

בס"ד

**THE ATTACK
ON
GLATT KOSHER
SHCHITAH**



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The Shochtim after Shachris

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The story of the transformation of Orthodox *Kashrus* standards in America:

GRANTING A HECHSHER FOR SHCHITAH TO A GOY

Preface

The very concept of granting a *Hechsher* to a goy for the production of Kosher meat hearkens back – or, more importantly, is a regression – to the America of yesteryear, to an America with appalling *Kashrus* standards, as they existed before the Second World War. The nadir to which *Kashrus* observance had sunk in those days is virtually incomprehensible to the modern Jewish community. In those dark days, the sobriquet of “America the *treifene medina* – the *treif* country” was applied most aptly.

Slowly, however, the tide of *Kashrus* observance began to turn. The end of the war heralded an influx of remnants of the G-d fearing Jewish communities of Europe, bringing with them the sanctity of their G-d fearing lifestyle to the safe haven of America. They were intent upon reconstructing the lives that had been destroyed in the crucible of Europe, lives that revolved around *Avodas Hashem* and *Shmiras ha'Mitzvos*. The resulting flowering of *Yeshivos* and other *Mosdos Torah* brought with it a general elevation of all aspects of *Kdusha* and *Shmiras ha'Mitzvos*, including *Kashrus* observance. Indeed, the meticulousness with which the *Kashrus* of both dairy and meat products is observed today has brought us to the point where no one would think of allowing a product without a reliable *Hechsher* to grace our tables.

This advancement in *Kashrus* observance has not been the exclusive province of the burgeoning *Charedi* world, which is accustomed to using only “*Glatt Kosher*” meat and “*Cholov Yisroel*” dairy products. Rather, *Kashrus* standards have improved throughout the *Torah* observant community, to the point where virtually anyone adhering to *Kashrus* appreciate the importance of a “*Glatt Kosher*” label on a product, and expect that such a product indeed meet the highest *Kashrus* standards implicit in such a designation.

This increased demand for *Glatt Kosher* meat, however, has created a situation where the available supply is often insufficient to keep pace with demand. Indeed, such a shortage may be found in the non-Kosher market.

Compounding the problem is the fact that, for various reasons, non-Jewish slaughterhouses are often reluctant to accommodate Kosher slaughter. As such, virtually all *Glat* Kosher meat in America is supplied by three Jewish meat companies that, on more than one occasion, have found it difficult to meet the demands of the growing *Kashrus* community.

This booklet is intended to illustrate the juncture at which we are standing in addressing the issue of *Kashrus* of meat in America, one that presents us with two diametrically opposed paths from which to choose. One path is that of the *Etz ha'Chaim* – the Tree of Life – whereby we exert our utmost efforts to uphold and strengthen all aspects of Kosher meat production – *Shchitah*, *Bedikah*, *Nikur* (*treibering*) and *Hashgocho*. Such efforts, however, involve a two-pronged approach. They first require that we ensure the integrity of the *technical* implementation of these procedures, lest critical deficiencies in their performance result in a non-Kosher product. Of equal importance, however, is ensuring the *spiritual* integrity of those charged with this holy work. We must therefore guarantee an environment conducive to the *Yiras Shomayim* and *Yiras Chet* (fear of Heaven and fear of sin), which can only be brought about creating a community steeped in the *Kdusha* (holiness) inherent in their holy work.

The other path that lies before us portends a *Gehenom* opening at our feet, where not only do we abandon all of the holy aspects of this work by failure to exercise our responsibility, but where we actively facilitate the erosion of *Kashrus* by entrusting its observance and enforcement to *goyim*. Such an approach would bring the wanton destruction of all of the tremendous gains in *Kashrus* observance that have been made at such sacrifice over the past fifty years, and drag us back to the dark days of the *Treifene* America of 5676 (1916).

It was for this reason that the *Agudas Horabonim* felt it necessary to publicize in the press **"A *Hechsher* granted by any *Rov* to a factory that sells both Kosher and non-Kosher meat is invalid, and that all such meat must be considered non-Kosher. In addition, one must question the integrity of the *Rov* granting such a *Hechsher*."** As such, the reader must analyze and understand the two opposing paths before him in order to choose the *Etz ha'Chaim*.



Introduction

Twelve years ago, in the year 5752 (1992), a new community of devout Jews was established in Hartley, Iowa. This community, unique in that area of the country, consisted entirely of Jews who lived a life of *Kdusha v'Tahara* – holiness and purity - unhesitatingly accepted upon themselves the strictest observance of *Mitzvos*. Such was a lifestyle suited to the holy work and responsibilities entailed in their chosen profession – that of *Shochtim u'Bodkim* (ritual slaughterers and inspectors).

The establishment of this community was the direct result of the efforts of the respected Chaimowitz family, owners of the Kosher meat company known as International Glatt. The Chaimowitz family had decided to consolidate the various *Shchitah* operations that it had maintained throughout the United States into one site, a slaughterhouse operated by a company called BSI in Windom, Minnesota. The primary advantage of this slaughterhouse, as opposed to the smaller sites previously employed, was that BSI owned an additional meat processing plant near the slaughterhouse, in the town of Harley, Iowa. This facility was equipped to fully process meat, from the initial cutting of the carcasses through boning, trimming, and final packaging. This location was particularly well suited to the needs of International Glatt and Kosher meat production, for it would allow for the immediate *Treibering* and *Kashering* of meat without the need and delay of transport to outside facilities.

At that time, International Glatt enjoyed the *Hashgacha* of the famous luminary and *posek* Rabbi Moshe Stern *zt"l*, *Av Bais Din* of Debrecin, author of *Shu"t Be'er Moshe*, together with his son *ybl't* Dayan Rabbi Shlomo Tzvi Stern *shlit"a*. In addition, Rabbi Yitzchok Eliezer Yakob *shlit"a* served as the supervisor of the *Shochtim* charged with upholding the exemplary standards of the *Shchitah*. Upon hearing of the plans to move the *Shchitah* and processing to BSI, the *Rabbonim* counseled the Chaimowitz family as to the extraordinary concerns entailed in such an endeavor. They explained that, on order to relocate of a *Shchitah* to an area so remote from an established Jewish community, it would be imperative to create a full *Kehillah* for the *Shochtim*, *Bodkim*, *Menakrim*, and *Mashgichim* and their families, one that would be infused with *Torah* and *Yiras Shomayim*. Only by creating such environment, cautioned the *Rabbonim*, could such an endeavor enjoy the *Siyyata d'Shmaya* (the Heavenly assistance) required for their holy work. Such a *Kehillah* would provide for a regular *Minyan*¹, for a *Bais Medrash* to

¹ In many other situations, *Shochtim* who travel to distant locations to *Shecht* are frequently required to travel the night before they begin work, and are often unable to *daven* with a *Minyan* or immerse in a *Mikvah*

maintain *shuirim* in *Torah*, and all of the other essential accoutrements of Jewish life.

Recognizing the importance of these requirements, the Chaimowitz family eagerly undertook to fulfill them. It immediately procured housing suitable for the *Shochtim* and *Bodkim* and their families and buildings for a *Talmud Torah* and kindergarten. Thus began the new "*Kehillah I'Shub'im*" (*Kehillah* for *Shochtim* and *Bodkim*) in the town of Hartley, together with a *Bais Medrash* replete with an *Otzer ha'Seforim* (library), as well as separate *Mikvahs* for men and women.

This attention to such spiritual needs extended even to the slaughterhouse in Windom, where a small *Mikvah* was constructed for the use of the *Shochtim*², as befitting their holy work, since many authorities have ruled that one should not *Schecht* without first immersing himself in a *Mikvah*.³

Rabbi Yitzchok Eliezer Yakob *shlit"a* from *Yerushalayim*, a leading expert in *Shchitah* and author of many works on the subject, oversaw the construction of the new *Kehillah I'Shubi"m*, along with its infrastructure for the continued learning and spiritual growth of its members. He saw in this project the fulfillment of a mission – to restore the holy traditions and special customs that had been the glory of *Shochtim* in pre-war Europe. Many of these traditions had been lost over years – or had never made it to America – and the *Kehillah I'Shubi"m* offered an unprecedented opportunity to return this holy work to its earlier grandeur.

His approach was to strive to the highest level of *Kashrus* as befits the devoutly-observant Jewish community. Specifically, the "*Glat*" status of the meat produced should meet the standards and customs of *all* groups and

² It is noteworthy that not only did the non-Jewish owners of BSI consent to the building of a *Mikvah* on their premises., they were even willing to shoulder all of the costs of its construction. Such an approach was based upon their understanding that all of the demands of the *Rabbonim* relating to *Kashrus* - as determined solely by the *Rabbonim* - were absolute requirements, not merely recommendations, and they were thus willing to accommodate all such requests without hesitation.

³ הובא ב"מרדכי" ריש מס' תולין וז"ל "כתב רבינו ברוך, ראיתי כתוב בהל' שחיטה שהביא רבי אלדד בן מחלי הבא מעשרת השבטים, אמר יהושע מפי משה מפי הגבורה: כל הזוכה לה' כו' ואם לא הורחץ משי' ושכח ושחט שחיטתו פיגול" עכ"ל. ועל הא דסיים המרדכי שם דלא נהגינן כוותיה, כתב ה"ימנחת יוסף" (שו"ב דק"ק בריסק) בקו"א שלו, דבע"כ כוונת המרדכי דלא אסרינן בדיעבד עבור זה, אבל לכתחילה לא מצינו שום תולק דצריך לקיימו, ובפרט בנידון זה שדעת הרבה ראשונים להתמיר.

communities according to their respective stringencies and careful interpretations of *Halacha*, as had been the hallowed custom of our forefathers in their communities in previous generations.

