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חקות החיים

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO THE
LAWS OF KASHRUT

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Meat and Milk

(בשר בחלב)

The prohibition of eating milk and meat together is mentioned three times in the Torah¹. Our sages tell us that the reason for this repetition is because the Torah wanted to tell us that, in reality, there are three different prohibitions included in this commandment:²

1. Cooking: It is forbidden to cook the meat of a kosher, tame animal with the milk of a kosher, tame animal.³
2. Eating: According to Torah law, milk and meat that were cooked together may not be eaten. However, the rabbis forbade eating milk and meat together even if they were never cooked together and both are cold.

1. *Shemot* 29/19, 34/26; *Devarim* 14/21.

2. *Chullin* 115b, *Shulchan Aruch Y.D.* 87/1.

3. In essence, it is permitted to cook chicken or the meat of a kosher, untamed animal with milk, but only if it is clear that the meat is not from a kosher, tame animal and that the meat is not intended for consumption by Jews.

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3. Benefit: One may not gain benefit from the meat of a tame animal that was cooked with milk (e.g., by selling to a non-Jew). If they were mixed together in a cold state (e.g., cold meat sandwich with cheese), there is no prohibition to gain benefit.⁴

PROHIBITED MIXTURES OF KOSHER AND NON-KOSHER FOOD (תערובות)

The laws of mixtures can be divided into two major categories:

1. *Yavesh be-yavesh* (a mixture of dry substances): For example a mixture of three separate, indistinguishable pieces of meat, two of which are kosher and one not. In this instance we follow the Torah principle of going after the majority⁵ and all three pieces are permitted.⁶
2. *Lach be-lach* (a mixture of wet substances): For example milk falling into the cholent pot. In this instance the *halacha* applies the principle of *ta'am ke'ikar* – the taste is akin to the actual substance.⁷ In other words as long as the taste is present, the *issur* (prohibited food) is present. Since tasting this mixture is obviously problematic, the *halacha* only permits its consumption if there are sixty parts of cholent per part of milk.⁸

Milk cooked in a meat pot on the fire (כלי ראשון)

If one cooks milk in a meat pot, it does not suffice to rinse the pot with water. Since the pot has previously absorbed meat taste, it must be *kashered*⁹.

4. Similarly, there is no prohibition to gain benefit from meat of an untamed animal or chicken cooked with milk.
5. *Shemot* 23/2.
6. See *Shulchan Aruch Y.D.* 109/1 that it is still forbidden to eat all three pieces at once. On a rabbinic level this law only applies to a piece of meat smaller than a piece one would regularly serve a guest (*chaticha ha-re'uya le'hitkabed*).
7. *Pesachim* 44a.
8. *Chullin* 97a, *Shulchan Aruch Y.D.* 98,1; for the source of the number sixty see *Chullin* 98a.
9. *Shulchan Aruch Y.D.* 93/1.

Moreover, the milk itself is *treif* and must be thrown out (because it absorbed the meat taste in the pot).

A utensil that was not used in the last 24 hours (כלי שאינו בן יומו)

The *halacha* rules that taste particles in a pot turn stale after 24 hours of not being used, therefore the taste particles subsequently emitted from that pot will also be stale (*noten ta'am li'fgam*). Hence, if one cooks meat in a milk pot that has not been used in the last 24 hours (*eino ben-yomo*), the food is still kosher.¹⁰ Nevertheless, the Sages decreed that the pot still needs to be *kashered* in order to prevent mistakes from occurring.¹¹

Milk spoon inserted into meat food

If one inserts a milk spoon into a hot meat stew:

1. If the volume of the food is 60 times greater than that of the spoon – the food and the pot are kosher and only the spoon needs to be *kashered*.
2. If the volume of the food is less than 60 times greater than that of the spoon – the food needs to be thrown away and both the spoon and the pot need to be *kashered*.¹²
3. If the spoon was not *ben-yomo* the food is permitted although the spoon requires *hag'ala* – immersion in a pot of boiling water.¹³

Milk spoon inserted into pareve food

If one inserted a milk spoon into *pareve* food being cooked in a meat pot:

According to Sefaradi custom the pot and spoon are kosher. Furthermore, the food may be eaten at a meat or milk meal.¹⁴

According to Ashkenazi custom, it depends on whether the pot

10. *Ibid.*

11. See *Shulchan Aruch Y.D.* 122/2 that the Rabbis were concerned that if people started initially (*le'chatchila*) cooking meat in milk pots that were not used in the last 24 hours – then they might come to using pots that were used in the past 24 hours (*bnei-yoman*).

