

**VAAD HARABANIM**  
THE RABBINICAL COUNCIL  
of GREATER WASHINGTON

# THE BULLETIN

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*Wishing you a Kesiva V'chasima Tova!*





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To the Greater Washington Jewish Community:

It gives me a great deal of pleasure to introduce another outstanding edition of the Vaad Bulletin and to express my profound *hakaros hatov* to Rabbi Moshe Walter, our Executive Director and Editor in Chief, for his skill, hard work, and dedication in putting it together. Instead of providing a Vaad overview or an introduction to this bulletin as in years past, I would like instead to share with you a simple, and hopefully helpful, thought.

The *Yomim Noraim* are upon us and G-d fearing Jews throughout the world will be reciting the thirteen Attributes of Mercy in hopes of awakening the *Ribono Shel Olam's* compassion. Included in these attributes is the expression “[He is] Abundant in Kindness and Truth.” The *Gemora* in *Rosh Hashana* (17b) highlights a difficulty here in that the concepts of Truth, which is the foundation of pure Justice, and Mercy, which bends, softens, and even suspends that justice, are inherently contradictory. Rashi explains that *Hashem* would prefer to run the world with strict justice but as a concession to our fallibility, He governs with mercy instead. If so, the commentators ask, why include “Truth” or “din” in the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy at all?

Rav Pam, zt'l, in *Atara L'Melech* (p 176) offers a beautiful explanation. The *Gemora* in *Shabbos* (151b) interprets the verse in *Parshas Re'eh* (13;18) “And He will give you mercy and be merciful to you” as the source of the *klal* that “*Kol Hamrachev al Habrios merachmim alav min hashmayim*” i.e. “Whoever is compassionate to *Hashem's* creatures is shown compassion by Heaven.” Rav Pam explains that oftentimes *Hashem* wants to perform an act of *chesed*, or kindness, for someone but “can't” *al pi din* because that person is undeserving of that *chesed*. *Hashem* therefore gives that person the opportunity to earn that *chesed* by presenting him with circumstances in which he can do *chesed* for someone else. The *pasuk* “He will give you mercy” means that *Hashem* will give you the opportunity to be merciful so that He can, according to attribute of Justice, “be merciful to you”. This is the meaning of “Abundant in Kindness and Truth.” *Hashem* gives us the opportunity to earn His kindness in a way that is not only consistent with Truth but transforms that Truth into an act of great Mercy.

The *Rabanim* who comprise the Vaad are indeed *yirei shemayim* who selflessly devote their time and energy to our community out of a sense of duty to *Ha Kadosh Baruch Hu*. It is no less true, however, that they are also *baalei rachamim* who are motivated by a desire to be kind to the people they love – their congregants and all of Greater Washington Jewry. It is an honor to be their leader.

On behalf of the Vaad HaRabanim of Greater Washington, please accept my humble blessing that we all merit *Hashem's* Mercy and be *zocheh* to a *shana tova umesuka*.

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# Foreword From the Director

Dear Community member,

We are pleased to present issue 6.2 of The Bulletin of The Rabbinical Council of Greater Washington. Our goals in publishing this document are to present educational and inspirational articles relating to the Yamim Noraim, concurrent with updating you on matters of communal importance.

In the Yamim Noraim section, you will find three articles written by Rabbi Michael Frank, Rabbi Levi Shemtov, and Rabbi Walter relating to three distinct aspects of the days of awe. It is our hope that the ideas and thoughts will be beneficial for all as we approach the most critical days on the Jewish calendar.

In the community section of the Bulletin, Rabbi Dovid Rosenbaum vice president of the R.C.G.W. sheds light on the primacy of supporting our local institutions, and Rabbi Zvi Holland, Director of Field operations summarizes the policies and procedures which define and highlight the first class certification of the Capitol K.

Finally, as the Yamim Noraim is a time for "tzedakah," we are honored to publish, The inside story on Yad Yehudah of G.W.- Facts and Stats, written by the leadership of Yad Yehuda of Greater Washington. The R.C.G.W. is honored to serve as a Rabbinic resource, and to support this most important tzedakah organization which works tirelessly to help hundreds of community members in need.

Thank you to Rabbi Yosef Singer for his herculean efforts as President of the Rabbinical Council of Greater Washington, and thank you to Mrs. Wendy Guberman for the beautiful typesetting and graphic design of the Bulletin.

It is our honor and privilege to serve our beloved community, and wish you, and yours a kesiva v'chasima tova; a year of success, joy, and geulah shleima b'karov!

**Rabbi Moshe Walter**

Director, Rabbinical Council of Greater Washington

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# Selichos - Happy or Sad?

