

BULLETIN OF THE VAAD HARABANIM OF GREATER WASHINGTON

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The Vaad HaRabanim is pleased to present issue 3.2 of its bi-annual Bulletin and Newsletter. This issue, as well as the next Vaad Bulletin (Pesach 5776, issue 4.1) will feature articles from new members of the Vaad HaRabanim. In this issue, Rabbi Michoel Frank of Kehillas Ohr HaTorah in Kemp Mill addresses the Laws of Borer on Yom Tov, while Rabbi Yehoshua Singer of Am HaTorah congregation of Bethesda presents an understanding of the custom of Hataras Nedarim on Erev Rosh HaShanah. The Vaad has already benefitted significantly from the insight, and active participation of all its new members.

Additionally, the Bulletin includes a letter from our new president, Rabbi Yosef Singer, as well as a Kashrus update. Both letters share new developments of the Vaad, specifically, in the areas of Kashrus and Geirus.

The Vaad HaRabanim would like to take this opportunity to express our deepest gratitude to Rabbi Dovid Rosenbaum, outgoing President of the Vaad, for his outstanding leadership over the last four years. The success and development of the Vaad during these important, difficult, and challenging years is due in large part to Rabbi Rosenbaum's diligent efforts, dedication, foresight, and commitment to the Greater Washington Jewish community. While his current term at the helm is coming to an end, his service to the Vaad and Greater Washington Jewish community continues. For that we are profoundly grateful.

We also would like to wish a Yasher Koach and Tzeschem L'shalom to Rabbi Yaakov Bieler for his service and devotion to the Vaad, and our community. Rabbi Bieler's many years of service included- most recently- serving as treasurer of the Vaad HaRabanim. Rabbi Bieler's integrity, which was a hallmark of his tenure, earned him the respect and admiration of his colleagues. May he have continued Hatzlacha in his Avodas Hakodesh

Wishing the entire community a *Kesiva V'chasima Tova*—a year of *Nachas, Simchah, and Shalom*.

Rabbi Moshe Walter
 rabbimwalter@gmail.com



Vaad Harabanim of Greater Washington, Inc. The Rabbinical Council

Rabbi Yosef Singer
Ezras Israel Cong., President

Rabbi Eliezer Kreiser
Cong. YI Ezras Israel Potomac, Vice President

Rabbi Hillel Klavan, Emeritus
Ohev Shalom T. T. Cong., Honorary President

Dear Community members,

During the Yomim Noraim, it is most appropriate to take stock of where we have been, where we are currently, and where we are going. This reflective exercise is not only necessary for individuals but is also essential for an organization like the Vaad Harabanim, whose sole purpose is to attend to the spiritual needs of the Jewish Community of Greater Washington. Under the capable leadership of Rabbi Dovid Rosenbaum, our outgoing President, the Vaad has responded positively to the challenges of the past year with courage and with creativity. Specifically, I am referring to initiatives undertaken in the areas of kashrus and conversions (geirus).

Rabbi Moshe Walter, Director of the Vaad Harabanim, and Rabbi Zvi Holland, Star K Kashrus Administrator and our new Director of Field Operations, have done an outstanding job of managing and sustaining a viable kashrus infrastructure comprised of dedicated proprietors, well trained mashgichim, and kosher products of the highest standards. The result is a first rate kashrus operation that runs smoothly and reliably. Readers are kindly referred to Rabbi Walter's accompanying article to learn more details about these recent developments.

In addition, the Vaad, in conjunction with the Manhattan Beis Din for Conversion and the Rabbinical Council of America (R.C.A.), has established a fully functioning conversion Beis Din that is now servicing the needs of the Greater Washington community. A recent letter from the R.C.A. explained that this Beis Din is the only local member of the Geirus Policies and Standards (GPS) network of conversion courts, which has the full endorsement of the Beis Din of America and which is recognized by the Chief Rabbinate of Israel. Rabbi Zvi Romm, Director of Manhattan Beis Din for Giyur, and Rabbi Yonah Reiss, Chairman of GPS for the R.C.A., have been working closely with the Rabanim of the Vaad in this critically important area. With the help of Rabbi Yehoshua Singer, the Beis Din's acting secretary, Rabanim from the Vaad are meeting with dozens of conversion candidates to whom they are responsive, sensitive, and respectful. Moreover, qualified candidates "in the pipeline" have already been, and are being converted.

This coming year, I am very much looking forward to working with you, the members of the Vaad, and our new slate of officers: Rabbi Eliezer Kreiser (Vice President); Rabbi Mordechai Rhine (Treasurer); and Rabbi Yehoshua Singer (Secretary). We wish to build upon the aforementioned accomplishments in kashrus and in geirus, in addition to our ongoing Beis Din activity in the areas of divorce and litigation. We will also endeavor to make the Vaad even more responsive and relevant to our beloved community. Our success depends on the chesed of the Ribbono Shel Olam, the energy, commitment, and talent of the Rabanim, and, of course, your support.

