

**Geirus Policies and Standards
Governing**

The Network of Regional Batei Din for Conversion

under the auspices of

**The Rabbinical Council of America and
The Beth Din of America**

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1. Introduction

The Rabbinical Council of America (RCA) and the Beth Din of America (Beth Din of America) attach great importance to ensuring that conversions to Judaism occur in a manner that follows the Halacha, allows for consistency in implementation, registration, policies and procedures, while avoiding unnecessary confusion and anguish, and allows for reasonable and practical means of timely recognition where appropriate. It is also essential that RCA rabbis, as well as their congregants and communities, have a clear understanding as to which conversionary practices and standards are, or are not, recognized by the RCA/BDA, and by extension by other rabbinic bodies. What is here described is the result of a full consultation and cooperation between the RCA/BDA and the Chief Rabbinate of Israel.

2. Structural Foundations

- a. While it has been the practice for many years in numerous communities for local rabbis to perform giyyur independently, this practice has led to claims of inconsistent standards and concern regarding the validity of many conversions, a result undesirable both to well-meaning community rabbis as well as many earnest applicants for conversion. It is our expectation that the establishment of regional Batei Din will help to ensure uniform standards to guide rabbis and converts alike, as well as provide assurance regarding the validity of all conversions conforming to these standards. Further the determination of an objective rabbinic panel as to the conversion candidate's suitability for giyyur envisioned in this document allows a community rabbi to more easily reject unsuitable candidates for conversion.
- b. From the time of formal implementation, the RCA/BDA will endorse conversions only if they have been performed in the framework of the expanded network of Regional Batei Din le'Giyyur (which will also include Batei Din whose standards conform to those of the RCA/BDA, but who are

not directly under RCA auspices). Under the general umbrella of the Beth Din of America, Regional Batei Din will strictly follow all RCA/BDA standards. Rabbis and lay people who carry out conversions outside of this framework should know that they cannot be assured of recognition by the RCA/BDA with respect to such conversions.

- c. All ishurim issued by the Beth Din of America, whether concerning conversions performed in the past or in the interim period until the new system is functional, will continue to be recognized.
- d. Where there are or will be other Batei Din for conversion, in North America or elsewhere, which are not part of the regional Batei Din le'Giyur network, we cannot guarantee our recognition of conversions done under their auspices.
- e. These standards have been formulated in consultation with members of the RCA, selected halachic authorities, and other Batei Din. They are as specific as possible, allowing for appropriate handling of many common categories of geirus situations that currently exist. The GPS Committee of the RCA/BDA will amend these standards in the future, as necessary, in consultation with the appropriate offices of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel.
- f. Notwithstanding the above paragraphs, it should be understood that the BDA retains complete autonomy to make halakhic determinations regarding the Jewishness or non-Jewishness of any individual and that nothing in this document shall be interpreted as creating any obligation or limitation of any kind upon the halakhic autonomy of the BDA.

3. Regional Batei Din

a. Identifying Regional Batei Din

- i. The RCA/BDA already cooperates with many other Batei Din le'Giyur that are recognized by the RCA/BDA. Upon adoption of these standards, the RCA/BDA will first review these standards in detail with each recognized Beit Din to confirm its commitment to ongoing compliance. As part of that review, each regional Beit Din le'Giyur is expected to formally adopt these standards as the norm for its regular activity, and to strictly follow them in practice. After completing the above review, the RCA/BDA will then consider other potential additional regional Batei Din. It will initiate discussions with currently functioning Batei Din listed therein to determine whether it should be invited to serve as an RCA/BDA regional Beit Din or as an affiliated Bet Din. Upon completion of those discussions, the RCA/BDA will strive to establish new regional Batei Din to operate in accordance with its standards in additional areas.
- ii. In order to function as a Regional Beit Din, a Beit Din must include the following components:

- A designated yosheiv rosh – the member of the Beit Din who carries the ultimate halachic responsibility, although not necessarily authority, for the actions of the Beit Din.
 - A menahel – an administrator, who will also serve as the liaison to the RCA/BDA for communications about policies and procedures. In appropriate cases, the yosheiv rosh may also serve as the menahel.
 - A permanent mailing address – this may be a synagogue or Vaad office, but should not be a PO Box
- iii. Where applicable and to the extent possible, the regional Beit Din should be affiliated with or endorsed by the established local Beit Din for matters of Even Haezer and Choshen Mishpat.
 - iv. New Regional Batei Din may be added to the network with the consent of the GPS committee and the approval of the RCA/BDA.

b. Regional Beit Din Organization

- i. Working with the RCA/BDA, each Beit Din will, as a rule, have a defined geographic area that it will cover, so that rabbis in outlying communities interested in referring candidates to the nearest regional Beit Din will easily be able to do so.
- ii. Working with the Regional Batei Din, the RCA/BDA will create informational brochures for rabbis to use when meeting with potential converts. These brochures will assist the rabbi by conveying the standardized procedures and requirements to converts and those associated with them. For similar reasons, the RCA/BDA may establish a website with public access.
- iii. Each regional Beit Din will create its own administrative setup, organizational process, leadership roles, and support services. It will utilize local human and material resources (mikva'ot, mohelim, synagogues, teachers, and learning structures for candidates to utilize.) It will create its own forms as needed, its own letter-head stationery and a stamp for embossing each teudat giyyur.
- iv. All halachically significant forms and teudot will need to be approved by the RCA/BDA, so that there can be a unified and consistent set of halachically operative documents. Thus, each Beit Din will submit its various intake and reporting forms, questionnaires, and records of completed conversions to the RCA/BDA for review. The RCA/BDA will maintain a database of these documents, and any revisions thereof, for ongoing reference.
- v. Fees:
Conversion is a not-for-profit endeavor. Nonetheless, the candidate should be made aware at an early point in the process that he or she will bear certain reasonable expenses, including some or all of the following:

- Outside tutoring fees
- Purchase of study materials
- Mikveh and Mohel costs
- Administrative fees to cover Beit Din costs

Each regional Beit Din should consider maintaining a “special cases” fund, for use as needed. It should share cost structures and arrangements with the RCA/BDA and the other regional Batei Din, for mutual benefit.

c. Teudat Giyyur

- i. A teudat giyyur will be issued only after the candidate presents a government-issued ID to confirm their legal identity, and will include a passport-style photo of the convert (to be provided by the convert), his/her Social Security number and birth date. The embossing of each teudah with the Regional Bet Din’s seal should cover a portion of the photo. It is to be signed by the three members of the Regional Beit Din who authorized the conversion, as well as the Sponsoring Rabbi. Copies of all documents with supporting records and information, including the final teudat giyyur itself, will be maintained indefinitely by each Regional Beit Din. The central office of the RCA/BDA will keep a copy of each teudat giyyur for future reference.

d. Who may serve as a Dayyan for Conversion on a Regional Beit Din:

- i. Every Dayyan must be an Orthodox rabbi, with a semicha acceptable to the RCA. Although he need not be a member of the RCA, he must currently function at least part-time as one of the following klei kodesh; communal rabbi, chazzan, mechanech, mohel, shochet, chaplain, kiruv professional, or other recognized rabbinic position.
- ii. Prior to his serving as a Dayyan for conversion, the RCA/BDA will need to approve him, based upon his knowledge of, and experience with, the laws of geirut. Every Dayyan who has not previously functioned in such a capacity must receive shimmush from a more experienced Dayyan. Initially, then, each regional Beit Din, on the recommendation of the Beit Din’s yosheiv rosh, will submit a list of proposed Dayyanim and a brief description of each dayyan that includes the source of the Dayyan’s semicha, his position in the community, and his previous involvement with geirut. This information will be distributed to the members of the GPS committee, and members of the committee will have the opportunity to voice any objection to the participation of any potential Dayyan. If there is an objection raised, the GPS committee, in consultation with the RCA/BDA, will make a determination as to whether to accept or reject the given Dayyan. Over time, additional names may be submitted for approval, as well.
- iii. The RCA/BDA will arrange ongoing professional training in Hilchot Geirut for those working in this area. This may include conferences,

Yemei Iyyun, webcasts, shiurim and dissemination of appropriate written or recorded material.

