

VAAD HARABANIM
THE RABBINICAL COUNCIL
of GREATER WASHINGTON

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Wishing you a Kesiva v'Chasima Tova!





Rabbi Yosef Singer
Cong. Young Israel Ezras Israel
President

VAAD HARABANIM
THE RABBINICAL COUNCIL
of GREATER WASHINGTON

Rabbi Moshe Walter
Woods de Synagogue Anshas Torah
Executive Director

Elul 5781

Dearest Friends,

In his sefer, Atarah LaMelech, chapter “*B’tzedek tishpot amisecho*,” Rav Avrohom Pam *zt”l* provides a beautiful analysis of the parameters, *hashkofos*, and consequences associated with the mitzvah of judging people favorably. Perhaps the most impactful consequence is found in the Gemara (Shabbos 127b):

הָדוֹן אֶת חֲבֵרוֹ לְכַף זְכוּת דְּנִין אוֹתוֹ לְזְכוּת.

One who judges his friend favorably is judged favorably [in Heaven].

Given the daunting challenges we have faced this past year on a national, communal, and individual level, it would appear that we are, indeed, in desperate need of Hashem’s favorable dispensation. What follows is a synopsis of Rav Pam’s holy words.

First, it must be determined if judging people favorably constitutes a mitzvah or simply a good character attribute — a *midah tovah*. There is, in fact, considerable evidence for both in rabbinic literature — sometimes from the very same source. The Rambam (Sefer HaMitzvos, Mitzvah 177), for example, writes that “every person is commanded...to judge his *chaver* favorably and to limit the interpretation of his actions and words for the good.” However, in his commentary on Pirkei Avos (1:6),

עֲשֵׂה לָךְ רַב, קַיֵּה לָךְ חֵבֵר, וְהוֹי דוֹן אֶת כָּל אָדָם לְכַף זְכוּת,

Make for yourself a Rav, acquire for yourself a *chaver*, and judge all people favorably,

the Rambam explains that “when dealing with an unknown person and associated actions, *derech chasidus* (the way of piety) compels one to judge said person favorably.”

The Chofetz Chaim, in his introduction (*p’sicha*) to the sefer for which he is named, resolves this

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difficulty. When dealing with someone we know to be conscientious in his *avodas hakodesh* but who occasionally stumbles — an *adam beinoni* — we are commanded by the Torah to judge him and his actions favorably, even if it's a “stretch.” This is the meaning of “*havei dan es chavercho l'chaf zchus*” (Shavuos 30b): you should judge **your friend** favorably. Such a person is a **chaver**. In contrast, when dealing with someone with whom we are unfamiliar — *kol adam* — judging favorably falls into the realm of *midos tovos* or *chasidus*.

Second, a competent judge will withhold judgment until he or she is familiar with all the *halachos*, laws, and policies associated with a case, as well as with the circumstances surrounding a person's questionable behavior. Since we are rarely in a position to know what those aforementioned circumstances are, we must, at the very least, withhold any negative judgement — especially with someone we know to be a reliable person.

That said, there is a difficulty with our opening quote from Chazal: “One who judges his friend favorably is judged favorably [in Heaven].” When we speak of judging someone or something favorably, it is because the circumstances surrounding a given action are unknown and/or are ambiguous and are therefore subject to interpretation. In such a case, we are commanded to provide a positive interpretation to our *chaver's* action. As a reward, Chazal teach that HaKadosh Baruch Hu and His heavenly court will provide a positive interpretation of *our* actions. The problem is that there is no ambiguity associated with our actions in the heavenly spheres. Hashem knows exactly what we did and why we did it — He has complete awareness of our life history, achievements, setbacks, strengths, weaknesses, and vulnerabilities. In this context, what does it mean to say that “Heaven will judge us favorably?”

Rabbi Avidgor Miller, *zt"l*, answers: If we truly desire in our heart of our hearts that the “suspicious” actions of our fellow Jews will be found to be true and good in the eyes of Hashem; if we sincerely look for the extenuating, sometimes implausible, circumstances that explain away suspect behavior; if we look for the goodness in one another's hearts — then Hashem will look for and find the goodness in *our* hearts and overlook *our* indiscretions.

I would like to express my profound thanks to Rabbi Walter for producing yet another outstanding

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volume of the Vaad Journal and for his abiding friendship; to the Rabanim of the Vaad and of the community for their selfless dedication, skill, and hard work on behalf of the Greater Washington community; to our proprietors; to the *chashuva* members of our *kehillos*; and to the Ribono Shel Olam for another year of life.

With love and respect,

Rabbi Yosef Singer
President, Vaad HaRabanim of Greater Washington

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Young Israel Shomrai Emunah
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Introduction from the Director

Rabbi Moshe Walter

Dear Community Member,

We are excited to present Volume 9.2 of the Journal of the Rabbinical Council of Greater Washington. This edition of the Journal is chock full of important articles and information relating to the *Yamim Nora'im*, our community, and the Capitol K Kosher division of the Rabbinical Council.

In the **Yamim Nora'im** section, you will find an article written by Rabbi Moshe Walter on the importance of forgiveness and interpersonal relationships in the *teshuvah* process. While significant attention is given to repairing our relationship with Hashem during the *Yamim Nora'im* season, we cannot turn a blind eye to improving and restoring relationships one with another. Now is that time!

In the **Torah in Our Community** section, we showcase two *Kollelim*, each of which has heightened the level of *Limud HaTorah* in our community. The articles — offered by Rosh Kollel Rabbi Eliyahu Reingold of Kollel Zichron Amram of the Yeshiva of Greater Washington and by Rosh Kollel Rabbi Menachem Winter of The Greater Washington Community Kollel — will inform you about these *kollelim* and how members of the community can tap into the wide array of learning opportunities available to all: from *shiurim* to *chaburos* to *chavrusos* and more, on any educational level. We thank Rabbi Reingold and Rabbi Winter for advancing and broadening Torah learning opportunities in our community. For what is a community without serious Torah study?

In the **Kashrus** section of the Journal, learn about the communal and national advancements which have occurred in the kosher meat industry. The Capitol K has always ensured the highest level of *kashrus*; the Vaad's knowledge and involvement in the meat industry has been an important focus of its supervision since the inception of the Rabbinical Council of Greater Washington. Please enjoy Rabbi Zvi Holland's fascinating article about kosher meat in Washington, from 1860 until the present.

In the **Community** section, Mr. Nathan Diament has penned an important article on the painful topic of anti-Semitism — a growing and frightening challenge which we must face, address, and tackle — with a focus on Tishrei as a call for action. Nathan shares with us information about the important work that he and the OU are doing in this regard and discusses what each of us can do as we enter 5782. Nathan's role in this area is well known; we are deeply appreciative of his efforts on behalf of the Jewish community on a national level.

As you read on, Mrs. Mindy Tolchinsky takes us back to a time when the Greater Washington Jewish community did not boast the number of organized chesed organizations we have today. You will be proud to see how our community has grown, with an extremely impressive array of

organizations addressing the full spectrum of needs of a large and thriving Orthodox community. The essence of a community is when members feel cared for, connected, and part of a larger network to which they can give and from which they can receive. This is what has been quietly developing across our community. The amazing selection of chesed organizations that our community currently boasts will certainly bring a smile to your face.

The Journal could never be presented with the level of professionalism and proficiency it now projects without the keen eye and careful pen of Mrs. Mindy Tolchinsky, a gifted writer and skilled editor. I have unbound *hakaras hatov* to Mindy for her awesome efforts in advancing and furthering the message and reach of the Journal of the Rabbinical Council of Greater Washington. I look forward to working with her on many more editions of the Journal in the future. My thanks as well to Mrs. Wendy Guberman for the outstanding layout and beautiful graphic design she brings to each and every volume of the Journal.

My gratitude, as always, to Rabbi Yosef Singer, President of The Rabbinical Council of Greater Washington, for his wise and sagacious leadership of the Vaad. It is my profound pleasure to work so closely with him.

The Vaad is thrilled to present this edition of the Journal. It is our hope that you will enjoy reading these interesting articles as much as we enjoyed preparing them.

Wishing you a Shana Tova — a healthy, happy, and sweet new year!

Rabbi Moshe Walter

Apologizing and Asking for Forgiveness¹

Rabbi Moshe Walter
Woodside Synagogue – Ahavas Torah

INTRODUCTION

We all know how difficult it is to ask for forgiveness from a friend, colleague, family member, or acquaintance whom we have wronged. The natural tendency of a human being is to justify his actions and fool himself into thinking that he really has nothing for which to ask forgiveness — because the other party was at fault. This unwillingness to take responsibility for misconduct is so strong that many people almost never acknowledge any degree of misbehavior toward others. Even those who are willing to admit wrongdoing often have “second-tier” reactions such as: “I am not asking forgiveness until he or she does so first”; or, “I am sorry you feel that way,” thus placing the onus on the other party and essentially exonerating themselves. Furthermore, even when we do recognize and admit that we hurt someone else, it is often too embarrassing to tell the other person, “I’m sorry. You were right and I was wrong,” and, therefore, an apology never materializes.

QUESTIONS

- From whom should one ask for forgiveness?
- According to *halachah*, when is one required to ask for forgiveness?
- How does one properly ask for forgiveness? Is there anything specific one has to say or do when asking for forgiveness?
- Is one required to reveal how one has wronged another party if the latter is unaware of the offense committed?
- May one apologize anonymously, through a third party or by another means of communication?
- What if the other party does not forgive? How many times must one ask for forgiveness?