On behalf of the Vaad Harabanim of Greater Washington, I wish you a ksiva v'chasima tova,

Sincerely,

Rabbi Yosef Singer
President, Vaad HaRabanim of Greater Washington

Rabbi Mordechai Rhine
Southeast Hebrew Cong., Treasurer

Rabbi Yehoshua Singer
Am HaTorah Cong., Secretary

Rabbi Moshe Walter
Woodside Synagogue, Director

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Vaad Harabanim of Greater Washington, Inc. The Rabbinical Council

To members of the Greater Washington Community,

It is now almost one year since the Vaad of Greater Washington- Kashrus Division (Capital K) engaged and later contracted the Star-K to manage our field operations. This significant step was precipitated by the remarkable increase of certified establishments by the Capital K, and by the increased complexity and global nature of Kashrus today. The Vaad considered it necessary to partner with an international kashrus agency in order to properly provide effective and continually expanding Kashrus services for the Greater Washington Community. Our unique partnership with the Star-K has been achieved through the appointment of Rabbi Zvi Holland, Star-K Kashrus Administrator, to also serve as the Field Operations Director for Capital K.

I would like to update you on various aspects of our Kashrus program, as well as the success, progress, and advances in the Kashrus of the Capitol K.

1. Our poultry and meat approved list now follows and is compatible with the Star-K list. This list is based on the research of Rav Moshe Heinemann of the Star-K, an internationally renowned expert in the area of shechitah and bedikah. We are pleased to note that this list is very expansive, and is absolutely not limited to Star-K shechitah. The list is constantly being updated and reviewed. The Vaad is happy to report that this list has successfully been implemented in all of our locations.
2. Our current policy regarding tuna fish is that all restaurants and caterers that serve prepared tuna fish under our certification, may only use tuna fish which meet the standard of Bishul Yisrael (cooked to a particular Halachic degree by a Jew). Although the requirement of Bishul Yisrael by tuna fish is subject to a difference of opinion amongst Halachic authorities, the Star-K was not comfortable with so close a relationship with the Capitol K unless this policy change was implemented. The Vaad therefore decided to make this change regarding prepared tuna in order to reap the many benefits of the relationship with the Star-K, as well as to properly service those community members who follow this Halachic ruling. (Note: Grocery stores under our certification may continue to sell sealed tuna fish, in the original packaging with appropriate non-Capitol K certifications. This change of policy requiring Bishul Yisroel tuna fish applies only to prepared food certified by the Capital K.)
3. It is noteworthy that the Vaad has worked diligently with all our proprietors to make these changes (the meat/ poultry list and the policy of Bishul Yisroel for tuna fish), as easy and doable as possible. We are proud to report that the teamwork between all our proprietors and the Vaad has been excellent. We thank each of the establishments for working with us enabling this transition to be a smooth one.
4. The Vaad has a bug-checking system for fruits and vegetables which is in compliance with the highest industry standards. Over the past six months our mashgichim have benefited from further training and review from Star- K staff who are nationally recognized experts in this area. The Vaad is proud to report that this system is being implemented exceptionally well.
5. The Vaad is in regular communication with its Mashgichim and proprietors to uphold these standards. Typically, our Mashgichim contact Rabbi Holland who serves as the Director of Field Operations for the Capitol K, while proprietors contact myself in my capacity as the Director of the Vaad. The Vaad carefully interviews and trains Mashgichim that we feel are of caliber to uphold these standards. I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of our dedicated Mashgichim who are the unsung heroes of our town, without whom we would not have the kosher options that we do.
6. In an effort to properly monitor our certification of all catered events under the Capitol K, Rabbi Mordechai Rhine has begun to audit catered events, and make regular visits to commissaries to make sure that our certification is of the highest caliber.
7. I would like to take the opportunity to thank Rabbi Zvi Holland, Director of Field Operations of the Capitol K for his tireless efforts on behalf of our community's Hechsher. Rabbi Holland and I are in contact numerous times daily making sure that our kosher program continues its well respected tradition, while at the same time keeping in line with the rapid pace of kosher development around the globe.
8. The success of any local Hechsher to maintain its quality supervision very much depends on the community's communication with us. We are always happy to hear from you, and see what we can do to improve. Please don't hesitate being in contact with the Vaad.

Rabbi Moshe Walter
Director, Vaad Harabanim of Greater Washington
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Borer on Yom Tov

Rabbi Michael Frank

Kehillas Ohr Hatorah

We know Rosh Hashanah to be a day of *Din* - judgement, and as one of the *Yamim Noraim*- Days of Awe, it is among the holiest days of the year. However in regard to its laws, it is equal to all other *Yamim Tovim*.¹ Let us attempt to clarify a particular halacha which is relevant to the upcoming *Yamim Tovim*, *be'ezras Hashem*.