**By Rabbi Michoel Frank**

Kehillas Ohr Hatorah

Why do we begin Selichos so many days before Rosh Hashanah? Why do we start on Motzei Shabbos specifically, like we say “*B’Motzaei Menuchah Kidamnuchah Techilah*,” ‘on Motzei Shabbos we came early before you’?

Why are we saying Selichos when we are so tired?

The *Terumas Hadeshen* says a fascinating thing. The reason we say Selichos on Motzei Shabbos is because on Shabbos no one worked, and we had time to immerse ourselves in learning. We also enjoyed Shabbos, doing the mitzvah of *Oneg Shabbos*. We acquired a measure of ‘Simcha Shel Mitzvah,’ the joy one experiences while doing a mitzvah. This is the right emotion to begin saying Selichos with. Because “*Ain Hashechinah Shoreh Lo Mitoch Atzvus etc. Elah Mitoch Simchah Shel Mitzvah*,” – ‘the *Shechinah* doesn’t reside amongst us when we are sad – only when we are infused with the joy of doing a mitzvah.’

Now this doesn’t seem to be the mood of saying Selichos, if you ask me. We say it in the middle of the night, when we are tired and weary. Or we wake up early to say Selichos, we’re groggy and davening is now so long. The words of Selichos seem a little depressing to us – “*Lechah Hashem Hatzedakah V’Lanu Boshes Hapanim*,” ‘to You Hashem, belongs righteousness, and to us, just embarrassment.’

I saw a beautiful explanation brought down in the name of the Ishbitzer Rebbe, that the reason why we start Selichos a week before Rosh Hashanah, and we specifically mention the fact that we have come early to speak to Hashem, is because when a person is pleading for his life, it helps to come early! He cites the story related in Shmuel II of Shimi Ben Gairah, who while David Hamelech was running away from his rebellious son Avshalom, with just a few people that still supported him, and was perhaps at the lowest point of his life, just then, Shimi came and began cursing David Hamelech in the most degrading way, throwing rocks and dirt at him, aiming to destroy whatever vestige of respect and honor was left to him. By doing this he earned himself the death penalty. But David didn’t allow his soldiers to kill Shimi just then.

Once Avshalom was overthrown, Shimi Ben Gairah immediately assembled some of the respectable people from Shevet Yehudah and ran to greet David Hamelech and ask for forgiveness. Since he came immediately on his own accord, before he was summoned by David, David pardoned him for the time being, and even instructed his son Shlomo not to kill him directly, rather to manipulate circumstances in a way that he would bring the death penalty upon himself.

We see coming early to plead for one's life helps – it makes a difference!

If we examine the story a little closer, it really resonates with what is happening on Rosh Hashanah. The navi says that Shimi came with people from Yehuda and a thousand men from Shevet Binyamin, his Shevet, and they crossed the Jordan in order to greet David. Shimi fell before the king and said, “Don't consider it a sin for me, and don't remember what I did on the day that the king left Jerusalem, don't take it to heart. Because I know that I sinned and have come here today, the first from all of the house of Yosef.” Then, Avishai, one of David's generals, said – “How in the world can you not kill him – he cursed the *Moshiach Hashem* – the anointed one!!” David replied, “A person of Israel can't be put to death today – because today I know that I'm the king over Israel.”

Meaning, that being that on that day, David Hamelech was re-established as king, it was a day of joy, and it's not appropriate for Shimi to be killed.

David had suffered the ultimate disgrace – his own son had rebelled against him and betrayed him. Huge numbers of Klal Yisrael had supported the rebellion. Here was a person that at the point when David was at his lowest, looked to add insult to injury and curse him in the most degrading way possible. This seems like a pretty intense sin. People have been killed for far less than that! But David said – he won't be killed – because today I am king. This means, that by Shimi coming and prostrating himself before David, by admitting his guilt, by running to be the first to reinstate David as king, he created an atmosphere of joy. He made the day, a day of crowning the king once again, and it's not appropriate to take vengeance on such a day.

This is our approach to Selichos. We are preparing for Rosh Hashanah, a day of *Malchiyos*. Rosh Hashanah is the day when Hashem is re-instated as King of the World. On a day of coronation – it's not appropriate to exact revenge and punishment – it's a happy day! When we come and prostrate ourselves before Hashem, and beg his forgiveness, even for sins as serious as betrayal and disgrace, we are crowning Hashem as king over us. By running to do it first, we are creating an atmosphere of joy, the coronation of a king! In that atmosphere Hashem won't judge unfavorably.

Therefore, it's of great importance that we take the situation seriously, but at the same time realize that through our actions we are achieving a tremendous goal – we are crowning Hashem as king. Although we have done things we wished we hadn't, we can ask Hashem – don't take it to heart – overlook the past, don't look at us – because today is the day of coronation, and we are here first! That's why the underlying emotion accompanying Selichos is joy - not sorrow - and certainly not sleepiness!

