



# Milk and Meat on the Same Table Part 2

In the *Mishna* in *Chulin* (8:2), R. Shimon Ben Gamliel ruled that when two people are sitting at the same table and one is eating meat and the other dairy, there is no concern that one will eat from another's plate. The *Gemara* adds that this is true under one condition, that they (the diners) are not eating *K'ein Betefisa Achat* (literally, one grasp). *Tosafot* (*Chulin* 107:B) explains the term *Tefisa Achat* as follows; two acquaintances can eat together, as long as there is something out of place on the table as a sign or warning in order to remind those eating not to mix the meat and milk. This signal is called a **hekeir** (visual reminder) in halacha. In short, *Tefisa Achat* is when there is no sign.

The *Shulchan Aruch* (88:2) ruled like *Tosafot*, that if two people are eating together yet with a *hekeir* between them, then they are allowed to eat at the same table. If no *hekeir* is present, they must stop eating until a *hekeir* is placed. (*Badei Hashulchan* 88:4)

What qualifies as a *hekeir*? What object can be used as a signal to remind one that meat and milk are being eaten at the same table?

Early authorities have different opinions regarding the *hekeir*. The *Rosh* (*Chulin* 8:20) mentions that the *hekeir* should be between the individuals who are eating, similar to a wall that separates them. The *Isur V'heter* (40:14) mentions that the obvious reminder should be something that is not usually on the table during a meal, and slightly large. The *Hagahot Oshri* (on the *Rosh* Ibid) states that even foods can be used as a *hekeir*, as long as they are not eaten at the table during that meal. The same applies to using a pitcher or dish that is not in use during that meal. There are many examples of *hekeirim*. Here are a few:

1. A placemat for one or both of the diners; or, one of them may use the tablecloth while the other eats directly from the table (based on *Rema* 88:2, *Darchei Teshuva* 88:2).
2. A lamp, centerpiece, or other utensil not normally on the table may be used as a *hekeir* (*Taz* 88:2, *Shach* 88:6). The object must be of sufficient size to be noticeable. However, objects that are relatively obscure such as keys or small jewelry cannot



be used as a *hekeir* (*Kaf Hachaim* 88:26, *Sefer Hakashrut* 10:24 note 59).

Another option to allow people to eat milk and meat at the same table is to keep a large space between them. This is based on the rationale that one might partake or mix one's food with the others. When this is impractical such as a case where one cannot reach the other food due to distance, no *hekeir* is required (*Pitchei Tehuva* 88:3, *Aruch Hashulchan* 88:8).

In many areas of *halacha*, there is a concept to remind someone else in areas of risk to keep a *halacha*. For example, the *Shulchan Aruch* (OH 275:3) rules that one may read by candlelight on Shabbat evening only if he asks someone to remind him not to tilt the candle. The question arises regarding the *halacha* of not having milk and meat on the same table. Is appointing someone to ensure the parties don't mix milk and meat sufficient, even without a *hekeir*? R. Akiva Eiger rules that a *shomer* (guard) cannot be used to circumvent the decree of not having meat and milk on the same table. The *Gan Hamelech* (88:71) explains that since the decree of meat and milk require constant supervision because of the suspicion that the foods might mix, a *shomer* is not sufficient. This is different from other

*halachot* where minimal supervision is required.

Another option to circumvent the decree prohibiting milk and meat at the same table is cited by the *Pitchei Teshuva* (YD 88:4). The *Pitchei Teshuva* learns from the *Responsa Maset Binyamin* (112) an innovative way to obviate using a *hekier*. He claims that if others are eating together on the same table with the parties who are eating either milk or meat, then a *hekeir* is not required. (It would seem that the *Pitchei Teshuva* meant that the other parties eating with them are consuming *parve*, since if they were eating either milk or meat, they too would be faced with the same question of how to have milk and meat on the same table). The *Badei Hashulchan* disagrees stating that a clear sign is required to circumvent the prohibition, and it's not enough to have other people at the table. Many *poskim* agree with the *Badei Hashulchan* and require a *hekeir* regardless of the number of people at the table (*Atzei HaOlah* 88:6, *Megilat Sefer* 88:3). This was also the position of Rav Yisroel Belsky (OU posek).

These *halachot* are quite applicable in many areas:

1. Two people on friendly terms may not eat milk and meat on the same table unless they place a noticeable

object in between them to remind them not to share food. In a situation where the table is long, so much so that they cannot reach each other's food, no object is required.

2. Additional people joining the meal, or having a friend remind you not to mix the foods, are not sufficient alternatives to putting an obvious object as a reminder.
3. When eating together in a school cafeteria or a mall food-court, one person eating dairy and the other meat, a mat or tray should be placed for at least one of them, if not both; or an object should be placed between them. Eating on a school backpack can also be

considered a *hekeir*, but merely eating out of plastic bags is not sufficient. In places where they use trays on a constant basis, separate trays (if they are the same color) are not enough and a different object is required. (If the trays have different colors for milk and meat, it is sufficient. *Responsa Yevakesh Torah* YD:6).

4. Two strangers may sit together at a park table even though one is eating meat and the other dairy. ■

## Kashrut Questions in Israel?

Call or Whatsapp Rabbi Friedman at  
050-200-4432

The Women's Performance Community of Jerusalem & OU Israel present Virtual Event

# My Yerushalayim

FOR WOMEN  
ONLY

WEDNESDAY, MAY 20, 8:00 PM



**BAKA**  
CHAYA TICKER



**HAR HOMA**  
RITA RIVKA LEWY



**KATAMON**  
DIANA SCHIOWITZ



**KATAMON**  
RIVKA DERAY

Discover  
Jerusalem's  
Neighborhoods  
through  
SONG & STORY

Join us on ZOOM.  
Link to be posted.  
[facebook.com/wpcjerusalem](https://www.facebook.com/wpcjerusalem)  
or  
[facebook.com/OUISrael](https://www.facebook.com/OUISrael)



**NACHLAOT**  
SARAH LEAH RODIN



**RAMAT ESHKOL**  
JUDY FRIDKIS



**SAN SIMONE**  
SHLOMIT KOVALSKI  
& FAGIE DEANA FEIN



**YERUSHALAYIM**  
SHEL ZAHAV  
MICHAL LOURENCO  
& RIVKA DERAY



OU ISRAEL CENTER

22 KEREN HAYESOD, YERUSHALAYIM

WWW.OUISRAEL.ORG