Of the many differences that exist between Hilchos Shabbos and Hilchos Yom Tov, one of the most difficult to decipher are the laws of *Borer* - Selecting, as they apply to Yom Tov. However, rather than tackling the full sugya, let's discuss two particular cases. Come Rosh Hashanah afternoon and your children are hungry and, surprisingly, they DO NOT want to eat leftover meat, chicken etc. After much deliberation a solution is arrived upon – macaroni and cheese. However the preparation of macaroni invariably includes the use of a colander, to strain the water out of the noodles. Is this permitted? Such an act on Shabbos would be of the greatest severity, this being an *issur deoraysa* of borer. Is it permissible on Yom Tov?

Another common question arises for those who appreciate brewed coffee, and the instant variety just doesn't cut it. Is it permitted to use the various forms of coffee straining implements, e.g. a French press, or a cone with a filter?²

Both these questions really revolve around one basic query – is borer permitted on Yom Tov, and more specifically, is borer using an utensil designed for straining permitted on Yom Tov?

The truth is, although this seems like a very basic and elementary issue, it is the subject of a great debate. The *Shulchan Aruch* in one place³ states that it is permitted to use a bowl with a small hole, to remove dirt and other undesirables from beans. In another place the *Rema* brings⁴ a debate if it is permitted to remove a stone from flour, even by hand! The *Mishna Berurah* says⁵ one should be stringent and not remove the stone, adding that likewise if a fly or other foreign object falls into a drink it should not be removed as is, rather one should pour out liquid together with the offensive material.

The obvious question is: what's the difference? Why is it permitted to remove foreign objects from beans even using a utensil designed for that purpose, yet it's forbidden to remove a stone from flour even by hand.

The *Biur Halachah* addresses⁶ this question, and brings two possible answers. The *Chayei Adam* [Rabbi

1 There actually are certain differences in regard to the second day, whereas by other Yomim Tovim certain leniencies exist, by Rosh Hashanah they do not apply.

2 The truth is that this question applies to Shabbos as well, but there are more factors involved, and the full discussion is beyond the scope of this article.

3 Siman 510 Seif 2

4 Siman 505 Seif 2

5 Siman 505 Seif 12

6 Siman 110 #2 d"h HaBorer

Avraham Danzig 1748-1820] answers⁷, that by beans it is permitted because this particular method of removing dirt is not the typical way of cleaning beans, therefore it is a *shinui* – an unusual act, and borer with a *shinui* is permitted on Yom Tov. However, removing a stone from flour with one's hand would be the normal way of ridding the flour from impurities even during the week, therefore it is prohibited.

The *Shulchan Aruch Harav* [Rabbi Shneur Zalman Schnierson of Liadi 1745-1812] answers⁸ that all types of borer are technically permitted on Yom Tov, however in regard to flour, which is generally sifted in bulk⁹, the *Chachamim* were more stringent and limited certain forms of borer. Therefore specifically removing a stone from flour is prohibited, but this stringency doesn't apply to any other food.

Bearing this in mind, we now approach our questions. Is it permitted to strain the water out of macaroni on Yom Tov? According to the *Chayei Adam* this would not be allowed, because this is the typical fashion of ridding macaroni of water, and there isn't a *shinui* being done. According to the *Shulchan Aruch Harav* it would be permitted, because only flour has the abovementioned stringency, whereas macaroni would be exempt, and would be permitted to strain the water. The same difference applies to straining coffee, according to the *Chayei Adam* it should be prohibited, and according to the *Shulchan Aruch Harav* it would be permitted.

That having been said, we now have to determine if the halacha follows the opinion of the *Chayei Adam* or of the *Shulchan Aruch Harav*. There is a debate amongst the contemporary poskim in this regard, however the opinion of the *Mishna Berurah* in a few places seems to be like the *Chayei Adam*, as we quoted earlier, the *Mishna Berurah* prohibits removing a fly from wine by hand, although it is not flour, and according to the *Shulchan Aruch Harav* that should be permitted.

However it isn't that simple. There is another undisputed halacha brought by *Shulchan Aruch* which states¹⁰ that one is allowed to place the sediments of wine into a *mishameres* - which is a strainer designed for this purpose, in order to strain out the remaining wine. To do this on Shabbos would be a biblical transgression of borer, yet on Yom Tov it is permitted.¹¹ Now according to the *Shulchan Aruch Harav* this poses no difficulty, because only by flour do we find any stringency, therefore straining sediments would be permitted. But according to the *Chayei Adam* why is this allowed? What's the difference between removing a stone from flour which is the typical fashion of borer and therefore prohibited, and straining wine from sediments using a *מישמרת* which is specifically designed for that purpose, and is most certainly the standard way of straining sediments!

