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בס"ד

# THE CROWN HEIGHTS CHRONICLE

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Established

**2 Candidates' Platforms**

**5 Dov Hikind: Election a Must!**

1981

28 Iyar, 5769 • May 22, 2009

THE INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER OF THE CROWN HEIGHTS JEWISH COMMUNITY

Special Edition

# Appeals Court OKs Sunday Election; Overturns Restraining Order

## Candidate Withdraws under Pressure

By Yitzchok Wagshul

Late Thursday afternoon, the Appellate Division of the New York State Supreme Court overturned a temporary restraining order (TRO) obtained Wednesday by opponents of the community election set for this Sunday, May 24. The election will give Crown Heights residents a long-awaited opportunity to

select new leadership after the term of the incumbents expired in January 2008.

Tuesday night, those involved in the election were served with court papers, which came in a *Beis Din* envelope together with notices signed by Rabbis Osdoba and Segal *shlita* forbidding their participation in the election. In response, candidate Zaki Tamir withdrew from the race, saying he did not wish to defy any *rov*. The court was asked to recognize the notices as arbitration awards arrived at pursuant to hearings before the Beth Din of Crown Heights. On Wednesday, Supreme Court Justice Laura Jacobson granted the temporary restraining order and set a hearing date for June 3.

On Thursday, Elie Poltorak and Ed Rudofsky, Esqs. argued for the lifting of the TRO; David Berger, Esq. appeared for the election's opponents. Mr. Poltorak successfully persuaded the Appellate Division to vacate the restraining order.

The election will take place as scheduled Sunday May 24 *IY"H*. There will be three polling places:

- 1) Downstairs in 770;
- 2) Corner Kingston Ave. and Montgomery St.;
- 3) Corner Carroll Street and Schenectady Avenue.



Candidates for Vaad HaKahal/Board of Directors of the Crown Heights Jewish Community Council present their platforms at a public forum Sunday evening. Bottom row, L-R: Elie Poltorak, Esq.; Zaki Tamir, Esq.; Zev Cadaner; Rabbi Yaakov Rogalsky. Top row, L-R: Chanina Sperlin; Mendel Shagalov; Yossel Mochkin; Kalmen Bialestock. Not pictured: Fishel Brownstein, CPA; Rabbi Yosef Keller.

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Supreme Court of the State of New York  
Appellate Division: Second Judicial Department  
ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE  
Appellate Division Docket No.: 2009-4084  
Upon the unopposed affidavits of Elie Poltorak and Ed Rudofsky, Esqs., and the papers annexed thereto, the Court has considered the application of the respondents and the court has determined that the respondents' application for an order to show cause is granted. The respondents are ordered to show cause before the court on the day of May 22, 2009, at 9:30 o'clock in the forenoon of that date, why an order should not be made and entered:  
1. GRANT TO APPEAL  
2. VACATE OR MODIFY TRO  
3. Granting each other and further relief as to the court may seem just and equitable.  
SUFFICIENT CAUSE THEREFOR APPEARING, it is ORDERED that pending the hearing and determination of the court, the temporary restraining order shall remain in effect until the day of May 24, 2009.  
Dated: Brooklyn, New York, May 21, 2009  
Associate Justice  
Appellate Division: 2<sup>nd</sup> Department

Appellate Division Order  
permitting Sunday's election

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For a full record & background of the netzigm, rabbonim, etc., visit our archives at [www.CrownHeightsChronicle.com](http://www.CrownHeightsChronicle.com).



# The Candidates' Platforms

The *Chronicle* sent a questionnaire to each candidate in the scheduled election for Vaad Hakahal/JCC Board of Directors. Following are their responses, to assist our readers in forming an opinion prior to the May 24 election. The ten candidates are (in alphabetical order): Kalmen Bialestock; Fishel Brownstein, CPA; Zev Cadaner; Rabbi Yosef Keller; Yossel Mochkin; Elie Poltorak, Esq.; Rabbi Yaakov Rogalsky; Mendel Shagalov; Chanina Sperlin; and Zaki Yitzchak B. Tamir, Esq. Of these, Messrs. Bialestock and Shagalov did not return their questionnaires by press time, and Mr. Tamir has decided to withdraw as a candidate.

The questions were:

1. Please spell your full name and list your age, occupation, and educational background.
2. Why do you want to serve on the Vaad Hakahal/JCC Board of Directors?
3. What do you consider the three biggest problems facing our community?
4. What would you do to solve those problems?
5. What is your plan for restoring achdus/unity to our community generally?
6. What is your position on the division within the Beis Din, and what are your thoughts on what might be done about it?
7. A controversy exists over whether it is appropriate to hold elections at this time, yet you have chosen to run anyway. Please explain your decision.
8. If you have not already included it as part of your answers to the above, please list any special qualifications and/or experience you have that would help you in the position.

In alphabetical order, the candidates responded as follows:

## Fishel Brownstein, CPA

1. Fishel Brownstein; Age: 56; Occupation: Self-Employed Accountant and Financial Advisor. Father of (married children who are) shluchim and klei kodesh. Education: Masters of Business Administration (MBA), Certified Public Accountant (CPA), Securities and Insurance Licensed.

2. It is customary to separate the function of the Crown Heights Jewish Community Council from that of the Vaad Hakohol. The JCC is a conduit for government funding and therefore abides by non-discrimination rules and equal opportunity laws. The Vaad Hakohol's functions include mainly religious, i.e., Jewish, affairs. As a CPA who has audited non profit organizations in the past, I have an expertise in knowing how non profit organizations function and the accountability standards to which they must adhere to maintain the funding from the various governmental agencies. It is no secret that the CHJCC has had problems in this area. I'm sure I can help remedy the situation.

I was approached by numerous people in our community who have urged & asked me to get involved and lend my expertise to our current state of affairs. Simcha Hellinger was instrumental in getting me involved in his project of "mishpat sholom," an arbitration panel that would help bring solutions to "litigants" that would help prevent cases going to the traditional "din Torah." Simcha worked in close cooperation with Rabbi Osdoba to obviate the necessity of a din Torah.

3-6. It is no secret that we (the man and woman in the street) are experiencing "A Crisis of Confidence" in many aspects to our communal leadership. The problems range from our Beis Din to chinuch to tznius to our young people, R"L, having yiddishkeit issues. I think I would be a helpful addition to a Vaad Hakohol in addressing these issues by locating proper professional assistance, as well as religious assistance i.e., mashpias, etc. We're going to need new approaches and we're going to need to enlist many community persons to get involved in the various "task forces" that need to be established. As mentioned earlier, the "task force" headed by Simcha Hellinger (when he lived here in Crown Heights) is a perfect example of the kind of input we are going to need from the residents of Crown Heights.

7. There seems to be controversy in Crown Heights no matter what is being discussed. I've spoken with numerous "normal" people in our community and just about everyone is in favor of elections of a new Vaad now. We are more than a year overdue. The man/woman

in the street is very frustrated at the state of affairs in which we find ourselves. We need new ideas, fresh ideas and people who are committed to real accountability and transparency. We don't need to give lip service to these ideas, we need to accomplish this in "poel mamosh."

## Zev Cadaner

1. Zev Meir Cadaner; 45; printing (The Printhouse); learned in Toras Emes, Oholei Torah, and 770.



Attentive community residents packed the room at the Candidates' Forum.

2. I believe that I can help in the category of chinuch in our community and in "achdus."

3. 1) the pirud in the beis din; 2) achdus in the community; 3) the chinuch of our children and our youth.

4. I can't pinpoint my plan, but as a person that is involved in schools and chinuch even as a bochur, I have always been the peacemaker and was never involved in any machlokes. Therefore, I believe that when you do something with a good intention, it ends up with amazing success. I personally have a lot of experience in chinuch, and the hatzlacha in chinuch even though it's a lot of hard work, it's worth the devotion and investment.

5. See #4.

6. To fix the problem with the Rabbonim, I have no exact "plan-to-solve" but it's clear to me that the community needs an active beis din and active rabbonim that are together with achdus, as the community signed a petition about this subject with over 1,500 signatures. In any case any decisions made about the rabbonim will go through a vote in the community.

7. I don't understand the controversy. Just like in any government office, there are elections every 3 years and no one has the audacity to say that there won't be elections, the same is in our community. The JCC is a government office! And there are bylaws which state that every 3 years there are elections! So how can people that serve as the board of directors come and decide that there shouldn't be elections?! We aren't a communist community. And more so, there are n'tzigm—all their job is to organize the elections. They took a vote and 20 out of 24 voted positive for elections. So therefore what is the controversy/dispute?!?!?!?

Especially since one of the members (and a highly ranked member) stepped down from the council, elections are needed now more than ever.

## Rabbi Yosef Keller

1. Yosef Yitzchok Keller; 41; Sforim Publisher, Editor and proofreader. [Past occupations: Librarian (in the Rebbe's Library). Data analyst. Sforim Specialist @ Judaica store]. Educational Background: Oholei Torah (Kindergarten, Elementary, and Bais Medrosh), Toras Emeth and Tomchei Tmimim Lud (Yeshiva Ktano), Central Lubavitcher Yeshiva (770).

2. To minimize (or even eliminate) discord in the community and to improve the services the community receives from the government.

3. a) The rift that is being created between the Rabbonim of the community; b) The large amount of youth that are thrown out of yeshivas and left to fend for themselves on the street; c) The great financial burden upon parents to provide for their children's education.

4. a) draw up a contract defining the relationship between different Rabbonim of the same Beis Din; b) establish educational institutes that are designed for the needs of the youth that the mesivtahs don't like to deal with, and offer programs that upgrade the kids to the standards that are acceptable for the mesivtahs; c) try to get the government (federal, state and city) to pay the tuition of Jewish education (it is cheaper than the \$12,000 per capita they spend on public school students in NYC).

5-7. In general, I believe strongly (and have some experience) in defusing conflicts rather than inflaming them. For instance: a) the shul has been run by the gabboim ever since Reb Yochanon Gordon started the minyan in 770 (in the year 5700) when the Friedrike Rebbe acquired it for the purpose of making it the Chabad Headquarters. When Reb Yochanon passed away, 5 Gabboim were elected by those present at the time in 770, one of the elected Gabboim (Y. K.) declined to accept an elected position and has not served as gabbai since (while the others accepted their elected position and served as gabboim). In the year 5747, elections took place with the participation of the Toshvei Hashchunah. Since 5757, the gabboim are elected on the same day as the Vaad Hakohol.

