



VAAD HARABANIM OF GREATER WASHINGTON

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Wishing you a Kesiva V'chasima Tova!

Introduction

We are pleased to present the community with issue 4.2 of The Bulletin of The Rabbinical Council Of Greater Washington. Our goals in publishing this document are to share educational, inspirational, and practical articles to help add to your Yom Tov experience, and to acquaint you with the Vaad's work in the areas of Kashrus, Geirus, and Beis Din.

This edition of the Bulletin includes three articles relating to critical aspects of the Yamim Noraim experience: The first, by Rabbi Eliezer Kreiser, describes the essence of the Mussaf Amidah for Rosh HaShanah; the second, by Rabbi Shaya Milikowsky, discusses the complex relationship between Fear and Joy on Rosh HaShanah, and the third, by Rabbi Mordechai Rhine, focuses on the centrality of constructive interpersonal relationships to successful Teshuvah.

In the Capital K Kashrus organization, it is the mashgichim who uphold the standards and execute the policies of the Vaad which ensure that its certification represents a Gold Standard for our community. We wish to provide insight to the community into the kashrus operation and, to that end, have asked two of our mashgichim to explain in detail their roles and responsibilities. Finally, Rabbi Dovid Rosenbaum writes about the lessons, models, and meaning of Rabbinic communal leadership based on the legacies of Rav Gedaliah Anemer, Rav Hillel Klavan, and Rav Kalman Winter Zichronom L'vrachah over the last half century in the Greater Washington Jewish community.

It is our honor and privilege to serve our beloved community, and look forward to hearing with you, the sound of the shofar of Mashiach Tzidkenu B'meheyra B'yamenu.

Thank you very much to Mrs. Adina Moses for the beautiful layout, design, and typesetting of the bulletin.

We hope you enjoy this edition of the Bulletin.

Kesiva V'chasima Tova,

Rabbi Moshe Walter

Director, Vaad Harabanim

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To the Greater Washington Jewish Community:

I wish to personally congratulate Rabbi Moshe Walter and the contributors to this year's Yomim Noraim edition of the Bulletin of The Rabbinical Council of Greater Washington. Contained within its pages are articles that are sure to provide inspiration during the High Holy Day season as well as insight into the nature of our kashrus operations. Most appropriately, there is also a moving tribute to Rabbis Anemer, Klavan, and Winter zt'l. This serves to remind us that we, the present members of the Vaad, have a sacred responsibility to uphold their precious legacy while we simultaneously navigate the ever changing waters of the Washington Jewish Community. Indeed, this is the very essence of our mission. Readers are referred to our new website, <http://www.capitolk.org/>, where they can learn how to avail themselves of the specific services that the Vaad provides: kashrus supervision; and beis din for the administration of Jewish divorce, arbitration of financial disputes and conversions. There, interested readers can dig deeper and review the proceedings of our successful March 13 symposium held at Young Israel Shomrai Emunah in Kemp Mill.

Rabbi Moshe Walter, Executive Director of the Vaad Harabanim, and Rabbi Zvi Holland, Director of Field Operations, continue to do an outstanding job of managing and sustaining a kashrus organization that is characterized by its high standards, operational efficiency, and responsivity. We are grateful to our dedicated and loyal proprietors, our well trained mashgichim, and, of course, to the members of our community.

Since last year, the Vaad, has succeeded in establishing a fully functioning, independent, conversion beis din that is a member of the Geirus Policies and Standards (GPS) network of conversion courts, has the full endorsement of the Beis Din of America, and is recognized by the Chief Rabbinate of Israel. I am pleased to report that our reputation for responsivity and sensitivity towards conversion candidates is growing. Our beis din for arbitration of financial disputes and divorce maintain the highest professional standards and treat all those who appear before them with dignity and respect.

This coming year, we wish to build upon the aforementioned achievements and make the Vaad even more responsive and relevant to our beloved community in all of its areas of service.

On behalf of the Vaad Harabanim of Greater Washington, I wish a heartfelt ksiva v'chasima tova, for you and your families.

Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Yosef Singer
President

The Structure of the Mussaf Amidah for Rosh HaShanah

Rabbi Eliezer Kreiser

Ezras Israel of Rockville

I cannot recall exactly how old I was, but I have a clear memory of davening Mussaf on Rosh Hashanah as a young child and being a bit confused – עלינו לשבח – in מוסף? Did I miss the end of Shemona Esrei? How did I get here? I also remember thinking “this Shemona Esrei is sooo long!”, and indeed this Shemona Esrei is long. A better understanding of the structure of our Tefillos can enhance our experience on Rosh Hashana, and with that in mind, we will undertake to explain the מוסף prayer, and in particular the three middle berachos .

The מוסף of Rosh Hashana is different than any other מוסף that we say throughout the year . The מוסף Shemona Esrei of Shabbos, Yom Tov and Rosh Chodesh contains seven Berachos.

- **Beginning:** 3 Berachos, the Birchas Hashvach (praise), which are always the same
- **Middle:** 1 Beracha which is called Kedushas Hayom — the theme and sanctity of that particular day.
- **End:** 3 Berachos, the Birchas Hodah (gratitude), which are always the same.

The מוסף on Rosh Hashana, however, is different in that there are nine Berachos. The first three and last three Berachos are the same as throughout the year, yet the middle section contains **three** Berachos as opposed to one Beracha, for a total of nine Berachos. These nine Berachos correspond to the nine times that the Almighty's name is mentioned in the prayer that Chana composed after she was blessed with the birth of Shmuel Hanavi. This prayer, known as Tefillas Chana, is a central part of the Haftorah of the first day of Rosh Hashana. Let us now explore the uniqueness of the structure of the three middle Berachos of the Rosh Hashana Mussaf.

These three Berachos are called (1) מלכיות (Kingship), (2) זכרונות, (remembrance) and (3) שופרות (Shofros) . These are the central themes of this holy day. Each of these three Berachos contains ten verses which correspond to the theme of that Beracha. This format is based on the Mishna in Rosh Hashana 32a which ordains that on Rosh Hashana we recite a minimum of ten verses of מלכיות, זכרונות, and שופרות. The Gemara explains why we recite ten verses. One reason is that these ten verses correspond to the ten Hallelukah's of the 150th chapter of Tehillim (the last Hallelukah in Pesukei D'Zimra). Ten also corresponds to the Aseres Hadibros (Ten Commandments) and the Asara Ma'amoros (ten utterings) with which the world was created.

