

SPEAKING OF BOOKS

By Isaac Mozeson

Laws Of Pesach

The Torah world has been enriched with the publication of the two volumes Mitzvah Encyclopedia and Laws & Customs of Passover Matzoh.

These seforim have just been published by the well known author Rabbi Sholom Yehuda Gross, the Rabbi of Holmin and Cong. Magen Shaul and Rosh Mesivta of Yeshiva and Kollel Beis Yeshaya, Brooklyn, N.Y. who has already written and published forty-two (42) seforim to date. These volumes consist of: An extensive anthology from the works of the Poskim, from the books of the Baal Shem Tov and his disciples, and other holy books encompassing the basic and fundamental rules related to the baking and eating of matzoh on Passover, as well as other matters related to that festival. Also we learn many important lessons from the mitzvah of matzoh, which will guide us throughout the entire year.

The author clarifies many complex problems, citing the sources. He starts from the Gemara and includes the greatest poskim and Gedolim. It clarifies many of the practical aspects of making the matzoh.

These seforim indeed constitute a major work of scholarship, **halacha** and **hashkafa** perspective. We find a comprehensive guide for fulfilling the mitzvah of eating matzoh, according to halacha as set down by the greatest authorities. The sefer is divided into four parts: Laws And Measures, The Mitzvah of Matzoh, Festive Joy, and Soaked Matzoh.

The language is clear and easy to understand; it is presented with clarity and detail.

This is the most comprehensive work issued to date on the eating and baking of Matzoh. In addition, the author includes the customs of many of the great Gaonim and Tzadikim of previous generations concerning the baking of Matzohs.

The book includes a special chart showing the various opinions and contains measurements, both in grams and ounces (2) How the kezaisim should be eaten (3) how fast do they have to be eaten (4) until what time is one allowed to eat matzoh? (5) what to do if one cannot eat the required measurements? (6) what can be done if the time for eating has passed?

Another section contains wonderful stories of tzadikim of yesteryear, likened to angels, permeated with G-d's fear. Here will be found excellent material for parents and grandparents to relate to

their children at the Seder.

This all-encompassing sefer has the **haskama** approbation of the leading Torah authorities including Harov Hagoon Reb Moshe Feinstein **shlita**, who writes, "The author, a gaon, has organized and explained each topic with extensive erudition and profound understanding... This gaon, the author, may be relied upon since he has already displayed his ability in this field..."

Other **haskamoth** are from Rabbi Moshe Stern (Debrecyner Rav) who writes, "In this field a giant thesaurus such as this has never before been published."

The last part contains excerpts in English from the correspondence the author received from many of the greatest companies in the Drug and Pharmaceutical industry. These letters indicate that it is questionable whether most medicines are kosher for Pesach, and also sheds light on their standard of Kashrus during the whole year.

According to the new information contained in these letters from the various companies, it is evident that one should not rely on the various published lists concerning the Kashrus of various medicines for Pesach as issued by the various Rabbinical organizations or individual rabbis. These lists were compiled without the knowledge of the new information written by the companies to the author!

This information concerning medicines is of great importance for anyone contemplating the use of medicine on Pesach.

Besides considering the questionability of the medicinal ingredients contained in animal products or derivatives, Passover use brings with it a series of doubtful ingredients (from the kashrus standpoint), such as legumes (kitniyos), e.g., corn starch, etc.

These two volumes will enrich your knowledge about baking and eating matzoh in order to celebrate the holiday of Pesach according to the halacha.

Rabbi Sholem Yehuda Gross is the author of the following seforim: Nefesh Yeshaya — Kashruth — foods that are not permitted, in Hebrew and English. Zivchu Zivchei Tzedek — problems of glatt kosher in America. Simchas Sholom — the laws pertaining to chupa and marriage. Minchas Yehudah — about simlach and Cholov Akum. Oholei Yisroel — a guide for the Bungalows in the summer and mezuzos. Dvar Moshe — various customs and laws. Mnuchas Sholom — a guide concerning the preparation of food in the home, and Kdushas Yisroel — Hilchos Yichud, and many other works.

