

GETTING A JEWISH DIVORCE

Jewish women with civil divorces are joining hands to win their freedom from recalcitrant husbands who refuse to grant them a religious divorce or get, it was reported this week by the Jewish World, a weekly newspaper published on Long Island.

One estimate holds that there are 15,000 women in New York State who have a civil but not a religious divorce, the newspaper said.

With divorce proliferating in the Jewish community, the Jewish World noted, the potential for abuse by husbands who withhold the bill of divorce under threat of extortion has correspondingly increased. Some religious authorities call the issue of Jewish divorce one of the most sensitive and pressing problems facing observant Jews today.

Jewish law requires a religious divorce before a woman may re-marry. According to the halacha (Jewish law) a get (the Hebrew word for divorce) must be delivered by the husband and accepted by the wife. This writ of release permits each party to remarry and to have legitimate children with the new spouse.

The husband's failure or refusal to grant such a writ, irrespective of any divorce decree issued by a civil court, dooms the woman to a permanent status in limbo. She is called an agunah -- a "chained woman" in Hebrew. The newspaper described the case of one Queens woman who gave her husband \$100,000 in cash and property and surrendered alimony and child support in order to obtain a religious divorce and end her status as an agunah.

Sometimes -- thought not nearly so often -- it is the wife who is the obstinate partner, refusing to accept a get from her husband even though the marriage is hopelessly shattered.

In Orthodox and Conservative Jewish circles there is growing concern that some women who are refused a get by their husbands will opt to remarry without it. Such unions are invalid according to halacha and any children born therefrom are considered illegitimate.

Reform Judaism, on the other hand, accepts a civil divorce as valid dissolution and does not require a religious divorce.

One approach to the problem has been taken by a Brooklyn - based grass - roots organization called GET (Getting Equal Treatment). GET was formed by Jewish women to intervene in problem cases and to persuade reluctant spouses to appear before a rabbinical court. The organization, which numbers 250 women and which has been endorsed by Orthodox and Conservative rabbinical bodies, works within the framework of halacha and under the guidance of several Orthodox rabbis.

According to GET's founder and president, Gloria Greeman, the group functions as both an intermediary to get couples to a rabbinical court and as a deterrent force to mobilize the community's moral suasion against the stubborn partner.

GET also offers a variety of educational programs and support services for lawyers, spouses and students in the hope of reducing the incidence of divorce. It also provides information on Jewish divorce requirements and proceedings, the Jewish World reports.

The Jewish World also reports efforts to rectify the vindictive misuse of Jewish law by means of state law. In the last session of the New York State Legislature, Assemblyman Sheldon Silver (D, Manhattan) introduced a bill that would authorize the civil court in a divorce action to order a fact - finding and arbitration panel for investigating an allegation by one spouse that a "barrier to remarriage" is imposed by the other party (in this case, refusal to grant

or receive a get). The judge would then have the power to withhold a civil divorce if the party does not abide by the panel's recommendation for the removal of the barrier.

The bill passed the State Legislature but was withdrawn in the face of an expected veto by Governor Carey on grounds of Church - State separation. The New York Civil Liberties Union opposed the measure on the ground that it violated First Amendment guarantees of religious liberty.

In Conservative Judaism, a conditional clause, added to the standard ketubah (marriage contract) some 25 years ago, has been used by many rabbis. According to Rabbi Wolfe Kelman, executive vice president of the Rabbinical Assembly (Conservative), the clause implies authority for a beth din (religious court) to dissolve a marriage retroactively if a husband refuses to give a get. Several Orthodox rabbis, led by Rabbi Abner Weiss of the Riverdale Jewish Center, are currently preparing the first Orthodox prenuptial agreement, independent of the ketubah, that would effectively ease the way for a religious divorce, should a civil divorce be obtained.

As a result of its merger earlier this year with the 40 - year - old Long Island Jewish Press, the Long Island Jewish World is now the fifth largest of more than 100 weekly newspapers in Nassau and Suffolk counties. Published in Great Neck, the Long Island Jewish World covers local, national and international issues and events of interest to Jewish readers. Jerome W. Lippman is its publisher. His wife, Naomi, serves as editor.

