



CHICAGO RABBINICAL COUNCIL

# חדשות CHADASHOT

*The Year in Review*

SEPTEMBER 2023 • TISHREI 5784

Updates, Insights, and Divrei Torah from the cRc



כתיבה וחתימה טובה!



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Rabbi Yosef Posner  
President

HaRav Yona Reiss  
Av Beth Din

Rabbi Levi Mostofsky  
Executive Director

Rabbi Sholem Fishbane  
Kashruth Administrator

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## cRc Leadership

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## Greetings from the Executive Director



The cRc is proud to present this year's *Chadashot*.

We are privileged to serve community needs on a daily basis, in many ways. While a lot of our work relates to private or corporate matters that cannot be publicized, there is much that we can share. Between the lines of the stories in this publication lie our staff's heroic work that they do *LeShem Shamayim*, for a higher calling, and with the necessary humility and professional discretion.

Since our founding over 90 years ago, we have developed into a premier *Beth Din, Kashrus* agency and community resource, recognized internationally for our professionalism, dedication and expertise. Based in Chicago and serving the entire midwest and beyond, we work to support partner organizations, foster unity, and provide leadership, *LeHagdil Torah UleHaadira*, to promote and support Torah interests. Much of our effectiveness is driven by our identity as a community *Vaad*, led by community Rabbis, and serving the members of our special Chicago community.

While the cRc name has earned broad respect in the *Kashrus, Beth Din* and rabbinic world, this is an opportunity to recognize our outstanding staff that drive all of our work. It is their dedication and skill that has built the organization, and it is their hard work that ensures we have food of the highest *kashrus* standards available for our families, that a *get* can be arranged in a respectful, timely, manner, and that two parties involved in a monetary dispute can resolve their differences in a fair and professional manner. It is their unsung work, their creativity and dedication, that resonates in so many homes, and around the world.

In the *Zichronos* section of *Musaf* on *Rosh HaShana* we include the *Pasuk* from *Yirmiyahu* 32:19

הָבֹן יָקִיר לִי אֶפְרַיִם אִם יִלְדֵי שְׁעָשְׂעִים כִּי מִדֵּי דִבְרֵי בּוֹ זָכַר אֶזְךָ- that Ephraim is a dear son, a pleasurable child, and when I speak of him I increasingly remember him. Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik notes that it would seem more logical to say that the more someone is remembered, the more they are spoken about. In reality, though, talking about someone can generate recollection and attention. On Rosh HaShana we must recount all the good, so that we can be appreciative and thankful to Hashem for His kindness, and genuinely approach הַקָּב"ה with our *tefillos* for the coming year. The *Chasam Sofer* explains the *pasuk* in *Devarim* 29:28, הַנִּסְתֵּי- רַת לֵד' אֶ-לִקִּינוּ, those that are hidden are Hashem's, that when we experience the daily miracles and wondrous good in our lives, we should be cognizant of Hashem's hidden hand. Rav Soloveitchik notes that in order to have proper appreciation for Hashem, it is essential that we first express appreciation for each other.

As we wrap up 5783, we look ahead to the coming year, we are thankful to the entire community for a wonderful past year, and look forward to the coming one. While ensuring that we continue to provide reliable reputable services, our staff are always thinking creatively about how to better provide our services, and address the religious needs of the community. We are currently working on new programs and services to roll out, with you and for you, in the new year.

**Rabbi Levi Mostofsky**

## Presidential Message

Rabbi Yosef Posner, cRc President



On behalf of the membership of the Chicago Rabbinical Council, Rabbanim and leaders of our community, I take this opportunity to wish everyone a *שנה טובה ומתוקה* – to be inscribed and sealed for a good and sweet new year.

During the month of Elul we take stock of the year which is coming to a close. In so doing, we have to note the areas which need improvement. We also must not overlook the good and the positive, as often happens, because they do not call attention to themselves, and we take them for granted. Much of the work of the cRc falls into this category.

How much work goes into providing accurate and updated resources for the community? Whether it is maintaining and updating the fruit and vegetable procedures, food and ingredient list, the beverage lists, the products lists for Pesach, and more, change is a constant. The cRc is unique in the lengths to which it goes to provide all sorts of kashrus information to the Chicagoland community and, frankly, to the whole world. Every time the cRc emblem appears on a product, it is a sign that numerous people have invested many hours determining that the product was worthy of bearing our mark.

The Beth Din is an even better-kept secret. Due to their very nature, Dinei Torah, divorces, and *giyur* procedures are matters handled discreetly and don't make a big splash. At the cRc Beth Din they are also handled professionally, with proper application of *Halacha*, and with great sensitivity to all involved. The cRc is on the cutting edge of developing divorce mediation processes to make this very difficult

moment in life more manageable.

We are also working on creating clear pathways for candidates to properly prepare for an eventual *giyur*, if the Beth Din finds that appropriate.

The cRc staff and membership are engaged in many areas of community interest, playing a leadership role in strengthening standards in Jewish communities across the country. This requires much time and effort. It is often a "behind-the-scenes" endeavor where our efforts remain anonymous.

When I joined the cRc many years ago, I was impressed with the seriousness and the commitment of the organization. No matter what the issue, the focus was always on what will make *Yiddishkeit* better? What will enable Jews to better observe *mitzvos*? Nothing else mattered. And, so when I was asked to help in various roles I always was happy to do so, knowing that any time and effort expended was to be *mekadesh sheim shamayim*, to sanctify Hashem's name.

In these pages you will get a glimpse of what the cRc has done, and *IY"Y* with G-d's help will do for the community. Read them, and feel a sense of pride that our community is blessed with the presence of such an organization.

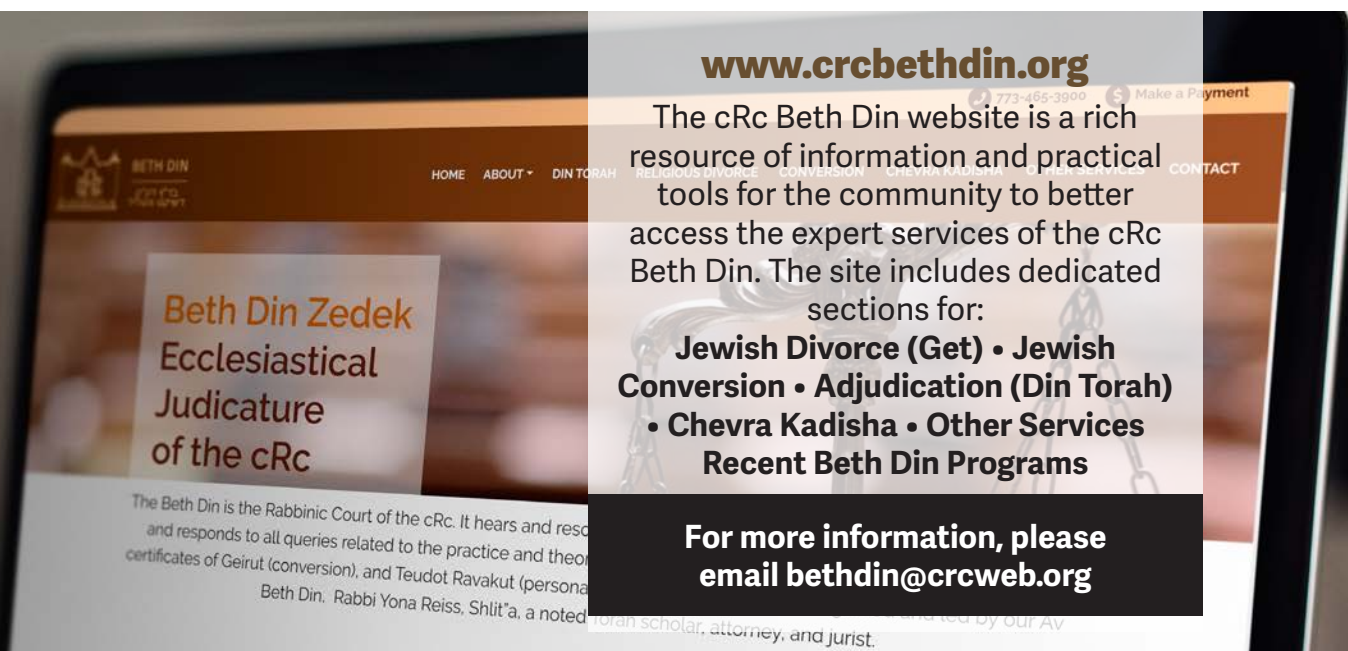
May our merits as individuals and as a community be sufficient that we will celebrate the beginning of the year 5784 in *Eretz Yisrael* with *Mashiach*!