מבנות להטעי סחונות

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2012
**DU VIN CACHEK
IMPORTE DE ROUMANIE**

**PRODUIT SOUS LE CONTROLE D'UNE
DELEGATION DE HASSIDE BELZ**

Une collaboration entre les importateurs de vin Hasside Belz et le gouvernement roumain s'est ouverte pour l'importation dans le pays de vins roumains strictement cachet.

Afin de contrôler la production du vin destiné à Israël, une délégation de Hasside Belz est partie pour la Roumanie pour superviser la production et la mise en bouteilles.

Cette collaboration a commencé il y a six mois lorsqu'un importateur de vin israélien originaire de Roumanie, connaisseur et

degustateur de vin s'est adressé au Hasside Belz pour envoyer un de leurs rabbins en l'occurrence le rav Hayim Yehiel Roitman étudier les possibilités d'importation de vin roumain cachet.

Pour cela il fallait surveiller les vignes, la production du vin et la mise en bouteilles.

Toutes les obligations de la cachetouth ayant été possibles, il a été décidé d'importer le vin roumain.

Prochainement il y aura en Israël, du vin roumain sucré et demi sec.

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Special to The Jerusalem Post

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Owing to the absence from the definition of "eating house" of any reference to a hotel, it was arguable that a hotel owner could be refused a kashrut certificate for some reason not connected with kashrut in the kitchen or restaurant of the hotel — for example, because a lift in the hotel was operated on Shabbat, as had happened in the past.

The Hotels Association objected to a refusal of a kashrut certificate for such a reason, and, in order to meet that objection, the definition of eating house was amended by adding to it the words: "in the case of a hotel, the parts of the hotel in which persons are engaged in the preparation, or serving, of commodities for eating or drinking therein."

For the purposes of the Law, the following persons are authorized to grant a kashrut certificate: the Chief Rabbinical Council of Israel or a rabbi authorized by it; a local rabbi who officiates in a place in which the eating house is situated, the ritual slaughtering is performed, or a commodity is produced; and in the case of the Israel Defence Forces (in which, under the Kasher Food for Soldiers Ordinance, 5709-1948, Jewish soldiers must be provided with kasher food), including any branches of the security system and the owner of an eating house, or a producer, working for them — the chief rabbi of the IDF or a military rabbi authorized by him.

A "local rabbi" is defined in the Law as "a person who holds a written authorization from the Chief Rabbinical Council of Israel, is a rabbi in Israel and officiates as a town rabbi, a rabbi of a regional council, a moshav rabbi or a kibbutz rabbi."

The owner of an eating house may not represent it in writing as kasher unless a kashrut certificate has been granted to him. If he holds a certificate and the eating house is represented in writing as kasher he may not serve, or sell, in it commodities which are not kasher according to the law of the Tora.

A producer of a commodity may not indicate on any commodity which he has produced, or on its packing, that it is kasher, nor may he represent it as kasher in any publication or otherwise, unless a kashrut certificate has been granted to him. If such a certificate has been granted in respect of such a commodity, he may not market any such commodity which is not kasher according to the law of the Tora with an indication that it is kasher.

A person who engages in the sale of commodities to the public may not sell, or offer for sale, a commodity which is not kasher according to the law of the Tora representing it in writing as kasher.

Where a person is charged with an offence under any of the above provisions he will have a good defence if, in good faith, he sold, or served, any commodity, or used any ingredient, in respect of which a kashrut certificate had been given.

A person may not engage in ritual slaughtering representing that it is kasher unless a kashrut certificate has been granted to him by the Chief Rabbinical Council, or by a person authorized by it, or by a town rabbi for local needs.

A person who claims that he holds a kashrut certificate or a ritual slaughterer's certificate under the Law must prove his claim.

A producer, or an importer, of a commodity which bears an indication that it is kasher may not sell it, or offer it for sale, unless it bears the name of the granter of the kashrut certificate.

