



CHICAGO RABBINICAL COUNCIL

מועצת הרבנים דשיקגו

תשפ"ג *The Year in Review*

SEPTEMBER 2022 • TISHREI 5783

Updates, Insights, and Divrei Torah from the cRc

כתיבה וחתימה טובה!

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Rabbi Shaanan Gelman, President | HaRav Yona Reiss, Av Beth Din
Rabbi Levi Mostofsky, Executive Director | Rabbi Sholem Fishbane, Kashruth Administrator

Greetings from the Executive Director



The ימים נוראים are an opportunity for us to look back at the past year, and prepare for the year ahead. We each daven for our individual needs and interests, those of our family and friends, and as members of a vibrant community, we recognize as well the needs of those around us.

In the tefillah of וּנְתַנָּה תּוֹקֶף we reference the Mishna that describes how, on Rosh Hashanah, each of us passes before Hashem מְרוֹן. כְּכִנִּי מְרוֹן. What does כְּכִנִּי מְרוֹן mean? The Gemara (ר"ה י"ח) cites three possible explanations for this simile: as sheep being counted for מעשר (see רש"י there), as those ascending the steps of Maron, or as soldiers in the army of David HaMelech. While much has been written about this gemara, perhaps we can focus on three key messages that emerge from the three interpretations, for us to remember.

Firstly, while we are individually responsible for our actions, and get counted individually, we are defined by those around us, and our collective purpose. The examples in the three interpretations illustrate this, as there is no tenth sheep without the other nine, no staircase with one step nor any army of one.

Second, as individuals we have to work together in an organized way. Compared to sheep, we can't let any of our fellows stray; standing on stairs, we need to recognize the order of our steps; and as soldiers we must be coordinated. The army of David HaMelech is said to have been the model of organization that set the standard for all world armies thereafter (see בן יהודה קידושין ע"ב).

A third lesson is that we must work together as a community with purpose and direction, to grow and to achieve. A simple sheep can be poised to transcend

the mundane and be sanctified, and we can climb the ladder of spiritual growth with a commitment to grow. As soldiers, we can collaborate and mobilize to change the world around us.

We at the cRc are ב"ה blessed to work with our colleagues and partners throughout the year on behalf of community needs. This time of year we have an opportunity to look back on the past year's accomplishments, and aspire for continued growth in the coming year.

Our membership consists of rabbinic leaders who individually and collectively provide guidance to the community and guide the services that we at the cRc provide the community. We are committed to supporting them and the broader role of rabbinic community-leadership. Our rabbis guide their respective institutions, and support the lives of the individuals who turn to them. They also work together on keeping us together, and on ensuring the collective standards of our rich communal lives. Whether it is matters of shul security, the kashrus of community functions, or the function of mikvaos and eiruvim, our rabbis are working to protect the community, and we are dedicated to supporting them.

Our staff are world renowned for their expertise and industry leadership. We are able to appreciate, as well, the daily dedication to the individual needs of community members, and to innovative ways of advancing the spiritual services they provide.

Our בית דין continues to expand services to the



The cRc arranged a meeting at Walder Education Pavilion of Torah Umesorah with Mayor Aliza Bloch of Beit Shemesh and some local community and educational leaders.



cRc Rabbis met with Consul General Yinam Cohen at Kehilat Chovevei Tzion.

community, from divorce, to conversion, and from Chevra Kadisha services to arbitration and mediation of financial disputes. Our דינים and staff provide services of the highest technical level of halachic expertise, with professionalism and discretion. We are continuously exploring new ways, as well, to expand access to our services, and to expand how we can help support those who come to us for assistance.

Our Kashrus Department is a leading voice in the international world of Kosher supervision, and is dedicated to our community's high standard of Kashrus. Our staff are authorities in Kashrus policy and research that the global community relies upon. From large multinational manufacturers to local retail establishments, our staff ensure that our community has access to kosher products and services of the highest standard. As a community organization we are committed to supporting consumers, to the needs of community, and the interests of individuals.

Our staff dedicate much time and effort to supporting our growing community through education and outreach programming. Publications like our annual

Pesach Guide and Divrei Torah for Yamim Tovim share with the community some of the wisdom, research and knowledge that are hallmarks of our organization. This year's Shemittah Newsletter series, for example, provided a broad introduction to a nuanced topic with which our staff are consistently engaged but that the community outside of Israel are often unfamiliar.

We also come into the community to provide hands-on communal services and education. This includes our annual Pesach Fair, vegetable-inspection seminar series, and this year's Chalitzah demonstrations. As the shemittah year comes to a close, we once again allowed community members to sign a pruzbul with the established dayanim of our beis din.

As we look ahead to the coming year, we are excited to partner with you and the entire community, working together with direction and purpose, to serve the spiritual needs of the community, coordinate rabbinic leadership of our communal growth, and usher in a שנת חיים ושלוה לנו ולכל ישראל.

Rabbi Levi Mostofsky

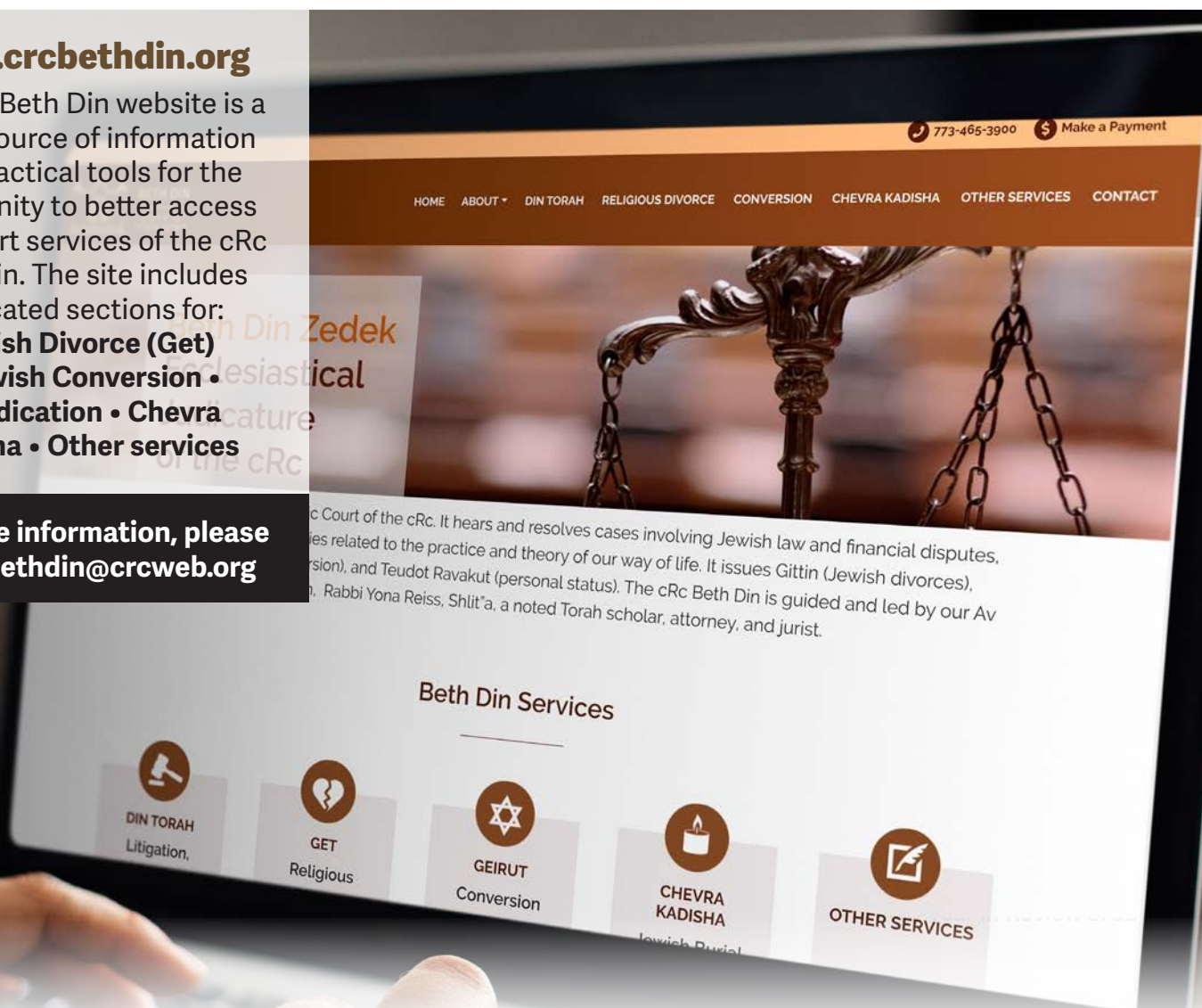
Executive Director, Chicago Rabbinical Council

www.crcbethdin.org

The cRc Beth Din website is a rich resource of information and practical tools for the community to better access the expert services of the cRc Beth Din. The site includes dedicated sections for:

- Jewish Divorce (Get)**
- Jewish Conversion •**
- Adjudication • Chevra Kadisha • Other services**

For more information, please email bethdin@crcweb.org



Kol Nidrei:

The Deeper Meaning

by Rabbi Yona Reiss
Av Beth Din, cRc



Kol Nidrei is perhaps the most defining moment of the Yom Kippur service, the opening prayer that pulls at the heartstrings of Jews all over the world, regardless of education, background, or commitment. However, if you look at the actual words of Kol Nidrei, it doesn't necessarily seem so profound – it is simply a legal formula for the nullification of vows, *Hataras Nedarim*. Why is the nullification of vows considered to be so inspiring? In this article, we will suggest five explanations.