Strangely enough this question is not addressed by the *Mishna Berurah*. The most likely solution to this question would seem to be, that even though the *Chayei Adam* prohibited doing borer in its typical weekday fashion, that's only when another option exists. In the case of the stone in the flour, the *Shulchan Aruch* gives us another option – to do *rikud*, which is a specific process of sifting. Therefore it is prohibited to remove the stone by hand, being that it is the most typical way of separating, and another option exists. However where there is no other option, like in the case of straining wine from sediments, that no other way to separate them exists, the *Chayei Adam* will agree that it is permitted to remove the wine in the normal fashion,

7 Klal 82 Seif Katan 3

8 Siman 510 Seif Katan 3

9 Melachos which are done in bulk and meant to create a long lasting supply are prohibited on Yom Tov. See beginning of third perek of Maseches Beitzah, and Rashi, Tosafos, Ran and Ramban et al.

10 Siman 510 Seif 4

11 See Biur Halachah d"h Mutar Liten

although it is the way it is done during the week as well.¹²

If this assertion is correct, then in our case of macaroni, even the *Chayei Adam* would permit straining the water using a colander, because everybody knows there is no safe and effective way of removing the water otherwise. Regardless if our answer is correct or not, there doesn't seem to be any difference between straining wine out of sediments and straining water out of macaroni, therefore for whatever reason, it should be permitted.

We therefore reach the conclusion, that the questions of straining water out of macaroni and making coffee with a filter should be approached as follows: According to the *Shulchan Aruch Harav* it is most certainly permitted. According to the *Chayei Adam* there also seems to be reason to be lenient, being that we find that it is permitted to strain wine out of sediments on Yom Tov.

¹² According to this answer, by beans there are other options how to separate them, whether by hand and such, therefore the Chayei Adam needs to explain the permissibility by saying that this method of sifting the beans is not the typical fashion. However this answer does not seem to coincide with the opinion of the Mishnah Berurah who prohibited removing a fly from wine, although it would seem there is no other way to do that.

HaTaras Nedarim—A Deeper Understanding of the Procedure

Rabbi Yehoshua Singer

Am HaTorah Congregation

On *Erev Rosh Hashsana* it is customary to be *Meifer Nedarim*/Annul Vows made the previous year. As we say in the proscribed text, vows can only be annulled if there was a mistake in making the vow. Otherwise, we are bound to keep to that which we intentionally promise.

With this in mind, it is difficult to understand the final declaration we make during *Hafaras Nedarim*/Annulment of Vows. We declare that all future vows to be null and void. How can one simply declare that a vow should be null and void? We can only annul vows, if we determine they were made in error, and are therefore not valid. Declaring that one will not be bound by valid vows that will be made seems tantamount to declaring that one will not be bound by the laws of *Kosher*.

The *Shite Mekubetzes* brings down the *Re'ei*”m who explains that the reason the declaration works is because we assume any vows made after the declaration were made in error. Being as the person has stated that they no longer wish to make vows, if they later make a vow, we can assume that they simply forgot their decision. Had they remembered their original declaration, they would not have made the vow. Indeed, *Abayei* says in the *Gemara* in *Nedarim* on *daf* 23b that the declaration only annuls vows made when one had forgotten the earlier declaration. Should one make a vow while being aware of the earlier declaration, it is understood that they have changed their mind, and now wish to make vows.

This however leaves us with a new question. Even if the person forgot, why do we assume that the person does not have a change of heart? Being as the person willingly and knowingly made a vow, it would seem to be clear that he currently does want to make vows.

Before addressing this question, I would like to raise another question regarding the declaration itself. The *Rashb”a* states that this declaration must be stated verbally. It is not sufficient to simply decide that one no longer wishes to vow or promise. The *Rashb”a* explains this based on a concept applied in many areas of Halacha, and quoted in the *Gemara* in *Nedarim* on *daf* 28 that *Devarim Sheb’leiv Einan Devarim*/Words in the Heart are Not Words. This means that something which was thought but was never said does not have the status of speech. The *Rashb”a* would seem to be saying that the decision which was thought is irrelevant as we are focused on speech. The law of vows is that one must stand by the words of his mouth, as the *pasuk* says in *Bamidbar* 30:3 “*lo yacheil devaro, k’chol hayotzei mipeev ya’aseh*” – “he shall not profane his word, as all that came out of his mouth he should do.” The obligation is to stand by that which was spoken. If the initial decision is only in thought, it would have no bearing in the world of vows.

According to the *Shita Mekubetzes*, however, who explains that this declaration is not functioning as any form of vow, this application of *Devarim Sheb'leiv*/Words of the Heart is difficult to understand. If the declaration is not a part of the process of vows, but rather simply a decision and commitment not to make vows in the future, why does it matter whether the decision was spoken or merely thought? Once there was a decision not to make vows, any later vow can be assumed to have been made by mistake.