The ten verses that we recite in each of the three middle Berachos are:

- Four verses from the Torah
- Three verses from Kesuvim
- Three verses from Neviim
- One verse from the Torah

Why do the verses from כתובים precede the verses from Neviim ?

Neviim were written as prophecies for future generations, while כתובים were written al Pi Ruach Hakodesh (a heavenly spirit), which is not on the level of prophecy, so shouldn't Neviim come first? Is not the order generally Tanach- Torah, Neviim , and then Kesuvim?

The order of the verses in the three Berachos of Mussaf is in order to show honor to Dovid Hamelech. The included verses of Kesuvim are from Tehillim, which was written by Dovid Hamelech , while the verses included in the Shemona Esrei from Neviim are from the later Neviim who came after Dovid Hamelech .

As we mentioned previously, the Mussaf Shemona Esrei always contains a Beracha of קדושת היום (sanctity of the day). Where then, is the Beracha of קדושת היום in the Shemona Esrei of Mussaf?

This theme of the sanctity of the day actually is expressed in the middle Berachos of our Rosh Hashana Mussaf as well. The Beracha of מלכיות, coronating the Almighty as our sovereign, is the theme of the day. Therefore, the theme of קדושת היום, is part of the Beracha of מלכיות. Indeed, the end of the Beracha expresses these two themes, מלך על כל הארץ מקדש ישראל ויום הזכרון, God's kingship over the world coupled with the sanctification of the Jewish people, and Rosh HaShnah.

Let us now explain why we recite עלינו in the middle of the first blessing of Malchios in מוסף . עלינו was composed by Yehoshua upon entering Eretz Yisroel. The first part of Aleinu is a stirring praise to the Almighty. The second part of עלינו, על כן נקוה, is about Malchios, Kingship. This is what I was not aware of as a young child. עלינו is actually an introduction to the ten verses of Malchiyos. עלינו is a declaration of faith, gratitude, and hope to the Almighty. The paragraph of על כן נקוה at the end of Aleinu expresses our fervent hope for the revelation of the Almighty's Kingship to the entire world. It is therefore a fitting introduction to the ten verses of Kingship. May we all merit a Rosh Hashana infused with the stirring theme of עלינו.

The above is based on the "Levush", (OC:591) Rav Mordechai Yaffe, 1530-1612.

The Levush was a disciple of the Maharshal (Rav Shlomo Luria) and The Rema (Rav Moshe Isserlis)

Fear and Joy on Rosh Hashana

Are they mutually exclusive?

Rabbi Shaya Milikowsky

Ohev Sholom Talmud Torah Congregation of Olney

There are many times during the course of the year that our observance requires us to experience conflicting emotions simultaneously. For example, at the Pesach Seder we commemorate both bondage and freedom throughout the course of the night. Nowhere is the dichotomy stronger, however, than on Rosh Hashana, which is both a festival and the Day of Judgement. Beginning thirty days prior to Rosh Hashana, during the month of Elul, we turn our focus to the seriousness of this time when Hashem examines the actions of each one of us and determines our fate for the coming year. Our *yiras hamishpat*, our fear and trepidation because Hashem is judging us, builds and reaches its climax on Rosh Hashana. To what extent is it really possible to incorporate *simchas yom tov* (the joy of the holiday) into that emotional reality? We will look at three answers to this question.

The first approach, taken by some Rishonim, was to strongly minimize the obligation of *simcha* (joy). In fact, the Trumas Hadeshen rules that it is a mitzvah to fast on Rosh Hashana. The Rambam, in Hilchos Chanukah, presents a second view. He feels that Rosh Hashana IS a day of *simcha*, but because we are being judged and feel a strong sense of *yirah* (fear), our level of *simcha* is limited and we do not say Hallel as we do on all other festivals when our *simcha* is unlimited.

The third perspective is the one on which I would like to focus, because not only does it show us that these emotions are not necessarily in conflict, but they can actually be two sides of one coin.

The Mordechai, agreeing with the Rambam that Rosh Hashana is a day of *simcha* on which it is forbidden to fast, sources his opinion by quoting a story from the 9th chapter of the Book of Nechemiah. On the Rosh Hashana following Ezra Hasofer's return to Israel, he gathered the Jews who had remained in Israel during the Babylonian exile without any religious leadership. He read, translated and explained to them the entire Torah, which they had not heard for 70 years. The people's reaction was to cry and be filled with regret, anxious to fast and begin the *teshuva* (repentance) process. Ezra, Nechemiah and the Leviim all directed them to instead focus their energy on celebrating Rosh Hashana properly. They should eat, drink and send gifts to those in need. "*Ki chedvas Hashem Hi Ma'uzchem*": The ultimate key to success in returning to Hashem and coronating Him as our King is to celebrate the yom tov with joy.

The Sifsei Chaim notes that the concept of *tamlichuni alaichem* (coronating Hashem) is more than just a detail of Rosh Hashana; it is at its essence. He observes this from the difference in the language used by the Chachomim in the summation of the *bracha* (blessing) in the *Amidah* that declares the holiness of the holiday. On Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkos it ends "*mikadesh yisrael vihazmanim*" (Who sanctifies Israel and the (festive) seasons). On Rosh Hashana it ends "*melech al kol ha'aretz mikadesh yisrael viyom hazikaron*" (King

over all the world, Who sanctifies Israel and the Day of Remembrance). Coronating Hashem is at the essence of what creates the *kedusha* (holiness) of Rosh Hashana.

If *tamlichuni alaichem* is so crucial, we must investigate further what it means to coronate a king. Obviously, we all understand that Hashem is omnipotent and omniscient. What else are we adding when we say that Hashem is our king? It is referring to the special and unique relationship between a monarch and his people because they are his nation; the sense of responsibility he feels to bring about the greatest success for his subjects, which engenders in his subjects a willingness and joy to follow his directives. This relationship is not automatic; it can only happen when the people see, understand and appreciate the king's wisdom. This is what *Shlomo Hamelech* (King Solomon) is referring to in Mishlei when he says "*melech bimishpat yaamid aretz*": a king will only build up and establish his dominion with justice. Rashi, in Shmos 28, 16 explains that *mishpat* means more than justice; it refers to "*birur hadvarim*", clarity of direction in all areas of doubt. This is why the *Kohen Gadol's* breastplate was called the *Choshen Mishpat*. It housed the *Urim Vitumim*, the conduit for communication with Hashem any time clarity of direction was needed. The breastplate was given the title of *mishpat* because through it the Jewish people received clarity when in doubt.