12. *Shulchan Aruch Y.D.* 94/1.

13. *Shulchan Aruch Y.D.* 94/4.

14. *Shulchan Aruch Y.D.* 95/3.

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and the spoon were *bnei-yoman*. If neither were *bnei-yoman*, the pot and spoon are kosher. Furthermore, the food may be eaten at a milk or meat meal.

If either the pot or the spoon was *eino-ben-yomo* and the other utensil was *ben-yomo*, (for example one stirred vegetables on the stove with a milk *eino-ben-yomo* spoon in a meat *ben-yomo* pot) the food may be eaten, but ideally only on a meat plate at a meat meal.¹⁵ It is the custom to *kasher* the spoon in such a case.¹⁶

If both the pot and spoon were *bnei-yoman*, the utensils need *kashering* and the food is forbidden unless its volume is sixty times the volume of the spoon. If this is the case, it is permissible to eat the food at a meat or milk meal.¹⁷

Cold milk in a meat pot

If one pours cold milk into a meat pot – it suffices to rinse out the pot with cold water (since the milk was not absorbed into the pot but was only on its surface).

What is halachically considered heat?

According to the Talmud¹⁸ *yad soledet bo* (so hot that it makes one withdraw one's hand) is considered the minimum level of heat required to facilitate absorption of taste by a utensil. It has been determined that *yad soledet bo* is equivalent to at least 45 degrees Celsius (113 Fahrenheit).¹⁹

If milk was heated in a meat pot at a lower temperature, the pot does not need *kashering* and it is sufficient to rinse it out thoroughly.

Keli sheni

Keli sheni is the vessel into which food was transferred from the *keli rishon* i.e., the vessel that was in direct contact with the fire. Halachically since a *keli sheni*'s "walls" are not hot it does not cook to the extent of a *keli*

15. *Shach* Y.D. 94/18.

16. *Peri Megadim, Mishbetzot Zahav* 94/9.

17. *Rema ibid.* and *Taz* 95/8.

18. *Shabbat* 40b.

19. *Minchat Shlomo* 1/91.

rishon.²⁰ Nevertheless the mixture of milk and meat in a *keli sheni* is still problematic as will be explained.²¹

Examples of a *keli sheni* are plates, cups and bowls.

Milk cutlery in meat plates and bowls

Ideally one should not insert a milk spoon into a bowl or cup containing a hot (*yad soledet bo*) meat food. If by mistake the spoon was inserted, then *bedi'eved* (post factum) the food is permitted but:

1. Only if disposing of the food will cause a financial loss²² (for the exact definition of financial loss one should consult a Rabbi).
2. The vessel needs to be *kashered*.

Hot meat foods placed on a milk plate

According to Ashkenazim, if a hot piece of meat (*yad soledet bo*) was placed on a milk plate, since the meat is a solid – *davar gush* – it retains its heat as if it is still inside the *keli rishon*.

Sefaradim do not subscribe to this stringency, and the laws of *keli sheni* apply to the food placed on the plate.

Therefore, for Ashkenazim:

1. The plate needs to be *kashered* in all instances.
2. If the plate was *eino ben-yomo* (not used for hot food in the last 24 hours) the meat is kosher.
3. If the plate was *ben-yomo*: one is required to cut off, with a knife, a thin slice of the meat that came into contact with the plate (*kedei kellipa*).²³

20. *Shabbat* 40b, Tosafot s.v. “*shema minah*”.

21. See further *Shulchan Aruch* *Y.D.* 105/2.

22. *Taz* *Y.D.* 105/4.

23. *Shulchan Aruch* *Y.D.* 105/3. This is based on the principle known as *תתאה גבר*, that the lower entity impacts upon the upper one.

Cutting cold foods with a knife

A knife which is normally used for cutting meat retains fats which cannot be removed with regular rinsing. Therefore it is forbidden to cut cheese with a meat knife even if they are both cold.²⁴

If one cut hard yellow cheese with a meat knife, one is required to rinse off the cheese.

If one cuts soft fruits with a meat knife and wants to eat them with milk, one must scrape off the layer of fruit which came into contact with the knife.²⁵

The above applies even if the knife was not used in the last 24 hours.²⁶

Rinsing the fruits will not suffice here since it will cause the fats on them to penetrate deeper.