A person holding a kashrut certificate must exhibit it where it can be seen in his place of business, and he may not exhibit a kashrut certificate which is no longer valid.

SECTION 11 provides that, in granting a kashrut certificate, the rabbi may take into consideration only the laws of kashrut. Section 12 provides that a person who has been refused a kashrut certificate may lodge an objection to the refusal to the Council, and the decision of the Council on the objection must be given within 100 days.

In the draft Law, there was no provision limiting the time within which the Council must give its decision. According to MK Kulas, the above provision was added by the Committee in order to prevent delay by the Council in giving its decision. But there is no provision in the Law as to what will be the effect of a failure by the Council to give its decision within 100 days.

Section 11 applies only to the

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THE JERUSALEM
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306
KASHRUT SHADOW

*To the Editor
of In Jerusalem*

Sir, — You report (Burgers vs. rabbis, November 11) that Rabbi Frankel of the Jerusalem Rabbinat refuses to grant the Jerusalem branch of Burger Ranch a kashrut certificate because he fears that the certificate may be photocopied and used in other non-kosher branches and because supplies from the other non-kosher branches could be sneaked into Jerusalem.

Rabbi Frankel seems to have forgotten that there is a large chain of pizza

restaurants with non-kosher outlets throughout the country that has obtained kashrut certificates from the Jerusalem rabbinat for its two kosher branches in Jerusalem.

Rabbi Frankel's statements not only contradict rabbinat policy, but also cast an even darker shadow on what many people feel is an already shady business: the issuing of kashrut certificates.

DAVID KATZ and
STEVEN KURITZKY
Jerusalem Tora College
Givat Mordechai

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THE JERUSALEM
POST

26 יולי 1953

Knesset passes kashrut bill

By ARYEH RUBINSTEIN
Post Knesset Reporter

With some Alignment members voting with the coalition, the Knesset yesterday passed into law the bill prohibiting fraud in kashrut. Most Alignment members abstained.

The maximum punishment for describing food offered for sale as kosher when no kashrut certificate has been granted is a year in jail.

Earlier, the House rejected minority proposals by Haim Ramon (Alignment) and Mordechai Virshubski (Shinui), which would have permitted any ordained rabbi to issue a certificate of kashrut and which would have prohibited the rabbi from taking into account any factors other than the kashrut of the food itself and the Sabbath obser-

vance in the hotel or restaurant concerned.

Law Committee chairman Eliezer Kulas defended the provision in the bill limiting the authorized issuers of kashrut certificates to the Chief Rabbinical Council, rabbis authorized by it or the local rabbi. He said it was not the business of the Knesset to limit the discretion of the authorized rabbi in deciding on what basis to issue kashrut certificates.

Yitzhak Berman (Likud Liberals) did not vote. The Alignment members who voted against the bill included the Mapam wing, Yossi Sarid, and Shlomo Hillel.

The Alignment members who voted with the coalition included Arye Nahamkin, Rafael Suissa, Yitzhak Peretz.

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THE JERUSALEM
POST

2008
When is porn kosher?

'Orthodox' quote shuts down kitchen

The owners of Sefer Ve-Sefel a books-cum-snack-bar downtown were quoted in the press — under a headline about Orthodox pornography seekers — and the next day their kashrut certificate was revoked. The Jerusalem Religious Council informed them that its inspectors had found something amiss in their kitchen.

The owners, American-born Shai and Judith Robkin, had been asked by a *Ma'ariv* reporter to characterize the reading habits of their clientele. If she had to characterize them, Judith said, well, the Americans prefer fiction, the Israelis history and philosophy and the ultra-Orthodox, sex and pornography. And then one day after the headline and the quote came the revocation of the snack-bar's kashrut certificate.

"But," says Shai Robkin, "since

we've been here, no one has ever inspected our premises. It would simply be impossible for a member of the kashrut department to walk into our premises without being noticed. This was obviously not the reason for revoking our licence."