The compromise between the two extreme viewpoints (that the stone must include the inscription that emphasizes that the Rebbe is no longer with us, and that the stone should include the inscription that the Rebbe is alive and melech hamoshiach), is for the stone to contain neither inscription (just merely the dry fact that the Rebbe laid the cornerstone in 5748), as the gabboim suggested.

b) it is very strange that a group of Lubavitcher Chassidim should insist that they want to be classified as anti-this or that (especially as anti-Moshiach).

In general: those that are bothered by the fact that many Chabad Chassidim continue to say "yechi adoneinu moreinu verabeinu melech hamoshiach leolam voed" (as was said and sung in the presence of the Rebbe with his encouragement for close to two years prior to the 3<sup>rd</sup> of Tamuz 5754), are under the wrong impression that the above-mentioned statement only makes sense if the Rebbe is still alive.

Actually the translation of the above mentioned statement into English is "our master teacher and Rebbe, King Moshiach, should live forever and ever." It does not explicitly discuss the present status of King Moshiach (whether or not he is currently alive), which is an entirely different discussion.

Actually: in the famous sichah of the 2<sup>nd</sup> of Nisan 5748 the Rebbe says that saying "yechi hamelech" accomplishes the resurrection of the dead, until the King Moshiach will arise and sing.

## Yossel Mochkin

1. Yossel Mochkin; 55; pizza shop owner; Oholei Torah, Lubavitcher Yeshiva, Shlichus in Montreal and Brunoy, France, with Reb Nissan Nemanov.

2. Especially now, there's such turbulence that I feel I must come in and restore confidence and dignity in the Community Council. I have the kochos to do the right thing and for 3 years, I want to devote myself to action on behalf of the community.

3. a. consensus on education: we need more than one mosad to address the needs of our teenagers and yungerleit, to lead them in the right direction; b. More playgrounds and recreational facilities for our families and youth; c. We need to enhance the housing. We should be able to get permits to fix up our houses, for example, if we have large families and need to add rooms.

4. advocate to government to understand our needs. This applies also to youth and education matters. It's all a function of the community council soliciting funds for these purposes. These are some ideas I have, but I must admit that I won't know what funds are actually feasible, i.e., what programs are available for what purposes, until I get in and learn more from the inside.

5. To speak the truth and stop beating around the bush. Speaking directly to the public with no behind-closed-doors deals. "Transparency," as they say.

6. It's up to Rabbi Osdoba. I spoke to him and I told him, if you want you could join us and if you want you can split the community. But we need to forge ahead and build our community. We have new people, we have new issues, we have a whole new young generation we

(Continued on p. 3)

have to address, new mosdos, etc. We cannot stop the process. But its crucial that we restore the beis din for din Torahs specifically. The existing rabbonim, if you want to use one or the other for siddur kid-dushin, fine, but with din Torahs, we can't have a situation where, if I call you to a din Torah by Rabbi Osdoba & you say, no I only recognize Rabbi Schwei or vice versa. That cannot work. So, at least for din Torahs, we must have three rabbonim who are authoritative for everyone. You wouldn't even have to pay them a salary because they would be paid per DT.

7. There's no reasonable reason for there not to be elections, especially since the three-year period is over—and especially since the chairman is sitting in jail. So it's certainly high time that there must be elections. How can the government, the outside world, respect us with the situation the way it is? The only tool that the community has is to go out and voice their vote to elect someone new. This is like stealing from us our chance to exercise bechirah, our chance to designate our own direction to voice our own destiny. Of the people, by the people, for the people. There was already enough time to try and make shalom by the rabbonim, now its time for a new approach, a new effort to solve this issue.

8. I'm more interested mostly in ruchnius than in gashmius. I want there to be more mashpiim, something which the Rebbe spoke about. There should be a paid mashpia, who should also appoint others, one for each block or couple of blocks or area. Someone to see that parents and their children learn more, daven more, go to mincha/maariv, be in touch with one another more. Through the right channels, there should be shiurim for the blocks, etc.

That's ruchnius. As far as gashmius, thank G-d I have a family of 11 children that are yerei shamayim and all good people. For ten years I was in the textile business, and I've been 10 years now in pizza, so I am very consistent and stable. I have, more or less, been successful, and I have had the opportunity to live and work in the community and see what the people's needs are.

There's much to do, and a lot can be accomplished; there are other issues, too, although not as important, like ticketing etc. There should be a website to report complaints, a central clearinghouse so we can all be united.

#### Elie Poltorak, Esq.

1. Elie C. Poltorak; *ben sh'loshim l'koach*; Attorney (commercial litigation); Oholei Torah and *l'havdil* Columbia Law School.

2. I want to restore transparency, integrity, and accountability to the Va'ad and to bring peace to the Beis Din and our community.

3. Other than the tragic *machlokes* in the Beis Din: 1. The disillusionment of our youth; 2. Cost of tuition; 3. The lack of a centralized social services infrastructure.

4. Allow me to address them in reverse order: 3) We live in a wonderful community, full of giving, caring people. There are several magnificent *chessed* organizations, as well as selfless individuals, involved in helping those in need. There are also countless government programs that can help. However, there is no one address for people to turn to. If elected, I will make the community council a "clearing house" for *chessed* in this community and a one-stop shop to direct those with any problems to the available resources. I also believe that we must be proactive in seeking out those in need, rather than waiting for them to overcome their shame and seek help. I plan to hire social workers to reach out to families and offer them the full panoply of services available—whether it is government programs, financial assistance, counseling, medical/mental health assistance, legal aid, job placement, marital counseling, help with at-risk children, etc. Any member of our community should be able to turn to the council with any problem and walk away with either a solution or an address. 2) The prohibitive cost of tuition for our children is a serious and growing problem and a *g'zeiras paro R"L*. On the other hand, the schools face rising costs and increasing deficits. It is easy to blame the schools for the cost of tuition, but I believe that our children deserve the very best chinuch possible—and that requires adequate funding. On the other hand, I firmly believe that no child should ever be turned away from a school due to his parents' inability to pay. I would tackle the problem from both ends by creating a communal fund to subsidize tuition for needy families. Such a fund would give the Va'ad clout with our schools in advocating on behalf of families and would incentivize all of our schools to cooperate with each other in sharing the burden. 1) This is the most difficult problem facing us. We were *zoche* to grow up with the Rebbe. Unfortunately, in these final moments before the imminent *hisgalus*, our children do not see the Rebbe. Therefore, we must work 100 times as hard as our parents did to inspire and be *mechanech* our children. We must spare no

resources—time or money—from our children's *chinuch*. We must have *achdus* in our community. We must create appropriate frameworks for all sorts of children and teenagers, so that no one is left to roam the streets. The Rebbe often said that in our generation, the generation of *malchus*, the only way to achieve is by being *mashpia* on others. We must encourage our youth to help each other—thereby bettering themselves. We must restore the idealism that has always made our community special.

5. We must engender tolerance in our community. We must stop doubting each others' motivations and recognize that, although we all seek to fulfill the Rebbe's will, we may legitimately disagree as to what the Rebbe wants. Too often, peacemaking is used as an excuse to impose our will on others. In short, we must learn to live and let live. Everyone should have a sense of belonging to the community and should carry the responsibilities associated therewith. The Va'ad should endeavor not to take sides in a *machlokes*. Rather, the role of the Va'ad should be to facilitate a peaceful solution.

6. This tragic *machlokes* is clearly a *ma'ase soton*. It is astounding that here, in the Rebbe's holy *shchuna*, such a terrible *machlokes* broke out over trivialities. I believe the rabbonim should go to a *din torah* to resolve their issues—as all frum Jews must. The Va'ad should do its utmost to attain the confidence of both rabbonim, so that they are secure in their positions and are comfortable compromising.

7. No one can dispute that the elections are more than a year overdue. The rabbonim's authority is premised on the Beis Din; neither rov has authority to act unilaterally. Moreover, the Rebbe specifically directed the rabbonim not to intervene in the Va'ad election. The community should not be held hostage to the rabbonim's *machlokes*. To the contrary, the *machlokes* only deepens the need for a functional Va'ad to lead the community out of this mess.

8. My experience as an attorney and negotiator would be very helpful in mending the rifts in our community. I have a proven track record of mediating between the rabbonim. Prior to the recent sham election for the Beis Din, I successfully negotiated an agreement between Rav Schwei and Rav Osdoba to postpone the election for a short time so that a fair and open election could be held. Unfortunately, certain individuals decided to carry on (and on) with the "election" despite the rabbonim's agreement—causing the present split in the Beis Din. I hope to reunite the rabbonim in one functional Beis Din. Rav Schwei and Rav Osdoba may never be friends (although one must never give up hope), but they must reach a *modus vivendi*—an agreement on how the Beis Din can function despite their disagreements. Ultimately, I hope to bring about non-partisan elections for an additional rov (or rabbonim) who can lead the community, with the support of both current rabbonim. "One who begins a mitzvah, we tell him 'finish.'" (*Yerushalmi Pesachim* 10:5) I worked very hard to negotiate the election agreement—only to see it undermined by individuals pursuing their own interests. I feel an obligation to undo the damage and implement the rabbonim's agreement.

I work well under pressure. I founded a successful commercial litigation boutique. I organized a *yeshivas kayitz* in Gush Katif the summer of the expulsion and administered it with 10 American *bochurim* and an additional 30 or so Israeli *bochurim* who joined us. I had to improvise and lead under very difficult conditions with rockets and mortars raining down on us. (Incidentally, the Rebbe stated that *shleimus ha'aretz* depends on the *shleimus* of Crown Heights.) I experienced first-hand the dilemma a *menahel* faces when parents say they can't afford to pay, yet the *mosad* does not have the funds to sponsor the student. (B"H, I did not turn anyone away for lack of funds and several of the *bochurim* attended at no charge.) Working with incredible young *bochurim* idealistic enough to be *moser nefesh* for *shleimus ha'aretz*, yet many of whom could not find a place for themselves in our yeshivas, instilled a passion in me for harnessing the untapped potential in our youth.

#### Rabbi Yaakov Rogalsky

1. Yaakov Rogalsky; 59; Rebbe/Educator; Attended yeshivas in Kfar Chabad, Yerushalaim, Flatbush, and Crown Heights (770). Masters Degrees in Education and Special Education.