FROM WHOM TO ASK FOR FORGIVENESS

What emerges from the *Shulchan Aruch* is that one is required to ask forgiveness of anyone who was wronged or upset by anything that one did — or even said.² Furthermore, even if the wronged party responds to the offer of forgiveness with wrath or derogatory remarks, one is still required to continue asking for forgiveness.³ Moreover, even if the offender is aware that

¹ Reprinted from *The Making of a Mensch* (Nanuet, NY: Feldheim 2021), Chapter 6, by Rabbi Mosher Walter, with permission of Feldheim Publishers.

² *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* 606:1, based upon *Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Teshuvah* 2:9.

³ *Nitei Gavriel, Hilchos Yom HaKippurim* 17:10, citing *Responsa Zichron Yehudah* 201.

the wronged party has already granted forgiveness, most halachic authorities maintain that the offender is still required to ask for forgiveness.⁴

It is common to overlook the closest of relationships when considering whom one must ask for forgiveness — including one's spouse, parents, children, colleagues, employees, students, teachers, friends, and neighbors.⁵ These are the people with whom one has the most interaction on a daily basis and thus the people whom one is most likely to have wronged. When the relationship is a close one, one person may inadvertently take advantage of the other, behave with insufficient courtesy and honor — and even sometimes offend and upset him or her. Thus, it is critical to review one's own conduct with people in one's inner circle and make sure to ask for forgiveness if necessary.⁶

If this is not done, the close relationship may start to unravel. In the absence of an apology, resentment and anger may well up in the wronged party, driving a wedge between the two and undermining the love and understanding that should exist between them. A sincere and honest apology is a critical component in re-establishing the relationship.⁷

WHEN TO ASK FOR FORGIVENESS

It is customary to ask for forgiveness on Erev Yom Kippur.⁸ The following are the two primary reasons for this timing:

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 against Hashem. This is derived from the words “before Hashem” in the *pasuk*. However, Yom Kippur does not atone for sins committed against others until one appeases the wronged party. Thus, on Erev Yom Kippur, one is charged to ask forgiveness of others to ensure complete forgiveness on Yom Kippur.⁹
2. On Yom Kippur, we resemble angels; just as angels enjoy purely peaceful relationships with each other, so, too, should all mankind.¹⁰

⁴ *Pele Yo'eitz*, entry for “*Teshuvah*”; *Moadim U'Zmanim* 1:54, citing Rabbi Yitzchak Blazer; *Chut Shani: Yom Kippur* (p. 100), citing the Chazon Ish. All of the above cite the episode involving Rav in *Maseches Yoma* (87a) as support for their position.

⁵ See *Kaf HaChaim* (606:44), who makes this point. *Ketzei HaMateh on Mateh Efrayim* (606:4) notes that one should even ask forgiveness of a non-Jew whom one offended.

⁶ See *Hilchos Chag B'Chag on Yamim Nora'im* 21:43 and fn. 118.

⁷ See *Successful Parenting: Insights and Advice from Rav Pam on Chinuch HaBanim* by Rabbi Shalom Smith (Mesorah Publications, 2004) pp. 17-18.

⁸ *Yoma* 87a and 87b, *Rosh* 8:24. *Tur* and *Shulchan Aruch* codify the *halachos* of forgiveness in *Hilchos Yom Kippur* 606. *Rema*, ad loc. 2, writes, “The custom is to ask for forgiveness on Erev Yom Kippur.”

⁹ *Yoma* 85b, cited by *Mishnah Berurah* 606:1.

¹⁰ *Pirkei D'Rebbi Eliezer*, ch. 6, cited by *Rosh* 8:24; *Tur* and *Levush* 606; *Aruch HaShulchan* 606:5. See *Moadim U'Zmanim* 1:54 for an alternative reason why Erev Yom Kippur was chosen as the day on which to ask for forgiveness.

In a situation where an individual feels wronged by someone even though that person actually did nothing wrong, the first reason exempts the person from apologizing. According to the second reason, however, it would be appropriate to apologize.¹¹

Although asking for forgiveness is linked with the repentance process of Yom Kippur, it is best to ask for forgiveness as soon as an offense has been committed and not wait until Yom Kippur.¹² Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach bemoaned the fact that many are not careful to fulfill this explicit *halachah* even on Erev Yom Kippur.¹³ Rabbi Chaim Shmulevitz lamented that even among those who do ask forgiveness of others on Erev Yom Kippur, many ask forgiveness only of those with whom they have no issues, as a *pro forma* religious obligation, but neglect to ask forgiveness of the people to whom they really owe an apology.¹⁴

SPECIFYING THE REASON FOR ASKING FOR FORGIVENESS

When asking for forgiveness, it is appropriate to specify why one is doing so.¹⁵ For example, if one wronged another by uttering a damaging remark, raising one's voice, or insulting the other, one should specify the reason for asking for forgiveness. An apology cannot be effective and complete without an explanation of why one is asking for forgiveness. Furthermore, specifying the nature of the offense makes the apology more heartfelt and sincere.¹⁶ Apologizing to a group of people at once does not suffice if one owes an apology for something specific to an individual member of the group.¹⁷

Even though specifying the offense is a critical component of the process of asking for forgiveness, there are certain exceptions to the rule:

1. If the wronged party will be embarrassed by hearing the details, one is not required to specify the offense.¹⁸ For example, if one divulged a sensitive secret about an individual, one should not reveal what he said when asking for forgiveness.
2. If the wronged party will be pained by learning of the details, one is not required to specify the offense. For example, if one spoke slander about an individual, he should not reveal what he said when asking for forgiveness.¹⁹

¹¹ See *Sfas Emes* (Yoma 87b, s.v. *ikpid*), who endorses 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.

¹² *Mishnah Berurah* 606:1, citing *Mateh Efrayim* 606:1 and *Chayei Adam* 138:5.

¹³ *Halichos Shlomo: Moadim*, ch. 3; *Orchos Halachah* 19.

¹⁴ *Hilchos Chag B'Chag on Yamim Nora'im* 21:43, fn. 118.

¹⁵ *Bach, Orach Chaim* 606:2, citing *Derashos Maharash. Magen Avraham*, ad loc., cites the *Bach*, and *Mishnah Berurah*, ad loc., cites the *Magen Avraham*.

¹⁶ See *Mishnah Berurah* 606:15 that when apologizing at the grave of a deceased person whom one offended, one is required to specify the sin unless it will embarrass the deceased. See *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* 131:5.

¹⁷ *Mishnah Berurah* 606:3, citing *Mateh Efrayim* 606:2.

¹⁸ *Magen Avraham* and *Mishnah Berurah*, ad loc.

¹⁹ Opinion of Rabbi Yisrael Salanter, cited in *Moadim U'Zmanim* 1:54, heard from Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler; *Az Nidberu* 7:66; *Tenuos HaMussar*, vol. 1, p. 363 (p. 334 in Feldheim ed.).

The Chafetz Chaim did not agree with the opinion of Rabbi Yisrael Salanter, as noted in *Sefer Chafetz Chaim* 4:12, based on the position of Rabbeinu Yonah in *Sha'arei Teshuvah* 207. See *Halichos Shlomo: Moadim* 3:6, and *Dvar Halachah* 6, ad loc., citing Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach who ruled in accordance with Rabbi Yisrael Salanter. See *Halichos Shlomo: Orchos Halachah* 24 and *Chut Shani: Yom Kippur* (p. 106), who suggest a way of reconciling the disagreement between Rabbi Yisrael Salanter and the Chafetz Chaim. See also *Mishnah Berurah* 606:3 where the

3. It is permitted to ask forgiveness of an individual whom one wronged without specifying the offense if it was of minor import,²⁰ such as a wrong that the other party will surely forgive.
4. Under certain circumstances, it is permitted to ask for forgiveness by phone or by mail without revealing one's identity. For example, one may return a stolen object or money, and apologize without revealing one's name, if the individual who was robbed never realized that anything had been stolen.²¹

USING A PROXY TO ASK FOR FORGIVENESS

Just as specifying the reason for the apology makes it more sincere, approaching the wronged party directly to apologize is more meaningful. Sending a proxy raises suspicions about a lack of seriousness. Furthermore, the embarrassment and discomfort of apologizing in person is part of the atonement for the offense.²² It is for this reason that many halachic authorities maintain that one should not send a proxy but should only apologize in person.²³

Even though a first-hand 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 may apologize through a proxy or by phone, mail, or the like.²⁴
2. If one knows that a third party has a better chance of securing forgiveness than the offender himself, it is best to send a third party to apologize.²⁵

If neither of these exceptions apply but one is unable to apologize to the wronged party before Yom Kippur, one should resolve to apologize following Yom Kippur. In that event, Yom Kippur atones for the sin as long as an apology is indeed made following Yom Kippur.²⁶

HOW MANY TIMES MUST ONE ASK FOR FORGIVENESS?

If an apology was offered but was not accepted by the wronged party, one is required to try an additional two times.²⁷ If one's apology is not accepted after three attempts, he is not required to try again.²⁸ At that point, one should state in the presence of ten people that an attempt was

Chafetz Chaim indeed rules like Rabbi Yisrael Salanter, seemingly contradicting his assertion in his *Sefer Chafetz Chaim*. The abovementioned ways of reconciling the two opinions may very well reconcile this apparent contradiction as well.