# Spiraling Upward

## Growth and not Circles

by **Rabbi Levi Shemtov**

The SHUL of the Nation's Capital  
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A father was once taking his son up a spiral staircase in a building with a forest mural on the staircase wall that was several stories high. At the landing on every floor he'd stop and ask, "Son, so what do you see?" to which he'd answer, "many trees."

After a few stories, the father turns to his son and asks, "Anything different about what you see now?" to which the son replied, "No, not really, just trees." "But can't you see, my son" responded the father, "that each time I have asked you what you saw, we were higher up in those trees?"

We live through the cycle of the Jewish year, during which we mark, mourn, celebrate, and revisit all the rituals and festivals in our tradition. But do we truly experience them or just trod through? Are we really in the moment, and are we building upon our previous experiences and lessons learned through those experiences - joyous, reflective and meaningful? Or merely going around once again, without any actual elevation from the previous experiences?

During the weeks of Elul leading up to Rosh Hashanah, we read the Parsha of Shoftim, which discusses the prohibition of cutting down (fruit bearing) trees in the process of war. "For man is like a tree in the field." Our sages explain this phrase in many ways, such as resembling an educational process which needs care from the very beginning like a new tree, or the person themselves, with roots reflecting faith, the trunk of the tree the standing of the person, the branches being their relation to others and the fruits being the mitzvos, offspring, or that which enables others to connect and benefit from the "tree."

The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, of sacred memory, elucidates this further. Man is the highest form of creation, given not only a privilege to rule and make use of the lower forms of creation (inanimate, vegetable, and animal life) but to elevate them all to a higher purpose, as each other form is to do as well with that which is beneath it. And they are all reflected in the human experience.

The inanimate soil gives a nurturing environment to the vegetation which feeds the animals from which the human is nourished, and which he also elevates by consuming them according to the Torah's mandates and then using the derived energy for sacred purposes, contributing to a world more G-dly. Thus, even the animal can be elevated to a more G-dly level by the human performing appropriate rituals, blessings, etc., associated with the animal and its consumption,



and also at the same time remaining mindful to tame the “animalistic” energies lurking within each person. Instead of animal life dragging down the human, the human can raise even the animal. As for vegetation, this is also reflected in man, says the Rebbe, in that no matter what, one needs to grow and will go to great length to ensure their growth. (You might remember the classic science experiment in school where the teacher placed one plant in sunlight and the other one in a darkened room and that second plant stretched, seeking light with which to grow.)

Growth is the greatest sign of life. And we all need it, even if at times we need to work and seek it.

So when we approach yet another season and year, it is important to remember that if we have merely the same experience, on the same level as we were the last time, with no discernible growth, we are not seeing the intent of the scenery of our lives, which is to surely recognize what we see, but be cognizant of the zechus, or merit, of not only our privilege but our responsibility - to ourselves and those around us, to the world we are blessed with, and to G-d who created it and granted us the opportunity to inhabit and improve it.

Another point. At a recent Shabbat luncheon, a student was trying to convey the sense of community she had come to appreciate during her years in school here, where she significantly developed and strengthened her Jewish identity through Jewish programs and activities. “I heard the reading of the Torah today describing man as a tree in the field”, she said. “That’s sort of what I felt like when I came here. And now I feel more like a tree in the forest.” We can make every person, which the Torah tells us is like a tree, feel more like they’re part of our “forest” of the Jewish people.

A new year is upon us.

Let us indeed see the forest for the trees. We should welcome our fresh opportunities for growth, and even pursue them if they are not immediately obvious. And let us also try and see them from an increasingly higher vantage point every year.



# “Do you forgive me?”

## How to really apologize and ask forgiveness

by **Rabbi Moshe Walter**

Woodside Synagogue Ahavas Torah

### **Introduction**

We all know how difficult it is to ask forgiveness from a friend, colleague, family member, or acquaintance whom one offended. What makes this challenge so great?

There are several reasons to explain the complexity of furnishing an apology. One, the natural tendency of a human being is to justify one's actions, and be blinded into thinking that, “I have nothing to ask forgiveness for” as the other party is really at fault. The lack of readiness on one's part to confess responsibility for misconduct is so strong, that rarely, if ever is one willing to admit any level of misbehavior toward another. Two, even those who are willing to admit wrongdoing, typically have one of the following second tier reactions; “I am not asking forgiveness until he or she does so first,” or “I am sorry you feel that way,” placing the onus on the other party, leaving oneself innocent of any wrongdoing. Finally, even when one does admit and recognize that one hurt someone else, it is often too embarrassing to tell the other person, I'm really sorry, you were right, and I was wrong;” and therefore an apology never materializes.

