



# CHADASHOT

*A Year in Review*

תשרי תשפ"ז • SEPTEMBER 2026



כתובת וחתומה 216!

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# Greetings from the Executive Director



by  
**RABBI LEVI  
MOSTOFSKY**

Executive Director

**A**S WE APPROACH ROSH HASHANA, AS INDIVIDUALS AND AS A COMMUNITY, we consider the past year, what more we could be doing and how much room we have for improvement. Acheinu Bnei Yisrael, here and around the world, face so many challenges, and we all feel a responsibility to improve and to grow, and to merit a *Kesivah VaChasima Tova* for ourselves and for the world. It is a time for honest, humble, reflection, for recognition of where we are lacking, for remorse and for conviction to do better.

Rav Avraham Yitzchak HaCohen Kook, in his *Sefer Ein Ayah (Maaser Sheini 5:1)*, comments that *Tikun HaNefesh* requires not just remorse for what we have done wrong, but also recognition of what we have done well. We have to maintain a *simcha* and positive disposition to encourage us to move forward. And if we are to improve, we require an honest audit and accounting of not just the bad but also the good, so that we can accurately assess and plan for how to improve.

In these pages you will find insight into the profound impact of the Chicago Rabbinical Council on the community. For nearly a century, the cRc has stood as a quiet, steady presence in the life of our community to meet religious needs and serving as a foundational institution for our city, the region and the entire Jewish community. Rabbi Fishbane and our Kashrus staff are ensuring access to kosher food at the highest standards and providing cutting edge kashrus education resources with unparalleled transparency. Rabbi Reiss and our Beth Din are dealing with the most complex *halachic* matters, attuned to the delicate nuances of how divorcing couples, geirim, and others are impacted by what they experience here. In civic matters, we represent the community's interests, partnering with other communal groups and institutions. We are graced by incredible staff, experts in their fields and dedicated *yirei Hashem* wholly committed to their *avodas hakodesh*. These pages reveal some of their tireless behind-the-scenes work that is revolutionizing their fields, and touching the lives of those who

rely on our services. They work in partnership with the membership of the cRc, the *Rabbanim* in the community who inform and guide our work to best serve real-life needs.

We hear from around the world how fortunate we are as a community to have such gems focused on our needs, and this is an opportunity for us to give thanks, reflect and appreciate. *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* has given us so much potential, so many resources, to do good for so many, and *B"H* there is so much good to acknowledge. We must be cognizant that such good work is done with much hard work and dedication, and that it happens when we work together, with representatives from all parts of the community, each with their particular *kochos*. And with the acknowledgment of the good, we feel the impetus and pressure to continue to grow, to move forward, to realize how our accomplishments position us for even greater good, and increase our awareness of how much more there is to do.

*Ashreinu Mah Tov Chelkeinu!* Reflecting on the past year, one is struck by the pattern and trajectory of the cRc's work, beyond any one accomplishment.

Serving with rigorous commitment to halacha, deep sensitivity and expert professionalism, we represent a healthy community caring for its needs. How blessed we are as a community to have such resources, and how great a responsibility do we have to continue the legacy of those that came before us and to pave a better future! May we all be zoche to more opportunities, to grow and realize greater potential, and to a *Kesiva VaChasima Tova L'alteir L'Chaim Tovim Ul'shalom*. ■



# Presidential Message: In G-d We Trust



by  
**RABBI JOEL  
GUTSTEIN**

*President of cRc  
and Rabbi of  
Congregation  
Yehuda Moshe*

**F**OR SEVERAL YEARS, I WORKED PART-time planning events for a Jewish organization. I would always write “G-d willing” on a note that was to be sent about the event. However, the organization for which I worked did not like that idea. They thought it sounded too religious.

So, one time my superiors removed the “G-d willing” from the note. However, G-d has a sense of humor and as only He could arrange it, that next event was cancelled due to inclement weather. After that, “G-d willing” was on every note. The heads of the organization realized that you can’t run an organization - certainly not a Jewish organization - unless you keep G-d in mind.

In the *Book of Ruth*, we find that Boaz would greet his workers using the phrase, “ה' עִמָּכֶם - G-d is with you.” The Talmud in *Brachos* explains that Boaz saw that people were not thinking about G-d. Even though we don’t say the name of G-d freely, for people to keep G-d in mind, Boaz instituted greeting others with the name of G-d and the rabbis agreed with him.

Unfortunately, in the United States there are many - especially in public life - who try to remove G-d from the picture. Several years ago, I attended a Memorial Day ceremony to honor American soldiers who fought and gave their lives for the United States. The person leading the Pledge of Allegiance said, “...one nation, indivisible...”, omitting the phrase “under G-d.” If one tries to remove G-d from the picture, immorality and violence become rampant and an acceptable part of life because one can then make up any rules one desires. Everything becomes permitted.

At this point, it should be very apparent that G-d runs the world and the Land of Israel does not run by the natural rules that G-d has instituted for the rest of the world. Israel is a special country with special people living there and G-d runs it in a unique manner. A visitor to Israel once asked Rabbi Yechezkel Abramsky to explain the miracle of the 1967 Six Day War. Rabbi Abramsky lived in the Bayit Vegan neighborhood of Jerusalem. He took his visitor to the window, opened the curtain and showed him the mountains that surround Jerusalem. Rabbi Abramsky quoted a *passuk* in *Tehillim* 125:2, “Jerusalem is surrounded by mountains and G-d surrounds His people.” Rabbi Abramsky explained that just as the mountains around Jerusalem are obvious to one who looks, so is G-d’s protection of the Jewish people.

The United States recently celebrated its 250<sup>th</sup> birthday. It has shown itself to be a hospitable host for the Jewish

people. However, recently - more specifically since October 7 - it has become apparent that the United States is also an exile for the Jewish people. Increasing anti-Israel rhetoric - which my father z”l would interpret to mean anti-Jewish rhetoric - has been coming from the people of the United States and especially from members of Congress, other government officials and would-be officials. Despite the anti-Jewish rhetoric and attempts to threaten Israel (the Jewish people), we must keep going, doing what G-d has commanded us in the Torah - both Written and Oral - and through the Rabbis who instituted many practices to uphold the observance of Torah.

At the cRc we do a wonderful job sanctifying the name of G-d and making the presence of G-d felt in this world. Rabbi Reiss - our *Av Beth Din* - is an internationally recognized Torah authority who together with our other dayanim - Rabbi Raccah, Rabbi Langer and Rabbi Kraft, as well as Rabbi Abramson as administrator - bring glory to the name of G-d through their operation of the Beth Din. The cRc’s Beth Din is a Beth Din for the Midwest, which seems to run east to west from the Appalachian Mountains to the Rocky Mountains and north to south from the Canadian border to the Mexican border.

Rabbi Levi Mostofsky - our executive director - is constantly working on new ideas to help grow our organization - both in number and in recognition. His tireless efforts are amazing to observe and see come to fruition.

Rabbi Sholem Fishbane and the *kashrus* staff continue to raise the standards of *kashrus* and the esteem of our *kashrus* certification. Rabbi Fishbane has led our *kashrus* division to the top in the *kashrus* world. You can find our certification on products in the least expected locations - even in Anchorage, Alaska as I discovered this past summer.

Finally, what might be the most overlooked part of the cRc is our office staff. They are responsible for all the behind-the-scenes work that makes the cRc so productive and efficient. We are truly blessed to have them running the office.

We are coming to the year 5787 - in Hebrew that is תשפ”ז. We can interpret that to mean הנה שנת פז - it should be a golden year. May G-d bless the coming year to be a golden year of success for the cRc, the Chicagoland Jewish community, the State of Israel, and all the Jewish people. ■

# From the Av Beth Din

## LESSONS FROM THE SE'IR LA'AZAZEL OFFERING OF YOM KIPPUR



by  
**RAV YONA  
REISS**

*Av Beth Din*

ONE OF THE MOST ENIGMATIC RITUALS in the Torah is also one of the most profound. On Yom Kippur, after the Kohen Gadol completed the elaborate Yom Kippur service, one ceremony stood apart from all the others: the sending away of the *se'ir hamishtaleach* (also known as the *se'ir la'zazel*), the goat sent to Azazel.

The sequence of the *Avodah* is itself remarkable. The Kohen Gadol first brought a *par* (bull) as his personal offering and confessed his own sins and those of his household, and then those of his fellow kohanim. Two identical *se'irim* (goats) were brought (prior to the Kohen Gadol's second confession) before Hashem, and lots were cast to determine their destinies. One goat became the *se'ir la'Shem* (goat designated for Hashem) whose blood, like the blood of the bull of the Kohen Gadol, was brought into the Holy of Holies and sprinkled before the Holy Ark, the *paroches* (curtain at the entranceway of the Holy of Holies), and the *mizbeach ha'zahav* (golden altar in the sanctuary) as part of the Yom Kippur service. The second became the *se'ir la'zazel*. After all of the sacrificial rites had been completed, the Kohen Gadol placed his hands upon this second goat, confessed over it the sins of the entire nation, and entrusted it to the *Ish iti* (designated person) who escorted it into the wilderness until it was cast from a precipitous cliff (see *Vayikra* 4:5-10, 20-22).

This final ritual is astonishing. The bull and the goat offered to Hashem principally atoned for the defilement of holy places and offerings, yet the *se'ir la'azazel* effected atonement for virtually every category of sin—intentional and unintentional, major and minor alike (*Rambam, Hilchos Teshuva* 1:2). Remarkably, it achieved this distinction without ever being offered upon the *mizbeach* (Holy Altar). Instead, it was deliberately removed from holiness and sent into the desolation of the wilderness.

Why should the sacrifice that accomplishes the broadest atonement be the one furthest removed from the sanctuary?

The answer begins with understanding the identity of Azazel itself.

Rashi (*Vayikra* 16:8) explains that “Azazel” refers simply to the rugged mountain from which the goat was cast. Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks observed that beginning with William Tyndale's English translation of the Bible in the sixteenth century,

translators rendered the phrase as the *עז אזל* - “escape goat,” eventually shortened to the familiar English word “scapegoat.” This understanding evokes the approach of the Rambam (*Moreh Nevuchim* 3:46), who sees the ritual as a powerful symbol: the Jewish people dramatically cast away their sins, impressing upon themselves the urgency of repentance. Like *tashlich* in which we stand by a river “to cast away our sins” or the Rambam's famous exhortation of *עורר ישנים משנתם* (*Teshuva* 3:4) - “awaken, sleeping ones, from your slumber” - with respect to the blowing of the shofar on Rosh Hashanah, the ceremony awakens the heart through visible action.

The Ramban (*Vayikra* 16:8), however, offers an altogether different interpretation.