### [www.crcbethdin.org](http://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 (Din Torah)
- Chevra Kadisha • Other Services
- Recent Beth Din Programs

For more information, please email [bethdin@crcweb.org](mailto:bethdin@crcweb.org)



# בשבילי נברא העולם

## "The Universe was Created for Me:"

### Parameters of Personal Priority in Penitence

by Rabbi Yona Reiss  
Av Beth Din, cRc



The Rambam begins *Hilchos Teshuva* (1:1) with a focus on the individual's obligation to do *teshuva* and the positive commandment for the individual to recite *vidui* (confession) for his or her sins. The Rambam records a formulation of the individual's *vidui*, כיצד מתודין, אומר אנא השם חטאתי עויתי פשעתי לפניך ועשיתי כך וכך והרי נחמתי ובושתי – *"How does one confess? He says, 'My G-d, I have sinned, and acted perversely and rebelliously in front of You, and have committed this sin and that sin, and I hereby regret such actions and am ashamed of my deeds, and I will never repeat them' – this is the essence of confession."*

On the other hand, we almost never utilize this personal formulation in our personal confession on Yom Kippur, instead reciting דופי דברנו גזלנו דברנו דופי – *"we have been guilty, we have betrayed, we have robbed, we have spoken slander,"* etc. This communally based confession is based on the principle (*Berachos* 29b) that לעולם לישתף איניש נפשיה בהדי ציבורא – a person should always join with the rest of the community.

However, this practice of connecting one's *teshuva* and confession to the rest of the community leads us back to the underlying question regarding *teshuva* and the days of repentance - is the focus on us individually or upon us as a community? Who comes first?

The *Mishna* (*Sanhedrin* 37a) makes a remarkable statement that sounds positively egotistical. חייב כל אדם – לומר בשבילי נברא העולם – every person is obligated to say that "the world was created for my sake." This dictate is not stated in the context of *teshuva per se*, but rather in the context of what a *Bet Din* tells witnesses who are

about to testify in a capital case. The witnesses need to understand the consequences of testifying against someone who may be put to death, and thus are reminded that each person was created in the image of Hashem and has a uniqueness that gives them the same value as Adam, from whom an entire universe of people emerged. Therefore, someone who kills an individual, or in this context a fellow Jew, is considered as if he has annihilated the world, and someone who rescues an individual is considered as if he has saved an entire universe. The *Mishna* emphasizes that in recognition of the infinite value of every individual, each person must say that the world was created just for me.

This perspective is a bit bewildering. On the one hand, we know that a person should conduct himself with extreme humility (see Rambam, *De'os* 2:3). Avrohom Avinu said (*Bereishis* 27:27), ואנכי עפר ואפר – *"I am dust and ashes."* In fact, the biggest impediment to proper *teshuva*, according to some of the great *mussar* masters, is the human ego. This is one of the ideas evoked in the verse (*Devorim* 5:5) – *"I stand between G-d and you,"* that the "id" blocks the way between us and G-d. But on the other hand, we are required to say בשבילי נברא העולם. Which is it?

One approach is that of the great Chassidic Rebbe, R' Simcha Bunim of Peshischa, who said that a person should always carry two slips of paper in his pocket. On one slip of paper is written בשבילי נברא העולם and on the other slip of paper is written ואנכי עפר ואפר. If a person gets too full of himself or herself, then he or she should take

out the paper that says *ואנכי עפר ואפר* to be reminded of his or her ultimate lowliness and to regain a sense of humility. However, if a person becomes too depressed or despondent, then he or she should pull out the slip of paper that says *בשבילי נברא העולם* to regain a sense of self-esteem and self-respect that is a prerequisite of being able to function in this world.

A second approach focuses upon a deeper understanding of the meaning of *בשבילי נברא העולם*. Rashi (*Sanhedrin 37a*) explains that this concept has nothing to do with inflating one's ego, but rather relates to the awesome responsibility that each person has. כלומר – חשוב אני כעולם מלא לא אטרד את עצמי בעבירה אחת וימשוך ממנה – given the awesome importance of each individual, a person needs to pause before doing a sin and say “I am not going to forfeit my place in this universe by committing a transgression.”

In fact, according to the midrashic treatise *Tana Debe Eliyahu (Parsha 23)*, it is precisely the attitude of *בשבילי נברא העולם* that imposes a communal responsibility upon each person. In other words, our emphasis should not be on the word *בשבילי* (“for my sake”) but upon the words *נברא העולם* (“the world was created”). Each person needs to view the *עולם*, the entire world, as needing his or her unique contribution, and it is therefore a dereliction of duty for each person to focus upon his or her own needs. Even a rabbinic scholar who might feel that his Torah learning is more important than anything else going on in the world is obligated to tend to communal needs, and to place his lot together with the challenges and burdens facing the rest of his community.

According to this approach, we can appreciate a ruling of the Rambam in connection with the laws of *teshuva*. The *Gemora (Rosh Hashana 16b)* speaks about the judgment of each individual person, and states (*Rosh Hashanah 18a*) that each individual is judged on Rosh Hashanah כבני מרון - in the same fashion that sheep are counted as they file through a corral one at a time. The Rambam (*Teshuva 3:1-3*), after recording this idea of how each individual person is judged on Rosh Hashanah, adds that it is not only the individual who is judged, but also each country and the entire world. The judgment of the individual appears to be a springboard for the judgment of the entire world.

The Rambam (*Teshuva 3:4*) then expounds upon this idea, stating that each person must realize that his next deed has the potential not only of tilting the balance with respect to his own fate, but also with respect to the fate of the entire universe. It is this realization, writes the Rambam, that propels the entire Jewish people to increase the amount of their charity,

good deeds and involvement with mitzvot between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur.

Based on the foregoing, we can suggest that the Rambam's message that each person carries the fate of the entire world on his or her shoulders during the *teshuva* season is a *halakhic* codification of the principle of *בשבילי נברא העולם*. Each person must do personal *teshuva* out of concern not only for himself or herself, but for the entire Jewish community, and indeed the entire world. Since we are all in this predicament together, we need to work collectively to improve our deeds during this time.

There is a third approach towards understanding the concept of *בשבילי נברא העולם*. While each person must say that the world was created for “me,” it is the job of each person to expand the definition of “me” in the broadest possible fashion.

In the preface to *Sha'arei Yosher*, Rav Shimon Shkop (1860-1939) cites the second verse in *Parshas Kedoshim (Vayikra 19:2)*, which states that on the one hand there is a requirement for us to be *קדושים תהיו* – “you shall be holy,” but at the same time the verse concludes *כי קדוש אני ה' א-לקיכם* – “for I, your G-d, am holy,” which according to the *midrash (Vayikra Rabbah 24:9)*, conveys the message that “my Holiness is greater than your holiness.”

What is the nature of this higher holiness? R. Shimon Shkop explains that Hashem created the world solely to bestow goodness upon others, but we mere mortals must take care of our own needs as well. He continues to explain that since we need to take care of our needs, each one of us needs to focus on “me”, the *אני*, as the great sage Hillel famously said (*Avos 1:14*) *אם אין אני לי מי לי* – “if I am not for myself, who will be for me?”

But then when Hillel said afterwards *וכשאני לעצמי מה אני* – “and if I am for myself, what am I?” – Rav Shkop explains that Hillel meant that our job is to expand our identity as much as possible. The greatest personality is someone who expands their identity to include his or her family, as well as the collective unit of the Jewish people, and for that matter the entirety of creation. Ultimately, we should see our identity as a cog in the machine of G-d's universe.

How, then, does the personal *teshuva*, and the individualized confession, as described by the Rambam, fit into this picture?

There is an instructive story about the Chofetz Chaim, regarding how he responded when he was once asked how he managed to exert such a huge influence on the entire Jewish world. In the words of Rabbi Benjamin Blech:

**Continued on page 8**

"At one time, he [the Chofetz Chaim] was asked how he was able to have such a great impact on the Jewish world. This is how he answered: "Originally, I set out to change the world, but I failed. So, I decided to scale back my efforts and only influence the Jewish community of Poland, but I failed there, too. So, I targeted the community of my hometown of Radin, but I achieved no greater success. Then I gave all my effort to changing my own family and I failed at that as well. Finally, I decided to change myself and that's how I had such an impact on the Jewish world."

This is the most positive form of egoism, the recognition when it comes to self-improvement that אין הדבר תלוי אלא בי – "it all depends on me" - as the *Gemora (Avoda Zara 17a)* tells us was the ultimate realization of the heroic penitent named Rabbi Eleazer ben Dordia, who initially asked the mountains and the valleys, the heavens and the earth, the sun and the moon, and the stars and the constellations, to pray for him, until he realized that his repentance was solely in his own hands.