One of the expressions that our former Av Beth Din, Rav Gedalia Dov Schwartz zt"l, was fond of saying, was "I don't go backwards – I only look forward." Kol Nidrei is at least in part about this idea of being forward looking, of asking Hashem to put the past behind us and enable us to go forward with a clean slate. The mechanism of nullifying past vows underscores this theme. As Chazal teach us, חכם עוקר גדר מעיקרו – when a vow is nullified by a Beth Din, it is uprooted from its inception so that it is considered like it was never uttered altogether.

This provides us with the first explanation of the profound significance of Kol Nidrei. People may become so despondent thinking about their past mistakes that it is difficult to strive to become better. Some commentators explain that this is the meaning of the phrase that we recite in our M'ariv prayer every night, והסר שטן מלפנינו ומאחרינו, please remove the Satan, the evil inclination, from in front of us and from behind us. We understand very well that we want to remove the Satan in front of us, to be rescued from sin, but what does it mean to remove the Satan from behind us? The masters of *mussar* explain that this refers to the aspect of your evil inclination that tells you to dwell in the past, so that you are unable to move forward and accomplish great things in the future. Yom Kippur is about the affirmation that we can become better people, and therefore we start off by removing the Satan from behind us. Kol Nidrei in this sense is the ultimate act of והסר שטן מאחרינו so that we can move effectively מלפנינו.

A second explanation emerges from a longer discussion

regarding the appropriate text of Kol Nidrei. The traditional text states that we are nullifying the vows of the previous year. However, the Rosh in his commentary to the Talmud (*Yoma, Perek Yom Hakippurim, Siman 28*) notes that Rabbeinu Tam registered several objections to this text. Rabbeinu Tam pointed out that according to halacha, the nullification of vows requires a Beth Din of three men, and this was not the way the Kol Nidrei is recited. Secondly, a person needs to express regret for his or her vows in front of the Beth Din, rather than relying on the recitation of a Chazan. Thirdly, the halacha follows the opinion that a person must specify his or her vow to at least one member of the Beth Din. And finally, queried Rabbeinu Tam, who exactly is annulling the vows of the Chazan?

Based upon these objections, Rabbeinu Tam concluded that the purpose of Kol Nidrei, which had already become a staple of the prayer service prior to his time, was not to nullify past vows, but to proactively prevent any future vows from becoming effective. He pointed to a Talmudic passage (*Nedarim 23b*), which explicitly references such a practice, as a prooftext for his position.

On this basis, Rabbeinu Tam altered the conventional wording of the Kol Nidrei prayer in one material respect, namely that instead of stating מיום כפורים שעבר עד יום כפורים זה (annulling vows retrospectively), he changed the wording to state מיום כפורים זה עד יום כפורים הבא עלינו לטובה (renouncing vows prospectively). According to this approach, if a person made a vow but did not remember the Kol Nidrei renunciation, the later vow would be automatically nullified by the renunciation and would only become binding if the person explicitly intended to override the earlier renunciation (like the position of Abaye in the Gemora in the Talmudic passage above, which according to Rabbeinu Tam is not disputed by his colleague Rava).

However, later commentaries pointed out a number of problems with Rabbeinu Tam's approach: (a) there is a contrary interpretation of the succeeding passage in the Talmud, based on the opinion of Rava in the same

Talmudic passage (and the assumption that he disagrees with Abaye), that the only time any subsequent vow would be viewed as invalid is in the unusual case when someone intentionally takes a vow afterwards which specifically relies upon the prior renunciation (even when one does not remember the nature of such renunciation), but not in the more typical case when the person forgot about the prior renunciation altogether (see Rambam, *Nedarim* 2:4, and *Kesef Mishneh* ad locum); (b) the *Aruch Hashulchan* (*Yoreh Deah* 211:10) writes that since Kol Nidrei has become such a public spectacle, it is inconceivable that an individual would take a vow and not remember that he/she said Kol Nidrei, in which case even Rabbeinu Tam would agree that any subsequent vow would be interpreted as overriding the prior renunciation of vows; and (c) the Rosh (id.) points out that at the conclusion of the Talmudic passage, Rava stated that it is forbidden to publicize the fact that vows can be proactively nullified in the future since it may cause people to take vows less seriously. Indeed, the Rosh strongly disagreed with Rabbeinu Tam and felt that Kol Nidrei should consist of a nullification of past vows, in accordance with the traditional formulation, rather than a renunciation of future vows.

How does Rabbeinu Tam get around these problems? With respect to the first issue (that renunciation of vows rarely works), the reality is that the Rema (*Yoreh Deah* 211:1) also ruled that absent a great need, one really should not rely upon the recitation of Kol Nidrei. However, there remains an instance in which the renunciation makes a clear difference. Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld ruled (*Salmas Chaim* YD 62) that a prospective nullification of vows would be clearly effective in the case of a מנהג טוב – a good practice that a person takes upon himself/herself without expressing any kind of vow or commitment, such as standing up during the reading of the Torah, without stating that it is being done as a vow. Although we generally treat a virtuous practice as the halakhic equivalent of a vow, one may be lenient to rely upon one's prior renunciation and not require a nullification of vows to discontinue the practice.

How does one avoid the *Aruch Hashulchan's* concern that everybody will remember that they said Kol Nidrei so that any new vow will be considered an intentional override of the original Kol Nidrei declaration? Some commentators cite the observation of *Tosafos* in *Nedarim* (23b, s.v. *Tanna*) that since Kol Nidrei is written in Aramaic, many congregants have no idea what it means anyway. This explanation also resolves the third issue, namely the concern based on the Gemora that instituting Kol Nidrei may cause people not to take vows seriously, since many will not understand that Kol Nidrei is a renunciation of vows. However, this answer presents

a new problem, because a nullification or renunciation of vows is not valid if the petitioner lacks an understanding of what is happening.

Since both opinions of the Rosh and Rabbeinu Tam regarding the correct formulation of Kol Nidrei have arguments for and against them, the Chayei Adam (144:20) suggests that the best wording for Kol Nidrei should include both a nullification of previous vows as well as the disavowal of future vows. Thus, the version that is printed in many machzorim, and that was favored by Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik zt"l, states מיום כפורים שעבר עד יום הכפורים הבא עלינו לטובה – including both past vows and future vows.

Based on the foregoing discussion, we can suggest a second explanation of the significance of Kol Nidrei. The three formulations, namely that of the Rosh, correcting the past, that of Rabbeinu Tam, correcting the future, and that of the Chayei Adam, connecting Kol Nidrei to both the past and the future, enable us to appreciate why this prayer belongs on Yom Kippur. Kol Nidrei represents not only a rejection of past errors, but an appreciation of the fusion between past, present, and future. On Yom Kippur, we not only eradicate the mistakes of the past, but we also prepare for a more perfect future based on the lessons that we have learned.

There is a famous poem of ancient but dubious origin that states העבר אינן, העתיד עדיין, וההווה כהרף עין, אם כן דאגה מנין (roughly translated as, "the past is past, the future is not yet cast, the present won't last, so why worry, let's have a blast"). Regardless of the identity of the author of this clever ditty, Rav Soloveitchik did not care for it. To him, a Jew is always part of eternity. When he learned Torah, he felt that Rashi and *Tosafos*, the Raavad and the Rambam, together with Rabbi Akiva Eiger and his grandfather Rav Chaim Brisker, were all at his side, participating in the "symposium of the generations." The same is true of each individual lifetime. We each look to correct our past and prepare responsibly for the future, and that is what defines our present, of where we are on Yom Kippur. That is why teshuva requires חרטה, regret for the past, קבלה, acceptance of a commitment to do better in the future, and וידוי (confession) in the present – there is no time frame that is irrelevant or passive – this is perhaps the most powerful message of Kol Nidrei, that it is about both the past and the future, מיום הכפורים שעבר עד יום הכפורים הבא עלינו לטובה.

Thus, the second message of Kol Nidrei is that it imbues us with this sense of "time awareness"; every moment counts, even the moments that we regret and want to undo or change, but that is also part of the human psyche, and part of our current reality. Nothing is fleeting; life is cumulative, and we believe that with a

בס"ד

FROM THE DAYAN'S DESK



featuring

Rav Yona Reiss,
shlita

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proper perspective, we cause not only every new moment to be meaningful, but we infuse meaning into the past and future as well. Along these lines, some say (*Likutei Zvi*, cited by *Sefer Kol Nidrei*, ch. 82, note 6) that the poignant melody that we sing for Kol Nidrei was instituted for the Anussim, who utilized Kol Nidrei to cancel the vows that they made to the Inquisitors to worship Christianity, repairing an act of apostasy with a song of meaningful prayer.

This brings us to our third message. There is another question about Kol Nidrei that helps to answer some of our previous conundrums. As a general rule, the annulment of vows is supposed to take place during a regular weekday, and not on Shabbos or Yom Tov, unless a particular vow needs to be nullified for a specific Shabbos or Yom Tov purpose. It is for this reason that Kol Nidrei begins during the daytime. However, it often begins right before sundown and continues until after sundown, and sometimes past nighttime. In fact, the *Rema* (*Orach Chaim* 619:1) states explicitly that the practice is to recite Kol Nidrei starting during daytime and continuing into the night.

Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv zt"l (*Ashrei Ha-Ish*, *Moadim* 21:11) explains that according to our current practice of each person doing a standard *Heter Nedarim* on Erev Rosh Hashanah, the Kol Nidrei on Yom Kippur represents a *Heter Nedarim Kellali* – more of a communal annulment of vows, which would be permissible even after nighttime on Yom Kippur. Why is this permissible even on Yom Kippur itself?

The *Nitei Gavriel* (*Yom Kippur*, *Teshuva* 3), citing the *Sefer Hamanhig*, who in turn cites Rav Saadiah Gaon, explains that the whole idea of Kol Nidrei has nothing to do with the individual. The individual vows are handled separately, either on Erev Rosh Hashanah or throughout the year. On Yom Kippur, we speak about communal offerings, such as the שער לעזאזל – goat of Azazel – that atoned for the sins of the entire nation. Kol Nidrei underscores the notion that we are all in this together, and that the atonement for the individual depends upon the atonement for the congregation.

Immediately prior to the recitation of Kol Nidrei, we invoke the ישיבה של מעלה, the Heavenly Tribunal, and the ישיבה של מטה, the earthly Beth Din, and declare אנו מתירין להתפלל עם העבריינים – we are given permission to pray together with the sinners. Why now? Because we need every member of the community to come together so we can confront our collective shortcomings and overcome them together. Hakadosh Baruch Hu is looking for a כפרת ציבור, a communal atonement, and therefore we must ensure that we are as united as possible as a community, that the community has no blemish. This is the essence of Yom Kippur. The *pintele yid* who responds to the cry of Kol Nidrei is responding to the awareness that he or she is not alone, but part of a long tradition, a torch bearer of all the Jewish fathers and mothers and grandparents throughout history.

We now have an answer to the question as to how we can annul vows even on Yom Kippur itself. A vow that is for the purpose of the Yom Tov can be nullified even on the Yom Tov itself. Since the prayer of Kol Nidrei is both unique and necessary as a *Heter Nedarim Kellali* – as a communal nullification of vows, it may continue even

into the evening. This illuminates a third explanation as to the special nature of Kol Nidrei – it is a manifestation of communal atonement and responsibility.

A fourth explanation of the special nature of Kol Nidrei emerges from the description of Kol Nidrei in the *Zohar*. In the *Zohar*, the recitation of Kol Nidrei seems to have a connection to the Talmudic passage in *Bava Basra* (74a) that speaks about how Hashem bemoans the fact that He took an oath to send us into exile and wishes that He could be extricated from that oath - אוי לי שנשבעתי ועכשיו - שנשבעתי מי מפר לי. According to this esoteric interpretation, we say Kol Nidrei in part to do our part to accommodate that Divine wish and release G-d from His oath. Notably, the *Aruch Hashulchan* who says that the recitation of Kol Nidrei does not really work nowadays since nobody will forget about Kol Nidrei when making a later vow, remarks that it could be that the main reason that we recite Kol Nidrei nowadays is based on the kabbalistic overtones (see *Aruch Hashulchan, Orach Chaim* 619:3). Maybe the idea of the *Zohar*, or at least a part of the idea that we can understand, is that Hashem is telling us that we need to do atonement, including the annulment of our vows, not only for ourselves but also for His sake, so that Hashem may take us out of our exile, and in the process

the Shechinah will come out of exile as well.

Finally, a fifth and final message of Kol Nidrei relates to the contrast between the nullification of vows and the removal of the Torah scrolls from the Holy Ark. Rav Yosef Mashash (*Sefer Mayim Chayim* 251) asks why the Sifrei Torah are removed for the purpose of Kol Nidrei. After all, we don't really find that *Hataras Nedarim* requires a Sefer Torah. Rav Mashash responds that since during this time we are nullifying so many oaths, we need a reminder that there is one oath that can never be nullified, and that is the oath that we took at Har Sinai to fulfill the Torah. When we remove and embrace the Torah scrolls at the time of Kol Nidrei, we demonstrate that regardless of whichever other vows may be subject to nullification or renunciation, our acceptance of the Torah is eternal.

May this year of תשפ"ג be a year of תהא שנת פעמי גאולה, a year in which we take the proper steps to bring the redemption, by stamping out past sins and creating a clean slate, by connecting ourselves with the continuum of Jewish history and destiny, by caring for the needs of our community, by elevating the Shechinah through our sincere atonement, and by rededicating ourselves to the eternal truth of Torah.

Kesiva v'Chasima Tova!



The cRc is proud to offer VEGETABLE-INSPECTION TRAINING SEMINARS

Sunday	Sunday July 31 st	Sunday September 4 th	Sunday September 11 th
		– MEN – 10-11 am – WOMEN – 11:30-12:30	10-11 am – FOR WOMEN –
HOSTED AT:			
KEILIM KASHERING	CONGREGATION KHAL CHASIDIM	KHAL OHR YISOCHER CHODOROV	

Joel Langer is a Dayan on the cRc Beis
Rc Rabbinic Coordinator for בדיקת תולעים,
research, cRc policy and mashgiach-training.



Chicago Rabbinical Council (cRc)
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CHICAGO RABBINICAL COUNCIL PASSOVER FAIR 5782 / 2022

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Rabbi Reiss in the Community

Rabbi Reiss, our Av Beth Din, is nationally and internationally known. From being one of the seven dayanim invited by Rabbi Lau to speak on behalf of dayanim from Batei Din from all over the world to speaking at Pepperdine Caruso School of Law, Rabbi Reiss' opinion is sought by many different constituencies.



Rabbi Reiss spoke to the Parsha and Pizza class at Or Torah, and to Rabbi Gelman's Mishnayos class of Kehilat Chovevei Tzion, on their completion of Maseches Shabbos.



Rabbi Reiss spoke at the ARK's Groundbreaking Event, covered by local news channels



Rabbi Reiss spoke at Ner Israel Rabbinical College in Maryland about אפקעינהו רבנן לקידושין מיניה



Rabbi Reiss spoke to the talmidim at Yeshivat Har Etzion in the Gush.



Rabbi Reiss participated in the Halichot Am Yisroel Conference in Israel in the beginning of February.



Rabbi Reiss participated in the pouring of the concrete for mikvah in Riverwoods, IL.



Rabbi Reiss supervised the re-filling of the mikva in Champaign, IL.



(Pictured to the left, l-r) Rabbi Levi Notik, FREE of Chicago, Rabbi Aron Rendler, FREE of Riverwoods, Rabbi Baruch Hertz, congregation Bnei Ruven, Rabbi Reiss, and Rabbi Sholom D. Notik, FREE of Riverwoods



Rabbi Reiss signed the petition along with rabbinical leaders around the world against the Israeli government's new Geirus policies and was interviewed about the current situation in Hamodia.

cRc in the Community



BETH DIN
בית דין
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For forms and more information:


Community PRUZBUL SIGNING

Sunday, Sept. 18	Sunday, Sept. 18	Sunday, Sept. 25
9:30AM – 11:00AM	5:00PM – 6:45PM (Mincha)	9:30AM – 11:00AM
CONGREGATION OR TORAH	BAIS CHAIM DOVID	CONGREGATION K.I.N.S.
3800 Dempster Street Skokie, IL	3462 W. Devon Avenue Lincolnwood, IL	2800 W. North Shore West Rogers Park, IL



As this Shemittah year comes to a close, the Beth Din of the cRc will be providing **three opportunities** for פרזבול signing.

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cRc Beth Din

SHABBOS IN SKOKIE

Parashat Mishpatim • January 28 – 29
Rabbi Yona Reiss & **Rabbi Aaron Kraft**
Av Beth Din Dayan Kavua

Personal Reflections from Life in the Beth Din
A community-wide Oneg at 8:00 pm
At the home of Dr. Yigal and Mrs. Donna Yahav (8630 Keeler Avenue)

Congregation Or Torah Prohibition to Litigate in Secular Court: When and Why Drasha by Rabbi Reiss at the 8:30 am Shacharit	Kehilat Chovevei Tzion Can I Choose a Beth Din? Shiur by Rabbi Kraft after the 8:30 am Shetiel Minyan	Lubavitch Chabad of Skokie The Price of Saving Lives in Halacha: The Case of Self-Driving Cars Afternoon Shiur in Seudat Shilshit by Rabbi Reiss after Mincha
Is Separation Between Religion and State a Jewish Concept? Drasha by Rabbi Reiss at the 9:00 am Shacharit	Jewish Justice: Not Just for a Beth Din Drasha by Rabbi Kraft at the 9:00 am Shacharit	Congregation BHH Kesser Maariv AL Halakhic Estate Planning: How a Beth Din Can Help Afternoon Shiur by Rabbi Kraft after Mincha

www.crcbethdin.org



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אב בית דין

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cRc Kosher Reaching Out



Oportunidades de la panela como alimento Kosher: Cooperación Fedepanela - Farmer to Farmer

Martes 25 de enero
10:00 a.m - 11:00 a.m


Vía Teams

Rabino **Moshe Moscowitz**
Consejo Rabinico de Chicago - CRC

USAID EL PASO DE LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS DE AMERICA

FARMER to FARMER

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AN HONEST LOOK AT THE STATE OF KASHRUS TODAY

RABBI SOHEM FISHBANE

RABBI SOHEM FISHBANE SERVES AS THE DIRECTOR OF KASHRUS FOR THE CHICAGO RABBINICAL COUNCIL (CRC), AS WELL AS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE ASSOCIATED KASHRUS ORGANIZATIONS (AKO), AN UMBRELLA GROUP OF MAJOR KOSHER-CERTIFYING AGENCIES.