Drawing upon the *Midrash of Pirkei Rabbi Eliezer Hagadol*, the Ramban identifies Azazel not merely as a place but as a reference to the Satan (*Samael*). The *se'ir la'azazel* is not, Heaven forbid, an offering to another power. Such an idea would be fundamentally incompatible with Judaism. Rather, the goat is dispatched solely because Hashem commanded it. The Ramban compares the ritual to a king who instructs his servants to provide one of his ministers with a portion of the royal banquet. The gift is not given independently; it is given only because the king himself desires it.

Yet the Ramban's language remains startling. He repeatedly characterizes the *se'ir la'azazel* as a kind of *shochad*, a bribe. On Rosh Hashanah we already encounter the expression *כדי לעררב השטן* (*Rosh Hashanah* 16b)—that we sound the shofar in a manner that confounds the Satan. On Yom Kippur the Torah teaches an even deeper lesson. Sometimes the most effective way to overcome the *yetzer hara* is not by confronting it directly but by understanding how it operates.

This insight transforms the way we understand temptation to sin.

The Gemara (*Bava Basra* 16a) identifies the Satan, the *yetzer hara* (evil inclination), and the *Malach HaMaves* (angel of death) as different manifestations of the same force. The adversary that tempts us is the very one that prosecutes us. If so, “bribing the Satan” means learning how to outmaneuver our own evil inclination.

Rav Eliyahu Dessler (*Michtav Me'Eliyahu* 5:654-656) offers a memorable illustration. He compares fighting the *yetzer hara* head-on to striking the blade of a heavy meat cleaver. The harder one strikes, the stronger the resistance becomes. Wisdom lies not in brute force but in strategy.





Instead of declaring, “I will never waste another evening,” one says, “Let me learn Torah for just five minutes first before engaging in distraction.” The *yetzer hara* gladly grants the delay, assuming victory will come later. Yet five minutes become ten, ten become thirty, and before long the temptation has lost its hold.

Rav Dessler sees this strategy reflected in Chazal’s principle of *מתוך שלא לשמה בא לשמה* – that by starting to do mitzvot with insincere motivations, one eventually comes to perform mitzvot sincerely (*Pesachim 50b*). Rav Shimon Schwab (*Ma’ayan Beis Hashoevah, Parshas Vayeshev*) similarly emphasizes that serving Hashem for secondary motives is not merely tolerated but often serves as the proper starting point for genuine spiritual growth. A person may initially refrain from *lashon hara* for pragmatic reasons, give tzedakah because of a raffle, attend *shul* because of the communal cholent, or learn Torah because of incentives offered at school. The *yetzer hara* is appeased because the motives are mixed. Yet over time, repeated acts reshape character until the external motivation fades and authentic love of mitzvot remains.

Rav Dessler adds a second dimension. The greatest spiritual danger is not only temptation but self-righteousness. Chazal warn (*Avos 2:4*), אל תאמן בעצמך עד יום מותך – do not trust in yourself until the time of death. Even the most accomplished individual must never assume he has permanently conquered his *yetzer hara*. Humility itself becomes part of the “bribe.” When a person remembers that he is still vulnerable, the Satan has less opportunity to exploit spiritual arrogance.

Perhaps this is the deepest irony of the *se’ir la’azazel*. The Torah is not teaching us to negotiate with evil. It is teaching us to understand the psychology of temptation. The *yetzer hara* is often overcome not by dramatic battles but by patience, wisdom, humility, and careful strategy. The “bribe” is not paid to another power. It is a metaphor for redirecting the forces that would otherwise work against us until they become instruments of our own spiritual growth.

“The Torah is not teaching us to negotiate with evil. It is teaching us to understand the psychology of temptation.

There is also an additional dimension. Drawing upon a passage in the Zohar cited also by the Ramban, Rav Asher Weiss notes that the two goats correspond symbolically to Yaakov and Esav. The Ramban (*ibid.*) himself hints at this connection by linking Esav, described as *Ish se’ir* (“hairy person”, but literally “person of Seir”), with the kingdom of Seir. Yet, this symbolism runs deeper than a historical contrast between two brothers.

A Midrash (*Bereishis Rabbah 65:15*) compares Esav to a man whose hair becomes entangled with the chaff blowing through a threshing floor. Chaff naturally clings to hair because it belongs there. Yaakov, by contrast, describes himself as *Ish chalak*, “smooth-skinned person.” The chaff simply slides away.

So too with sin. The sins represented by the *se’ir la’azazel* are not intrinsic to the Jewish soul. They cling to us externally, but they do not define us. *Teshuvah* is therefore not the creation of a new identity but the recovery of our authentic one. The goat cast unto the wilderness symbolizes everything that obscures who we truly are, while the “goat to Hashem” represents our true selves.

“Teshuvah is therefore not the creation of a new identity but the recovery of our authentic one.

This perspective also explains why the two goats had to be virtually identical. Outwardly they appeared indistinguishable. Only the lottery determined which would become the *se’ir la’Shem* and which would become the *se’ir la’azazel*. In much the same way, every Jew experiences both lofty aspirations and moral failures. The struggle is real, but only one reflects the person’s essential identity.

Rabbi Steven Pruzansky (*Repentance for Life*, pp. 537-538, 540), quoting Rabbi Yisroel Chait, captures this idea beautifully. The *se’ir la’azazel* is not who we are; it is what we must leave behind. The *se’ir la’Shem* represents our *פנימיות*, the inner self that remains faithful to Hashem even when our actions have fallen short.

The Gemara (*Eruvin 69a*) similarly distinguishes between someone who publicly desecrates Shabbos out of ideological rebellion and one who still refrains from doing so in the presence of a great Torah sage. The latter demonstrates that the bond remains alive. His actions reveal that beneath the surface he still cares what it means to belong to the Jewish people.

This, perhaps, is the ultimate message of the *se’ir la’azazel*. *Teshuvah* is not about pretending that sin never occurred. Nor is it about inventing a new self. It is about recovering the self that was always there.

The ceremony also teaches practical lessons for everyday life. Rav Dessler’s advice to postpone temptation reminds us that sometimes we simply need to defer impulse until it loses its power. Rav Schwab’s emphasis on *מתוך שלא לשמה בא לשמה* teaches us that imperfect motivations can become the gateway to genuine spiritual growth.

Finally, Chazal’s counsel of *משכהו לבית המדרש* (*Kiddushin 30b*) – drag the *yetzer hara* into the *beis midrash* – encourages us to redirect our desires rather than deny them, finding holiness in the joy of Torah. The jubilation of performing mitzvot itself becomes a powerful defense against the *yetzer hara*, for Chazal teach (*Shabbos 30b*) that the Divine Presence only resides upon one who is suffused with the happiness of a mitzvah. If learning Torah and doing mitzvot make someone happy, the Satan may interpret that as an insincere motivation, when it is truly the highest fulfillment of a mitzvah. Hence, there is arguably no greater weapon against the *yetzer hara* than the enjoyment of Torah and mitzvot!

Finally, we can learn a final lesson from the mysterious *Ish iti*, the man who escorted the goat into the wilderness. The Rambam (*Hilchos Avodas Yom Hakippurim 3:7*) describes him as אִישׁ  
(Continued on page 12)

# Remembering Biranit Cohen a”h

בירנית שובה בת אפרים מרדכי הכהן ע”ה - נלב”ע ז’ שבת תשפ”ו

**T**HE COMMUNITY SUFFERED A TRAGIC loss this past year, with the sudden *petirah* of one of its beloved employees, Mrs. Biranit Cohen a”h, *Biranit Tova bas Ephraim Mordechai HaKohen*, who passed away on 7 Teves 5786.

For over 20 years, Biranit devoted extraordinary effort and care to helping consumers keep kosher. She was the cRc’s voice. Biranit served as the front line for the cRc, answering consumer phone calls with patience, warmth, and sincerity, and responding to hundreds of emails to help people navigate and find reliable kosher options. Biranit was known for her brilliance and her exceptional organizational skills.

When she began working at the cRc, Biranit worked for the Executive Director, Rabbi Moshe Kushner a”h. She then worked for the Rosh Beth Din, Rav Gedalia Dov Schwartz zt”l, who became one of her mentors whose guidance she cherished. Rav Schwartz was the *mesader kedushin* when Biranit married her dear husband, Jonathan Cohen.

After getting married, Biranit moved to Boca Raton, Florida and then to Dallas, Texas, but she still continued her central position working for the cRc. She managed our social media presence with thoughtfulness and consistency, providing timely, engaging, and informative updates to the community. Biranit also oversaw our popular Pesach Guide, investing tremendous time and attention into producing a resource that was both beautiful and helpful. She was also in charge of managing its distribution. She did all this while dealing with the *mechiras chometz* forms from consumers and companies. Pesach went as smoothly as it did for the community, companies, and restaurants because of Biranit.

In addition, she supported many facets of the Kashrus Department, including foodservice and catering companies, and managed the Kashrus website and numerous consumer lists. Biranit helped raise standards of kashrus in Chicago and Midwest and beyond.

One of the factors that made Biranit “tick” was her drive to do chesed. It affected her every move and decision. Whatever gifts she had, she wanted to share them with others. From sharing her vast knowledge to sharing the

guest room in her warm home, Biranit wanted to help. She did not want any fanfare or credit; she worked quietly behind the scenes.

Biranit realized that the phone connected her to a human in a real situation. She treated each caller with kavod. She listened, empathized, and went out of her way to assist everyone who called.

People in Dallas asked her kashrus questions after cRc hours, so she started a What’s App Group called “Is it Kosher?” People from all over the world joined the group run by Biranit and her kashrus understanding.

Although she was a very modest person in her behavior, dress and actions, she would never shy away from helping people and doing the things she felt needed to be done. When Biranit saw a need, she acted on it. She was non-confrontational, but she stood up for what she believed in. She was an advocate for the needs of the Jewish community.

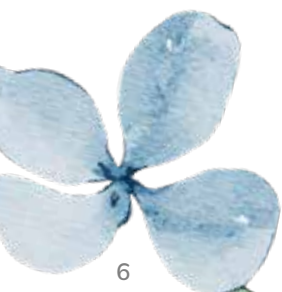
Biranit was one of the first people called on the *bikur cholim* list in Dallas. She was also so happy to host those visiting the community and provide them delicious meals in addition to sleeping accommodations. She would organize rides for guests coming in for *simchas*. She once told a complete stranger who called for help with a ride, that she will be at work when they would be arriving, but if they couldn’t find another ride, she would figure something out.

She had a great love and respect for children, not just for her cherished nieces and nephews, but for all children. In Chicago she opened up a Purim costume *gemach li’iluy nishmas* her father, called *Malbushei Mordechai HaKohein*. It was filled with hundreds of costumes and accessories. There was no charge. One only had to bring back a clean costume.