Psychology today teaches that there are five ingredients to an Effective apology. One, a clear “I'm sorry” statement. Two, an expression of regret for what happened. Three, an acknowledgment that social norms or expectations were violated. Four, an empathy statement acknowledging the full impact of our actions on the other person. Five, a request for forgiveness. Apologies are tools with which we acknowledge violations of social norms and take responsibility for the impact of our actions.<sup>1</sup>

The goal of the coming pages is to understand the halachic parameters of asking forgiveness; what are situations that require one to ask forgiveness, how does one properly ask for forgiveness, when is it appropriate to ask for forgiveness, and who should one be asking forgiveness from?

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<sup>1</sup> Psychology Today, November 21, 2013 Guy Wilch, The Five Ingredients of an Effective Apology <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-squeaky-wheel/201311/the-five-ingredients-effective-apology>.

## When to ask for forgiveness

It is customary to ask forgiveness of an individual who one offended on Erev Yom Kippur.<sup>2</sup> The following are the two primary reasons for this custom.

1. The Mishnah, commenting on the pasuk, “from all your sins before Hashem shall you be cleansed” explains that Yom Kippur, the day of atonement, only atones for sins between man and God as the pasuk indicates that sins committed “before Hashem” will receive atonement. However, Yom Kippur does not atone for sins between man and man until one appeases his fellow first. Thus, on Erev Yom Kippur, one is charged to ask forgiveness of others to ensure complete forgiveness on Yom Kippur.<sup>3</sup>
2. On Yom Kippur we resemble angels and just as angels enjoy purely peaceful relationships one with another, so to should all of mankind.<sup>4</sup>

A practical difference between these two opinions regards apologizing to an individual who feels offended, when one didn't wrong this person. According to the first reason it would not be necessary to apologize, while according to the second reason it would be appropriate to apologize.<sup>5</sup>

Although asking forgiveness is linked with the repentance process of Yom Kippur, it is best to ask forgiveness as soon as an offence has been committed, and not wait until Yom Kippur.<sup>6</sup> Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach bemoaned the fact that many are not meticulous to fulfil this explicit halacha, even on Erev Yom Kippur.<sup>7</sup> Rabbi Chaim Shmulevitz bemoaned the fact that even those who do ask forgiveness of others on Erev Yom Kippur, only do so as a pro forma religious obligation from those that they have no issues with; and don't ask forgiveness from the people they really have to apologize to.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Maseches Yoma 87a and 87b, Rosh 8:24. Tur and Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim codify the halchos of forgiveness in Hilchos Yom Kippur; siman 606. Rama ad loc. 2 writes, “the minhag is to ask forgiveness on erev Yom Kippur.”

<sup>3</sup>Yoma 85b cited by Mishnah Berurah 606:1

<sup>4</sup>Pirkei D'Rebbi Eliezer cited by Rosh 8:24 and Tur 606

<sup>5</sup>See Sfas Emes Yoma 87b s.v ikpid who posits like the latter position due to the unique nature of asking forgiveness on Erev Yom Kippur. This also seems to be the intention of Aruch HaShulchan 606:5

<sup>6</sup>Mishnah Berurah 606:1 citing Match Ephrayim, 606:1 and Chayei Adam 138:5

<sup>7</sup>Halichos Shlomo- Moadim, chapter 3: Orchos Halachah 19

<sup>8</sup>Hilchos Chag B'chag on Yamim Noraim 21:43 footnote 118

## Whom to ask forgiveness of

The Shulchan Aruch does not give a list of individuals who one is required to ask forgiveness of but does note the requirement to ask forgiveness of an individual who was offended by “words alone.”<sup>9</sup> What emerges from the Shulchan Aruch is that one is required to ask forgiveness from anyone who was offended by anything that one did to upset them. Furthermore, even if the offended party responds to the offer of forgiveness with wrath and derogatory remarks, one is still required to continue asking for forgiveness.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, even if the offender is aware that the offended party has already granted forgiveness, most halachic authorities posit that the offender is still required to ask forgiveness.<sup>11</sup>

It is not uncommon to overlook the closest of relationships when considering who one must ask forgiveness of including one’s spouse, parents, children, colleagues, employees, students, teachers, friends, and neighbors.<sup>12</sup> These are the people who one has the most to do with on a day to day basis, and the individuals who may have been treated with less honor and respect; and at times even wronged. Thus, it is critical to consider if a misdemeanor was committed to anyone in one’s inner circle, and make sure to ask forgiveness of that person.<sup>13</sup>

Unfortunately, many are unable to acknowledge error or wrongdoing as it takes much moral strength to admit a mistake and proclaim guilt. The offended party knows full well that he or she was treated unjustly, and that the other party was wrong. The resentment and anger this creates often drives a wedge between these close nit parties and undermines the love and understanding that should exist. An honest and sincere apology is a critical component in reestablishing the relationship.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 606;1 based on Rambam, Yad HaChazakah, Teshuvah, 2:9

<sup>10</sup>Responsa Zichron Yehudah 201

<sup>11</sup>Moadim U’zmanim 1:54 citing Rabbi Yitzchak Blazer and Chut Shani Yom Kippur page 100 citing the Chazon Ish based on Yoma 87a.