THIS SUNDAY (1/23) 9PM
FOLLOWED BY MARIV @ 9:45PM

HEICHAL HATORAH
5100 NORTH HILLS DR. HOLLYWOOD



Rabbi Fishbane speaking at an AKO Conference in San Diego.



Rabbi Fishbane interviewed in Mishpacha Magazine.

PESACH GUIDE and
Pesach information

ASKcRc:


<https://www.askcsrc.org/>

cRc APP

cRc • Year in Review 5782



Membership Programs




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פרוזבול
EDUCATING YOUR COMMUNITY

With *אמא אקוואות* you can use for your own *אמא אקוואות*!

תuesday, August 30th ג' אלול
11:45 AM (Central)

Please RSVP to
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Rabbi Yona Reiss, אב בית דין

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**Pre-Pesach
Membership Conference Call**

 Rabbi Sholem Fishbane Kashruth Administrator	 Rabbi Yona Reiss אב בית דין	 Rabbi Dovid Cohen Senior Rabbinic Coordinator
--	--	---

תuesday, March 29th כ"ז אדר ב' תשפ"ב
4 PM Central

ZOOM Meeting ID: 863 2985 0152 Passcode: 660002

Chicago Rabbinical Council (cRc) | office@crcweb.org | (773) 250 - 5499



We've hosted cRc Membership Lunch & Learns with shiurim by Rabbi Reiss for the Pre-Bein HaMetzarim Shiur, Pre-Shavuot on Geirus Reforms in Israel and the Potential for Local Impact, and Pruzbul – Educating Your Community



HaRav Hershel Schachter addressed questions from cRc Members in May.



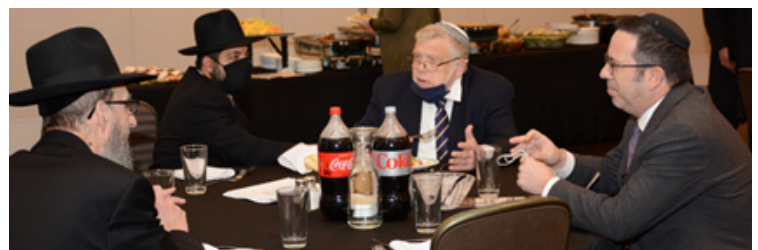
Rabbi Reiss spoke at Adas Yeshurun about Rav Schwartz zt"l on Thanksgiving.

Remembering Rav Gedalia Dov Schwartz zt"l



Our Annual Membership Dinner – Melava Malka coincided with the First Yahrtzeit of Rav Schwartz zt"l.

We listened to Rabbi Reiss, and watched a video from Rabbi Mordechai Willig and a tribute video for Rav Schwartz from 2007.



Encouraging Future Leaders



Students from Epstein Hebrew Academy in St. Louis met with Rabbi Reiss in the Beth Din on Memorial Day.



Rabbi Kraft taught Ida Crown Jewish Academy senior boys about the Beth Din in May.

We encourage learning and future leaders with the cRc Torah Achievement Awards and the Rebbetzin Shoshana Schwartz, a"n, Torah Essay Contest.

Congratulations to this year's recipients of the cRc Torah Achievement Award

Malka Galster
Bais Yaakov High School

Gabe Schechter
Fasman Yeshiva High School

Tzvie Lebovics
Hanna Sacks Bais Yaakov High School

Will Blumberg
Ida Crown Jewish Academy

Chani Greenberg
Lubavitch Girls High School

The cRc wishes Mazal Tov to this year's winners of the Rebbetzin Shoshana Schwartz, a"n, Torah Essay Contest:

MAINTAINING HALACHA THROUGH THE PANDEMIC CATEGORY
Donny Friedman
Fasman Yeshiva High School
Halachic Triage in a Pandemic

TANACH CATEGORY
Amitai Kakon
Ida Crown Jewish Academy
Emunah from Adam to Avraham Avinu

MAZAL TOV TO OUR RUNNERS UP

Halacha Division:
Shimon Herman
Fasman Yeshiva High School

TaNaCH Division:
Miriam Aron
Bais Yaakov High School of Chicago

TaNaCH Division:
Batsheva Dubovick
Bais Yaakov High School of Chicago

TaNaCH Division:
Rivky Grunwald
Bais Yaakov High School of Chicago

We congratulate the winners on their excellent work, and wish them and all who participated great success as they continue their Torah education in Israel.

The cRc thanks Rabbi Michael Myers, Education Committee Chairman, for coordinating these programs.





BAKERIES

Better Bites Bakery LLC (Fairfield, NJ)
Bimbo Bakeries USA (Riviera Beach, FL)
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Premium Food Group (Florida, NY)
Second Nature (Madison Heights, MI)
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Tazzy Candy (Scarsdale, NY)
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Camp Moshava of Wild Rose Inc (Wild Rose, WI)
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Nalco Water (Düren, Germany)
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Paramount Colors, Inc. Texas (Stafford, TX)
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Le Cafe De La Plage Inc (Beverly Hills, CA)
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Milk Bar (New York City, NY)
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Prairie Farms (Reedsburg, WI)
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SpartanNash (Byron Center, MI)
T Ventures, Inc Sach Foods (Oakland, CA)
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MANUFACTURING

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 BW Gas & Convenience Retail, LLC d/b/a
 Yesway (Beverly, MA)
 DMS Packaging Services (Elk Grove Village, IL)
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 Great River Organic Milling Company (Hereford, TX)
 Great River Organic Milling Company (Fountain
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 Groupe Bra (Aousja, Tunisia)
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 Jiangsu OCI Chemical Co. Ltd. (Madian, Taixing,
 Taizhou, China)
 Lidl US, LLC (Arlington, VA)
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 Meelunie America, Inc. (Kallo, Belgium)
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 Performance Food Group (Richmond, VA)
 Plant B (Minneapolis, MN)
 Pristine Kashering (Far Rockaway, NY)
 Puris Protein (Rancho Cucamonga, CA)
 Puris Proteins (Waukon, IA)
 Puris Proteins (Boone, IA)
 Puris Proteins Dawson, MN (Dawson, MN)
 Top Fox Snacks (Goodfield, IL)
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 Teasdale Latin Foods (Buda, TX)
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 Vincent Van Gogh Cafe, LLC (Smithtown, NY)
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 City, China)



NUTRITION

Provitas, LLC (Plano, TX)
 Shandong Hearun Dietary Hall Co., Ltd.
 (Weifang, Shandong)



RESTAURANTS

Dunkin Donuts, 3900 West Dempster, Skokie
 (Skokie, IL)
 Mordy's Kosher at United Center (Chicago, IL)



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 Quala Wash Facility (Mt. Vernon, MO)
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 Total Clean, LLC (Channelview, TX)
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 Total Clean, LLC (Pasadena, TX)



TRUCKING

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 (Clearbrook, VA)
 Create-A-Pack Foods, Inc. Trucking (Ixonia, WI)
 Hansen Express Inc (Elroy, WI)
 Harcros Chemicals, Inc. Trucking (Thornton, IL)
 KAG Canada (Mississauga, ON, Canada)
 Kill Agri-Service LLC (St. Marys, OH)
 Polyock All-Star Commodities LLC (Zenda, WI)
 Propel Trucking, Inc (Russellville, AR)
 The Alden Group (Detroit, MI)
 Time Dedicated Carriers Inc (Channahon, IL)
 Triple B Milk Transport LLC (Readstown, WI)

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ASKcRc

cRc Kosher Info at Your Fingertips

Welcome to the cRc Mobile Web Application

A large, woven basket filled with several round, golden-brown loaves of bread. Some wheat stalks are visible in the background, and more bread is scattered on a white surface in the foreground. The lighting is warm, highlighting the texture of the bread and the weave of the basket.

Pas Yisroel

DURING ASERES Y'MEI TESHUVAH



by Rabbi Dovid Cohen

Administrative Rabbinical Coordinator, cRc Kosher

Background

In the times of the *Mishnah*, *Chazal* forbade us from eating bread-like items that were baked exclusively by non-Jews. [The bread-like items are referred to as *pas* and that term will be defined more clearly below.] If, however, a Jew participated in any part of the baking process, the food items are permitted and are known as *pas Yisroel*. In later years, *Chazal* partially retracted this prohibition because the baking ovens were controlled and/or owned by non-Jews, and the aforementioned restriction made it overly difficult for Jews to obtain “kosher” *pas*.

In partially retracting the prohibition, *Chazal* created a new class of *pas*, “*pas paltar*,” whose literal translation is “baker’s *pas*.” *Pas* baked by a non-Jew in his home remained forbidden, but *pas* sold in a bakery or other commercial setting where the non-Jewish baker and the Jewish customer have no personal contact, was now permitted even if there was no Jewish participation in the baking. However, there are two opinions in the *Rishonim* as to how this retraction was structured.

- Some say that since the prohibition was only retracted due to the difficulty in obtaining *pas Yisroel*, *pas paltar* is only permitted when *pas Yisroel*

is not readily available. However, in situations where *pas Yisroel* can be purchased, the original *halacha* applies and *pas paltar* is forbidden.

- Others hold that the retraction applies to all cases, and *pas paltar* is permitted even when *pas Yisroel* is readily available.

The accepted practice is to follow the latter, more lenient, opinion but there are those who have the commendable practice of following the stricter approach (and some do so on Shabbos – see *Mishnah Berurah* 242:6). To help these consumers, the cRc strives that all “*pas*” served at cRc certified restaurants and caterers are *pas Yisroel* year-round, and also makes efforts that commercially produced items should also meet that standard. In all cases, it is best not to assume a food is *pas Yisroel*, and one should speak to the *Mashgiach*, or check the packaging, to see whether it qualifies.

