

UNTIL WHEN? A PAINFUL CRY FROM THE GAON AND TZADDIK, RABBI SHRAGA FEIVEL MENDELOWITZ OBM

9 Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in my heart like a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with restraining myself, and I could not.

10 For I heard the calumny of many, fear on every side. Denounce him, we will denounce him, say my close friends as they watch for my stumbling. Perhaps he will be persuaded, and we shall prevail against him, and we shall take our revenge on him. 11 But the Lord is with me like a mighty awesome one; therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail; they shall be greatly ashamed; for they shall not succeed; their everlasting confusion shall never be forgotten. 12 But, O Lord of hosts, who tests the righteous, and sees the inwards and the heart, let me see your vengeance on them; for to you have I opened my cause. (Jeremiah 20:9-12).

I use the above prophetic words as a preface to my article concerning Kashrut, because this article will not bring honor to me. On the contrary, I will be attacked with ridicule from all sides. But, what can I do? A fire is burning within me, and within a thousand Jews like me ... a fire which cannot be extinguished. The Kashrut question has recently been discussed in the yiddish press, but only one side of the question, viz. concerning the unscrupulous butchers who sell Trefot without a hechsher or with a false one. The press has remained silent, however, concerning the second side of the question, about the Trefot being sold under rabbinical supervision and under rabbinical signs in butcher shops. The press is silent about this problem, perhaps because of the honor of the rabbis, or, perhaps, because of other reasons. The honor of the rabbis is dear to me, too. But, the honor of the Torah which is lying in the garbage, and the honor of the truth, which is trodden under foot, are dearer to me. Where there is chillul Hashem we do not impart any honor to a rabbi. I, therefore, come forward with an accusation.

I Accuse.

I accuse many rabbis, who grant hechsherim, who knowingly or otherwise, or out of neglect, permit no - kosher meat to be sold under their stamp of approval both wholesale and retail; the seller is an unscrupulous person with Torah sanction.

I accuse many rabbis who grant hechsherim, to whose attention many Jews have brought this problem, that Trefot are being sold under their hashgachah, yet they have kept this matter quiet and permitted the butchers to continue to sell Trefot to their hearts' content.

I accuse many rabbis, who, although they themselves have no part in the hechsherim, nevertheless, know about them and still remain silent. There is a sort of mutual reciprocal agreement to keep quiet about each other's false hechsherim. Perhaps it is because they

wish to avoid a chillul Hashem. They forget, however, that where there is a chillul Hashem, we do not impart any honor to a rabbi. I accuse the very great rabbis, the leaders of our people, because of the internal strife. These disputes are not for the sake of Heaven; if one says that something is prohibited, the other one must say it is permissible, if one says that something is contaminated, the other must say that it is pure. It is impossible to bring order into the chaotic Kashrut situation, especially in the meat and chicken markets. I accuse the rabbis who have also neglected Kashrut in other fields. They have, for instance, disregarded Kashrut in pastries, when most bakeries use egg powder in baking Rolls and challos, even though it is known, almost without a doubt, that this is made from eggs of non-kosher birds. Some Jewish bakeries even use lard, as simple as that.

I accuse the rabbis, because of whose negligence, the laws of cholov akum (gentile milk and gentile cheeses) have virtually been forgotten. I know that there are various heterim for this, but they apply only when it is impossible to obtain Jewish milk and cheese. In our situation, however, with a little effort, order could be brought into this chaos, and "if one can be good, why should he be bad?"

It is especially noteworthy, that a certain agricultural school publicized in its report that unclean animals (especially horses) are milked all over. Consequently, our sages fear that the gentiles will mix in milk of unclean animals is equally applicable today as it was in Mishnaic times. I accuse our orthodoxy, for sleeping the sleep of Choni Hamaagel, who slept seventy years. They are completely unaware of what is happening around them and how our strongest ramparts are being smashed by our internal foes. They are unaware that all our holy traditions are being trampled underfoot, that our three thousand year hold heritage has all but completely disappeared. Yet, Orthodoxy sleeps. But how much longer?

Do you know that all of the fortresses of Judaism which have protected us from destruction, the only one left is Kashrut, that the other mitzvos are observed very laxly even in Orthodox homes? And now Kashrut too is being smashed, yet you sleep. But how much longer?

If you have begun to build yeshivos and Talmud Torahs during the past few years, in order to give your children a Jewish education and to implant Jewish traits in them, do you not know that bodies nourished with Nevelot and Trefot cannot become Jews with Jewish character traits? Don't you know that Nevelot and Trefot clog the heart and cause predestined demise? Heaven forbid. Yet you sleep, but how much longer?

Don't you see what has become of your youth? Don't you know that Jewish children have become tramps, gamblers, gangsters, candidates for the electric chair, and all kinds of "ist"s only because they have been raised on Nevelot and Trefot, yet you sleep. But for how much longer?

Don't you know that going to the mikveh every day to purify yourselves will be of no avail? Not even all the waters in the world can help, since you immerse yourselves, not with a carcass of a creeping thing in your hand but inside of you! And when you pray

every morning and evening or when you learn your daily lesson of Torah, don't you know that the breath that emanates from your mouth is the breath of sin? Because it reeks of Nevelot and Trefot? Yet you sleep, but how much longer? When you wash your hands to eat a roll, or when you make kiddush, and the table is bedecked with challos, meat, fish, and all sorts of delicacies, and you say with each bite, "in honor of the Shabbos" you are angering G-d?. Yet you sleep, but how much longer?

I know that you will reply that "Jacob is small and poor", but look what Jacob's brother on East Broadway has accomplished, how he erected a fortress through the poor laborers, a fortress against Judaism, because he has united forces. Yet you sleep and do nothing. But how much longer?

Gentlemen! Do a little soul searching and see how far you have strayed; remember that our parents have sacrificed their lives for kiddush Hashem; they allowed themselves to be burned and roasted in order to uphold our holy Torah, whereas you are not required to make any sacrifice; with but a handful you can save the situation. Yet you sleep. But how much longer?

Fellow Jews! Have you no fear for the great and terrible day of judgment? On that day you will no longer be able to come up with excuses or with a shrug of the shoulders. And I ask you, "How much longer?" **And I say, "You sleepers, awaken from your slumber**