2. The present lack of leadership prompted me to get involved in the election.

3. The three biggest problems can be summarized in the following manner: 1. *Shlaimos HaAm*: The lack of unity among the Rabbonim of the community; the apathy of the younger generation to care and get involved in the community due to their cynicism because of the constant *machlokes* that permeates the community. 2. *Shlaimos HaEretz*:

The lack of affordable housing in the community. 3. *Shlaimos HaTorah*: If there is not bread there is not Torah—the lack of job opportunities; the lack of special education facilities for the children that need them; the lack of appreciation of each child to make him/her feel special.

4. The latter two, *Shlaimos HaEretz* and *Shlaimos HaTorah*, will be answered first, due to the order that the questions were posed to the candidates. *Shlaimos HaAm* will be answered in questions 5 and 6.

The lack of affordable housing is a detriment to the whole community. Young people can not buy houses which results in a drain of creative talent leaving our neighborhood. This issue needs creative, honest, and caring individuals to be involved in increasing the availability of housing that is reasonably priced. We only hurt ourselves when we compete against each other for scarce resources. Lobbying efforts, even in this economy, should be increased to secure funding for housing. It should be made clear to city officials that any funding that they provide will be used for the purpose that it is allotted for. Emphasis should not only be on condos, but increasing affordable rentals. The Mishpat Shalom, which was a mediation board between landlords and tenants, should be revived and its members should be paid a salary. Quality of life issues are very important, such as arranging alternate side parking each side only once a week. Stores should have more uniformed prices to help the consumer. If other Yidden see that we are offering affordable housing and rentals (something that the Rebbe wanted at least from the late seventies) they will want to come and live here. Utica and Nostrand Avenues can finally change.

Education is also a major issue of concern. All the toddler playgroups, Head Starts, UPK's, etc. stress the worth and special talents of every individual child. As children get older, the rebbes and morahs have to find ways that continue to make each child feel important and successful. Why do people act out? In order to show you that I am an individual and should be noticed. If not in a positive way, then it will be in a negative way. It is true that competition among the Yeshivas is good, but not at the expense of leaving children out of the system. Educational Mosdos should not throw out students without input from an advisory panel and without having an alternative place for this student to learn in. By having this so called expulsion, you are automatically creating children at risk. The Big Brother/Sister Mentor system should be strengthened, without it being regarded as a stigma. In addition, there should be a concentrated effort to create special needs yeshivas for our students, a resource that is sorely lacking. The lack of such institutions creates additional stress and hardships on families with special needs children. In general, there should be abuse and therapy hotlines to provide support for families and individuals.

An additional area that needs immediate attention during these difficult economic times is to increase community involvement in finding employment for people of all age groups. Every avenue should be utilized to expand our resources. Open forums should be created to provide legal advice, benefit counseling, training in writing resumes, and creating a job bank of employment opportunities in as many fields as possible. We should be willing to partner with other organizations, work with professionals proficient in these areas, and post on-line job fairs and any networking opportunities available that would lead to employment. There should be seminars on how to modify your mortgages, credit card debts, etc. These suggestions should not distract from the work already done by individuals and the community council who have already made contributions in this area.

5, 6. There cannot be a community without the Rabbonim intact and functioning in a way of *achdus* and *shalom*. The people that are encouraging *pirud* and separation for their own personal agendas should be marginalized. Those that are seeking to promote solutions should be encouraged.

The residents of Crown Heights are entitled to leadership and a sense of direction that they can respect. One can't underestimate the power of a united community to obtain funding and support on many levels, as has been demonstrated in other communities. This lack of unity has really led to a great apathy among all age groups that are within our community. People have said that they, as young teenagers, have only grown up with *machlokes* and are at the point of not caring anymore. Others have said that the reset button should be pressed and we should start all over again. We need to look at the "aerial view" of Crown Heights as a single unit and not as private personal units. We are part of the Rebbe's community and that only demands that we have the unity for growth and positive outlooks.

(Continued on p. 11)



# Letter from Rav Osdoba Shlita

הרב יהודה קלמן מארלאוו ז"ל  
 הרב אברהם אזובא שליט"א  
 הרב יוסף א. הלוי העלער שליט"א  
 הרב יצחק רייטפארט שליט"א  
 הרב יצחק צירקינד שליט"א  
 הרב שלמה יהודה הלוי סגל שליט"א

ב"ד צ"ד ק"ק שכונת קראון הייטס  
**BETH DIN OF CROWN HEIGHTS**  
 Beth Din Address: 788 Eastern Parkway • Room 210 • Brooklyn, NY 11213  
 Mailing Address: 390-A Kingston Avenue • Brooklyn, NY 11215  
 Tel. (718) 604.8000 • Fax (718) 221.0103

Thursday 20th Iyar 5769

To the members of the community שיחיו

I would like to clarify my position regarding holding the elections, that have been discussed lately. In my opinion one should not vote in these elections (for Vaad Hakohol etc and Gaboim) for the simple reason: the idea of elections is to give an equal opportunity to upstanding and honest individuals to be elected to the important role of Gaboim and community activists. In the present situation there is no possibility to maintain this fundamental provision. During the past four years, three election campaigns have taken place in our neighborhood: 1. Vaad Hakohol. 2. Gaboim. 3. Rabbonim, in which the community let their view be known as to who they deem appropriate to serve in each of the three above mentioned capacities. Unfortunately, they faced opposition from a certain Rav, who disqualified several of those elected **with out basis in Halacha**. The situation deteriorated to the extent that a schism developed within the Beis Din, (which is an explicit prohibition under the rubric of "Lo Tisgodadu" (Rambam Hil. Avoda Zara 12:14 where it says: "this causes great controversy"), within the Vaad Hakohol, the Gaboim, (and the Netzigim). (The three Rabbonim that were elected by the community sent three summons to a Din Torah to the above mentioned Rav (who disqualified them) through a neutral Beis Din, and it is their hope that matters will be settled in accordance to Halacha and in the best possible manner).

### The rift among the Netzigim

Amid all the above mentioned disagreements, the one which is currently pertinent is the split among the Netzigim that are responsible to organize the elections. The regulations of the Netzigim, as outlined in the by-laws, is that they appoint upon themselves (through internal elections) a governing board known as the "executive committee", headed by a chairman, a vice-chairman, etc. The function of this board is to administer the Netzigim, to call meetings etc.

Recently an intolerable situation has developed: there are two groups calling themselves the "executive committee". (An appalling conflict!). One of these factions is organizing the elections under discussion. The opposing faction has summoned their opponents to a Din Torah, claiming that under the by-laws they have no authority, since they were not voted in by the majority of the Netzigim of the shuls.

Moreover, among the candidates that have been approved, as has recently been made public, there are several that have offended communal representatives in a vulgar manner, thereby being disqualified according to Halacha to be appointed to a leadership position (as stated in Shulchan Aruch Choshen Mishpat 37:22). Is it tenable that these individuals be handed the opportunity to act as lay leaders in the community? [This constitutes a case of the Talmudic dictum] "a violator prospering?!" (Avoda Zara 2b).

### The rift in the Beis Din

P2

According to the by-laws of the Netzigim all disagreements, misunderstandings etc that arise between the Netzigim organizing the elections and those running for election, the Vaad Hakohol, the Gaboim, or between the Netzigim themselves, at every juncture during the election process, - which is likely as experience has shown - should be brought before the members of the Beis Din.

In the present situation this is unattainable. There is a split in the Beis Din - one of the members has opened a separate Beis Din in violation of "Lo Tisgodadu". See Rambam Hil. Avoda Zara 14:14 "included in this prohibition is that there should not be two batei dinim .. since this causes great controversy, as the passuk states "lo tisgodadu" [from which chazal derive] do not make 'agudos agudos' [separate factions]".

When an aforementioned disagreement arises, there is no solution. Because X will approach Beis Din A and Y will agree to appear only before Beis Din B. Elaboration on the fire of Machlokes etc that will rage as a result of this is superfluous.

The Rebbe surely doesn't desire such elections. (See Sefer Hasichos 5747 p. 289: [Hashem says] "what place could be My resting place" - since it is possible to build a house for Me that is not "My resting place" G- forbid, i.e. when the building is connected with matters that are contrary to Shulchan Aruch, [such as] infringing on another's business and the like, (a mitzva which is achieved by means of an aveira). Hence the requirement to stress that one ought to build a house that will be "My resting place", in accordance with Shulchan Aruch).

Therefore, in my opinion, as per the ruling of the Beis Din on 3<sup>rd</sup> Shvat 5768, which is in full enforcement until further notice, the above must be rectified in order to hold elections based upon true and solid foundations, for the benefit of the entire neighborhood.

In light of all of the above and as a continuation to the Psak Din: **until the aforementioned issues are corrected, one is forbidden to participate in these elections. And whoever does participate in them adds to the strife and to the destruction of the community.**

With prayer for immediate peace in our community,  
 and that we merit to journey along the path that leads towards,  
 the ultimate preparation for Matan Torah -  
 "The Yidden encamped at the mountain - like one man with one heart!"  
*Rabbi Avrohom Osdoba*  
 Rabbi Avrohom Osdoba

*Editor's note: To avoid confusion arising from the existence of two versions of the above letter, it should be clarified that Rabbi Osdoba initially released his letter with the language "I do not G-d forbid lament holding elections and I have not come to invalidate them....[nevertheless,] until the aforementioned issues are corrected, one should not partake in these elections." This was understood as Rabbi Osdoba's non-binding opinion. Opponents of the election pointed this out to Rabbi Osdoba, whereupon he released a revised version of his letter, bearing the same date, in which the paragraph beginning "I do not G-d forbid lament holding elections" was deleted, and changing "one should not partake in these elections" to "one is forbidden to participate in these elections."*

## Yisroel Best Responds to Rav Osdoba's Letter

I'm responding to Rav Osdoba's letter for the sake of *shalom*. Misinformation causes *machlokes*, so I want to set the record straight. Rabbi Osdoba, of course, cannot be in all places at all times, and could not have firsthand knowledge of all of the facts. Therefore, I'm being *melamed zechus* that Rav Osdoba must have received misleading information from someone with his own agenda.

The *rov* writes in his letter that "the idea of elections is to give an equal opportunity to upstanding and honest individuals to be elected." The fact is

that we invited Yanky Sufrin [leader of the opposing faction among the *n'tzigim*] and those in his camp to join with us in running elections. The invitation was contained in a public letter that went out.