The answer to this question lies in a deeper understanding of *Devarim Sheb'leiv*/Words of the Heart. Speech is not merely a method of communication. The words we speak have an impact on us, and by speaking out our intentions we develop a deeper level of commitment. Decisions which are only thought but not spoken do not have the same level of *Gemiras Da'as*/Completion of Intent (or commitment) as those which are spoken. An example of this is found in the *Gemara* in *Gittin daf 32a* where one authorizes a messenger to divorce his wife. Once he stated that he wants the divorce, the *Get* given by the appointed messenger is still valid, even if he had subsequently decided that he does not want to divorce his wife. In order for him to cancel the appointment of the messenger he must verbally express that he no longer authorizes the messenger. Simply deciding that he no longer authorizes the messenger is not sufficient. By saying that the messenger has the authority to carry out the divorce, he has created within himself a commitment to this course of action. In order to truly change his commitment he has to create an equal or greater commitment to the new course of action. Merely deciding in his heart, will not have the same impact on himself, and will not develop the necessary level of commitment to fully cancel the messenger. Only if he verbally expresses his desire to cancel the appointment do we say that he has achieved the necessary level of commitment to cancel the authorization of the messenger.

(See the *Gemara Gittin daf 32a*; *Tosfos* *ibid. d"h Mahu*; *Mahara"m Shi"fi* *ibid. d"h be'd afeelu heicha*)

With this we can now understand why the *Rashb"a* applies the concept of *Devarim Sheb'leiv*/Words of the Heart to this declaration. If it is only words of his heart, the initial decision would only carry with it a low level of commitment. When he later verbalizes a vow, he will have achieved a greater level of commitment to making the vow than he originally had to not making a vow. As such, the initial decision would be overridden by the vow. It is only by verbalizing the commitment to the initial decision not to make any future vows, that the initial commitment will be equal to the later commitment to the vow.

We still remain with our initial question, though. Why do we assume that the first commitment is the real one, and his later vow a mistake? In fact, when studying the *Gemara* in *Gittin* it seems that as long as the later commitment was equal to the initial commitment we assume the later commitment to be his current decision, and not to be a mistake.

The answer to this question can be found in the *sugya* in *Gittin*, as well. The *Toras Gittin* on *daf 33b (d"h Tzreechi bei asarah l'mishl'fei)* gives us a further insight into this concept of *devarim Sheb'leiv*/Words of the Heart and the levels of commitment which can be achieved. He teaches us that it is not only whether or not a decision was spoken which determines the level of commitment, but it is even possible for different speeches to carry with them different levels of commitment. The *Gemara* on *daf 33* says that if one were to authorize ten people to each be valid messengers to divorce his wife, he cannot cancel the appointment without ten people. Based on the *Rashb"a*, the *Toras Gittin* explains this to mean that if he initially appointed all ten people with one speech, he cannot cancel one of them, unless he is cancelling all ten of them. (If he initially said "The ten of you are all authorized to write and give a *Get* to my wife", he would only be able to cancel the authorization by saying "All ten of you are no longer authorized to divorce my wife.") He explains this based on the same concept of the commitment achieved through speech. The initial speech had a powerful effect—it authorized ten messengers to divorce his wife. A speech which has such an effect is

said with an added measure of gravity. The added gravity, allows a person to achieve an even deeper level of commitment. If he later says he is cancelling two of the ten, his speech would only be effecting two cancellations. The later speech would therefore lack the added gravity of the initial authorization, and thereby lack the added commitment. As such, the later cancellation would not have the necessary level of commitment to truly change his initial commitment to authorize the messengers.

With this idea, we can now answer our original question. When a person decides they no longer wish to make vows, and is moved to verbally express that decision, we understand that this person was not making this declaration flippantly. Rather, the person has clearly been inspired to appreciate the severity of violating vows, and in fear of violating vows in the future is now stating, for all to hear, that he is committed to never vow again. Such a declaration is certainly said with a measure of gravity, and will carry with it a higher level of commitment than simple speech normally would. Even if one later makes a vow, forgetting this initial commitment, we understand that the initial commitment is stronger than the new commitment to the vow. Had the person remembered the initial commitment they certainly would not have made the vow, as the initial commitment is deeper than the current interest in the vow. The vow is clearly being made by mistake and is therefore not valid.

Following this idea, the *Shita Mekubetzes* brings down *Rabeinu Nesanel* and the *Re'ei"m* who suggest that this declaration must be made either on *Rosh Hashana* or *Yom Kippur*. Being as these days are days of judgment, we can inspire ourselves and attain deeper levels of appreciation for *Mitzvos* and serving *Hashem*. As such, the declaration not to make future vows, said out of fear for violating the laws of vows, will be said with a particular level of gravity and will carry with it a very deep level of commitment.

This concept is of great value to us at this time of year. As we look for ways and means by which to change and grow, it is crucial that we appreciate how much of an impact our words and actions have on the way we think and how we feel. Every speech and every action has an impact on our personality and our psyche and becomes a part of who we are. The more positive words we speak and the more positive actions we do, the better a person we will become.