The certificate was withheld until Rabbi Frankel, head of the kashrut department of Jerusalem's Religious Council, came up with an acceptable solution. This week, with deep reluctance, the Robkins signed an undertaking not to stock "pornography," and this includes illustrated books about pregnancy and child birth.

Rabbi Frankel himself did the honours of inspecting the shop and presented the Robkins with their renewed kashrut certificate. As the Talmud has it: One cannot compare he who sees and eats with he who doesn't see and eats.

M.B.





The Wrong Matzoh

Dear Editor,

As Passover is fast approaching, can you visualize the following scenario?

The Passover table is set in shining beauty. The matzoh, our symbol of hope and freedom, is prominently displayed. The father washes, breaks the matzoh, and makes a "Motzie" over the matzoh. A beautiful and inspiring scene. Yes, however, the matzoh being used for the "Motzie" in this as well as countless Jewish homes is egg, whole wheat, or even chocolate matzoh. This means that the wrong blessing is being said! The reason for this is that the package is clearly labeled Matzoh - Kosher for Passover and is certified by prominent orthodox rabbis




and their rabbinical organizations. These same rabbis (I imagine) privately instruct their own congregants that these so-called matzohs may only be eaten by the sick or elderly and that the blessing over matzoh may not be recited over them.

The certifying rabbis are happy, as they smilingly deposit their large checks for certifying the kashruth that these egg, whole wheat, and chocolate matzohs are kosher for Passover, discarding the thought that well-meaning Jews will recite the wrong blessings unwittingly.

So as you see, this is indeed a happy scene which is repeated each year.

However, I wonder if HASHEM is happy over this?

Bernard Gevertzman
New York, N.Y.



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El Al employees angry over latest kashrut deal

By HAIM SHAPIRO
Jerusalem Post Reporter

El Al was busy kashering its pots and pans yesterday in what the chief rabbi described as a "revolution" in kashrut observance in Israel.

The national airline's kashrut certificate was twice suspended by Chief Rabbi Ovadia Yosef and Shlomo Goren in the past week.

But the chief rabbi told *The Jerusalem Post*, that from this morning, observant Jews can eat the food on El Al flights without fear of breaking the dietary laws.

El Al workers yesterday threatened to disrupt food supplies

to foreign aircraft on the Sabbath. The move is designed to torpedo an arrangement between the El Al subsidiary that produces the food and the rabbinat.

The subsidiary — Tamam — produces meals for KLM, British Airways, Swissair, Austrian Airlines, SAS, Maof and several other charter companies, in addition to El Al.

According to the agreement under which the rabbinat declared the food to be kosher, El Al will no longer be permitted to transport the food from Tamam to the planes on the Sabbath. Each airline instead

will have to fetch its own food.

El Al's staff committee regarded this as a move to implement the government's decision to ground the national carrier on the Sabbath.

"They're taking the work away from us and other Jews (employed by foreign airlines) will get the work," shop committee spokesman Gabi Salzman complained to *The Jerusalem Post*. The workers will act to prevent others from robbing them of their work, he stressed.

The furor began last week after the Sabbath Observance Committee, a private religious group based in Bnei Brak, conducted a surprise Shabbat check on Tamam, the El Al catering subsidiary, and reportedly found it working at full force.

On Monday the committee reported to Rabbi Yosef, who asked the Tamam management to meet him on Wednesday. When the latter failed to show up, the two chief rabbis announced they were rescinding their kashrut certification of El Al.

The chief rabbi said yesterday that not only had work been carried out on Shabbat at Tamam, but there had also been infringements of kashrut itself. The same trays, they

said, had been used for meat and dairy dishes.

They also said that the Tamam kashrut supervisor had been intimidated by the management. As a result, they said, all kashrut supervisors will now be paid through the local religious councils or the Religious Affairs Ministry.