As for the idea of Rabbi Schwei disqualifying candidates, let me give you some history. Two neutral *n'tzigim* went to Rabbi Osdoba some time ago and said they wanted to organize an election, but Rav Osdoba told them he was against that because he was afraid that Rav Schwei would disqualify candidates. So the two *n'tzigim* went

to Rabbi Schwei and asked him to sign a letter confirming that he would stay out of the election process, which he did sign. But Rabbi Osdoba never went ahead with his approval. We did everything we could to make it fair.

Furthermore, a deal was struck between Yanky Herzog [a *natzig* in Mr. Best's faction] and Benny Raskin [a *natzig* in Mr. Sufrin's faction] that three *n'tzigim* from each faction would combine to conduct the election, and that there would be no challenges; anyone who wanted could run without fear of disqualification. So despite what Rabbi Osdoba

must have been told, these elections were to be as fair as possible, and no one was to be prevented from running.

I'm incensed that anyone would question the fairness of anything we've done so far.

Rav Osdoba writes that our *n'tzigim* are not legitimate because we were called to a *din Torah* and refused to go. But the fact is that it was *we* who first called *them* to a *din Torah*, and it was *they* who refused to go. We are prepared to go anywhere they want for a *din Torah* by the method of *zabla* as we originally proposed, and this is a public

announcement for all to see.

So again, I'm sure the *rov* was given bad information about what really happened at that meeting in Moshe Rubashkin's house and how the second group of *n'tzigim* illegally came

into being. But the facts are otherwise, and the *rov* was misled by people with their own agendas.

(Mr. Best is chairman of the *N'tzigim* organizing Sunday's election.)

## Leibish Nash: Grants Aren't Being Applied For

Leibish Nash, Vaad Hakahal/JCC Board member, reported that infighting and mismanagement of the

current Vaad, grants are going unapplied for and many funding agencies have stopped giving. Longterm JCC

accounting firm Loeb & Tropper resigned last year over many financial irregularities in the books, he said. And the

Met Council refused to continue funding unless Moshe Rubashkin stepped down, said Mr. Nash.

ב"ד  
**THE CROWN HEIGHTS CHRONICLE**  
 כ"א צוה"י את הברכה  
 Established 1981

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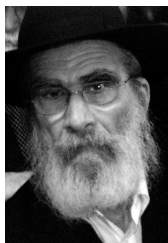
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## Interview with Rabbi Abba Paltiel, *shlita*

Noted community *mashpia* and member of the founding Vaad HaKahal



Q: What is your position on the upcoming election for Vaad HaKahal/JCC Board of Directors?

A: The fact that there are problems and people who object is very painful but also not new. Even when the elections were urged expressly by the Rebbe, there were those who stood on the sidelines objecting and hoping that the effort would fail. This is unfortunate, but it certainly cannot be allowed to interfere with the conduct of the elections.

I cannot understand the point of the fight now—just as I couldn't make sense of it then. From the original experience, I reached the conclusion that it is too much to expect universal consensus on anything in a Jewish community. In my opinion, the right thing to do is quite obvious: a duly elected Vaad is the only thing that can work. The current Vaad has already lost its mandate, since their term of office expired long ago; thus, they are operating without a mandate from the community. That is the first step toward chaos.

This is particularly true of elections in Crown Heights such as the presently scheduled ones. We, of all people, should know this, particularly since we all witnessed the great emphasis and importance the Rebbe placed on these elections—even to the point of speaking harshly about any inference or even non-participation.

Q: What about the claim that, yes, elections are important, but holding them now will further the *machlokes* within the community?

A: I cannot see any possibility for the elections having negative effect in terms of bringing greater disparity. Quite the contrary, if any thing could bring any kind of unity it is precisely through elections.

Q: Those opposed to elections say that the *netzigim* who are organizing them are not legitimate *netzigim*. Do you have anything to say about that?

A: As far as the legitimacy of the *netzigim* who are organizing these elections, to the best of my knowledge these people are representatives from the various shuls in the community. As such, I cannot imagine what can be illegitimate about them.

Q: What is your opinion of the candidates?

A: The candidates themselves in my opinion, are pretty viable, and as would be the case for any of us, with diligence they will learn on the job, with proper consultation, etc.

Q: A letter from Rabbi Osdoba has been circulated in which the *rov* strongly opposes holding elections now. How can we go out and vote if a *rov* has spoken against it?

A: I haven't seen the letter of Rabbi Osdoba

# Letter from Rav Schwei *Shlita*

בס"ד

בד"צ דק"ק שכונת קראון הייטס

Beth Din of Crown Heights

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Brooklyn, New York 11213

Telephone (718) 774-7000

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B"H Monday 24 Iyar 5769

To the Residents of Crown Heights  
"Here G-d has commanded His blessing"  
May G-d be with them

Whereas this Sunday, Rosh Chodesh Sivan, elections for Vaad Hakohol and Gabbaim of 770 are to be held:

In view of the well known, clear instructions of the Rebbe in this matter (in the Sicha of Shabbos Parshas Mattos-Massei, 5747 on the importance of the elections and with reference to those who attempted to prevent the elections,) and in view of the bylaws of the community that the elections should be held every three years, it is the right and duty of every resident of the community who is entitled to vote to participate in the elections and to choose whichever of the candidates he feels are appropriate to direct the community and the shul.

The attitude and the unique effort of the Rebbe Melech Hamoshiach with respect to the organization of elections in the neighborhood, is well known. These are his holy words from the farbrengen of Shabbos Parshas Ki Savo, 5747:

"In view of the great importance of the matter – something which involves the entire community, all residents of the neighborhood – they will certainly all (who have a right to vote) participate in the elections, and they will not make calculations, that it is not in keeping with their honor or that they are busy with other matters, holy and good as they may be, for such calculations do not come from the side of holiness, rather they come from the left [negative] side [of the heart.] For we are talking here of something that affects the wellbeing of the entire public."

Further on in that Sicha the Rebbe announced that everyone who would participate in the elections would receive a dollar from the Rebbe to be given to tzedaka.

May G-d bless his people with peace.

With blessings for the receiving of the Torah  
in a deep and joyous fashion

**Rabbi Aharon Yaakov Schwei,**  
Member of the Crown Heights Beth Din

yet. From what was reported to me, it merely states his opinion that the election will cause further divisiveness. Number one, this is not a halachic opinion—it is in fact what one may call a political one. While I respect Rabbi Osdoba's opinion in this area, as I would respect any one with some experience, that does not preclude the possibility of disagreeing with it. And so I disagree in this instance.

But on a more important note, I don't know why people in the opposition have to involve the *rabbonim* in

every dispute. Why drag Rabbi Osdoba into it at all? This is beyond me.

The bottom line is that I have confidence in our community. The voters are not fools, and are well aware that there is a faction within the existing power structure that desperately wants to hold on to their power. The voters understand for themselves that all the negativity is being put out by these people, and will interpret it in that light. I personally plan to vote, and I trust that the great majority of eligible voters will do likewise. That is crucial.

## Statement of Dov Hikind

Dov Hikind, New York State Assemblyman from Boro Park, told the *Crown Heights Chronicle* he strongly believes Sunday's election is essential to our community.

"I'm a great believer in democracy and in giving people the opportunity to make choices," he said. "In fact, one of the things I've admired about the Crown Heights community is that you have elections—real choices—you don't have that in many other communities.

"Every day that goes by that you don't have a clear picture of who the leaders are is harmful to Crown Heights. As someone in government, I can tell you that, for quite a while now, everyone [in the government] knows that 'You can talk to this one or that one,' that there's no pressure to listen to the community's demands because if the talks aren't going the way [the politician] wants, you can just walk away and talk to someone else. Everybody claims to be a leader in Crown Heights.

"Especially in today's economy when funding is tight, the sooner word spreads that there's only one united leadership, the better it will be for the community."

# Large Turnout at Candidates' Forum

May 18—A public forum was held last night at the Bais Chaya Mushka school, to allow the public to meet the candidates for Vaad Hakahal/Jewish Community Council (JCC) Board of Directors and for *gab-boim* of 770. Attendance was surprisingly strong despite the fact that virtually no publicity had been conducted for the event; the only notice of the meeting appears to have been street posters put up before *Shabbos*. Nevertheless, close to sixty community residents turned out to hear the speakers, demonstrating that, notwithstanding some degree of pre-election controversy (see related stories in this issue), the community at large is taking very seriously its right to

vote.

Rabbi Yitzchok Holtzman, Jewish chaplain of SUNY Downstate Medical Center and director of the Yad L'Ezer charitable organization, was master of ceremonies and opened the meeting with a *d'var Torah*. He then announced that each candidate for Vaad HaKahal/JCC Board would be permitted five minutes to speak, and that questions would be taken from the audience after all the speakers had finished.

The candidates were called in alphabetical order, except for Fishel Brownstein, CPA—who was out of town and unable to attend—Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Keller, who arrived late. Following are their paraphrased remarks:

## Kalmen Bialestock:

My name is Kalmen Bialestock, and I live in Crown Heights. I have four children.

The Jewish Community Council was set up to assist the *shechunah* [neighborhood] in any way it can. We are now at a crossroads: we can accept the status quo or we can have the JCC refocus on the community's needs. For example, assistance with government programs, like Food Stamps and Medicaid, should be available without having to go out of Crown Heights for it. We need to restore a sense of pride to our community.

I am optimistic that if elected, the new Board will be successful in these matters. There are already many organizations in the

neighborhood that are active in important community services, and I would give more *koach* [power] and support to such organizations to continue their important work.

I'm speaking as a politician, so I'll conclude with this pledge: "No New Taxes!"

## Zev Cadaner:

My involvement with the community has mainly been in the area of *chinuch* [education]. I've been involved with various *mosdos* [organizations] and actively work with young people, mostly around 14–17 years old. One of the most important things for our community is that people should feel involved in education. People shouldn't feel the onus is all on the school to educate and influence

kids; the home must take the lead. In a broader sense, we must all feel responsible for *chinuch* in the community, even for someone else's children. Many times, a child feels more comfortable if he or she doesn't have to confront his parents or teachers directly about something troublesome. That's an area in which others can help: kids would do much better if there were a program in which parents "adopt" a kid from another family, in the sense that they would be available to act as a go-between for that child and his or her parents or teachers if necessary. Another important area that must be addressed is the burden so many people have with tuition.