This concept also provides us with a simple tool which we can utilize in making lasting commitments for the coming year. As we approach the *Yomim Noraim*/Days of Awe and hear many inspiring speeches and classes, and begin to introspect, we can achieve a great desire to change and accomplish. Out of that desire, we make real commitments to improve as a servant of *Hashem*, treating our friends and relatives better, focusing more during *davening*, learning more etc. Yet, we all know, that by the time we put away the *Succah*, the inspiration begins to wane. We see from this *Gemara* that it is in our hands to deepen our commitment in a permanent and lasting way. If we verbalize our commitment, or take the time to write it down, the effort we put into committing ourselves will itself deepen our commitment, and become what we truly want. Just as one who verbally commits to no longer make vows and then later forgets is understood to have made a mistake, but not to have had a change of heart, so too will we simply have made a human error. Even when we no longer feel the inspiration and sometimes slip, we will not be slipping back to who we were. It will now simply be a one-time mistake. The goals and desires we achieve in this special season will remain who we truly are.

May we all merit true and lasting growth and a year filled with *bracha*.

Please note that the laws of vows are complex and there are many factors to consider. A full discussion of practical law is beyond the scope of this article. There are many additional factors to be taken into consideration. Any practical questions should be directed to one's Rav.

Erev Rosh HaShanah and Erev Yom Kippur Checklist

Rabbi Moshe Walter

Woodside Synagogue Ahavas Torah

Preparation is the key to success to all aspects of life; for a career, professional training, an interview, meeting, or even a vacation. At the same time, preparation is equally crucial to spiritual growth. Rav Moshe Chaim Luzzato articulates this point in the first chapter of his Mesillas Yesharim citing from various sources in Chazal including “he who toils on Erev Shabbos will feast on Shabbos” (Maseches Eruvin 22a) and “this world is like an anti-chamber before the world to come, prepare yourself in the anti-chamber, so you may enter the banquet hall”. (Maseches Avos Chapter 4 Mishnah 16)

As we approach the Yamim Noraim, let us consider preparing for the incredible opportunity that we have been given to bask in the spiritual laboratory of these golden days. Various customs and Halachos of Erev Rosh HaShanah and Erev Yom Kippur have been penned by the Rishonim (many of which have been codified by the Shulchan Aruch and Rama) to specifically help us appreciate and prepare for our mission ahead. The following is list of many of these Minhagim and Halachos. Certainly this list is not exhaustive or exclusive, but the list may be consulted to serve as a practical guide, helpful reminder, or even food for thought.

Erev Rosh HaShanah

- ❑ It is appropriate to find time to review the Machzor and Tefillos that will be recited, in order to be fluent with them in time for their recitation. (*Beir Heitev Siman 582 # 3 and Mateh Ephrayim Siman 581 # 58*)
- ❑ It is appropriate to give extra Tzedakah, and see to it that the needy have food for Rosh HaShanah. (*Rama Siman 581 Seif 4, Mateh Ephrayim ibid. and Elef HaMagen ibid # 120 citing Pri-Chadash*)
- ❑ There is a custom to fast. (*Shulchan Aruch Siman 581 Seif 2*)
- ❑ It is appropriate to bathe and take a haircut (shave) in honor of Rosh HaShanah. (*Shulchan Aruch ibid Seif 4*)
- ❑ Men have a custom to be tovel in the Mikvah. (*Rama ibid.*)
- ❑ Some have the custom of visiting the cemetery and daven at particular graves. (*Rama ibid.*)
- ❑ Longer Selichos are recited with added concentration and feeling. (*Mateh Ephrayim Siman 551 # 33*)
- ❑ Hataras Nedarim (nullification of vows) is stated in front of a Beis Din. (*Chayei Adam Klal 138*)
- ❑ A new fruit should be purchased to be used when reciting the Berachah of Shehecheyanu in Kidush on the second night of Rosh HaShanah. (*Shulchan Aruch Siman 500*)
- ❑ Prepare the Simanim. (Special fruits upon which a Yehi Ratzon is recited at the Rosh HaShanah evening meal) (*Shulchan Aruch Siman 583*)