She was very dedicated to her family and friends. Although traveling was not so easy for her, she made it her business to fly to *simchas* and *levayas* of her close family and friends as well as extended family members. As evidenced by the number of people who came to the *levaya* and *shiva*, Biranit’s relationships were real. High school classmates, and friends from England and Israel, including one of her elementary school teachers, came to share their condolences with Biranit’s family. She was a *bracha* to all who knew her. תנצ”ה ■



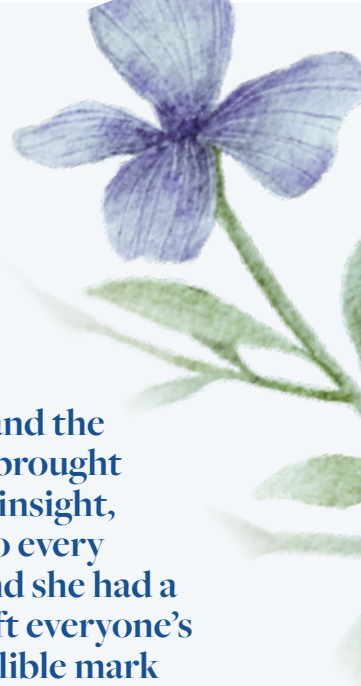
Rav Schwartz zt”l at Biranit’s wedding







## From Her cRc Family



“Biranit has a *shem tov*, a good name – with her family, friends, and everyone who had the privilege of meeting her.

“She loved everyone and everyone loved her.

“Everyone confided in her because she listened to you and treated you as if you were the most important person.

“She was so smart and so down-to-earth.

“Biranit always had a ready smile. If she was upset, she would have to tell you, because you were not able to tell.

“She was trustworthy.

“Biranit was the ultimate communicator. She spoke a lot and was so *makpid* on avoiding *lashon hara*.”

“Biranit made everything look so easy.

“Biranit loved the cRc and the cRc loved Biranit. She brought incredible intelligence, insight, warmth and humility to every task and interaction, and she had a beautiful ability to uplift everyone’s spirits. She left an indelible mark that inspires us to uphold her commitment to excellence in serving our community.”

— RAV REISS

“We are overwhelmed by the magnitude of what she covered and have tremendous gratitude for what she brought to the cRc, consumers in general and to *Klal Yisroel*.”

— RABBI FISHBANE

“Wherever she was, Biranit was a proud member of the community and an integral part of the cRc. With a sharp wit and soft affect, she committed her broad knowledge and deep caring to helping others.”

— RABBI MOSTOFSKY

“When I came, Biranit was here for only a month. I thought she had been here forever – the way she handled everyone and everything with ease.”

“She was very spiritual. When she would say things like if *Mashiach* is not here yet, or talk about the *geulah*, you knew she meant it sincerely.”

“She loved the people of Israel and Eretz Yisroel.”

“She could’ve done anything; she appreciated being part of the cRc family, being involved in *harbatzas Torah* and advocacy for the Jewish community.”

“The name Biranit used in her email address, *morah cohen*, was true for Biranit at all times. Whether she knew it or not, Biranit was a *morah* – people learned from everything Biranit did, no matter what she was doing. Biranit set the example.”

# One Thing: Rosh Hashanah

Rabbi Baruch Hertz  
Rabbi, Bnei Ruven



## HOW DO YOU SAY ROSH HASHANAH IN ENGLISH?

Look at your calendar. It says New Year.

But that is curious. The Jewish New Year is not actually called “New Year,” nor is it called the “Beginning of the Year.”

It is called Rosh Hashanah, the Head of the Year.

Think about that for a moment.

A head is one part of the body, just like the heart, the hands, or the feet. Why would the holiest days of the year be called the Head of the Year?

That is our first question.

Here is a second question.

Throughout Elul and the High Holiday season, we recite *Tehillim* 27 twice each day. King David begins with the words:

“*Achas sha’alti me’es Hashem, osah avakeish*,” “One thing I ask of Hashem; that alone do I seek.”

Yet immediately afterward, he lists several requests: to dwell in Hashem’s house, to experience His closeness, to find protection, and to be uplifted.

If he is asking for many things, why does he begin by saying he is asking for only one?

These two questions are really one question, and together they teach us one of the most important lessons of Rosh Hashanah.

Our lives are busy. We are constantly pulled in different directions. There is work. There is family. There are financial responsibilities. There are children. There is our community. There is our spiritual life. Sometimes it feels as though every area of life is a separate compartment, each demanding its own attention.

There is a beautiful story about two brothers.

One was wealthy, and the other struggled financially. The poorer brother needed help marrying off his daughter, so he traveled to ask his wealthy brother for assistance.

The wealthy brother proudly showed him through his magnificent home. “This is my bedroom. This is my dining room. This is my room for receiving guests.” When the tour was over, the poorer brother quietly replied, “My dear brother, I feel sorry for you. In my home, I have only one room.”

At first glance, the comment seems strange. But it contains a profound lesson. How many “rooms” do we have in our own lives? One room for business. One room for family. One room for Torah.

One room for prayer. One room for recreation. One room for ourselves. Life becomes fragmented.

True integrity means much more than honesty. Integrity means being integrated. It means being one person wherever we are and whatever we are doing. Whether we are learning Torah, sitting in an office, eating dinner with our family, or helping another Jew, the same values guide every part of our lives. That is living in one room.

The Maggid of Mezritch taught that *teshuvah* means returning completely to Hashem. His student, Reb Zusha, explained that the first letter of the word *teshuvah* reminds us of the verse:

“*Tamim tihyeh im Hashem Elokecha*,” “Be wholehearted with Hashem your G-d” (*Devorim 18:13*). To be wholehearted means not to live a divided life. It means becoming whole. It means becoming one person.

Herbert Weiner, a well-known Jewish author and congregational rabbi, once met with the Lubavitcher Rebbe while researching Chabad. During their conversation, he remarked that the *Chassidim* he had met all seemed to have an unusually open and peaceful expression. The Lubavitcher Rebbe answered with one word.

“They are missing a *kera*.”

“A what?” Weiner asked.

“A split.”

The Lubavitcher Rebbe explained that many people struggle because they are trying to live in two different worlds at once. At the end of the meeting, Weiner asked what message the Lubavitcher Rebbe would give to Jews searching for their way back.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe answered simply, “No compromise.”

Then he quoted the Prophet Eliyahu:

“How long will you continue wavering between two opinions?”

The challenge is not simply to do more. The challenge is to become whole.

There was once a legendary *melamed* in Lubavitch named Reb Shmuel “Greinem” Esterman. He would tell his students about a man who complained that he had so many problems. “My daughter is getting married,” the man said. “I need to provide a dowry, pay for the wedding, buy gifts, and cover all the expenses.”

His friend listened and then asked, “How much will everything cost?”

“Three hundred silver rubles.” His friend smiled and replied, “Then you don’t have many problems. You have only one problem: finding three hundred silver rubles.”

(Continued on page 13)



## Divrei Torah Publications

Throughout the year, cRc member rabbis share *Divrei Torah* about *Yamim Tovim* in our *Divrei Torah* booklets.

# Who Were the 'Precious Ones of Yerushalayim' and How Can We Join Their Ranks? Yom Kippur 5787

Rabbi Akiva Males

Rabbi, Young Israel of  
Memphis, Tennessee



**A**MONG THE MANY UNIQUE DETAILS OF THE annual Yom Kippur *Avodah* (service) that took place in the *Beis HaMikdash* (Holy Temple) was the *Se'ir HaMishtalei'ach* (the scapegoat). In Vayikra 16:21-22 we read:

כא - וקָמַד אֶהָרֹן אֶת־שְׁתֵּי יָדָיו עַל־רֹאשׁ הַשֹּׁעִיר הַסֵּי וְהִתְנַחֵה עָלָיו אֶת־כָּל־עֲוֹנוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶת־כָּל־פְּשָׁעֵיהֶם לְכֹל־חַטָּאתָם וְנָתַן אֹתָם עַל־רֹאשׁ הַשֹּׁעִיר וְשָׁלַח בְּיַד־אִישׁ עֹתִי הַמִּדְבָּרָה:  
כב - וְנִשָּׂא הַשֹּׁעִיר עָלָיו אֶת־כָּל־עֲוֹנוֹתָם אֶל־אֶרֶץ גְּזֵרָה וְשָׁלַח אֶת־הַשֹּׁעִיר בַּמִּדְבָּר:

21 - And Aaron shall lean both of his hands upon the live he goat's head and confess upon it all the willful transgressions of the children of Israel, all their rebellions, and all their unintentional sins, and he shall place them on the he goat's head, and send it off to the desert with a timely man.

22 - The he goat shall thus carry upon itself all their sins to a precipitous land, and he shall send off the he goat into the desert.

The *Mishnah* (*Yoma* 6:4) teaches that the one leading the scapegoat was accompanied at the start of his journey:

יקירי ירושלים היו מלווין אותו, עד סוכה הראשונה

The precious ones of Jerusalem would escort him until the first shelter.

In his commentary to that *Mishnah*, Rav Ovadia Mi'Bartenura defines those precious individuals as being "from the important people of Jerusalem."

Just who were those "important people"? Furthermore, what did they do to earn being described by our Sages as "*Yakirei Yerushalayim* – the precious ones of Jerusalem"? Were they great scholars, people known to be meticulously observant Jews, or persons of extremely high moral character? Perhaps they were people of great pedigree or high social standing?

Rabbi Mordechai Yehuda Leib Zacks, *zt"l*, (Jerusalem, 1906-1963) suggests that they were a small group of people who simply chose to escort the individual leading the Yom Kippur scapegoat into the wilderness. Rabbi Zacks posits that they did not want that communal representative to feel lonely and frightened when heading out into the desert. By accompanying him at the start of his journey, this cohort helped ease his feelings of anxiety.

This begs the following question: Why should engaging in this one simple act crown its practitioners with the title of "the precious ones of Jerusalem"? After all, the *Mishnah* taught that they merely accompanied the one leading the scapegoat to the first station outside the city – not all the way to the final destination. Furthermore, as kind as this deed was, it occurred just once a year. On the surface, this one small act does not appear to merit earning the title of "*Yakirei Yerushalayim*"?

Rabbi Zacks suggests that we need to look at what those

individuals willingly gave up in order to escort their fellow Jew as he left Jerusalem. They had been in the *Beis HaMikdash* on Yom Kippur – witnessing the *Kohen Gadol* (high priest) carry out the singularly unique *Avodah* of that day. Can one imagine a holier place to be – or any greater spiritual experience to witness?

Yet, what did this select group of people choose to do? They said to themselves, "How can I only focus on myself and my own spiritual experience? There's a Jew about to head out into the wilderness all alone. He must be feeling nervous. I need to tear myself away from my own powerful spiritual accomplishments and help calm another Jew's nerves."

This special group of individuals chose to leave the holiest place on Earth (the *Beis HaMikdash*), on the holiest day of the year (Yom Kippur), so that another Jew might have peace of mind. Sacrificing a powerful spiritual experience for the wellbeing of another Jew earned them the lofty title of "*Yakirei Yerushalayim* – the precious ones of Jerusalem."