- e. **Mohelim**
 - i. Using appropriate halachic standards, each regional Beit Din will select mohelim suitable for conversion-related activities.
- f. **Ongoing Coordination between the Regional Batei Din and the BDA**
 - i. For the mutual benefit of all, the BDA will serve as a clearinghouse for ongoing communication between the Regional Batei Din regarding official documents, referrals, experiences, procedures and other matters pertaining to giyyur. This may be done via regular group email communications, occasional conference calls, and perhaps a private limited access website (linked to the RCA/BDA websites) for maintaining database information, online reference materials, etc.
 - ii. To prevent a candidate from shopping around for a more amenable Beit Din, all regional Batei Din will tell the BDA, and one another, the names of candidates who have been rejected, and the reasons for that. This should be part of regular communication between the regional Batei Din and between the regional Batei Din and the BDA.
- g. **BDA Annual Review of Regional Batei Din**
 - i. Each year, the BDA will conduct a review of the conversion-related activities of all of the regional Batei Din. This peer review is intended to monitor and strengthen the consistency of each regional Batei Din's adherence to these standards, and to identify areas where improvements are warranted. To facilitate that review, each regional Beit Din will promptly submit to the BDA a statement, the contents of which the BDA will specify, summarizing its activities for the previous calendar year. The BDA may choose to conduct in-depth on-site visits, as well. Each regional Beit Din may have to pay the BDA to offset the costs of conducting this review.
- h. **Converts who Come from Elsewhere**
 - i. The RCA will expect each of its chavirim to refer an individual claiming to be a halachic convert from a Beit Din other than those described here to the regional Beit Din in the chaver's area or to the BDA in order to clarify that individual's status. The RCA/BDA will establish criteria for recognition of such "out of network" converts in the future, in consultation, when appropriate, with the Rabbanut Harashit.

4. The Sponsoring Rabbi

- a. **Who may be a Sponsoring Rabbi**

- i. Any Orthodox rabbi may serve as a Sponsoring Rabbi; i.e., the rabbi who recommends an individual as a potential candidate for conversion. A Sponsoring Rabbi may only sponsor someone who lives in his own community, with whom he is personally familiar, and whom he is confident in recommending as a candidate. A close teaching/learning relationship between a Sponsoring Rabbi and the candidate does not disqualify him from sponsoring her or him.
- b. **Referring a candidate for Consideration to a Regional Beit Din**
 - i. Upon his determination that a candidate appears to satisfy the criteria for a serious candidate for conversion as set forth herein, the Sponsoring Rabbi will contact the most appropriate regional Beit Din to deal with this conversion, or the chairman of the RCA's GPS Committee, for a referral to such a regional Beit Din, so that the regional Beit Din may determine if it is appropriate to proceed with the candidate. (If the Beit Din chosen is not the one geographically closest to the case in question, the chosen Beit Din will notify the closest Beit Din. In such cases the Beit Din should indicate in its records the reasons that the closest Beit Din was not chosen.)
 - ii. The referral should be made prior to any intensive involvement by the Sponsoring Rabbi in a course of preparation for conversion, as the regional Beit Din may determine that the candidate is not eligible for such instruction, or that the candidate needs to be tutored by a separate rabbinic mentor, or teacher (male or female) to impart knowledge in specific areas.
- c. **Final Approval for Conversion**
 - i. Although three independent dayyanim of the regional Beit Din will make the final decision to convert each candidate, the Sponsoring Rabbi must concur with the Beit Din's decision to give his candidate final approval and may serve as a Dayyan at the mikveh at the time of conversion. He will also submit a form, attesting to the level of the candidate's shemirat ha'mitzvot.