²⁰ *Halichos Shlomo: Moadim* 3:5.

²¹ *Pele Yo'eitz*, entry for "Teshuvah"; *Iggeros Moshe, Choshen Mishpat* 88, s.v. *u'mah sh'sha'alta*.

²² *Mateh Moshe, Amud HaAvodah, Aseres Yemei Teshuvah* 848 and earlier, fn. 4.

²³ *Mishnah Berurah* 606:2 and *Sha'ar HaTziyun*, ad loc. 3, citing *Bach, Elyah Rabbah*, and *Mateh Efrayim* 606:1. See, however, *Pri Chadash* 606:1, s.v. *v'afilu*, and *Pele Yo'eitz*, entry for "Teshuvah," who rule that a proxy would suffice.

²⁴ *Mishnah Berurah* 606:2, citing *Mateh Efrayim* 606:1. See *Yechaveh Da'as* 5:44 and *Hilchos Chag B'Chag: Yamim Nora'im* 21:40 and fn. 110.

²⁵ *Mishnah Berurah* 606:2 and *Hilchos Chag B'Chag: Yamim Nora'im* 21:40.

²⁶ *Elef HaMagen* 606:3 and *Ketzei HaMateh* 606:3, citing *Sefer Yafeh L'Lev*.

²⁷ *Shulchan Aruch*, ad loc. *Shulchan Aruch* adds that the individual should bring three people with him each time. *Kaf HaChaim* 606:17 notes that the same three people may come along each time. *Mekor Chaim*, ad loc., notes that the three apologies may take place during the same visit. *Mishnah Berurah*, ad loc. 2, adds that a different form of apology or request for forgiveness should be used each time.

²⁸ *Shulchan Aruch*, ad loc.

made to apologize. This is done so that one will not be suspected of not wanting to make amends.²⁹

If one wronged one's Rabbi, there is no limit to the number of times that he should ask for forgiveness — until it is granted.³⁰

If the person whom one wronged has died, he should go to the individual's grave with ten people and declare, "I have sinned against the G-d of Israel and against this individual."³¹

BEYOND FORGIVENESS

At times, it is not enough to merely ask for forgiveness. The Rambam writes, "Sins against other people — such as injuring, cursing, and stealing — are never atoned for until [the offender] has paid what he owes the person and appeased him. Even if he pays, he still must appease [the injured party] and ask for forgiveness."³² When it comes to verbal wrongdoing, asking for forgiveness is the totality of the penitent's requirement. When the offense extends beyond the realm of the verbal, however, one is required to rectify the damage as well as to ask for forgiveness.

The Rambam continues: "A person who causes physical damage to another is [halachically] unlike one who causes financial damage. When a person harms another financially, once he pays compensation for the damage caused, he receives atonement. In contrast, when a person causes physical damage to another, he cannot gain atonement until he asks for, and is granted, forgiveness from the injured party."³³

In this *halachah*, the Rambam rules that only physical damage requires an apology, as opposed to financial damage, which does not. Yet in the earlier *halachah*, the Rambam writes that theft cannot be atoned for until the thief has repaid his victim and appeased him as well! How is this paradox to be understood?

The Lechem Mishnah explains that appeasement is required in a case of theft because a thief inflicts physical damage as well as emotional suffering — while also benefiting personally from the theft. This is unlike property damage, when only reimbursement is required. Because the damager did not cause any emotional suffering and did not benefit from the damage, appeasement is not necessary. However, regarding theft, it is necessary to replace the stolen item(s) and to apologize as well, due to the physical and emotional damage inflicted.³⁴ For the same reasons, physical injury requires financial restitution coupled with appeasement.

²⁹ *Rema*, ad loc., with *Mishnah Berurah* 6. *Kaf HaChaim*, ad loc. 24, notes that if nobody else is aware of the offense, there is no need to make this public proclamation.

³⁰ *Shulchan Aruch*, ad loc.

³¹ *Shulchan Aruch*, ad loc. 2.

³² *Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Teshuvah* 2:9.

³³ *Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Choveil U'Mazik* 5:9.

³⁴ *Lechem Mishneh on Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Choveil U'Mazik* 5:9.

Based on this, halachic authorities rule that a thief may return the stolen item without asking for forgiveness if the victim never knew about the theft — since no emotional damage was caused.³⁵

CONCLUSION

The laws related to asking for forgiveness force the offender to recognize the sin he committed and understand the pain of the wronged party. Furthermore, the offender is obliged to approach his fellow, admit his guilt, and express remorse for the pain he caused. These steps should lead to forgiveness from the victim and complete atonement from Hashem.

³⁵ *Iggeros Moshe, Choshen Mishpat 1:88:15, s.v. u'mah she'sha'alta. See Mishnah Berurah (Dirshu ed.) 606, note 6 for additional source material.*



Kollel Zichron Amram: Building Torah from the Inside Out

Rabbi Eliyahu Reingold
Rosh Kollel, Kollel Zichron Amram

When I was 19, I was chozer b'teshuva in Atlanta. I was thirsty to learn Torah and come close to Hashem. I struggled to master the basics of learning while at college.

Today, Rabbi Moshe Chaim Blate is Rosh Chabura of Second Seder at the Yeshiva of Greater Washington's Kollel Zichron Amram and its Director of Community Programming. He continues:

As a young man, I had marveled at the members of the Kollel — masmidim and talmidei chachamim — whom I wished to emulate. There never was any question: I wanted to continue my growth in Torah at Kollel Zichron Amram.

My Rosh Kollel and the Rosh HaYeshiva guided me as I grappled with how to conduct our home life or navigate raising children. They provided practical advice steeped in a life perspective based upon Torah. As our children grow, they continue to provide valuable direction today. (Rabbi Moshe Chaim Blate)¹

What is a Kollel? What distinguishes Kollel Zichron Amram?

TWO TYPES OF KOLLELIM: A BRIEF HISTORY

A. THE YESHIVA KOLLEL

The first kollel, according to modern usage of the term, was established in 1877 in Kovno (Lithuania) by Rabbi Yisrael Salanter. A group of ten exceptional young men (and their families) would receive a small stipend to dedicate a few years to intensive study, preparing them to be the leaders and scholars of the next generation. Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetsky zt"l was a member of that kollel (as were Rabbi Yosef Hurwitz, founder of all Novardok yeshivos; Rabbi Dovid Leibowitz, founder of Yeshiva Chofetz Chaim in America; and Rabbi Chaim Telzer of the Telshe Yeshiva). All yeshiva kollelim (plural of kollel) are modeled after this kollel.

¹Rabbi Blate's complete story may be found at: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1K7dy28oaE-RRtCjx9iPLsFGszwhnfEFv5-gZY6HFBrA/edit?usp=sharing>

As a yeshiva kollel, Kollel Zichron Amram provides the opportunity for a young married couple to build their marriage on a foundation of Torah learning and growth. Torah teaches, purifies, and expands the individual who studies it, spreading its effect onto one's home and family.

I am very fortunate to have spent three years learning in the Kollel. It was a brotherhood of yidden which was hyper-focused on instilling Torah and cultivating ruchniyus (spirituality) that would serve as the bedrock for our lives to come. This nurturing environment recognized that most of us would one day enter secular society to earn a living; that same Derech HaChaim (approach to life) continues to guide us outside the walls of the Beis Medrash. (Dr. Justin Cohen, Baltimore)

B. THE COMMUNITY KOLLEL

In 1970, a new type of kollel came into being: the community kollel. First in South Africa and then in Toronto, this kollel was dedicated to spreading Torah across the community. The impact of intense group Torah study on a city, and the inherent *kedushah* that it brings, should not be underestimated — even before the kollel spreads one word of Torah beyond its own walls.

The Kollel is committed to standards of excellence in everything that it does. This will be reflected both in the establishment and development of a thriving Beit Midrash as well as its interfacing with the community by teaching, programming and personal contact. The motto of the Kollel is contained in the clear directive to every Jew: ללמוד וללמד – to study and to teach.²

A kollel is always primarily focused on the individual person; whether we are referring to an *avreich* (Hebrew for Kollel member) or community member, the goal is personal growth through learning Torah. It is called a *kollel* (כולל) because it recognizes the power of a group (from the word *klal*, i.e., included) to be the framework and catalyst for that personal growth. A kollel brings Torah learning and spiritual growth to a city, thereby creating a Torah community.

SILVER SPRING AND KOLLEL ZICHRON AMRAM

A visitor once commented that Rabbi Gedaliah Anemer, *zt"l*, was “fresh in his learning,” as if he was a young man in yeshiva. Rabbi Anemer dreamed of building a community based upon Torah learning and growth, establishing the Yeshiva of Greater Washington in 1964. With the addition of the Yeshiva Gedolah (1995) and Kollel Zichron Amram (1998), the die was cast: Silver Spring would become a bastion of Torah.

Rabbi Anemer had requested that the yungerleit (Yiddish for kollel members) learn with Young Israel Shomrai Emunah members. I helped Rabbi Reingold build the Tuesday Night Beis Medrash program there. That first Tuesday, over 60 Baal

² Ner Le'Elef, “Models,” *Nitzotzot Min HaNer*, January – March, 2004, Vol 16, p.8, <http://www.nerleef.com/Nitzotzot/janmar4.pdf>.