Thus, when it comes to the broader self-definition articulated by Rav Shimon Shkop, of being holy individuals, of recognizing our purpose to contribute to the world around us, and to help and support others, then our identity - our אני - needs to encompass as many people as possible, so that we see ourselves not as mere individuals, but part of a chosen nation and a redemptive world.

However, when it comes to our personal *teshuva*, of passing in front of Hashem כבני מרון, sheep going through the corral one at a time, then the אני is indeed very small, very limited, and must start with the proposition, "I decided to change myself and that's how I had such an impact on the Jewish world." Taking ownership of one's own deeds and not blaming one's woes on the vagaries and vicissitudes of the universe around us is the first major step in making positive changes not only for oneself but also for others.

This is evocative of the advice given by the founder of the modern day *mussar* movement, Rav Yisroel Salanter, who said that when it comes to a person's own situation, he needs to be a *ba'al bitachon*, a person who trusts completely in Hashem and does not seek more than one has been given to him with the understanding that this must be sufficient. However, regarding someone else's situation, he must assume that help will not be forthcoming unless he does everything in his power to help the other person. There are ways in which we should focus upon ourselves, in terms of trusting in Hashem and being happy with our lot. However, when we expand our focus to others, it is not an egocentric exercise, but rather represents,

as Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik may have put it, the emergence of ethical man, the development of a religious sensibility that each of us can and must make a huge difference in uplifting others.

So, do we stand before Hashem as a single sheep passing through the corral? Yes and no. We are all individuals, and we are responsible for our own actions – אין הדבר תלוי אלא בי. But when we pray for our needs, when we pray for redemption and salvation, and for growth and inspiration, we need to expand our definition of self to include others, and we thus stand a much better chance of being judged favorably since we cement our roles as vital components of the collective destiny of our communities and the Jewish people.

Along these lines, in the book *Yemei HaRochomim V'Haslichos* (pp. 43-44), Rav Yoel Schwartz z"l, an eminent Torah scholar who passed away last year, writes: הדאגה האמיתית ל"אני" הוא על ידי שיתוף עם הזולת ודאגה לו לכן – "the ultimate concern for one's self – for the אני - is through worrying about others, and this is what Hillel meant when he said, "if I am only for me, who am I?"

Rav Yoel then relates that the Chofetz Chaim was once asked that since the *Gemora (Shabbos 151b)* interprets the phrase in *Koheles (12:1)*, "the years will come in which I have no desire," as a reference to the days of *moshiach* [since there will be no additional merits to be obtained at that time], why do we constantly pray for the *moshiach* to come? The Chofetz Chaim answered that in truth the reality is that our reward is much greater during the time prior to *moshiach* when we need to overcome trials and tribulations to perform *mitzvot*; however, the glory of Hashem will be much greater during the days of *moshiach*. Therefore, our praying for *moshiach* is our way of demonstrating that our truest "אני" – our greatest self-realization, is to give ourselves up entirely for the sanctification of Hashem. This is the idea of the verse in *Shir Hashirim (6:3)* that forms the touchstone of the month of Elul – אני לדודי ודודי לי – ("I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine").

The formula is clear – if we pray for our personal redemption as a vehicle for including the entire Jewish people in our thoughts, our prayers, our deeds, and in our own self-identification, and we ultimately surrender our identity to the service of Hashem, then we will indeed merit the full realization of אני לדודי ודודי לי and help bring redemption to ourselves, all the Jewish people, and the entire universe. כתיבה וחתימה טובה.





# Community Opportunities to Learn with Rabbi Reiss

## From the Dayan's Desk

Once a week at Congregation K.I.N.S. people come to hear Rabbi Reiss present a behind-the-scenes look at the Beth Din in the "From the Dayan's Desk" series.

The series was begun by the Torah MiTzion Kollel six years ago to teach the broader community about the Beth Din and the underpinnings of the Beth Din decisions. The *shiur* has presented a wide array of topics ranging from *Choshen Mishpat* to *Beth Din* procedures, from *gittin* and *geirus* to specific challenges facing the community today.

We have a "wonderful *chevrah* and great camaraderie for Torah learning and discussion," said Rabbi Reiss. "I learn as much from my *talmidim* and even more than what I am privileged to impart to them."

Mr. Ira Piltz, Attorney at Law, has been a regular attendee of the series since it began. "I find the topics to be timely and relevant to me as an observant Jew who represents members of our community,"

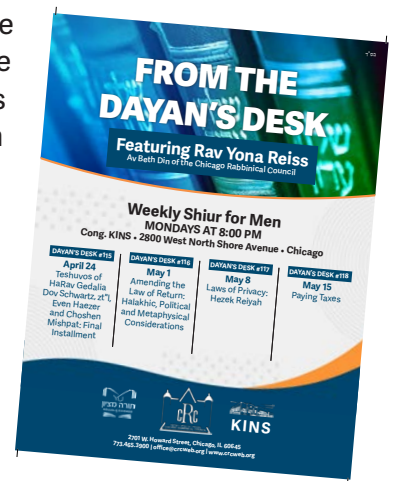
he said. "I enjoy the unique perspective which Rabbi Reiss brings to the *shiur* from his vantage point as a Dayan as well as an attorney.

"Rabbi Reiss' breadth and depth of any topic is astonishing. He manages to include contemporary

sources and, when relevant, legal opinions, which elevate the understanding of the *halachic* concepts discussed, while showing its practical application."

"The Dayan's Desk is a remarkable and special opportunity for people to not only learn with HaRav Reiss, *shlitah*, but as a window into some of the *shailos*, questions, and scenarios that come to the cRc from around the world," said Rabbi Aaron Leibtag, Associate Rabbi of Congregation K.I.N.S.

**Contact [office@crcweb.org](mailto:office@crcweb.org) to find out the schedule for the Dayan's Desk.**



## Weekly Chaburah at cRc

On Tuesdays and Wednesdays weekly for the past nine years, Rabbi Reiss gives a *Chaburah* at 4:30 p.m. at the cRc office and on Zoom. The *Chaburah* learns *Shulchan Aruch*

and *mefarshim*. A few important halachic topics covered have been *basar vechalav*, *ribbis*, Shabbos, and *shechitah*, all with modern day applications.



# Pesach with the cRc



מכירת חמץ תשפ"ג

2023 SALE OF CHAMETZ

CHICAGO RABBINICAL COUNCIL

# PASSOVER FAIR 5783 / 2023

Sunday, April 2, 2023 • 1:00 – 4:00 pm  
Hebrew Theological College • 7135 N. Carpenter Rd, Skokie, IL

**KEILIM KASHERING**  
Items being kashered must be clean and must not have been used within 24 hours.

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**KNIFE SHARPENING**

**cRc FAQ Booth**

For more information, please visit [www.cRcPesach.org](http://www.cRcPesach.org)

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# Membership Programs



The cRc Proudly Presents  
A Special Program for our Chaveirim

## Pre-Pesach Membership Meeting

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

Thursday, March 23<sup>rd</sup> · ר"ח ניסן תשפ"ג  
11:30 AM Central

ZOOM Meeting ID: 898 9186 0870    Passcode: 426045

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



Pre-Pesach Membership Meeting

HaRav Hershel Schachter shlit"a speaks with cRc members



Membership Melava Malka

# National GPS Sponsoring Rabbi Conference

The cRc hosted a conference for rabbis around the country who prepare and support candidates for Jewish conversion. The conference was an opportunity for these rabbis, known as Sponsoring Rabbis, to share insights, challenges, and advice.

The conference was held at Kehilat Chovevei Tzion on November 2nd and was organized in partnership with the Rabbinical Council of America (RCA) and the Beth Din of America (BDA).

Geirus Policies and Standards (GPS) is a project of the RCA and BDA. GPS was formed in order to ensure *halachic* integrity and uniform standards in the performance of Jewish conversions. The cRc Beth Din serves as the Midwest Regional GPS Beth Din, and our Av Beth Din, Rabbi Reiss, serves as the National Chairman of the GPS Committee, as well as Sgan Av Beth Din of the BDA.

The conference, officially a National GPS Sponsoring Rabbi Conference, was joined by over 50 participants, including Sponsoring Rabbis from across the United States, as well as the leadership of both the RCA and BDA. The cRc Beth Din Menahel, Rabbi Avraham Abramson, chaired the conference,



whose session topics included Partnering with the Beth Din, Pastoral Management of Community and Family Dynamics, and Partnering with Educators and Campus Rabbis.

**"The GPS conference was immensely helpful."**

"We wanted interaction between Sponsoring Rabbis and the Beth Din, and for Sponsoring Rabbis to share their expectations, concerns, and ideas and vice versa," said Rabbi Abramson.