Following the announcement that certification had been rescinded, the Tamam management and El Al quickly arranged a meeting with the chief rabbi on Friday. There they agreed that work would stop on Shabbat, and that within a month the kitchens would be locked on the Shabbat, with the key handed over to the airport rabbi.

However, the rabbi said, they learned that this weekend the kitchen was again functioning on Saturday. According to the chief rabbi, the management said it had not understood that the agreement was to go into force immediately.

As a result, the chief rabbi again suspended the kashrut certification and yesterday again met with representatives of the catering company. A new understanding was then reached.

The Wrong Matzoh

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Bernard Gevertzman
New York, N.Y.

Coalition falters as Knesset term begins

Post Knesset Correspondent

The first week of the Knesset's summer term has been a flop as far as legislative work is concerned.

Because of the absence of deputy finance minister Haim Kaufman, two bills posted for yesterday's session were scratched at the last minute. No coalition majority was available in the case of two other bills, so one of them was not brought to the vote while the second was scratched.

Kaufman's absence has caused the deferment of the first reading of a bill to provide a statutory basis to the 1 per cent levy on the purchase of foreign currency.

But the most controversial coalition failure belonged to the National Religious Party, when the lack of a majority yesterday on a government bill it had sponsored to prevent *kashrut* fraud, led to the postponement of the vote to a future session.

The opposition monopolized the debate on the first reading, with attacks on the *kashrut* law for being too comprehensive. But it was Agudat Yisrael which hit the NRP below the belt. Although the Aguda

had promised the NRP it would support the *kashrut* law on the first reading, and seek to change the draft in the committee stage, the Aguda man at the session, Shmuel Halpert, slipped out of the chamber just before the vote.

Aguda does not like the *kashrut* bill in the form sponsored by the NRP because it would give increased power to local rabbis associated with the NRP. Not enough Likud MKs were present to help make up a majority.

Similar legislation was first tabled 20 years ago, but it never got off the ground because of suspicion that it was designed to build up the NRP.

Alignment and Shinui speakers condemned the proposal because, instead of linking the *kashrut* certificate to *kosher* food and *kosher* cooking in a *kosher* kitchen and restaurant, it would sanction the past practice of many rabbis to deny a certificate for unrelated reasons — such as if hotel lifts operated on the Sabbath; if non-Orthodox Jews held functions elsewhere on the premises; or if music was played on the premises on Friday nights.

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THE JERUSALEM
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1982

EL AL KASHRUT

To the Editor of *The Jerusalem Post*
Sir, — In your editorial of August 9, denouncing the chief rabbis' handling of the El Al kashrut incident, you wrote that "had the chief rabbis been following what is considered normal civil procedure, they would have first (i.e. before rescinding El Al's kashrut certification) held a discussion of the allegations with the management of Tamam and El Al."

I couldn't agree more fully with your position; it is compellingly reasonable. Except that on page one of the paper, your reporter Haim Shapiro wrote that the chief rabbis did request a meeting with the management of Tamam, and only "when the latter failed to show up [did] the chief rabbis announce they were rescinding their kashrut certification of El Al."

My question is: Don't you read what your reporters report as fact, or don't you believe what your reporters write?

Before chastising others for opportunism, recognize that your own biases lead you to the same evil you oppose, namely, blasting away in the media before getting the facts straight.

MENACHEM KASDAN
Jerusalem (Brooklyn).

Tamam's kashrut certificate was lifted on the basis of an unauthorized report by a private Bnei Brak group, after Tamam failed, for reasons that remain obscure, to show up on Wednesday in response to peremptory orders issued by the chief rabbinate the previous Monday. This does not conform to "normal civil procedures." — *Ed. — J.P.*

DURING the last 29 years, the Knesset made several unsuccessful attempts to enact a law prohibiting deception in kashrut. Eventually, on July 25, 1983, it succeeded in enacting such a law, the Prohibition of Deception in Kashrut Law, 5743-1983, which will come into force on December 1. But, as will be seen from the following account of the provisions of the Law, it appears that it still requires some amendments.