Our first three monarchs were all anointed by the leading prophet of their generation, yet it took years of leadership for the people to accept both Shaul and David as their king. Only one monarch, Shlomo Hamelech, received the people's trust and allegiance from the beginning. The Radak, in Melachim 4, 1 says that the people accepted him immediately because of the unique *bracha* (blessing) that Shlomo Hamelech received from Hashem of a "*lev chochom vinavon*" (a heart that is wise and sagacious). They saw a level of clarity, care and understanding in the way he dispensed *mishpat* that had never been seen before. The prophet says "*vayiru pnai hamelech*"; not that the people were afraid of Shlomo Hamelech, but rather that they were in awe of him because of his tremendous ability for *birur hadvarim*, a unique clarity of knowing the right thing to do in every situation. In the very next verse it says that the entire nation accepted Shlomo as their *Melech*. Rashi explains that the Jewish people unanimously, with *simcha*, chose to make him their king.

There was a three step process that led to the coronation of the greatest "*melech bosor vodom*", (king of flesh and blood) Shlomo Hamelech. First, the people witnessed his wisdom in *mishpat* that was a result of the unique *bracha* that Hashem gave him. Second, they were full of awe, *yirah*, for Shlomo, because nothing was hidden from him. Third, this translated into a *simcha* that they were blessed to have a leader who saw everything with clarity and had their best interests at heart.

We can now return to our original point of clarifying how *yirah* and *simcha* come together when we appropriately coronate Hashem as our king. During the month of Elul, the month of "*Ani Lidodi Vidodi Li*" (I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine), we focus on Hashem's closeness to us and His involvement with us on every level. As we get closer to Rosh Hashana, the time of *mishpat*, we understand that Hashem dispenses judgement with complete accuracy, and all His decrees are ultimately for our good, both on a personal and national level. This leads us to "*yiras haromimus*", a strong sense of awe because nothing is hidden from Hashem. It is now up to us to recognize that this should in turn lead us to feel *simcha* at our good fortune that Hashem is OUR king.

From Erev Rosh Hashanah through Yom Kippur we say "*Shma Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad*" ten extra times. Rashi says that "*Hashem Elokeinu*" means OUR G-d; only the Jewish people have this special relationship with Hashem. During these days we proudly proclaim that Hashem chose us to be His nation; our challenge is to do this with joy, which will inspire us to be the best subjects of Hashem that we can be. May Hashem inscribe us all in the Book of Life and bless us all with a good year.

Constructive Attitudes for Shemiras Halashon

Lessons from the Torah

Rabbi Mordechai Rhine

Southeast Hebrew Congregation

One of the prominent themes of the Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur season is the importance of building good interpersonal relationships. The name of the Hebrew month preceding Rosh Hashana, “Elul”¹ is viewed as an acronym for the verse in Shir HaShirim (6:3), “Ani Lidodi Vidodi Li - I am to my beloved and my beloved is to me.” This description of a warm relationship is true in our relationship with Hashem, and is also meant to be reflected in our interpersonal relationships with neighbors, friends, and relatives. In fact, another one of the acronyms associated with the word “Elul” is the verse from Esther (9:22) “Ish Lireyeyhu Umatanos Loevyonim - Each person to [focus properly] on their friend, and giving gifts to the poor.”²

In addition to proactive acts of kindness, which are most appropriate for this time of year,³ it is important to recognize the power of speech in interpersonal relationships. Although speech doesn’t appear to be an action⁴ we are well aware that a nurturing comment can brighten and enliven a person, while a derogatory comment can cut them down. As Shlomo HaMelech stated, “Death and Life are in the power of the tongue.”⁵

In fact, according to tradition, one of the distinctive qualities of the human being is the power of speech. When describing the creation of man, Targum describes man as “Ruach Mimalila - The one who speaks.”⁶ Likewise in Kabbalistic literature there are four levels of creation: “Inanimate, Plants, Animals, The one who speaks.”⁷ In fact, when a person dies, the significant feature that is lost is noted by describing him as “Yordei Duma - Descending into silence,”⁸ reflecting the fact that he can no longer speak.⁹

Indeed, speech is a powerful feature of the human being, and it is through mitzvos related to proper speech that we set the tone and ambiance of our homes and lives. Let us examine some events from T’nach and discover lessons and perspectives relevant to the mitzvah of Shemiras Halashon (proper speech).

CHAVA and THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE

One of the greatest catalysts for disparaging speech is the feeling of being deeply offended, especially by

1 Spelled in Hebrew, Alef, Lamed, Vuv, Lamed.

2 Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 128:1.

3 See Ramoh Yoreh Deah (Hilchos Tzedaka) 247:3, “Just as he wants Hashem to listen to his entreaty, he should listen to the entreaty of the poor”; Rashi Parshas Re’eh (Devorim 16:11) Hashem says, “You take care of My people, and I’ll take care of those close to you.”; as well as the statement in Mussaf of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur “Tzedaka removes a bad decree.”

4 Indeed in certain Talmudic applications prohibitions regarding speech are described as “Prohibitions that do not involve an action” (Sanhedrin 63b).

5 Mishlei 18:21.

6 Targum Bireishis 2:7.

7 See for example Rabbeinu Bechaye, introduction to Parshas Vayakheil.

8 Tehillim 115:17.

9 See also, Rabbi Ahron Lopiansky, Time Pieces, “Rosh Hashana: The Revelation of Speech.”

someone to whom we felt very close and who we trusted. An example of this is Chava in Gan Eden, where Chava is led to believe that Hashem withheld some goodness from her, and that she could acquire that goodness by eating the forbidden fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. What puts Chava in a compromised mental state is that Hashem was introduced to her as benevolent, kind, and loving. That He would withhold something of this goodness from her was troubling; to eat it was quite enticing. And so Chava accepted the Lashon Horah about Hashem, and ate the forbidden fruit. By the time the story is over we realize that the prohibition of eating of the Tree was for Adam and Chava's benefit. Had they not eaten, they would not have been introduced to sin on a personal experiential level, and would have progressed directly into the World-to-Come, benefitting themselves forever.¹⁰

What emerges is the importance of the principle: "Hevei Dan Likaf Zechus- Judge others favorably."¹¹ When someone offends us we are obligated [in most cases] to refrain from assuming the worst. We are enjoined from reaching negative conclusions and then speaking to others about the offense. This is especially true when the person is someone close to us. We are deeply offended when it seems to us that someone close to us would offend us so deeply. However the principle of Hevei Dan Likaf Zechus says that precisely in such a case of perceived profound hurt, it is probable that the person never intended to, or actually did not, do the wrong that we are attributing to him or her.