For generations, a beautiful story has been told about Rabbi Yisrael Salanter (1809-1883):

One Yom Kippur eve, Rabbi Salanter did not arrive in shul in time to recite the solemn *Kol Nidre* prayers together with the congregation. His absence puzzled many who had made every effort to be there. The rest of the story later emerged: On his way to shul that evening, Rabbi Salanter heard a baby crying uncontrollably. He quickly deduced that the infant's mother had left her sleeping baby in order to attend *Kol Nidre* at shul. The child had awoken while its mother was away and was distraught. To calm that panicked baby, Rabbi Salanter decided to forgo his own Yom Kippur eve experience. He chose to stay at that infant's side, doing his best to soothe that distressed child until the mother returned. Rather than experience the spiritual high of reciting *Kol Nidre* with a *minyan* (quorum), on that Yom Kippur night, Rav Yisrael Salanter offered comfort to a baby and prayed alone.<sup>1</sup>

Rabbi Salanter's decision epitomizes how Rabbi Zacks understood the term "*Yakirei Yerushalayim* – the precious ones of Jerusalem." In fact, on that fateful Yom Kippur eve in the 1800's, Rav Yisrael Salanter must have thought of this very *Mishnah* in *Maseches Yoma*. Certainly, this is what compelled him to comfort that baby whose cries he chose not to ignore.

In the year that lies ahead, let's open our eyes and ears to the very real needs of others in our communities. Let us commit ourselves to look beyond our own interests and attend to the more pressing needs of our fellow Jews. In doing so, each of us can also be counted among the "*Yakirei Yerushalayim*."

In the merit of selflessly caring for others, May Hashem seal us – and all of *Klal Yisrael* – in His *Sefer Chaim Tovim* (Book of Good Life). ■

For a complete telling of this story, see Rabbi Dov Katz, "*Tenu'as HaMussar*" (p. 342). Feldheim Publishers (1996).





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תשרי תשפ"ז

# IS YOUR SHABBOS MODE KOSHER?

by Rabbi Shmuel Katz  
Rabbinic Coordinator at cRc Kosher

Appliances on Shabbos have been part of the educated Shabbos observers' consciousness for as long as appliances were being used. The first refrigerator to see widespread use was the General Electric "Monitor-Top" refrigerator introduced in 1927. The halachic responsa on this topic started shortly thereafter making almost 100 years of discussions.



As appliances got more complex, so did the Shabbos related challenges. In response, manufacturers began building "Shabbos Mode" directly into the appliance software. Right before Rosh Hashana in 1998 The Whirlpool Corporation was granted the first US Patent for a Sabbath mode. This allowed the Shabbos observant community to use these appliances, comfortable that all the Shabbos issues were satisfactorily taken care of. Since then, many manufacturers have filed their own patents for many inventions relating to Sabbath observance in appliance use.

The prevalence of appliances with Shabbos mode has led to the issues surrounding appliances slipping from even well-educated Shabbos observers' active consciousness. However, consumers must remain vigilant, both with properly using the Shabbos modes themselves and with specific rulings from their own rav about the Shabbos Modes.

**First, not all Shabbos modes have a hechsher.** The owner's manual showing you how to use the Shabbos mode does not mean that it is certified at all. With all the additional technology incorporated into appliances, an uncertified appliance is, in many cases, more problematic than the appliance without any Shabbos mode you may have grown up using. Although your rav may have permitted some appliances to



be used as is without any Shabbos mode in the past, this may not apply to your current appliance.

**Secondly, each Shabbos mode may have specific conditions** from the certifier under which the appliance may be used on Shabbos. It is imperative to check the certifier's information for how to use the Shabbos mode properly. This can include manually disabling the ice-maker or setting the light in an oven to stay on the whole Shabbos.<sup>1</sup> In an oven this may also include specific instructions on what you may or may not be allowed to do while the oven is in Shabbos Mode. More on this later.

The Star-K and the OU maintain lists on their websites of the specific models they certify as well as specific guidelines and alerts for the models they certify.

►  
Whirlpool  
Corporation  
first US Patent  
for a Sabbath  
mode

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| United States Patent [19]                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| [11] Patent Number:                                                                      | 5,808,278                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| [45] Date of Patent:                                                                     | Sep. 15, 1998                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <hr/>                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| [54] ELECTRONIC APPLIANCE AND A SABBATH MODE THEREFOR                                    | 4,031,435 6/1977 Zioni et al. 361,356<br>4,071,215 1/1978 Halperin et al. 387,29<br>4,098,576 4/1980 Staton 387,141.8<br>4,363,944 12/1982 Poirier 209,42 R<br>4,375,583 3/1983 Halperin et al. 479,90<br>4,506,120 3/1983 Hochman 260,4 R<br>4,513,169 4/1985 Ueda et al. 219,10.55<br>4,611,265 9/1986 Fowler 364,354<br>4,816,288 3/1989 Ikeda et al. 219,492<br>4,819,714 4/1989 Onaka et al. 165,57<br>5,269,113 3/1994 England et al. 364,140 |
| [75] Inventors: Chang Hwan Moon, Dayton;<br>Jonathan T. Smith, Beavercreek, both of Ohio |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| [73] Assignee: Whirlpool Corporation, Benton Harbor, Mich.                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| [21] Appl. No.: 742,188                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| [22] Filed: Oct. 31, 1996                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Primary Examiner—Mark H. Paschall                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

1. Occasionally these are not controlled by the main computer and cannot be disabled with the general Shabbos Mode.

These instructions are not to be taken lightly as there may be more to them than meets the eye. I would like to delve into one instruction in particular. Almost all Star-K certified ovens have the following instruction, “On the Sabbath, the oven door may only be opened once, all the food removed, and then closed.” This instruction is on almost all Star-K certified models<sup>2</sup> but not for the same reason.

This point is often misunderstood. In the past, the common discussion about opening and closing an oven on Shabbos concerned a thermostat cycling the heat on and off. The concern was that when the oven door was opened the cool air entering would cause the oven temperature to drop and the internal thermostat, sensing the cooler internal temperature, would turn the flame back on or keep it on for longer until the temperature returned to the desired temperature. This question of a thermostat cycling the appliance on and off is in halachic responsa for almost 100 years. On the question of the thermostat, some Rabbonim were stringent and some were lenient. The Star-K follows the stringent opinion that only allows for an oven door to be opened at a time when the flame is no longer needed. This would be when one is removing all the food. However, there are those who disagree and rule that one may open and close an oven on Shabbos even if one intends to leave food inside.<sup>3</sup>

Many reading this instruction from the Star-K that all the food must be removed will assume that because their rabbi has told them that they can follow the lenient opinion, they can ignore this instruction.

However, on many models there is an additional and more severe concern than the thermostat. Even those who were lenient regarding thermostats would agree that it is prohibited in this case. The reason for this is the addition of the door switch being connected to the heating of the oven.

Many ovens have a door switch that detects if the door is open or closed.

Sometimes this is only used to turn the interior light on and off. This can also be used for other oven functions. One of the additional functions of the door switch on many ovens is that once the door is open for about 30 seconds the flame or electric heating element will go off; this is for safety and efficiency. Once the oven door is closed, the flame or heating element will turn back on. On these ovens opening and closing the door directly makes the heat go off and on. Whereas the thermostat turning the flame on was indirect and separate from the direct action of opening the oven door, on these models this somewhat inconspicuous physical button is being manipulated with the door each time it is opened and closed. When one closes the oven door, one is using the oven door to push a button that is turning the heating back on. This is obviously a concern regarding Shabbos; one may not use a button to turn an oven on or off during Shabbos.

The obvious question is how in Shabbos mode, is this feature dealt with? There are some Shabbos Modes that disable the door entirely. These are the Star-K’s “New Shabbos Mode” and GE’s OU certified “Enhanced Shabbos Mode.” However, the most common Shabbos mode on ovens is the Star-K regular Shabbos Mode. On these ovens with such a door switch, the flame will continue to go on and off when the door is closed and opened even in Shabbos mode. However, the regular Shabbos Mode adds a delay where the door switch only completes the intended action after a built-in time-delay runs its course.

Their *posek* has ruled that when one pushes a button, there is no discernable immediate change and the effects are only discernable later; it is a *grama*. However, even a *grama* is not allowed on Shabbos for a beneficial action. Therefore, the Star-K writes “On the Sabbath, the oven door may only be opened once, all the food removed...” Once all food is removed there is no benefit in the flame going back on. However, if one were to



A door switch detects if the door is opened or closed

leave food in the oven for later, the turning on of the oven when the door is closed serves a purpose to keep the remaining food warm and this is forbidden on Shabbos even with the built-in delay. Those who were lenient about closing the oven door on Shabbos when the only concern was the thermostat, would not be lenient to close the oven door with food inside when there is a door switch that will turn the heating on.

I have spoken to many people who have checked their ovens and were dismayed to learn that their oven had a door switch turning the flame off and on with each opening and closing of the oven door. This can be easily missed for many years if one is not paying attention. Before relying on the original ruling that one may leave food in the oven when closing the door on Shabbos it is prudent to check your model and see if there is a door switch that will make that prohibited on Shabbos.

Beyond the specifics of how particular ovens operate, one broader point remains: **Even when a Shabbos mode is reliably certified and used according to the certifier’s instructions, it reflects the halachic rulings of the certifier’s rav.**

*(Continued on page 12)*

2. Ovens with the “New Shabbos Mode” will not have this instruction.

3. Some of the lenient opinions require only opening the oven door when the flame is currently burning.



## Chicago Rabbinical Currents

A newsletter from the cRc Beth Din and cRc Kosher, featuring articles on practical *halacha* relevant to all.

Read online at

[crcbethdin.org/chicago-rabbinical-currents](http://crcbethdin.org/chicago-rabbinical-currents).

# IS YOUR SHABBOS MODE KOSHER?

(Continued from page 11)

One should therefore consult their own rav to determine what is appropriate for them.

Many rabbonim disagree with the Star-K that adding a delay after one presses a button before the action happens makes it a *grama*. This has two important implications. The first is that one may not open and close an oven door that has a door switch that is turning the flame off and on even with a delay. The second implication is that some Shabbos modes include instructions for pushing buttons to change the oven temperature on Yom Tov. This too relies on the built-in time-delay being a halachic *grama*. Those that dispute this maintain that it is prohibited to use buttons on any oven to change the temperature on Yom Tov.

In conclusion it is important to know that your specific model is certified,<sup>4</sup> what the Shabbos mode certifier says the Shabbos mode allows, and it is also important to consult your own rav to know what you should be doing in your own home.

If your appliance doesn't have a Shabbos mode or your rav says to disable the door switch in addition to the Shabbos mode, here is what you need to do:

(a) Locate the door switch. On an oven this will be a visible button on the face of the oven where the door would meet the oven when closed.

(b) Place a magnet<sup>5</sup> to keep the door switch fully engaged over Shabbos.<sup>6</sup> This will make the appliance sense the door is closed even when it is open.<sup>7</sup> ■



Magnet to keep oven door switch fully engaged over Shabbos can be purchased at <https://ebay.io/m/OK8cmn>

4. This can be challenging for older GE models as GE no longer works with their original certifier and these are no longer searchable on the Star-K website.