The time of year when most people are *machmir* regarding *pas Yisroel* is during the days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur (*Aseres Y’mei Teshuvah*), based on *Shulchan Aruch* 603:1 who records such a custom. During those ten days, Jews who otherwise rely on the lenient opinion that permits *pas paltar* in all cases, are careful to only eat *pas Yisroel* when it

is reasonably available. It is worth noting that in this context, *Mishnah Berurah* (603:1) defines “reasonably available” as requiring less than 72 minutes of travel to obtain.

Which foods are *pas*

As noted, the term “*pas*” refers to bread-like foods, and to qualify as *pas* the food must meet the following criteria:

1. It must contain one or more of the five major grains – wheat, barley, rye, oats or spelt. Thus, rice cakes, corn flakes, and most corn tortillas cannot possibly require *pas Yisroel* as they are not made from these grains. Although granola bars are made from oats, most *Poskim* are of the opinion that they do not qualify as *pas* (and the *bracha rishona* is *ha’adamah*) due to technicalities regarding how they are produced which are beyond the scope of this article. On the other hand, breads made from “sprouted wheat” are most definitely *pas*.
2. It must have *tzuras hapas* / the “form” of bread. There is much discussion as to how to define this term, but (a) all bread, bagels, cake, crackers, cookies, pies, pizza, soft pretzels and most hard

pretzels have *tzuras hapas*, and (b) pasta does not. There are differences of opinion as to whether very small hard-pretzels, blintzes, very thin wafers and wraps have *tzuras hapas*. Rav Schwartz *zt”l* ruled that wraps are considered “*pas*,” but Cheerios-like cereals are not, since they do not have *tzuras hapas*.

3. *Shulchan Aruch* (O.C. 168:13) cites two opinions as to whether *pas* is limited to items which are baked (or fried in a minimal amount of oil), or if it even includes doughnuts and similar items that are made with a bread-like batter but are cooked or deep-fried.



Rabbi Cohen's sefer on Pas Yisroel & Bishul Yisroel is available to purchase at www.crcweb.org/books.php

What foods require *pas Yisroel*?

Bagel	Yes
Blintzes	Difference of opinion
Bread	Yes
Breakfast Cereals	
Cheerios	No
Corn Flakes	No
Rice Krispies	No
Others	
With 5 Grains	Depends on cereal
Without 5 Grains	No
Cake	Yes
Challah	Yes
Cookie	Yes

Corn Tortillas	No ¹
Crackers	Yes
Croutons	
Bread Crouton	Yes
Mandel Type	Difference of opinion
Doughnuts	Difference of opinion
Ezekiel Bread	Yes
Flour Tortillas	Yes
Granola Bars	No
Matzah	Yes
Pancakes	Difference of opinion
Pies	Yes

Pita	Yes
Pizza	Yes
Pretzels (Soft & Hard)	Yes ²
Rice Cakes	No
Sprouted-Wheat Bread	Yes
Tortillas	
With Wheat Flour	Difference of opinion
Without Flour	No
Wafers (Thin)	Difference of opinion
Wraps	
With Wheat Flour	Yes
Without Flour	No

1. Assuming they don't contain wheat flour; if they do, see wraps.

2. Some say very small hard pretzels don't.



A Consumer's Guide to **ARBA MINIM SELECTION**



Rabbi Yochanan Schnall

Rabbinic Coordinator, cRc

Approved by Rabbi Yona Reiss, Av Beis Din, cRc



A complete set of "arba minim" used for Sukkos includes one *lulav* (palm frond), one *esrog* (citron fruit), three *hadassim* (myrtle branches), and two *aravos* (willow branches).



A *lulav* consists of multiple leaves that are attached to a hard, green spine. Three leaves protrude from the top of the spine and the central one of them is called the *tiyomes*. Although not readily apparent, the *tiyomes* is comprised of two separate halves which grow adjacent/fused to one another.

As they grow, the two halves of the *tiyomes* may start to separate, and in the ideal *lulav*, the *tiyomes* halves are completely stuck together. If the majority of the *tiyomes*' length has split into two parts, then the *lulav* is invalid. If only the minority of it is split, the *lulav* is still kosher but is not *mehudar* (ideal). In either case, if the *tiyomes* appears forked at its tip or if the tip has been severed, the *lulav* is invalid.

Ideally, a *lulav* should have a spine that is at least 16 inches long, but its minimum permitted length is 13 inches.



Esrog

The most important part of an *esrog* is the slanted area towards the top of the fruit where it slopes upwards. Any black spots in the area invalidate the *esrog*, but light brown spots do not. On the rest of the *esrog*, the *esrog* is kosher unless there are multiple black spots depending on size and location. [When in doubt, show the *esrog* to a Rabbi.]

The uppermost tip of an *esrog* often has a small woody stem called a "*pittum*." If the *pittum* falls off after an *esrog* is formed, the *esrog* is invalid, but if the *esrog* grew without a *pittum* then the *esrog* is kosher.



Hadasim

Ideally, each *hadas* twig should be at least 12 inches long (excluding the leaves) but its minimum permitted length is 9.5 inches.

The leaves of a *hadas* grow in clusters along the stem, and when the base of all three leaves is aligned that cluster is called "*meshulash*". A choice *hadas* has a least 12 inches of stem covered with *meshulash* leaves, but at a minimum there must be 5 inches of *meshulash* clusters.



Aravos

Each *aravah* twig should be at least 12 inches long, but its minimum permitted length is 9.5 inches. If the majority of the leaves have dried out or fallen off, the *aravah* should not be used. [It is therefore common that *aravos* must be replaced once or twice during Sukkos]. If the top of an *aravah*'s stem is severed, the *aravah* is invalid.



How To

Before Sukkos, bind the *hadassim* and *aravos* to the *lulav*. With the spine of the *lulav* facing you, place the three *hadassim* on the right of the *lulav*, and the two *aravos* on the left. Traditionally, this is done with detached *lulav* leaves (formed by trained *lulav* dealers into special holders called "*koisheklach*"), but if those are not available you can use a rubber band or anything else.

On each of the seven days of Sukkos – aside from Shabbos – hold the *lulav*, *hadassim*, and *aravos* in your right hand with the spine facing you, and the *esrog* in your left hand with the *pittum* [or place where the *pittum* would be] facing downwards. Then recite the *bracha* (found in any *siddur*), turn the *esrog* over so that the *pittum* faces upwards, bring your hands close together, and shake the *lulav* etc. as follows:

Extend your hands forward, shake the *lulav*, and pull your hands back towards your body. Repeat this shaking two times. Then perform the same three shaking movements to your right, behind you, to your left, above your head, and towards the floor. In total, that is 3 shakes in 6 directions, for 18 total shaking movements. [Some people reorder the six directions as follows: right, left, front, up, down, and then back.] If you have a *lulav* and *esrog* in shul (and it is not Shabbos), you will perform the same shaking procedure at specific times during Hallel and will also circle the Torah with your *lulav* etc. during "*hoshanos*." Details for those parts of the service can be found in a *Siddur*.

Women are exempt from the *mitzvah* of *lulav* and *esrog* but, of course, they are permitted to perform it and may recite a *bracha* upon doing so.

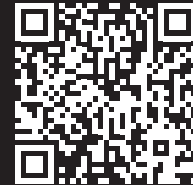
On the first two days of Sukkos, the *arba minim* must belong to the person who is performing the *mitzvah*. Therefore, if a person does not own a set, they must receive the *lulav* etc. as a gift from the owner. The *lulav* etc. can be returned to the original owner once the *mitzvah* has been performed.

The cRc spreads Torah through various publications including our Divrei Torah pamphlets for the Yamim Tovim and our monthly Shemittah newsletters.



The Monthly Shemittah Newsletter

Scan the QR code to view all the past issues of the Shemittah Newsletter



Divrei Torah for the Yamim Tovim

Mazal Tov to Rabbi Dovid Cohen on the publication of his new sefer, Kashering, in his Kashrus Halacha series.

Rabbi Reiss and Rabbi Raccach went through the sefer, together with Rabbi Cohen, the author, chapter by chapter for more than 2 years, and their rulings on more than 150 issues can be found after (almost) every chapter. The sefer is a systematic analysis of Shulchan Aruch OC 451-452 as a means of developing appropriate methods of kashering in the home and industrial settings. Learn more at www.kashrushalacha.com





שבת הארץ

בס"ד

CHICAGO RABBINICAL COUNCIL MONTHLY SHEMITTAH NEWSLETTER

TISHREI 5783 • OCTOBER 2022 • FINAL ISSUE IN THE SERIES

14

Succos After Shemittah

by Rabbi Dovid Cohen

Administrative Rabbinical Coordinator, cRc Kosher

This chapter will discuss the application of *hilchos shemittah* as relates to the four *minim* used on the Succos after *shemittah*.

Aravah

The *aravah* is a simple twig of wood which has no *kedushas shevi'is*, and therefore there are no restrictions on taking possession, cutting, and selling it. Of course, it is forbidden to do *melacha* on an *aravah* tree except for those which keep the tree from dying.

Hadassim

In a previous installment (Issue 10) we saw that plants which are sold for their fragrance have *kedushas shevi'is*, and *hadassim* appear to qualify for this. For example, in *Eretz Yisroel* it is common for *Sephardim* to use *hadassim* as their *besamim* on *Motzai Shabbos*.