## Yossel Mochkin:

They asked me why I'm running. The question is, how can you **not** run?

My family—my father and grandfather—has always been involved in all kinds of *mosdos* without the need for any titles, and I wish I could do the same, but there's a crisis in the community and I must get onto the Vaad HaKahal/JCC Board in order to do anything about it. I wish I had campaigned harder the last time I ran [in January 2005], because had I been elected then, there might not be such *pirud* [divisiveness] now.

I live and work in Crown Heights, and have raised a family here of 11 children, all of whom are *yereim*

(Continued on p. 7)

B"H

## MAKE A DIFFERENCE! GET INVOLVED!




- Honesty
- Professionalism
- Dedication
- Dialogue

**FISHEL BROWNSTEIN, CPA**  
**A MAN YOU CAN TRUST**

B"H

## PURSUING PEACE FIGHTING FOR JUSTICE



- ★ Restoring transparency, integrity and accountability to communal institutions.
- ★ Empowering the youth of Crown Heights.
- ★ Assisting the less fortunate with housing and tuition costs.

**אלי פולטורק**  
הכוח הצעיר במועד הקהל

**Elie C. Poltorak, Esq.**  
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*u'shleimim* [G-d fearing and wholesome]; in that measure I have been a tremendous success. Likewise, in business: I have been the owner of the Kretchme pizza shop for ten years and before that I was in textiles for ten years—I'm a stable, consistent person.

When it comes to politics, you have to go on, to move forward. There are always new people growing up, moving in, and so on, and you can't sit on the status quo. Some people get elected to an office and suddenly they're too important to talk to anyone anymore; if I'm elected, I will not act that way. On the contrary, the Community Council

will be a place everyone can take part in. Every single person will get a hearing, *kakaton kagadol* [small and great alike].

We have a *rov* [rabbi] over here—don't ever forget it!—Rabbi Schwei, who encourages these elections. We have a right to self-governance and to vote.

**Elie Poltorak, Esq.**

I'm an attorney practicing commercial litigation. I see the Vaad HaKahal/JCC Board a little differently: I think instead of a body that does everything itself, I think it is meant to be more of a supervisory body. The whole community should be involved. I think we've lost that sense of com-

munity we used to have; we need to restore the sense that "we're all in this together."

My commitment to you is to work with you. We must have professional staff in the Community Council to administer the programs according to established guidelines; it shouldn't be that Vaad members are the ones to decide who gets what.

There are many *chessed* [benevolent, charitable] organizations in the community, but many people don't know where to turn. There should be some central location to act as a clearing-house, with trained staff and social workers, who are familiar

with all available programs and can match people up according to their needs. They should also take a proactive stance by seeking out those in need of assistance.

Some other pressing problems in Crown Heights are our youth, and also the issue of *schar limud* [tuition]. That's a problem from both sides: the parents

need to be able to send their children to yeshivah, and from the other end, the teachers need to be paid.

What I do for a living is negotiate. I'm very good at that. I hope we can speak to the *rabbonim* [rabbis], and somehow bring them closer. They might not become friends tomorrow, but at least they should have a working

relationship. I successfully negotiated an agreement signed by both *rabbonim* before the contested election [in April, 2006] for more *rabbonim* on the *Beis Din* [rabbinical court]. Unfortunately, that agreement was derailed by people with their own agendas, but I hope something like it can be done again.

(Continued on p. 8)



## Candidates' Forum (Continued from page 7)

If anyone has any comments or suggestions, email me at [moshiachnow@gmail.com](mailto:moshiachnow@gmail.com).

### Rabbi Yaakov Rogalsky

I've lived in Crown Heights for thirty years. A lot of your children were my students—I hope that will help me get votes!

There cannot be a community without *achdus* [unity] and *shalom* [peace] among the *rabbonim*. How can that be accomplished? There have been private, quiet efforts along those lines before, and hopefully, continuing efforts will bear fruit.

Also, even though *higia zeman geulaschem* ["the time of your redemption has arrived," a quote from the *Yalkut Shimoni* that the Rebbe publicized as applicable today], there are still people that are suffering. It's not just food stamps and such, but the middle class have problems as well, like mortgage trouble, or abuse G-d forbid; we have it in our community. We must get everyone involved, we must all feel like it's **our** community.

We need a recreational center where people will be able to go, and take their children, to relax and relieve the stress and be healthy. And there are the quality-of-life issues: the City must know that garbage pickup should be accommodating to our needs. Also, housing: our community needs affordable condos and rentals suitable for growing families.

### Mendel Shagalov

I've grown up right here in Crown Heights and know the community well. I have worked with many people and have helped hundreds of youth and tens of families.

Before I give my remarks I want to share with you that I wrote to the Rebbe about my participation in these elections. Here is the response I received: [Mr. Shagalov then read an astonishingly direct letter from the *Igros Kodesh* [volumes of the Rebbe's letters] containing a blessing on being elected to the *hanhala* [leadership] of the holy *kehilla* [community] and noting that it should be carried out in the way of the Baal Shem Tov, that is, with *Ahavas Yisroel* [love of one's fellow] toward all].

I'm executive director and associate executive director of two organizations in Queens, and I am in the government offices daily. I must say, I regularly meet my colleague Chanina Sperlin there, advocating for the community. We can all give a *yasher koach* [thanks, appreciation] to Chanina for his tireless work. [Applause from the audience.]

I have 31 programs in one of the communities in Boro Park and Queens; there's a *ozen kasheses* [listening, sympathetic ear] when people need to talk. In the office of our organization, at 50th Street and 16th Avenue, we have 70 people an hour coming for help, many of them from Crown Heights. They come for just general financial help and advice—it's unbearable that people must leave Crown Heights for that.

There needs to be accountability. The community should have the ability to see where money comes from and where it goes.

Many young people in our community don't even know their neighbors. I decided, on my block, to make a block event so everyone could get together.

What the *kahal* [community] wants, we should

try to deliver—with integrity and with honesty.

What about *tznius* [modest attire and conduct]? This area belongs to the *rabbonim*, but as a *Vaad HaKahal* member you can't walk away from it. The older *yungerleit* [married people] should be a *tziur* [example, role model] for the young. There are 192 *shluchim* [emissaries of the Rebbe] in the tri-state area. If necessary, a *shliach* should "adopt" a child, make him or her feel special. I spoke recently at an event, and afterward I was in a conversation with five fathers. I asked them, with an *emes* [honestly], when was the last time you hugged your child? One father said to me, I have ten kids, I just have no time. That's where we are today—no time. Something must be done.

### Chanina Sperlin

I'm sorry I was late, but I've just come from the Agudas Yisroel dinner.

I want to focus on one issue tonight: in my three terms on the Vaad HaKahal/JCC Board, I'd say hundreds of people got jobs in government offices through my efforts. During the last term, thanks to the generosity of a local benefactor and with the help of my colleague Leibish Nash, we opened a job help center at 465 Crown Street, upstairs from the Agudas Yisroel shul, called Crown Heights COJO Jobs. There a staff of two there, who look for jobs for people, help you with your resume, prepare you for an interview.

I want to continue this. Unfortunately, today, you're lucky if you have a government job and keep it. So we want to expand into the private sector. Any job is better than no job, even if it doesn't cover all your bills.

If you want to know what I've done for the community in other areas, just speak to the *mosdos* of our community—Oholei Torah, Bnos Menachem, Beis Rivka—they can speak on my behalf.

### Zaki Yitzchak Bachar Tamir, Esq.

I'm a criminal defense attorney by profession, born in Miami Beach to Israeli parents of Yemenite descent. I grew closer and closer to Lubavitch and to Crown Heights from an early age, and I now live here with my wife and three children. This community welcomed me, and I thank the community very much. I love this community. My family and my wife's family have opened businesses in Crown Heights.

Over ten years of "taking" from the community, I felt I didn't deserve to have a voice. There are surely many of you out there who are more qualified than I am—and believe me, I will find you. I'll put together a board to utilize all that people have to offer. I have neighbors that give out bail money. Why is that on them? Why isn't it up to the Community Council to coordinate such things?

I've worked in social services. For five years, even with two kids, I went every Shabbos to Human Care Services, an offshoot of Mishkan. I worked for the DA's office and collected many resources there. I want to apply that experience to benefit our community.

There's a separation of powers in this town. I respect both of the *rabbonim* very much, but we cannot be paralyzed by it. The Jewish Community Council is a government agency; there's supposed to be money coming to us, and it isn't because of the problems with the *rabbonim* that that isn't happening. According to these

bylaws, unless there's some version I haven't heard about, the Vaad HaKahal is not supposed to get involved with who should or shouldn't be a *rov*. And conversely, the *Beis Din* shouldn't keep the people from speaking. There are boundaries.

The job of the Vaad HaKahal/JCC Board is to bring resources to the community. I want to give back to all of you who have given to me all these years.

[Rabbi Abba Paltiel, a respected community *mashpia* and former Vaad HaKahal/JCC Board member, interjected, saying it was important to clarify that the Crown Heights Jewish Community Council is a not-for-profit organization that receives government funding on behalf of the community, while the Vaad HaKahal is a separate entity that receives no government funding and is involved with religious matters, such as supporting the *Beis Din*.]

If there's an emergency, one cannot let the fact that one is injured get in the way. One must get up on crutches and start running. We can do it; you can do it!

I will keep you updated, and will be as transparent and open as possible. If you have any questions or want information, you can visit my website, [www.votetamir.com](http://www.votetamir.com).

### Rabbi Yosef Keller

My father was very active in the community. He got drug-ravaged buildings and renovated them for the community.

Regarding education and tuition, the government spends \$14,000. per pupil per year in public school. There's no reason the government shouldn't fully fund our yeshivos. Setting the goal is half the job. I've spoken with Rabbi Yaakov Goldstein, chairman of Community Board Nine, and he pointed out that in Monroe, they have worked out all sorts of methods for accomplishing this goal.

As for the *rabbonim*, seven years ago after Rabbi Marlow *a"h* [of blessed memory] passed away, we needed another *rov*, and it turned out that we still needed more. But, as the Rebbe said, there's no *farfallen* [hopelessly failed situation]: *shalom* between the *rabbonim* can still be achieved.