5. Whirlpool was awarded a patent for a device that will keep the door switch physically depressed for Shabbos. However, I do not believe this device was ever brought to market.

6. An important note from the experts: Ovens can usually operate efficiently with the door switch always pressed in (some materials may not survive the high heat of the self-cleaning cycle and will need to be removed beforehand). Fridges on the other hand are engineered to rely upon the input from the switch and should not remain with the switch pressed in the entire week.

7. The oven will only turn the heating on when the thermostat calls for heat. One should follow their Rav's ruling what to do on such an oven regarding leaving food inside.

## From the Av Beth Din

### LESSONS FROM THE SE'IR LA'AZAZEL OFFERING OF YOM KIPPUR

(Continued from page 5)

המוכן—a prepared man. Rashi (*Vayikra* 16:21) notes that he was designated in advance. Others explain that he knew the wilderness (*Sifsei Chachomim ad locum*) or possessed exceptional wisdom (*Ha'amek Davar ad locum*). Together these interpretations convey a single message: *teshuvah* requires preparation. As Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik often remarked, אין קדושה בלי הכנה – there is no holiness without preparation. Holiness is rarely spontaneous. It is cultivated through thoughtful preparation, humility, and perseverance.

The Mishnah (*Yoma* 6:5) relates that along the route to the wilderness the *Ish iti* was repeatedly invited to eat and drink, though he never accepted (Rambam, *ibid.*). The bread and water were available if needed, yet he continued onward. Like Rav Dessler's explanation of the strategy of postponement, we can suggest that each station represented another victory over temptation. The journey ended not when temptation disappeared, but when it no longer controlled him.

Although we no longer have the *se'ir la'azazel*, its message remains central to our Yom Kippur experience. We continue to “bribe the



Satan” whenever we outsmart the *yetzer hara* instead of confronting it recklessly; whenever we harness secondary motivations in the service of mitzvot; whenever we replace forbidden pleasures with holy ones; whenever we use the tools of the modern world to deepen rather than weaken our service of Hashem; and whenever we mark moments of spiritual growth with meaningful actions that reinforce lasting change.

The *se'ir la'azazel* reminds us that there is never an offering to evil. There is only an offering to Hashem. Our failures do not define us; they challenge us to rediscover who we truly are. Every temptation is an invitation to choose again, every act of *teshuvah* a declaration that our deepest identity remains bound to Torah and to Hashem.

May this Yom Kippur season inspire us to cast away everything that obscures our true selves, to emerge wiser from our struggles, and to merit a year of personal and national redemption, relief from suffering, and the joy that comes from overcoming the *yetzer hara* in the service of the Almighty. ■



## One Thing: Rosh Hashanah

(Continued from page 8)

Greinem explained that we often make the same mistake. We think we have countless different problems: health, family, children, livelihood, finances, the future, the Jewish people, and the state of the world. But from a deeper perspective, we really have only one challenge: to connect ourselves to Hashem, the Source of every blessing.

When that relationship is strong, everything else begins to find its proper place.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe once explained that there are two ways to heal the body. One approach is to treat each symptom individually. The other is to strengthen the entire person. When the whole person becomes healthy, the individual symptoms improve as well. That is why these days are called Rosh Hashanah.

The coming year is like a living body. Every day is another limb. Every hour is another organ. Every moment is another cell. We can spend our lives trying to solve one problem after another, or we can go to the head. When the head is healthy, the entire body is directed properly.

That is the purpose of Rosh Hashanah. We are not merely asking Hashem to solve one difficulty after another. We are reconnecting ourselves to the Source of all blessing.

Now we can answer both of our questions. Dovid Hamelech really is asking for only one thing. “*Achas sha’alti me’es Hashem.*”

Everything that follows is simply another expression of that one request: “Allow me to live in Your presence.” If a person truly lives with Hashem at the center of life, then every other blessing finds its proper place. Health. Livelihood. Family. Peace. Purpose. Joy. They all flow from that one relationship.

That is why Dovid Hamelech begins with the word “one.” And that is why today is called the Head of the Year. The head does not walk. It does not pump blood. It does not digest. But every part of the body receives its direction from the head. If the head is healthy, the entire body benefits.

So too, Rosh Hashanah is not about fixing every detail of life individually. It is about aligning the head.

It is about renewing our relationship with Hashem and making Him the center of everything we do. Many of us arrive on Rosh Hashanah with a long list of requests. Health. Children. Parents. Livelihood. Peace in Eretz Yisrael. Success in our families, our schools, and our communities.

Every one of those prayers is important. But beneath every request is one deeper prayer:

*Ribbono Shel Olam*, help me live with You at the center of my life. Help me become one person, living one integrated life, with one purpose.

Perhaps that is what *teshuvah* truly means. Not becoming a different person. Becoming one person.

May Hashem grant each of us the wisdom to seek that one thing, the privilege of living lives centered on Him, and a year filled with health, happiness, peace, and every revealed blessing.

*Kesivah Vachasimah Tovah.* ■

## cRc Student Awards

### WINNERS OF THE cRc REBBETZIN SHOSHANA SCHWARTZ, A”H, TORAH RESEARCH PROJECT

#### FIRST PLACE WINNERS:

**Eliezer Herman** (Fasman Yeshiva High School)  
“DNA as Halachic Evidence”

**Akiva Isenberg** (Fasman Yeshiva High School)  
“Redeeming Hostages”

#### RUNNER-UP

**Matanya Goldstein** (Fasman Yeshiva High School)  
“Intellectual Property”

### WINNERS OF THE cRc TORAH ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

The award is given to a senior in each high school who will be studying in Israel during the 5787 school year and displays dedication to Torah and to the maintenance of high *middot* standards.

**Ami Gavant** (Ida Crown Jewish Academy)

**Rochel Gertz** (Hanna Sacks Bais Yaakov High School)

**Naftali Neikrug** (Fasman Yeshiva High School)

**Shana Sochaczewsky** (Bais Yaakov High School)

**Chaya Teldon** (Lubavitch Girls High School)

*Congratulations to all of the above cRc winners on your excellent work, and hatzlacha rabbah as you continue your Torah education in Israel.*

*Thank you, Rabbi Michael Myers, Chairman of the Education Committee, for organizing these programs.*

## WELCOMING MRS. BRYER

The cRc is very pleased to welcome Mrs. Ashira Bryer to its staff as its Consumer Specialist. She answers consumers’ questions on the phone and email, and is working on expanding the cRc’s social media presence.

THE cRc HONORS RABBI MICHAEL A. MYERS

# A Pillar of the City



THE cRc HONORED RABBI MICHAEL Myers at its annual Melava Malka in December in recognition for his contributions to the cRc, and for his influence in the Chicago community.

The Melava Malka was held on the 24th of Kislev, the 5th *yahrzeit* of Rabbi Gedalia Dov Schwartz *z"tl*, Rosh Beth Din Emeritus. "Rabbi Schwartz set the path for a lot of what we do at the cRc," said Rabbi Mostofsky, cRc Executive Director.

"Rabbi Schwartz *z"tl* believed not only in the importance of the integrity of the work we do, but also in the way we do it," explained Rabbi Reiss. "Rabbi Schwartz would often say 'Ninety percent of our work is human relations.'"

Honoring Rabbi Myers on Rabbi Schwartz's *yahrzeit* is fitting because Rabbi Myers "always generates a sense of love and affection and a sense of value for what everyone does," explained Rabbi Reiss.

For over 50 years Rabbi Myers has made a mark in chinuch institutions that reach across the religious spectrum. He has inspired thousands of students in his different educational roles. He was dean of Hebrew Theological College/Bais HaMidrash LaTorah, and principal of Ida Crown Jewish Academy and Telshe High School. He was the principal and a teacher at the Woodfield Community Hebrew School in Schaumburg, and also taught in ICJA and Sarah Hartman Women's College of Touro at HTC. His mentors include Rav Mordechai Gifter, Professor Nechama Lebowitz, and Rav Ahron Soloveichik.



Rav Reiss, Rabbi Gutstein, Rabbi Mostofsky, and Rabbi Myers

For the past 28 years, Rabbi Myers has been the chairman of the cRc Education Committee. He is in charge of the high school senior contest and awards. Both the contest and the awards program are open to high school seniors in Chicago who plan to spend a year in Israel studying in a yeshiva or seminary after graduation. The Rebbetzin Shoshana Schwartz *a"h* Torah Research Project encourages the development of serious research and creative thought through the writing of essays. The Torah Achievement Awards are for graduating seniors who display dedication to Torah and to the maintenance of high middos standards.

Throughout the evening in person and on a video tribute, cRc staff, board members, community leaders, and friends paid tribute to Rabbi Myers' unique talents and strengths. Rabbi Myers is known not just for his outstanding pedagogical talents but also for his love and concern for his students.

HaRav Binyomin Olstein knows Rabbi Myers from many different angles and calls him an "*Ish Haeshkolot, ish shehakol bo*," someone who contains all strengths. He knows Rabbi Myers as a teacher, educator, principal, scholar in Tanach and in *lashon haKodesh*, a loyal friend, and a parent of his students. From all sides Rabbi Myers is a person who is "outstanding and unique."

Rabbi Dr. Leonard Matanky, Dean of ICJA and Rabbi of Congregation K.I.N.S., considers himself one of Rabbi Myers' biggest fans. Rabbi Myers is the "epitome of what a Jewish educator should be. He cares about his students, raises them up and is willing to go the extra mile for them. Rabbi Myers is one of the treasures of our community!"

Rabbi Gutstein, cRc President, Rav of Yehuda Moshe, and teacher at ICJA, has had the privilege of having lunch with Rabbi Myers almost every school day for approximately 40 years. He said everything Rabbi Myers does is done with "a smile and patience."

"He is a *talmid chacham*, an expert in *dikduk* and *Tanach*, Israel and its geography, and the methods of how to analyze *pesukim*."

"Rabbi Myers is a rare combination between a sweetness and pleasantness and a force and a presence of someone who can really influence and make a real



Rabbi Myers teaching at HTC (Photo courtesy of HTC)

impact on the community,” said Rabbi Eitan Allen, cRc member and Rabbi of Park Plaza Senior Living.

Rabbi Mordechai Eisenbach, *Mashgiach* and *Rebbe* of Telshe Yeshiva called Rabbi Myers “an *amud ha’ir*, a pillar of the city. He is a pillar in Torah, *yiras Shamayim* and *chesed*. He is a *talmid chacham*, an *oved Hashem* and has sterling *middos*.”

Mrs. Kineret (Kini) Abrams and Mrs. Penina Moskovits, two of Rabbi Myers’ daughters, spoke on the video about the home they grew up in that was filled with sincere love for each Jew, encouragement for Torah growth, and *emes*. The values in their home were from both their parents who strongly encourage and support each other.