<sup>12</sup>See Kaf HaChaim 606:44 who makes this point. K’tzeh HaMateh on Mateh Efrayim 606:4 notes that one should even ask forgiveness from a non-Jew who one offended.

<sup>13</sup>See Hilchos Chag B’chag on Yamim Noraim 21:43 and footnote 118

<sup>14</sup>See successful parenting, insights and advice from Rav Pam on Chinuch HaBonim by Rabbi Shalom Smith (Mesorah Publications 2004) page 17-18

## Specifying what the forgiveness is for

When asking forgiveness, it is appropriate to specify what one is asking forgiveness for.<sup>15</sup> For example, if one harmed another by uttering a damaging remark, raising one's voice, or insulting someone, one should specify the reason for asking forgiveness. The reason for this contingency is that for an apology to be effective and complete, one needs to explain and articulate what one is asking forgiveness for. Furthermore, specifying the nature of the offence makes the apology heartfelt, honest, and sincere.<sup>16</sup> Even if one apologizes to a group of people generally, this does not suffice as a bonified apology when one knows that one must apologize for something specific from one of the members of the group.<sup>17</sup>

Even though specifying the offence is a critical component of the process of asking forgiveness, there are certain exceptions to the rule.

1. If the offended party will be embarrassed if the specifics of the misdemeanor are revealed, one is not required to specify the offence.<sup>18</sup> For example, if one divulged a top secret about an individual, one should not reveal what one said when asking for forgiveness.
2. If the offended party will be pained and hurt if the specifics of the misdemeanor are revealed, one is not required to specify the offence. For example, if one spoke slander about an individual, one should not reveal what one said when asking for forgiveness.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Bach Orach Chaim 606:2 citing Drashos Maharash. Magen Avraham ad loc. cites the Bach, and Mishnah Berurah ad loc. cites the Magen Avraham

<sup>16</sup>See Mishnah Berurah 606:15 that when apologizing at the grave of a deceased person who one offended, one is required to specify the sin unless it will embarrass the deceased. (Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 131:5)

<sup>17</sup>Mishnah Berurah 606:3 citing Match Ephrayim 606:2

<sup>18</sup>Magen Avraham and Mishnah Berurah ad loc.

<sup>19</sup>Opinion of Rabbi Yisrael Salanter cited in Moadim U'zmanim 1:54 heard from Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler, Az Nidberu 7: 66, and Tenuos Hamussar volume 1 page 363 (page 334 in Feldheim edition).

The Chafetz Chaim did not agree with the opinion of Rav Yisrael Salanter as stated in Sefer Chafetz Chaim klal 4:12 based upon position of Rabbeinu Yonah in Sharei Teshuvah 207. See Halichos Shlomo- Moadim 3:6 and ad loc. Dvar Halachah 6 citing Rabbi Shlomo Zalman who ruled in accordance with Rabbi Yisrael Salanter. See Halichos Shlomo Orchos Halchah 24 and Chut Shani Yom Kippur page 106 who suggest a reconciliation to the debate between Rav Yisrael Salanter and the Chafetz Chaim. See as well Mishnah Berurah 606:3 where the Chafetz Chaim indeed posits like Rav Yisrael Salanter which would contradict his assertion in his sefer Chafetz Chaim. The above reconciliations between the two opinions may very well reconcile this apparent contradiction as well.

3. One is permitted to ask general forgiveness from an individual who one offended without specifying the offence, if the offence was of “minor” import.<sup>20</sup> For example, if it is a matter that one knows that the other party will forgive, one is not required to mention what exactly one is asking forgiveness for.
4. Under certain circumstances, one is permitted to ask forgiveness through the phone or a letter, without revealing one’s identity. For example, one is permitted to return a stolen object or money and apologize without revealing one’s name if the individual who was robbed never knew that anything was stolen.<sup>21</sup>

### **Using a proxy to ask for forgiveness**

Just as specifying the reason for the apology makes the apology sincerer, similarly approaching the offender first hand to apologize is more meaningful. Sending a proxy to apologize shows the offender a lack of seriousness and earnestness regarding the apology. Furthermore, the embarrassment and discomfiture of apologizing in person is part of the atonement for the offence.<sup>22</sup> It is for this reason that many halachic authorities posit that one should apologize in person and not send a proxy in one’s place.<sup>23</sup>

Even though a firsthand apology is ideal, there are certain exceptions to the rule.

