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SUBMISSION ON N.S.W. KASHRUTH AUTHORITY IMMUNITY

I was horrified to discover that various apparently malicious groups within the Jewish Community, many of whom are not strictly observant and to whom strict observant of Kashruth (keeping kosher, strictly in accordance with Jewish Law) is not important, are trying to undermine the authority of the N.S.W. Kashruth Authority (KA) and have apparently caused the issue of Kashruth to be brought before the ACCC.

Firstly, the supervision of Kashruth is a matter for rabbis, not for lay persons. The laws pertaining to kashruth are highly complex and an organisation supervising Kashruth requires a team of highly qualified experts behind it. I refer you to the articles published weekly in the English Editions of *Hamodia*, the Newspaper of Haredi Jewry (published in New York, London, Antwerp, Zurich and Jerusalem, available from Gold's Bookshop at Six Ways, Bondi Beach) by the Kashruth experts of the Orthodox Union of Synagogues (OU) in the United States. If you were to read even only one of these articles, you would begin to understand the intricacies of supervision and knowledge involved.

All four of my sons have at some stage been involved in Kashruth supervision (in Melbourne and in New York). The supervisor (Mashgiach), as my eldest son puts it, "has to have eyes in the back of his head as they will try to put anything over you". (He is referring to caterers, restaurants and other kosher kitchens run by institutions.)

Secondly, from an historical point of view, it would be a very retrograde step if the wonderful ~~united~~ **EXCLUDED FROM** Sydney, so praised by the late Rabbi Chaim Gutnick **PUBLIC REGISTER**

EXCLUDED FROM, were to be undone. On the Intermediate Days of the Passover before he died, the late Rabbi Chaim Gutnick gave a lecture on the authority of the Beth Din (Rabbinical Court) at Kollel Beth HaTalmud - a strictly Orthodox post graduate Rabbinical

College in Melbourne (at which I was present) and said that it was wonderful how Sydney and all New South Wales had an authoritative Beth Din and a unified Kashruth Authority, which was the religiously desirable ideal. He decried Melbourne's lack of unity - a situation where, when one is in Melbourne one always has to ask from which butcher they buy their meat and from whom they buy their bread and cakes and so on.

Melbourne is awful. I hate it, because it is so hard visiting other people's houses. I only eat meat in Melbourne under the supervision of Rabbi Beck of Adass Yisroel. So, to my understanding, do my sons. When we go out we have to ring up first to check. Most restaurants in Melbourne fold in less than an year because of all the boycotts from various sectors of the community who do not regard them as kosher enough.

In the first part of the twentieth century every synagogue in Sydney employed its own shochet (ritual slaughterer). Purchasers had to kasher the meat (soak and salt to get rid of the blood) themselves. Only in the last twenty odd years have butchers been kashering meat for their customers. In the first part of the twentieth century the standards of kashruth were appalling. The local rabbi would designate a butcher shop to be an outlet, but the meat was not really kosher at all.

I have just last Sunday delivered a paper on a brief history of "frum" (strictly Orthodox) Jews in New South Wales at the Australian Jewish Historical Society. One informant I interviewed from a very religious family related how, in those days, one relative had walked into such a butchery, where there was both kosher and non-kosher meat and saw the non-Jewish butcher pick up a knife from the non-kosher side and go to the "kosher" side and use the same knife (which, of course, made that meat also not kosher) and she declared, "So that's what I've been eating!"

Most people who were strictly observant arriving in those days found they could not eat meat and only had milk if they milked the animal themselves. (My late husband used to supervise the production of kosher milk (chalav Yisrael) in the 1970's.)

Even though there were good shochemim like Rev Kleerekoper (who was really entitled to be called "Rabbi"), the problem was the lax standard of the butcher shops, both those that sold only kosher meat and the mixed ones. Some owners were not averse to using materials specifically forbidden by the supervising rabbis as not kosher - thereby rendering the products, such as sausages, unfit for kosher consumption (only good for dog food!).