"The GPS conference was immensely helpful," said Rabbi Ira Ebbin, Rav of Congregation Ohav Sholom in Merrick, NY. "First and foremost, it gave me the opportunity to speak and hear from fellow Sponsoring Rabbis, particularly those from

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Rabbi Reiss speaks at the 2022 GPS conference

smaller communities, who are addressing very similar concerns and challenges that I encounter with my conversion cases.

"It was an honor to hear from the cRc and the GPS leadership, particularly from Rabbi Reiss, who reinforced what a special privilege it is and the incredible responsibility we have in escorting each conversion candidate through their specific and unique journey. The sessions spoke about many new initiatives that were discussed that, G-d willing, would provide extremely helpful resources for the Sponsoring Rabbis."

"The sessions were quite informative," said Rabbi Binyamin Blau, Rabbi of Green Road Synagogue in Beachwood, Ohio. "The first session with Rebbetzin Abby Lerner, Rabbi Kraft and Rabbi Romm, really spoke to the challenges that I find most acute in the role of being a Sponsoring Rabbi."



"We received much positive feedback following the event and hope that we can continue to partner with sponsoring rabbis in maintaining a professional process to service worthy conversion candidates," said Rabbi Michael Zylberman, the Associate Director of the Beth Din of America and the National Director of GPS.



HaRav Zev Leff shlit"a visiting the cRc office on May 8



Rabbi Reiss spoke at Kehillat Chovevei Zion on May 21 on the Halachic Health Care Proxy, End of Life Decisions, and Inheritance. Tamara Kushnir Groman JD presented a legal discussion and a Q&A session.



Rabbi Reiss gave a shiur at the Yeshiva University Israel Campus this past August.



Rabbi Reiss addressed the Halichot Am Yisroel conference in Israel in June.



## Series on End-of-Life Issues

The cRc Beth Din hosted a Special Series of *Chaburahs* on End-of-Life *Halachic* Issues, live at the cRc Beth Din and on Zoom. They were led by Rabbi Eliezer Gewirtzman.

Rabbi Gewirtzman is a *posek* for Chayim Aruchim, a division of Agudas Yisroel of America, an organization dedicated to helping families navigate the difficulties of end-of-life care according to *halacha*.

"End-of-life *shailos* are one of the most complicated types of questions that *rabbanim* deal with frequently," said Rabbi Kraft, cRc Dayan Kavuah and Rav of Congregation Bais Chaim Dovid. "In addition to the high stakes involved in these questions, there are so many factors that need to be understood, considered and analyzed."

Rabbi Yisroel Langer, cRc Dayan Kavua and

Rav of Congregation Beth Itzchok, heard Rabbi Gewirtzman give a 4-hour shiur a few years ago. From that presentation, it became apparent to Rabbi Langer how much there is to learn on this topic, and he, therefore, arranged this in-depth *Chaburah* for the cRc Chaverim.

"The *chaburos* given by Rabbi Gewirtzman were extremely informative and enlightening," said Rabbi Reiss. "All participants gained tremendously from both the substance and sensitivity of his presentation."

"I was extremely happy that the cRc arranged for Rabbi Gewirtzman to speak on this topic," said Rabbi Aaron Wolf, Rav of the Chicago Mitzvah Campaign. "This is an area that I am personally very interested in because of the many seniors and patients that I come across on a daily basis. I think it was very informative, and the rabbi really explained many medical concepts and scenarios that a Rav should really know in order to answer critical life and death questions."

**Source material and recorded sessions are available at [chicagobethdin.org](http://chicagobethdin.org).**

## Welcome To Mrs. Elana Lipman

The cRc welcomed Mrs. Elana Lipman, Esq. to its staff this past spring. Mrs. Lipman coordinates divorce mediation at the Beth Din and supports conversion candidates at the cRc.

The *dayanim* are excited to have the service of Mrs. Lipman complementing their work. Rabbi Raccah, senior Dayan, noted the human toll of divorce, and how "having the services of a competent, caring and effective mediator can reduce much of the distress and complexities of the process."

# Encouraging Future Leaders

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

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

The award is given to a senior in each high school who will be studying in Israel during the 5784 school year and displays dedication to Torah and to the maintenance of high Middot standards.

**Ilan Blumenthal**  
Ida Crown  
Jewish Academy

**Chana Cutler**  
Hanna Sacks  
Bais Yaakov

**Yoni Horovicz**  
Fasman Yeshiva  
High School

**Faigy Kaufman**  
Bais Yaakov High  
School of Chicago

**Chaya Raichik**  
Lubavitch Girls  
High School

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

**Liba Posner**  
Lubavitch Girls High School  
**A Single, Perfect Whole**

## MAZAL TOV TO OUR RUNNERS UP

**Nechama Levi**  
Bais Yaakov High School of Chicago

**Avi London**  
Fasman Yeshiva High School

**Chaya Mushka Wolf**  
Lubavitch Girls High School

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.

Thank you to Rabbi Michael Myers, Chair, cRc Education Committee, for all of his work on these programs.



Rabbi Reiss speaking to CTeen group



Rabbi Kraft speaking to HF Hebrew Academy students from Missouri



Rabbi Moscowitz speaking to the Lubavitch 5th grade boys



# Chicago Rabbinical Council High School Student Research Project

**by Rabbi Michael Myers**  
*Chair, cRc Education Committee*

For more than two decades, the Chicago Rabbinical Council has sponsored an annual essay contest open to seniors in local high schools and *yeshivot* who plan to continue their Torah studies during the following year in Israel. For many years the contest was sponsored through the generosity of our Chaver Rabbi Harold Karp, z"l. In more recent years, the contest has borne the names of our revered Av Beth Din, HaRav Gedalia Dov Schwartz, z"l and his Rebbetzin, Shoshana Schwartz, z"l.

The contest has a three-fold objective. Firstly, cRc wishes to maintain an institutional bond with those schools that train future leaders of the Jewish people. Secondly, we hope to encourage students to use their critical thinking skills and writing skills to address important topics that affect the Jewish people. Finally, we wish to reinforce the importance of continuing Jewish education in Torah institutions in Israel.

The past four years have seen profound changes in societies in America, Israel, and around the world. The world of 2023 is radically different from the world that existed in 2019. Many of the changes have come about due to the COVID 19 pandemic. Expectations in the workplace have changed. In fact, the workplace, itself, has changed. Breakthroughs in medicine prolong lives, but in the process, they create new dilemmas regarding end-of-life issues. The *Halachic* attitude on abortion is misrepresented in the press and on talk shows by misinformed or malevolent pop-theologians. Once

considered an oxymoron or the punchline of a joke, Artificial Intelligence plays a dominant role in human behavior in everything from college essays to political advertisements to script-writers of plays. In many circles, climate change is considered reality, not a distant threat. New innovations such as those in the processing of food, and the creation of "meat" in the laboratory pose serious questions for *Poskim*.

The cRc currently addresses many of these challenges directly and indirectly. The education committee has restructured our annual essay contest to reflect the fast-emerging changes in our society. The annual essay has been replaced by the Chicago Rabbinical Council High School Student Research Project. Our new project is designed to encourage our youth to address some of the issues mentioned above and to explore their *Halachic* ramifications. We hope to assist serious students to acquire research skills using legitimate *Halachic* and *TaNACH* sources. We plan to present the cRc Research Project in detail to the seniors in our schools immediately after Sukkot.



Rabbi Reiss spoke to students at Sinai Scholars of Chabad of Northwestern University.

## Hayom Haras Olam – Whose Birthday Is It?

Rabbi Leonard A. Matanky, Ph.D.

Rabbi, Congregation K.I.N.S.; Dean, Ida Crown Jewish Academy



One of the most well-known but difficult phrases in our Rosh Hashana machzor is found in the brief prayer we recite following each set of shofar blasts, the words היום הרת עולם - "today is the birth, or the birthday of the world."

Yet, for anyone with a basic knowledge of Hebrew or halacha, is that translation correct?

After all, from a halachic perspective, we rule like Rabbi Yehoshua that בניסן נברא העולם - the world was created in Nisan, and not in Tishrei. So how can we say it's היום - today?

And the word הרת - doesn't really mean birth because לידה does. Rather, הרת means conception, just as הריון means pregnancy.

And עולם, while ל חז"ל used this word to mean "world," in ספר ירמיהו (Jeremiah (20:17), where we encounter the phrase היום הרת עולם for the first and only time in תנ"ך, there the word עולם means forever.

All of which means that it's not today, and it's not a birth, and it's not the world!

So, what does היום הרת עולם mean?