FIRE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT REPS SALUTED AT VALLEY HOSPITAL



LUNCH IS SERVED -- REPRESENTATIVES FOR SOUTHERN NEVADA'S LAW ENFORCEMENT, FIRE DEPARTMENTS, REECO AND DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY (DOE) PERSONNEL WERE ON HAND FOR A SPECIAL THANK YOU LUNCHEON AT VALLEY HOSPITAL MEDICAL CENTER TO SHOW APPRECIATION FOR THEIR CONTINUED SUPPORT. PRESENTING CERTIFICATES OF APPRECIATION WERE HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATOR RICHARD L. PONDER AND EMERGENCY SERVICES MEDICAL DIRECTOR DR. COREY BROWN.

24,000 DIPLOMAS AWARDED BY YESHIVA UNIVERSITY

With the conferral of some 1,290 academic degrees and diplomas at its four commencement exercises in June and August, Yeshiva University and its affiliates have awarded a grand total of 23,901 degrees and diplomas since the institution began awarding degrees in 1908, according to Professor Morris Silverman, special assistant to the executive vice president.

Yeshiva University, now in its 97th year, is America's oldest and largest University under Jewish auspices. The University, comprising four academic centers in Manhattan and the Bronx and affiliated campuses in Los Angeles and Israel, has an enrollment of some 7,000 men and women, a faculty of 1,200, and an operating budget of more than \$150 million. Together with its undergraduate programs

in liberal arts and sciences and Judaic studies, the institution offers graduate and professional programs in medicine, law, social work, psychology, education and advanced Judaic studies. The University's Main Center is in Manhattan's Washington Heights. The University's undergraduate schools have awarded some 10,000 degrees and diplomas. Yeshiva College, founded in 1928, has conferred a total of 5,587 bachelor's degrees. Stern College for Women, founded in 1954, has awarded 2,381 bachelor's degrees. Bachelor's degrees also are conferred by Erna Michael College of Hebrew Studies and Teachers Institute for Women.

On the graduate level, more than 4,700 master's degrees have been awarded by Bernard Revel Graduate School, Ferkauf Graduate

School of Professional Psychology, and Wurweller School of Social Work. The University's Albert Einstein College of Medicine, founded in 1955, has awarded 2,960 Doctor of Medicine degrees. More than 1,000 doctoral degrees, including 965 Ph.D.'s, have been conferred by the institution's graduate schools. The University's newest division, Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law, established in 1976, has awarded 1,108 J.D. -- Doctor of Law -- degrees.

Among the University's affiliates, Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, founded in 1896, has been the home for 1,635 students who have received Semikhah (ordination) at the nation's foremost Torah center. Alumni of RIETS today are serving in the top leadership posts of American-Jewish cultural and religious organizations. Yeshiva University instituted the conferral of honorary doctoral degrees in 1932. Since that time, 348 honorary doctorates have been awarded to prominent figures in government, education, science, the arts, law, industry, and communal life.

United Way of Southern Nevada today made its progress report to the community on the current status of its annual fund drive. Burton Cohen, 1982 Campaign Chairman, announced that the human care service organization was approaching the mid - point in its \$2,421,117 goal. He revealed that thus far, \$1,002,372 had been pledged which represents 41.4% of the goal of \$2,421,117.

AMERICAN Tax Accounting
Larry L. Voight

1806 South Main
Las Vegas, Nevada 89101
(702) 384-9887

WOMENS HOSPITAL
• PREPARED CHILDBIRTH
• CLASSES USING THE HARRIS METHOD

CLASS FEE: \$10.00
To Sign Up For These Classes Call

Ph. 735-7106

Classes are six weeks in length and are held on:
Mon-Fri. 7-9 p.m. Sat. 1-3 p.m.
2025 E. Sahara Ave., Las Vegas, Nevada 89104

We are pleased to announce that
WILLIAM K. STEPHAN M.D.
has joined our firm as a
Financial Consultant
And manager of our new offices at
The Graystone Complex
1900 E. Flamingo Road Suite 289
Las Vegas Nevada 89109
Telephone (702) 735-3200

Coordinated Financial Service Inc.
Salt Lake City
Denver, Los Angeles, Oakland, Phoenix,
and San Jose