5. Special Situations

The following common conversions scenarios will be handled as described below. We recognize that exceptional cases may arise from time to time that do not fall within the guidelines described here. If any such circumstances are to proceed to actual conversion they must be cleared with the RCA/BDA whenever the need first becomes apparent. In addition ongoing consultation with the BDA is necessary throughout the process. If there is an exceptional case where a regional Beit Din and the BDA concur that a conversion shall occur, an appropriate teshuva shall be written explaining the circumstances and rationale (both pragmatic and halachic) for the giyyur, which shall be placed in the conversion file

- a. **Where the Conversion is Primarily for the sake of Marriage**
- i. Where marriage to a particular Jewish partner is a major incentive to a prospective conversion, there is an increased possibility that the geirus may come with less than the complete commitment necessary for a conversion that would be in keeping with the standards we are trying to set for the regional Batei Din. Nonetheless, experience also shows that such a motivation can result in converts of the highest caliber. Conversion for the sake of marriage therefore requires the Beit Din to constantly reevaluate if the candidate and future partner are likely to subscribe to the requisite beliefs and practices. The Beit Din must be convinced that if the potential spouse were to disappear from the candidate's life, his or her commitment to the Jewish faith and people would not waver. These factors inevitably prolong the process and make examination of the prospective convert more intense. Indeed, should the couple mention a proposed wedding date as a deadline or goal, the Beit Din should respond that the process will take significantly longer than that.
- b. **Where a Jewish Couple wishes to Convert an Adopted non-Jewish Child**
- i. The premise on which conversion for a child is based is that it is a zechut (benefit) for that child to convert. While some have argued that simply becoming Jewish is a zechut, others believe that only in circumstances where observance of mitzvot is likely to be part of the child's life as an adult is it really a zechut to convert an underage person.
- ii. Therefore, a Jewish couple that has adopted a child to be converted must:
- belong to an Orthodox synagogue within walking distance of their home, and
 - commit to 12 years of Orthodox day school education for that child. The Bet Din should set criteria for what it considers to be schools in which the child will receive a serious Orthodox day school education, and
 - In addition, full observance of elements such as Shabbat, Kashrut, holidays, etc., should be part of the adoptive family's lifestyle. To that end, the sponsoring rabbi and the converting Bet Din should use the opportunity to encourage the family to accept a complete standard of observance. However, where this can not be accomplished, then at the very minimum, if there is
 - significant observance of Shabbat
 - complete observance of Kashrut

- a positive attitude towards full mitzvah observance and commitment to Halacha within the basic family unit,
 after consultation with the RCA/BDA and after writing an explanatory memo that will be included in the conversion file explaining the circumstances, giyyur katan (conversion of the child) may be allowed.

c. **Requirements of Other People in a Candidate's Life**

- i. When a candidate is previously intermarried or is converting for the sake of an individual Jew (as per above), the spouse's observance level and attitudes must be consistent with the present and future Torah observance of the candidate and not be a source of conflict or opposition to the convert's adopting a halachic lifestyle. The Beit Din should also consider whether other significant individuals in the candidate's life such as parents, or any existing minor children, will have an impact on the success or failure of the process and the aftermath of conversion.