The key to Rabbi Yakob's success was his founding of a unique *Kollel*, known as *Ohel Shalom Tzvi*, specifically geared to the needs of *Shochtim*, *Bodkim*, and *Menakrim*. From this reservoir of almost one hundred respected scholars, Rabbi Yakob was able to found the new *Kehillah l'Shubi"m* in Hartley, allowing for the establishment of a *Shchitah* on the highest spiritual level, and allowing its members to prosper both physically as well as spiritually. Indeed, respected *Rabbonim* and guests who visited the new *Kehillah* were amazed at the vibrancy of the Jewish life they found there and fervency of the learning of *Torah* that resounded from the *Bais Medrash*. The core of their learning, of course, was the *Halachos* of *Shchitah*, *Treifos*, and *Nikur*. These were constantly studied and reviewed to sharpen their proficiency in these *Halachos*, for the entire essence of the *Kehillah* was geared to but one purpose – ensuring the epitome of excellence in the *Kashrus* of their *Shchitah*, *Bedikah*, and *Nikur*.

So functioned this devout *Kehillah* for many years, in a spiritual environment most conducive to the holy work in which its members were engaged. As the years progressed, Rabbi Yakob's *Kehillah* was further strengthened for, in addition to the *Hashgacha* of the illustrious *Debriciner Rov*, Rabbi Yitzchok Stein *shlit"á*, *Av Bais Din* for Rabbi Yechezkel Roth *shlit"á*, and Rabbi Yaakov Zeida, *Dayan* of Vznitz, agreed to join in giving their approval to the *Shchitah*. These *Rabbonim* jointly stand behind the *Hashgacha* of the *Bais Din Tzedek Mishmeres l'Mishmeres*, which oversees the *Hashgacha* at International Glatt.⁴



⁴ A crucial stipulation by the *BD"Z Mishmeres l'Mishmeres* in granting their *Hashgacha* was a requirement that no member of the management of International Glatt or its representatives be allowed on the premises of the slaughterhouse during *Shchitah* or *Bedikah* unless accompanied by one of the *Rabbonim Hamachshirim*. In addition, all salaries for *Shochtim*, *Bodkim*, *Menakrim*, and *Mashgichim* are paid from a fund that is administered under the direction of the *BD"Z*. The principals of International Glatt have no knowledge of or any involvement with any of the *Shochtim* or *Bodkim* working in the facility.

The Importance of a Jewish-owned Company in the Handling of Meat

Although *Shchitah* is the first step in the processing of Kosher meat, not all animals that are *Shechted* will ultimately be considered Kosher. According to *Halacha*, certain types of deformities or injuries to an animal render it a *Treifah*, and such an animal would not be considered Kosher even if properly *Schechted*. For this reason, *Bodkim* (inspectors) check the lungs and other internal organs of each animal after *Shchitah* – both while the organs are inside the body cavity (*Bedikas Penim*) and after they have been removed (*Bedikas Chutz*) – to determine which animals are *Treifos* and which are Kosher. Each animal is tagged with a specific number and, after the *Bodek* has made the appropriate determination as to the animal's Kosher status, he marks the carcass as Kosher and records that animal's identification number and status on a special list. The carcass is then split into two sides of meat, which are conveyed to a large refrigerator, with the Kosher meat stored on one side of the refrigerator and the non-Kosher meat stored on the other. At the end of the day, a *Mashgiach* will check the Kosher markings and compare the list of identification numbers of Kosher animals with those on the meat on Kosher side of the refrigerator, as well as verify that the total number of Kosher animals matches the total number on the list. The Kosher status of the meat is also verified by checking additional markings that had been covertly applied by the *Bodek* and are known only to the *Bodkim* and *Mashgichim*.

After cooling overnight, the Kosher sides of meat are *Treibored* and *Kasherred* (soaked and salted), after which the *Kasherred* meat must be packaged. Careful supervision of the packaging of the meat is crucial to ensure the integrity of the Kosher operation, since the Kosher symbols by which the meat is ultimately identified are pre-printed on the vacuum plastic bags in which the meat is packaged. Consequently, all packaging must be done under the direct and attentive supervision of a *Mashgiach*. In addition, meat may be packaged in large containers, a process that also requires a *Mashgiach* to supervise the process and apply appropriate Kosher seals.

Because not all animals that are *Schechted* can be considered Kosher, every Kosher slaughterhouse produces both Kosher and non-Kosher. The non-Jewish owner of the slaughterhouse, however, must clearly understand that the Kosher meat is the sole and absolute property of the Jewish company that arranges for its production. There must also be absolutely no question that any attempt on his part to compromise the integrity of the Kosher meat or to seek to mislabel non-Kosher meat as Kosher will result in the direst of consequences, including possible criminal penalties as well loss of the valuable Kosher business. It must be abundantly clear that any such activity would be the cause an immediate termination of *Shchitah* in his plant.

Such an arrangement is only possible, however, where the Jewish company is the sole owner of the Kosher meat. In such situations, the *goy* would never be able to increase the number of animals marked as Kosher, nor would he have any benefit in exchanging a non-Kosher animal for a Kosher one. Where the non-Jewish owner of the slaughterhouse is also the owner of the Kosher meat, on the other hand, the temptation to "increase" the amount of Kosher meat is immense, for the price that can be commanded for *Glatt* Kosher meat is far higher than that for not Kosher product.

This concern would also be compounded by two other factors. Due to the *Halachic* requirements and additional stringencies relating to the *Shchitah* and *Bedikah*, the number of *Glatt* Kosher animals is generally the *minority* of the animals *Schechted*. As such, the *majority* of animals produced during *Glatt* Kosher slaughter must be sold as non-Kosher – and thus less expensive – product.⁵ In addition, the standards of *Nikur* established by the *Rabbonim* – based upon the words of the *Agur*⁶ – require the removal of significant amounts of objectionable material, thereby decreasing the yield of the meat significantly.

With these facts in mind, it is important to note that the company known as "International Glatt" is owned and operated by *frum* Jews, and that the entire system of *Kashrus* and *Halachic* stringencies governing all meats sold under the "International Glatt" brand name are subject to three distinct *Hechsherim*: (1) Debrecin, (2) *BD"Z Mishmeres l'Mishmeres*, and (3) the "OU". Given the relationship between the *Hechsherim* and the company that they certify (International Glatt), the *Rabbonim* of each of these *Hechsherim*

⁵ *Shchitah* of veal (calves) tends to yield even fewer Kosher animals than beef. Indeed, it is common for *Shochtim* sent to veal slaughterhouses in various locations to *Schecht* for International Glatt to return empty-handed after a full day of *Shchitah* because all of the animals *Schechted* had to be declared *Treif*. [The lungs of calves often exhibit a great number of *sirchos* (lesions), which render them *Treifos*.]

⁶ רבינו האגור (סי' אלף קע"ה) לאחר שהביא ז' מקומות בבהמה שנפל בהן מחלוקת, ולאחר שהוסיף מדיליה עוד מחלוקת אחת כתב וז"ל "ואתה בני חכם לבך וישמח לבי גם אני, אל תלך בדרך המקילים, כי לא תדע איזה יכשר ואל תכניס עצמך בספק איסור כרת, כי ספק אבוד נפש הוא. ומצאנו שרבותינו ז"ל החמירו אפילו בספק איסור דרבנן ואפילו בספק ספקא לפעמים כגון כו', וק"ו בן בנו של ק"ו בספק איסור חלב שעושו כרת שאל תכנס בספקות. שטה מעליו דרכך פרעהו אל תעבור בו. ועוד אומר, כי בזה אין נקרא ספק חלב, מאחר שדברים אלו תלויים בחכמה ובקבלה, כמו שפסקו המחברים במקום שלא תוכל לשער האיסור מחמת חסרון דעת אין נקרא ספק, כו'. ואתה בני אשר נתן לך השי"ת לב לדעת ועיני השכל לראות, מנע רגליך מנתיבות ספק איסור חלב".

feel comfortable in assuming full responsibility for the *Kashrus* of the product. This would not be possible, however, if a *goy* were the owner and in control of the meat and the packaging material, in which case it would be obvious that no reliable *Hechsher* could be maintained on the *Kashrus* of such products.

For years, this dichotomy between the functions and responsibilities of the non-Jewish owner of the slaughterhouse and the Jewish owners of International Glatt was clear and unambiguous. The owner of the slaughterhouse and his employees carefully and respectfully heeded all of the requests and requirements put forth by the *Rabbonim*, and cooperated fully in maintaining the outstanding system of *Kashrus* established under the auspices of Rabbi Eliezer Yakob *shlit"á*.



The Churban Begins

Some years ago the facilities at Windom and Hartley were acquired by a company called PM Holding. The new management looked askance at the arrangements for the handling of *Glatt* Kosher meat that were in place, regretting the fact that the profits from the sale of this lucrative product produced in its own facility were the province of International Glatt and not PM Holding. The company then began to question why it should not be able to handle *Glatt* Kosher meat, and finally made a formal request from Rabbi Yakob *shlit"á* for a direct *Hechsher* for PM Holding. Rabbi Yakob replied that such a *Hechsher* was impossible, since it is *Halachically* forbidden to give a *Hechsher* to a *goy* who handles both Kosher and non-Kosher meat.

The *goy*, however, did not give up, and turned to the *Rabbonim* of the OU for a *Hechsher*. The OU also responded that its policy similarly precluded the granting of a *Hechsher* for meat products to a company, owned by a *goy*, that handled both Kosher and non-Kosher meat.

Eventually, however, it became known to PM Holding that Rabbi Moshe Heinemann *shlit"á*, of the Star-K Kosher Certification Service, did not feel encumbered by the reservations of Rabbi Yakob and the OU, and was ready and eager to provide the *Hechsher* that it was seeking.⁷

When Rabbi Yakob became aware that PM Holding had arranged for its own *Hechsher* through the Star-K, he immediately consulted with the leading *Poskim* of our generation, *Hagaon HaRav* Elyashiv *shlit"á* from *Yerushalayim* and *Hagaon HaRav* Vosner *shlit"á* of *Bnei Brak*, both of whom ruled that there could be no ambiguity this matter – **it was forbidden to grant a *Hechsher* for meat to a *goy*.**⁸

⁷ This type of approach to *Kashrus* certification has been the source of much consternation amongst *Kashrus* organizations. They have long lamented the fact that it has become impossible to use the threat of removal of a *Hashgacha* as a means of ensuring compliance with *Kashrus* regulations, since companies are well aware that the Star-K would always be available to take over their certification. Indeed, this concern was the subject of a large meeting held in Flatbush that was attended by many *Vaadei Kashrus*, seeking to form a common policy to combat this grave threat to the integrity of all reliable *Kashrus* organizations.