According to Rabbi Elazar of Worms, the great 13th century בעל הרוקח, the answer is that this phrase is not about the Creation, but about each one of us, and should be understood to mean - today is the beginning, the conception of our future, our forever.

Not just because Rosh Hashana is the beginning of the year, but because, as the Gemara in *Rosh Hashanah* (16b) taught אין דנין את האדם אלא לפי מעשיו של אותה שעה - G-d judges us according to our actions of the moment. He judges us not based on what we did yesterday or hope to do in the future. But based on what we are doing היום, today.

And to prove its point, the Gemara refers to the Torah reading of the first day of Rosh Hashana, when G-d saved Yishmael from his mother's abandonment - כי שמע אלקים אל - באשר הוא, because G-d heard the cry of the child, - קול הנער שם - in his present state.

These words, "in his present state," means that G-d judged Yishmael not as the one who one day would torment his brother Yitzchak and not as the father of a nation who would torment the Jewish people but as he was on that day; a child in distress and in need of G-d's mercy.

Therefore, teaches the Gemara, G-d will save us, no matter what happened in the past and what may occur in the future, because אין דנין את האדם אלא לפי מעשיו של אותה שעה - because of today.

This is an encouraging, even uplifting promise. Because it means that who we are right now is how G-d will judge us. If we are בעלי תשובה, even though in the future we might stumble, He will judge us as בעלי תשובה. If we are בעלי חסד - even if in the past we may have been selfish - He will judge us as בעלי חסד. And if we are growing in our connections to Him and to כלל ישראל, even though we may have pushed one or the other aside, G-d will see us as מבקשים - as people who strive to be closer.

היום הרת עולם - Today is the beginning of our forever.

The story is told of a chasid of the 18th century Rebbe, Reb Moshe Polier, also known as the Kobriner, who once visited the Kotzker Rebbe.

Asked the Kotzker to the Kobriner chasid, "What is your Rebbe's greatness?"

The chasid answered, "My Rebbe's greatness is whatever he is doing at that moment."

This is the challenge of Rosh Hashana, to ensure whatever we are doing today needs to be our greatness.

היום הרת עולם - Today is the beginning of our forever. היום - and today, G-d will judge us and all the world, on who we are, on how present we are in our prayers and our repentance, and how we choose to begin this New Year.

May this be a year filled with goodness, health, commitment to one another, and devotion to Torah. And may this Rosh Hashana be the beginning of our forever.

# The Power of Yom Kippur

Rabbi Levi Notik

Rabbi of FREE of Chicago

Director at Bubby Fira's Food Bank



**Y**om Kippur, the *אחת בשנה*, the holiest day of the year, the culmination of *Aseres Yemei Teshuva*, possesses qualities and abilities that are unique and special only to Yom Kippur.

Regardless of a Yid's past actions, whether missed *mitzvos*, or even committed *aveiros*, Yom Kippur presents a remarkable opportunity to transform ourselves, to erase the past, and to begin anew.

How is this possible? How does it actually work? What is it about Yom Kippur that gives us the gift of starting fresh?

The key to understanding this is a debate in *Gemara* (*Shavuos* 13A) regarding *כפרת עוונות* atonement for sins, that happens on Yom Kippur.

According to Rabanan *יה"כ אין מכפר אלא על השבים* Yom Kippur's atonement is contingent upon proper *Teshuva*; only those who genuinely repent will achieve atonement.

R. Yehuda Hanasi argues, and insists that *בין עשה תשובה, בין לא עשה תשובה, יום הכיפורים מכפר*.

Maintaining that besides for several exceptions; such as desecrating Yom Kippur *ר"ל*, Yom Kippur brings atonement, whether one did *Teshuva* or not. Because *עיצומו של יום מכפר* the intrinsic nature of the day of Yom Kippur contains such power it brings *כפרה, Kapora*, it brings atonement, even in the absence of complete repentance.

The Rambam in *Hilchos Teshuva* (1:3) rules according to Rabanan, that *Teshuva* is indeed a prerequisite for *Kapora*. Atonement won't be achieved unless one does proper repentance.

Interestingly though, both Rabanan and R. Yehuda Hanasi concur that *עיצומו של יום מכפר* the potency of the day facilitates atonement, arguing only whether it's conditional to a complete *Teshuva* or not. This teaches us that there's something exceptional about the very day of Yom Kippur itself which brings the opportunity for atonement.

This whole concept of Yom Kippur bringing *Kapora* is difficult to understand. *Kapora* entails more than

just atonement. When an *aveira* is committed a stain is imprinted on the soul, now requiring *tikun*, correction, and cleansing. How then, can the arrival of Yom Kippur erase these blemishes and stains just because of *עיצומו של יום* ?

The Lubavitcher Rebbe in *Likutei Sichos* (Vol. 4, pg.1149) answers this by emphasizing the profound connection between a Yid and Hashem.

There's a bond we have with Hashem that is formed through doing *mitzvos*, through accepting *Malchus Shomayim*, and through commitment and devotion to fulfilling Hashem's will. Every *mitzvah* a Yid does strengthens this connection, and any *aveira* done, weakens it.

However, there's a deeper connection that is expressed when *Teshuva* is performed. *Teshuva* addresses a situation after an individual disconnects from Hashem by transgressing His will. In this disconnected state what's prompting him to do *Teshuva* altogether? The fact that he's doing *Teshuva* reveals an innate bond with Hashem that clearly isn't conditional to *mitzvah* observance, *אף על פי שחטא ישראל הוא*.

Despite anything a Yid may have done, he remains connected to Hashem. *Teshuva* reveals this previously dormant link; it exposes this special connection that runs deeper than one's actions.

This is the beauty of *Teshuva*, through which a Yid realizes that he never really severed any connection with Hashem, The Yid is Hashem's child and He will always be that loving Father waiting for him to come back home.

In actuality, an even more profound connection exists, far deeper than what's expressed through *Teshuva*. It's rooted in the essential *neshomo* bond between a Yid and Hashem. Every Yid has a *neshomo* which is a *חלק אלוך ממעל ממש* (*Tanya* 1:2), a soul that is part of Hashem's essence, perpetually united with Him irrespective of *mitzvos* or even *Teshuva*.

Throughout the year, this intrinsic connection remains concealed, and operates primarily on a subconscious level. The bond typically expressed, is the one that hinges on doing *mitzvos*, or on the depth of *Teshuva*. On Yom Kippur

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## BAKERIES

Ashley Farms, Inc. (Wayne, NJ)  
 Associated Wholesale Grocers (Kansas City, KS)  
 Aunt Millie's Bakeries (Fort Wayne, IN)  
 Jewel Osco (Itasca, IL)  
 Libanais Foods, Inc (Skokie, IL)  
 Meijer Distribution, Inc. (Grand Rapids, MI)  
 Schnuck Markets, Inc. (St. Louis, MO)  
 Winfar Foods Inc (Chicago, IL)



## CANDY & NUTS

ADUSA Distribution, LLC (Salisbury, NC)  
 Aldi, Inc. (Batavia, IL)  
 AMJR Equity, LLC (Miami Beach, FL)  
 Fatty Sundays & Co., LLC (Roslyn, NY)  
 Publix Super Markets, Inc. (Lakeland, FL)  
 Rolling Pin Baking Company, LLC (New York City, NY)  
 Setton International Foods, Inc. (Commack, NY)  
 Sparrow Enterprises Ltd (Boston, MA)  
 Trader Joe's Company, Inc. (Monrovia, CA)  
 Tru Fru, LLC (West Valley City, UT)  
 TTRG, LLC (Alamo, CA)  
 Wakefern Food Corp. (Keasbey, NJ)



## CATERING

CCKC INC (Chef Carlos) (Northlake, IL)



## CHEMICALS

Air Products and Chemicals, Inc. (Council Bluffs, IA)  
 Linde Gas & Equipment, Inc. (Allentown, PA)  
 Linde Gas & Equipment, Inc. (Palmer, MA)  
 Satin Fine Foods, Inc. (Chester, NY)  
 Thornton, Musso & Bellemin (Zachary, LA)  
 Watertech Incorporated (Fort Smith, AR)  
 Watertech of America, Inc. (Greenfield, WI)



## DAIRY

1836 Farms, LLC (Plant #48-3133 (Terrell, TX)  
 DFA Dairy Brands Fluid, LLC Country Fresh (#26-330) (Grand Rapids, MI)  
 DFA Dairy Brands Fluid, LLC Schenkels Dairy (Plant #18-1000) (Huntington, IN)  
 Gelati Co. (Chaska, MN)  
 Giant Eagle, Inc. (Pittsburgh, PA)  
 La Vaquita, Inc. (Plant #48-1844) (Houston, TX)  
 Land O Sky, LLC (Asheville, NC)  
 Meijer Distribution, Inc. (Grand Rapids, MI)  
 Oasis Street Food (Iowa City, IA)  
 Oberweis Dairy (Plant #17-61) (North Aurora, IL)  
 SMiZE Cream SMP, LLC (Los Angeles, CA)  
 Whoa Momma Protein, LLC (Denver, CO)