Rabbi Reiss, Rabbi Mostofsky, and Rabbi Gutstein presented Rabbi Myers with a plaque and a silver *yad*. In response, Rabbi Myers thanked the cRc and took the opportunity to thank his *Eishes Chayil* for raising their children with *emes* and noted that he does not remember her speaking one word of *lashon hara*.

Rabbi Myers continued on to thank the “people who inspired him to do avodas Hashem and to appreciate the importance and *kedusha* of the Jewish people.” He thanked them on his behalf and on behalf of all of their *talmidim*. He began with the Rabbi of the synagogue in Canton, Ohio, where he grew up, and continued on to speak about the influence Rabbi Ahron Soloveichik *zt”l*, Professor Nechama Lebowitz *z”l*, Rabbi Hirsch Isenberg *z”l*, and Rabbi Herzl Kaplan *z”l*, had on his life.

He also shared a few of the values he learned from his mentors that continue to guide him in his teaching and in his relationships with his students. He created the following acronym to remember them — **CALM**: being **C**onsistent with what you teach and with your own actions, having an **A**ll-encompassing **L**ove, and recognizing that a teacher has a **M**ission as an agent of *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*.

Rabbi Mostofsky concluded the evening by thanking Rabbi Myers, his mentor, friend, and teacher, for allowing the cRc the profound honor of honoring him. ■



Rabbi Eisenbach



Rabbi Myers, Rabbi Mostofsky, and Rabbi Gutstein



Rabbi Abramson, Rabbi Eisenbach, Rabbi Gelman and Rabbi Kraft



Rabbi Gelman and Rabbi Engel



Rabbi Matanky and Rabbi Daniel Fox

“Rabbi Myers is one of the treasures of our community!

— RABBI DR. LEONARD MATANKY,  
DEAN OF ICJA AND RABBI OF CONGREGATION K.I.N.S.



# Beth Din Report 5786

THE cRc BETH DIN CONTINUES TO SERVE  
THE CHICAGO COMMUNITY & BEYOND

## Beth Din Staff & Activities

### RAV YONA REISS – Av Beth Din

Our Av Beth Din, Rav Yona Reiss, leads the staff of the Beth Din. In addition to his many responsibilities locally and nationally, he serves as:

- Rav Hamachshir of the Skokie Eruv & the Champaign, IL Mikvah
- Sgan Av Beth Din at the Beth Din of America (BDA)
- Rosh Yeshiva at Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS)
- National Chairman of the Geiruth Policies and Standards (GPS) Committee

### RAV DANIEL RACCAH – Senior Dayan

Rav Daniel Raccah serves as the Beth Din's Senior Dayan.

- Rav of Ohel Shalom Torah Center and Nasi of the Sephardic Community Kollel
- Delivered numerous *shiurim* throughout the community and beyond, sharing his vast Torah wisdom and knowledge with diverse audiences.

### RAV AARON KRAFT – Dayan Kavua

Rav Aaron Kraft serves as one of the Beth Din's Dayanim.

- Rosh Bais Midrash at Bais Chaim Dovid
- Delivered *shiurim* on Beth Din matters within the community.
- Served as a scholar-in-residence in various communities and programs
- In addition to writing for the *Chicago Rabbinical Currents*, Rav Kraft contributed an article to *Kavod Chachomim*, a Chicago Torah journal published by the Lubavitch Mesivta of Chicago.

### RAV YISROEL LANGER – Dayan Kavua

Rav Yisroel Langer serves as one of the Beth Din's Dayanim.

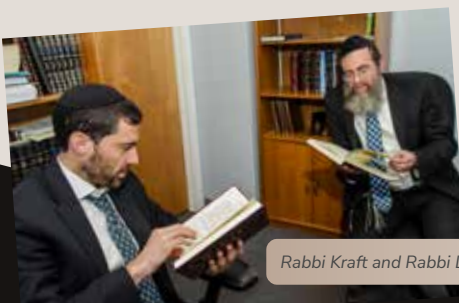
- Rav of Beth Yitzchok
- Spoke on the proper inspection of fruits and vegetables for insects (*Bedikas Tolaim*) at the 16th Annual Midwest Agudas Yisroel Rabbanim Conference in July at the Westin in Lombard, IL
- In addition to writing for the *Chicago Rabbinical Currents*, Rav Langer contributed an article to *Kavod Chachomim*



L to R: Rabbi Zisook, Rav Reiss, Rabbi Raccah and Rabbi Lehrfeld



L to R: Rabbi Langer, Rabbi Kraft and Rabbi Raccah



Rabbi Kraft and Rabbi Langer learning



**O**UR OVERALL CASE LOAD IN MEDIATION, BOTH IN TERMS OF CHOSHEN MISHPAT AND DIVORCE mediation, continues to grow. The number of *shailos* answered by all our *dayanim* has increased along with the expanded case load of *Batei Din* matters.

The cRc Beth Din has played an important role in supporting the *Batei Din* both in Israel and the diaspora. *Rabbonim* seek our support and advice in *geiruth*, *gitten*, personal status and *shtaros*, and *dinei Torah*.

**ALL THIS WORK IS DONE WITH OUR BETH DIN STAFF.**

## RAV AVROHOM MORDECHAI ABRAMSON – *Menahel*

Rav Avrohom Mordechai Abramson serves as the *Menahel* (Administrator) of the Beth Din. He plays a pivotal role in resolving monetary disputes through mediation and coordinates the staffing and adjudication of Beth Din matters.

Represented the Beth Din at a community *Yom Iyun* at Congregation Adas Yeshurun on procedural issues relating to Beth Din adjudication.

## MRS. RENEE LEVIN – *Assistant to the Beth Din*

Mrs. Renee Levin serves as Assistant to the Beth Din and to Rav Yona Reiss, Av Beth Din. She keeps the Beth Din staff organized, coordinated, and working together effectively.

## RABBI SAM BIBER & RABBI KENNETH ZISOOK – *Eidim*

Rabbi Sam Biber and Rabbi Kenneth Zisook frequently serve as *eidim* for Beth Din cases.

## RABBI ARYEH LEHRFIELD – *Sofer for Gitten*

Rabbi Aryeh Lehrfield serves as the Beth Din's *sofer* for *gitten*, assisting with the preparation of *gitten* in accordance with halachic requirements.



Rabbi Lehrfeld, Rabbi Shmuel Muschel (cRc Auxiliary Dayan) & Rabbi Biber at a get



Rabbi Raccach and Mrs. Levin

## Shiurim

Our Beth Din staff has delivered shiurim regarding a variety of halachic matters throughout the community and beyond.





# Our Year in Numbers\*

Over  
**50**  
DINEI TORAH

Nearly  
**60**  
GERUTH

Over  
**40**  
DIVORCE MEDIATION  
CASES

## Divorce Mediation & Gitten

**MRS. ELANA LIPMAN, ESQ.** – Head of Divorce Mediation

Mrs. Elana Lipman heads the Beth Din's divorce mediation program, assisting couples in navigating the mediation process and working toward productive resolutions.

**MRS. DANA HUNTER** – Mediator

Mrs. Dana Hunter joined the Beth Din this year as an additional mediator, strengthening the Beth Din's divorce mediation services.

### DIVORCE DOCENTS

The Beth Din has a capable team of divorce docents who assist women during the time of the giving of the *get*, providing guidance and support as they navigate the various stages of the procedure.



At a geiruth meeting



Rabbi Abramson

## Geiruth

**RAV DR. HERTZEL HILLEL YITZHAK** – Dayan for Geiruth

Rav Dr. Hertzel Hillel Yitzhak serves as the Dayan for Geiruth, overseeing matters relating to conversion.

**RAV YOSEF SCHANOWITZ** – Rabbinic Chair of the Geiruth Committee

Rav Yosef Schanowitz serves as the Rabbinic Chair of the Geiruth Committee, providing rabbinic leadership and guidance to the committee.

**MRS. MIRIAM GERSTEN** – Geiruth Liaison

Mrs. Miriam Gersten serves as the Geiruth Liaison, coordinating and facilitating the administrative needs of those involved in the conversion process.



Rabbi Mostofsky, Mrs. Gersten, and Rabbi Kraft at a geiruth meeting

\*The figures reflect 2025–2026 to date. They exclude Dinei Torah cases resolved informally, as well as geiruth applicants in process.



# Ongoing Shiurim for the Community

Contact the cRc office for more information.

**HILCHOS CHOL HAMOED  
WITH RAV YONA REISS**

**KASHRUS SHIUR  
WITH RABBI DOVID COHEN**

**DAYAN'S DESK  
WITH RAV YONA REISS**



## KANFEI YONA - VOLUME II:

Rav Reiss recently published the second volume of his sefer *Kanfei Yona*, addressing a broad range of contemporary *halachic* topics, including *get*, *agunah*, and *din Torah* adjudication in the modern age. The sefer received approbations from HaRav Dovid Yosef, the current Sephardic Chief Rabbi of Israel, and Rav Asher Weiss.



The second volume of the sefer *Kanfei Yona*

# Rav Reiss



Rabbi Reiss was invited to make a presentation to the judges of the Cook County Court Domestic Relations Division



Rabbi Reiss meets Rabbi Kalmen Ber, the Chief Ashkenazic Rabbi of Israel, in New York at Yeshiva University

## Rabbinic and Professional Outreach:

Rav Reiss continues to be a sought-after speaker on contemporary halachic and legal issues. Over the past year, he:

- Spoke at the *Halichos Am Yisroel* annual conference for *dayanim* in Jerusalem about mental capacity and undue influence.
- Presented at an OU Shul Professional Programming workshop in Los Angeles on "Halachic Foundations of HR: What Can and Can't a Shul Do?"
- Spoke at the annual Jewish Law Symposium in Whippany, NJ, on "The Role of Truth in the Pursuit of Justice."
- Addressed the Rabbinical Council of America annual convention.
- Addressed matrimonial law judges at the Chief Judge's Office in Chicago on divorce arbitration and mediation at the cRc.
- Presented a lecture at Columbia Law School on "The Law of the Land and Army Prescription – a Jewish Law Perspective."
- Was featured several times on the popular *Headlines in Halacha* podcast.
- Served as rabbinic scholar at the annual conference of the Rabbinical Council of Victoria in Melbourne, Australia.