As for jobs, I haven't heard of the program that Rabbi Sperlin mentioned, but I think there should be courses offered in such things as *safrus* [writing of Torah scrolls, *tefillin*, and *mezuzos*] and *shechitah* [kosher slaughter of animals].

## GABBOIM

### Rabbi Yosef Baruch Spielman

I spent 23 years in the service of the community, and I continue to serve. I was asked to help out by running for *gabbayus* and that's why I'm here tonight.

### Uri Niazov

I also was asked to put my name in. I've been helping with the *shul* [synagogue] for many years, and I ran Seudas Shlomo [the committee in charge of serving meals in 770] for eight years. Many have lost pride in 770, but it should be the center of our community. There should be *shurim* [Torah classes], lectures, etc. that draw people in. I'm here only to help the *gabboim*, who have worked very hard over the years.



# On Balance

## by Yitzchok Wagshul



You're probably wondering what I'm doing here. Why, in other words, have I suddenly put out a special edition of the *Crown Heights Chronicle* after having "retired" from my role as this community's journalist of record nearly two years ago? There's a philosophical answer and a practical answer to that question, and I'm going to give you the philosophy first:

As a journalist who has covered this community on and off for twenty years, I have seen it all. I have personally been present at many of the public and private events that have shaped our community politically, and have discussed them at length with those who carried them out. To put it succinctly: at virtually all of the steps we have taken along the path to where we stand today; at virtually all of the meetings, all of the votes, all of the arguments, all of the fights—I was there. And I can tell you, I have a pretty good idea what's *really* going on here, and I'm going to share it with you.

The practical answer is simple, and I wouldn't dream of keeping it a secret from you: for the first time in my career, I am actually being paid to produce this special edition. As the election neared, a number of Crown Heights residents approached me on the street and remarked that they wished there were still a *Crown Heights Chronicle* to provide the objective and reliable story. I smiled politely, thanked them for the compliment, and said I was glad to sit this one out. Then, I was approached by those organizing the election, who proposed I publish a special edition—and again, I politely declined. But they urged me to consider what the people on the street had already expressed: we really do need an objective, free press in this town—especially in these contentious times. They flattered me by saying that people trusted this newspaper and respected my fairness and journalistic integrity—even though I have made no secret over the years of my personal opinion. In the end, I decided that if I were permitted to maintain that journalistic integrity and the reputation of this newspaper by a) interviewing all sides and reporting their points of view, and b) disclosing candidly that I am, in fact, being paid—not paid to say one thing or another, of course, but for my time in undertaking this assignment—then I would do it.

So here I am.

The thing to remember is, I'm not going to tell you anything I haven't said before, on the record, without accepting a penny from anyone. As I said at the outset, my opinion is based on all I've observed over the years, which I reported to you as it happened. You can look it all up in the back issues of the *Crown Heights Chronicle*, which I am making available online at [www.CrownHeightsChronicle.com](http://www.CrownHeightsChronicle.com).

Now then, down to business: what's really going on with the planned Vaad Hakahal/JCC Board elections, and, most important of all, should we participate?

The answer is simple and compelling if we but

remember all that has led up to the present crisis. The details are all in the online archives I mentioned above, so I'll bow to deadline pressure and summarize them by simply saying that a truly irreconcilable deadlock has crippled every branch of Crown Heights' tripartite system of government. Our executive branch, the Vaad Hakahal/JCC Board, is split in two; our legislative branch, the *netzigim* committee, is split in two; and our judicial branch, the *Beis Din*, is split in two. Incredible, but true: Crown Heights is *broken*. There can only be a spiritual explanation for this, no doubt involving *chevlei Mashiach*, the birth pangs preceding Messiah's arrival—but our job is to take responsible action in this practical world. And our goal must be to repair the situation as best we can.

The trouble is, when I say "a truly irreconcilable deadlock," I mean *truly* irreconcilable. I refer you to my column in the issue of June 23, 2006 (mis-labeled due to a production error as the June 9 issue), in which I reviewed some of the disputes and compared the situation to a hair knot that won't come out. When the tangle is so bad, there's no alternative but to cut it out and let it grow back straight. Believe me (or read it for yourself), everything has already been tried. Everything has already failed. That knot isn't coming out.

Under those circumstances, what should be done? Those organizing Sunday's election believe that the community must voice its choice for a new Vaad Hakahal/JCC Board (they're the same for all practical purposes, and I'll do us all a favor and just say "Vaad" from now on), since the term of office of the last Vaad, elected in January 2005, expired in January 2008. What is more, as I mentioned above, the last Vaad is irreparably split in two, and has engendered more controversy than any other Vaad in Crown Heights' history. Its chairman is in jail even now, for G-d's sake...for the *second time*, for G-d's sake. Look, I personally believe he is a well-meaning man, and he does give a lot of charity, but even so—after all the horrible, horrible *machlokes* and scandal on his watch, and with two felony convictions under his belt, what kind of psychological disease must we be suffering from if we insist that he, and only he, must lead our community?

Obviously, then, one option is to go to the polls and elect new leadership, people committed to Crown Heights and willing to work hard on our collective behalf toward resolving the problems that the previous Vaad simply wasn't able to handle. They tried, but they couldn't do it, and now their turn is over. It was over a year and a half ago. It's time to let someone else have a chance; those are the rules.

Now, some argue that while elections are indeed necessary, it is not feasible to hold them now. I spoke to Mr. Shalom Rubashkin, Moshe Rubashkin's son, last week, and he articulated this point of view. I also spoke briefly with Rav Osdoba *shlita*, and although the *rov* had to cut the conversation short because of a prior commitment, I believe I understood him to mean the

same thing. (The younger Mr. Rubashkin, apparently, is running the Vaad Hakahal in his father's absence. I strongly object to that, as should you. Mr. Rubashkin Jr. may be a fine young man, but I don't know him from Adam, and I certainly didn't elect him to anything. From the standpoint of any law ever written, he is an unauthorized inter-loper in our community's affairs, and for that reason alone—simply on principle, let alone because of the appearance of grave impropriety—he must be removed. Sorry, son.)

Anyway, according to Mr. Rubashkin, the opponents of Sunday's election feel that the next Vaad Hakahal should be recognized and accepted by everyone, and that this cannot be achieved through an election at this time. That is because, they claim, it is inevitable that one *rov* or another would invalidate some of the candidates, leaving the election in dispute. What is more, even if an uncontested election could be held, the new Vaad would sooner or later come up against communal questions that call for halachic guidance, and until the dispute between the *rabbonim* is resolved, it will not be possible to address those *shaalos* [questions] without further divisiveness. Thus, according to this viewpoint, we should wait until peace is restored to the *Beis Din* before attempting to hold Vaad Hakahal elections.

Mr. Rubashkin's point is well taken. However, his conclusion is unsound because, as I said before, that knot ain't coming out. Far be it from me to say that our *rabbonim* cannot resolve their differences (G-d forbid), but remember, this problem did not arise recently. It has been going on for years, and has only grown worse (*r"l*). Everything has already been tried. Everything has already failed. The knot just isn't coming out. Tying the overdue Vaad Hakahal election to peace between the *rabbonim* simply isn't a sensible idea.

Finally, some worry that since a *rov*—Rabbi Osdoba—opposes the election, it would be wrong to vote on Sunday. Rav Osdoba's letter to that effect appears on page four. All I can say to that is that I am an insignificant and unqualified person who is not fit to question the opinion of a *rov*. However—other respected *rabbonim*, including Rav Schwei *shlita* (who is, like Rav Osdoba, an elected member of the *Beis Din* of Crown Heights), Rabbi Mangel, *shlita*, and Rabbi Paltiel, *shlita*, are in favor of Sunday's election. The opinions of all three also appear in this issue. What is a person to do—whether scholar or layperson—when different *rabbonim* take different positions?

In a case like this, which is a genuine emergency, the answer is: we must act in accordance with what makes the most sense to us. We must be guided by our own reason. We must move forward on our own and follow the *rov* of our choice.

For you see, ultimately, power resides in the people. We, of all people—we who live in Crown Heights and who heard our Rebbe speak—should know this. The Rebbe taught that even a king of Israel, even the Messiah himself, derives his power from the people: *ein melech belo am*, there is no such thing as a king

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## “Let the third one come and reconcile them”

Harav hagaon, harav hachassid Rabbi Nisen Mangel *shlita*,  
rav of the Ksav Sofer shul and *dayan* in the Beis Din of Crown Heights,  
speaks out in a special interview granted one week before the elections



(Translated from the Hebrew)

In one week, elections will be held for Vaad Hakohol/Crown Heights Jewish Community Council Board of Directors, as well as for Gabbaim of 770, and the public is confused. The two elected Rabbis, Rabbi Osdoba and Rabbi Schwei *sheyichyu*, have issued contradictory letters. Rabbi Schwei supports the elections, and writes that it is a sacred obligation to participate in them in accordance with the Rebbe's instructions. On the other hand, Rabbi Osdoba argues that one should not participate in these elections. What is Rav Mangel's opinion on the matter?

As someone who has been involved in the rabbinical establishment of the community for many years, and who has sat many times on Din Torahs together with Rabbi Marlow *a"h* and *yblct" a* Rabbi Osdoba and Rabbi Schwei, I was a witness to the process of elections for Vaad Hakohol and for *rabbonim* since the first elections in 5746, and I saw the Rebbe's positive and unique attitude toward elections in our community. Likewise, I saw the Rebbe's displeasure when the *rabbonim* tried to intervene in the process of the elections.

For this reason, it is amazing to me that Rabbi Osdoba signed a letter against participation in these elections. Perhaps Rabbi Osdoba's intent—as the wording of his letter implies—is not to prohibit the elections, but merely to express his opinion that holding elections at the present time would likely harm the community in several respects.

[Editor's note: Rabbi Osdoba initially released his letter with the language “I do not G-d forbid lament holding elections and I have not come to invalidate them....[nevertheless,] until the aforementioned issues are corrected, one should not partake in these elections.” This was understood as Rabbi Mangel writes here. Opponents of the election pointed this out to Rabbi Osdoba, whereupon he released a revised version of his letter, bearing the same date, in which the paragraph beginning “I do not G-d forbid lament holding elections” was deleted, and changing “one should not partake in these elections” to “one is forbidden to participate in these elections.”]

Regardless, it is clear that no *rov* has the authority to interfere in the community's conduct in election matters or to prohibit the elections.