Continued on page 22

Devotion to the Study of Torah

by Rabbi Yisroel Langer

Dayan Kavua, cRc Beth Din
Rav, Congregation Bais Yitzchok

In *Maseches Derech Eretz* it states:

הלכה א: רבי שמעון בן יוחאי אומר שבוע שכן דוד בא, שנה ראשונה ... בשביעית מלחמות, במוצאי שביעית בן דוד בא.

Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai predicts what will take place in each of the individual years of the last *shemittah* cycle prior to the coming of *Moshiach*. He predicts that the year of *shemittah* will have wars and then after *shemittah*, *Moshiach* will come. Although *Moshiach* can certainly come at any given moment, why is it that *Motzaei Shevi'is* seems to be a more opportune for his arrival?

In the times of the *Beis Hamikdash* there was a *mitzvah* known as *Hakhel* that was performed only one time every seven years. It took place during the *Yom Tov* of Succos immediately following the year of *shemittah*. This *mitzvah* was performed by the king reading sections of

Continued on page 23

לזכות רפואה שלימה בעבור מרים דישראל בת גאלדה

Therefore, *hadassim* should seemingly be treated with *kedushas shevi'is*, meaning that they must be left as *hefker*, cannot be sold in a traditional manner, and cannot be wasted or ruined.

However, in a different context, Ohr Sameach says items cut off the ground for a *mitzvah* do not have the status of "food" as relates to *kedushas shevi'is*. According to Ohr Sameach, *hadassim* cut for the *mitzvah* – as are most of the ones we get – cannot have *kedushas shevi'is* since they are not the same as "regular" *hadassim* which are cut off for fragrance.

Esrog

Esrogim grown in Eretz Yisroel will generally be from farms which observe *shemittah* in the traditional manner, and the ones used for the Succos after *shemittah* surely have *kedushas shevi'is*. [Ohr Sameach explains that the principle he suggests (noted above) does not apply to *Esrogim* since there is a specific requirement that the *esrog* be [halachically] "edible" and is therefore considered "food" even if harvested for the *mitzvah*.] They have *kedushas shevi'is* and their harvest and distribution are accomplished through the system of *Otzar Beis Din* as discussed in Issue 12.

If so, how can the *esrog* be exported to us in *chutz la'aretz*, when, as noted in Issue 9, there

is a prohibition to export produce with *kedushas shevi'is* from Eretz Yisroel? In fact, Chazon Ish

rules strictly that this is forbidden, but notes that if the *esrog* was taken out of Eretz Yisroel it remains acceptable for use in the *mitzvah*. Others take a more lenient approach and either permit such export outright or under special conditions, such as that it is performed by a non-Jew or that the *esrog* be returned to Eretz Yisroel after Succos so that the *mitzvah* of *biur* can be performed properly (see article in Issue 13).

Lulav

The Gemara clearly states that a *lulav* has *kedushas shevi'is*. [Others understand that the conclusion of the Gemara and/or the *halacha*, may reject this point.] Why? Does anyone eat *lulav* branches? Rashi explains that non-food items can also have *kedushas shevi'is* if they meet

the standard of הנאתן וביעורן שוה (the benefit one gets from the object happens in conjunction with the item's destruction), and the *lulav* is an example of this because it is often used as a broom, where sweeping (i.e., the benefit) happens simultaneously with the branches becoming destroyed. However, *Minchas Shlomo* notes that in our culture it is very rare for a person to use a *lulav* branch as a broom and therefore there is no question that it has no *kedushas shevi'is*.



Devotion to the Study of Torah (continued from page 21)

sefer Devarim in front of all the Jewish people, men, women and children. The *Chinuch* (*Mitzvah* 612) explains that the point of this *mitzvah* is to impress upon ourselves that the Torah is of foremost importance to the Jewish People. The Torah is our pride and our splendor.

This display of honor to the Torah will create a greater yearning to learn more and more of it. The question is why is this *mitzvah* specifically performed right after *shemittah*?

At the end of the *tochacha* in *Parashas Bechukosai* (*Vayikra* 26:43) the *pasuk* says that you will go into *golus*

יען וביען במשפטי מאסו, ואת חקתי געלה נפשם

"because you despised My laws, and My decrees you abhorred."

The *Or Hachayim* asks, why does it say *ya'an* twice? The *Or Hachayim* answers that *golus* comes because of two specific sins. The first one is because of a lack of importance shown to Torah study. This is derived from the *pasuk* in *Yirmiyahu* (9:11 – 12):

על מה אבדה הארץ על עזבם את תורתך.

"Why was the land lost? Because they abandoned My Torah."

The second sin is violating the laws of *shemittah*, as indicated in the *Mishna* in *Avos* (ch. 5) which states "*Golus* comes to the world for not adhering to the laws of *shemittah*."

At first glance it would seem that these two sins, *bitul Torah* and violating the laws of *shemittah*, are unrelated. However, these two sins are really one and the same. The *Medrash* tells us that when the Jewish Nation entered into *Eretz Yisroel*, the Torah complained: "Everyone will now run to the fields and vineyards to work. Who will have time to study me?" Hashem responded to

the Torah, "I gave you *Shabbos*, a day when all work is prohibited. On *Shabbos* the people will study from you."

Likewise, the year of *shemittah* is also a time when it is prohibited to work in the field; it's a full year that Hashem gave to the "Torah" for the Jewish People to study it. Throughout the first six years of the *shemittah* cycle, the farmer gets distracted from Torah study as he busies himself with his fields. The year of *shemittah* is a time

to refocus and prioritize the study of Torah laws. Accordingly, when the *Mishnah* in *Avos* says that *golus* comes about because of the sin of violating the *mitzvah* of *shemittah*, it is in essence saying that the sin of *bitul Torah*, which is brought about through not keeping *shemittah*, is what causes the Jewish People to go into exile.

Let us return to our original question. It is now very understandable as to why the *mitzvah* of *Hakhel* follows the year of *shemittah*. It is only after the farmer spends a year studying Torah, and acquires a new appreciation for the Torah, that he is now ready to gather together with others like himself and show great honor to the Torah. This display of honor will in turn create an even greater yearning amongst its participants to spend more time learning during the coming years.

It is also understandable why *Motzaei Shevi'is* is an opportune time for *Moshiach* to come. If *golus* comes about because of a lack of importance shown towards Torah study, then furthering our commitment to and appreciation of Torah study accomplished by taking a Sabbatical during *shemittah*, will end the *golus*. Let us all take this message of *shemittah* to heart to further our commitment to Torah study and be *zocheh* to greet *Moshiach Tzidkeinu b'mheira v'yameinu!*



And So Will I Go In To The King

Rabbi Zvi Engel

Rav, Congregation Or Torah of Skokie



Three of the paragraphs added by Chazal to the Amida of Rosh Hashana and Yom Hakippurim open with the same word, *u-ve'chein* - and so:

וּבְכֵן תִּתֵּן כְּבוֹד... וּבְכֵן תִּצְדִּיקֵם....

And so place the fear of You, Hashem our God, over all of Your works... **And so** place honor, Hashem, on your nation... **And so** may the righteous see and rejoice...

The Tur (OC 582) explains that Chazal formulated these words using the expression of Esther Hamalka as she accedes to the entreaties of Mordechai to make a desperate appeal for clemency from the king, to rescind an evil decree. At great personal peril, Esther declares herself willing to enter the inner sanctum to beg for the lives of her nation and people. In many ways, this is the central pasuk of the megila that bears her name:

לֵךְ כְּנוּס אֶת כָּל הַיְּהוּדִים הַנִּמְצָאִים בְּשׁוּשָׁן וְצוּמוּ עָלַי וְאַל תֹּאכְלוּ וְאַל תִּשְׁתּוּ שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים לַיְלָה הַזֶּה גַּם אֲנִי וְנַעֲרָתַי אֲצֻם כֵּן וּבְכֵן אֲבֹא אֶל הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר לֹא כָדַת וְכֹאֲשֶׁר אֲבִדְתִּי אֲבִדְתִּי: (אסתר פרק ד, טז)

Go and gather all of the Jewish People in Shushan, and fast for me, do not eat or drink for three days, night and day; my maidens and I will similarly fast; and so will I go in to the king, against the law, and as I am lost, I am lost.

To the Tur, *u-ve'chein* reminds us that this is the day of judgement as we go to present ourselves before the King of all Kings, Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Everything hangs in the balance called Tishrei, and it is with great trepidation that we enter to stand before *Malko shel olam* - the King of the world. R' Avraham Schorr (הלקח והלבוש תשס"ה עמ' קכב) wonders how Chazal could override their own prohibition on making requests within the first three brachot of the amida through a slew of requests in this third bracha, *Birkat Hakedusha*. Citing this explanation of the Tur, he explains that we open each request with the word *u'vchein* - and so, to signal our acknowledgment that it is *אשר לא* - against the law, and yet the intense feeling that the ongoing exile and concealment of Hashem in this world renders a *pikuach nefesh* - life threatening situation for the entire world. Thus, we enter an otherwise forbidden area, the precincts of kedusha, in order to appeal for the revelation of Divine majesty in this world.