On March 22, 1983, a draft of the Law was published in *Reshumot*, the Official Gazette, on behalf of the government and, after a first reading on May 9, it was referred to the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee of the Knesset.

The draft published in *Reshumot* was not accompanied by any explanatory note, contrary to the usual practice. But Eliezer Kulas MK, the chairman of the committee, in submitting it to the Knesset for a second reading together with the amendments made by the committee with the almost unanimous agreement of its members, reviewed the attempts since 1954 to have such

a law enacted. He explained some of the difficult problems which had to be solved, and how it was proposed to solve them.

The Law was passed by the Knesset on this second reading after it had rejected all the committee's proposed amendments.

ONE OF THE most difficult problems which had to be solved was how to make provisions in a secular law on a subject, such as kashrut, which is governed by religious law. The problem, it was submitted, was solved by not specifying who is entitled to receive a kashrut certificate, but by specifying the acts which may not be done by any person or a certain class of persons unless he has a kashrut certificate, specifying the persons authorized to grant such a certificate, and by providing, in Section 11, that such authorized persons, when granting a certificate, may take into consideration only the laws of kashrut.

The Law imposes certain prohibitions on owners of eating houses as defined therein,

Deception in kashrut

By HENRY E. BAKER/Special to The Jerusalem Post

producers of food or drinks, persons engaged in the sale of food or drinks to the public, persons engaged in ritual slaughtering, and producers, and importers, of food or drinks bearing an indication that they are kosher.

In the draft Law, "eating house" was defined as "a place in which persons are engaged in selling, or serving, to the public commodities to be eaten or drunk therein, and also a butcher shop"; "commodity" was defined as "food and drinks and, as regards a butcher shop, meat and meat products"; and "production of a commodity" was defined as including its packing.

Owing to the absence of a definition of "eating house" and reference to a hotel, it was pointed out that a hotel owner could not issue a kashrut certificate for a reason not connected with the kitchen or restaurant. For example, in the hotel was operated, but as had happened in the case of a hotel, the Hotels Association refused to grant a kashrut certificate for such a reason, and meet that objection, of eating house was an addition to the words: "a hotel" the parts of which persons are engaged in preparation, or serving commodities for eating therein.

For the purposes of the following persons are granted a kashrut certificate by the Rabbinical Council: a rabbi authorized by the chief rabbi who officiates in a place where the eating house is engaged in ritual slaughtering is a commodity is produced in the case of the Israel Defense Forces (in which, under the Food for Soldiers Ordinance of 1948, Jewish soldiers are provided with kashrut food) including any branches of the system and the owner of the house or a producer of the food — the chief rabbi or a military rabbi authorized by him.

A "local rabbi" is defined in the Law as a person who has received authorization from the Rabbinical Council to act as a rabbi in Israel and in a town, a rabbi council, a moshav or a kibbutz.

The owner of an eating house may not represent it as kosher unless a kashrut certificate is issued to it.

y grant of a kashrut certificate by the
y rabbi. It does not apply to the grant
s of a certificate by the Council. It
y would appear, therefore, that the
y Council in granting a kashrut cer-
a tificate is not required to take into
d consideration only the laws of
n kashrut.

- If the Council rejects an applica-
h tion to it for a kashrut certificate or
- an objection to a refusal by an
h authorized rabbi to grant such a cer-
e tificate, the applicant can petition
y the Supreme Court sitting as a
- High Court of Justice, against the
- refusal. It is difficult, however, to
a see how that court could help him
- without entering into the question
- as to whether he has complied with
a the laws of kashrut; and it may be
e reluctant to do so as that is a matter
d which the Knesset apparently in-
t tended should be decided only by
y the persons authorized to grant a
a kashrut certificate, unless the
- refusal was on a ground which has
s nothing to do with the laws of
- kashrut.