## FISH

North Pacific Seafoods, Inc. Naknek, Alaska (Naknek, AK)



## FLAVORS

FCI Flavors (Portage, IN)  
 Ooni, Inc. (Austin, TX)

Smoke 'n Sanity, LLC (Poymette, WI)



## LIQUOR

Northwest Ordinance Distilling (New Albany, IN)  
 Royal Wine Corporation, Inc. (Bayonne, NJ)



## MANUFACTURING

AGROMED (Nadhour, Zaghouan, Tunisia)  
 Albertsons Companies, Inc. (Pleasanton, CA)  
 Aldi, Inc. (Batavia, IL)  
 Amazon Fresh (Seattle, WA)  
 Amazon Fresh (Seattle, WA)  
 Amerikoa Ingredients, LLC (Melrose Park, IL)  
 Anatolian Harvest, Co. (Miami, FL)  
 C&S Coffee Roasters (Forest Park, IL)  
 Caleb Chemical, Inc. (Peotone, IL)  
 Caleb Chemical, Inc. Warehouse (Peotone, IL)  
 Caoxian Smart Wooden Products Co., Ltd (Heze City, Shandong, China)  
 Custom Blending Solutions (Huntley, IL)  
 Everbest Organics, Inc. (St. Hilaire, MN)  
 Far West Distributors (Visalia, CA)  
 Gias Srl (Mongrassano Stazione, Cosenza, Italy)  
 Hubei Mato Biotech Co, Ltd (Tianmen, Hubei, China)  
 Hy-Vee Inc. (West Des Moines, IA)  
 Industria Colombiana de Café S.A.S. Colcafé (Medellín, Antioquia, Colombia)  
 Layla's Delicacies (Chatham, NJ)  
 Lipari Foods, LLC (Warren, MI)  
 Marion Zoological, Inc. (Plymouth, MN)  
 Mario's Marinara dba Recipes from the Firehouse (Berwyn, IL)  
 McCormick & Company (Hunt Valley, MD)  
 NoltPak, LLC (Quarryville, PA)  
 North Lily Foods (Clayton, NC)  
 Orion Corp (Cheongju-si, Chungcheongbuk-do, South Korea)  
 Plant B dba AcreMade (Minneapolis, MN)  
 Ramilex Inc. (Montreal, Quebec, Canada)  
 Safeway (Pleasanton, CA)  
 San I Malt Industrial Co., Ltd. (Tainan City, Shanhu District, Taiwan)  
 Savory Smokehouse (Sauk Centre, MN)

Schlatterbeck & Foss (Chester, VT)  
 Sonoma Farm, LLC (Shelby, IN)  
 SP Sales, LLC (Brooklyn, NY)  
 Specialty Java (Waconia, MN)  
 Star of the West Milling & Everbest Organics (McCanna, ND)  
 Ste Olea Kotti (Kairouane, Arabe, Taiwan)  
 Target Corporation (Minneapolis, MN)  
 The Hive Supply Company (Chicago, IL)  
 Travelin' Tom's Coffee Truck (Florence, KY)  
 UTC Food Corporation (Pingtung County, Taiwan)  
 Wholesale Nuts and Dried Fruit (Dover, DE)  
 Wildwonder Brands, Inc. (San Francisco, CA)



## NUTRITION

Rara (Lake Forest, IL)  
 Sprouts Farmers Market, Inc. (Phoenix, AZ)



## RESTAURANTS

Rita's of West Ridge, Ice Ventures, LLC (Chicago, IL)  
 Rocket Slice, LLC (Lincolnwood, IL)



## SOFT DRINKS

Lemonback LLC (Jermyn, PA)  
 Pepsi Beverages Company (Tampa, FL)



## SPICES

Tally Foods, Inc (Denver, CO)



## TRUCK WASH

Total Clean, LLC Charlotte, NC (Charlotte, NC)  
 Total Clean, LLC High Point Archdale, NC (Archdale, NC)  
 Total Clean, LLC Garden City, GA (Garden City, GA)  
 Gavinos Truck Wash (Okeene, OK)  
 Total Clean, LLC Wilmington, NC (Wilmington, NC)  
 Total Clean, LLC Greer, SC (Greer, SC)  
 Quala - Geismar, LA (Geismar, LA)  
 Quala - Jacksonville, FL (Jacksonville, FL)  
 Quala - Lancaster, PA (Lancaster, PA)  
 Sweet Life Services, LLC Truck Wash (University Park, IL)  
 Archview Tank Wash (Fairmont City, IL)  
 Rainbow Transport Tank Cleaners (Long Beach, CA)

Quala - Tulare, CA (Tulare, CA)  
 Total Clean LLC Memphis, TN (Memphis, TN)  
 Total Clean LLC Memphis, TN (Memphis, TN)  
 Quala - Beaumont, TX (Beaumont, TX)  
 Quala - West Memphis, AR (Petro Cove) (West Memphis, AR)  
 Total Clean LLC Baton Rouge, LA (Baton Rouge, LA)  
 Total Clean LLC Lake Charles, LA (Lake Charles, LA)



## TRUCKING

Heniff Transportation Systems, LLC Corporate (Oak Park, IL)  
 RSI Logistics (Knoxville, TN)  
 Gavinos Trucking Inc. (Okeene, OK)  
 Heniff Transload Facility - Clare/Cincinnati (Cincinnati, OH)  
 Brett Parr Transport, LLC (Monroe, WI)  
 Vermillion Valley Railroad, Company, LLC (VRRR) (Danville, IL)  
 MJW Trucking, LLC (Picayune, MS)  
 KAG SPG FLEET (Jacksonville, IL)  
 KAG SUGAR FLEET (Jacksonville, IL)  
 KAG OILS FLEET (Jacksonville, IL)  
 Bulkmatic Transport Company - Inedible (Griffith, IN)  
 Napier Trucking, LLC (Nabb, IN)  
 Heniff Transload Facility - Redmond, OR (Redmond, OR)  
 Carry Transit Transfer Terminal - Memphis, TN (Memphis, TN)  
 Trey Transport, LLC (Peotone, IL)  
 Jaguar Transport - Union, MO (Union, MO)  
 Jaguar Transport - Rusk, TX (Rusk, TX)  
 McLeod Express, LLC (Lafayette, IN)  
 Jaguar Transport - St. Louis, MO (St. Louis, MO)  
 SDK. Steve Douglas Kienbaum - Trucking (Whitewater, WI)  
 Newman Carriers Inc (Fairmont City, IL)



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**for on Android and iOS devices**  
 Your mobile web source for up-to-date consumer kashrus information.

# Getting Back to the Basics with the Kashrus Awareness Project

Ten thousand people a month tune in to the website or read the articles from the Kashrus Awareness Project (KAP) co-started by Rabbi Sholem Fishbane, Director of Kashrus at the cRc and President of AKO (Association of Kashrus Organizations. Learn more about the AKO on page 22).

The idea to go into “overdrive” to teach people about *kashrus* crystallized during COVID, explained Rabbi Fishbane. From the questions that arose from the multitude of home businesses that began during that time without supervision, and from other questions that were asked, it became apparent that there was a general lack of *kashrus* knowledge. People were not aware, for example, of the *issur* of baking dairy *challah*. Stories came in about mishaps that occurred because of lack of knowledge about *bishul akum* and *stam yayin*.

Rabbi Fishbane also received calls from different *kashrus* organizations throughout the United States about their realization of the need to go back to teaching basic *kashrus* knowledge.

Many years ago, Rabbi Fishbane explained, people grew up thinking a product was kosher as long as there was no treif ingredient listed on its package. After that period there was an explosion of *hashgachos* and products that covered a vast array of food categories. Then “everything” really became kosher. People became accustomed to being able to eat just about any product with a *hashgacha*.

Rabbi Fishbane compared this shift in the outlook on *kashrus* to the outlook of a person who grew up in a city where there was a kosher *eruv*. Although he knows there needs to be an *eruv* in order for him to carry when he visits another city, he automatically assumes this city has an *eruv* as well and proceeds to carry items with him as usual. Similarly, because so many products had become available as kosher,

people began assuming that all foods were kosher, when they were not. They even thought that all kosher products were *cholov Yisroel* and *pas Yisroel*.