HaBatim came to learn. Rabbi Anemer's face shone with simcha. It was the intersection of his two loves — the Yeshiva and his shul. (Rabbi Moshe Chaim Blate)

Kollel Zichron Amram is a unique yeshiva kollel. When the Kollel began 22 years ago, its mission statement included an expectation of every *avreich* to engage in community learning at least once per week. *Avreichim* were not to see themselves as an island unto themselves, but as a source of knowledge, passion for Torah, and wisdom for others. The impact of the purity and earnestness of the *avreich* and his family upon an individual who may have not had that opportunity is inestimable. Friendships and mentorships are formed in both directions.

The Kollel, Yeshiva and our community owe a debt of gratitude to the group of individuals who saw the formation of a such a unique kollel as the true, appropriate memorial for Amram Hillel Feldman, *a"h* (late husband of Mrs. Gloria Feldman, *shetichyeh*). Without the vision of its founders, the Kollel would not have come into being. Rabbi Avrom Landesman, *shlit"a*, should be singled out for the yeoman's job of carrying the financial responsibility of the Kollel singlehandedly for over ten years.

While the learning component at Kollel Zichron Amram is independent from the Yeshiva — focused on areas that an *avreich* should learn and master — and while fundraising is separate as well, in other ways they are one institution. The Rosh HaYeshiva is connected to the *avreichim*; the *avreichim* are connected to the high school and Yeshiva Gedolah students.³ Each division enhances the vibrancy of the other; when a community member joins the Kollel for a learning opportunity, he gains from the atmosphere and *kedushah* of the overall institution.

I had the pleasure to give a shiur to several community members (including my father) over three years. This opened my eyes to the joy of sharing Torah and honed my skills as an educator. As a resident physician, educating medical students, junior residents and patients is a big part of what I do — a skillset I acquired at the Kollel. (Dr. Justin Cohen)

Beyond ongoing *chavrusa* opportunities, the Kollel conducts various community programs. Prior to all Yamim Tovim, special shiurim are presented by our Rosh HaYeshiva Rabbi Ahron Lopiansky, *shlit"a*, or our Rosh Kollel Rabbi Reingold. Shiurim on Federal holidays immerse members of the community in Torah knowledge; many contemporary and challenging topics have been explored. Recorded shiurim are available on the Yeshiva's website.

Other programming includes halachah shiurim for women and Lunch and Learn programs in DC. To bring the wisdom and knowledge of the Rosh HaYeshiva and Rosh Kollel to the broader Washington community, the Kollel joins communities for Shabbatonim in Potomac, Woodside,

³ Rabbi Amram Hes, when seeking to bring the Kollel back to the Yeshiva during the Covid-19 situation, commented that it was vital to have the presence and passion of the Kollel to inspire the high school students.

Olney, and Kemp Mill. Additionally, Rabbi Reingold delivers a daily 5-minute halachah shiur, available by podcast or email.⁴

The crown jewel of the Kollel's community programming is the annual Yom Iyun, which brings approximately 150 people into the Yeshiva Beis Medrash for a full morning of learning. The program is blessed to have had the participation of the Rabanim of Greater Washington, who learn together with their shul members; many Rabanim have served as the main speaker.⁵

Aside from the impact of its sheer presence, the Kollel has been a home to so many young men in our community who are looking for a place to learn, daven, and be uplifted in ruchniyut. The presence of a yeshiva and kollel here creates a ripple effect that strengthens all our institutions. It has been wonderful to bring so many members of KMS to learn in the Beit Midrash during the Yom Iyun programs which really have a broad appeal. (Rabbi Brahm Weinberg, Kemp Mill Synagogue)

My daily Torah learning used to be one or two halachot and שניימ מקרא ואחד תרגום. Since my involvement with the Kollel, I have made more than five siyumim on various masechtot and mishnayot. My daily learning involves much more than before. I now study an Amud of Gemara, a few mishnayot, and halachah each day! (Mr. Rafi Cattan, community member)

KOLLEL MEMBERS AND ALUMNI

Many area Rabanim have connections to the Kollel. Rabbis Rosenbaum and Kreiser are Kollel alumni; Rabbis Bulman, Frank, Postelnek, and Walter are current Kollel members. All appreciate the opportunity for Torah growth afforded by the Kollel.

Kollel Zichron Amram has afforded my husband the opportunity to continue advancing in his learning since our arrival in Silver Spring ten years ago. The Kollel has been a lifeline for him in the work that he does in our home, in Woodside and across the broader community. (Mrs. Devora Walter)

The Kollel has over one hundred alumni, B"H; forty remain in the area. While many serve as Rabanim and Rebbeim, they include psychologists, accountants, lawyers, engineers, therapists, and brokers. What they have in common is their passion to grow spiritually, enhance their families' connection to Torah, and make a positive impact upon those around them.

Part of my function is having end-of-life discussions and supporting patients as their time in this world wanes. I often find myself drawing on ideas about life, death, and our purpose that I learned during my time in Kollel. This Derech HaChaim has impacted all parts of my life, including but not limited to my family, my job, and the central role Yiddishkeit plays in my life. (Dr. Justin Cohen)

⁴ Contact: info@dvarhalacha.com

⁵ Save the date: Sunday, February 20, 2022!

What does the Kollel mean to you?

Everything. From the Rosh Kollel to all the Kollel Rebbeim who learn Torah all day. Their Torah learning is what keeps our entire community safe and connected to Hashem. (Mr. Rafi Cattan)

To join this journey, please contact Rabbi Moshe Chaim Blate: (404) 273-3392 or moshechayim@gmail.com.



The Greater Washington Community Kollel: Lighting the Flame of Torah Across our Community

Rabbi Menachem Winter
Rosh Kollel, Greater Washington Community Kollel

The founding of the Greater Washington Community Kollel (GWCK) in September of 2008 was the realization of an enduring dream of my father Rabbi Kalman Winter, *zt"l*, the long-serving Rabbi of Southeast Hebrew Congregation and community leader in Greater Washington. Rabbi Winter's ambitious vision was to create an entity that would bring high-quality Torah content and passionate engagement with Yiddishkeit to the community, reaching all sectors, irrespective of affiliation or background. Men, women, boys, and girls — from beginner to scholar — would have a resource in which to immerse themselves in authentic Torah study, be nourished by the timeless wisdom of Jewish ideals, and enrich themselves in a non-judgmental and inviting atmosphere. This foundational ideal has been the Kollel's operating guide since our inception thirteen years ago.

To actualize this dream, high-caliber and seasoned Torah scholars were selected from the finest Yeshivos, distinguished by their passion and dedication to sharing their knowledge and wisdom, as well as by their teaching acumen and ability to present subject matter in a modern and relevant manner. Kollel scholars and their families are integrated into the community as members of local shuls — opening up their homes, davening there regularly, presenting *divrei Torah* between Mincha and Maariv, interacting at Kiddush, and attending *simchos* and events.

The Kollel operates on a dual track. In the morning and afternoon, GWCK scholars further their studies through an intense curriculum, enabling them to advance their scholarship and develop into effective leaders and teachers. In the evenings, on Shabbos, and on weekends, Kollel scholars are dedicated to the GWCK's diverse communal engagements, classes, and programs throughout Greater Washington.

The Kollel's success in forging close relationships and partnerships with many community shuls, organizations, and institutions has shaped its character and laid the groundwork for many of its accomplishments. Area shuls have partnered with and hosted the Kollel in their midst — includ-

ing Aish Rockville, Kemp Mill Synagogue, Kesher Israel, Southeast Hebrew Congregation, Woodside Synagogue Ahavas Torah, Young Israel Ezras Israel of Potomac, and Young Israel Shomrai Emunah — with the Kollel scheduling regular daily or weekly classes in many of them. GWCK is also an ongoing partner of the Bender JCC and MesorahDC. It is an honor, privilege, and joy for us to work closely with and be a resource for the many wonderful entities across Greater Washington.

A cherished area of focus for the Greater Washington Community Kollel is our youth. Prioritizing these future members of the Jewish people, the Kollel has developed an array of youth-centered activities and educational opportunities, including holiday programming, enrichment classes, summer learning, girls' nights out, and various other activities that provide occasions for education, inspiration, connection, and fun for area children in a warm and wholesome environment.

Outstanding among the many community contributors on our staff is our Rosh Chaburah, Rabbi Yitzhak Grossman, who is beloved for his erudition, kindness, and humility. In addition to leading the study sessions for the Kollel scholars, Rabbi Grossman is a prolific contributor to the community, in diverse and multifaceted ways. A respected authority in *Choshen Mishpat* and other areas of halachah, Rabbi Grossman is consulted by individuals as well as by local and national Batei Din. Rabbi Grossman presents weekly classes at Kemp Mill Synagogue, Southeast Hebrew Congregation, and Young Israel Shomrai Emunah. His Lunch and Learn presentations in Rockville and DC, on a wide variety of contemporary issues and intriguing topics, are especially popular. Rabbi Grossman lectures and writes across many media platforms on diverse and fascinating subjects.

In 2017, under the dynamic directorship of Rabbi Hillel Shaps, GWCK inaugurated the LINKS program, with the far-reaching goal of connecting even more Jews from across the religious spectrum to their heritage. Over the last few years, LINKS has reached hundreds of men and women through its many programs: volunteer events for young professionals, Hebrew reading crash courses, High Holiday prep classes, and — most notably — its flagship learning program at the Bender JCC in Rockville.