On a personal level, as we seek to enter on Rosh Hashana, we can hear the voice of Esther Hamalka warding us off, reminding us that any breach of protocol in the royal court will render our lives forfeit. We feel a certain reluctance to dare to stand

lifnei Melech Malchei Hamelachim. Will we say the words with appropriate kavana, our hearts fully engaged in encountering the Ribono Shel Olam? Are we ready to make our appeals for *rachamei Shamayim* - Divine mercy, recognizing His majesty and dominion over every aspect of our lives? How will we make redress for ways in which we failed over the last year? R' Yisachar Dov Rokeach of Belz explains that this story of Esther Hamalka reminds even those of us who hardly feel ready—who feel we may lack standing to stand before Hashem—that we can in fact still present ourselves, machzorim in hand, and pour out our hearts before the Ribono Shel Olam. We do our utmost to ready ourselves—asking, did we really do our utmost?—and then, *u-ve'chein* - and so, we go inside. In essence, we need to hear the voice of Mordechai countering that the dire consequences of remaining silent at this time outweighs any inherent danger. We may feel unready, but we are not entirely unworthy.

Tehilim reassures us that our sincere tefila will be accepted:

פָּנָה אֶל תְּפִלַּת הָעֹרֵעַר וְלֹא בָּזָה אֶת תְּפִלָּתָם: תִּכְתֵּב זֹאת לְדוֹר אַחֲרָיו וְעַם נִבְרָא יְהַלֵּל קָה: (תהלים קב, יח-יט)

He has turned to the prayer of those who cried out ["arar"], and He did not despise their prayer. Let this be inscribed for the last generation, and a [newly] created people will praise Hashem.

Rashi renders the *ar'ar* as one who screams, while Metzudat Tziyon translates it as one who is awakened through their tefila. Malbim, by contrast, sees *ar'ar* as the imagery of a lone tree, standing in solitude on a vast plain. In Midrash Tehilim, Rav Yitzchak reads these two psukim as a unit, as referring to the generations bereft of a navi, or of other spiritual leadership to guide them, who live in the absence of the atonement afforded by the Beit Hamikdash. What is left to these forlorn generations? Says Rav Yitzchak, only a single prayer remains: the tefila of Rosh Hashana and Yom haKippurim. The Midrash then asks: Which generation is described as the last one, inscribed as the newly created people who will praise Hashem? R' Yehuda Bar Simon explains: this is the generation of Mordechai, a newly created people. This first *dor acharon*, who thought of themselves as possibly the last generation in exile, confronted the specter of catastrophe with fasting and prayer. In our own *dor acharon*, not the last but the latest generation, we can take strength from this call to tefila, beseeching the Ribono Shel Olam וְתִקְבֵּל בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ וּבְרַצוֹן אֶת־תְּפִלָּתֵנוּ - *and accept our prayer with compassion and favor.*

Shemittas Kesafim – You Don't Owe Me

Rabbi Shaanan Gelman

cRc President

Rav, Kehilat Chovevei Tzion of Skokie



Written in partnership with Rabbi Ariel Rackovsky

As 5782 comes to an end, one of the most unique laws pertaining to the Sabbatical year comes into play – *shemittas kesafim*, the cancellation of loans and debts.

Of course, money is far from the only thing that is canceled in the seventh year. Land may not be worked during that entire year, slaves are set free, and in a yovel year, even property in the land of Israel returns to its original owners. Peculiarly though, all of these laws are listed together in *Parshas Behar*, save one – *shemittas kesafim*, which is only described in *Parshas Re'eh*:

וְזֶה דְּבַר הַשְּׁמִטָּה שְׁמוֹט כָּל־בַּעַל מִשָּׂה יָדוֹ אֲשֶׁר יִשֶּׁה בְּרֵעֵהוּ לֹא־יִגַּשׁ אֶת־רֵעֵהוּ וְאֶת־אָחִיו כִּי־קָרָא שְׁמִטָּה לָהּ: (דברים טו:ב)

This shall be the nature of the remission: all creditors shall remit the due that they claim from their fellow [Israelites]; they shall not dun their fellow [Israelites] or kin, for the remission proclaimed is of Hashem. (Devarim 15:2)

The distinction of this *halacha* from all other *shemittah*-related precepts suggests to us that there is something different about the cancellation of debts. Moreover, there is a thematic difference between *shemittas kesafim* and the rest of the laws. Whereas all the other laws of *shemittah* focus on democratization, and on leveling the playing field for everyone to be able to help one another, *shemittas kesafim* seems to accomplish the exact opposite. Cancellation of debts certainly helps the debtor, but it does not help the creditor at all. In fact, it could have a chilling effect on commerce in general, discouraging him from ever lending money again! Hillel famously instituted the concept of a *pruzbul*, an innovation that allows debts to be collected even during a *shemittah* year.

The reason Hillel instituted *pruzbul* was to prevent “locking a door in the face of borrowers.” The Torah wants us to continue to lend money; in fact, there are at least three verses in the Torah that tell us so. And the Rambam (*Hil. Tzedaka* 10:7) lists a loan among the highest forms of *tzedaka*:

שְׁמוּנָה מַעֲלוֹת יֵשׁ בַּצִּדְקָה זוֹ לְמַעַלָּה מִזֹּו. מַעֲלָה גְדוֹלָה שָׂאִין לְמַעַלָּה מִמֶּנָּה וְהַמַּחְזִיק בְּיַד יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁמֶךְ וְנוֹתֵן לוֹ מִתְּנָה אוֹ הֶלְאָה אוֹ עוֹשֶׂה עִמּוֹ שְׁתַּפּוּת.

Furthermore, the Torah cautions us not to refrain from lending money on account of the cancellation of *shemittah* year.

הַשְּׁמִיר לָךְ פְּרִיְהִיָּה דְּבַר עַם־לִבְבְּךָ בְּלִיעַל לֵאמֹר קִרְבָּה שְׁנַת־הַשְּׁבַע שְׁנַת הַשְּׁמִטָּה וְרַעָה עֵינֶךָ בְּאֶחִיד הָאֲבִיוֹן וְלֹא תִתֵּן לוֹ וְקָרָא עָלֶיךָ אֱלֹהֵי' וְהָיָה בְּךָ חֲטָא: (דברים טו:ט)

Beware lest you harbor the base thought, “The seventh year, the year of remission, is approaching,” so that you are mean and give nothing to your needy kin—who will cry out to Hashem against you, and you will incur guilt. (Devarim 15:9)

נָתַתָּן תִּתֵּן לוֹ וְלֹא־יִרַע לְבִבְךָ בְּתִתְּךָ לוֹ כִּי בְּגִלְל הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה יִבְרָכְךָ ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל־מַעֲשֶׂיךָ וּבְכָל־מְשָׁלְחֶיךָ: (דברים טו:י)

Give readily and have no regrets when you do so, for in return your God will bless you in all your efforts and in all your undertakings. (Devarim 15:10)

The question is simple: If the Torah wants us to keep lending money, why does it order us to cancel debts? How is this even in the same category as releasing slaves from mandatory servitude?

Perhaps we can suggest that within *shemittas kesafim* lies a novel and powerful idea: it is improper for us to hold others in our debt. True, there is a way to be paid back financially, but this concept is much deeper than just a few dollars. We should not be walking around making calculations over who owes us what. It is unhealthy to maintain a mental ledger of the insults we have suffered; of the favors we have done for others and the credit we may deserve for things we have done. People who live life like this, making lists and artificial rules of debt, enslave others to their imaginary tit for tat obligations, but also become enslaved themselves. They always feel cheated and underappreciated, always striving for parity in relationships, invoking “fairness” and “my turn” type of ethics, seeking recognition that is often elusive and never sufficient. While their accounting of who owes them may be incorrect, it can lead a person to feel perpetually unhappy. One of the central features of Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorder is a “Preoccupation with details, rules, lists, and order¹ and with who is right and who is wrong.” When you live a life of *cheshbonos*, all of your interactions become transactional; it is often this kind of scorekeeping that turns marriages into toxic prisons of enmity.

Shemittas kesafim reminds us that we can be larger than that. And it doesn't have to wait for a jubilee, a *shemittah* year like this one, or Rosh Hashanah. It is available to us every day; all we have to do is let go of the stubborn insistence that we are owed something and decide instead to be happy.

¹ <https://www.verywellmind.com/ocd-vs-obsessive-compulsive-personality-disorder-2510584>

Teshuva, Tefillah, Tzedakah

Rabbi Michael A. Myers

Education Chair of cRc

Instructor of TaNaCH, Ida Crown Jewish Academy



ותשובה, ותפילה, וצדקה מעבירין את רוע הגזרה!
“But repentance, and prayer and acts of charity
will avert the harshness of the decree.”

Few passages of the Mahzor capture the awesome nature of the Day of Judgment as do the words of תוקף.

Tension builds as the proceedings of the heavenly court determining the fate of each creation are graphically recorded.

Our Machzor reading is adapted from the Gemara (Rosh HaShana 16B):

אמר רבי יצחק: ארבעה דברים מקרעין גזר דינו של אדם, אלו הן: צדקה, צעקה, שינוי השם, ושינוי מעשה.

Rabbi Yitzhak said: Four actions have the capacity to annul the severe judgment against a person. They are acts of charity, heartfelt prayer, the change of a name and the change of behavior.

Two observations are worth noting.

- Rabbi Yitzchak mentions four actions that afford us the opportunity to avert the severe decree. Only three are mentioned in our Mahzor. Why is “changing the name” omitted from this list?
- We need not question the centrality of these Mitzvot. They are obvious. But we can ask: What is the common thread that links them?

