett* relating to the woman's receipt of it are:

- She must remove any jewelry from her hands and stretch one out to receive the Gett;⁸
- She must not have any assistance at the moment she takes receipt of the Gett;
- She must not close her hands on the Gett until her husband pronounces: 'This is your Gett and you are divorced from me and permitted to be married to any man.'
- She must then take hold of the Gett.⁹

The *Seder Ha-Gett* evolved with time. For example, having a minyan of men present when the Gett is delivered¹⁰ fell out of practice, even though a Gett is halakhically required to be public. It became the practice for individual rabbinic authorities, in consultation with their contemporaries and heavily referencing previous works, to collate such developments, along with statements of the original laws, into halakhic treatises.¹¹ One such guide, the *Kav Naki*,¹² remains a key halakhic source for Jewish divorce as conducted today, including by the *M'sadrei Gittin* of the Conservative / Masorti movement, and the exhaustive list of versions and spellings of Hebrew names that comprises the second half of the *Kav Naki* likewise remains in use.

⁷*Shulḥan Arukh, Even Ha-Ezer* 154; David Amram, *The Jewish Law of Divorce* (Hermon Press, New York 1968) pp. 192ff.

⁸The Rema notes here that the woman should remain veiled until addressed by the Rabbi; that she must answer 'yes' when asked if she receives it of her own free will; and that the Rabbi will enquire about the Ketubah so there should be no dispute afterwards regarding it.

⁹*Shulḥan Arukh, Seder Ha-Gett* 81-85

¹⁰*Shulḥan Arukh, Seder Ha-Gett* 77

¹¹ <https://www.jewishgen.org/databases/givennames/hilgittin.htm>

¹² Rabbi Avraham David ben Yehuda Leib Lavaot, *Kav Naki* (3rd Edition, Kehat Publishing House, Brooklyn, 1985)

The *Kav Naki*, who renders the ceremony in Yiddish, provides additional directions, including instructions about the exact placement and height of the wife and husband's hands, the Rabbi in advance of the delivery warning the woman that the Gett will result in her being divorced and translating the husband's declaration for him so he will understand what he is saying. The declaration itself is slightly expanded: 'This is your Gett; receive it, and with it you will be divorced from me from now on, and permitted to be married to any man.'¹³

This is more or less the version of the ceremony that is still being used today. A small minority of ceremonies are currently conducted with both the wife and husband present, following the traditional model; far more common is the situation in which only the woman will attend a *Beit Din* to receive her Gett.¹⁴ Thus, there are many situations in which our *M'sadrei Gittin* oversee how the process is experienced by the woman, playing a pastoral role as well as a ritual one. Some explain in advance what will happen, some even invite the woman to say a few words of her own, whether extempore or prepared beforehand. All of these ways of adapting the ritual and making it more inclusive of the woman about to receive her *Gett* speak to a praiseworthy effort on the part of our *M'sadrei Gittin* to address the inequality of the ceremony; but they remain at the sole discretion of each individual *M'sader/et Gittin* and therefore are being applied piecemeal across our community.

In addition to *M'sadrei Gittin* delivering the Gett to the woman, often rabbis in the field are called on to deliver the Gett. They serve as a *shaliah* and might not be aware that there are ways to empower the woman who is receiving her Gett, and to offer her opportunities to express herself.

It is the belief of these writers that a rabbi can, and does, play a central role in ensuring that women receiving their *Gittin* maintain their dignity and are able to integrate the process with all the other parts of their Jewish lives. It is primarily to these rabbis that this teshuvah is addressed, in the hope that we can walk better and more meaningfully with women at the beginning of this next phase of their journey.

¹³ *Kav Naki*, *ibid.*, 1:221ff

¹⁴In a still smaller minority of situations, the *M'sader Gittin* acts as agent for both the husband, in giving the Gett, and the wife, in receiving it.

Opportunities

If we accept that it is time to give women some agency at this crucial moment in their lives, should we go the route of changing the script for Gett receipt entirely? Should we not write a new one that fulfils the basic halakhic requirements but no more, and expand it to include greater opportunities for the woman's participation? Yet there is a fine line that needs to be walked here. On the one hand, changes to the ceremony are long overdue; on the other, the halakhic requirements around Gittin are as entrenched as they are precisely to ensure that the marriage is ended with zero ambiguity about the woman's subsequent status. A new script would likely strongly resemble the current one. Furthermore, to rewrite the script would infringe upon the expertise of our patient and diligent *M'sadrei Gittin*, some of whom have already quietly been evolving the ceremony and all of whom are usually far more familiar with the halakhah of divorce than their colleagues who lead congregations.