Rabbi Shaps also teaches and leads Silver Spring's Semichat Chaver Program (SCP) in partnership with Young Israel Shomrai Emunah. SCP is a rigorous, innovative, and interactive halachah program which draws many dozens of weekly participants. Rabbi Shaps, with his warm, engaging, and relatable personality, has forged close relationships with many community members and, in particular, with young professionals in Kemp Mill, for whom he leads a weekly casual study session.

Among numerous study opportunities for women afforded by the Kollel are popular weekly classes from our Director of Women's Programming, Mrs. Sara Malka Winter. A noted national lecturer, with recent contributions to the OU Women's Initiative Nach Yomi Series, Mrs. Winter's presentations are acclaimed for their depth, clarity, and breadth. Her weekly classes have

included topics such as Chumash, Megillos, Mitzvos and Tefillah. Mrs. Winter's special holiday presentations attract a following from across Greater Washington.

Greater Washington Community Kollel alumni, many of whom remain in the area, make valuable contributions to the local Jewish community. Our alumni families continue to serve as teachers, principals, outreach professionals, shul board members, and founders of organizations which serve the community.

The Kollel is fortunate to have Mr. Judah Lifschitz as its long-time president. Mr. Lifschitz, a successful trial lawyer, has made many distinguished contributions to our community, including founding and leading the Kemp Mill Daf Yomi, serving as acting head counsel for the Vaad HaRabanim of Greater Washington, and guiding Sulam as its president. In his work with the Kollel, Mr. Lifschitz has promoted impassioned and inspired Yiddishkeit. Among the initiatives he has spearheaded are the celebrated annual Kollel/Shomrai Emunah Shabbaton and musical kumzitzes, undertakings that embody his vision for a Judaism filled with fervency and joy.

Greater Washington Community Kollel has also engaged the community through many multimedia print and digital platforms. One such publication is the weekly "Shabbos Delights" which contains exciting, informative, and inspiring content for adults and children. The Shabbos Delights is distributed in print to local shuls and is emailed to thousands more, sparking a national following. Other digital offerings include online video lectures, Zoom presentations, audio classes, and podcasts by our staff. Digital platforms have served the Kollel well, enabling us to continue our mission uninterrupted during the very challenging COVID-19 pandemic. Based upon feedback, this continued and dynamic engagement was especially appreciated by many who felt lonely and isolated during this difficult time.

Going forward, as people have increasingly migrated to consuming content online, with many enjoying it for its ease of access and convenience, the Kollel hopes to maintain and grow its digital presence to best serve the ever-changing needs of our community. Most of all, the Greater Washington Community Kollel looks forward to learning, studying, and connecting with you in the very near future. We can't wait to see you at a class near you!

For more information about The Greater Washington Community Kollel, please visit gwckollel.org or email info@gwckollel.org.

A Snapshot of Kosher Meat in Washington: 1860 – Present

Rabbi Zvi Holland
Director of Field Operations, Capitol K

A WORLD WITHOUT HECHSHERIM

Everything about food production has changed over the last one hundred years. *Shechita* (ritual slaughter of animals according to *halachah*) is no different. The *Gemara* in *Chullin* describes a common situation where ALL of the meat in a city was slaughtered by G-d fearing Jews. Assuming no *treifos* (non-kosher animals) were identified, the meat was then sold to butchers — both Jewish and non-Jewish. The *halachah* and common practice in that situation was for Jews to buy meat from ANY of the city's butchers since presumably it was ALL kosher. For a variety of reasons, that process became untenable and halachic authorities required that meat be purchased only from a Jew and sealed with two kosher seals when sent with a non-Jewish delivery person.

LOCAL RABBINIC OVERSIGHT

From that time until the advent of refrigeration, while the kosher meat industry changed, the fundamental structure of *kashrus* did not. A local *shochet* slaughtered the meat; it was *traibored* (deveined) by a butcher and *kashered* (soaked and salted) at home. If and when there were *shailos* (halachic questions), the local Rov resolved them one way or another.

During the first half of the twentieth century, there were reportedly dozens of kosher slaughterhouses and butchers in Washington, DC. In Baltimore in the 1930s, approximately three hundred butchers presented themselves as kosher.

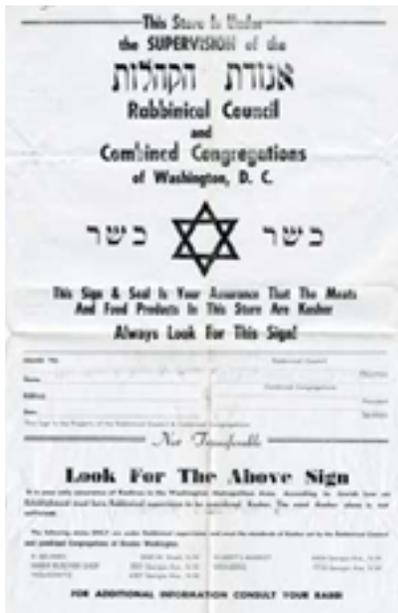
The 1935 banquet journal of the fledgling *Yeshivas Ner Yisroel* in Baltimore (founded 1933) contains an ad thanking the 34 butcher shops who each donated half a calf once a year (reprinted in *Yeshurun Journal*, 18 Kislev 5767, page 170). By mapping the printed addresses one can appreciate the high density of kosher butchers, as this list represented just 1/9 of the total number in the city.¹

In his 2015 review, "Keeping the DC Area Kosher," Zachary Paul Levine notes that, while Washington boasted six kosher restaurants during the Civil War, there were only a few *shochtim* (ritual slaughterers) serving the entire Washington Jewish community by 1900. Those *shochtim* generally provided services to specific congregations.

¹ Rabbi Moshe T. Schuchman, "Kosher Meat in the Marketplace," *Kashrus Kurrents* 38, no. 3 (Winter 2016): p.1.



Kashrus Certification Symbol of the Rabbinical Council and Combined Congregations, 1966. Jewish Historical Society of Greater Washington Collections. Donor: Ohev Sholom - The National Synagogue.



Kashrus Supervision Poster of the Rabbinical Council and Combined Congregations, 1962. Jewish Historical Society of Greater Washington Collections.



Advertisement of the Rabbinical Council and Combined Congregations for markets with kosher supervision, 1966. Jewish Historical Society of Greater Washington Collections.

Simon Mundheim, for example, supervised *shechita* for Washington Hebrew Congregation beginning in 1863, later serving Adas Israel Congregation. Congregation Ohev Sholom, which similarly engaged a *shochet* for its congregants' needs, charged an additional half-cent per pound of meat to help support its religious school.

In 1901, one kosher butcher existed in the area of 4½ Street, SW, while two *shochtim* worked on Seventh Street, NW. Both kosher and non-kosher meat were sold by a butcher in Center Market (at the current location of the National Archives).

The increase in Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe prompted the formation of *Agudas HaKehillos* (Combined Congregations) in 1907 to supervise all facets of Orthodox Jewish life in Washington, DC — including *shechita*.²

SHECHITA MOVES TOWARD THE LIVESTOCK

With the advent of refrigerated transport, it made more sense for animals to be harvested close to the farms on which they were raised. Thus *shechita* moved out to where the animals were raised as well. Gone were the days when you knew your *shochet* to be an upstanding *y'rei Shamayim* (a G-d fearing Jew) and when the local Rov visited the slaughterhouse regularly to ensure that his community was getting truly kosher meat.

During the second half of the twentieth century, while the local Rov's, butcher's and kosher consumer's relationships with *shechita* diminished, the processes of *traiboring* and *kashering* remained in the hands of the *Rabanim*, butchers and Jewish homemakers. There was no branding of meat or commercialization of kosher certifiers. *Kashrus* of meat was the higher calling of the local rabbinate which (hopefully) possessed the knowledge and expertise to choose its sources of meat and oversee its appropriate preparation. If they were paid for supervision, it was part of a subsistence level income rather than big business. Community members were able to evaluate the *Rabanim* and *mashgichim* and build trust based upon long-term personal relationships. Local oversight and *minhagim*, at least for *traiboring* and *kashering*, remained intact for as long as ritually slaughtered beef, poultry and lamb were delivered to butcher shops for final *kashering*.

COMMERCIALIZED SHECHITA AND ITS SUPERVISION

Since the 1970s, the meat industry in general has undergone drastic changes. While a full review is beyond the scope of this article, suffice it to say that the two trends that have most affected kosher markets are pre-*kashered* chicken and boxed beef. The advent of pre-*kashered*

² Zachary Paul Levine, "Keeping the DC Area Kosher," JewishFoodExperience.com, August 2, 2015, <https://jewishfoodexperience.com/keeping-the-dc-area-kosher/>.

chicken (pioneered by David Elliott Poultry of Scranton, PA and later adopted by Empire Kosher Poultry of Mifflintown, PA) and vacuum-packed and boxed beef (first introduced by Iowa Beef Packers) has altered the *shechita* scene forever. *Shechita* plants now also process the meat until it is packaged and shipped (either fresh or frozen) to the kosher markets. Local *Rabanim* and *kashrus* agencies are now, for the most part, completely removed from the entire process. Consumers — who, at one time, were able to directly evaluate the *Rabanim machshirim*, *shochtim* and *mashgichim* on their own — are left to read messaging printed on vacuum-sealed packages of meat, often crafted by marketing companies touting the reliability and high level of the *hechsherim* printed on the labels. Not only are the *products* marketed to us: the *kashrus* is now branded and marketed as well.