⁸ On another occasion, Rabbi Yakob had mentioned to Rabbi Elyashiv that a certain American *Rov* was prepared to grant a *Hechsher* for meat to a *goy*, to which Rabbi Elyashiv was flabbergasted and exclaimed, "Is he an Orthodox rabbi?"

When the *Rabbonim* who certified International Glatt heard that PM Holding had succeeded in obtaining its own *Hechsher*, they were incredulous – they could not believe their own ears. Indeed, such a *Hechsher* was especially troubling since one of the *goy's* major complaints about the current system was that it did not produce a sufficient number of *Glatt* animals.

At that point, Rabbi Yakob requested a personal meeting with Rabbi Heinemann, at which he implored him directly not to undertake such a *Hechsher*. He described the great danger that granting such a *Hechsher* to a *goy* would pose to the integrity of *Kashrus* in America. Specifically, it would have the potential of undermining years of efforts to maintain the highest standards for *Glatt* Kosher meat, which had been safeguarded by ensuring that its processing and sale be under the exclusive purview of *frum* Jews. Rabbi Yakob explained that once a *goy* is allowed to control the processing and sale of both Kosher and non-Kosher meat, he would stop at nothing in attempting to pressure the *Shochtim* and *Bodkim* to increase the yield of Kosher meat. Such an arrangement, explained Rabbi Yakob, would be the antithesis of reliable *Kashrus* certification, for even where the principals of a meat processing facility are *frum* Jews, they are nonetheless forbidden to be present during *Shchitah* or *Bedikah* lest they exert undue influence over the determination of the Kosher status of the animals.⁹ Rabbi Yakob further stressed the underlying concern with allowing a *goy* to control the processing and sale of both Kosher and non-Kosher meat – that one may not rely on a *goy* to vouch for Kosher food, and that such a situation would provide him with the ability to fraudulently sell the non-Kosher meat under his control as Kosher. Since the *goy* would have access to a significant amount of non-Kosher meat – which, indeed, is the *majority* of the meat produced in a slaughterhouse – he would be greatly tempted to tamper and forge Kosher markings and market some of this product as Kosher, thus realizing a far higher profit from his operation.

Nonetheless, after listening to all of Rabbi Yakob's concerns – which are both incontrovertible and the clear practical *Halachic* rulings of the *Gedolim* – Rabbi Heinemann responded, "I will indeed give a *Hechsher* to a *goy*."

Rabbi Yakob was astounded. He then attempted to persuade Rabbi Heinemann by using a different tact. He noted that, "You, yourself, had seen our *Shochtim* and *Bodkim*, all of whom are G-d fearing and devout. You are

⁹ שאסור למי שיש נגיעות ממון לבהמה להיות נוכח בשעת בדיקות הריאה, כמבואר בכרוז התקנות הישן משנת תקע"ו דלא יעמוד בעל השור אצל שורד, אשר באו עה"ח עליו גדולי הדור כמו הישועות יעקב, הבית אפרים, האוהב ישראל מאפטא, העטרת צבי מזידיטשוב, השר שלום מבעלזא, ועוד (הכרוז הישן מודפס בקונטרס "נוהג כצאן יוסף" ש"ל ע"י מכון תבואות שור תשס"ג).

also quite aware that the *Shochtim* that are generally in your employ follow different lifestyles and customs¹⁰, and should they come to work in the same environment, no doubt they will adversely affect the special holiness that had been built up with such sacrifice over the years."

At this point, Rabbi Heinemann offered the following solution. "I remain committed to my original decision to grant a *Hechsher* to a *goy*", he declared. "However, I am willing to grant a concession regarding the *Shochtim*, and to allow you to continue providing the *Shchitah* services, provided I give a *Hashgacha* to the *goy* for the meat that is produced." [The reason that Rabbi Heinemann had the audacity to propose such an arrangement – recognizing full well that the *Rabbonim* were in vehement opposition to it – was that he had already prepared an alliance with the *goy* by which to control the *Rabbonim*, as will become abundantly clear as the story progresses.]

The *goy* then turned Rabbi Heinemann's proposal into an ultimatum. He threatened the *Rabbonim* that, should they reject the compromise of the new *Rav Hamachshir*, all of the current *Shochtim* and *Bodkim* would be barred from working at the slaughterhouse..

Faced with the prospect of disbanding the *Shchitah* that they had worked so hard to perfect, the *Rabbonim* were coerced into submitting to the

¹⁰ דכידוע ישנם כמה וכמה ענינים שחסרון ההקפדה בהם, לדידהו לא הוי מומא, אבל לדידן הוי והוי מומא, ובפרט להעוסקים בקדשי הזבח הצריכים להיות יר"ש מרבים (כמובא להלן). עד היכן הדברים מגיעין ניתן ללמוד מן העובדא המובאת בספר "לבושי יהודה על שמלה חדשה" (על הל' טריפות הריאה) "שמעתי מאדמו"ר (הוא הגה"ק בעל "אך פרי תבואה" אבד"ק ליסקא) שאמר לי, שכאשר בא לביתו מבאניאהד ששם למד (יחד עם הגאון מוהר"ש גאנצפריד בעל קצוש"ע אצל הגה"ק רבי צבי הירש העללער בעל טיב גיטין), ובא לפני הרב הקדוש בעמ"ח ישמח משה אב"ד דק"ק אוהעל זצ"ל, אמר לו, כעת הצלם אלקים שלך אינו כמו מקדמת דנא. והיה מעיין אדומ"ר בדבר מה זה ועל מה זה שנשתנה פניו, ואמר, שכנראה בגלל שהיה ירא אלקים מאוד ועוסק בתורה כראוי, ושאינ לו במה לתלות רק בעבור שאכל מהשר"ב של אויבערגעגנט, כי השר"ב דשם אינן טובלים במקוה לעת הצורך, ושוחטין בלא כובע רק בכובע קטן, ובפרט שאינן אומנים בהשחזת הסכין כידוע, עכ"ד. [אגב, לאח"ז נשתנה שם המצב לטובה, כידוע]. בהבנת הענין מדוע הזכיר את הטעם העיקרי והחמור "שאינן אומנין בהשחזת הסכין" רק לבסוף, שלכל הדיעות היה צ"ל הטעם הראשון. כי באמת כל ג' הטעמים חד הם ותלויים הא בהא, וזוהו טמון כל יסוד ההבדל ב"גישה" אל הזבח. הדנה אומנות "השחזת הסכין" תלוי ב"כוונת הלב" כמפורש בשו"ע "הלא תראה כי יבדוק אדם פעמים שלש ולא ירגיש בפגימה דקה ואחר כך ימצאנה כי הכין לבו באחרונה ובחינת חוש המישוש כפי כוונת הלב" (לשון המחבר שו"ע יר"ד סי' י"ח סעי' י"ז). והא ראייה דכוונת הלב הוא חלק בלתי נפרד מהאומנות והמומחיות, כי "רבים מן המומחין רחק לבס מיראת חטא, ואשר אינו ירא לבו לא יבין לדקדק בבדיקת הסכין כי צריך לכוון את לבו מאד מאד בבדיקתו" (לשון שו"ע הרב יר"ד סי' א' ס"ק ב'). ואצל השוב"ם והבודקים דידן ב' הטעמים הנזכרים הנ"ל הם מחלקי קבלת העול והטהרה לכוונת הלב כדי להיות "אומנין" בהשחזת הסכין ל"הרגיש" כל פגימה דקה. וכדאמרם ז"ל הבא לטהר מסייעין אותו.

demands made jointly by the goy's *Rav Hamachshir* and the *goy*. PM Holdings then promptly established its own *Glatt Kosher* line of products, and created a Jewish-sounding brand name – *Zalman's Meats* – under which to market with the *Hechsher* of the Star-K.

However, the *Rabbonim* made the following point perfectly clear to Rabbi Heinemann:

“Our involvement with your *Hechsher* is limited to providing you with *Shchitah* and *Bedikah* 'services'. It should be crystal clear to you that we are not assuming any responsibility for the finished product, for once a *goy* has control over the Kosher meats, as well as the packaging material bearing the Star-K Kosher symbol, he would be as free to handle them as he handles his non-Kosher meat.”



The Emerging Pattern of Problems Encountered with Granting a Hechsher for Meat to a Goy

From that point forward and especially over the past year [5763 (2003)], many serious deficiencies were noted concerning the *Kashrus* of the meat under the Star-K *Hechsher*, as illustrated by the following examples:

1. Zalman's Kosher meat is generally packaged in plastic bags that are pre-printed with the Zalman's label and the Star-K *Hechsher*, and are supposed to be stored in a locked area under the control of the *Mashgiach*. One of the *Mashgichim* noticed that an employee of PM Holding removing several cartons of such packaging from the storage area, each containing several hundred such individual bags with Kosher markings. Allowing a *goy* to have unfettered access to the "*simonim*" (*Kashrus* symbols) undermines the entire concept of the seals that are *Halachically* required for Kosher meat. Indeed, in all of the years prior to the new *Hechsher*, no worker had ever been so brazen as to remove such seals without the express permission and direct supervision of a *Mashgiach*.

Realizing the questionable nature of such behavior, the *Mashgiach* decided to keep an eye on the situation, and after a time called the *Rabbonim* from Debrecin and *Mishmeres I'Mishmeres* to ask them what he should do. They instructed him that the must not let the bags out of his sight. When the *Mashgiach* at the slaughterhouse realized that the *goy* was transporting the bags bearing the Star-K symbol to the packaging facility in Hartley in a company trailer, he immediately telephoned the *Mashgiach* in Hartley. He advised him, "You should be aware that several 'suspect' cartons of packaging material bearing the Star-K symbol are on board a trailer that will be arriving at your facility, and you must be vigilant to determine what the *goyim* are plotting to do with them."

When the cartons indeed arrived and the *Mashgiach* realized that a worker had secreted them to the side, the *Mashgiach* turned to the supervisor of the operation and asked, "Why are these cartons of bags here?" The *goy* responded, "These are not your cartons, they belong to Zalman's." Feeling a responsibility for the *Kashrus* of the facility – regardless of which *Hechsher* was involved – the *Mashgiach* persisted, and told the supervisor that he was charged with ensuring the integrity of *all* packaging material bearing a Kosher symbol, to which the supervisor retorted, "These bags do not belong to you – they are the property of PM Holding."