1. If it is hard to apologize in person due to the physical distance between the two parties, one can apologize through a proxy, over the phone, through a letter, or through another form of communication.<sup>24</sup>
2. If one knows that a third party has a better chance of securing an apology than apologizing oneself, it is best to send a third party to apologize.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Halichos Shlomo- Moadim 3:5 citing Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach.

<sup>21</sup>Iggeros Moshe Choshen Mishpat 88s.v. u’mah s’shaltah

<sup>22</sup>Mateh Moshe 848 and Chut Shani Yom Kippur page 100 citing the Chazon Ish.

<sup>23</sup>Mishnah Berurah 606:2 and Shaar HaTzion ad loc 3 citing Bach, Elyah Rabbah and Mateh Ephrayim 606:1

<sup>24</sup>Mishnah Berurah 606:2 citing Mateh Ephrayim 606:1. See Yechaveh Daat 5:44

<sup>25</sup>Mishnah Berurah 606:2 and Hilchos Chag B’chag Yamim Noraim 21:40

3. If none of the above options suffice, and one is unable to apologize to the offended party in advance of Yom Kippur, one should accept upon oneself to apologize following Yom Kippur, and in the meantime, Yom Kippur atones for the sin, so long as an apology is made following Yom Kippur.<sup>26</sup>

### **The amount of times to ask forgiveness**

If an apology was offered, but was not accepted by the offended party, one is required to ask forgiveness a second time, and finally, a third time.<sup>27</sup> If after attempting to apologize three times, one's apology is not accepted, one is longer required to apologize again.<sup>28</sup> At that point, one should state in the presence of ten people that an attempt was made to apologize so that one will not be suspected of not wanting to make amends.<sup>29</sup>

If one offended one's Rabbi, there is no limit to the amount of times that one should ask forgiveness; until it is granted.<sup>30</sup> If the person whom one offended died, one should go to the individual's grave with ten people and say "I have sinned to the God of Israel and to the individual whom I have sinned against."<sup>31</sup>

### **Conclusion**

The laws relating to asking forgiveness intend for the offender to recognize the sin committed and understand the pain of the offended. Furthermore, the offender is charged to approach one's fellow admitting guilt and expressing remorse for the pain which was caused. These steps will hopefully lead to forgiveness being granted by the victim and receiving complete atonement from God. In the merit of asking forgiveness from others who we offended, we ask Hashem to forgive us from our blunders, and grant us a shana tov u'mesukah!

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<sup>26</sup>Elef HaMagen 606:3 citing Sefer Yafeh L'lev

<sup>27</sup>Shulchan Aruch ad loc. Shulchan Aruch adds that each time the individual should bring three people with him. Kaf HaChaim 606: 17 notes that the same three people can come along each time. Mekor Chaim ad loc. notes that the three apologies can take place within the same sitting. Mishnah Berurah ad loc. 2 adds that a different form or request of an apology should be made each time.

<sup>28</sup>Shulchan Aruch ad loc.

<sup>29</sup>Rama ad loc. with Mishnah Berurah 6. Kaf HaChaim ad loc. 24 notes that if nobody else is aware of the offence there is no need to make this public proclamation.

<sup>30</sup>Shulchan Aruch ad loc.

<sup>31</sup>Shulchan Aruch ad loc. 2

# Reaching Out Nearby

**Rabbi Dovid Rosenbaum**

Young Israel Shomrai Emunah of Greater Washington

In this season of repentance, we are frequently reminded of the great power of generosity with our assets as a merit for the next year. During the coming days, we will dramatically intone the powerful idea that repentance, prayer, and charity can reverse the evil decree. It is appropriate to reflect periodically on the manner in which we share our blessings with individuals and institutions by donating funds.

There is much discussion in halacha regarding the hierarchy among tzedakah options. The following thoughts are not intended as such. The many questions on this topic are best explored with one's personal rabbi. I also do not intend to discuss specific institutions, as our community is blessed with many that are worthy of our support. Rather, I would like to reflect a bit on the general choices which we make.

Of course, we are urged in halacha to give generously to individuals in need. We have some very special organizations in our community that help those struggling financially. On the other hand, we receive so many solicitations by mail, from around the World, for specific, heart-breaking plights. We need to remember that *aniyai ircha*, the poor of our own community, take priority (though there is also special status for the poor of Israel) (Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah, 251, 3). In our own community, there are individuals who struggle to pay for food, housing, and medical care. Please remember that they exist, perhaps sitting next to you in shul, even if there is not a mailing discussing their needs.