THE ROLE OF A LOCAL KASHRUS AGENCY: 1980 – PRESENT

As a result of these changes, local *Rabanim* in one community or another had little influence on the actual day-to-day operations of *shechita*. Rabbis no longer had to study the laws of *shechita*, *traiboring* or *kashering* in order to qualify for ordination. Most were ill-equipped to determine the status of the *shechita* that their *kashrus* agencies were approving for local consumption.

There were a few notable exceptions around the country, among them Washington, DC and Baltimore, MD. Both were located in relatively close proximity to kosher slaughterhouses and both had well-respected and expert *Rabanim* who were intimately familiar with the requirements of *shechita*.

Both the Capitol K and the STAR-K have maintained strict oversight over which meat and poultry products are allowed to be sold in their respective communities. Slaughterhouse visits, interviews of *shochtim* and *mashgichim*, and an ongoing dialogue regarding *kashrus* standards with certifying agencies are all part of a serious effort to ensure that these communities can be comfortable that the meat they are eating truly satisfies the high expectations of its rabbinate.

MIDWEST, LATIN AMERICA, AND BEYOND

With the globalization ushered in by the twenty-first century, it became no longer sufficient to visit Pennsylvania-based kosher chicken *shechitos* and local beef slaughterhouses. Since the 1990s, kosher boxed beef has been produced in modern plants that complete the entire *kasherization* process in places all over the United States: in Iowa, Illinois, Nebraska, Minnesota and beyond.

Further afield, US-based companies, working in tandem with established Israeli meat producers, began to import kosher boxed beef from Uruguay, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, and Mexico. Imported processed poultry comes from a variety of facilities in Israel as well. These changes have made the maintenance of solid local oversight of kosher meat even more challenging.

THINK GLOBALLY, ACT LOCALLY

In order to maintain the Vaad HaRabanim of Greater Washington's established policy not to permit the sale of any new meat or poultry product until the Vaad or its representative has visited the plant and approved the item for use, the Vaad takes advantage of its close relationship with the STAR-K to receive firsthand reports on new slaughter facilities that the STAR-K reviews. Members of the STAR-K Shechita Team regularly review with the Vaad HaRabanim of Greater Washington current information on *shechita* plants that the STAR-K decides to accept or chooses to avoid. Using outside expertise in this manner provides the Vaad access to broader information while applying local considerations and reviewing its approach to meat and poultry products used across its community.

STRIKING A BALANCE

With an active, educated rabbinate, the Greater Washington Jewish community has the benefit of guidance by *Rabanim* who apply real-life information to their *kashrus* determinations regarding meat and poultry. *Rabanim* attentive to the financial and spiritual concerns of the community can strike a balance to ensure an adequate supply of products that meet the expectations of both the rabbinate and the community.

Addressing the Rise of Anti-Semitism in America: Orthodox Union Advocacy

Nathan Diament
Executive Director, Orthodox Union Advocacy Center

As we close the year 5781, the American Jewish community looks back upon a year that, along with many blessings, saw a terrible and historic rise in anti-Semitism in the United States. National Jewish organizations are working in their respective ways to address this historic challenge. The Orthodox Union's focus has been threefold:

- increasing security resources available to our communities' shuls and schools;
- engaging with national elected officials to have them speak out against anti-Semitism; and
- ensuring that the threat of anti-Semitism that uniquely impacts the Orthodox segment of the Jewish community is properly accounted for and addressed.

SECURING OUR SCHOOLS AND SHULS

More than a decade ago, the Orthodox Union spearheaded the creation of the Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP), administered by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. NSGP grants, available for up to \$100,000, pay for physical security measures such as fencing and shatterproof glass, and for hiring security guards. Since its inception, more than \$600 million in NSGP grants has been allocated. The OU is currently advocating for Congress to increase the annual appropriation for next year's NSGP grants to \$360 million. Additionally, the OU is working with Department of Justice officials to have DOJ increase resources to local police departments, specifically to expand protection for houses of worship and other faith-based institutions.

URGING LEADERS TO SPEAK OUT

The most recent surge in anti-Semitic acts and rhetoric occurred in May, 2021, in the shadow of Israel's latest battle with Hamas. In a startling development, some American politicians publicly asserted that Israel was not acting in its self-defense and, thus, sought to undermine her moral standing in the war against terrorism. The OU launched a campaign mobilizing hundreds of Orthodox Jewish constituents of scores of Members of Congress. Those constituents held meetings with their elected representatives, resulting in many Members of Congress speaking out in defense of Israel and against anti-Semitic attacks and rhetoric.

FOCUSING ON THE THREATS TO ORTHODOX JEWS

Orthodox Jews are often the most “visibly” Jewish — thanks to our *kippot* and other distinctive garb as well as our frequent gathering at shuls and other Jewish institutions. As documented by the ADL and others, this has led to a disproportionate share of anti-Semitic incidents directed at our segment of the Jewish community. Yet, many law enforcement and elected officials are unfamiliar with the Orthodox Jewish community — our practices and sensitivities — even when it’s in the local “backyard” of these government leaders. To fill this information gap, the OU launched an ongoing series of meetings with local police and government leaders in key communities to forge better relationships, increase understanding, and open lines of communication.

TISHREI AS A MODEL FOR ACTION

The Yamim Tovim we celebrate in the month of Tishrei remind us that we as Jews are both members of humanity at large and a separate, distinct people.

Rosh HaShanah and Sukkot have key elements that focus on humanity as a whole. On Yom HaDin we declare:

הַיּוֹם הִרְתָּ עוֹלָם, הַיּוֹם יַעֲמִיד בַּמִּשְׁפָּט כָּל יְצוּרֵי עוֹלָמִים...
Today, the world was created,
today all creatures of the world stand in judgment...

On Sukkot, *korbanot* were offered in the *Beit HaMikdash* for all seventy nations of the world.

On the other hand, Yom Kippur is a day of repentance uniquely gifted to the Jewish people, just as Shemini Atzeret/Simchat Torah are days of unique celebration for us with HaKadosh Baruch Hu.

In this duality — manifested in *hashkafa* and *halacha* — we are asked to understand ourselves as straddling two spheres: sharing a general identity with humankind while also being a unique nation. While this duality is a challenge for us — one that, hopefully, leads us to a life in which we are both thriving in *mitzvot* as well as engaged in society at large — it is also a lens through which to view the challenge we now face from anti-Semites.

Two years ago, Professor Deborah Lipstadt, eminent Holocaust historian and President Biden’s nominee to serve as the State Department’s Special Envoy to Combat Anti-Semitism, spoke at Kemp Mill Synagogue. She noted that, as far as the white supremacist anti-Semites on the ‘right’ are concerned, Jews are not ‘white enough’ and, as far as the intersectionalist anti-Semites on the ‘left’ are concerned, Jews are not ‘minority enough.’

Professor Lipstadt's pithy summary of the anti-Semites' perspective is the dark underside of the duality we are called to live. But we must embrace it and be motivated by it.

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, z"l, wrote that too many Orthodox Jews misunderstand the verse spoken by Bil'am — *Am Levadad Yishkon* (a nation that dwells alone) — as the expression of an isolationist ideal: that we are to be secluded and alone and have nothing to do with broader society or humanity. Rabbi Sacks contends that the proper meaning of the verse is that we must be anchored in our unique identity *and, from that posture, work to engage and inspire humanity at large*. This dynamic would be the uplifting antithesis to the dark perspectives of the anti-Semites described by Professor Lipstadt.

The Yamim Tovim of Tishrei call upon us to reflect on this charge and to resolve to fill the year ahead with action and engagement as both members of humanity as a whole and as part of our unique *goy kadosh*. Shana Tova.

For more information on the OU Advocacy Center and its efforts, please visit advocacy.ou.org.

Watching Our Community Grow: New Chesed Efforts Across Greater Washington

Mindy Tolchinsky

My family moved to Greater Washington in 1962. We lived in the “old Shomrai Emunah neighborhood” in Hyattsville, moving from there to Summit Hill and on to Kemp Mill. Our family’s moves closely mirrored those of many in the Orthodox Jewish community at that time.

Growing up in Summit Hill and Kemp Mill, the community was tightly knit and very close. I often tell others that, if I passed someone on the street wearing a *kipah* in those days, I knew his name, the names of his siblings, his parents, etc. If not, he was clearly visiting. The size of our community was comforting — like a big, warm hug.

There were, however, things that appeared to be lacking in those days. As I grew older and developed friendships in other cities, I was always impressed with (and somewhat jealous of) the formal Jewish organizational structure in other communities. In Baltimore, for example, my friends would eat dinner at their local Jewish Community Center; our JCC did not have kosher food at that time. In Cleveland, the Board of Jewish Education was extremely supportive of the local day schools, offering regular in-service sessions as well as programming appropriate for day school students; this was fairly non-existent in the Washington of my youth. And while there was a tremendous amount of chesed practiced one on one and within individual shul communities, I had the distinct sense that Greater Washington was not yet “grown up” enough to have much of the formal organizational framework that graced other communities.

In the intervening years, Jewish Greater Washington has grown exponentially. We are no longer just a few small communities; *kehillos* have sprouted up and developed in numerous areas, each with its own distinctive flavor. I marvel at the number of observant people I pass as I drive down Lambertson Drive in Kemp Mill, while simultaneously wistfully longing for the days when I knew everyone I passed. For those of us who “remember when,” the size of our communities is sometimes daunting; at the same time, it fills us with both wonder and pride.