Matters improved after Rabbi Shmuel Dov Bernath (a shochet) was brought out to Australia by Mr Abraham Rabinovitch in late 1947 to create a kosher butchery for the Adath Israel Congregation (my synagogue) Bondi (then called Bellevue Hill). The first Adath Butchery was in Bondi Beach. Later it was in Bondi Junction. They always had a completely religiously observant butcher in charge with two religious supervisors (mashgichim) of the highest integrity supervising to ensure the proper standards of kashruth were met. No one who is really concerned about keeping kashruth quibbles about the price. From then on people could eat meat in Sydney.

However, at some time in the 1970's there was either no shochet here for Adath or the butchery closed (I have not researched this point, but I recall it) and we had to fly in hard frozen meat from Melbourne Adass Yisroel's butchery (Melbourne Kosher Butchers on Inkerman Street - the only Melbourne meat I will eat).

After this Rabbi Krausz of Adath Israel, Bondi (or possibly Rabbi Wosner, his successor), Rabbi Pinchas Feldman of the Yeshiva, and Rabbi Osher Abramson, Dayan (Chief Judge) of the Sydney Beth Din (Rabbinical Court) (Rabbi Abramson did wonders in raising the standards of kashruth observance in the Sydney community) got together to form a combined Adath-Yeshivah- Sydney Beth Din Kashruth Commission - to raise all kashruth to an equally high standard in Sydney. Even so, at that stage, there were several butcher shops.

A new combined Yeshiva-Adath butchery called "Eilat" had opened on Bondi Road, run by Motti Hasofer. This was later bought by Mr Tommy Rev of Adath Israel. By then, the supervision of all kashruth in Sydney was under the N.S.W. Kashruth Authority, or its predecessor, the N.S.W. Kashruth Commission. (Incidentally, the Yeshiva in Sydney was a 1955 break-away from Adath Israel and was not Lubavitch in origin.) This butchery was "glatt kosher" - that is kosher with no questions at all. (Another term is "Mehadrin").

This is the standard demanded by the strictly observant. Rabbi Abramson and his successors strove to gradually raise the standard of kashruth in N.S.W. to this standard. The Kashruth Commission became the Kashruth Authority. It began publishing a list of products found to be kosher or supervised as kosher so the community keeping kosher would know what to buy. It is very useful to know there are locally produced products, so we do not have to just rely on imports.

Keeping kosher is a religious standard and requirement which requires rabbinical supervision and guidance.

(When I was researching my paper, one family related how, in the old days, they had had to make everything from scratch - noodles, bread, wine, Shemura Matzot and so on, which happens in Hobart today.)

Some years ago Tommy Rev bought the only other kosher butchery still existing, - Hadassa at Six Ways, and combined the two butcheries - Eilat and Hadassa into one glatt kosher butchery.

All the other butcheries had failed.

Thirdly, I would not eat the "kosher" meat from Coles. To me, it is trefe - not kosher. Even if they happened to bring in Adass Melbourne meat (totally improbable, as Adass would not permit their meat to be sold under such questionable circumstances, including the possibility of Sabbath sales), I could not see Coles giving the kind of personal service Tommy Rev has given.

When I was a junior solicitor in Goulburn, Tommy would freeze my meat order solid and put it onto the train at Central, ring the office to tell me what train it was on, and I would peddle my bicycle at lunch time to the goods yard and pick it up and store it in the wills strong room (freezing cold) until I could peddle it home in the evening and put it into the freezer.

That is the kind of service one only has from a butcher. Likewise, now, I have physical disabilities and am on a part pension. I ring up and the meat is delivered right into my kitchen.

If the authority of the N.S.W. Kashruth Authority is destroyed, we will no longer have a kosher butcher in N.S.W. at all. Those of us who are meticulous about kashruth will be unable to eat meat or else, if rich enough (which I no longer am) will have to fly in meat from Adass Melbourne.

I will not eat meat under the other "kosher" supervisions in Melbourne. Melbourne is a mess. One cannot eat out most times or at each other's homes (and, with Coles now stocking Melbourne "kosher" meat that I would not touch, the same is happening here).

I personally believe part of this push may be orchestrated by Coles to drive Tommy Rev out of business.

Also, contrary to the false claims by stupid, mostly non-observant restaurant owners, and the like, introducing "foreign" meat just drives away customers. Melbourne has a dearth of kosher restaurants and they are lucky to last twelve months, because there are about four different mutually exclusive kashruth supervisions in Melbourne and those who eat one will not eat the other. (Three of my sons, all married, live in Melbourne, so I know.)