This lesson is quite useful in marriage, business, and all close relationships. The closer the supposed offender is to us, the more deeply hurt and offended we may feel. But the reality is that what seems to be a catalyst for feeling so violated should actually be a catalyst to give us pause. A person so close to us probably didn't mean the terrible violation that we feel. Instead of fallout, we can judge favorably, and when we will be ready we can have a calm conversation about how we feel about what occurred.

A Case in Point: A woman related that a very close friend suddenly broke off contact with her without explanation. She called this friend for a number of favors, and just to chat, and never received a call back. After the first wave of confusion and resentment had passed, she described how she calmed herself, "and went over to my [former] friend's home to say hello. I had no idea why she broke contact with me, and just wanted to say that I would consider us friends forever. Her daughter answered my knock at the door, and said Mom wasn't available. When she saw my confusion, she gently explained that her mom was very sick. It was only because I stayed calm and insisted on the friendship that I found out what was going on and was able to help."

AVRAHAM and SARA

One of the greatest marriages of all time was that of Avraham and Sara. Together, as a pair, they introduced monotheism to the world.¹² The Talmud (Baba Basra 58a) records that the image of Avraham and Sara is that of them embracing. Nevertheless, when Sara uses the expression, "My husband is old,"¹³ Hashem purposely does not repeat her quote verbatim¹⁴ because even if true, it would still have been hurtful to Avraham to hear that Sara spoke about him like that.

We have already pointed out that a disparaging remark made by someone we love and hold dear is particularly painful. This is certainly reinforced by the story of Avraham and Sara, and the sensitivity with which Hashem repeated Sara's comment.

Another theme that emerges from this story is that one is not at liberty to speak Lashon Horah about family

10 Ramchal in Derech Hashem, Book 1- 3:6.

11 Mishna, Avos 1:6.

12 Rashi to Bireishis 12:5, "Avraham guided the men; Sara guided the women."

13 Bireishis 18:12.

14 See Bireishis 18:13.

members. Sometimes spouses, parents, children, or siblings feel that they are entitled to speak about those close to them. The Chofetz Chaim points out that the laws of Lashon Horah apply even to close relatives. He writes, “Those who think they may speak about a spouse or in-laws to their family, are mistaken.”¹⁵ Likewise, parents are not allowed to speak Lashon Horah about their children to neighbors and friends. Just because one is very close to the person they are speaking to, or very close to the person they are speaking about, does not make it okay. If something constructive can be accomplished, then a comment might be made privately and with great care. But indiscriminate speaking about those close to us is prohibited.

YOSEF and THE SHEVATIM

The story of Yosef and his brothers is a window into another consideration that is helpful in observing Shemiras Halashon. The commentaries say that one of the arguments between Yosef and his brothers was regarding their status, being that they lived before the Torah was given. Were they considered Jewish or not? This legitimate disagreement (among others) degenerated into a lack of trust between them. Yosef’s brothers felt that he was finding fault in them and trying to disenfranchise them from the Jewish family when he spoke negatively about them to their father, Yakov. They truly felt that they were acting in self defense when they sold Yosef away.

Rabbi Shimon Schwab¹⁶ observes that Yosef called his child Menashe, “For I forget the toil that occurred in my father’s house.” Apparently Yosef regretted the charged nature of arguing that occurred, preferring (in retrospect) a forum that would have allowed for more respectful Machlokes between them. Indeed, Machlokes destroys. But Machlokes - when channeled correctly- can build and bring blessing, as we find in much of the Talmud, and in the Jewish literature that follows.

In practice, we must come to recognize that different views may represent different legitimate perspectives. As motivated as we may be to speak out against wrong, we also must recognize that differences in style may be unique expressions of commitment to the very values that we hold dear.

A Case in Point: “A yarmulka or a hat” is for some a feature that is assumed to speak volumes about the wearer’s attitude and philosophy. Knowing this, a friend of mine went to a family simcha wearing the head-covering that he was used to wearing, although it was different than the type of head-covering which is typically worn by those living in the area in which the simcha was being held. At the simcha, someone (quite indiscreetly) approached him, and asked (just out of curiosity) if he felt out of place. He responded, “No, I actually do not feel out of place at all. It is a family simcha.”

I once read a prediction of how things would be when Moshiach came. He would come to a shul to present himself, and they would say, “It can’t be that you are Moshiach. Your head-covering doesn’t match the type we are expecting Moshiach to wear.” So he changed his head-covering to accommodate the expectations. But when he came to the next shul, he was again met with an unreceptive audience, because his head-covering didn’t match theirs. Eventually, Moshiach concludes- the story goes- that the Jewish people have not quite risen out of the Sinas Chinom¹⁷ of history, and are not quite ready for his coming.

15 Hilchos Lashon Horah 8:1-2.

16 Maayan Beis Hashoeiva, Mikeitz

17 Literally: hatred without basis. Refers to a lack of mutual respect, which should have been present despite disagreement or styles of expression.

THE MIRAGLIM (SPIES)

Sometimes we may experience a feeling of animosity that has little to do with the person about whom we wish to speak Lashon Horah. Instead it is our selves that color our perception and give us the feelings that we have. This is similar to someone who wears glasses that are smudged and thinks that the whole world is fuzzy, or someone who wears red tinted glasses and thinks the whole world is tinted red.

Many commentaries say that the Miraglim (spies) were afraid of the changes that would occur when they entered the Promised Land.¹⁸ They were anxious about the changes which might include a different structure of authority and status. As such, they found all kinds of problems with the plan to enter the land. But careful analysis reveals that their fears were not objective ones. Rather they were self-serving excuses to justify the conclusion that they personally felt. The Torah records¹⁹ that they were in their own eyes like grasshoppers (inadequate), and therefore they perceived the nations as looking down at them.

Likewise, when we are tempted to belittle someone else, it is worthwhile to ask, “How much of this is about him/her, and how much of this is about me?” “Is it possible that my feelings are those of jealousy, and I only think less about them because it helps raise my perception of my own status and goodness?”