In response to the situation, Rabbi Fishbane, along with his brother Benzion, his nephew Sholom Mandelbaum, Rabbi Yaakov Tescher, and Rabbi Yitzchok Hisiger developed the Kashrus Awareness Project (KAP). Rabbi Fishbane chose topics and they began producing short videos called “Let’s Talk *Kashrus*.” Torah Anytime shows these videos once a week.

“We give a pareve upbeat message - no *mussar*,” said Rabbi Fishbane.

Some of the topics covered have included Starbucks, hard seltzer, *kashrus* overseas, event planning, and summer camps. Rabbis interviewed include cRc Rabbis - Rabbi Dovid Cohen, Rabbi Akiva Niehaus, and Rabbi Yochanan Schnell - as well as Rabbis from other *kashrus* organizations. KAP gets its *halachic* guidance from AKO (Association of Kashrus Organizations).

Fifty of the videos were transferred onto a USB to accommodate those without internet. The USBs were sold out quickly in America and in *Eretz Yisroel*. Efforts are being made to produce a weekly or monthly newsletter that summarizes the videos.

Despite the incredible success they have seen so far, there is a lot more work to be done. “We’re still not reaching enough people,” said Rabbi Fishbane.

**“We give a pareve upbeat message - no mussar.”**

Let’s Talk  
**Kashrus**

Kashrus  
Awareness  
Project



Visit [www.kashrusawareness.com](http://www.kashrusawareness.com)  
for materials and more information.

# Kol Korei About Small Businesses

There has been a significant growth of small home food businesses over the past few years. Last Elul four nationally known *poskim* signed a letter urging all home food businesses to obtain official outside *hashgacha* certification. This was not a reflection of the trustworthiness of the proprietors, but it was a matter of adherence to *halacha*. When food is sold for profit, it needs to bear kosher certification from an outside source.

This summer, the Chicago Rabbanim united together to sign a continuation of this letter, requiring all home businesses in Chicago to get a certified *hashgacha*. This letter, as well as the original letter, was crafted by Rabbi Reiss. It explains that the requirement for certification is not a derogatory reflection of the *kashrus* standards, but is a "demonstration of our collective commitment to the optimal observance of *Torah v'Yiras Shamayim*." The Rabbis agreed that all businesses will follow the guidelines set by Rabbi Reiss and Rabbi Shmuel Fuerst, *Dayan*, Agudath Israel of Illinois.

Rabbi Fishbane pointed out that the Chicago community is unique in a number of ways. One is in its unity among the *Rabbanim*. The Rabbis who signed the letter represent a religious spectrum in Chicago. The *Rabbanim* are also not only requiring that small businesses get *hashgacha*, they are determined to help those businesses with the requirement. If a business requires financial assistance to accommodate separate ovens and utensils to help them get certified, arrangements have been made to help them with the needed funds.

At present there are four local *hashgachos* servicing the home establishments. Because the cRc's main goal is to help consumers keep kosher, they are encouraging the growth of these other smaller, local *hashgachos*. To help explain this unique approach, Rabbi Fishbane borrows from an old kosher hot dog ad, "We answer to a Higher Authority."

For an in-depth explanation regarding the *kashrus* of home businesses, please see Rabbi Reiss' article entitled "Kashrus of Home Establishments" which was published in the *Journal of Halacha and Contemporary Society* by the Rabbi Jacob Joseph School. The article may be accessed on the cRc website.

## The Association of Kashrus Organizations (AKO)

The Association of Kashrus Organizations (AKO) was established in 1985. It was first chaired by Rabbi Benjamin Shandalov, beloved cRc member and former cRc Kashruth Administrator. Its primary goal is to unite the different *kashrus* agencies around the globe under one umbrella, serving the Jewish community to raise and maintain the highest level of *kashrus* possible. Through AKO, the leading authorities in the world today have a medium where they can discuss the many situations that arise in the *kashrus* industry, to create a plan for emergency *kashrus* situations, to construct basic guidelines for mutually acceptable standards and to present a unified voice in *kashrus*.

Rabbi Sholem Fishbane became the Executive Director of AKO in 2003. Under Rabbi Fishbane's leadership, AKO has grown to become a nucleus of international *kashrus* administration.



### First meeting of the AKO

Around the table (l-r): Rabbi Green, Rabbi Appelbaum a"h, Rabbi Luban, Rabbi Teichman, Rabbi Kaganoff, Rabbi Heisler, Rabbi Schuman, Rabbi Blech a"h, Rabbi Goldzweig a"h, Rabbi Fishweicher a"h, Mr. Flaks, Rabbi Heineman, Rabbi Rapoport a"h, Rabbi Rivkin a"h, Rabbi Broyde, Rabbi Shandalov a"h, Rabbi Pearl, Rabbi Weiss, Rabbi Segal.

# The Pas Yisroel Switch

By the spring of 2022, all\* of cRc's food service establishments - restaurants and caterers – became *pas Yisroel*. "The cRc is known for its high quality supervision," Rabbi Fishbane explained, "but we need to always assess what is our next step? We constantly have to ask ourselves, 'Ayeka, where are you?'"

"The city of Chicago is changing and we are proud to keep up with its growing demands."



Rabbi Reiss and Rabbi Cohen at Ken's Diner for pas Yisroel question

The need to switch the establishments over to *pas Yisroel* grew for a number of reasons. There are more people in the community who would appreciate *pas Yisroel* products. There is also a need to accommodate the many visitors who pass through Chicago for business or pleasure.

Before asking the establishments to become *pas Yisroel*, the cRc wanted to provide them with an option where making the switch would be possible and not costly. The cRc found a large Midwest bread company that produces a vast variety of high quality bread products under a different kosher certification and turned that facility into a *pas Yisroel* plant at the cRc's expense.

Rabbi Yaakov M. Eisenbach, Rabbinic Coordinator in Food Service/Catering, worked closely with the establishments to make sure they were pleased with the switch. Ken's Diner found it challenging to replicate a specific wrap in a *pas Yisroel* version. Rabbi Reiss went to the restaurant and examined the different wraps under consideration to ensure their *pas Yisroel* status. Rabbi Reiss and Rabbi Eisenbach worked with the proprietor, trying different products until an acceptable match was found.

"The city of Chicago is changing and we are proud to keep up with its growing demands," said Rabbi Fishbane.

*\* with the exception of franchise establishments such as Dunkin Donuts, Graeter's Ice Cream, Rita's and Cinnaholic. The bagels in the cRc-certified Dunkin Donuts are pas Yisroel.*



**Kashrus Rabbinical Staff**

Top row: Rabbi Yochanan Schnall, Rabbi Yisroel Langer, Rabbi Sholem Fishbane, Rabbi Yosef Landa, Rabbi Akiva Niehaus.  
Bottom row: Rabbi Yaakov M. Eisenbach, Rabbi Dovid Oppenheimer, Rabbi Dovid Cohen, and Rabbi Moshe Moscovitz



# What foods require pas Yisroel?

|                          |                       |                        |                       |                        |                       |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Bagel                    | Yes                   | Crackers               | Yes                   | Pizza                  | Yes                   |
| Blintzes                 | Difference of opinion | <b>Croutons</b>        |                       | Pretzels (Soft & Hard) | Yes <sup>2</sup>      |
| Bread                    | Yes                   | Bread Crouton          | Yes                   | Rice Cakes             | No                    |
| <b>Breakfast Cereals</b> |                       | Mandel Type            | Difference of opinion | Sprouted-Wheat Bread   | Yes                   |
| Cheerios                 | No                    | <b>Doughnuts</b>       | Difference of opinion | <b>Tortillas</b>       |                       |
| Corn Flakes              | No                    | Ezekiel Bread          | Yes                   | With Wheat Flour       | Difference of opinion |
| Rice Krispies            | No                    | <b>Flour Tortillas</b> | Yes                   | Without Flour          | No                    |
| <b>Others</b>            |                       | Granola Bars           | No                    | <b>Wafers (Thin)</b>   | Difference of opinion |
| With 5 Grains            | Depends on cereal     | <b>Matzah</b>          | Yes                   | <b>Wraps</b>           |                       |
| Without 5 Grains         | No                    | Pancakes               | Difference of opinion | With Wheat Flour       | Yes                   |
| <b>Cake</b>              | Yes                   | <b>Pies</b>            | Yes                   | Without Flour          | No                    |
| Challah                  | Yes                   | Pita                   | Yes                   |                        |                       |
| <b>Cookie</b>            | Yes                   |                        |                       |                        |                       |
| Corn Tortillas           | No <sup>1</sup>       |                        |                       |                        |                       |

1. Assuming they don't contain wheat flour; if they do, see wraps. 2. Some say very small hard pretzels don't.



## The Power of Yom Kippur | Continued from page 19 | Rabbi Levi Notik

however, this profound deepest soul connection is revealed. This is the meaning of עיצומו של יום מכפר, Yom Kippur awakens the great bond that exists inherently, to the extent that all blemishes from *aveiros* can vanish. In face of this *kedusha*, holiness, nothing can disrupt that connection. Yom Kippur; when utilized properly, wakes up the Yid and brings his true feelings, and sincere resolve to the surface, showcasing that the Yid is eternally connected to Hashem, regardless of where he's been or what he's done. He is now inspired to genuine and complete *Teshuva*.