The same applies here. Everyone accepts the N.S.W. Kashruth Authority, as it is comprised of rabbis of all the Orthodox congregations, being a combination of Adath Israel, Yeshiva and Sydney Beth Din. Not everyone will eat Melbourne Kashruth, Kosher Australia, or Yeshiva Melbourne (and, for all I know - possibly on political grounds - some may even not eat Adass Yisroel Melbourne - Rabbi Beck).

Having recently heard that one restaurant was possibly using some non-Kashruth Authority meat and was using Melbourne (not Adass) meat, I phoned the owner, as it had been my favourite restaurant and I wished to have dinner there. He confirmed he was using this "foreign" meat, so I had to tell him I could not longer eat at his restaurant. I would not even eat his fish, because he was using meat that I do not consider to be sufficiently kosher.

The fact is, that we who are meticulous about kashruth rely upon the hechsher (Rabbinical Authority) of the Kashruth Authority. It represents a certain standard. We expect outlets that *agree* to be under their supervision (and no-one forces them) to meet the standards set down by the Kashruth Authority, which includes the provision of meat slaughtered here in Sydney by shoctim (ritual slaughterers) of the highest personal integrity as well as technical standard and kashered in the butchery owned by Tommy Rev (being the only butchery left), also to a very high standard, under constant supervision. If any outlet wants to use meat from elsewhere - even with the approval of the Kashruth Authority, as has allegedly happened in meat shortages - then a large sign should be displayed outside informing would-be customers so they are not misled by the KA sign.

Also, any caterers who use meat, cakes or bread from elsewhere must let all potential consumers know by large signs on the

tables and an announcement. I want to eat GLATT KOSHER and I don't want people misleading me. They should also let people know when they make enquiries about booking them and people issuing invitations should let people know where their food comes from - under what supervision (or none).

Besides what appears to possibly be a push from Coles to drive Tommy Rev out of business, there also appears to be a push from certain interests in Melbourne (and possibly elsewhere) to invade the Sydney market and work with Coles to drive Tommy Rev out of business.

Additionally, you have here further ructions arising from the destruction of the Yeshiva in Sydney in 2003.

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They appear to be using ignorant people, new to kashruth and not meticulous in practice, as their unwitting tools.

There is ~~another~~ ~~anti-religious~~ group [REDACTED] who, in their manner, going back to Germany of the nineteenth century, are still trying to demolish all Orthodox Jewish institutions, of which the N.S.W. Kashruth Authority is essential to the Orthodox Jewish Community.

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Please, do not bring the State into religious affairs. The supervision of Kashruth is a matter for Rabbinical authorities, not the State. No outlet is forced to be kosher or to accept kosher supervision. It is a matter of choice for the owner to choose to accept - ask for - kosher supervision or not.

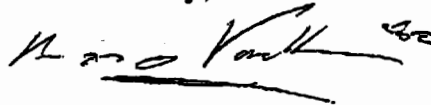
The most successful kosher restaurant in Sydney was Schwarcz's Folk

Centre Restaurant and Guest House which ran for many decades until the owners retired, and which also provided airline meals. It was strictly Glatt Kosher, mehadrin, under the supervision of the Rabbi (whoever held office from time to time) of Adath Israel Congregation, Bondi. It was not cheap. It provided excellent service, fine dining, fine kosher food, and celebrities flocked to it. It had a large non-Jewish fashionable clientele and was written up in the newspapers and mentioned on the radio, because it was excellent, yet uncompromisingly strictly kosher and shomer shabbat. It is quality and service that sells.

Being strictly kosher is part of that quality. It is a standard that cannot be compromised. We need the guaranteed supervision of the N.S.W. Kashruth Authority and we need to keep our last remaining local kosher butchery.

I hope this submission may be considered. I only learnt about this enquiry taking submissions a few days ago and do not even know if I have the title of the enquiry correct.

Yours faithfully,



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 (Committee Member of the Australian
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 Adath Israel Congregation, Bondi)
 Personal submission. NOT on behalf of
 the above organisations.

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