An Observation: A child said that she doesn't like to play on a see-saw. When asked why, she replied, “Because in order for me to get up, I need to put someone else down.”

GEDALYA BEN ACHIKAM

One of the scariest wake-up calls to study the laws of proper Shemiras Halashon is the case of Gedalya (the governor of Eretz Yisroel after the first Beis Hamikdash was destroyed) who did not accept constructive Lashon Horah when he should have. Gedalya acted sincerely, but by ignoring warnings about a rebellion, he caused his own death and the deaths of many others.²⁰ The tragedy of sincere observance gone awry was deemed so significant that we have a fast day (the day after Rosh Hashana) to commemorate the event.

The story of Gedalya highlights the importance of careful halachic observance of Shemiras Halashon. Just saying that we will never talk or listen to bad about anyone isn't a valid course of action. Sometimes the Lashon Horah is constructive, and must be attended to. As with any topic in Judaism, just forbidding it or being strict is not true observance.²¹ Rather, proper knowledge of what is forbidden and what is permitted is required.

A Case in point: A woman relates that when she did checking for her daughter's shidduch, everyone told her the boy was really wonderful. Only after the marriage, once it became clear that the young man was dealing with a heavily medicated mental illness, did people begin saying that they knew about the condition for many years. Two children and four years later, the family still deals with a breach of integrity and honest disclosure, partially resulting from a misguided compliance to the laws of Lashon Horah.²²

Speech is a special gift to mankind. By sensitizing ourselves to the Torah's lessons about speech we can improve our use of speech, and enhance our lives and the lives of those around us. May the High Holiday season be one that leaves us on a high with Hashem, as well as with our neighbors, friends, and family.

18 See for example Meshech Chochma, Bamidbar 13:30.

19 Bamidbar 13:33.

20 Yirmiya 41:9; Talmud, Niddah 61a.

21 Ein Horoh Liisur, Rashi Kesubos 7a.

22 The very same verse (Vayikra 19:16) which forbids “Tale-bearing” also warns “Not to stand idly by” as someone is damaged. The Chofetz Chayim devoted large sections of his classic work on Lashon Horah and Richilus to the rules of Constructive Lashon Horah. As these laws are full of nuances and considerations, an expert halachic advisor should be consulted in such cases.

סימנא מילתא

Symbolic Foods of Rosh Hashanah

On Rosh Hashanah night it is customary to eat round challah dipped into honey. After the challah has been eaten, apples are also dipped into honey. Below are other foods that can be eaten in order to discuss their symbolism before the meal begins.

Blessed are you, HASHEM our G-d, King of the universe, who creates the fruit of the tree. May it be Your will, HASHEM, our G-d and G-d of our fathers, that You renew for us a good & sweet year.	ברוך אתה ד', אלקינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי העץ. יהי רצון מלפניך, ד' אלקינו ואלקי אבותינו, שתחדש עלינו שנה טובה וקטוה.	תפוח ודבש	Apple & Honey	
May it be Your will, HASHEM, our G-d and G-d of our fathers, that our merits increase as the seeds of the pomegranate.	יהי רצון מלפניך, ד' אלקינו ואלקי אבותינו, שירבו זכותינו כרמון.	רימון	Pomegranate	
May it be Your will, HASHEM, our G-d and G-d of our fathers, that we be at the head and not the tail.	יהי רצון מלפניך, ד' אלקינו ואלקי אבותינו, שנהיה לראש ולא לזנב.	ראש דג	Head of a Fish (or Sheep)	
May it be Your will, HASHEM, our G-d and G-d of our fathers, that we be fruitful and multiply like fish.	יהי רצון מלפניך, ד' אלקינו ואלקי אבותינו, שגפרה נרבה כדגים.	דג	Fish	
May it be Your will, HASHEM, our G-d and G-d of our fathers, that our merits increase.	יהי רצון מלפניך, ד' אלקינו ואלקי אבותינו, שירבו זכותינו.	רוביא	Carrot	
May it be Your will, HASHEM, our G-d and G-d of our fathers, that our enemies be removed.	יהי רצון מלפניך, ד' אלקינו ואלקי אבותינו, שיסתלק אויבינו.	מלאך	Beet	
May it be Your will, HASHEM, our G-d and G-d of our fathers that our enemies be destroyed.	יהי רצון מלפניך, ד' אלקינו ואלקי אבותינו, שיכרתו שונאינו.	כרתי / כרוב	Leek / Cabbage	
May it be Your will, HASHEM, our G-d and G-d of our fathers, that our enemies be wiped out.	יהי רצון מלפניך, ד' אלקינו ואלקי אבותינו, שיתמו שונאינו.	המר	Date	
May it be Your will, HASHEM, our G-d and G-d of our fathers, that the decree on us be cancelled, and may our merits be proclaimed before You.	יהי רצון מלפניך, ד' אלקינו ואלקי אבותינו, שיקרע רע גזר דיננו ויקראו לפניך זכותינו.	קרא	Gourd (or pumpkin / squash)	

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A Day in the Life of the Mashgiach

Roles, Requirements, and Responsibilities

Like many jobs in communal work, being a *mashgiach* comes with merits, responsibilities, challenging moments and genuinely gratifying ones. But all will agree that it is a vital position in a Torah observant community.

I have had the opportunity to have a position as a *mashgiach* in the Greater Washington area for the past number of years working for the Vaad. In this article I would like to share my perspective on what some of my responsibilities are. Many of my colleagues in the world of *hashgacha* may share my thoughts, while others may share a different perspective. Of course, every setting comes with its unique set of responsibilities.

Hashgacha 101: Meat and dairy don't mix. While in our kitchens at home we keep milk and meat separated, at a large food establishment, or commissary filled with dozens of employees, multiple preparation areas, large amounts of food, and commercial appliances, the challenges become that much greater, and the practical and *halachic* implications that much more common. Food preparation is done in clearly marked and separate areas, but employees sometimes work in both areas, and I need to make sure that the food stays in the correct place. I need to make sure all equipment, including pots, pans, utensils and dishes, are clearly labeled. I do this by both color coding with paint, and engraving "meat" or "dairy" on all items. I also take new dishes to the *mikvah*, and make sure that food is stored in separate areas of the fridge and freezer, which can be difficult when dealing with limited space

Nothing comes into the building without a *mashgiach's* approval. I sign delivery invoices, and check all deliveries for acceptable certification. I check meat deliveries which require special double seals, ensure that employees do not bring in outside food, and pay careful attention to incoming Israeli produce due to the special *halachos* relating to Israeli produce including tithing, and *shmita* (sabbatical year.)