Everyone knows of the Rebbe's sharp response after the *rabbonim* attempted to interfere in the Crown Heights elections of 5746. In those elections, the *rabbonim* disqualified several of the candidates for Vaad Hakohol, and after the Rebbe wrote to them that they had to put their reasons in writing according to Shulchan Aruch, the *rabbonim* wrote to the Rebbe that the disqualification of the candidates had been for personal reasons that would have been inappropriate to publicize, and therefore—wrote the *rabbonim* to the Rebbe—“a) We thought it was sufficient that we conveyed the matter verbally at the Netsigim meeting, to the agreement of most or all of them; b) Since, in our opinion, they are unfit according to Halacha, the acquiescence of the community is not required.”

In response to the *rabbonim's* statement, “the acquiescence of the community is not required,” the Rebbe wrote to them:

“In this and similar cases, such acquiescence is necessary, for (as I have said in the past) it is well known that they were elected to fill the place of Rabbi Zalman Shimon Dworkin, peace be on him (they should be distinguished for good lives), and it was unheard of that he should interfere in the leadership of the community. And what would have been ‘lacking’ if they were to have conveyed their reasons to the committee that was chosen for this matter on behalf of the public—and they would decide and publicize [their decision]. Now that it has already been publicized, it is not worth backpedaling further on this, [but] it is relevant for the future.”

It was in that answer that the Rebbe wrote, “it is relevant for the future,” and it now seems that the Rebbe's intent in that response was precisely for this situation.

Because Rabbi Osdoba, *sheyichye* is a good friend of mine, and one of the important *rabbonim* in the community, it pains me very much that people with agendas of their own and parties to controversy are surrounding him and diminishing his standing.

The great respect that the community accords to the *Rabbonim* of Crown Heights flows from the Rebbe's description of them as “valiant among the valiant,” etc., etc. And the same Rebbe who amplified the power of the *rabbonim* chosen by the community also established that they cannot interfere in the election process. Therefore it is amazing to me that Rabbi Osdoba would nevertheless sign a letter against the elections.

Everyone surely remembers, that in the same period, several community activists tried to negate the Vaad Hakohol election completely. To that end they recruited Rabbi Yitzhak HaCohen Hendel, *Rov* of the Chabad community of Montreal. Rabbi Hendel, who was then visiting New York, wrote a halachic ruling determining that Vaad Hakohol elections should not be held. When the Rebbe became aware of the ruling, he called Rabbi Hendel and asked him for the basis of his decision. The Rebbe instructed him to extend his stay in New York for an additional day and to change the ruling. From this incident, that Rabbi Osdoba surely remembers well, we see that the Rebbe's opinion is that the *Rabbonim* should not come out against elections.

All this is especially true in a matter about which there is no difference of opinion. Everyone agrees that there should be elections every three years. That is also the requirement of the bylaws of the Vaad Hakohol.

Of course we must all honor the *rabbonim*, but in this matter we have the clear rule [expressed by the rhetorical question], “as between the words of the teacher and the words of the student, whom should we obey?” Since the Rebbe made his opinion clear that the *rabbonim* should not inject themselves into the conduct of the elections, and

that elections must take place—we must participate, as the Rebbe wants. Anyone who is qualified to vote should know that he has the right and the obligation that the Rebbe gave to us, and no one can take that away from him. Therefore, you should vote, and I call on every eligible resident of the neighborhood to exercise his right and obligation that the Rebbe gave to him, and to come out and vote.

**In Rabbi Osdoba's letter dated Thursday, 20 Iyar, he raises several points, the main issue seeming to be that there is no reason to hold elections when Rabbi Schwei invalidates officials elected by the public.**

First of all, the whole episode of a member of the Beis Din invalidating an elected official began when Rabbi Osdoba invalidated R' Yaakov Herzog from serving as a member of the Vaad Hakohol; ceased to recognize him as a member of the Vaad Hakohol; and called for his resignation. Then came the episode of R' Moshe Rubashkin refusing to appear at a Din Torah, to the point where Rabbi Schwei ruled that he cannot serve as Chairman of the Vaad Hakohol until he should appear.

Later was the episode of the Netsigim. The Netsigim were legally chosen three years ago. According to the rules of the Vaad Hakohol, the Netsigim have the authority to request and to receive an accounting from the Vaad Hakohol, to make sure that everything is being run properly. Two years ago, after questions began to be raised about the financial operation of the Vaad, the Netsigim asked the chairman of the Vaad to provide the books and records. He refused to present the accounting and, to avoid any attempt to get at the truth, he invited supporters who daven at several of the neighborhood shuls to his home and appointed them as members of the Netsigim... The members of the official Netsigim Executive Committee summoned the imposter Netsigim Executive Committee to a Din Torah, but they refused to appear.

It is obvious that in the resultant situation, where there are two groups claiming the position, and the second group refuses to appear at a Din Torah, that the official group is the original one that was definitely chosen properly.

Specifically because of these unfortunate circumstances, and to avoid any problem as to who is the proper Netsigim Executive Committee, right at the beginning of the whole election process now, a group of Netsigim asked both Rabbi Osdoba and Rabbi Schwei to sign that they would accept the decisions of the Netsigim as a whole. I know that Rabbi Schwei signed the statement but Rabbi Osdoba refused to sign.

In view of this fact, I find it strange that Rabbi Osdoba would use this reason to justify his opposition to the elections.

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## Rabbi Nisen Mangel (Continued from page 10)

**Rabbi Osdoba writes that the second group of Netsigim sent a summons for a Din Torah to the first group.**

The facts are exactly the opposite. When the official Netsigim found out that the chairman of the Vaad Hakohol was attempting to set up a new Executive Committee for the Netsigim in order to escape his responsibility to provide a financial report of the Vaad, they called the new group to a Din Torah. The new group consulted with Rabbi Osdoba who, incredibly, instructed them not to answer the summons.

It is therefore very strange that now that the official Netsigim have announced an election, and R' Moshe Rubashkin is trying to prevent the election through the "Netsigim" that he appointed, that Rabbi Osdoba should write that the official Netsigim are the ones being called to a Din Torah.

It is even stranger that the date of Rabbi Osdoba's letter is 20 Iyar. The date that was set for the Din Torah between the two groups is 23 Iyar. Even according to Rabbi Osdoba that the elections should not be held as long as the Netsigim did not appear, how can the letter be dated before the date that the Din Torah was supposed to take place? Did Rabbi Osdoba make his decision before hearing the facts?

Rabbi Osdoba writes in his letter, "Most important of all: among the candidates that were certified, as was publicized lately, there are several who insulted those who were appointed over the community, and were invalidated according to Halacha from being appointed over the community. How can it be that such people should be given the opportunity to be community leaders, in a way that "the sinner benefits?"

Three points:

1) Precisely this was what the Rebbe's answer of 5746 was about. When the Rabbonim wished to disqualify certain candidates specifically with these words, "Since in our opinion they are unqualified according to Halacha, there is no need for the agreement of the community," specifically on this issue was the Rebbe's answer that Rabbonim should not inject themselves into this area, and if they have anything to say on the matter they should say it to the election committee, who should in turn make the decision. The issue is as clear as day and the concluding words

of the Rebbe's answer, "and it is relevant to the future" are screaming out now as ever.

2) Rabbi Osdoba himself claims that it is impossible to hold elections as long as one Rav is invalidating candidates. I don't understand how in the same letter Rabbi Osdoba can write that there already some candidates who must be disqualified.

3) On the issue itself that he writes about, "that they coarsely insulted those who were appointed over the community"—I do not wish to go into the whole painful story, of whether they were in fact, according to *halacha*, appointed over the community.

**In his letter Rabbi Osdoba writes that it is impossible to hold elections when there is a split in the Beis Din, since the Rabbonim will not sit together and no Din Torah can be held, and since according to the rules of the Vaad Hakohol, the Beis Din must be the ones to decide any disputes about the elections.**

It's true that the current situation is not good, but what is the answer? To leave in place the incumbent Vaad Hakohol? There are many outstanding summonses for them to appear at Dinei Torah, which must be resolved according to their own rules, and the situation does not allow for any resolution.

The only resolution is that the Rabbonim should settle their differences through a Zabla, meaning that each picks a Rov, and the two Rabbonim together select a third who is acceptable to both parties. This is the traditional way that has been accepted over the years for resolving disputes, the panel of three will decide all the issues that are between the rabbis, and finally we will have peace in our camp.

We see many, many times in the Rebbe's answers that, when there were differences of opinion, the Rebbe referred the parties to be judged through Zabla. The Beis Din of Crown Heights also sent people to Zabla. And so it should be in this situation.

Indeed, last year about 1,500 Crown Heights residents signed a request to the Rabbonim to resolve their disagreement in a Zabla. The request was addressed to both Rabbonim equally. Immediately when he received it, Rabbi Schwei indicated that he was ready to participate in a Zabla at any time. To the best of my knowledge, Rabbi Osdoba has not agreed to participate.

Even in the last few days, Rabbi Schwei sent a letter to the Beis Yosef Beis Din in Boro Park, that has been designated by Rabbi Osdoba as a "neu-

tral Beis Din," indicating that he is ready to be judged by Zabla. To this moment, the Beis Din is waiting for a response from Rabbi Osdoba that he agrees to the same.

Unfortunately, I am forced to say the open truth: Enough of the present situation! The spiritual condition of the neighborhood is getting worse and worse. The respect of the Beis Din is trampled in the streets. Only because they don't want to go to Zabla. Where is their responsibility to the neighborhood?

Since Rabbi Schwei has already declared his readiness and desire to submit to Zabla, and has already signed a commitment to obey the ruling of a panel of Rabbis formed by Zabla, I am forced to make this call to Rabbi Osdoba: For the sake of this holy neighborhood, you must do what the Halacha demands in such circumstances; sign on an undertaking for a Zabla! I am certain that such a step will restore the lost honor of the Beis Din and the Rabbonim of our community. And if for some reason Rabbi Osdoba cannot submit to a Zabla, better that he should resign than that he should drag the entire neighborhood into an unbearable spiritual state.

By the way, in Rabbi Osdoba's letter, he blames Rabbi Schwei for the split in the Beis Din. It is a little strange to read these words, in view of what everyone knows, that the current Vaad Hakohol are the ones who threw Rabbi Schwei out of the Beis Din, changed all the locks, and stopped his salary. They forced him to open a new office. Now they raise the complaint of "Do not split into groups!?"