d. **Havchana**

- i. **A Couple Converting at the Same Time.** When a non-Jewish couple converts to Judaism at the same time, the halacha requires them to separate from each other for a period of three months (ninety two days, including the date of conversion and the date of marriage) before they can become married under Jewish law. This is in order to differentiate between a child conceived by a Jewish mother and a child conceived before its mother became Jewish (havchana). There are sometimes grounds for leniency, such as (a) when the woman is already pregnant; (b) according to some poskim, in certain cases where the woman is past menopause (c) has recently had her period; or, (d) takes a pregnancy test. In appropriate cases, the regional Beit Din may refer a case to its Sponsoring Rabbi to determine whether lenient grounds exist in that case, or make such a determination itself. However, any such referral to a third party posek or determination by the regional Bet Din must occur only after consultation with the BDA.
- ii. **Intermarried Couples, those living Together, and Single Women.** The requirement for havchana is also relevant when the gentile partner in an intermarriage converts, or where the couple was living with each other outside of wedlock. In such cases, the regional Bet Din should require the couple to separate for at least three months prior to conversion, which is in any event necessary in order for the couple to demonstrate their readiness for a life of full Torah observance. In consultation with the BDA, the regional Beit Din will determine whether any of the leniencies described above apply in any particular case.

- iii. **A Single Woman Living Alone.** A regional Beit Din may rule that a single woman living alone need not be subject to the requirement of havchana.
 - iv. **Small Children.** When a couple's need to care for small children would make the requirement for the couple to live in separate quarters into an excessive hardship, the regional Beit Din may arrange with the couple – in consultation with the BDA – to take appropriate measures in order to avoid yichud during the havchana period, or may rely on those opinions which would substitute a pregnancy test for havchana
 - v. **Summary.** Despite the grounds for leniency that may exist in individual cases, the strong expectation is that the full havchana waiting period will be rigorously observed and required by regional Batei Din in all appropriate cases.
- e. **Confirming the status of a Candidate Reared as a Jew.** Each case of possible conversion of someone raised as a Jew requires exceptional psychological and pastoral sensitivity as well as careful halachic analysis since calling into question someone's previously firm Jewish identity can have a strong, unpredictable impact on that person. This said, when there is no doubt that a previous conversion is invalid, even though the candidate has lived as a Jew, the regional Beit Din should proceed to convert the candidate in appropriate cases. However, if there is even a small doubt, the regional Beit Din should first consult with the BDA. One possible response may be that a giyyur mi'safek will be required. In such a case a determination will be made as to whether a beracha should accompany the particular conversion. Further, if there is a clear conclusion that such a conversion is necessary, then it may often be done more expeditiously than in other cases.

6. The Conversion Process

a. Overall Intent of Process

It is assumed that a candidate for conversion should be motivated by a sincere desire to embrace both the people of Israel and the faith and practices of Judaism. The process set out here is intended to confirm this motivation in a dignified, thorough manner. The goal is not to exclude people, but rather to set approved and appropriate standards. We must be able to ascertain to the extent possible that the candidate is sincere, understands what is involved in conversion itself, and what conversion will require in terms of personal growth and transformation, in both religious and communal involvement. The regional batei din will accept converts without regard to race, national origin, ethnicity or prior religious background.

b. Grounds for Terminating the Conversion Process

At any point, the Beit Din or Sponsoring Rabbi may terminate the conversion process for the following, or other, reasons:

- i. A candidate will be expected to demonstrate ethical behavior of the highest order, and the Beit Din may terminate the process at its

discretion in case of violation of this principle. This includes, for example, displaying a lack of honesty with the Beit Din and others, not evidencing sensitivity to others' feelings and concern for their misfortunes, refusing to be charitable with one's time and resources, being unable to show regard for people of all faiths and classes, not acting as a law-abiding citizen, and not respecting the differences between oneself and others.

- ii. Honesty also includes full disclosure to the Beit Din itself regarding the candidate's true motivation, romantic attachments, and level of commitment, in seeking the conversion. To this end, it should be made clear that the candidate is not expected to be a full shomer mitzvot from the outset of the conversion process, but is expected to embrace a model of gradual adaptation.
- iii. Every candidate for conversion will be expected to demonstrate consistency of commitment to the process and its goals. If a candidate appears to be unable to follow through with the process of study, mitzvah observance, and gradual adaptation to participation in a full Jewish communal life, the Beit Din may terminate the process.
- iv. Similarly, concerns may arise about psychological fitness for conversion that may prompt the regional Beit Din to terminate the conversion process.
- v. The Bet Din may require a psychological evaluation for any and all candidates before beginning the conversion process.