In many locations, the *mashgiach* spends significant time checking vegetables for bugs to ensure that all potentially infested produce is *halachically* clean. This area of *halachah*, and its execution are taken very seriously. All *mashgichim* in the Greater Washington area follow the same protocol known as the thrip cloth method, which is the industry standard and most common method used to check vegetables contemporarily. We are well trained in the method, as well as being trained to know how to identify the small bugs.

At my location, we also have baked goods, and therefore I ensure that the *mitzvah* of *challah* is properly observed. I do not separate the dough from each batch that is made, but rather we have a frozen piece of *tevel* dough (dough of which *challah* has not been taken) kept near the baking area in the freezer. There is a formula that I recite daily that designates a part of that dough as *challa* for each subsequent batch of dough or batter. This *challas tevel* is replaced every *succos* and *pesach*.

Interface: *Mashgichim* are the main interface between the consumer and the kashrus of the establishment. We field consumer questions, ranging from "is this a good certification?" to "can you get me a specific

shechita?” Sometimes, those of Sephardic tradition, who follow the ruling of the *Beit Yosef* regarding the laws of *bishul akum* (food cooked by a non-Jew) will ask us to put the food on the heat source, so that a *shomer shabbos* Jew is involved in the cooking process.

Communication: Communication is key. A *mashgiach* needs to be in touch with the other *mashgichim* on staff to ensure that they are on the same page, which vegetables need to be checked, what to look out for, and any other current issues. *Mashgichim* generally talk at the shift hand off. At locations that also cater events, it is important to communicate with the *mashgiach* that will be working at an event.

We are regularly in communication with the Vaad’s Kashrus leadership, and are kept aware of kashrus alerts. For routine kosher questions regarding product acceptability, scheduling assistance, and questions regarding new procedures in the kitchen I contact Rabbi Holland, and his responses are almost instant. If it is an issue that involves a Vaad standard, or a major procedure that requires Vaad involvement in discussion with the proprietor, Rabbi Walter is contacted. Additionally, we receive spot checks from Vaad representatives to ensure that we are complying with the highest standards. In all situations, a number of specific Vaad Rabbis are available if I need a question answered.

In reality, *hashgacha* is a managerial position, and for any manager to be successful, the manager needs to build a positive working relationship with his employees. Employees need to feel respected and empowered and know what is expected of them. If employees are treated in this fashion, they will respect the *kashrus* requirements even when a *mashgiach* is not looking. In our Vaad’s setup, *mashgichim* are expected to help out the production as long as it does not interfere with their most important duties - *hashgacha*. When *mashgichim* are seen by the employees as part of the team it goes a long way towards a cooperative relationship. It is also vital that the *mashgiach* has his finger on the pulse of the place. The *mashgiach* needs to be intimately aware of everything that is taking place, what is generally delivered, from where the food came, and where it is being stored, and what the usual production practices are. This way the *mashgiach* will know right away if something doesn’t smell right. When clarification is necessary, friendly non accusatory questions need to be asked to clarify.

In conclusion, I hope that I have provided you with a new understanding of a day in the life of a *mashgiach*. It should be quite evident that the *mashgiach* plays an indispensable role in the *mitzvah* observance of any Torah community. Next time you purchase something from the deli, enjoy a slice of pizza, or bite into a burger you should be even more confident with the *Kashrus* of what you are putting in your mouth.

Kosher Quality Control

The Foresight of the Mashgiach

The kosher consumer has an adequate understanding of the mashgiach's job description. He is there to "make sure that the food is kosher". For the most part, restaurants and catering operations require an on-site mashgiach to be present for the entire duration of the food production and service processes. He is the first to enter and the last to leave. Nothing enters the kitchen without his approval, and he oversees that nothing leaves until it is properly sealed and labeled. He should have a strong knowledge of the practical halachic principles of kashrus, especially those of which that he encounters more frequently, but needs not to be an expert. He turns on the flames and ovens, and he washes and checks all greens according to the outlined procedures to ensure a bug-free meal. This, according to the average kosher consumer, would constitute a strong, general synopsis of the mashgiach's job.

Indeed, this is a rather accurate description of the typical day-to-day routine of the mashgiach. However, in conjuring up this generic description, there is much that the public takes for granted, albeit unwittingly so. Many aspects of his job are much more subtle and indeterminate, and his need for strong communication and judgment are vastly overlooked.

This general lack of understanding stems not from a misunderstood job description, but rather from an unawareness of what kosher quality control really is, namely, a refinement process. There is no such thing as a kosher facility that has or will ever achieve perfection, and no good mashgiach will ever claim that his place of work is entirely seamless. Rather, the true measure of a great mashgiach is determined by how much thought and effort is exerted in finding potential weaknesses in the system, and in developing solutions to fix them. As is the case in every industry, mistakes are inevitable, and this inexorable truth demands that systems of preemptive measures be developed to keep these mistakes to a minimum.

The most obvious and objective of such measures is the enforcement of kashrus policies by their respective kashrus agencies. In every area of Halacha there exists an innumerable amount of rabbinic laws that serve as a protection for the people. As humans are apt to be inept, they tend to need protection even from themselves, and therein lies the need for these laws. Their original instatement began thousands of years ago, and for the vast majority of cases, are still halachically binding today. The twentieth century's commercialization of virtually everything has certainly left its mark on the kosher food industry, namely that the sheer size of any food production process is much greater than ever before, and in kashrus there is usually a direct correlation between the size of an operation and the complications it produces. Thus, in addition to the already existing Jewish law, the need for further policy implementation was born. One very basic example of policy is the requirement that all utensils must be marked in some fashion so that they are easily distinguishable to everybody as either dairy or meat, even though there is no halacha per se that requires this. More complex policy includes methods for washing and testing vegetables for bugs, which pose a major kashrus problem independently from their unappetizing nature. There is no one required method of bug testing in halacha, yet over time the nature of infestations of different greens and how best to get rid of them were learned, so much so that very precise and often painstaking methods have been developed. Granted, this overall increase in rules inevitably creates more opportunity for rules to be broken, however the severity of most mistakes is

greatly reduced. A mashgiach must be fluent in all of the policies of his particular kashrus agency if he hopes to succeed in maintaining reliable kashrus.