In addition, so many worthy institutions promote core aspects of Jewish life around the World. It is a great merit to aid such wonderful causes. At the same time, we should remember that there are special institutions in our community, too. Furthermore, many times we ourselves are beneficiaries. Who doesn't benefit from at least one shul in his/her community? Whether it be minyanim, shiurim and other programs, or guidance or assistance from a rabbi, shuls offer so much. It is important to become a member of a shul. In addition to helping shuls meet their expenses, one actively demonstrates an interest in formally becoming a member of the community. So many of us also benefit from other community institutions like the local mikvah and eruv, and it is a great merit to help such vital entities financially. Additionally, such institutions are normally driven by numerous volunteers. Think of all the support a devoted volunteer feels when he/she can look at a long roll of those proud to be members of the organization. While there is normally a fee to use the mikvah, for just a bit more, in many neighborhoods, one can become a member.

Imagine that someone asks you to teach him/her Torah. Or imagine that someone asks you to



prepare a meal for a family having difficulties. While some in our community are very engaged in these--and other-- acts of kindness, many of us do not have the time or ability to assist others as much as we would like. It is vital for a major community such as ours to have the organizations and programs to help a wide range of individuals in a variety of situations. Even if someone doesn't volunteer as much as one would like, many of these causes have expenses. By contributing funds, one is helping insure that community acts of kindness will continue.

For most young families within the American Orthodox community, paying tuition is their greatest financial pressure. There are many projects and efforts to help relieve that pressure. Because it's highly questionable that a "silver bullet" will be found any time soon, for the time being, we need to implement as many approaches as possible to help make the situation more manageable. It is essential that our community provide strong programs to educate our children and to inspire them to be knowledgeable and passionate Jews. Effective education is expensive, and the parent body cannot bear the burden on its own. What if every adult in our community, whether or not they have children of school age, committed to make a significant annual donation to a Jewish school of his/her choice? Could there be a better investment in the futures of our community and the Jewish People?

At this time of year, we ask Hashem to shower us with His blessings. We resolve that if He does so, we will use them with thought and energy to fulfill His will. In that spirit, let us resolve to be thoughtful in our giving, and to remember our neighbors and the institutions from which we and the broader community benefit so much. In that merit, along with many others, may we all be written and inscribed in the Book of Life for the year to come.

# Inside the Capitol K

## Rabbi Zvi Holland

Director of Field Operations Capitol K

The *Vaad* often receives phone calls and emails from consumers worldwide inquiring about acceptable kosher establishments located in our nation's capital. In answering these types of questions, I have come to appreciate the unique nature of the *Vaad* among local *kashrus* agencies. The following protocols and policies reflect the views of Capital K, the *kashrus* division of the Rabbinical Council of Greater Washington. These policies were established by former community *rabbanim* and continue to be maintained by our current rabbinic leadership.

- **Hashgacha Temidis** - Any restaurant that serves meat, fish or cheese and offers any means of sensitive cooking practices has its own dedicated mashgiach (independent of ownership) who is trained and approved by the Vaad.
- **Secured Meat and Poultry** - The storage of meat and poultry in Vaad establishments falls under the exclusive purview of the mashgiach. Ownership has no regular access to meat or poultry unless in the presence of the mashgiach.
- **Curated Meat and Poultry Sources** - The most kosher-sensitive items in our diet are meat and poultry. Throughout the history of the Vaad, only meat and poultry sources that have been reviewed and confirmed by the Vaad to adhere to its standards and expectations are permitted to be served in Vaad establishments. Mashgichim are trained to review each box or package of meat before accepting them.
- **Vegetable Checking** - A critical area of contemporary kosher certification is checking fruits and vegetables for insect infestation. Every Vaad mashgiach is trained, tested and approved to implement the most effective methods available in verifying the kashrus of produce.
- **Fish** - Confirming the kashrus of fish is also a kosher-sensitive area, as non-kosher fish are forbidden by Torah law. Only fish with fins and scales are kosher. Once skinned, kosher and non-kosher fish are indistinguishable. While in some cases leniencies have become accepted in certain communities, all fish served in Vaad establishments has been checked for kashrus prior to being skinned.
- **Kosher and Non-Kosher** - Engaging in the sale of Torah prohibited non-kosher items is forbidden by Jewish law. The Vaad ensures that all its establishments are owned by people who do not engage in non-kosher business. Furthermore, the Vaad does not usually allow caterers to modify non-kosher equipment to comply with kashrus constraints for the purposes of a special event, unless there is extra supervision and a specific set of requirements are met.