At that point, the *Mashgiach* advised the supervisor that he was under specific instruction from the *Rabbonim* to confiscate the bags in question, to which the supervisor replied, "You are not in control of these

bags – they are ours and not yours.” The *Mashgiach* then advised that supervisor, “I forbid you from moving these cartons until I resolve this matter with the *Rabbonim*.” The anxious *Mashgiach* immediately ran to the telephone to advise the *Rabbonim* of what had transpired, who instructed him to affix a written warning to the cartons that they may not be moved or otherwise tampered with.

By the time the *Mashgiach* returned, however, the cartons were nowhere to be found. The *Mashgiach* paled and his heart pounded, recognizing the calamity that was about to take place with the disappearance of these labels into the hands of the *goyim*. After searching unsuccessfully for the bags, he was able to prevail upon one of the workers to reveal to him where the bags had been hidden. After the *Mashgiach* promised not to reveal how he obtained the information, the *goy* told him, “If you go into the innermost part of the trailer, you will find the cartons of bags behind boxes of meat.” The *Mashgiach* immediately ran to the supervisor and screamed at him, “Hadn’t I instructed you not to touch those cartons”, to which the supervisor replied, “I acted under the direct instructions of the owner (PM Holding) to place them in the trailer.”

The *Mashgiach* then ordered the supervisor to return them immediately, to which the *goy* replied, “You may control anything relating to International Glatt, but you have no authority over the Zalman’s label. If you wish to take matters into your own hands, I suggest that you remove the cartons from the trailer yourself – but I will advise the owner of your actions.” This terrifying story ended with the *Mashgiach* removing the cartons of plastic bags from the trailer at his own peril. [It was eventually discovered that the Zalman’s plastic bags bearing the Star-K imprint were routinely ordered and received directly by the *goyim*.]

At this point, the *Rabbonim* decided to summon Rabbi Heinemann to an emergency meeting to discuss this matter. The *Rabbonim* confronted Rabbi Heinemann with the entire shocking series of events, to which he had two answers: (1) “I will look into the matter to determine if the *goy* had intentionally violated regulations or if it was merely an honest mistake”, and (2) “One must be aware that, in practice, just as the plastic bags bearing the International Glatt markings are “yours”, the bags bearing the Zalman’s brand name and the Star-K belong to PM Holding. As such, the *goy* acted correctly.”

The *Rabbonim* were stunned by these two responses. As to the first statement, the *Rabbonim* were incredulous as to how the actions of the *goy* could be open to question, for if he were to be “believed”, it would be tantamount to giving him more credence than the *Mashgiach* on whom the entire Star-K *Hashgacha* was supposedly based. As to the second

statement, could anything be more foolhardy than a respectable *Rov* continuing to grant a *Hechsher* to a *goy*, especially after seeing the results of such an arrangement. The *goy* was the acknowledged master over the very seals that guaranteed the *Kashrus* of the meat, and yet the *Rov* defended himself from the debacle that had almost taken place by confirming the *goy's* control of the seals – "The *goy* was correct!"

The *Rabbonim* left the meeting with Rabbi Heinemann far more disillusioned by it than by the original events involving the *goyim*. They could not believe that any *Rov* was capable of making such ludicrous statements. Indeed, *Chazal* tell us that a person may fully comprehend his errors only after falling victim to them, and Rabbi Heinemann had already fallen victim to the results of virtually the same approach on a previous occasion. A number of years ago, the Star-K had granted a *Hechsher* to Shalom caterers, owned by non-kosher Overlea Caterers in Baltimore. This led to many Jews being fed non-Kosher food. As a direct result of this tragedy, *Hagaon HaRav* Moshe Feinstein *ztl*, the leading *posek* of our generation, felt it necessary to reconfirm the original edict of the *Agudas Horabonim* against granting such *Hashgachos*, and to personally sign his name to the edict. It is therefore inconceivable how the same *Rov* would persist in endangering thousands of G-d fearing Jews in the same manner.

2. It did not take long for the *Mashgichim* to come upon another serious infraction. The *Mashgichim* found that the "double seals"¹¹ on a number of boxes of Zalman's meat had been broken and the boxes opened. Since the Kosher seals on the meat had been compromised, the *Rabbonim* referred to matter to the Star-K – this time, in writing:

¹¹מעשה "רב" זה, מזכיר לנו הלכה מפורשת בשר"ע (יר"ד סימן קל"א) ומקורו בש"ס (ע"ז עמו' ס"א) בדין ישראל המטהר יינו של גוי, בביתו של גוי, דהיינו שהישראל מייצר יין כשר בבעלות הגוי והנמצא ברשותו של הגוי, כדי למוכרו לישראל, דע"פ הלכה אין מועיל "חותם בתוך חותם", משום דב' מצבים אלו אין הגוי "מירתת" (מתירא) לזייף את החתימות כלל וכלל, משום דהיין יינו והבית ביתו. במקרה זה מחייבת ההלכה משגיח "יושב ומשמר" או לכה"פ "יוצא ונכנס". ובמצב שידוע לגוי איזה "סיבה" שהיא שבגללה המשגיח אינו יכול להגיע פתע פתאום, כבמקרה דידן שהמפעל נמצא בעיר רחוקה שאין בה יהודים, דודאי אין הגוי מתירא ב"יום השבת" שהמשגיח יגיע לפתע ויכנס למפעל, שאז מרגיש הגוי חפשי לעשות ב"רשותו" ככל אות נפשו עם ב' החותמות על הבשר Zalman's השייך "לר". וכבר הורו רוב הפוסקים דהלכה זו ד'ישראל המטהר יינו של גוי" לא נפסקה רק לגבי יין נסך, אלא גם לענין בשר או גבינה וכיו"ב (ראה ליקוט דעת הפוסקים בענין זה בספר "כשרות והכשרים בהלכה" סי' ג פרק א).

Monday, *Parshas Pekudei* 29 Adar II, 5763

Rabbi Moshe Heinemann
Satr-K Kosher Certification

We wish to bring to your attention that, once again, we have been confronted with a serious problem with PM Holding concerning meat under the "Levitz" label that bears your *Hechsher*. We wish to reiterate our discomfort with the arrangement, which you had confirmed at our last meeting, whereby PM Holding considered itself in control of the Kosher meat, and therefore the exclusive master of the packaging material and labels even though they bear the symbols of *Kashrus*. As we had discussed, one may not remain indifferent to such a situation, nor ignore it, for it goes to the heart of the *Kashrus* program that we administer. At our meeting, you assured us that we were of the same mind and recognized that such a situation could not be allowed to continue, and that you would immediately address this matter. Nonetheless, we are distressed that it seems that the same issue has again reared its ugly head, whereby the company does as it pleases, and behaves in a manner with which we have no experience, to wit:

1. They have ordered packaging material bearing the Star-K certification without our knowledge, a situation that obviously undermines the integrity of your entire *Hechsher* and the Kosher status of the meat emanating from this factory.
2. On numerous occasions, *Mashgichim* have found containers of meat bearing the Levitz label whose original packaging had been opened and seals broken – a situation for which the company was unable to provide a satisfactory explanation.
3. A major *Kashrus* concern has been raised involving changes in the manner by which the company has begun to wash the carcasses after *Shechitah*, which have been implemented without any consultation or discussion with the *Kashrus* authorities. In the past, only cold water was used. Recently, however – and without any consultation – the company has begun to use extremely hot water, at times reaching 150°F at the source, and 115°F as it came into contact with the meat.

We are confident that you will recognize the gravity of these issues, come to the appropriate conclusions, and take the corrective actions necessary to resolve them. We therefore respectfully request an urgent meeting with you to immediately restructure the arrangements at the plant. Please contact us as soon as possible to arrange a time for this meeting that is mutually convenient.

אנחנו מאמינים כי אתם תזהו את חומרת הבעיות, תגיעו למסקנות מתאימות ותנקטו את האמצעים הנדרשים כדי לפתור אותן. לפיכך נבקש מכם באדיבות לקיים פגישה דחופה עימנו כדי לשקול מחדש את הארגון באתר. אנא יצאנו לפגישה כזו ככל שניתן בהקדם האפשרי.

To date, no response has been received to this letter

A full year has elapsed since this letter was sent, and neither Rabbi Heinemann nor Dr. Pollak have felt it necessary to respond to the alarming dangers emanating from their *Hashgacha*.

However, when Rabbi Heinemann visited the slaughterhouse several week after this letter was sent, he asked the *Mashgiach*, "What was all the commotion going on here?" The *Mashgiach* responded, "For Heaven's sake, if *goyim* are able to take the seals designating your Star-K Kosher certification and move them as they please, then the entire *Hashgacha* is under their control. If this is true, *K'vod ha'Rav*, over what do you expect us to be *Mashgichim*?"

To this question, Rabbi Heinemann chuckled and said, "*Es is nisht azoy geferlich* - It is not so terrible..."

3. It is inconceivable – but true – that the *Rav ha'Machshir* of the Star-K himself called the owner of International Glatt and said, "You are businessman, why do you waste money to maintain a second *Bodek Chutz* (one who checks the lungs after they have been removed from the animal), when he does not increase the yield of *Glatt* animals sufficiently to justify his salary?"

Such a question befits that from a butcher to a salesman – not from a *Rav b'Yisroel* to a company that must adhere to the demands of the *Rabbonim* that his meat satisfy the highest *Kashrus* standards without question, and without leniencies and exceptions predicated upon business pressures.



The Deterioration – From Bad to Worse

Upon seeing the reaction – or lack of same – of his new *Rav ha'Machshir* to the objections of the *Rabbonim*, the non-Jewish owner of the slaughterhouse also began to sing a new tune. He repeated his complaint that the *Bodkim* were not producing enough "Glatt" meat, and called upon his *Rav ha'Machshir* to assist him in pressuring the *Bodkim* to be less "stubborn" in their "interpretation" of the *Halachic* requirements of *Glatt* Kosher meat. Rabbi Heinemann, did indeed shamefully do the bidding of the *goy*, and personally stood at the side of the *Bodek Chutz* at his worktable, urging and pressuring him to declare more animals as *Glatt*. In the end, however, he was forced to end his efforts, for as he questioned the reason why any given animal was declared *Treif* (or non-*Glatt*), the *Bodek* showed him the *sirchos* (lesions) on the lung or problems with the *Bais ha'Kosos* (reticulum) that clearly invalidated the animal.