Erev Yom Kippur

- ❑ Some have the custom of visiting the cemetery and davening at particular graves. (*Rama Siman 605*)
- ❑ It is a Mitzvah to eat on Erev Yom Kippur, and to increase the amount of food that one partakes of from a regular day in order to fulfil this Mitzvah. (*Shulchan Aruch Siman 604*)
- ❑ Kapparos are performed with either a chicken or money. (*Shulchan Aruch and Rama Siman 605*)
- ❑ Men have a custom to be tovel in the Mikvah. (*Shulchan Aruch and Rama Siman 606 Seif 4*)
- ❑ It is appropriate to give extra Tzedakah. (*Mateh Ephrayim Siman 607 # 3*)
- ❑ A special meal- Seudah HaMafsekes - is eaten following Minchah and prior to Kol Nidrei. (*Shulchan Aruch and Rama Siman 608*)
- ❑ There is an obligation to ask forgiveness, especially from those whom you may have insulted, as Yom Kippur does not atone for sins between man and man until one has asked forgiveness from the individual who has been hurt. (*Shulchan Aruch and Rama Siman 606*)
- ❑ One should be forgiving, and accept the forgiveness requested of the individual who insulted and hurt you. (*Rama ibid.*)
- ❑ There is a custom for a father and mother to bless their children prior to leaving to Shul for Kol Nidrei. The beautiful and moving Berachah can be found in the beginning of most Yom Kippur Machzorim. (*Mateh Ephrayim Siman 619 # 2*)
- ❑ There is a custom to receive a Berachah from a holy Tzadik and Talmid Chacham. (*Mateh Ephrayim ibid and Elef HaMateh ibid # 5*)
- ❑ Light candles (Hadlakas Neiros) with a Berachah for Yom Kippur. (*Shulchan Aruch and Rama Siman 610 Seif 1 and 2*)
- ❑ A Yartzheit candle is lit for those who it is pertinent for. (*Rama ibid.*)
- ❑ A candle (Ner Shel Batalah) should be lit from before Yom Kippur to be used on Motzei Yom Kippur to make the berachah of Boreh Meorei Ha'esh on, as part of Havdalah.
- ❑ The table should set with a nice tablecloth (like Shabbos) even though a meal will not be eaten. (*Rama ibid.*)
- ❑ Married men should prepare their white Kittel which is customarily worn on Yom Kippur. (*Rama ibid.*)
- ❑ Tefillah Zakah (a moving Tefilah and confession which can be found in the beginning of the Yom Kippur Machzor) is recited. (*Chayei Adam Klal 144*)
- ❑ The sanctity of Yom Kippur including all prohibitions of Yom Kippur should be accepted no later than prior to sundown. (*Shulchan Aruch Siman 608 Seif 1*)
- ❑ One should try and give extra time to go into Yom Kippur with piece of mind.
- ❑ One who has received a Psak from a Rav to eat or drink with measurements (shiurim) on Yom Kippur should be prepared with the proper amount that he or she is permitted to eat. (*Mateh Ephrayim Siman 618 # 11*)

We are all busy at this time of year with a multiplicity of new beginnings; the school year, back to work schedules after summer vacation, and cooking for the Chagim. When will we find the time to adequately prepare for the Yamim Noraim and review the Machzor? When will we be able to dedicate time to thinking and reflecting about the past year and seriously contemplating the upcoming one? How will we be able to get everything ready in time for Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Sukkos?

Perhaps the following could be a suggestion:

During these special days of the year, Hashem allows for His presence to be more apparent, tangible, and within reach. The gates of heaven have been opened wider, and the King of all kings is giving us clear access as at no other time of the year. Hashem has reached out to us and now we have to move closer to Him. Hashem wants us to connect to Him when He has opened up to us. We ask of Hashem always, "Bring us back to you Hashem, and we shall return, renew our days of old" (Eichah 5:21). Hashem has answered our request. Now is the time for us to return. While time is of the essence, we must also recognize that quantity is not the only option. The quality of our Teshuva, the desire to improve, and the decision to turn a new leaf are integral to the repentance process. Hashem is cognizant of our struggles, shortcomings, and challenges, and of what we are capable. What we must concentrate on is the effort to achieve what is best in each of us and Hashem will respond according.

May Hashem give each of us the strength to unwrap the special gifts of Teshuva, Tefillah, and Tzedakah.

Kesiva V'chasima Tova to all.

Vaad Certified Establishments

For the benefit of community members and visitors who are meticulous to eat Cholov Yisroel, Pas Yisroel, or Yoshon, we have additionally provided the information as to which establishments maintain such a Kashrus standard

DAIRY RESTAURANTS

Ben Yehuda Cafe and Pizzeria

1370 Lambertson Drive
Silver Spring Maryland 20902
Phone: (301) 681-8900
Cholov Yisroel, Pas Yisroel, Yoshon

Goldberg's New York Bagels

4824-6 Boiling Brook Parkway
Rockville, MD 20852
Phone: (301) 816-9229
Cholov Yisroel, Pas Yisroel

Goldberg's New York Bagels II

9328 Georgia Ave.
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Phone: (240) 450-4177
Cholov Yisroel, Pas Yisroel

Goldberg's New York Bagels III

7731 Tuckerman Lane
Potomac, MD 20854
Phone: (240) 404-1210
Cholov Yisroel, Pas Yisroel

Kosher Pastry Oven

1372 Lambertson Drive
Wheaton, Maryland 20902
Phone: (301) 592-8844

Nut House Pizza

11419 Georgia Avenue
Wheaton, MD 20902
Phone: (301) 942-5900
Cholov Yisroel

Siena's Pizzeria

12303 Twinbrook Parkway
Rockville Maryland 20852
Phone: (301) 770-7474
*Cholov Yisroel, Pas Yisroel,
Pizza is Yoshon*

MEAT RESTAURANTS

(All Glatt Kosher)