- **Off-Premises Kashering** – Kashering (aside from kashering for Pesach) is typically discouraged. As a matter of policy, certified Vaad off-premises catered events exclusively utilize kosher dedicated equipment. If kashering the facility is unavoidable, a specially trained and approved mashgiach or team of mashgichim is provided.
- **Yoshon, Pas Yisroel, Cholov Yisroel** -The Vaad is dedicated to serving the needs of community members and visitors who are careful about these stringencies. Regarding our establishments, the Vaad's certificates and website reflect the detailed status of each location. This information can be obtained at events either from the hashgacha card or directly from the mashgiach.
- **Packaged Goods on Supermarket Shelves** -The Vaad reviews every packaged item that makes its way onto the shelves of certified supermarkets. While the certification on each item is ultimately responsible for its kashrus, the Vaad ensures that every item requiring hashgacha is certified by a reliable kashrus organization. Of course, the specific standards of each item are the domain of the certifying agency.
- **Active Rabbinic Oversight** - Capitol K, as well as the community, is fortunate to have the active involvement of the rabbis of the *Vaad* which includes Rabbi Moshe Walter, Director, in addition to kashrus auditors Rabbi Mordechai Rhine and Rabbi Avraham Sussman. The Vaad's *Kashrus* Committee is comprised of Rabbis Yosef Singer, Dovid Rosenbaum, Michael Frank, and Braham Weinberg who help to set policy and address issues that arise daily. Rabbi Walter and I interact with proprietors regularly and supervise our dedicated *mashgichim*. The involvement of the local *rabbanim* with *kashrus* demonstrates the ongoing tradition of unwavering dedication to outstanding kosher certification that has been associated with the Rabbinical Council of Greater Washington.

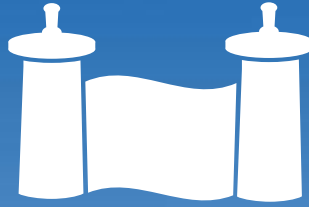
# "THE INSIDE STORY OF YAD YEHUDA OF GREATER WASHINGTON:" FACTS AND STATS

HERE ARE SOME IMPORTANT REASONS TO GIVE YOUR SUPPORT TO YAD  
YEHUDA OF GREATER WASHINGTON

- **Yad Yehuda of Greater Washington offers an array of financial assistance programs for Jewish community members, addressing a vital community need.**
- Yad Yehuda of Greater Washington is a 501 c3 non-profit organization. All donations are tax deductible.
- More than 650 Jewish Washington area community members were assisted by Yad Yehuda services so far in 2018. Yad Yehuda recipients come from every major Jewish neighborhood in Maryland and the District of Columbia.
- Yad Yehuda helps our friends and neighbors get back on their feet, whether the need is for short or longer term financial assistance. All Yad Yehuda services are strictly confidential. Maintaining the privacy and dignity of our recipients is our highest priority.
- More than 150 recipients benefit regularly from the free groceries at the Capital Kosher Pantry.
- More than 50,000 lbs. of food are obtained by the Capital Kosher Pantry and distributed free of charge.
- Tomchei Shabbos distributes \$17,600 in Shalom gift cards every month, allowing for the purchase of over 25,000 Shabbos and Yom Tov meals annually.
- Tomchei Shabbos provides Shabbos and Yom Tov meals that benefit 200 individuals of all ages.
- Tomchei Shabbos benefits are administered through all area Rabbis, including members of the Va'ad HaRabbanim, Beltway Va'ad and local Chabad Shluchim. Rabbis make the initial contact and then remain as the liaisons with Yad Yehuda in order to maximize assistance for the recipients.
- Over 94 cents of every dollar donated to Yad Yehuda goes directly to individuals and families

- in need of financial assistance.
- Yad Yehuda distributed over \$52,500 on Purim day 2018 (5778) for Matanos L'Evyonim
- Yad Yehuda gave out over \$44,000 before Pesach 2018 (5778) for Maos Chitim
- Yad Yehuda prides itself on receiving donations of every size from Washington area Jewish community members of all ages and incomes. About \$500,000 was donated by about 2500 Yad Yehuda supporters last year. We also welcome contributions in the form of donated goods and services.
- Yad Yehuda is run by volunteers of all ages. Volunteers run the Capital Kosher Pantry, donate professional expertise and design fundraisers to collect food, school supplies, clothing and cash.
- **Between Rosh HaShana and Sukkos this coming Tishrei, Yad Yehuda hopes to distribute over \$43,000 in Shalom gift cards to provide Shabbos and Yom Tov meals for needy individuals and families in our neighborhoods. The need is great and every donation is welcome.**
- **Please visit us on our website at <https://www.yadyehuda.org/>**





**VAAD HARABANIM**  
THE RABBINICAL COUNCIL  
of GREATER WASHINGTON



**Vaad Harabanim of Greater Washington**  
**The Rabbinical Council of Greater Washington**

Rabbi Yosef Singer, *President*

Rabbi Moshe Walter, *Director*

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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.