There are still opportunities, however, to reframe the ceremony and adjust the balance of its elements. The ceremony itself is structured in three parts - the start of the ceremony during which the *Beit Din* is gathered, the reading of the script, and the proclamation at the end of the script of "the ban of Rabbenu Tam."¹⁵ But up to the moment of reading the script, and once the ban has been proclaimed, anything which happens in the room is not part of the Gett delivery and cannot impact the *kashrut* of the Gett. Thus it is possible as well as desirable to retain both a halakhically viable Gett as prescribed in the *Kav Naki* and to give the woman agency in receiving it, making use of the "white spaces" around the script that are overdue for exploration.

Another place where we could encourage significant change is in the role that rabbis play in advance of the process. It is time for each rabbi to create a set of intake questions¹⁶ for women who will be receiving their divorces, along with a promise to walk with them through the process.¹⁷ Women ought to be briefed about what will happen at the ceremony, be given the opportunity to ask questions about it and rehearse if they wish. Does the woman wish to bring a friend, or friends? (Inviting female friends is particularly encouraged, bearing in mind that her rabbi, the *Beit Din* and the witnesses might all be male, thus there will be a significant gender imbalance in the room.) Or would she prefer to have the *Beit Din* meet her in her home or in the chapel of the synagogue, rather than in an office?

Providing full information to women about what they can expect from this process and the ways they can take active control if they wish to do so restores women's agency at a time when she may be feeling particularly vulnerable. Transparency about the process can enhance a woman's confidence in herself and connection to the ancient tradition of which she is a part.

¹⁵" Know ye, all who are present, that Rabbenu Tam and his disciple Rabbi Moses and other distinguished rabbis, have forbidden any and all persons under penalty of excommunication, to cast a slur upon a Gett after it has been delivered. If anyone among you has any doubts about the validity of this Gett let him declare them forthwith, and they will be considered. [Pause] Therefore, from now on, if anyone will arise and cast aspersions upon this Gett, he will be subject to the ban declared by Rabbenu Tam in conjunction with his disciples and associates. I therefore proclaim it forbidden for anyone, under penalty of ban, anathema and excommunication, to cast any aspersions upon this GETT from now on and forevermore."

¹⁶ See Appendix 2 for a suggested outline.

¹⁷In situations where the woman's rabbi cannot accompany her, the rabbi should in advance send a copy of the woman's answers to the person conducting the ceremony so that her wishes can be put into practice.

Some may be concerned that if we shed too bright a light on this life stage, we risk exacerbating a woman's or family's distress. Respect for individual privacy at this sensitive time is important, but it should be balanced with messages of affirmation so that our lack of discourse around this lifecycle event is not tinged with secrecy and shame, both of which can feel oppressive. We lose none of the sanctity of the ritual by making it more meaningful and less opaque; nor do we lose a sense of respect for the tradition from which it came. Instead, we provide a chance for recommitment and reconnection to our ancient legacy and create a space where a woman can walk together with trusted partners as she embarks on a new life stage.

Below are three possible rituals that can be integrated with the script.¹⁸ We hope they are appropriate to, and therefore may be adopted by, any couple dissolving a partnership.

The rituals are not exhaustive; rather, we hope that they will act as springboards to turn a critical moment of transition, one being undergone by half our community, into a ritual of healing, of *tikkun*, and of *kedushah*. We ask that rabbis and recipients alike feel empowered to choose the pieces that will be meaningful for them during this life-changing moment. And we hope that by doing so, women who are divorcing will no longer be shamed and confounded.

פסק דין (Ruling)

Our traditional Gett-Giving ceremony can, and should, be expanded in the ways suggested in this teshuvah, and in similar ways, to give women agency and dignity in receiving their *Gittin*, without alteration to the existing script and process for Gett receipt.

¹⁸ This teshuvah was written primarily to address women leaving a heterosexual marriage who have had a traditional (i.e. non-egalitarian or para-egalitarian) ketubbah/wedding. It may of course be adapted for other partnerships. We hope this teshuvah will have a limited lifespan as more and more couples choose the egalitarian ketubbah/wedding, for which there exists a corresponding egalitarian Gett/divorce ceremony - see Rabbi Pamela Barmash, "Egalitarian Kiddushin and Ketubbah" <https://www.rabbinicalassembly.org/sites/default/files/2022-04/barmash-egalitarian-kiddushin-teshuvah-final.pdf> and Rabbi Pamela Barmash, "Egalitarian Divorce and Gittin" <https://www.rabbinicalassembly.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/barmash-egal-divorce-final.pdf>

Appendix 1 - New Rituals¹⁹

Kavvanah

I cleanse my soul

I focus my energy

I am present and fully attentive to what will unfold here.²⁰

Ritual 1: Hand-Washing

This ceremony uses Netilat Yadayim as a way to create separation between what has been and what will be. You will want to have a pitcher of water or a netilat yadayim cup, a bowl big enough to hold the water that is used, and a clean towel.

