

## OUR MIRACLE

From: Atara Michal (Simkovitz) Feller

With tons of thanks to Hashem we're sharing with the group the amazing news of my release from igun and recent marriage.

Three years ago, I grabbed my toddler, barely gave a last glance to all my possessions from which I parted and fled from a terrifying marriage.

I had about \$40 cash on me. That was it. I borrowed a friend's credit card, and purchased tickets to NY, where I sought refuge by a friend, before moving into a Domestic Violence Shelter.

That was 3 years ago.

Many hundreds of days passed during which I achingly questioned whether I'd ever be granted the blessing of moving forward– to build a family....to finally experience a safe relationship....to not be the satellite slave to someone whose sole goal is to control me.

Oy, the mental torture of Igun.

I clung to Bitachon, telling myself that somehow the day would come.

But, al pi teva, there was no visible hope.

Does he want money? Custody? To marry someone else?

Does he fear publicity? Does his family?

No, no, no.

My case– all did tell me– was a most difficult one.

"Beating the guy up" is not an option (no one wants to risk being jailed), and the usual 'leverages' were not relevant.

But I persisted.

Being an Aguna was a full-time position.

Endless calls to rabbanim, meetings, lengthy brainstorming with those who cared to help.

Yet, sadly, I encountered all too many rabbanim who had forgotten to incorporate compassion into their holy work.

Rallying support proved very difficult.

I would not have believed it until I lived it first-hand.

But Hashem has His ways.

I was referred to a certain rabbi who

Introduced me to another element in Halacha. One which some attempted to deny, but my instincts told me, must exist (after all, Halacha is the Wisdom of Hashem who loves us!)

Mekach Ta'us.

It was a new term to me.

Now it's my mantra.

While he was not authorized to pasken, this rabbi (&many others) noted that my story most likely had strong grounds for being a 'mekach ta'us.'

I was sent to a Beis Din which feared only the One Above, and not the wrath of 'Jewish politics' or critics.

After weeks of deliberation, they set me free!

But in my mind, I remained a prisoner.

I had received 'mixed reviews' regarding whether it was advisable to move forward using such a psak.

So, I continued to suffer and wait.

Yes, I stayed busy and yes, I counted my blessings daily.

Constantly, I mentally declared that this was all meant to be...not everything can we understand.

My neshama—for a reason which would remain hidden— needed to travail this very journey.

But to someone who sees family life as the greatest blessing of all, nothing could truly silence my pain.

At the opening of this past summer, I guess I'd say my time had come... my mazal took a leap for the good.

Almost unanimously, every rabbi, askan or other whom I'd approached, shifted their tone with me. They stopped pretending. They all told me they had absolutely no ideas left for me, and obtaining a Get was just not feasible.

I began to hear more horror stories of Agunos who had to pour thousands of dollars into the hands of their abusers to get a Get. Or others who, after growing hopeless, had left Yiddishkeit altogether. (please understand— I say this with only sympathy & not an ounce of judgement)

And all too often, rabbis remained silent.

Abuse thrives in silence...

I watched as my son— an only child, with an

Absent father, accumulated sorrow, as he encountered 'kinderlach & Tatties' galore in our neighborhood.

"Lama nigara?!"Why was he deprived?

Yes, everyone has troubles ....and we all have many angered queries for Hashem "why?!".

But what about the suffering that doesn't have to be?

My perspective began to shift...

If there are rabbanim, ready to draw on Halachic precedents, to free a woman from a state of pikuach nefesh (I have seen it written in a sefer that Igun qualifies as such).

Then, therein, lies the Emes.

So why some rabbinic opposition?

Many answers have been surmised. Surely it requires a lengthier discussion, but to present a few:

Zeh le-umas zeh.

In accordance with the holy potential comes the opposition.

The Agunas of today differ from those of yesteryear. The plague of deliberate Get-refusal is a crisis unique to our times. Just as rabbanim had to rule regarding the Halachic implications of modern technology, there must be a more proactive rabbinic response to this tragic issue.

There are glimmers of hope. There are certain rabbanim who avidly explore (Rishonim, Achronim, R Moshe Feinstein, and other mekoros), the Halachos of mekach ta'us and hafka'as Kidushin.

It could also be explained–

A psak to free an aguna may not always be the 'lechatchila' approach. But, when a rav views her predicament as one of great harm, he can pasken that it's davka the Halachic approach to use the 'bedieved' to free her.

Back to our story...

With the encouragement of certain rabbis, I was getting comfortable with the idea of using my psak to remarry.

Around this time, Levi Feller posted on the group. He mentioned how he BH had been instrumental in freeing 3 Agunos, and kindly offered to help others.

I noticed his post, but sadly declined to respond, knowing how very difficult my case is.

But, as I re-read his name, I thought it sounded familiar, and got excited when I realized he knew my ex!

I immediately wrote to him, hoping maybe he would have an idea as to how to finally approach him.

Levi promptly responded that he did not know him but would be happy to try to help.... thus, we began communicating.

(I had mistaken him for someone else w a similar last name).

As an aguna-advocate, Levi was comfortable dating someone who was freed via such a psak.

Very quickly, as we took to liking each other, we began to perceive the hand of Hashem in our journey...

During the few months while we were dating, we each researched the topic of mekach ta'us extensively. ...we spoke and met with rabbanim, and ultimately were admitted meeting with a very renowned Chareidi Possek. Before we mentioned that we were considering marriage, the possek reviewed my psak. He looked at us and suggested we'd make a beautiful Shidduch and gave us his brachos to marry. He seemed impressed with the psak and indicated that we could absolutely rely on it.

This confirmed our suspicions.

Much of the opposition to the concept of such piskei dinim is political and due to lack of knowledge, not Halachic.

We continued to communicate with this possek.

He eventually told us that he is "too old to start a war", and could not go public with his approbation, but gave us many brachos to get married, using the current psak.

One might ask, why would he be reluctant to go public?

In response–

We know of one case where someone's business was sabotaged by the angry ex of an aguna whom he had helped. Another rabbi has received multiple violent threats from ex-husbands due to his involvement in helping Agunos.

Yes, sadly, the threat of such opposition is very real.

The Possek's approval gave us the confirmation and encouragement that we sought: there are legitimate Halachic ways of helping Agunos!

Contrary to the belief of some, it is NOT always possible to convince a man to give a Get. (The very trait of such cruelty and lack of reason would point to a potential mekach ta'us. No woman would willingly marry a man who has such malicious tendencies.)

We excitingly launch this post as what we pray will be a step in furthering the hopes and education for other Agunos who continue to suffer abuse.

We see so clearly the Hashgacha Pratis in all of this....Hashem sought an alternate way of freeing me, and then brought us together!!!

As stated in Kaballa, each time an Aguna is freed, Moshiach approaches even faster!!

B'ezras Hashem all the Agunos should be granted true simcha –whether through a Get, or a Halachic psak!

We would love to be in touch with any Agunos who would like more info.

You are welcome to contact us, either through PMing Levi or email me at

[Ataramsim@gmail.com](mailto:Ataramsim@gmail.com)

(My FB messaging is not working)

Moshiach Now!!!

"And one knows it is a great mitzvah to release her from her chains and a major prohibition to leave her in chains if one has the ability to repair the situation and does not resolve it."

– Igrot Moshe Even HaEzer 1 siman 117