The mere fact that an important *Rav* would attempt to sway the *Bodek* and question his decisions – in the very presence of the *goy* – served to reinforce the brazenness of the *goy* in trying to undermine the authority of the *Shochtim* and *Bodkim*, as well as that of the *Rabbonim*. Such blatant interference with the *Shochtim* and *Bodkim* had been unheard of in all the previous years, when even the smallest request relating to *Kashrus* was fulfilled with the utmost respect, for they understood that it came from the "Bible". Their willingness to meet these requests extended even to the offer to pay for the building of the *Mikvah* in the slaughterhouse. This relationship, however, changed abruptly from the bitter moment that Rabbi Heinemann entered the facility, degenerating step by step. Each request was now met with an offer to "compromise", for they now realized from their new *Rav ha'Machshir* that one may compromise with the Bible – an approach that had previously been unthinkable.

In the end, the secret was unveiled, and the true agenda of Rabbi Heinemann and Dr. Pollak was starkly revealed in a registered letter from the president of PM Holding to International Glatt. In this letter, the company advised the *Rabbonim* that it was immediately suspending Rabbi Yakob's right to enter the facility. The letter claimed that the company came to this decision for "business reasons", based on serious legal issues relating to the *Shochtim* – concerns that were based upon a despicable act of *Mesirah* perpetrated by the leaders of the Star-K.¹² In truth, however, one cannot

¹² A meeting was held in Baltimore, attended by the following: Dr. Avrohom Pollak, President of the Star-K, together with his advisor, Rabbi Yonah Gewirtz; R' Yaakov Chaimovitz and R' Shmuel Szmulewicz of International Glatt; and Mr. Curry Roberts, president of PM Beef and other members of his company. During this meeting, Dr. Pollak publicly raised his voice and proclaimed, "Mr.

deny the fact that the basis of this decision was one of "Kashrus" – to finally gain total control over all aspects of the Kosher program at PM Holding.

On *Erev Shabbos ha'Gadol*, a second letter was received from the president of PM Holding. In it, he reiterated that the basis of his decision was that, according to his understanding, Rabbi Yakob lacked the qualifications necessary to be the company's *Rav ha'Machshir*. The letter contained a long list of such qualifications, none of which bore any relationship to qualifications in *Kashrus*.

Most telling, however, was the comment made by the president at the end of the letter, in which he summarized his point with utmost clarity: "We are looking for a *Rav ha'Machshir* who supports the PM Windom Operations in every way as a virtual member of the management team."

There is no question that such a *goyishe* perception of the attributes and qualifications of a *Rav ha'Machshir* could only have been the product of the lessons they learned from Rabbi Heinemann and Dr. Pollak, as is apparent from reading the letter.

The *Rabbonim Hamachshirim* saw the end had been reached and they realized that, under such conditions, it would be now impossible to sustain the exemplary *Shchitah* at PM Holding such as they had for the past twelve years. The entire system had now been corrupted by the leaders of the Star-K organization, to the point where the company had the audacity to forbid Rabbi Yakob *shlit"e*, the *Rav Hamachshir*, from entering the gates of the factory. Obviously the *Rabbonim* and the entire *Schechita* crew were left with no choice other than to immediately terminate the *Shchitah*.

It should be noted that the decision to cease *Shechting* at Windom was a particularly painful and bitter one, even if it ultimately proves to be only temporary until the situation is resolved. For we are not talking merely about closing a business – we are dealing with the livelihoods of dozens of innocent *Shochtim*, *Bodkim*, *Menakrim*, and *Mashgichim*. We are also ultimately dealing with the survival of a holy *Kehillah*, a vibrant *Bais Medrash*, and a committed group of scholars, a pure *Talmud Torah*, and a holy *Mikvah*. How well may we understand the words of *Chazal*, "A butcher has a partnership with *Amalek!* (*Kiddushin* 82a)"



Roberts, are you aware that all members of the crew of *Shochtim* working in your facility lack proper immigration documents and pay no taxes?" Aside from the fact that making such a statement is a grave violation of the *Halachos* of *Mesirah* (informing on a fellow Jew), it was a purely spiteful tact in that it was irrelevant to PM Holding – the *Shochtim* were employees of the *Kashrus* organization and not the company.

In Summary

Whose heart would not tremble and be saddened by such tragic events, events that should shake the entire *frum* Jewish community in general – and those involved in *Kashrus* in particular – to their very core. The phenomenon of an Orthodox Rabbi participating in such egregious disdain of *Kashrus* norms has no precedent in the past fifty years. Indeed, it raises the dark specter of a return to the horrific standards of *Kashrus* endemic to the *Treifene America* of years gone by, standards that were won after the Second World War only by the sacrifice of the devout and pious refugees from Europe who brought with them *Torah*, the fear of G-d, and *Chassidus*.

When news of these events began to spread throughout the Jewish community, numerous individuals and organizations involved in *Kashrus* requested further information about what had transpired, as well as accurate information as to the *Kashrus* of Zalman's meats. During these discussions, it became apparent that the actions of the Star-K in Windom were, by no means, an isolated phenomenon. Rather, each recounted his own personal bitter experience with the Star-K. One would recount problems with the unacceptable *Shchitah* of fowl¹³, another with *Matzah* and wine, another with

¹³ This issue related to the former *Shchitah* at Falls Poultry, as described in the startling report prepared by Rabbi Avrohom Rubin *shlit"ta* from Rechovos, based on a visit he made to the facility at the request of the OU (*Shvat* 5753 [1993]). Rabbi Rubin visited the factory on a day when it was processing chickens under the Star-K certification, and Rabbi Heinemann was personally in attendance. The *Shochtim* confided that they were very unhappy with the lack of coordination and leadership of the *Hashgacha*. Among the points noted was that conveyor belt on which the birds hung during *Shchitah* was unsteady – a situation that would allow the birds to flap wildly and thus require the *Shochtim* to struggle to restrain them in order to perform a proper *Shchitah*. Such a situation would create a number of serious *Kashrus* concerns. First, *Shechting* under strenuous conditions tends to cause *Drasa* – undue pressure on the knife that will invalidate the *Shchitah*. Second, it is difficult for the *Schochet* to concentrate on the *Shchitah* while fighting with the birds, especially since he would be concerned that the birds may injure him directly or by hitting the knife. To present a more acceptable picture, however, the *Shochtim* advised Rabbi Rubin that a subterfuge had been arranged on the day of his visit to deceive him – only *weak* birds were being used for *Shchitah* on that day, so that this problem should not be so pronounced. Normally, much stronger birds were *Shechted*, which created far more problems than those observed on the day of the inspection.

*Bishul Akum*¹⁴, and another with non-Kosher food being served on a cruise.¹⁵ The stories go on and on, well beyond the scope of this report, each unique in its details but eerily similar in their form.

One must wonder, of course, how the Star-K *Kashrus* organization persists in foisting such corruption on the *Kashrus* community. The answer, however, seems to be “a good offense is the best defense”. It seeks to maintain an aura of “stringencies” about itself by periodically declaring perfectly acceptable products as “*Halachically* unacceptable”. For instance, this spring the Star-K announced that G&G Poultry was unacceptable, since it used natural rock salt for *Kashering*, and therefore prohibited all of the catering establishments under their certification from using such poultry. A few weeks later, they repeated this declaration against product from Vineland Poultry. Ironically, the use of rock salt was *mandated* by personages none other than the *Satmar Rebbe zt”l*, as did the respected

¹⁴ Rabbi Heinemann’s “innovation” in the *Halachos* of *Bishul Akum* involves placing a light bulb that is lit by a Jew inside an oven, which he considers as if the Jew is participating in the cooking by dint of the heat of the bulb. This approach has been soundly rejected by such authorities as Rav Wosner of *Beni Brak*, who calls it a travesty on the *Halachos* of *Bishul Akum*. In addition, Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach *zt”l* ties the tragedy of intermarriage that has befallen *Klal Yisroel* of late to laxness in observance of the laws of food prepared by non-Jews (*Stam Yaynam*, *Pas Akum*, and *Bishul Akum*), including “innovations of Rabbis in America who espouse unacceptable leniencies in this regard”.

¹⁵ Approximately 22 years ago, hundreds of Jews fell victim to eating non-Kosher food on a cruise that was certified by the Star-K. When summoned to a *Din Torah* at the *Agudas Horabonim* over this affair, Rabbi Heinemann responded that it was an “accident beyond his control”. The *Rabbonim* responded that this was not an “accident” but rather “negligence”, for the Star-K had 5 years earlier had also violated the edict of the *Agudas Horabonim* forbidding granting a *Hechsher* to a company that handles both Kosher and non-Kosher food (which was the proximate case of this fiasco). Rabbi Heinemann’s response 5 years earlier had been to dismiss the edict as obsolete, and thus did not feel bound by it. However, when the matter came to the attention of *Hagaon Harav Moshe Feinstein zt”l*, he demanded that a copy of the “old” edict be brought to him, to which appended his fresh signature along with the date – 20 *Adar* 5742 (1982) – to show that this edict was not “obsolete” (see also *Igros Moshe Y.D.* III:18).

אגודת הרבנים דארצות הברית וקנדה
THE UNION OF ORTHODOX RABBIS
OF THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA
235 EAST BROADWAY, NEW YORK, NY 10002

ד"ס

תקנת אגודת הרבנים ע"ד מכירת בשר כשר ונבלה ביחד

חבא לקמן נדפס בספר היובל של אגודתנו משנת תרפ"ח, דף צ"א :
בעידה הרע"ץ נתקבלה החלטה לפורסם בעתונים כי הכשר אשר יתן
מאזנה רב לבתי עשי אשר המכור בשר כשר ונבלה ביחד הרי זה
טרפה, וצריכים להרהר גם אחרי המכשר.