The Maharsha addresses the question of the omission of the “name change” by offering two answers. The first is that the author (הפייט) of our passage in the Machzor felt that the purpose of this Tefilla is to move us and to inspire us – but not necessarily to teach us the Talmudic selection in its entirety. A second possibility is that Teshuva, Tefilla and Tzedaka are designed to avert a decree brought about by our own misdeeds. The actions of Teshuva, Tefilla and Tzedaka can effect כפרה, forgiveness. But, “name change” is associated with Avraham and Sara. While their name changes may have been to avert the decree, the decree was not determined because of any wrongdoing on their part.

Now, to the question of the commonality of these three acts.

The Maharal (*Hidushei Agadot*, ad loc) claims that all four options, Teshuva, Tefilla, Name change, and Tzedaka, constitute total change of a person’s essence. The person, in effect, becomes איש אחר. In fact, he draws our attention to the term for prayer used by Rabbi Yitzchak; צעקה, not תפילה. Maharal asserts that “צעקה” is indicative of one who cries out in bitterness and with a broken heart. In effect, “a different man, a broken man!” Dr. Eliezer Berkovitz eloquently makes this point in his monograph on prayer. “A divine decree may hang over a man, but it is conditional. If he returns to God, the decree may be annulled. This, however, does not mean that the decree has changed. It is the man who has changed. It is as if he had become another person to whom the decree never applied.” (*Studies in Torah Judaism: Prayer*, Yeshiva University Press. 1962).

Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik pointed out that for many, the Teshuva process is “transactional.” In our society, once a debt is paid, life goes on. The restoration of the relationship between the creditor and the debtor is “transactional.” But, in matters of the spirit, transactions are insufficient. True Teshuva requires that the “debtor” is, in a meaningful way, somehow transformed.

Every person must interact with this world on three levels: our relationship with our fellow human beings; with our God; and within ourselves. Through Tzedaka, we revolutionize our relationship with our fellow human beings. Through Tefilla, we reconstruct our relationship with God, whose hand is always outstretched, despite our misdeeds. Through the power of Teshuva we can begin to see ourselves in a different light, revealing spiritual potential long untapped.

With this three-fold revolution our transformation is complete. We may look with hope toward a year of health and spiritual bounty for us and for all Israel.

The Beth Din had a busy and productive year. We have finally turned the corner navigating the challenges of the COVID pandemic, and slowly resuming Beth Din activities in our offices. We now officiate Gittin and Geirut interviews safely and comfortably in our Beth Din chambers.

We thank the member rabbis who support the work of the Beth Din, and contribute to the important work that so many rely on. Special thanks to Rabbi Kenneth Zisook, Rabbi Sam Biber and Rabbi Ben Zion Lazovsky. We also thank our chaver Rav Dr. Hertzel Hillel Yitzhak for his selfless dedication as one of our dayanim for Geirut and to Rav Yosef Schanowitz for serving as our chairman and contributing to many of the meetings with candidates during this period.

Our case load in mediation especially in divorce mediation has grown exponentially. Din Torah cases have also been increasing, a testament to the growing community appreciation of the cRc Beth Din as an address to adjudicate differences al pi derech HaTorah and with respect and finesse. Each case is handled with patience, fortitude, and scholarship by our Dayanim. At this time special recognition should be accorded Rav Daniel Raccah, our Senior Dayan, and to our dayanim Rav Yisroel Langer and Rav Aaron Kraft.

The Beth Din, together with Rabbi Dovid Cohen, published 13 issues of the Shemittah Newsletter, of which the last one of this series, Issue #14, appears in this volume of Chadashot.

Our Av Beth Din, Rabbi Yona Reiss, served as scholar in residence in Los Angeles, California at Adas Torah, and in Boynton Beach at Anshei Chesed Congregation, and delivered Zoom lectures for Congregation B'nei Avraham in Brooklyn, Young Israel of Brookline, and Riverdale Jewish Center. Rabbi Reiss spoke for Nishmat, Beit Midrash of Teaneck, and Congregation Bnai Yeshurun of Teaneck. He also gave the annual Yahrzeit lecture, in memory of his father, Mr. Harry Reiss z"l, at the Gruss Center in Israel and spoke in Ramat Bet Shemesh at Beit Midrash Mevakshei Emet. Earlier in the year, Rabbi Reiss spoke at the Halichot Am Yisrael Annual International Conference of Jewish Law Arbitrators in Jerusalem.

Rabbi Reiss met with groups of students over the course of the year. Some of the children's groups

Rabbi Reiss spoke with were in Or Torah and Kehilat Chovevei Tzion and eighth graders in Hillel Torah. Rabbi Reiss also gave shiurim at Yeshiva College and Stern College, and addressed law students at NYU Law School, Northwestern Pritzker School of Law, and Pepperdine Caruso School of Law. Rabbi Reiss gave two Chalitzah demonstrations, one in Bais Yitzchok and one in Chovevei Tzion. Rabbi Reiss was also involved in supervising the refilling of the mikvah in Champaign, IL.

Rabbi Reiss edited the soon-to-be-released special volume of HaDaron in memory of Rav Schwartz zt"l.

We also express our gratitude to our summer legal intern, Elka Blonder, who did a wonderful job in coordinating numerous mediation and arbitrations as well as the Dinei Torah. She also did an exhaustive study and analysis of all our geirut candidates in the last five years, which provided us with invaluable information in terms of assessing our internal processes and planning for the future. We look forward to sharing her study and statistics with our chaverim at a future meeting. We thank Elka for her dedicated efforts and wish her well as she is about to graduate from Cardozo Law School and begin a career in law.

Finally, the Beth Din warmly welcomes Mr. Aaron Retter, who recently joined the Beth Din staff as a special assistant to the Av Beth Din.



Rabbi Reiss, Rabbi Raccah and Rabbi Abramson

The cRc's 2022/5783 Guide to a Kosher New Year

It is customary to eat certain foods and simanim on Rosh Hashana. Below are the Chicago Rabbinical Council's recommendations to avoid any kashrus concerns on these items. All further inquiries can be checked on www.ASKcRc.org or by calling the office (773) 465-3900.

NOTE: This chart should only be used in 2022/5783.



Honey



Requires kosher certification, as packaging equipment for retail honey may be produced on non-kosher lines.



Carrots



FRESH OR FROZEN (including baby carrots) with no questionable additives are acceptable without hashgachah.



CANNED

Requires kosher certification.



Leek



Cut along full length of the leek so every leaf is separated. Wash each leaf thoroughly under running water.

Cabbage



FRESH GREEN

Remove and discard 4 outer green leaves. Rinse remaining leaves thoroughly (front and back) under a stream of water.



PRE-WASHED

Acceptable without kosher certification; no further washing is required.



Beets



RAW No checking required.



COOKED, CANNED OR JARRED Requires kosher certification.



Pomegranate



FRESH No checking required.

Dates



FRESH Slice open a handful from the container and check inside. If no insects are found the rest may be eaten without checking. This applies to all dates - domestic and/or pitted.



DRIED with no additional flavors are acceptable even without certification. Slice open a handful from the container and check inside. If no insects are found the rest may be eaten without checking. This applies to all dates - domestic and/or pitted.



Gourd



FRESH No checking required.



CANNED

requires kosher certification.



Raisins



All domestic do not require certification, unless they are oil treated or flavored. No checking required.



Fish / Head of Fish

RAW FISH It is preferable to purchase raw fish in a kosher fish store. If this is not possible, one must first make sure the fish is, in fact, a kosher species. The only reliable method of determining that a fish is from a kosher species is by inspecting its scales to be sure that they are the type that can be removed from the fish without ripping any flesh. (One notable exception is salmon where the flesh-color is unique and is considered a clear identifying mark of the kosher, salmon fish.) Secondly, the knives used to scale, eviscerate, fillet and/or cut the fish may have been previously used for non-kosher fish. To avoid this issue it is necessary to ask the store employees to clean the knife and work on a clean piece of butcher-paper. If this is not possible, there is basis to permit the purchase of packaged, pre-cut fish but it is necessary to scrub clean any surfaces that had been cut.



SMOKED / COOKED / PROCESSED / JARRED / CANNED

Requires kosher certification.



Head of Sheep



Requires kosher certification.

Black-eyed Peas



RAW A general inspection is needed to rule out obvious infestation.



COOKED, CANNED OR JARRED Requires kosher certification.



Fenugreek



FRESH Use cRc cleaning thrip-cloth method, as directed below.

Spinach



FRESH Use cRc cleaning thrip-cloth method, as directed below.



PRE-WASHED Use cRc cleaning thrip-cloth method, as directed below.



FROZEN OR CANNED Requires kosher certification.



Thrip-cloth Method (using a silk cloth)

You will need a large bowl, dish soap, 2 strainers, a thrip-cloth, and a light box.

1. Separate the leaves and place them into a bowl of water.
2. Put enough dish soap (a good choice would be Seventh Generation 0% fragrance) or kosher vegetable wash into the bowl until the water and leaves become somewhat slippery.
3. Agitate and soak the leaves in the soapy water for 1- 2 minutes.
4. Remove the leaves from the bowl and discard the water.
5. Repeat steps 2-4. Alternatively (instead of repeating steps 2-4) one can wash each leaf under running water (both sides) and then place leaves into a new bowl of soapy water.
6. Remove leaves and pour the water through a thrip-cloth (fine silk cloth that can be purchased from the cRc) that is sandwiched between 2 strainers.
7. Check the cloth carefully on top of a light box or similar apparatus. If a bug is found, repeat. If no bugs are found, rinse and enjoy.

FURTHER DIRECTIONS on checking for infestation can be found on our website at www.crc kosher.org