This awakening chiefly occurs during *Neila*, the closing *Tefila* on this awesome day. *Neila* doesn't signify closing of the gates with us remaining outside, rather, it is Hashem enclosing us with Him on the inside. He beckons us to focus

on this unique bond, to reveal our unbreakable connection, to allow it to impact us on Yom Kippur and by extension throughout the year.

As we approach Yom Kippur, let us realize this very deep connection we have with Hashem. Let's acknowledge the special bond that exists between us. Let it be a driving force for our own *Teshuva*, and a lens through which we view every single Yid. To recognize and appreciate their inherent holiness, irrespective of their journey or current level.

Wishing you and your families a שנה טובה ומתוקה, a good sweet year, filled with complete *gezunt*, abundant *parnos*, and much *nachas*, and may we be זוכה to the האולה האמיתית now!

# cRc Publications



## Divrei Torah for the Yamim Tovim

**Sappirim**  
[consumer.crc kosher.org/  
 publications-category/sappirim/](http://consumer.crc kosher.org/publications-category/sappirim/)

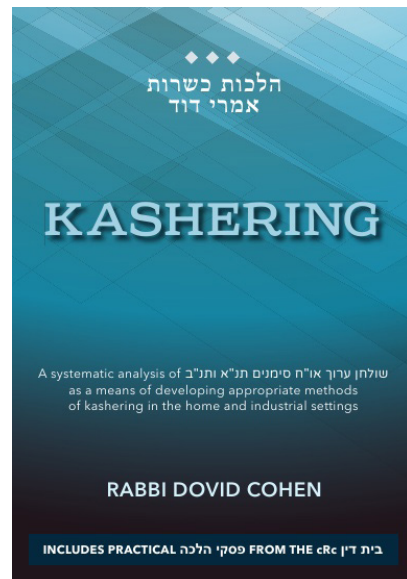
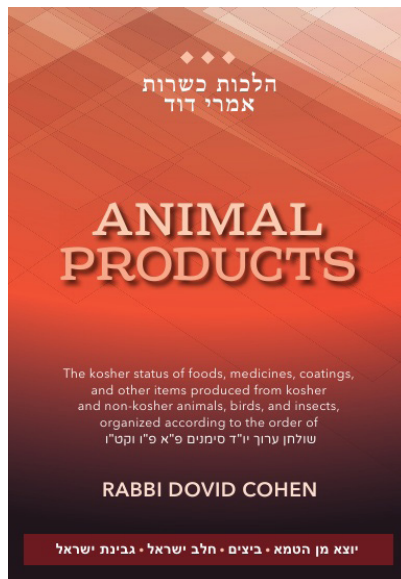


**Derech Kitzarah**  
[consumer.crc kosher.org/publications-  
 category/derech-kitzarah/](http://consumer.crc kosher.org/publications-category/derech-kitzarah/)



### Special edition of the Hadarom Journal

Published by Rav Gedalia Dov Schwartz זצ"ל, including Torah essays from Internationally renowned rabbonim and dayanim, and a collection of never-before-published teshuvos from Harav Schwartz זצ"ל. Edited by Harav Yona Reiss.



These sefarim along with Rabbi Cohen's other sefarim are available for purchase at [crcweb.org](http://crcweb.org) and on his website at <https://sites.google.com/view/kashrushalacha/home>

Rabbi Reiss's sefer, *Kanfei Yonah*, is a collection of essays and responsa relating to a variety of contemporary halakhic and hashkafic issues.



## cRc Beth Din Update

From the Desk of the Menahel, Rabbi A.M. Abramson

The Beth Din had a busy and productive year.

Once again 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 and Rabbi Sam Biber for their frequent assistance in get cases. 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 meetings with candidates during this period.

Our case load in mediation especially in divorce mediation continues to grow. *Din Torah* cases and *Geirut* applications 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 our rigorous regulations as part of the GPS Network of the Rabbinical Council of America (RCA). Each case is handled with patience, fortitude, and scholarship by our *Dayanim*.

Rabbis throughout the country consulted with our *Av Beth Din* and *Dayanim* throughout the year on a variety of *halachic* issues. At this time special recognition should be accorded to Rav Daniel Raccah, our Senior *Dayan*, and to our *dayanim* Rav Yisroel Langer and Rav Aaron Kraft. Their contributions to the work of the Beth Din in every domain are invaluable and incomparable. We also extend our great appreciation towards Rabbi Yochanan Nathan, our longstanding *sofer* for *Gittin*.

We published *Divrei Torah* booklets with *Divrei Torah* from *dayanim* and *Chaverim* before each Yom Tov, including Chanukah and Purim, comprising a total of five such booklets since last Rosh HaShanah.

Our *Av Beth Din*, Rabbi Yona Reiss, in addition to his daily task load at the Beth Din, served as scholar-in-residence in Baltimore, Maryland at Congregation Shomrei Emunah; in Boca Raton, Florida at Boca Raton Synagogue; in Brooklyn Heights, New York at Congregation Bnai Avraham; in Los Angeles, California at Beth Jacob Congregation; in Toronto at Shaarei Shomayim; and in Indianapolis, Indiana at Congregation Bnei Torah. He also gave the annual Yahrzeit lecture, in memory of his father, Mr. Harry Reiss z"l, at the Gruss Center in Israel. Earlier in the year, Rabbi Reiss spoke at the *Halichot Am Yisrael* Annual International Conference of *Dayanim* in Jerusalem and the World Orthodox Israel Congress in Jerusalem.

Rabbi Reiss met with many groups of students over the course of the year. Some of the many groups

Rabbi Reiss spoke with were Chabad of Deerfield High School students, the Sinai Scholars from NW University, a cohort of the Chabad CTeen group, University of Chicago college students, students from Chabad Peoria, and ISU students. Rabbi Reiss also addressed law students at University of Chicago and University of Illinois (Champaign – Urbana). In Champaign, Rabbi Reiss checked on the *mikvah's* status in his role as *Rav Hamachshir*.



Rabbi Reiss presented at a workshop for lawyers called Keeping the Faith in Estate Planning for the Chicago Estate Planning Council (CEPC), spoke at the Jewish Law and Ethics Symposium for lawyers in St. Louis, and gave a workshop for the JWE and NILI about Women in Business and *Halacha*. In Yeshiva University Rabbi Reiss presented a shiur on *Get* Enforcement at its second annual Yom Hakahal for the broader community.

Rabbi Reiss edited and contributed to the special volume of *HaDarom* that was published in memory of Rav Schwartz z"l, and published numerous articles in Torah journals and publications including *Kol Tzvi*, *Shaarei Zedek*, *Ateret Tzvi*, *Kevod Chachamim*, *Batei Yosef*, and the *Journal of Halacha and Contemporary Society* which included his important article on the *kashrus* of home food establishments. Rabbi Raccah and Rabbi Kraft also contributed articles to the special volume of *Hadarom*, and Rabbi Kraft also published an article in the *Kevod Chachamim* journal.

The Beth Din was proud to host Rabbi Eliezer Gewirtzman from Chayim Aruchim who gave a multi-part seminar on end-of-life issues (see page 15) attended by our *dayanim* and many cRc rabbis. Rabbi Reiss also presented at an End of Life Seminar at Kehilat Chovevei Tzion.

Beth Din welcomes Mrs. Elana Lipman, Esq. to our staff. Mrs. Lipman coordinates divorce mediation and supports conversion candidates at the cRc.

We greatly appreciate the continued contributions of Mr. Aaron Retter, who joined the Beth Din staff last year as a special assistant to the *Av Beth Din*. We also express our gratitude to our summer intern, Yehuda Goldstein, who meticulously worked on various Beth Din projects.

The Beth Din is happy to extend its wishes to the entire community for a *K'siva V'chasima Tova*.



# The cRc's 2023/5784 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 at [www.ASKcRc.org](http://www.ASKcRc.org) or by calling the office at (773) 465-3900.

NOTE: This chart should only be used in 2023/5784.



## 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 each date, and check for worms and beetles inside. This applies to all dates - domestic and/or pitted.

**DRIED** with no additional flavors are acceptable even without certification. Slice open each date, and check for worms and beetles inside. 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](http://www.crc kosher.org)