That pride extends to the magnificent communal infrastructure that now exists across Greater Washington. Beyond the schools, shuls, and *mikvaos*, concerned individuals have launched numerous projects to serve our community’s needs. Looming large on the chesed horizon are the Chevra Kadisha, Bikur Cholim, and Yad Yehuda, all of which receive the communal attention they so rightfully deserve. But other targeted efforts exist across our community, as well — to help people sitting *shiva*, to provide free clothing, to unite widowed women, to recycle products of use to others, to link people davening for the same outcome — all this, and more.

Over the next pages, you will be introduced to several of these wonderful projects, presented by the incredible volunteers who work so hard to serve our community. If you’ve lived in Greater Washington as long as I have, you can only read on with tremendous pride.



Capital Closet, formerly the Clothing Exchange, came into being approximately four years ago, when people expressed a desire to donate their modest clothing back to the community. Volunteers soon had hundreds of bags of clothes to inspect and organize. This initial project to “recycle” used clothing in good condition gave birth to the Clothing Exchange.

Over time, this effort has evolved into Capital Closet, with a lovely showroom offering a selection of like-new, stylish attire at no charge. Staffed and run completely by volunteers with a zero-dollar operating budget, Capital Closet has a distinct mission: to help anyone and everyone across Greater Washington locate the clothing that they desire at no charge. Volunteers work assiduously to ensure that each item offered is like-new, up to date, and modest.

Located in the Yad Yehuda building at 1910 University Boulevard West in Wheaton, Capital Closet functions very much like a boutique. Clothes and accessories are attractively displayed by function, with separate offerings for girls, teens and women and a small selection of menswear. During the colder months, coats and jackets for the entire family are on hand. Volunteers assist each shopper and a convenient dressing room is available to ensure the proper fit. The showroom is a constant work in progress; volunteers ensure that the offerings change to reflect current styles and the needs of the community.

While Capital Closet looks and functions like a stylish boutique, there is one important difference: *There is never a charge for any item. Everyone in our community is welcome to shop at no cost.* While donations to Yad Yehuda are always welcome, there is no fee for any of the items in the store. The shop is open during specific, advertised hours on many Sundays. Community members are welcome to shop during posted hours or by appointment.

To ensure that the shop remains a wonderful resource for like-new, stylish attire, Capital Closet is not accepting donations of used clothing at this time. Donations of NEW clothing will be considered after communicating with the organizer.

New for Fall 2021: The Uniform Gemach for Torah School uniforms is now housed at Capital Closet; shopping for families is now all the more convenient. For more information about the Uniform Gemach, please call or text Becky Langer at 301-651-5826.

It has been gratifying to see the number of repeat and one-time shoppers at Capital Closet. Most people are able to find *something* that works for them on their shopping trips. For more information about Capital Closet, please contact Naomi Carmel at ncarmel@yadyehuda.org.



It's not uncommon for people to share previously-used items with their friends or neighbors. Outgrown baby outfits, maternity clothes, a good book: all these are often shared between close friends and relatives. But matching the available item with the interested party on a larger scale? That is the function of a *gemach*.

A *gemach* (from the words *gemilus chesed*, acts of kindness) is essentially a free exchange, in which users can receive or borrow items at no charge. Users may return the item in question or perhaps donate replacements (in the case of disposable items) for the next user. For reusable items, this can be a money-saving solution that also promotes "recycling" of products. For late-night urgent needs, it can be a virtual lifesaver.

A *gemach* can exist for almost any item. In some communities, there are *gemachim* for baby pacifiers (pre-boiled and hung in sealed plastic bags outside an apartment door, for desperate parents who cannot find their child's pacifier at midnight); for eyeglass repair kits (with those tiny little screws that always go missing when a frame breaks); and for challah rolls that the borrower may have forgotten to purchase before Shabbos.

Individual *gemachim* have existed for several years across the Greater Washington area, tended by caring individuals who hope to make certain items more accessible to their neighbors, while reducing cost and waste. Some *gemachim* welcome donations of used items to increase their stock. New *gemachim* are sprouting up all the time.

To ensure that everyone can identify and locate *gemachim* in our area with ease, a centralized directory now exists: Gemach Exchange, available at gemachexchange.com. Each listing includes a brief description of the items available and a contact for more information or to reserve an item. Greater Washington area *gemachim* range from *simcha* items (wedding dresses, folding tables, bris outfits/pillows) to baby gear (baby equipment, infant hearing protection ear muffs) to books (English language Judaic books, Hebrew *seforim*) to clothes (maternity clothing, school uniforms) and to assorted specialty items (water damage carpet drying fan, slushie maker, strep tests, bicycles, Purim costumes, professional amplifier systems).

To view the directory of *gemachim* in our area, reserve an item, inquire about donating items to a specific *gemach*, or to set up a new *gemach* of your own, please visit gemachexchange.com.



Hachnosas Kallah of Greater Washington assists with wedding costs for couples in our community. The Vaad Journal recently discussed this project with Rabbi Moshe Mittelman.

WHEN AND HOW WAS HACHNOSAS KALLAH OF GREATER WASHINGTON (HKGW) STARTED?

In early 2018, I asked Nechemia Mond if Yad Yehuda had a Hachnosas Kallah fund. He replied that there was no specific fund to help finance weddings and encouraged me to start one. When I said that I had no idea where to start, he replied: “You just started.” Shortly afterward, we processed our first two requests for assistance.

WHAT NEED WAS THIS FUND ATTEMPTING TO ADDRESS?

Historically, all Jewish communities had specific funds designated to help families struggling to fund weddings. While *hachnosas kallah* literally refers to escorting the *kallah* to her *chuppah*, it relates to financial assistance to marry as well (see *Gemara Sukkah 49b with Rashi quoting the She'iltos D'Rav Achai Gaon*). It was important that our community have such a fund.

WHO DOES HKGW SEEK TO ASSIST? WHAT ASSISTANCE IS PROVIDED?

HKGW generally assists two categories of people. Some applicants struggle with day-to-day expenses and certainly cannot afford to marry off a child. Other applicants are just getting by financially but cannot absorb the additional costs of a wedding. HKGW provides funds to ease the monetary stress of the wedding; we also refer couples to other resources as needed. HKGW has distributed almost \$50,000 in assistance in the first half of 2021.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED FROM YOUR WORK WITH HACHNOSAS KALLAH?

Prior to my involvement in HKGW, I had no idea how great the needs of Klal Yisroel are and how difficult the demands of making a wedding can be. I especially did not realize that financial strain can mitigate the *simcha* and calm that a young couple so desperately needs as they embark on building a Jewish home. Yet I was also amazed by people's generosity; often a donor responded with a multiple of the amount we expected to receive.

HOW CAN SOMEONE REQUEST ASSISTANCE FROM HACHNOSAS KALLAH?

They can reach out to me at mmittelman@hkgw.org.

HOW CAN MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY ASSIST HACHNOSAS KALLAH IN ITS WORK?

Hachnosas Kallah of Greater Washington generates all its funding independently. Interested donors can contribute at hkgw.org. Donations can be made on a one-time or monthly basis.

Community members can also keep their eyes and ears open to ensure that a couple in need is referred to Hachnosas Kallah for assistance. Lastly, please daven, daven, daven.

WHAT GOALS DOES HACHNOSAS KALLAH HAVE FOR THE FUTURE?

I would love to secure monthly or quarterly donations from members of the community. Currently, we just scramble to collect the funds necessary to address each new request. Monthly or quarterly recurring donations would ensure that funds are available *before* the need arises.



Mayan HaKesef (literally, “The Silver Spring”) is a foundation offering interest-free loans in the Greater Washington Jewish community. In 2016, it became clear that there were those in our community who preferred to handle their financial crises by borrowing money in lieu of receiving outright *tzedakah*. To answer this need, Rafi Cattan and Gabe Bensimon established Mayan HaKesef, under the spiritual guidance of Rabbi Eliyahu Reingold.

The Torah (Shemos 22:24) instructs the Jewish people to loan money to their brethren in need without interest. Interest-free loan societies, created along that imperative, have existed for many years. In 1892, ten leaders of the Jewish community on the Lower East Side of Manhattan pooled \$95 to form the Hebrew Free Loan Society, with loans starting at 50 cents each.

In our community, Mayan HaKesef has loaned in excess of \$500,000 in the five years since its inception. Borrowers include those who have accumulated large amounts of credit card debt and who, because of very high interest rates, cannot retire that debt. With the funds received from Mayan HaKesef, these borrowers have paid off their high-interest credit card balances and, in several cases, have repaid their interest-free loan within 2-3 years.

Other borrowers include community members who have sufficient funds for their daily expenses but cannot afford a large unexpected expense, such as an expensive car repair or replacement of a large appliance. An interest-free loan from Mayan HaKesef allows them to make that purchase with an affordable repayment plan.

Those in need of a loan can email rafi@mayanhakesef.org for assistance. After completion of an application describing one’s financial situation and the reason for the loan, the borrower must supply two co-signers. Loans are often approved within 1-2 days. Once the borrower and the co-signers sign a promissory note, the borrower receives a check for the full amount of the loan. Loan repayment schedules vary from 24–60 months, with emphasis on a schedule that is not a burden for the borrower.