2 UNDER SECTION 13, for the pur-
1 poses of the Law, a rabbi authorized
1 to grant a kashrut certificate will be
1 deemed to be a "public employee"
1 within the meaning of the Punish-
1 ments Law, 5737-1977, so that the
1 provisions of that law applicable to
1 a public employee will be applicable
1 to him. Among them are provisions
1 relating to offences committed in,
1 or against, the public service and to
1 bribery offences.

That section does not apply to the
Council.

A PERSON who contravenes any of
the above prohibitions, and a holder
of a kashrut certificate who fails to
exhibit it where it can be seen in his
place of business, will be liable to
imprisonment for one year.

Where an offence is committed
by a body corporate, the person
who, at the time it was committed,
was an active director, a partner
other than a limited partner, or a
senior administrative employee of
the body corporate, who is responsi-
ble for the matter in question, will
also be guilty of the offence if he
does not prove that it was commit-
ted without his knowledge and that
he took all reasonable measures for
ensuring observance of the Law.

If an offence is committed by an
employee in the course of the
business of his employer, his
employer will also be guilty of the
offence if it is proved that it was
committed with his knowledge and
that he did not take all reasonable
measures for ensuring observance
of the Law.

The Minister for Religious Af-
airs is charged with the implemen-
tation of the Law and he may, with
the consent of the Minister of
Justice, and with the approval of the
Committee, and, in the case of the
Israel Defence Forces, also of the
Minister of Defence, make regula-
tions necessary for its implementa-
tion.

*The writer is a former president of
the Jerusalem District Court.*

El Al yields to rabbinate, 'kashrut' restored

3012
4/8
By HAIM SHAPIRO
Jerusalem Post Reporter

El Al regained its kashrut certificate on Friday following a meeting between Chief Rabbis Ovadia Yosef and Shlomo Goren and officials of the airline and its catering subsidiary, Tamam.

The certificate was withdrawn last week following a surprise check of the Tamam kitchen by rabbis of the Sabbath Observance Committee. They reportedly found the kitchen, which also supplies most of the foreign airlines flying to Israel, working on Shabbat. The company's kashrut supervisor reportedly told the rabbinate that he knew of the Sabbath work, but was afraid to

report it for fear of being fired.

According to Friday's agreement, the keys to the kitchen are to be entrusted to the airport rabbi on Friday before sunset and only returned after the conclusion of the Sabbath on Saturday night. Two more kashrut inspectors will also be employed, with their salaries paid by the rabbinate.

Although El Al officially "welcomed" the agreement, the airline's director-general, Yitzhak Shender, said he had been given no warning that anything was amiss prior to the rabbinate's announcement that it was lifting its certification. Senior officials of the company stressed that the kashrut itself had never been in question. Rumours

are rife among company employees that the airline had to contribute to a number of yeshivot as the price for the recertification.

In fact, travel agents have recently reported an increase in the number of ultra-Orthodox Jews travelling on the national airline, evidently as a show of support for the planned cessation of Shabbat flights next month.

Tourism Minister Avraham Sharir lashed out at the rabbinate last night for harming the traffic to Israel with the incident. The chief rabbis should have handled the matter quietly, he said, adding that the religious establishment should leave El Al alone and not add to its present difficulties.

El Al staff opens war on 'religious coercion'

By MICHAL YUDELMAN
Jerusalem Post Reporter

BEN-GURION AIRPORT. — El Al's workers yesterday launched a public campaign against the government's decision to rest the airline on Shabbat and other Jewish holydays. They announced that they would take a series of "demonstrative steps" in the next few days to prevent the closure.

"We shall spearhead the public struggle against religious coercion," works committee spokesman Gabi Saltzman said yesterday. "We hereby inform (Agudat Yisrael leader Avraham) Shapira — and his buddies that we will fight for our jobs and will not let him destroy El Al."

El Al workers last night held a quiet demonstration outside Knesset member Dan Tichon's house in Jerusalem to remind him of his promise to support them in their fight against the closure.

The demonstrators urged Tichon not to "bend to coalition dictates" and to oppose El Al's closure in the Knesset Finance Committee. (the High Court of Justice recently made absolute an order *nisi* according to which the airline may be closed down on Sabbaths and holy days only with the approval of the Finance Committee).

