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Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim

IN THE HEART OF THE OLD CITY OF JERUSALEM

Ha-Rav Shlomo Aviner on...

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One Nation – One Kashrut

In Exile we were a Nation scattered and separated among the nations. Now, we have returned to "one Nation in our Land." "Who is like Your Nation Israel, one Nation in the Land" (Shemoneh Esrei for Minchah on Shabbat).

It must be said to one Nation. One kashrut! It is incumbent upon us to wage war against the myriad of kosher certifications which erect divisions among the Nation, between one person and his friend. This is a terrible occurrence, since many times one person will not eat with another, and even with a relative. Our Rabbis prohibited food cooked by a non-Jew in order not to bring us close which can lead to intermarriage, since a meal brings people together. And now we have turned against each other as with do with the non-Jews, G-d forbid.

There are great Rabbis who rise above these divisions. Three stories about Ha-Gaon Ha-Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach attest to this fact. He was asked by female seminary students about eating at certain families' homes who were not as strict as they were. He said: "I do not understand what you are asking. Will they serve you non-kosher food there?" "No." He responded: "Then eat." They asked him: "Ha-Rav also acts this way?" He said: "Yes. When I am invited to a wedding, I eat what is there. What I do not eat in my home, I eat when I am invited."

He was also asked by a couple about their practice to eat food at their parent's house which is under kosher certification which they do not eat in their own house. He responded: Ha-Gaon Ha-Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld ztz"l, when he was at a brit milah of a Sefardic family, ate the meat which was prepared under the Sefardic slaughtering practices. When you eat at your family's house or with other G-d-fearing people, you must eat from

everything they give you. They are not feeding you non-kosher and treif food! The basic halachah is that all of the kosher certifications from local Rabbinate are good, and while certain kosher certifications are strict on different issues, this does not affect the basic halachah.

Rav Auerbach also said to the Rabbi of a kibbutz: Something which has a standard production process, such as kosher certified tea for Pesach, one can rely on the kosher certification which a known Torah scholar gives to the factory, and there is no need to go to the factory and see the production process. Anything which affects the public, you may only rule according to the basic halachah and not according to strictures. You may only be strict in regard to yourself or for individuals who wish to be strict ("Va-Alehu Lo Yibol" vol. 2, pp. 66-67).

If only we would follow his light.

We will not even mention the shaming of Torah scholars when we relate to them as if they feed people treif and non-kosher food. And we will not discuss the fact that the apparatuses of the different kosher certifications are huge commerce which sweep away millions of dollars and increase the prices of the product – and on the back of the impoverished segment of the population. In fact, economists claim that a united kashrut would significantly lower the prices.

We are therefore obligated to unify the kashrut through a supreme, joint structure which would meet the needs of everyone. We call: One Nation, one kashrut! We must stubbornly march towards this vision. The main hall is one kashrut, the corridor is respect for all kosher certifications.

[From the parashah sheet "Ma'ayanei Ha-Yeshu'a" #292 – Parashat Tzav/Shabbat Ha-Gadol]