How can the community help? You can add to the funds available for loans by donating to Mayan HaKesef. The wonderful thing about such a contribution is that the money gets used for interest-free loans over and over again, thus “recycling” both the funds and the donor’s mitzvah. Mayan HaKesef is a 501(c)(3) charitable institution. Your tax-deductible donation may be sent to: Mayan HaKesef, 11702 Fulham Street, Silver Spring, MD 20902. For more information, please email rafi@mayanhakesef.org.



Part of the cycle of life is death, which can present many overwhelming and emotional challenges. But there are also many practical aspects of the death of a relative which must be addressed as well. After the burial, family members return home to sit *shiva*. This requires a potpourri of items not typically found in a home. Historically, these needs have been answered across Greater Washington by the *shiva* committee in each shul.

Misaskim of Greater Washington began in 2010, originally to provide more comfortable *shiva* chairs to mourners. It soon became clear that many supplies needed in *shiva* homes were not available. Misaskim assembled an inventory of equipment, currently housed in shuls across the Greater Washington area, to enhance the comfort of mourners and to accommodate visitors to their homes. In its expanded capacity, Misaskim helps supplement supplies available for mourners in each community in coordination with many area shuls.

While delivering equipment for *shiva* homes remains Misaskim's most utilized function, its volunteers offer services including care for mourners and the deceased, burial assistance, emergency response, and disaster recovery. Volunteers who engage in emergency response and disaster recovery receive training in *halachos* pertaining to death, respect for the deceased, and the proper treatment of body parts and fluids.

In July of 2019, Misaskim volunteers from across the northeast converged on the Virginia coast to search for Rabbi Reuvain Bauman, z"l, who had gone missing in the waters off Virginia Beach. Three volunteers from Misaskim of Greater Washington joined the search, which employed planes, helicopters, jet skis, and boats in this large-scale effort.

Many people are not aware that there is a local chapter of Misaskim which is able to respond immediately to accidents resulting in death or other casualty situations. Misaskim volunteers, in close collaboration with Rabbi Ariel Sadwin of Agudath Israel of Maryland, are trained to interface with local law enforcement and medical examiner personnel. It is critical to contact Misaskim in these situations, using the emergency number that appears on their website.

You can assist Misaskim by donating at [misaskimgw.org](https://www.misaskimgw.org). Tax-deductible contributions will help increase available *shiva* supplies and purchase equipment for rescue and recovery efforts.

To request assistance from Misaskim, please visit [misaskimgw.org](https://www.misaskimgw.org), click on CONTACT, and select the appropriate number to call. A Misaskim volunteer will return your call promptly.



Nismach: “we will rejoice.” That may sound like an odd name for a support group for widowed women. Shouldn’t those women be sad about losing their husbands?

How do support groups work? When one experiences a traumatic event, the best people to help you navigate the maze of feelings and challenges may be those who have been there before you. The goal of a support group is to take the hand of others who have experienced loss and guide them — with sensitivity, validation and encouragement — through the challenges one typically encounters.

Who else can share how to word a bar mitzvah or wedding invitation to sensitively reference the *niftar*? Who else can help a widow plan to handle the loneliness of Shabbos alone? Only a widow can truly understand another’s pain on a birthday, anniversary or the *yahrtzeit*.

Validation and guidance: these are the main tasks of support groups. But Nismach isn’t your typical support group; we don’t have group therapy sessions to discuss our sense of loss. We’re a group of Orthodox women from Greater Washington and Baltimore who have built supportive friendships through fun activities together, but also through our shared Torah values. Those bonds naturally lead to support for one another.

Nismach’s activities include an annual summer cruise on the Chesapeake Bay, art classes, uplifting *divrei Torah* from amazing speakers, challah/cooking demonstrations, and more. *There is never a fee to attend Nismach activities*. In partnership with Project Yedid in Baltimore, Nismach also provides very beautiful, elegant gifts for our members before every Yom Tov.

Nismach Maryland is all about bringing happiness to widows. *We have fun together as a reminder that we are still here, in this world, without our life partners, TO LIVE*. Together, we learn to rejoice in life once again and set an example of being *b’simcha* for newer widows who unfortunately join our group.

While we don’t hope for any new members, if you are aware of a recently widowed Orthodox woman in Maryland, please tell her about our group. When she feels ready to join, she will greatly appreciate seeing other widows who choose happiness and are living life to the fullest. She can find us at nismach.org.

Donations to support our work are deeply appreciated. Please visit nismach.org/donate.



Partners in Tefillah matches people who are praying for the same need so they can daven for each other. Partners in Tefillah is administered by Rafi Cattan and Devorah Slater. The Vaad Journal recently spoke with Rafi about this effort.

WHEN AND HOW DID PARTNERS IN TEFILLAH GET STARTED?

Almost three years ago, I listened to a *shiur* from a Rav in New York about the power of *tefillah* and, especially, when one is praying for another. Our Sages says that when one prays for another — for something he himself needs — he is answered first. Hashem loves when we choose to focus our prayers on the needs of others. No *tefillot* are more powerful than those that we offer with love and compassion on behalf of a fellow Jew awaiting a similar *yeshuah* (salvation).

The Rav said that a few New York organizations matched people with similar needs to *daven* for one another and that it worked. We felt that Greater Washington needed this service as well.

WHAT NEED WAS THIS EFFORT ATTEMPTING TO ADDRESS?

In every community, there are many people looking for help and *davening* for it on a daily basis. Some pray for a *shidduch*, others for a *refuah shleimah*; some *daven* for success in raising their children, others for financial livelihood. Everyone has occasion to pray for something that they need — for themselves or for a loved one. We created Partners in Tefillah to harness the power of mutual *tefillah* and, hopefully, bring about those *yeshuot*.

IS DAVENING FOR ANOTHER TRULY SUCCESSFUL?

People on our list have seen real *yeshuot*: they found their *shidduch*, their health situation improved, etc. Davening for another can be very powerful. I know of one situation where two sisters-in-law had sons who were about to begin *shidduchim*. The mothers decided that each would *daven* for the other's son to find a *shidduch*...and they became engaged within ten days of each other!

HOW DOES PARTNERS IN TEFILLAH WORK?

Visit our website, PartnersInTefillah.com, and complete the brief application. We will match you with someone else so each of you can *daven* for the other. You may choose to remain anonymous, providing only Hebrew names.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY REGARDING TEFILLAH?

Never underestimate the power of *tefillah*. There are countless stories of people who found a *yeshuah* through sincere *tefillah* for themselves or for others.



Rayut is a group for women who are divorced in the Greater Washington Jewish community. Launched in the spring of 2021, Rayut's mission is to provide an uplifting and secure platform for connection, camaraderie, and support for and between participants. Implicit in the name "Rayut" are the organization's twin goals of generating friendship and rays of hope among group members.

Rayut's projects and initiatives are designed with a local vibe, well-suited to benefit women from the Greater Washington Jewish community. Social gatherings have been the focus of Rayut's inaugural programs, including an art event and a brunch; plans for *shiurim* and recreational activities are in the works for the future.

In addition to stand-alone events, Rayut is exploring ideas for ongoing programming in areas of interest to participants and their families. As an additional expression of Rayut's objective to foster connections between women in the community, Rayut participants receive phone calls and seasonal gifts before *chagim*.

Program directors are Livia Dunkin (ldunkin@rayut.org) and Miri Gottlieb (mgottlieb@rayut.org).

After a successful start with a small group of women who, for the most part, have children at home, Rayut is ready to expand to include participants at various stages of life. There is no fee to join. For more information about Rayut or to request to join, please visit rayut.org.



It is a pleasure to introduce the Greater Washington Jewish community to an exciting, new initiative to assist singles in our community. The Shidduch Spot has recently been launched as a resource to help single women and men in their search for a life partner.

The *shidduch* process (finding one's match) can sometimes be a bit overwhelming. The Shidduch Spot, coordinated by Mrs. Miriam Singer, aims to make the journey more pleasant by providing guidance, advice, and encouragement. Our goal is to help local singles feel supported as they navigate the *shidduch* journey. To begin, each single person completes a confidential intake form. Access to the information provided is available only to our *shadchanim* (matchmakers), to enable them to gather the information necessary to understand our singles, help them make connections, and provide them with dating opportunities. Both singles and their parents may access our list of capable, local *shadchanim*. These *shadchanim* will provide guidance, direction, and reassurance to singles and/or their parents, while maintaining the utmost sensitivity and discretion. Our enthusiastic *shadchanim* network with one another and reach out beyond our community as well.

Several individuals have volunteered their time and expertise to The Shidduch Spot. These are our Shidduch Advisors, who make themselves available to advise singles on the *shidduch* process in general or about specific suggestions for a match. Their contact information appears on our website.

Included on The Shidduch Spot site are links to several useful resources. One can access a database of *shadchanim* in other communities. Also linked is Shidduchim 101, a website providing tips and how-to guides for people in *shidduchim*, filled with a wealth of thoughtful and useful advice. The Tefillos tab on our site lists specific chapters of Tehillim and *tefillos* designed to help one find one's life partner. Lastly, there is a link to a very beautiful organization, Ohel Sarala, which connects those looking for a *shidduch* with a childless couple hoping for a child — so they can each daven for the other!

Shidduch Spot organizers are busy planning exciting upcoming events. Zoom discussions to guide the community — both singles and their parents — are in the works! Stay tuned!

For more information or to connect with our *shadchanim*, please visit theshidduchspot.com.



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.