ובדף קי"א בספר הנ"ל נדפס :

העידה השנתית (תרפ"ץ) של אגודת הרבנים מאשרת את התקנה
הישנה כי בתי החרושה של טרפה אשר יש להם גם מחלקה של כשרה
על ידם או סמוך להם, הם אמורים ואין השגחה מעילה בהם, כי אין
אפשר להשיג שלא תצא מהם חקלית ומכשולים כאמודי טרפה ונבלה.

אנחנו הרבנים חתומי מטה מפרסמים בזה גלוי לכל, על דבר התקנה של אגודת
הרבנים מאז, שאסור לתת הכשר לבתי חרושת של בשר מעושה כשר השייכים לבעלי
בתי חרושת של טרפה, כי התקנה הזאת שנתקנה בכל חומר הדין למיגדר מילתא,
לאפרושי מאיסורא של הזיופים הרבים שנמצאו בתעשיות כאלה, הרי היא כוללת
כל מיני שיכות, הן על ידי שותפות עם מוכרי טרפות בגוף העסק, הן שותפות בכספים
על ידי "שעהרס", "קארפארישאנס" וכדומה. ואין לשום רב או ועד או ב"ד של
רבנים להקל בזה.
הכו"ח לשם האמת והצדק. ערב ר"ח אדר התרצ"ד.

נאם יוסף ראזין
אב"ד דפאסיק סגן יו"ר אגה"ד

נאם אליעזר זילבר
יו"ר אגה"ד

ועוד רבנים מחאו בנוסחאות שונות

כ' אדר תשמ"ב

מישה פיינשטיין נשיא אגודת הרבנים

*This announcement was publicized in various newspapers in 1934
signed by 53 prominent rabbis, and was republished after
Hagaon Harav Moshe Feinstein ob"m reaffirmed it in 1982*

INJUNCTION OF THE AGUDAS HORABONIM CONCERNING THE SALE OF BOTH KOSHER AND NON-KOSHER MEAT

אגודת הרבנים דארצות הברית וקנדה

THE UNION OF ORTHODOX RABBIS
OF THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

235 EAST BROADWAY, NEW YORK, NY 10002

[The following was printed in the *Jubilee Edition* of our organization in the year 5688 (1928), page 91.]

In our assembly of 5676 (1916), a resolution was passed to publicize through the press that a *Hashgacha* granted by any Rabbi to factories that sell both Kosher and non-Kosher meat at the same time is invalid, and that *all* such meat must be considered *Treif* (non-Kosher). In addition, one must further question the integrity of the Rabbi granting such a *Hechsher*.

[On page 111 of the above *Jubilee Edition*, it further states]

The annual meeting of the *Agudas Horabonim*, held in 5686 (1926), reaffirms the previous injunction that factories that contain a Kosher division adjacent to or near them are prohibited, and any *Hashgacha* granted to them is invalid because, in such situations, errors are certain to occur that would cause non-Kosher meat to be sold as Kosher.

We, the *Rabbonim* signed below, hereby publicize and impress in all manner possible that the validity of the original decree implemented by the *Rabbonim* of the earlier generations is undiminished, and that it is forbidden to grant a *Hashgacha* to factories (producing Kosher smoked meats) that are associated with those that produce non-Kosher meat products. This injunction was instituted with the utmost severity in order to prevent the corruption of *Kashrus* prevalent in such situations. It must be understood that such "associations" between Kosher and non-Kosher enterprises include all manner of relationships, whether they be in the form of partnerships in the actual processing or purveyance of non-Kosher meat, financial partnerships through shares or incorporation, or similar subterfuges. No Rabbi or *Va'ad* or *Beth Din* of Rabbis may be lax in this matter.

In the name of truth and justice, our signatures are affixed on *Erev Rosh Chodesh Adar* 5694 (1934).

Rabbi Eliezer Silver

President of the Agudas Horabonim

Rabbi Yosef Rosen

Vice-President of the Agudas Horabonim

20 Adar 5742

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein*

*Hagaon Harav M. Feinstein's reaffirmation of this decades-old Takanah, was in response to Rabbi Heinemann's justifying to Agudas Harabanim in 1982, his awarding the Star-K certification to the kosher division of a non-kosher caterer, by claiming that the old Takanah no longer applies. Many Jews ended up eating *Treif* as a result of this Star-K certification.

Posek the Kapisher Rav zt"l, author of "*Mishnas Yaakov*" (Vol III, glosses on the *Yoreh Deah* 69). Indeed, the *Mishnas Yaakov* cites authorities who question the efficacy of the evaporative salt commonly used for salting (see also *Darkei Teshuvah* 69:74). Even more disconcerting to note is that, for years, Rabbi Heinemann's own *Galil* chickens (*Shechted* at Empire) have been processed using the very same rock salt that he now held was unacceptable! Has the salt that had been used for thousands of years suddenly become unacceptable to the Star-K?

Unfortunately, this indeed seems to be the source of their success, as summed up in the words of *Rabbeinu Nissim* in his *Viduy ha'Gadol* before *Yom Kippur*: "I have forbidden what you permit and permitted what You forbid." It would seem that both of these transgressions are related, for by succeeding in one, a *Rav ha'Machshir* may succeed in the other.

The bitter reality of this entire situation is that it has the potential to lower the level of *Kashrus* to the depths endemic in America over sixty years ago. Should such grave infractions go unchallenged, Heaven forbid, we will indeed return to the *Treifene America* of old, and all of the great advances in *Kashrus* over the past half century will evaporate.

The foregoing story is nothing but the vile handiwork of the *Satan*. It is therefore incumbent upon all G-d fearing Jews to check the *Hechsher* of each piece of food before it enters their mouths – and especially meat products – to know if the *Hechsher* on the product is indeed a reliable one. Indeed, *Chazal* admonish us that "before we allow *Torah* to enter our bodies we should pray that inappropriate delicacies should not precede them". May the Almighty guard us from falling victim to eating non-Kosher foods, for the entire basis of the *Kedushas Yisroel* (the holiness of Israel) is dependent upon it.



AN OPEN LETTER

Pesach Sheni, 5764 (May 5, 2004)

To Rabbi Heinemann and Dr. Pollak of the Star-K from Rabbi Yakob's disciples, in response to their "invitation" to return to work:

Let it be publicly known that Rabbi Eliezer Yakob *shlit"á* is a renowned expert in matters of *Shchitah*, *Bedikah*, and *Nikur*. He has written many valuable *seforim* on these subjects, including *Siach Yitzchok ve'Yalkut Eliezer*, *Noheg Katzon Yosef*, some 200 issues of *Mishmeres ha'Kashrus*, *Rov Tevuos Bekoach Shor*, for which he has received the approbation of the giants of Jewry.

These include contemporary *Poskim*, as well as many from the previous generations, have valued his contributions in the field. He has approbations from all the major *Menakrim* of previous generations, and his expertise is recognized by Rav Elyashiv *shlit"á* and Rav Wosner *shlit"á*, among others. He is further recognized as an expert resource in these fields by *Va'adei Kashrus* throughout the world.

Rabbi Yakob is an exemplary individual, kind in spirit and generous to all. He has personally seen to the training of over one hundred illustrious *Shochtim* and *Bodkim*, employed by many of the *Kashrus* organizations in *Eretz Yisroel* and abroad. He publishes the weekly *Mishmeres Hakashrus*, full of information and insights into *Shchitah*, *Nikur*, and *Bedikah*. It is he who established the *Kehillas ha'Shubi"m* – the *Kehillah* for *Shochtim* and *Bodkim* – in the town of Hartley, Iowa, and it is he whom we look to as our *Rov*.

Until the involvement of the Star-K, we lived in peace and security, and the community blossomed spiritually along with its institutions – its *Bais Medrash*, its *Cheder*, and its *Mikvah*.

Rabbi Yakob's decision to decline to grant a *Hechsher* to a *goy* was undoubtedly correct, for it followed the opinion of the *Gedolei Yisroel* to whom the issue was presented. They had unanimously forbidden the granting of such a *Hechsher*. The Star-K, however, nevertheless desired to grant such a *Hechsher*, and Rabbi Yakob's decision thereby incurred their wrath.

The decision to dismiss Rabbi Yakob from his position was obviously based on a joint decision by the *goy*, Rabbi Heinemann, and Dr. Pollak, a situation that was clear to all of the *Shochtim*. We therefore unanimously concluded that we could not work under a regime where the *goy* could control the *Hechsher*, and – with great *mesiras nefesh* (self-sacrifice) – we resigned. We believe we made

a public *Kiddush Hashem* by not participating in a certification of meat being granted to a *goy* by a *Rav* subservient to a *goy*.

Much more could be written regarding other shortcomings of the *Hechsher*, including *Hasogas G'vul* (infringing upon some else's territory – see below), on compromises in *Kashrus*, on the coercion of *Shochtim*, etc.

We have no interest in working in any place that is certified by Rabbi Heinemann, and let him not pretend that he is inviting us back. We therefore reiterate to the Star-K that we have no interest in working for a *goy* or for a Rabbi who certifies a *goy's* meat. The letter that you published is a deceitful confusion of the reality. The truth will come out.

Fortunate are you, Rabbi Yakob, that you were victimized for standing up on behalf of the *Torah* and the sanctity of *Kashrus* – to fulfill *Hashem's* admonition, "Distinguish between the defiled and the clean." We are taught that only a person who distinguishes between the Jews and the *goyim* can distinguish between the defiled and the clean, whereas one who fails to distinguish between Jews and *goyim* will fail to make the other distinction – and will mislead others with him.

In the name of all sixty *Shochtim*,

(-) Dovid Moshe Friedman

(-) Yehudah Freund

P.S. The reference to the prohibition of infringing on someone else's territory mentioned previously was not made solely with regard to the issue of our lost employment. Rather, it brings into question the entire efficacy of the Star-K certification, for the *Shchitah* of one who engages in such actions may be (at least suspect as) *Neveilah* (non-Kosher). Indeed, the *Bais Shlomo* (*Yoreh Dei'ah* 2:18) quotes a response by the *Ba'al Hatanya* concerning a *Shochet* or *Bodek* who infringes upon someone else's livelihood is called a *Rashah* – an wicked person – which is sufficient in and of itself to invalidate his *Shchitah*. In a similar vein, the *Divrei Chaim* (*Y.D.* 1:9) rules that should one *Shochet* deprive another of an established position, he is considered a *Rashah* and one may definitely not rely on his *Shchitah*. The *Divrei Chaim* subsequently reiterates this position (*Y.D.* 11:20), where he notes that one who transgresses this prohibition is considered a thief, and his *Shchitah* is therefore considered *Neveilah* - and whoever eats from his *Shchitah* is considered as if he had eaten *Neveilah*.

