



# Esther rescued us, maybe it's time we rescued Esther...

## (... and Rivkah and Shlomit and Debbie and Lisa and Chani and Toby and Michal and Malki and ...)

The Fast of Esther (Monday, March 13th) commemorates a time when all Jews needed rescue from a seemingly hopeless fate. We were saved by the resolve and action of one woman — Esther.

Today there are once again Jews who confront a hopeless fate: The growing number of *Agunot* in our midst.

Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of blameless women are doomed to a life of solitude and childlessness. Why? Because their husbands — with the active or passive complicity of Rabbis and *Batei Din* (rabbinic courts) — refuse to grant them a *Get*, the Jewish writ of divorce.

**As a result, these women are considered 'chained' — chained to marriages that no**

longer exist, even as their former husbands are free to move on with their lives.

### **What can be done? In fact, plenty.**

- Rabbis should insist on a pre-nuptial agreement — prior to performing any marriage ceremony — that guarantees a civil remedy in the event the husband should ever refuse to grant a *Get*.
- Using legitimate halachic means such as *mekach ta'ut* (marriage entered into under false pretenses) and *hafkaat kiddushin* (annulment) Rabbis should make every effort to retroactively void marriages when a husband refuses to grant a *Get*.
- The names of recalcitrant husbands should be publicized, and a global roster of such men

should be maintained on the Internet so that they may be shunned socially, religiously and in business.

- Philanthropic contributions by recalcitrant husbands should be forbidden, rejected or returned in full.
- Corrupt *Batei Din* should be exposed, and litigants should be encouraged to avoid using those rabbinic courts for litigation of any kind.
- Rabbis should deny synagogue honors and invitations to recalcitrant husbands.

**There is no excuse for there to be even a single *Agunah*.** This is one issue that should unite all of us, because it is nothing less than *pidyon shvuyim* — the emancipation of hostages, which is the #1 priority of every single Jew.

**Join us on the Fast of Esther, as we resolve to do everything possible for Esther, and Rivkah and Shlomit and all the other women who are victims of our collective indifference. Call your Rabbi today and make sure he is doing what's necessary and right.**

**B'nai David Judea Congregation**  
www.bnaidavid.com

**Nessah Educational & Cultural Center**  
www.nessah.org

**Iranian Jewish Women's Organization**  
Eretz Siamak Cultural Center

**JOFA**  
www.jofa.org

**Sephardic Temple Tifereth Israel**  
www.sephardictemple.org

**Westwood Village Synagogue**  
www.villageshul.org