



Milk and Meat on the Same Table

Part 3

In a decree to prevent transgressing “*Basar B’chalav*” (a mixture of meat and milk), our Sages prohibited having meat and milk on the same table during a meal out of concern that one might come to eat them together.

Based on the *Gemara* (*Chulin* 104a) and *Rishonim*, this decree applies only to the eating of meat and milk (not the waiting between them, though see below), and only in a place where the food is being eaten (not storage). As mentioned in previous articles, it is permissible to have meat and milk next to each other on a counter or in the fridge.

All halachic authorities (see *Badei Hashulchan* 88:2) agree that following

the consumption of meat, one is permitted to handle dairy, whether it be storing the food or preparing for a dairy meal. (In general, normative Jewish law accepts the decree of our Sages as stated. The *poskim* avoid adding additional stringencies upon existing Rabbinic decrees unless there is strong basis in halachic literature to do so.)

Beit Yaakov (R. Yaakov of Tzozimer, *siman* 12) raises a question regarding someone who has eaten meat and is still waiting the required time afterwards, and now wishes to sit down to eat with someone who is eating dairy. The *Beit Yaakov* states that he is only permitted to do so if a *hekeir* (obvious reminder) is present. This ruling stems from the concern that the person who ate meat will forget and mistakenly consume dairy. Many *Achronim* (*Teshuva MiAhava* 3:331, *Yad Efraim* 88 and *Kanfei Yona* 88), however, disagree with the *Beit Yaakov*, as his ruling is not based in previous sources. Modern *poskim*, therefore, rule against the *Beit Yaakov* (*Yalkut Yosef* 88 note 38, *Ohel Yaakov* 88:10) and no *hekeir* would be required in this situation.

Eating meat alone while dairy is present (or vice versa)

The *Gemara* in *Chulin* (ibid) discusses



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the halachic ruling regarding two people sitting at a table where milk and meat are being eaten. What about a person who sits alone eating meat, while milk is on the table (or vice versa)?

The *Maharam* of Rothenberg (Reponsa 12) rules that someone eating alone is forbidden to have milk and meat together at his table; merely having a *hekeir* would be insufficient. He learns from a Gemara in *Shabbat* (13a) that both a *heiker* and another person must be present at the table to ensure that no transgression occurs.

The *Chochmat Adam* (40:11), however, disagrees with the *Maharam*. He maintains that there is no difference between one or two people, and a *hekeir* should suffice. (See *Teshuvot Vehanhagot* 2:396 which reconciles the Gemara in *Shabbat* according to *Chochmat Adam*.)

Many later authorities ruled like the *Maharam* of Rothenberg (*Darchei Teshuva* 88:18; *Badei HaShulchan* 88).

Rav Moshe Shternbuch (*Teshuvot Vehanhagot* 2:396) rules that a *hekeir* alone would not suffice. However, he permits eating if there is a large distance between the diner and the food of the opposite type.

A practical application of the halacha

would be when someone wants to eat dairy at a table where meat food is placed temporarily in order to cool down after being cooked. One may do so as long as he sits at a distance from the meat food. If that is not possible, he may not eat dairy at the same table.

Eating together with a baby or young child at the table

A baby or young child cannot serve as a reminder, and therefore it is not considered as if one is dining with another individual. Thus, a *hekeir* alone would be insufficient (*Yalkut Yosef* 88 note 21, *Ohel Yaakov* 88 note 25). This issue is quite common when feeding a baby or young child dairy while the adult is eating meat or vice versa. One should refrain from doing so altogether, or alternatively the adult must remove his own food when feeding the child. However, when eating with children above the age of six who have been taught to separate meat and milk, their presence is a sufficient reminder together with a *hekeir*. ■

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