



Waiting After Hard Cheese Part 3

The laws regarding waiting between eating hard cheese and consuming meat are applicable to specially aged cheeses. However, many dishes can be prepared using hard cheese as an ingredient as well. In order to properly understand the *halacha* regarding these mixtures, it is important to return to the sources.

The rationale behind waiting after consumption of hard cheese is based on the firmness of the cheese, which can stick in one's teeth after eating, as well as the pungent flavor of the cheese.

The question arises: what is the status of hard cheese when it is melted or combined with other foods?

The *Rema* (YD 89:3) writes regarding waiting between meat and milk that if one were to eat a dish that had meat inside (a potato from a cholent, for example), one would need to wait just as if he had actually eaten meat (hamburgers or chicken breast). The *Yad Yehuda* (89:30) concludes that the

Rema was only stringent regarding the original rabbinic decree, which was to wait between meat and milk. However, since waiting between hard cheese and meat is a stringency, if a large chunk of cheese was cooked, since it became softer as a result of cooking, there is no basis to wait at all. According to the *Yad Yehuda*, parmesan cheese melted on a potato would not require waiting since the cheese was no longer hard. The *Badei Hashulchan* (commentary *Rema* 89:2) and others (*Avnei Yashfei* 6:112) disagree with the *Yad Yehuda*. They argue that the *Yad Yehuda*'s logic only fits with the first reason of the stringency to wait after hard cheese- the firmness. However, based on the second reason, which is the cheese's potent flavor, melted cheese should be no different and waiting should still be required.

A possible resolution to the conflicting view of *Yad Yehuda*, is that according to his perspective the main reason for waiting after hard cheese is **only** because of the firmness. According to his reasoning, the strong flavor discussed by early authorities is not additional reason behind the stringency to wait, but rather it is a sign of the cheese being firm. If so, the *Yad Yehuda* does not accept the basis of potent flavored cheese requiring an interval of time before



eating meat. As such, once hard cheese has been softened, meat may be eaten without waiting (see Appendix to *Yad Yehuda* by Rav Efraim Landau). Certain authorities (see *Ohel Yaakov* 89 note 58), felt that there is a basis to rely on the *Yad Yehuda*. However, other *poskim* have taken an opposite approach (Ibid quoting Rav Moshe Shternbuch). They felt that in order to remove the waiting period between hard cheese and meat, the cheese would have to mixed in with other foods, be completely melted, and not visible (as in certain dairy soups). They ruled that anything less would require a waiting period until one could eat meat.

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OU policy has been to take a middle ground. Rav Yisroel Belsky felt that both reasons for waiting after consumption of hard cheese apply. However, as opposed to the stringent view, he states that there is room to be lenient under two conditions. Rav Belsky felt (this was also his understanding of the *Yad Yehuda* cited above) that if the hard cheese was

melted so it lost its hardness **and** was mixed in with other foods so that its flavor was not so pronounced, (as opposed to if it was eaten whole,) waiting before eating meat is not required. Based on this ruling, one would have to wait after eating “Caesar salad” made with Parmesan cheese since the first condition is not fulfilled (cheese being softened). The same applies to a focaccia or a bagel with melted Romano on top, since the second condition is not met (being a mixture). However, if someone adds Parmesan cheese to a lasagna that has sauce, and other cheeses, one need not wait before eating meat since both conditions apply: the cheese is mixed well with other foods and is softened by cooking.

It would seem that according to Rav Belsky, if a pungent but not halachically “hard” cheese (because it was not aged six months see part 1 of this series) was mixed with other foods, no waiting time is required. For example, after eating a salad with Limburger cheese added, no waiting period would be needed before eating meat. ■

Kashrut Questions in Israel?

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