## Writing and Scholarship:

- In addition to writing for the *Chicago Rabbinical Currents*, Rav Reiss contributed an article to *Kavod Chachomim*
- Authored an article in the *Touro-NYMC Medical Halachah Annual Journal*



Rabbi Reiss at Bnei Ruven Menorah Lighting

הרב  
יונה יצחק יעקב  
הכהן ריס

אב בית דין  
בית דין גדול ותיק ונכבד  
המשפיע והמבוקש

THE CHICAGO  
RABBINICAL COUNCIL (cRc)  
2751 W. Howard St. Chicago, IL  
www.chicagorabbinical.org  
(773) 268-5409

ANNUAL YAHRZEIT SHIUR  
לימודי בינה תמוז תשפ"ו Mr. Harry Reiss ז"ל  
רייזביץ מרסרס הכהן ז"ל

"DETERMINING JEWISH  
IDENTITY BASED ON DNA  
and Other Recent Case Files from the Bet Din"

Thursday, June 18<sup>th</sup> '26  
אור לדי תמוז תשפ"ו  
8:30 PM  
Sponsored by Mrs. Marion Reiss

BET SHEMESH  
COMMUNITY  
BET MIDRASH  
Torani Leumi (BMTL)  
Rachov Asher 1  
Bet Shemesh

הכנס השנתי העולמי ה-35 לדיני ממונות ומשפט עברי - הליכות עם ישראל  
"קביעת דעת צלולה בצוואות כשיש טענה על השפעה  
בלתי הוגנת - השלכות לנזקים נפשיים וטראומה"

יום ד', ב' תמוז ה'תשפ"ו | 17/6/2026  
9:40-10:05 מלון 'בראן' רחוב א.י. שחראי, 24 ירושלים



Rav Reiss at the Halichos Am Yisroel annual conference





Rav Reiss and Rav Yehoram Ulman, from Sydney, Australia at the RCA Convention



Rav Reiss at the Annual Conference of the Rabbinical Council of Victoria in Melbourne, Australia



Rav Reiss Delivering a shiur in Bava Kamma at Yeshiva Gedolah Chabad in Melbourne, Australia



Rav Reiss, Rabbi Willig, and Rabbi Ber at the Beth Din of America



# Using a Halachic Lens to Build a Better Path Through Divorce



**D**IVORCE IS ONE OF THE MOST PAINFUL transitions a family can go through — emotionally and financially. Every step carries weight: negotiating a fair settlement, arranging a parenting plan, and, giving and receiving a *get* in accordance with *halacha*. Few moments call for more sensitivity, more expertise, and more genuine care.

The Chicago Rabbinical Council's Beth Din built its Divorce Mediation program to meet exactly that reality. Three years in, the program's growth speaks to how well it is meeting a real need in our community: our caseload has increased as our experience grows, and the cRc is now working to expand the program's capacity even further.

## *Why This Kind of Mediation Meets a Real Communal Need*

A civil courtroom is built to resolve legal disputes. But it isn't designed to hold the emotional and *halachic* realities that come with a frum family's divorce, including the *halacha* that litigation between Jewish parties should not be in civil court altogether. The cRc's Beth Din saw an opportunity to offer something different: a process rooted in *halacha*, sensitive to what families are actually feeling, and attuned to the particular pressures of Orthodox communal life—yeshiva tuition, *shidduchim* for children down the line, standing in the *kehilla*, and more.

When any divorce becomes drawn-out and adversarial, the cost compounds—financially, emotionally, and especially for the children involved. The cRc's mediation program was built specifically to ease that burden, guiding couples toward resolution with far less of the toll a long, contested process can take.

**"We try to acknowledge the parties' pain and validate their emotions. Every single person's situation is unique and we have to be understanding of that,"** said Elana Lipman, Esq., Director of Divorce Mediation.

**"If children are involved, the parties are going to be co-parents for the rest of their lives and they need to be able to communicate with each other. One major goal is to focus on the children's needs and what is in their best interest."**

The goal isn't only to resolve today's dispute, but to help two people build a working relationship they'll rely on for decades. Better communication between parents doesn't just ease the divorce—it builds a better future for their family.

## *How the Mediation-Arbitration Process Works, Step by Step*

The process begins with both parties signing a Mediation-Arbitration agreement—a single framework covering both mediation and, if needed, arbitration in Beth Din, and not the secular court system, addressing the division of financial assets and the shape of a parenting plan going forward.

Collaborative mediation comes first, always, so the couple reaches its own agreement rather than having one imposed on them. If mediation stalls on a particular issue, the Beis Din doesn't send the whole case to court—it arbitrates that specific point, issues a binding decision, and returns the couple to mediation to continue working through everything else.

Once terms are reached, each side's attorneys convert the resulting Memorandum of Understanding into a Marital Settlement Agreement and Allocation Judgement, which are filed in civil court. Throughout the process, the cRc's mediators work collaboratively alongside both parties' attorneys, rabbis, and with anyone else both sides would like to include in the conversation when appropriate.

**"With the clients' permission, our rabbis of the Beth Din and mediators consult with the parties' rabbis because we want to work together to achieve the common end goal. It is powerful teaming up with the clients' support systems,"** said Mrs. Lipman.



*A divorce mediation meeting with Rabbi Reiss*

# INSIDE THE cRc'S GROWING DIVORCE MEDIATION PROGRAM, THE BETH DIN'S *HALACHIC* EXPERTISE AND GENUINE CARE FOR FAMILIES ARE HELPING COUPLES MOVE FORWARD WITH LESS PAIN — AND MORE DIGNITY.

## *Meet the Growing Team Behind the Program*

Mrs. Dana Hunter is the newest addition to the mediation team. She is building expertise in the financial side of divorce — asset division, support calculations, and the practical details that can otherwise become their own source of conflict. Mrs. Lipman and Mrs. Hunter consult with our *Av Beth Din* and our *dayanim*, in particular Rabbi Kraft who has made significant improvements to the program.

## *Why Understanding Frum Life Makes Such a Difference*

Every case that comes to the cRc is different, each one shaped by its own circumstances, with a family's future stability resting on the outcome. The cRc's mediators bring a fluency in Orthodox communal life that comes only from years of involvement in it. That fluency allows real, lasting resolutions to be reached with far less friction along the way.

## *The Sensitivity Behind the Expertise*

The cRc's mediators don't rush past a couple's pain to get to the paperwork. Validating what two people are feeling — even while helping them negotiate what comes next — is treated as part of the work itself. The focus stays on solutions rather than conflict, giving both parties real agency over their own future.

And when a family needs support beyond what the cRc itself provides, staff are quick to say so warmly, and to point families toward the right resources in the community. The team's familiarity with the community's other resources ensures families are never simply left to figure it out alone.

"Divorce is painful. We're discussing with them the most sensitive parts of their lives and splitting them up potentially. You're taking a home and splitting it in two. I hope that we can get them to a decent enough place that they feel like their feet are on the ground and they're steady, walking out of here," said Mrs. Lipman.

## *A Reflection of the cRc's Broader Excellence*

Ask Rabbi Mostofsky what success looks like, and the answer isn't "closing the case" — it's healthier co-parents. Children who go on to build healthy lives of their own. Families who genuinely recover from one of the hardest chapters they'll ever face. Multiply that across a caseload that's grown in three years and a clear picture emerges: a program built with real halachic depth, real professional skill, and real heart.

It's also a reflection of who the cRc is as an institution. The same expertise and care that have long defined the cRc's work are now helping families through one of life's most difficult transitions — and building, quietly, a stronger and more connected community in the process. ■



Mrs. Hunter and Mrs. Lipman



Training docents

# Highlights in the Kashrus World

WITHIN cRc & ACROSS THE GLOBE



Based on an interview with  
**RABBI SOLEM FISHBANE**

Kashrus  
Administrator

**R**ABBI FISHBANE, cRc KASHRUS Administrator, and Executive Director of AKO, Association of Kashrus Organizations, shared with us how the cRc spread *kashrus* awareness and education throughout America and beyond this year.

## PESACH VIDEOS:

The new Pesach videos are for certain the big project of the year.

Education is one of our main goals. We are using the talents of media to help us. From videos, magazines and apps we are reaching more and more consumers.

With the videos we made the giving over of the information about Pesach kashrus more interactive for adults and children! Many people told us that watching a video was a treat they gave their children as a reward for positive behavior.

Each video in the series deals with one topic, is a few minutes long, and makes the material very clear.

We strive to make adults aware of current issues in areas they are so used to dealing with in a certain way. People sometimes assume that certain products are always kosher in certain neighborhoods. We want to remind adults not to work on auto-pilot and make them aware of new issues that have arisen.

We try to teach the children the current challenges from the beginning of their education.

Because these videos were so successful, we recently filmed videos for issues that come up when traveling and for Rosh Hashana.

## CIRCLE MAGAZINE:

The cRc has teamed up with *Circle Magazine* to introduce a new feature column that presents kashrus topics to children through entertaining comics. The column has been very well received, with fantastic feedback from readers. This partnership allows the cRc to remain at the forefront of kashrus education by making important concepts interesting and engaging to children and adults alike.

## THE cRc IS NOW ON WHATSAPP! 📱

Kosher consumers can now join the cRc WhatsApp Community and follow our Status for the latest cRc news, kashrus information, alerts, and more.

Now, anyone with a kashrus question can send us a private message directly on WhatsApp.

WhatsApp (773) 503-2428  
[wa.me/message/R5B2CPCPYIB6J1](https://wa.me/message/R5B2CPCPYIB6J1)

## LET'S TALK KASHRUS VIDEO SERIES:

We're also educating the public with videos in the Let's Talk Kashrus series, a Kashrus Awareness Project of the cRc, hosted by Rabbi Yitzchok Hisiger. Recently they interviewed Rabbi Zvi Fishbane, cRc Rosh HaShochtim, about the ever-sliding definition of what is called glatt and Bais Yosef meats.

We're getting very good feedback on this video series too. It is on Torah Anytime, the cRc kashrus website and the Kashrus Awareness website.

We are constantly updating our kashrus symbols on our cRc Kosher App and its *hechsher* logo scanner.



Rabbi Leibel Greenberg of CHK (Crown Heights Kashrus) & Rabbi Zvi Fishbane inspecting a shechita in São José, Brazil







Rabbis Dovid Cohen, Eli Lubelsky, and Elozor Willner visiting a cRc chocolate factory in Belgium



Rabbi Sholem Fishbane visiting the Rabbonim of KF in London



Rabbi Dovid Cohen giving a shiur on Kashrus in an Antwerp kollel

## SHIURIM:

We also still educate the traditional way – through *shiurim*. The cRc Rabbis give *shiurim* to women and to students in schools. Rabbi Shmuel Katz spoke at the Peterson Park Agudah Women's Shabbos *Shiur* about the new challenges with Shabbos modes on appliances.

Rabbi Sholem Fishbane often speaks to different local and out-of-Chicago schools about different kashrus topics.

We also get questions that are not directly kashrus related, but because we are rabbis, we get asked about other things like the atmosphere in a kosher restaurant e.g. the type of music being played.

## PESACH GUIDE:

This year was the second year we distributed the *Pesach Guide* with *Mishpacha Magazine*. It was a successful venture, sending 60,000 guides to people across the globe.

We did a post-Pesach survey about the guide. Our real question was, should we continue to print the guide when many people today work off their phone. The absolutely overwhelming feedback was, "No, no, no, keep printing the paper guide!"

## EUROPE:

We are also making a difference in kosher supervision in Europe. I visited London three times this year; each time for a different *hashgacha*. Each of them wants to be listed on our approved certification list. Our list is like the *Good Housekeeping* stamp of approval list.