More recently, *Hagaon HaRav* Moshe Feinstein *zt"l* ruled in a similar case (*Igros Moshe C.M.* 11:40) that a one may not seek to displace a *Rov* from a *Hechsher* for which he enjoys a *Chazakah* (tenure), nor use any tactics to discredit him for such a purpose. He concludes that any *Hechsher* for *Shchitah* obtained in violation of such prohibitions may not be recognized under any circumstances.

We have therefore noted the issue of *Hasagas G'vul* to advise the public that – until such time as the matter is resolved in a reliable *Bais Din* – the meat produced under the cloud of such *Hasagas G'vul* has the *Halachic* status of *Safek Neveilah* – questionable *Kashrus*. Let Jews who are scrupulous in their observance of *Kashrus* be aware of this situation.

IGERES HA'SHUBI" M – A LAMENT OF THE SHOCHTIM

[We write this letter to unburden our hearts, to describe the pain that we feel at the destruction of the *Kehillah Ohel Shalom Tzvi*, and all that has transpired in Windom, Minnesota and Hartley, Iowa, and the *Shchitah* of International Glatt. We preface this letter by requesting Divine forgiveness if we stumble in our words or misspeak, for any such error is but a result of our deep sorrow and anguish.]

We, the *Shochtim* and *Bodkim*, have been employed at these facilities as part of an operation that had been established over twelve years ago by the respected members of the Chaimowitz family – R' Yosef Leib and his son, Avrohom Yaakov – owners of International Glatt. They had found an ideal area in which to locate their meat processing operation, which enjoyed the *Hechsher* of Rav Shlomo Tzvi Stern *shlit" a*, *Av Bais Din* of Debrecin, as well as *BD"Z* "*Mishmeres l'Mishmeres*", comprising Rabbi Yitzchok Stein *shlit" a*, *Rav Av Bais Din* of Karlsburg, Rabbi Yitzchok Eliezer Yakob *shlit" a*, *Rosh Kollel Ohel Shalom l'Shchitah*, *Bedikah*, *v'Nikur* and *Rav of Bais Medrash Tevuos Shor*, and Rabbi Yaakov Zeida *shlit" a*, *Dayan* of Viznitz in Williamsburg.

At that time, Rabbi Yitzchok Eliezer Yakob *shlit" a* was sent to review the facility and determine its suitability for meeting the most stringent standards of *Kashrus* requirements.

Tremendous planning and effort preceded the opening of the facility, and great trepidation was expressed as to how to maintain a community of devout and pious Jews in an area far from Jewish communities and missing the very basic requirements for a Jewish life. There was no *Bais Medrash*, no *Mikvah*, Kosher food, *Chinuch*, *Shiurim* – in summary, a wilderness completely devoid of every accoutrement of a traditional, non-compromising Jewish lifestyle.

Similarly, the physical plant required a major overhaul to be able to handle the requirements of a Kosher operation. Issues relating to *Kashrus*, *Shchitah*, *Nikur*, and *Hashgacha* – literally hundreds of details – were noted and brought to the attention of

the owners to make the changes needed to create an exemplary Kosher establishment meeting the highest *Kashrus* standards without any compromise.

The *Rabbonim Ha'Machshirim* recognized the gravity of their responsibly, and concluded that they could not allow the establishment of such a processing center unless they could create an oasis of *Yiddishkeit* – a complete *Kehillah* with all that it would imply – to allow devout and pious Jews to live in a lifestyle conducive to their commitments to *Torah* and *Yiras Shomayim*. Slowly, and with many *Tefilos* and the blessings and support of the *Gedolei ha'Dor*, their goal was realized and the establishment of the *Kehillah* was realized. From the very first day of the opening of the *Kehillah*, it included a beautiful and spacious *Bais Medrash*, a *Mikvah*, a school for the *Chinuch* of the children of the young families whose fathers worked at the facility. In addition to providing generously for the spiritual needs of the community, the Chaimowitz family did not stint on providing for its members physical comfort, for they realized the difficulties the families would have in being transplanted to such a strange and distant environment.

Just as the *Rabbonim* had demanded the highest *Kashrus* standards for the physical plant, so too did they make similar demands on the staff that would partake in this holy work. Each member of the community was carefully selected by the *Rabbonim*, insisting that his piety be first and foremost amongst his qualifications. His entire allegiance must be to *Hashem*, be scrupulous in adhering to the smallest iota of *Halacha* – it was only in this manner that the *Rabbonim* succeeded in establishing a sacred *Kehillah* dedicated to *Hashem* and the keeping of His *Torah*. Every *Shabbos* boasted five *Shiurei Torah* in *Gemorrhah* and *Chassidus*.

Everyone was aware that, despite working arduously during the day, it was incumbent upon them to enter the *Bais Medrash* every evening to ensure a steady regimen of *Torah*. Rabbi Yakob would constantly inquire as to whether we had a *Chavrusa* (study partner in *Torah*), or whether we felt we were growing and excelling in our *Torah* learning. Such a situation – where the *Rav ha'Machshir* himself takes a personal interest in the spiritual growth and physical well-being of his *Shochtim* – is virtually unheard of anywhere else in the world. We felt that we could always turn to our mentor – to someone who took our best interests to heart, felt our pain, shared our hardships, and rejoiced

in our growth. Such concern bred a *Kehillah* unified in purpose and deed. Arrangements were made for our *Kehillah* to be visited by esteemed *Rabbonim* during the days of *Shovvevi"m* as well as other times of the year to provide us with *Shiurim* in important *Halachos* and to give us spiritual support, as is commonplace in other Jewish communities. And although such *Shiurim* may not be conducted as often as they should in other *Kehillos*, no effort or expense was spared to ensure that the spiritual needs of the members of the *Kehillah* were amply met.

One should not make light of the difficulties inherent in maintaining a proper Jewish life in such far-away places, so different from the comfortable *Yiddishe* surrounds in which many of us find ourselves ensconced. Those familiar with other outposts of *Shchitah* throughout the world have told us that it is virtually unheard of for the owners of such enterprises to take such a personal interest in ensuring that all of the needs of the community – spiritual as well as physical – are met in such a gracious manner. We have often heard our *Rabbonim* express the sentiment that the entire project would not be worth it if even a single member found that it diminished from his *Yiras Shomayim* – even if they were due to unforeseen circumstances that were no one's fault.

We wish to reiterate, however, that the purpose of these statements is not to denigrate or cast aspersions on the situations at other slaughterhouses. However, at this juncture it is critical to let the truth be known – our success in upholding the punctilious standards of the *Shchitah* was only possible in the merit of the investment in our spiritual needs, an investment that was no less important or intensive than that invested in meeting our physical needs.

Even while we were involved in our work in the factory, the *goyim* were fully aware that any order or request issued by a *Menaker*, *Mashgiach*, or *Shochet* would be honored and implemented immediately and without compromise. All Jewish workers in the factory were treated with the utmost respect, as befitting the holy work with which they were entrusted.

If one should ask why such deference was so critical, one should realize that it was the compromise of such a relationship that allowed the destruction of our special *Shchitah* virtually overnight. In the two years since the Rabbi from Baltimore (the head of the Star-K organization) came to our facility, he succeeded in ruining

all of the goodness that had been built up over the years, and he destroyed the excellent working relationship that had existed between the non-Jewish management and International Glatt. From that point on, all requests were met with ridicule, and all issues that we raised relating to *Kashrus* were ignored – indeed, they were greeted with derision and suspect. [We wish to emphasize that this discussion is unrelated to any business issues outstanding between the company and International Glatt, for we have no involvement in such matters. We can only describe what we saw and felt while we were working.]

Whereas before the advent of the Star-K involvement the management understood that all of our requests would be met and maintained for they were critical to *Kashrus*, the arrival of the Star-K brought with it a difficulty in receiving any cooperation, to the point where we needed to involve Rabbi Yakob personally in every request. Even then, our needs were not met until after much aggravation and effort on his part. The excellent relationship that had been built up had now evaporated.

Anyone involved in this type of work recognizes that questions and issues arise on a daily basis, and cooperation with the employees of the company is essential for the *Mashgiach* to do his job well. From the day that the Star-K entered the facility and set the *goyim* against us, however, the difficulties in performing our holy duties increased seven-fold – all in the name of making money.

The Star-K's involvement brought new allegations against us on a daily basis, many of which involved true *Mesirah*. Such attacks were clearly intended to harm us, for it is clear that making such accusations in the face of *goyim* can only bring about the destruction of lives and livelihoods, taking the bread out of the mouths of innocent Jewish families.

One is well aware of the declaration made over two hundred years ago, prohibited the owner of an animal from being present during its *Shchitah*, lest he exert undue influence over the *Shochet* in determining its Kosher status. In the world of *Shchitah* today, this edict prohibits anyone with a financial stake in a meat processing operation from having any involvement whatsoever with the *Shochtim*, *Bodkim*, or others involved in maintaining the *Kashrus* of the meat. This edict was signed by all of the *Gedolei ha'Dor*, including the *Yeshuos Yaakov zt"l*, the *Apta Rov zt"l*, the *Bais Ephraim zt"l*, and many other sages. This edict was upheld

by our *Bais Din* of *Mishmeres l'Mishmeres*. In our factory, each employee knew that even if one of the owners of the company would make a request of them, they had no right even to respond, and that they should immediately turn to the *Rabbonim*, who would then deal with the matter. Such an approach is a critical feature of a *Hechsher*, and was instituted to guarantee that *Shochtim* and *Bodkim* could perform their work diligently without fear or intimidation. This edict had been honored with great sacrifice for hundreds of years.