Nevertheless, policy alone is not enough. In order to maintain an operation that adheres to kashrus protocol, good communication is crucial. Communicating with the vaad, the business owner, the employees and other mashgichim allows for the vigilance necessary that contributes towards the refinement of quality kashrus. One very common example of this is the need to review the floor layout of an event site. The vaad uses this information to determine if multiple mashgichim are necessary. Also, some government buildings in Washington, D.C. have heightened security, and sealed carriers holding food must be opened and searched before they are allowed entrance into the building. Typically, the mashgiach doesn't show up until the chefs need to open the seals to begin to prep the food, but when the seals need to be opened for security purposes, a mashgiach must be present. It is hiccups such as these that, if overlooked, can result in much unneeded last minute chaos. Communication and foresight with hotel staff is also crucial. Often times in hotels the staff is not familiar with kashrus, and will not necessarily know to defer to the mashgiach when a guest asks for coffee creamer at a meat function. Nondairy creamer is one of several items that every good caterer should always bring along as a just-in-case measure, but if the mashgiach doesn't inform the hotel staff captain, it is very likely that the hotel's nondairy creamer with an OU-D ends up at the coffee station instead. So, in essence, as important as kashrus policy is, the only way to know which policies require special attention is if the mashgiach, in conjunction with the business owner and the vaad, remains vigilant and communicates all foreseeable vulnerabilities.

The mashgiach must also maintain a constant line of communication with other mashgichim who work in his facility. It is very common for multiple mashgichim to share one location if no one of them can be there every day of the week, and they must work together to develop systems to help each other identify and categorize different items. For example, a mashgiach should be able to open the refrigerator and tell immediately what greens were washed and cleared from bugs and which ones still need inspection without having to rely on asking the chef, even if the chef is a "really nice and honest guy". Also, if an issue arises that is out of the ordinary, the other mashgiach ought to be queued in on it before he shows up to work in the morning. It is this very practice which, albeit simple, can either cause the workers to have respect for kashrus or, unfortunately, become aggravated when their actions are repeatedly thrown into question because one mashgiach didn't talk to the other; those who are not accustomed to the many intricacies of Jewish law often find it intolerable when one mashgiach approves of something and then a second mashgiach challenges it. Chefs, for example, often prefer to use their own knives rather than the knives provided at their place of work. Upon seeing these foreign knives in the kitchen, any mashgiach should instantly question their status, and should not allow them to be used by solely relying on the chef's word that they were kashered by yesterday's mashgiach. Even as the mashgiach does exactly what he is supposed to do, the chef will likely become aggravated when the mashgiach temporarily puts a hold on his knives and attempts to contact yesterday's mashgiach to make sure all is good. These seemingly minor issues can often provoke much frustration, and if constant can erode the already thin patience of many kitchen staff members. A simple email or phone call the day before is sometimes all it takes to prevent another headache.

The trickiest part of the mashgiach's job is not written in his handbook. In every industry the workplace has a tendency to serve as a breeding ground for interpersonal friction. With high intensity kitchens where workers and chefs scramble to produce large quantities of food by a specific deadline, the food industry is certainly no exception. Add to this all of the kashrus restrictions and the inability to finish work on Shabbos, and one can only imagine the amount of yelling, screaming and blaming that might occur from time to time when some-

thing goes awry. It follows suit then that in order for the mashgiach to do the work that the public expects from him, namely to “make sure that the food is kosher”, it is imperative that the mashgiach is cognizant of all of these potential fault lines from the get-go, and exercises good judgment before he acts. Criticism is always difficult to take, and its timing and delivery requires masterful exactness if a productive outcome is expected, especially if it is aimed at an already disgruntled individual. Informing others of their mistakes and shortcomings is a most unpleasant endeavor that never seems to become easier with time.

There are a couple precursory steps for the mashgiach to take that might make this task slightly less painful. He should see to it that he establishes a positive rapport with all the workers. Upon the mashgiach's arrival on day one at his new place of work, he must engage them in some form or another in a positive way to grant them assurance that he aims to be a contributing factor to the team. Hopefully, this will eventually develop into a comradery of sorts so that they view the mashgiach to some extent as one of their own, and yet he can still maintain the dignity and command the respect that a frum yid ought to have. Not only will this allow for a more seamless operation, but it will also encourage the workers to follow the rules; they certainly will not magically grow fond of kashrus, but at the very least they will not want to disrespect their fellow worker, the mashgiach. The upkeep of these relationships is as important as their establishment, and if the mashgiach cares he will find that there is no shortage of opportunities for their development. This can even be as simple as making the chef a cup of coffee in the morning. All in all, the underpinning take away is that there is often a balancing act of fragile tempers in which the mashgiach must participate if he aims to ensure stability in kashrus.

No two facilities are exactly the same, and the mashgiach must be able to quickly acclimate to his surroundings. It is very rare to find any kosher facility that regularly encounters all of the aforementioned problems, and yet it is equally rare to find one that encounters none. What is crucial is that the mashgiach maintains a well-rounded skill set. He must have a strong knowledge base of kashrus and vaad policy. He must maintain constant communication with the vaad and the business owner. He must develop interpersonal relationships with the other workers. And of course, the good mashgiach will always “make sure that the food is kosher”.

Lessons in Communal Responsibility

*An Appreciation of Rav Gedaliah Anemer,
Rav Hillel Klavan, and Rav Kalman Winter, zt"l*

Rabbi Dovid Rosenbaum

Young Israel Shomrai Emunah

Our community has lost three very special rabbis over a brief period of time. Rav Gedaliah Anemer, Rav Hillel Klavan, and Rav Kalman Winter, *zecher tzadikim livracha*, have all passed within the last seven years. In addition to being stellar leaders of their congregations, these three rabbis together were the core of Vaad Harabanim leadership over the 25 year period preceding their passing. Much has been said, rightfully so, about the end of a rabbinic era in the Greater Washington community. As a rabbi of “the next generation” who had the great privilege of working closely with each of these individuals, I have been reflecting much since the recent passing of Rav Klavan as to what common qualities these men shared in their leadership of the community. Much could be written about the impact each of them made on numerous families and individuals within their congregations. In this context, I will focus on their acts on behalf of the community beyond their congregations. I hope the thoughts will be enlightening not only to rabbis, but to any individual striving to lead an inspired life including community service.