Cafe Shawreen

188 Rollins Ave.
Rockville, MD 20852
Phone: (301) 770-3003

Max's Place

2311 University Blvd West
Silver Spring, MD 20902
Phone: (301) 949-6297

Moti's Grill

4860 Boiling Brook Parkway
Rockville, MD 20852
Phone: (301) 231-0839

Royal Dragon Glatt Kosher Restaurant

4840 Boiling Brook Parkway
Rockville, MD 20852
Phone: (301) 468-1922

BAKERIES

Breadsmith of Potomac LLC

7937 Tuckerman Lane
Potomac, MD 20854
Phone: (301) 983-6033
Pas Yisroel

Goldberg's New York Bagels

4824-6 Boiling Brook Parkway
Rockville, MD 20852
Phone: (301) 816-9229
Pas Yisroel

Goldberg's New York Bagels II

9328 Georgia Ave.
Silver Spring, MD 20910
Phone: (240) 450-4177
Pas Yisroel

Goldberg's New York Bagels III

7731 Tuckerman Lane
Potomac, MD 20854
Phone: (240) 404-1210
Pas Yisroel

Kosher Pastry Oven

1372 Lambertson Drive
Wheaton, Maryland 20902
Phone: (301) 592-8844
Pas Yisroel, Yoshon

Krispy Kreme Doughnut Corporation

6332 Richmond Highway
Alexandria, VA 22306
Phone: (703) 768-1002

Krispy Kreme Doughnuts

14919 Shady Grove Road
Rockville MD 20850
Phone: (240) 453-0334

Krispy Kreme Doughnuts

1350 Connecticut Ave NW
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: (202) 463-0414

Moti's Market

4860 Boiling Brook Parkway
Rockville, MD 20852
Phone: (301) 468-0400
Pas Yisroel (Yoshon only as listed)

Shalom Kosher Market and Bakery

1361 Lambertson Dr
Silver Spring, MD 20902
Phone: (301) 946-6500
Pas Yisroel

Sunflower Bakery

8507 Ziggy Lane
Gaithersburg, MD 20877
Phone: (240) 361-3698
Pas Yisroel

LOCAL CATERERS

Carmel Caterers

Phone: (301) 744-9504

Community Kosher Catering, LLC

Phone: (301) 765-6029

The Kosher Kitchen Catering Co.

Phone (703) 227-7142

The Pastry Oven Catering

Phone: (301) 592-8844

Potomac 18 Caterers

Phone: (301) 294-8445

Shalom Strictly Kosher

Phone: (301) 946-6500

Signature Caterers

Phone: (301) 949-6297

Wrap2Go “Gourmet Sandwiches and Fine Catering”

Phone: (301) 328-1418

Cholov Yisroel

OTHER

Cold Stone Creamery

(Ice cream shop)

7314 Baltimore Avenue
College Park, Maryland 20740

Phone: (301) 277-2229

Joes Does

(Pizza dough and other dough’s)

Phone: (301) 754-1128

The Candy Man

1351 Lamberton Drive
Silver Spring, MD 20902

Phone: (301) 681-1100

Soupergirl I

314 Carroll Street, NW
Washington, DC 20012

Phone: (202) 609-7177

Soupergirl II

1829 M Street,
NW Washington, DC 20036
(Between 18th and 19th Streets)

Phone: (202) 733-4401

HOTELS

Grand Hyatt

1000 H Street NW
Washington, DC 20001

Phone: (202) 637-4928

Glatt Kosher

Park Hyatt

24th and M Street NW
Washington, DC 20037

Phone: (202) 955-3871

Glatt Kosher

COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS AND SHULS

Am HaTorah Congregation

Beth Sholom Congregation

Beth Joshua Congregation

CESJDS Middle School

CESJDS Lower School

Charles E. Smith Life

communities (Hebrew Home)

Ezras Israel Congregation

Lubavitch of Washington DC –

(Cholov Yisroel)

Kemp Mill Synagogue

Kesher Israel Congregation

MJB Hebrew Academy

Maryland Hillel

Ohev Shalom Congregation of

Olney

Southeast Hebrew Congregation

Young Israel Shomrei Emunah

Young Israel of Potomac

Woodside Synagogue



Vaad Harabanim of Greater Washington

Rabbi Yosef Singer, *President*

Rabbi Moshe Walter, *Director*

www.capitolk.org

Capitolkdc@verizon.net

301-593-0336; Fax: 301-593-1115

The Vaad Harabanim of Greater Washington is an organization of Orthodox rabbis in the metropolitan Washington area responsible for *kashrut* supervision. We maintain a *Beth Din* which deals with matters affecting divorce and financial disputes. We additionally strive to support vital community religious interests and projects. Members of the Vaad HaRabbanim are dedicated to serving the broader Jewish community in whatever way possible and appreciate the opportunities to do so.