Note: Even a single drop of water on a Gett can invalidate it. The washing and the delivery should take place in two separate areas of the room.

Before the script for delivery begins:

Remove your rings as instructed - this could be the time you remove your wedding band for good.

(1) The rabbi invites you and those gathered into a moment of silence. This is an opportunity to focus, meditate, and concentrate on breathing. You, as the Gett Recipient, are in charge of how much silence you would like. Take as long as you need, there is no rush, and this is your time.

(2) When you are ready, wash your hands, pouring the water from the pitcher or cup three times over each hand. This is *Netilat Yadayim* without a blessing. If you wish, you may invite a friend or the rabbi to pour the water over your hands for you, as a reminder that you are not alone.

(3) You may wish to take another moment of silence or deep breath at this point.

(4) *When you are ready, say: “Hineni mukhanah u’mezumenet – Here I am, ready and prepared, or as ready and prepared as I can be, to receive my Gett, my Jewish divorce document.”*

¹⁹ We have written the rituals in the second person, intending for the rabbi to print out a copy for the woman and to facilitate a conversation about the ritual precisely to give the woman agency in advance over the planning and preparation for the actual Gett delivery. The woman may choose any one of the three ceremonies. Rabbis should adapt gender references and pronouns as appropriate.

²⁰ This *kavvanah* follows the suggestion of Rabbi Karen Reiss Medwed, who has translated it and suggested transposing it from the charge given to the witnesses of the Gett elsewhere in the ceremony. It is intended as a declaration by the woman receiving her Gett and may be added to the ceremony as agreed with her beforehand.

After the end of the script:

(1) Choose a text to recite:

- **Ezekiel 36:25-27:** I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean...And I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit into you; I will remove the heart of stone/your heavy heart from your body and give you a heart of flesh/a tender heart and I will put my spirit into you.”
- **Isaiah 43:2-3:** When you pass through water, I will be with you; through streams, they shall not overwhelm you. When you walk through fire, you shall not be scorched; through flame, it shall not burn you. For I am Adonai your God.
- **Psalms 121:** A song of ascent. I lift up my eyes to the hills. What is the source of my help? My help comes from Adonai, Maker of the heavens and the earth. God will not allow you to stumble; Your Guardian will not slumber. Indeed, the Guardian of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps. Adonai is your Guardian, your shelter at your side. The sun will not smite you by day nor the moon by night. Adonai will guard you against all evil; God will guard you, body and soul. Adonai will guard your going out and your coming home, now and forever.
- **A Reflection:** I have so many emotions swirling around in my head and in my heart, God. Help me to understand them. Help me to learn from them. I feel anger and sadness about what is broken and cannot be fixed. I feel wistful about the good memories I want to hold on to. I feel strong and loved and alone and relieved in this moment, even though it might not make sense to feel all of these emotions at the same time. Fill me with resilience so that I can create the future I want to step into. Help me to create the next version of myself – the me I want to be.

(2) You may wish to take another moment of silence or deep breath at this point.

(3) Wash your hands, pouring the water from the pitcher or cup three times over each hand. If you wish, you may invite a friend or the rabbi to pour the water over your hands for you, as a reminder that you are not alone. This time, you will recite the blessing:

ברוך אתה יי אלוהינו מלך העולם שעשני בת חורין.

Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melek ha'olam she'asani bat horin

Praised are You, Holy One, Source of life, who supports my independence.

Rabbi may recite: Just as you lifted up and held out your hands to receive your Gett, now you may lift up and hold out your hands as you enter this new stage of your life.

(10) Replace any rings you now wish to wear on your hands.

Ritual 2: Two Cups Ceremony

You will need two glasses or cups - one to reject/have taken away and one to claim. If you wish, you can use vessels that have significance for you - perhaps a family cup, or one used in your wedding and/or a gift from a friend. You can involve your rabbi, your friend or the head of the *Beit Din* in the ceremony if you wish.

The ceremony is based on three verses from the Tanakh, all of which contain the word *kos*, meaning ‘cup’. They can be recited in Hebrew or in English. Prior to the day your Gett is delivered you and your rabbi might want to explore the context of these verses and discover if they hold additional personal meanings for you. The wording of the ceremony itself is concise so that you can allow yourself fully to inhabit what you will be saying.