A word that each of these individuals would regularly intone with great passion was “*achrayus*,” frequently translated as responsibility. What, in communal terms, does that mean? Imagine an individual leaving his home in the morning. After entering his car and backing out of the driveway, he turns to the side and notices the past two days’ newspapers in his neighbor’s driveway. As he shifts the car into drive he suddenly remembers that his neighbor had asked him to keep an eye on the house being that he was going on vacation for two weeks. Our protagonist stops, puts the car in park, gets out, and collects the newspaper. He accepted a responsibility on himself and his word means something.

What if the neighbor had not mentioned that he was going out of town, but our protagonist saw him loading the car two days ago and the neighbor normally asks him to watch the house? Would a person of responsibility stop to collect the papers? What if the neighbor never expressed a wish that someone collect his papers, and is frequently guilty of leaving days’ worth of papers even when he is in the area? How many people would still get out of the car, thinking of the dangers the abandoned papers leave for the homeowner?

Rabbis have a number of responsibilities within their synagogues. Many times a congregation might expect the rabbi to play a role in the broader community infrastructure. A rabbi who tends to his daily congregational responsibilities, and even some in the broader community as requested by his lay leadership, is doing his job, earning his paycheck, being an honest and conscientious employee. What if no one asked a rabbi to see to it that a matter in the broader community is dealt with appropriately? Is it his responsibility? Does he have to save the World? Doesn’t he, like so many other noble individuals, have a family to look after? What I find remarkable about these three rabbis is they all lived the community’s needs, whether it was a *kashrus* standard, an individual wronged, or so many things in between.

The only way I can grasp the remarkable devotion these individuals had to the religious needs of the community is that they saw themselves as being charged to play such a role. It might not have been their syna-

gogues that assigned them these duties. It was G-d Himself. All of these *rabanim* lived an inspired *rabanus*, both in their shuls and beyond, because they believed it was the Divine will that they serve the community in this manner. Only with such an outlook can I understand how Rabbi Winter could take a passionate interest, not only in the needs of individuals from his *shul* who he had known for decades, but in the case of the *kashrus* policy of a store while he was deathly ill. Rabbi Klavan was a man of tremendous passion and vigor to fight for what was correct. Despite his remarkably gentle nature, he could engage in a very fierce argument over communal policies in his last months. Rabbi Anemer headed two institutions, holding roles that would have required the efforts of at least one and a half people far his junior, and yet he always had time for communal matters. Their lives did not revolve around jobs and contracts, rather a sense of mission. They each saw the religious needs and growth of the community as part of their personal mission.

This sense of the rabbinate as a lifelong mission was quite possibly the cause for another unique quality that they all possessed; a great sense of honor for other rabbis, even those far their junior. I had the distinct honor of having Rabbi Klavan as a member of my *shul* in his last years. With great determination he insisted on being helped out of bed, dressed, and pushed in his wheelchair to attend the last *Shabbos Hagadol drasha* I gave in his life. He explained to family and friends that if the Rabbi is presenting a *drasha* he must be present. I served as an assistant rabbi under Rabbi Anemer. I was a close student of his for many years. He knew me since I was in elementary school. He was extremely diligent in all public settings to refer to me as “Rabbi Rosenbaum” and strongly rebuked past teachers of mine who would refer to me by first name. As a 25-year old rabbi of a 15-family shul I was so struck by the honor Rabbi Winter would always bestow on me at *simchos* and gatherings. The rabbinate was a calling, so much more than a profession. A person who merited this calling was sent by G-d Himself. What difference should age make when looking at someone else who shares the mission? I think it also worth noting the great harmony with which these three individuals of very different personalities and yeshiva traditions worked together. There was a very strong sense of mutual respect and appreciation for each other’s individual and unique strengths.

One more aspect that I find so striking about these three wonderful people was their tremendous adherence to the traditions of the Greater Washington community. Rabbi Klavan’s esteemed father, Rabbi Yehoshua Klavan, ז”ל, was a very prominent rabbinic personality in the community. Many of the communal religious standards were set by him. It was understandable, but quite beautiful, how frequently Rabbi Klavan would quote his father at Vaad meetings. I would occasionally reflect how, as I sat at a table with Rabbi Klavan, I, a young rabbi in the 21st century in the Washington, DC area was being bridged back to a world-class authority who was a product of the Kamenitz Yeshiva at the beginning of the 20th century. I once asked Rabbi Anemer about a communal practice. Here was a rabbi through whom all communal infrastructure roads ran. Surely he would have a passionate explanation for the practice. After all, if he didn’t feel strongly about it, would it be the communal policy? I was shocked when Rabbi Anemer told me this was the policy when he came to the area and he had a couple of theories for why it was so. Either way, he explained, this was the policy when he came to the area and he saw no reason to change it. I remember once attending a rabbinic meeting at the Klavan home. Rabbi Winter pointed at a portrait of Rabbi Klavan’s esteemed father. He urged me and one of the other younger rabbis present to view ourselves as links in the chain of the Washington rabbinate.

I personally heard many Torah thoughts from each of these three rabbis. However, as we are taught in Meseches Brachos (7b), even greater than the *Torah* we learn from scholars are the lessons we learn from their personal conduct. I feel so privileged to have worked closely with Rav Gedaliah Anemer, Rav Hillel Klavan, and Rav Kalman Winter, *zecher tzadikim livracha*. I learnt many practical lessons about the rabbinate. These three lessons, living one’s life with a true sense of mission, treating others with utmost dignity and respect, and having great regard for the previous generations, might be some of the most inspiring ones I learnt from them. I hope these reflections spark warm memories in the hearts and minds of many who knew them well. I also hope they give a small sense, for those who never had the pleasure of knowing them well, of the remarkable individuals who, with great toil and devotion, made remarkable contributions to the Greater Washington Orthodox community from which we all benefit.



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The Vaad Harabanim of Greater Washington is an organization of Orthodox rabbis that provides the Greater Washington Jewish community with critical services such as *kashrus* supervision, a *beis din* for the administration of Jewish divorce, a *beis din* for arbitration of financial disputes, and a *beis din* for conversion. In addition, the Vaad, also known as the Rabbinical Council, acts as a rabbinic resource, and supports vital communal service organizations, such as the *Chevrah Kadisha*, *Bikur Cholim*, *Yad Yehuda* and the *Mikvah Emunah* Society. Members of the Vaad Harabanim are dedicated to serving the broader Jewish community in whatever way possible and appreciate the opportunity to do so.