c. **Exposure to Communal Life by Living in an Orthodox community**

- i. As far as the halacha is concerned, conversion involves the creation of a transformed, fully reborn, new person. Becoming fully part of the Jewish family, one literally acquires a new family, a new life and as such one reorients one's entire being. The candidate will be expected to cultivate new friendships, new relationships, new social activities, new Torah commitments. Moreover, as with any Jew, the growth and learning process continues throughout one's life.
- ii. As a result, a candidate must come to reside in a Torah observant community. It is not possible to learn and absorb Judaism and Torah living at a distance; it must be experienced on a daily basis, especially on Shabbat and holidays. The candidate must also experience traditional Jewish communal life in order to be familiar with the realities of living as a Jew, both in faith and in peoplehood.
- iii. Ordinarily, this community will be one in which fully observant families, other than that of the local rabbi, have sustained and can continue to sustain Orthodox life over the long term. Additionally, the candidate will have been living there for a significant period of time either without intention to move or with a commitment to move only to a similar community, and maintain an ongoing, positive relationship with a local rabbi.

- iv. If a candidate has current or past affiliations with more than one Jewish community, the Sponsoring Rabbi and regional Beit Din will consult with the rabbis of all those communities for their evaluation of the candidate.
 - v. Candidates living in circumstances other than these (for example, college students, members of the military, the foreign service or other highly mobile professions) require a far greater degree of scrutiny. At a minimum, the candidate must have ongoing, reasonable accessibility to the institutions of Orthodox life; e.g., a mikveh, an Orthodox day school through 12th grade, kosher food, and live within walking distance to an Orthodox minyan that meets regularly each Shabbat and Yom Tov. This must be true not only during the conversion process, but the Beit Din must determine, to the extent possible, that the candidate has a strong commitment to conducting his or her life so as to maintain access to those institutions for the rest of his or her life. The final decision in such cases and in situations where some of these things may be unavailable will reside with the regional Beit Din, subject to the approval of the BDA.
 - vi. All three members of the Beit Din must be physically present at all of their required meetings with the candidate and relevant other parties.
- d. **The First Interview:**
- i. Upon referral by a Sponsoring Rabbi, the regional Beit Din will schedule an initial interview with the candidate along with his or her spouse, if any, and Sponsoring Rabbi. The dayyanim of the regional Bet Din will interview the candidate and other relevant individuals to determine the suitability of proceeding with the process.
 - ii. If the regional Beit Din deems further instruction to be appropriate, it will instruct either the Sponsoring Rabbi or another qualified rabbi to serve as the main mentor for the candidate (the "Mentoring Rabbi") who shall then tutor the candidate in accordance with the course of instruction set forth herein. Other teachers, tutors, or guides may also be assigned. Naturally, then, it is preferable that the Sponsoring Rabbi should get clearance from the regional Beit Din before the candidate gets very far into studying the formal syllabus.
 - iii. A suggested syllabus will be formulated in due course.
 - iv. A suggested reading list will be formulated in due course.
- e. **Interim Meetings**
- i. The amount of time for a convert to be prepared for conversion varies from case to case, depending upon the level of knowledge and experience that preceded the quest for conversion and many other factors. A minimum of two years of study and experiential growth is generally recommended though individual circumstances may vary in this regard. During this time, and as a rule not less than every six months (i.e., usually 4-5 interactions), the candidate will be in

communication with the Beit Din to review his or her progress, and make any necessary adjustments or decisions as to the remaining course of study and personal growth. These should include at least two face-to-face meetings. There should also be regular communications between the Beth Din, the mentor, and the Sponsoring Rabbi, to monitor progress.