About 900 workers will have to be fired and enormous losses will be incurred if El Al stops flying on Saturdays and holidays, Saltzman said.

The workers will hold a large demonstration either today or in the

next few days to show that they will not take the government's decision lying down, he said.

They have meanwhile distributed leaflets among their members asking the workers to contribute their vacations to finance the "long and hard" struggle to maintain their posts.

The workers are also sending Knesset Finance Committee members letters calling on them to vote according to their consciences in the matter and to ignore coalition discipline.

The works committee cabled Deputy Prime Minister Simha Ehrlich, commending him on his stand against the closure and asking to meet him as soon as possible.

Saltzman said El Al's workers have already sacrificed enough — 1,600 of them retired and every worker agreed to a pay reduction — in their effort to save the airline, and they would not let the government destroy it now.

Meanwhile, the Chief Rabbinate Council yesterday welcomed the agreement signed last week between the rabbinate and Tamam, the El Al catering service, banning all work in the company's plants on Saturdays.

After an urgent meeting on the "serious problems" in El Al, the council also announced that it would issue new guidelines on the employment of kashrut supervisors (*mashgihim*), their salaries and their job status.

Chief Rabbis flying high

THE FLAP about kashrut in El Al, Tourism Minister Avraham Sharir has suggested, may well be accounted for by the fact that the chief rabbis are envious of Agudat Yisrael, for its success in pushing a ban on Sabbath flights by the national carrier. This may indeed be the only rational explanation for the latest burst of ecclesiastical activism.

Kashrut is obligatory in El Al, as is natural for an Israeli airline that caters mainly to a Jewish clientele. That, too, is why El Al had, until late last week, three kashrut inspectors making sure that the religious law was being followed at the airline's catering subsidiary, Tamam. The rabbi in charge of Ben-Gurion airport, Yoel Souissa, was supervising the inspectors.

No wonder Rabbi Souissa himself was dumbfounded when, last Thursday, while he was away on a visit to Canada, chief rabbis Ovadia Yosef and Shlomo Goren summarily withdrew Tamam's kashrut certificate. Their decision was based on a report that a spot check had revealed the Tamam kitchen to operate on the Sabbath. Religious Jews everywhere were at once warned that El Al food was inedible — and, in effect, that they could no longer fly El Al with a clear Jewish conscience.

Had the chief rabbis been following what is considered normal civil procedure, they would have first held a discussion of the allegations with Rabbi Souissa and then with the managements of Tamam and El Al. The purpose would have been to work out an agreement for corrective action, if it was found necessary. But the chief rabbis appear to have been far less interested in redressing a wrong than in demonstrating that they, too, were able to arm-twist the national carrier on a religious matter.

With maximum possible fanfare, in full view of the nation, Tamam's certificate of kashrut was officially lifted. This was how both Tamam and El Al were first apprised of the rabbis' decision.

The following day, Friday, a meeting was held between the chief rabbis and Tamam executives, in the presence of the airport rabbi. But it only served to lay down the law to the company, and further highlight El Al's humiliation by clerical authority. The certification was restored, on condition that the number of kashrut inspectors was doubled, that no work be carried out at the Tamam kitchen on the Sabbath and that, within a month, the key to the kitchen be entrusted to the airport rabbi for the duration of the Sabbath.

The chief rabbis did not seem to be troubled by the fact that Tamam's allegedly non-kasher food was being supplied, as kasher, to all the other airlines that stop at Ben-Gurion airport. What mattered was that the chief rabbis were able to chalk up a political victory over El Al.

In a larger sense, it is true, the chief rabbis have also established, or re-established, the principle of untrammelled rabbinical authority in all matters in which the chief rabbinate has a monopoly. On the other hand, perhaps it would be proper for the High Court of Justice to examine whether the exercise of that authority without regard to orderly procedures of fair hearing can be reconciled with the law of the land.