



**KOSHER OVERSEERS  
ASSOCIATION  
OF AMERICA  
INC.**

SERVING NON-PROFIT IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

ב"ד  
מרכז מחזיקי  
הכשרות  
דמוקרטית  
כ"ט

November 9, 1988

Mr. Tony Papa  
Department of Agriculture and Markets  
Director New York City Office  
2 World Trade Center, 27th Floor  
New York, New York 10047

Dear Mr. Papa:

Regretfully I am unable to attend the November 17, 1988 session of the Public Hearings on possible Changes to New York's Kosher Laws due to forthcoming overseas travel.

My proposal to establish a Beth Din (Ecclesiastical Court) to deal with key issues is germane to the subject of the hearings and can help resolve key issues relating to Kashruth enforcement and achievement by the various rabbinic agencies serving in kosher endorsement.

I, therefore, submit an excerpt from my article recently published in the "Jewish Press", Brooklyn, New York, which ties in with the subject of the hearing. I would welcome its being read in my absence.

Best wishes for a productive conference,

Sincerely,

Rabbi Dr. I. Harold Sharfman  
Administrator, KOAOA, INC.

IHS:mh  
encl/

WANTED! STATE ENFORCEMENT FOR ECCLESIASTICAL AUTHORITY  
by Rabbi Dr. I. Harold Sharfman, Rabbinic Administrator  
Kosher Overseers Association of America, Inc.

Ecclesiastical authority relating to kashruth has been contested in the United States since the beginnings of Jewish mass migration to America.

Since earlies times, rabbinic decision in the U.S., had been contested and rejected by those who acted without conscience, and there was no enforcement agency to assist in its enforcement until states established kosher food enforcement laws.

1844 marked the beginning of scientific testing of kosher foods to assist rabbis in their decisions. This came as a result of one Jewish woman's concern over contaminated product, considered pure and kosher.

Rebecca Esther Noah, a fifth-generation American, in 1844, heard rumors that the bottled "sweet olive oil" she used for cooking, and represented as being pure olive oil, had actually been adulterated with clarified lard oil by unscrupulous manufacturers.

Rebecca called this concern to the attention of her husband, Mordecai Manuel Noah, a Judge of the Court of Sessions of New York. Judge Noah, who swung his gavel for honesty and justice, and as a champion of Jewish rights had advocated creating a Jewish army to wrest Palestine from the Turks and establish a Jewish homeland for oppressed European Israelites, now took up the cudgel for kashrus.

Judge Noah requested Dr. Lawrence Reid, professor of chemistry at the College of Pharmacy of New York, to analyze the contents of bottles of imported sweet oil emblazoned with the protruding letters that read PURE OLIVE OIL. Thus began a new era in kashrus--laboratory testing to determine the kashrus of food products.

Thereupon Rabbi Abraham Joseph Rice, "Chief Rabbi of the United States" de facto, issued his responsum forbidding usage of adulterated imported cooking oils. No sooner did Rice's decision appear in print when arrogant Orthodox Reverends, ignorant in Jewish law, countered that the "oils of gentiles" is no longer prohibited.

Whereas those 19th century communal leaders declared non-kosher products as kosher, the 20th century sprouted a new phenomenon: Orthodox Rabbis serving in kashruth, who declare kosher products certified by a kashrus endorsing agency other than theirs', as non-kosher, but in print they cover up their libel under the euphemism "non-acceptable".

This trend of each kashrus agency seeking a "holier than thou" status, has escalated to the degree that to some, only glatt is deemed kosher; and even super-glatt has become a contending issue between those who claim that theirs is glatter, and others who maintain that theirs is the glattest.

Whereas throughout our history, we had three descending classes of Jews, Kohen, Levi, Yisroel. These have been replaced in the 20th century by three ascending classes: glatt-frum, glatter-frumer, glattest-frumest.

But Ken Yirbu aside...

Kosher Overseers Association of America urges all administrators of k and u symbols, Chasidic Rabbiyim engaged in kashrus endorsement, and individual rabbinic kashrus certifiers, to establish a supreme rabbinic Beis Din. This authoritative body, nationally and universally recognized, would issue responsa resolving complexities that increasingly confront kashruth certifying rabbis in this evolving scientific age; also deal with the plague of inter-organizational rivalry, and thereby achieve a UK, a United Kingdom through United Kashrus.

---