(Anyway this is not a case of the prohibition of "*Lo Sisgodedu*, do not split into groups" and whoever relies on the opinion of the Rambam on this subject, did not analyze the issue properly. I have already written a lengthy responsum on the topic and here is not the place for that discussion.)

My heart bleeds for the situation in our neighborhood, but now we have an opportunity to repair it and to create an opening to truly fix the problem, through electing new candidates who have no connection to the current political situation. Then we can hope that they will give the proper honor to both elected Rabbis, and out of a situation of mutual respect, they will, with G-d's help, bring the Rabbonim to a compromise.

It is therefore a right and a holy obligation of every eligible resident of the Crown Heights neighborhood to come on Sunday and elect new members to the Vaad Hakohol, and with G-d's help they will act and succeed!

## Candidates' Questionnaires (Continued from page 3)

People need to believe and have faith that change could happen here. There are so many creative and innovative individuals who reside here and it's time we let their voices be heard. Perhaps a sub-committee Vaad of younger Crown Heights residents whose sole objective is to be in touch with the younger residents of the neighborhood and provide a forum in which their voices would be heard. All avenues should be utilized to create a caring unity in gashmeus and in ruchneus.

7. G-d willing, by having new faces, new ideas and perspectives will emerge. Every effort possible should be made to rectify the situation. By denying the new opportunity at this time, it would be limiting the possibility for success. The "present" Vaad, whose term has expired,

has not succeeded in creating, fostering, and enhancing a healing. It is your community. Even people who in the past have felt that for political reasons they do not want to get involved should realize that this is the Rebbe's community and since you are his Chassidim it is also your community. The community has a tremendous potential to grow and to be great and you can and should be a part of this wonderful phenomenon.

8. My community service is that I have taught the children of Anash for over twenty years. I am unique. I am a free agent without any allegiance to any group. I am not indebted to any side or faction and I do not have any obligations. I am independent and look at the community as a whole. I try to be honest and sincere. Throughout any Vaad administration, there should be open disclosure. Voices of the community should be heard, and their opinions should be considered and counted. This is especially true with the younger generation because they are our future.

## Chanina Sperlin

1. Chanina Sperlin hakohen; 45 (layvs"t); Real Estate; Lubavitcher Yeshiva.

2. I have had the zchus to serve in the last three terms; I was part of many, many good and positive projects in the community. With the right people and partners and even more important, with the help of the community, we can build our shchuna even more.

3. a) Our young; b) housing; c) our economy.

4. Continue bringing funding to the shchuna. Tap into the bright minds of the community: educators, real estate entrepreneurs, business people.

5. I have served and assisted many individuals who have disagreed with me. I do not mix my personal feelings with my professional obligations.

I am asking all, to give me again the opportunity to serve.



**On Balance**  
*(Continued from page 9)*

without the consent of the nation. This is true of community *rabbonim*; the Rebbe himself emphasized the great authority of our *Beis Din* precisely because the *rabbonim* had been elected by the people. And it is certainly true of our lay leadership. Thus, ultimately, the buck stops here: the responsibility rests with us to step in and act when everything else is broken. This is the normal procedure and should not be regarded as unusual or radical. The bylaws of the Jewish Community Council, which govern the electoral process in Crown Heights, expressly require elections to be held every three years. The time has come and gone, and the power is in our hands—what are we waiting for?

In a last-ditch effort to hold onto their power, the outgoing faction went to court on Wednesday for a temporary restraining order prohibiting the election—but *baruch Hashem*, in a victory for the forces of democracy and self-governance, an appeals court overturned the restraining order the very next day. There are those who would stifle your voice, but elections are on anyway; let us seize that opportunity before they try to take it from us again.

Do the right thing for your community, your institutions, your family, and your children. Vote for whom you please, but vote this Sunday, May 24th!



בס"ד

**YOSSEL  
MOTCHKIN**

**MORE GASHMIUS.  
MORE RUCHNIUS.**

**CHANGE  
ZONING  
TO SUIT OUR NEEDS**

**A Letter in Support of the Election  
Signed by 70 Crown Heights  
Rabbonim, Mashpiim, Netzigim, and  
former Vaad HaKahal Members**

B"H Sunday, Milechatchila Aribet 2 Iyar 5769

To the Residents of Crown Heights, שיחי

Greetings and Blessing

Crown Heights is a neighborhood that is run in a manner consistent with the directions of the Rebbe. With regard to the Vaad Hakahal, everyone is aware of the Rebbe's desire that the members of the Vaad should be duly elected by the residents of the community. Shortly before the first elections that were held on 17 Elul 5746, the Rebbe dedicated an entire Sicha to the topic, and spoke of the "great importance of the matter – which is of concern to all members of the community." The Rebbe encouraged that "certainly everyone will participate in the election." In that Sicha the Rebbe also announced that everyone who participated in the election would receive the Rebbe's dollar for a blessing.

Six different Vaads have been elected and served over the years. In recent times the custom has been that the elections are held every three years, together with elections for Gabbaim of 770. According to the rules of the Vaad Hakahal, the election should have taken place last year, but for various reasons it has been pushed off several times.

Unfortunately, the delay of the elections affects all of us. The people chosen by the community are unable to serve, and the Community Council is functioning in an impaired fashion, which has resulted in the loss of a good deal of potential government support.

A short while ago, it was announced that the elections for Vaad Hakahal and Gabbaim would be held on Rosh Chodesh Sivan (May 24, 2009.) Baruch Hashem, there are already several respectable community residents who are willing to serve the community and have put forward their names as candidates.

We are therefore writing to extend support and encouragement to the organizers and the candidates, and to offer blessings for their success that they should be able to conduct the elections in accordance with the Rebbe's will, thus strengthening our community.

We ask all residents of the community – anyone to whom the words of the Rebbe are dear, and to whom the Crown Heights community is dear – to participate in the elections. And as the Rebbe said then at the time of the first elections, "The entire campaign should be conducted in an atmosphere of calm, in a spirit of friendship, brotherly love and unity, 'Love your neighbor as yourself,' and with an intent to act for the sake of Heaven."

**Signed,**

- |                                               |                                                        |                                                                      |                                               |                                                                        |                                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| <br>Rabbi Shmaryahu<br>Roitblat               | <br>Rabbi Berl Lipskier                                | <br>Rabbi Refael Wilshansky                                          | <br>Rabbi Mordechai Gurary                    | <br>Rabbi Abba Paltiel                                                 | <br>Rabbi Yitchock Springer                          |
| <br>R' Mendel Drizin                          | <br>R' Yosef Shechter                                  | <br>R' Aharon Raskin                                                 | <br>Rabbi Shmuel Fogelman                     | <br>Rabbi Moshe Nissan<br>Volvosky                                     | <br>Rabbi Chaim Serebransky                          |
| <br>R' Yosef Y. Spalter                       | <br>Rabbi Y.Y. Holtzman                                | <br>R' Yona Avtzon                                                   | <br>R' Leibel Motchkin                        | <br>R' Yosef B. Raices                                                 | <br>R' Chaim Osher Kahanov                           |
| <br>R' Leizer Avtzon<br>Reb Getzel's Shul     | <br>R' Eli Slavin<br>Menachem Nochum                   | <br>R' Eli Blachman<br>Ahavas Moshe (Maple Shul)                     | <br>R' Zev Karp<br>Reb Michael's Minyan       | <br>R' Sholom Ber Drizin<br>Agudas Yisroel                             | <br>Rabbi Mendel Baumgarten<br>Khal Chassidim        |
| <br>R' Chaim Kaaman<br>The Shul               | <br>R' Mendel Schneerson<br>Beis Moshiaich "770"       | <br>R' Menachem Slapochnik<br>Chevra Shas                            | <br>R' Nissan Edry<br>Merkaz Dovre Yivrit     | <br>Rabbi Michael Chazan<br>Kingsbrook Shul &<br>Previous Vaad Members | <br>R' Moshiaich Chudaitov<br>Elyahu Nochum          |
| <br>R' Yisroel Best<br>Bris Shalom            | <br>R' Yisroel Landa<br>Ksav Sofer                     | <br>R' Phivel Caplan<br>Frankel Shul                                 | <br>R' Yisroel Sandhaus<br>Ner Menachem       |                                                                        | <br>R' Zalman Gelernter<br>Anshe Rubashov            |
| <br>R' Moshe Feiglin<br>Aliya Center          | <br>R' Kalman Weintraub<br>Bais Eliezer Yitzchok       | <br>R' Yitshal Briton<br>Sphardic Minyan                             | <br>R' Meyer Kohen,<br>Persian Center         | <br>R' Zev Faygen<br>Congregation 935                                  | <br>R' Moshe Poltorak<br>Itchke's Shul               |
| <br>R' Shmuel M. Samuels                      | <br>R' Elyahu Cohen                                    | <br>R' Yitchock Mishulovin                                           | <br>R' Michael Slavin                         | <br>R' Yosef Wolovik                                                   | <br>R' Yaakov Elberg                                 |
| <br>R' Shmuel Popack                          | <br>R' Hershel Scheiner                                | <br>R' Yisroel Greenberg                                             | <br>R' Levy Baumgarten                        | <br>R' Yecheskel Freund                                                | <br>R' Mordechai Volvovsky                           |
| <br>R' Leibish Nash<br>Member of Vaad Hakahal | <br>R' Yakov Spritzer<br>Previous Vaad Hakahal         | <br>R' Shmuel Malamud<br>Previous Vaad Hakahal                       | <br>R' Reuven Elberg<br>Previous Vaad Hakahal | <br>R' Boruch/Bush<br>Previous Vaad Hakahal                            | <br>R' Menachem Friedfertig<br>Previous Vaad Hakahal |
| <br>R' Gadi Blizinsky                         | <br>R' Michael Cohen<br>French Jewish Community Center | <br>Chaim S. Broner<br>Hadar Hatorah Shul &<br>Previous Vaad Members | <br>R' Yaakov Bryski                          | <br>R' Yekutiel Rapp                                                   | <br>R' David Dery                                    |
|                                               | <br>R' Meyer Schmukler                                 | <br>R' Nachum Markowitz                                              | <br>R' Shofom B Schapiro                      | <br>R' Yaakov Reich                                                    |                                                      |