The kosher market is smaller in Europe. If they want certification, it's largely for exporting to America. To raise the standards of these places, we'll specify in what areas they need to improve in order to be on our list. In this way, the cRc is playing a very active role in raising standards around the world based on the drive to be listed as approved on our list.

People also ask us where they can eat if they go overseas. We are perhaps the only large agency that's answering these questions for people. ■



Rabbi Zvi Fishbane speaking at the AKO Conference in Israel



Rabbi Sholem Fishbane meeting with UOS Cape Town Kashrus Team



The Sefardic Chief Rabbi, Hachochom Dovid Yosef shlita, Rabbi Asher Weiss shlita and Rabbi Sholem Fishbane,

“Keep printing the paper guide!”





# Recently Certified Kosher

AS OF JULY 2026



## BAKERY

Aspire Bakeries (Los Angeles, CA)  
Creative Seeds (Fort Lauderdale, FL)  
ES Foods (Woodbury, NY)  
Firebrands US (Chicago, IL)  
Fit Bagel (Wheeling, IL)  
Today's Temptations (Wheeling, IL)  
Truly Good Foods (Charlotte, NC)  
Winfar Foods, Inc. (Chicago, IL)

## CANDY & NUT

Airline Pops, LLC (Bend, OR)  
Albertsons (Itasca, IL)  
Bonnie and Pop (Fairfax, VA)  
Circle K (Laval, Quebec, Canada)  
LeLick Inc (Austin, TX)  
Leonidas S.A. Baulers (Nivelles, Wallonia, Belgium)  
Meijer Distribution, Inc. (Grand Rapids, MI)  
The Matzo Project LLC (Brooklyn, NY)  
UNFI Brands (Hopkins, MN)  
WFM PRIVATE LABEL LLC, a Delaware limited liability company (Austin, TX)

## CATERER

Zeldas Table Papastrami (Skokie, IL)

## CHEMICALS

Alexander Chemical Corporation (Kingsbury, IN)  
Applied Specialties Innovations LLC (Reserve, LA)  
BoShuai Biotechnology Co., Ltd (Tianjin, China)  
Camco Chemical dba TMA/Chemnet (Florence, KY)  
CH2O, Inc (Tumwater, WA)  
FBC Chemical Corporation (Mars, PA)  
Greenchem Industries, LLC (West Palm Beach, FL)  
HeiQ Chrissal NV (Lommel, Limburg, Belgium)  
Kasano Kosan Co. Ltd. (Wakayama City, Japan)  
Kinetic Chemical (Trimble, MO)  
Munzing North America LP (Clover, SC)  
Phibro Ethanol Div. of Phibro Animal Health Corp (Teaneck, NJ)  
Renkert Oil (Brabant, Antwerpen, Belgium)  
Solenis LLC (Wilmington, DE)  
SolNexus Chemical, LLC (Midland, TX)  
Tri-Sure (Carol Stream, IL)  
V. Chopik Company, Inc. (Coral Springs, FL)  
Watertech of America, Inc. (Greenfield, WI)  
Wöllner GmbH (Ludwigshafen, Germany)

## DAIRY

Arps Dairy (Defiance, OH)  
Lunds and Byerlys (Edina, MN)  
Performance Foodservice (Richmond, VA)  
Sunny Sky Products, LLC (Houston, TX)  
United Dairy Farmers (Cincinnati, OH)  
UpStar Nutrition Inc. (Scottsdale, AZ)  
WinCo Foods (Boise, ID)

## EQUIPMENT

Kosher Innovations (Toronto, Ontario, CAN)

## FISH & PRODUCE

Sai Gon Food Import Export Joint Stock Company (Dong Nai Province, Vietnam)  
Checked for You, Inc. (Toronto, Ontario, CAN)  
Touhy Fresh Lettuce LLC (Chicago, IL)

## FLAVORS

Green Spot (Claremont, CA)  
Provitas LLC (Plano, TX)  
The Food Source International, Inc. (Exton, PA)

## Pesach Initiatives

### PESACH FAIR

The cRc Pesach Fair is a one-stop, hands-on event that helps families prepare for Pesach with practical services like utensil kashering, knife sharpening, and shaatnez testing. It brings the community together while offering trusted halachic guidance—all in a welcoming, convenient setting.



## GENERAL PRODUCTS



Bi-Mart Corporation (Eugene, OR)  
 Caer Inc. dba Yumi (Miami, FL)  
 Caruso Provisions (Addison, IL)  
 Chefmaster (Fullerton, CA)  
 Colson Health, Inc. (Encinitas, CA)  
 CPS Incorporated (Indianapolis, IN)  
 Da Silva Foods LLC (Katy, TX)  
 Fully Functional Therapeutics LLC (Brooklyn, NY)  
 Gelati Biscoti (Skokie, IL)  
 Go Puff (GoBrands, Inc) (Philadelphia, PA)  
 Good Grains Inc. (Glendora, CA)  
 Grocery Outlet (Emeryville, CA)  
 Harvest Farms Solutions (Lancaster, CA)  
 Kooshy (Chicago, IL)  
 KOS Nutritionals, LLC dba KOS (Plano, TX)  
 Libb Snacks Inc (Parsippany, NJ)  
 MC Resources (Peotone, IL)  
 Potentia Health Inc. (Anaheim, CA)  
 Rust Oleum Mantrose Group (Attleboro, MA)  
 Rymbe Reed Beverages (Cleveland Heights, OH)  
 Satin Fine Foods (Chester, NY)  
 Schuil Coffee Co. (Grand Rapids, MI)  
 Split Rock Coffee, LLC (Blaine, MN)  
 Sprouts Farmers Market (Phoenix, AZ)  
 Summit Hill Foods, Inc (Rome, GA)  
 Sweetener Supply Corp (Thomasville, NC)  
 Tastemaker Food Products, Inc (Windermere, FL)

The Kroger Co. (Cincinnati, OH)  
 The Napoleon Co. (Bellevue, WA)  
 Topco Associates LLC (Itasca, IL)  
 Trader Joe's (Monrovia, CA)  
 Trader Joe's Company, Inc. (Monrovia, CA)  
 Unreal Brands Inc. (Boston, MA)  
 UpSnack Brands, Inc. (Bethlehem, PA)  
 Vitamin Nation dba Potent Nutri (Lakewood, NJ)  
 Walmart (Bentonville, AR)  
 Wilmot Productions (Chicago, IL)  
 Zab's Inc (Montgomery, TN)  
 Zack's Mighty, Inc. (Brooklyn, NY)

## JUICE & LIQUOR



Lipari Foods (Warren, MI)  
 Love's (Oklahoma City, OK)  
 Moody Tongue Brewing Company (Chicago, IL)

## SPICE & BLENDING



Doehler North America (Cartersville, GA)  
 Enhanced Medical Nutrition (Toronto, Ontario, CAN)  
 Karlsburger Foods (Maple Lake, MN)  
 Magic Spoon (New York City, NY)  
 Nature's Mills Shaker (Ellenwood, GA)  
 Rise Distribution (Des Plaines, IL)  
 The Pasta Shoppe LLC (Nashville, TN)  
 U.S. Spice Mills Inc. (Glendale Heights, IL)

## TRUCK WASH



Centurion Container (Dalton, GA)  
 Depot Connect International DCI (Indianapolis, IN)  
 Depot Connect International DCI (Summerville, SC)  
 ICI Foods ASR Facility (Charlotte, NC)  
 Kenan Advantage Group (Kingsport, TN)  
 Mitchel Enterprises Corp. (Bluffton, IN)  
 Quala DCI (Linden, NJ)  
 Total Clean LLC (Hinton, IA)  
 Total Clean LLC (St. Gabriel, LA)

## TRUCKING



D&D Trucking & Services Inc (Delphos, OH)  
 Erpelding Trucking (Algona, IA)  
 Freese Trucking, LLC (Bristow, IA)  
 GP National Transportation (Tulsa, OK)  
 Heil Transportation Inc (Clymer, NY)  
 Heniff Transportation Systems LLC Food Grade (Midland, NC)  
 Heniff Transportation Systems LLC Food Grade (New Orleans, LA)  
 Herb Radwan Inc Trucking (Plainfield, IL)  
 JBF Transport (Arlington, TN)  
 JCM Cartage (Beresford, SD)  
 Kansas City West Bottoms Railroad (Kansas City, MO)  
 Peak Midstream Knoxville, LLC (Knoxville, TN)  
 Prairie View Trucking LLC (Argyle, WI)  
 Stacked Logistics Inc (Pine Bluff, AR)  
 T&H Transportation Inc (Lavaca, AR)

Selling chometz at Congregation K.I.N.S.



## ONLINE FORM TO SELL CHAMETZ

The cRc's online *Mechirat Chametz* form makes it easy for Jews worldwide to sell their chametz, ensuring *halachic* reliability and extending the cRc's impact far beyond Chicago.





# Membership Meetings ▶

Throughout the year, cRc member rabbis had the opportunity to connect with and gain valuable insights from the following featured guest speakers.



*Rabbi Engel and Rabbi Dr. Isenberg*



*Rav Rimon*



*Rav Neuburger*

## A SAMPLING OF School Visits ▶



*Rabbi Sholem Fishbane speaking to Hebrew Academy of Cleveland*



*Rabbi Reiss speaking to Rabbi Dovid Tiechtel's students from The Chabad Campus for Jewish Life and Living in Champaign, Illinois*



# Membership Announcements



**cRc Staff & Membership Meeting**  
 — BREAKFAST & SHILSH —

**Friday morning, October 17<sup>th</sup>**  
 חמשה עצום | פרק 17

**9:00 - 10:00 AM**

With  
**Rav Yosef Zvi Rimon שליט"א**

New South Shalom Regional Council & New Jerusalem Synagogue of New South Shalom  
 10000 Highway 100, Suite 100, New South Shalom, Ontario







## The cRc's 2026/5787 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), on our cRc Kosher apps, or by calling the office at (773) 465-3900.

NOTE: This chart should only be used in 2026/5787.



### Honey

Requires kosher certification- due to equipment concerns. Pure honeycomb does not need hashgacha. However, any visual bee parts should be removed. Honey should be separated from the comb before Shabbos or Yom Tov.



### 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.



### Carrots

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

**CANNED**  
Requires kosher certification.



### Leek

Separate each leaf. Place into soapy water, then wash each leaf individually under strong 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.



### 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.



### Beets

**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.



### Pomegranate

**FRESH** No checking required.



### 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.



### Dates

**FRESH** Slice open each date, and check for worms and beetles inside.

**DRIED** with no additional flavors are acceptable even without certification. Slice open each date, and check for worms and beetles inside.



### 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.

#### 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.cRckosher.org/fruitsandveggies](http://www.cRckosher.org/fruitsandveggies)

*The Chicago Rabbinical Council  
wishes everyone a Kesiva Vchasima Tova.*