Consider what you would like each cup to contain: water? wine? something else? It might be meaningful to have something bitter in the first cup and something sweet in the second.

Note: Even a single drop of liquid on a Gett can invalidate it. The ceremony and the delivery should take place in two separate areas of the room.

Before the script for delivery begins:

Hold the cup you will reject in your left hand.

Rabbi/friend:

I take from your hand the cup of reeling
You need not drink from it any more.

הִנֵּה לִקְחָתִי מִיָּדְךָ אֶת־כּוֹס הַתַּרְעֵלָה
לֹא־תוֹסִיף לִשְׁתוֹתָהּ עוֹד:

*Hinei lakaḥti mi-yadekh et kos ha-tar’alah
Lo tosifi lishtotah od*

The cup is taken from you.

After the end of the script:

Take the second cup in both hands and raise it.

You:

I lift up the cup of deliverance
I call the name of the Holy One.

כּוֹס־יְשׁוּעוֹת אֶשָּׂא וּבְשֵׁם יְיָ אֶקְרָא:
Kos yeshu’ot essa u’vshem Adonai ekrah

Holy One,
Go before me as I leave this place
Stand at my side as I walk into new life
Be gracious in guarding and protecting me
as I discover myself anew.
Remind me that I am strong
that I am resilient
that I am enough.

My cup is full to overflowing.

כּוֹסֵי רְנָיָה:
Kosi revayah

Drink from the cup and leave the ceremony.

Ritual 3: Cutting the Ketubah, Severing the relationship

There are times in the Jewish tradition when tearing or cutting is the appropriate response. When a person learns that an immediate family member has died, they tear their clothing. Alternatively, at the funeral, they are given a ribbon to tear or cut as they recite *Barukh dayan ha-emet*.

At the ketubah signing and often under the huppah itself, the bride is instructed to take possession of the ketubah to show that she enters the marriage willingly and accepts the conditions stipulated in the ketubah. In some circumstances, the right thing to do will be to tear or cut the ketubah that had been used at the wedding prior to receiving the Gett, provided the ketubah is available.

Actions can speak louder than words. Like *yahatz*, the fourth step in the seder, when we break the middle matzah without words or a blessing, in this ritual, we use action and silence to express the feelings behind the brokenness.

If you would prefer to use scissors or a knife rather than tear the ketubah, please instruct the rabbi to have them available.

- (1) The rabbi invites you and those gathered into a moment of silence. This is an opportunity to focus, meditate, and concentrate on breathing. You, as the Gett Recipient, are in charge of how much silence you would like. Take as long as you need, there is no rush, and this is your time.
- (2) When you are ready, tear (or cut) the ketubah in the manner that seems appropriate to you. The cut must be through at least the first line of the contractual text. When you are finished, place the cutting instrument (if you used one) and the torn ketubah to one side.
- (3) Receive your Gett.
- (4) After the end of the script, recite one or both of the following texts:

Just as Havdalah separates the ‘every day’ from the holy, divorce separates two chapters of a life – from married to no longer married. But just as one week leads into the next, so may the chapters of my life build upon one another. May I come to appreciate what was good, forgive or move on from what was bad, and embrace who I have become and who I will come to be.

ברוך אתה יי אלוהינו מלך העולם שעשני בת חורין.
Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melek ha'olam she'asani bat horin

Praised are You, Holy One, Source of life, who supports my independence.

Appendix 2 - Outline for Meeting Prior to Gett Delivery

Plan for at least one meeting before the Gett delivery and allow sufficient time to conduct it.

Greet the woman and check in: how is she feeling? Everyone comes to divorce with a different collection of emotions - there can be a wide range here. Gently ascertain her feelings towards her spouse and the fact she is divorcing. These can point you towards appropriate rituals for her at this time. It might be appropriate to refer the woman and her children (if any) for additional counseling.

Describe the process:

- What is a Gett, what is it for, what does it say?
- What is a *Beit Din* and what will it/they do?
- What questions will you be asked, and why?
- What will you be asked to do?

Allow the woman to ask any questions of her own about the process.

Offer the woman a choice of rituals and talk them through with her (you might want to have them printed out for her in advance). It might be that none of the rituals offered here are a fit for her and you and she will want to craft a different one.

Be sure to encourage the woman to invite a friend or friends to be with her at the ceremony. She might wish for her friends to participate in some way in the ritual, and this is permissible.

Just as with other lifecycle events, it might take more than one conversation to prepare the woman. Be prepared to set a follow-up meeting as needed.