At this point, one may wonder how Rabbi Heinemann could remain silent when hearing one of his colleagues remarking to a *goy* that, "the amount of *Glatt* meat would surely increase if the wages of the *Bodkim* were reduced"? Or, "if we would count out a *Shochet's* salary while he is *Shechting*, then certainly the *Neveilos* would come out *Kosher*"? Such comments, and many more like them, were uttered by these Jews – we heard them with our own ears, yet chose not to confront them. Whereas in the past, the *goy* knew that *Shchitah* and *Bedikah* were the exclusive province of the *Schechita staff* and he had no involvement in them, the new era heralded a situation where the *goy* would brazenly approach the *Shochtim* and *Bodkim* to instruct them how to practice their profession.

All of these actions served to undermine the fortress of *Kashrus* that had been erected with such tremendous effort. It tore at our very ability to perform our holy work with the diligence that *Hashem* would expect of us. Towards the end, we were repeatedly confronted with refusals on procedures upon which there had been agreement for years because the *goyim* knew that the Rabbi from Baltimore was also a great Rabbi who also knows the laws of *Kashrus*, and he did not require such procedures.

There was ultimately nothing left for the *Rabbonim* to do, but to come to the conclusion that it was impossible to continue under these conditions. Although the livelihoods of over sixty families lay in the balance, there was not even a hint of doubt that the time had come to say it is time to uproot what had been planted. So was the gravestone placed on the holy and glorious *Kehillah*, sixty families were cast to the merciless sea without so much as bread to feed their children, without seeing a resolution on the horizon. All of this transpired as the result of the efforts of those who, purely out of greed, would stop at nothing to destroy and obliterate all that had been built through the toil and effort over many years.

I have written this letter out of great anguish, over what was and no longer is. We believe that we had publicly sanctified *Hashem's* name with our decision to refuse to work under a Rabbi given to the control and influence of *goyim*, who had become partner with a *goy* to destroy all the good that had been realized.

How good is our fortune and how pleasant is our lot that He did not make us the same as they. I therefore affix my signature to this document, in full affirmation that everything written herein is true and accurate.

Iyar 5764, currently in Yerushalayim, formerly in Hartley, Iowa.

**In the name of all of the
*Shochtim, Bodkim, Menakrim, and Mashgichim,***

Chaim Meyer Fried

Shochet u'Bodek

60 UNIFIED VOICES RESPOND TO THE STAR-K

We the undersigned are responding to a widely-publicized letter by the Star-K Kosher Certification in which Dr. Avrom Pollak welcomes IGK and the entire rabbinical crew to return to work at the PM plant in Windom, Minn. The Star K- also encourages "the shoctim, bodkim and menakrim who lost their jobs due to the IGK walkout to contact STAR-K for employment opportunities."

Contrary to the letter, the shechita at the PM Windom plant was not a joint supervision/*shechita*. The shechita on behalf of International Glatt Kosher was supervised by Debrecin, Mishmeres L'Mishmeres and the Orthodox Union (OU) and NOT by the Star-K. The Star-K provided certification for PM's kosher brand - Zalman's. The walkout was not an IGK walkout but was a walkout by all the Debrecyn/Mishmeres L'Mishmeres shoctim, bodkim and menakrim in response to actions by PM in banning our Rav Hamachshir from the plant and at the same time applying unconscionable pressure on us to produce more glatt meat. We would never consider any type of work for the Star-K because we would never work for a certifying agency that provides hashgocha to a non-Jew who is involved in the production of both kosher and non-kosher meat. We would also not be interested in any "employment opportunities" with a certification that has shown a total disregard for kashrus standards at the PM plant.

We find it ironic and personally insulting for STAR-K to offer us "employment opportunities" as if we were hired hands to kill animals. We are G-d fearing shoctim and bodkim who take our responsibilities in providing the Jewish community with glatt kosher meats that meet the strictest standards. We see our work as "holy" work that enables us to provide for our families - not "employment opportunities" that put kashrus standards in jeopardy. We are extremely conscious of the fact that even the slightest lapse on our part affects the meat that ends up on the plate of an unsuspecting consumer. It is for that reason that we strictly adhere to the guidelines and safeguards set forth by rabbis of the previous and present generations, (*i.e. that one is not allowed to give a **hecsher** to a plant that produces kosher and non kosher meat, especially when the production, processing and marketing are controlled by a non Jew.*)

The Star-K on numerous occasions, knowingly, violated sacred kashrus guidelines that resulted in hundreds of unsuspecting consumers being fed *treif* meat. In the short time that we provided the Star-K, under Rabbi Heinemann, with *shechita* services, Rabbi Heinemann on numerous occasions pressured us to compromise on our standards. Our serious concerns regarding the kashrus of meat were dismissed by Rabbi Heinemann as “nonsense.” After observing Rabbi Heinemann’s careless and lax approach to kashrus and his total disregard for rabbinic guidelines and safeguards, we find it insulting for anybody to even think that we would even consider being participants in such an organization.

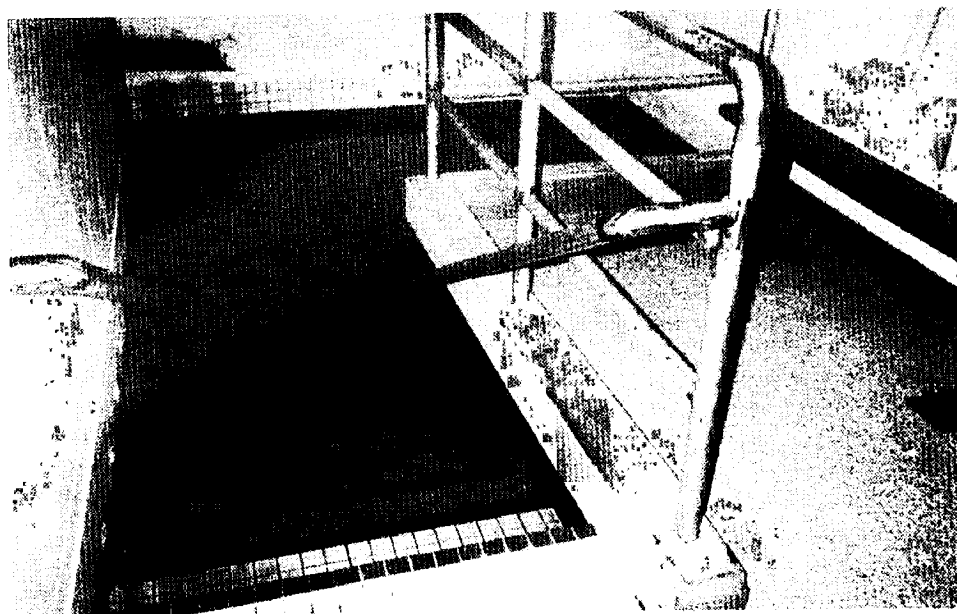
It should be clear that this was not an “organized IGK walkout” as the Star-K letter charged. It was a harsh and difficult decision we unanimously adopted after PM holdings, under the influence of Rabbi Heinemann, banned Rabbi Eliezer Jakob *S”hlita*. He was, and still is, our mentor and leader, a role model for the entire kashrus community to look up to and emulate. During the past 2-½ years of the existence of Zalman’s (PM’s kosher brand), Rabbi Jakob was our main support and guide in the face of tremendous and unrelenting pressure to compromise our high standards for glatt kosher *shechita*. Sadly, Rabbi Heinemann felt that Rabbi Jakob was an impediment to his providing his services (with the attendant financial rewards) to the non-Jewish owners of PM. Without the guidance and expert halachic opinions of Rabbi Jakob, we could no longer continue to work at PM despite the devastating impact on our livelihoods and our families..

Dr. Pollak, rather than continue in the service of your non-Jewish masters, we strongly urge you to review your actions and policies. We hope that you will think about making amends to Hashem and his people whom you have wronged by feeding them non-kosher or at best questionably kosher products by affixing a kashrus symbol on products that did not merit such certification.

Rabbi Heinemann, you and the Star-K have in the past caused Jews to eat *treif* meat based on your assurance that it is kosher while you chose to ignore the safeguards that were implemented to avoid these very occurrences. If a non-Jew witnesses a rabbi coercing *mashgichim* to accept a *sircha* as glatt or arguing their decision on a *neviela*, what guarantees are there that he won’t try to co-mingle *treif* meat with his kosher stock, where the profits are obviously much higher. After all, at this point the non-Jewish



Women's Mikveh in Hartley, Iowa



The Mikveh for Shochtim in the plant



*A visit to the Shoctim by Rabbi Shmuel Furst from Chicago,
Rabbi Yakob to his right*



*Rabbi Yakob (center) to his right Rabbi Tzvi Arye Biksenshan
who served as a Bodek Pnim*



*Rabbi Yakob during a Yom Iyun for Rabbis and Menakrim
in Montreal, Canada*

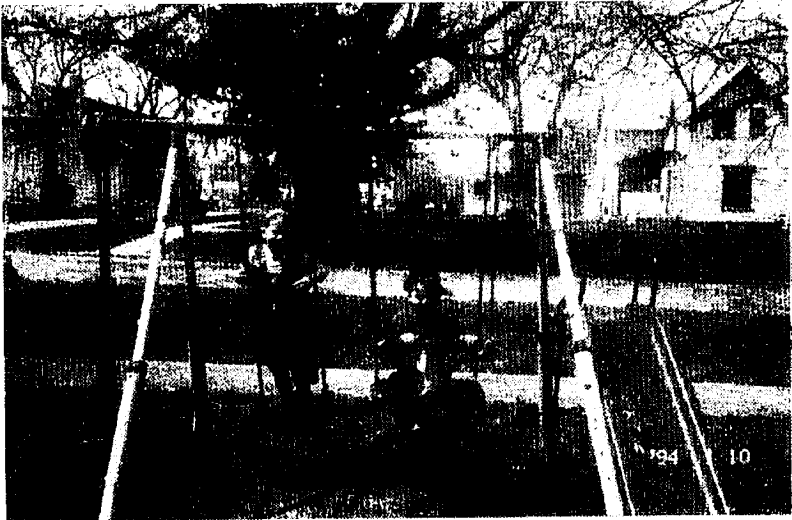


*Rabbi Yakob demonstrating the method of Nikur
to the Ziboi'er Rav Rabbi Y. M. Katz*

Also Expelled



Chanukah Party for the kindergarten at the Hartley Kehillah



The playground at the Talmud Torah in Hartley