f. **The Decision to Convert**

- i. If and when the Beit Din is satisfied that the candidate has acquired sufficient knowledge to live as a mitzvah observant Jew, can be relied upon to live up to the commitments of the yoke of mitzvot, and identifies with the Jewish people and its destiny, it will agree to proceed with the actual conversion procedures.
- ii. Prior to assenting to the conversion procedures, the regional Beit Din should inform the candidate of the specific mitzvah commitments that are expected of him or her, as they are of all candidates.

g. **The Formal Acts of Conversion**

- i. Bris Milah/Hatafat Dam: This part of the conversion process must be done in the presence of a Beit Din, preferably the converting Beit Din.
- ii. Tevila: The three dayyanim must be present in the mikveh room during the actual immersion. The modesty of the female convert should be protected by the presence of a covering as she enters the water – before the dayyanim enter the mikveh room. The dayyanim must witness the female convert’s head fully immersed in the water, and not rely on the statement of a third party attesting that immersion took place.
- iii. Kabbalat ha-Mitzvot: The acceptance of the commandments must follow the guidelines found in Yevamot 47a-b and Shulchan Aruch: Yoreh Deah 268.
- iv. The prospective convert should make a declaration (in his or her own words) embracing the G-d of Israel as the one and exclusive Deity, accepting the Divine origin of the Torah and indicating that he or she commits to observance of halachah which includes both the oral and written laws (alternatively or additionally: the Biblical and Rabbinic laws).

7. After the Conversion

a. **Review Mechanism**

- i. One year after the conversion the sponsoring rabbi shall provide the regional Beit Din with a one paragraph report on how the person is progressing in his or her religious development. If the regional Beit Din hasn’t heard from the Sponsoring Rabbi, the regional Beit Din shall pursue the matter through the sponsoring

rabbi or on its own. This one-year follow up will be used for self-evaluation of the regional Beit Din.

- b. **A Converted Minor and the Need for Re-Affirmation**
 - i. In cases of conversion of minor children it is essential that the regional Beit Din ensures that children converted as minors be informed prior to becoming bar/bat mitzvah that they were converted, and that they have the opportunity at such time either to renounce their conversion or demonstrate their commitment to Judaism by continuing to practice a fully committed Jewish life. As long as this disclosure has been made to a child in a timely fashion, their continuing identification with Judaism at the time of their bar/bat mitzvah shall preclude any possibility of undoing the conversion in the future. There shall be no need at the time of bar/bat mitzvah for the child to express a formal acceptance of Mitzvot before a newly convened Bet Din, but rather this informal process shall be deemed sufficient in accordance with time-honored traditions of Jewish law and practice.

- c. **What to Expect/Do when Moving to a New Jewish Community**
 - i. A ger, or family of gerim, should inform the local rabbi of their status shortly after moving into the community. This is especially important where a woman converted after she had children (and the children converted together with her), or, as is not uncommon, where the female converted in a non-Orthodox manner before marriage and/or children, and later converted ke'halachah. As the female children in such a situation could not usually marry kohanim, this fact would be important for them – and for the rabbi – to know. If circumstances warrant, the regional Beit Din shall indicate in the conversion document that a female convert was pregnant at the time of conversion.

8. Conclusion

- a. **Individuality of each Convert**
 - i. The regional Beit Din structure recognizes that each person is an individual and that each prospective convert comes with a history and a set of circumstances that are unique. The system presented here, while it has been developed to standardize geirut procedures, also will make every effort to respect and work with the individual candidate "ba'asher hu sham."

- b. **Further Implementation and Review**
 - i. As stated at the outset, our goal is to implement the first phase of the proposed system starting in the Spring of 2007, and concluding in the summer of 2007. We are in consultation with our regional

Batei Din and with the RCA's Vaad Halachah and Vaad Haposkim to further study the realities of conversion in North America and to avail ourselves of the profound knowledge, expertise and sensitivity of our Torah leadership in this critical area. In addition, annual reviews of the regional Beit Din structure and its implementation on the ground will, be'ezrat Hashem, allow us make this system function in the most appropriate way possible.