In order to kasher the knife in these cases, where everything was cold, one must rinse it thoroughly with steel wool and liquid soap.²⁷

If one cut bread with a clean milk knife, it is permissible to eat the bread with meat.²⁸

Ideally every Jewish home should have two sets of knives, for meat and for milk,²⁹ and also a *pareve* knife designated only for cutting bread and vegetables.

Cutting hot meat foods with a milk knife

If one cuts a hot piece of meat with a milk knife that is *ben-yomo*³⁰ – there needs to be 60 times more meat than the blade of the knife in order for the meat to be permitted. Nevertheless, one is required to remove a layer of meat with which the knife made contact from both sides which is approximately 2 cm (*kedei netilla*).³¹

24. *Shulchan Aruch Y.D.* 89/4.

25. *Shulchan Aruch Y.D.* 96/5.

26. *Noten ta'am li'fgam* does not apply here since the fat is considered to be present on the surface of the knife rather than absorbed in it.

27. This is the present day equivalent to piercing the knife into soil.

28. *Taz Y.D.* 89/7.

29. *Rema Y.D.* 89/4.

30. Used to cut boiling hot milk food in the last 24 hours.

31. *Shulchan Aruch Y.D.* 105/4.

If the meat was cut in a *keli sheni* (e.g., plate), Sefaradim can be lenient.³²

If the knife was clean and *eino ben-yomo* then the meat is permitted regardless of the ratio between the knife and the meat.³³

In both of the above cases the knife requires *hag'ala*.

Milk lid placed on a meat pot

If one mistakenly placed a milk *ben-yomo* lid on top of a meat pot that was on the fire, the pot and the lid need to be *kashered*, and the food is *treif* – since vapor that evaporates from the meat comes into contact with the lid and condenses back into the pot.³⁴

If the lid was *eino ben-yomo* only the lid needs to be *kashered*.

Pickling (כבוש)

According to Jewish law, pickled food (food immersed in a liquid for 24 hours) has the same status as cooked food (*kavush ki'mevushal*).³⁵

Therefore if one placed a milk food together with a meat food in liquid for 24 hours, both foods are forbidden.

Similarly, if one placed cold milk in a meat pot (not on the fire) for 24 hours, the pot needs to be *kashered*. Nevertheless the milk itself is still considered kosher.³⁶

Regarding sharp foods (see pg. 31) the pickling process is much more rapid (6–18 minutes). It is therefore recommended that when storing pickled cucumbers or onions etc., one should use a *pareve* utensil.

Pareve foods that were cooked in meat or milk utensils (נ"ט בר נ"ט)

If potatoes were cooked in a clean meat pot and one would like to eat them with milk:

32. As noted above Sefaradim are not stringent with regard to a *Davar Gush*.

33. See *Shach* 94/29.

34. *Shulchan Aruch Y.D.* 93/1.

35. *Shulchan Aruch Y.D.* 105/1. It is important to note that the above principle is rabbinic in nature. Therefore in case of doubt one may be lenient.

36. The reason for this is that the food is only considered cooked after 24 hours, at which time the vessel is not *ben-yomo*, so the pot emits a *ta'am lifgam* and the milk is still kosher!

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1. According to the Sefaradi custom one may do so.³⁷
2. According to the Ashkenazi custom it is forbidden but we are lenient if:
 - a. The potatoes are already mixed with milk.
 - b. The potatoes were cooked in a meat pot that was not used for meat in the last 24 hours. (*eino ben-yomo*)

Furthermore:

- a. The potatoes can be eaten on a milk plate (but should be transferred onto the plate with a meat spoon).
- b. One can eat milk after eating the potatoes without waiting.
- c. One may use a milk vessel which is not *ben-yomo* to cook *pareve* food to be eaten with meat, if one does not have a vessel which is *pareve*, or meat, which would be suitable³⁸.

Pareve foods cooked in a milk or meat oven

If a *pareve* dry food (e.g., bread) was cooked in a clean meat oven one is permitted to eat that food with milk. Likewise, if the food was cooked in a milk oven it may be used with meat.³⁹

If one wishes to cook a *pareve* food that contains liquid in an oven previously used for meat, in order to eat it with milk, one should first *kasher* the oven (clean thoroughly and turn on the maximum heat for half an hour). If the *pareve* food was cooked without initially *kashering* the oven one may eat it at a milk meal, but may not mixed eat it together with milk foods.

“Sharp” foods (דבר חריף)

“Sharp” foods are defined as any foods whose taste is as strong, or stronger than, a radish. This includes onions, garlic, horseradish, very salty fish (herring), strong spices, cucumbers pickled in a strong brine etc.

There are 3 stringencies we have regarding “sharp” foods:

37. *Shulchan Aruch* Y.D. 95/1. According to Rav Ovadia Yosef, Sefaradim may do this *le'hatchila* (see introduction to *Yalkut Yosef, Issur veHeter* 3).

38. See *Chochmat Adam* 48/2.

39. *Iggerot Moshe* Y.D. 1/40.

1. Even when they are cold they can absorb the taste of a knife when cut by it, i.e., when they are cut with a meat knife they themselves become meaty.⁴⁰
Note: this stringency only applies if the knife has been used at some stage with boiling hot meat or milk.
2. The lenient principle of *nat bar nat*, mentioned above regarding a case where a *pareve* food was cooked in a milk or meat utensil, with “sharp” foods. Therefore even if the onions were cooked in a clean meat pot they lose their status of being *pareve* and become meaty.⁴¹
3. When “sharp” foods come into contact with utensils that have not been used in the last 24 hours for meat/milk (*einam bnei yoman*), they are able to extract the taste out of them and the taste is not considered *ta’am lifgam*.⁴²
Note: Sefaradim can be lenient regarding law 3, in a case of great financial loss.⁴³

According to Ashkenazim all stringencies apply.

Therefore:

If one cuts onions with a meat knife, they may not be eaten with milk. However, if the onion was sixty times larger than the amount of the knife which penetrated it, the onion may be eaten after removing two centimeters from each side that came into contact with the knife.

If one cuts onions with a meat knife (that had been used in the past to cut boiling meat) and they are subsequently fried, by themselves,⁴⁴ in a milk pan, – the onions are *treif* and the pan needs to be *kashered*. Nevertheless if the onions were prepared in a soup and not fried, the onions remain *pareve*.

One should be careful when serving horseradish (*chrein*) not to use a meat spoon since the spoon can make the *chrein* meaty through pickling.⁴⁵

40. Chullin 111b, Shulchan Aruch Y.D. 96/1.

41. Rema Y.D. 95/2.

42. Avoda Zara 39a, Shulchan Aruch Y.D. 103/6.

43. Kaf HaChaim Y.D. 96/10.

44. If the onions were fried together with other non-sharp food *bitul* may occur.

45. Pickling in “sharp” food occurs very rapidly. Opinions vary from 6 to 18 minutes.

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If one fries onions, by themselves, in a meat pan and stirs with a milk spoon:

1. If the pot and the spoon are *ben-yomo*, they both need to be *kashered* and the onions are forbidden.
2. If the pot and the spoon are *einam-bnei-yoman* – everything needs *kashering* and the onions are forbidden.
3. When the onions are fried, they take on the status of meat and are no longer classified as “sharp”. Hence, if the milk spoon is inserted when the onions were *already fried*:
 - a. If the spoon was *ben-yomo* the spoon and the pot need *kashering* and the onions are forbidden.
 - b. If the spoon was *eino-ben-yomo*, the onions and the pot are kosher⁴⁶ and only the spoon needs *kashering*.

If one ate an onion cut with a meat knife, one does not have to wait afterwards in order to eat milk.⁴⁷

Note: In order to avoid all of the above problems one should always cut vegetables with a *pareve* knife on a *pareve* board!

SEPARATING BETWEEN EATING MILK AND MEAT

Eating milk after meat

Beyond the Torah prohibition to eat meat (or chicken) and milk that were cooked together, the sages decreed that one may not eat milk immediately after eating meat without an intermission from one meal time to the next.⁴⁸

Two reasons are given for this decree:

46. Since the onions now have the status of meat and not “sharp” foods, we do not apply stringency (3) mentioned above.
47. *Chidushei R' Akiva Eiger on Shach Y.D.* 89/19. However, there are opinions that if one eats meat, one should wait 6 hours before eating an onion cut with a milk knife.
48. *Chullin* 105a.

1. After eating meat, some of it remains in one's teeth for six hours and if one eats milk in that time, one is eating meat with milk.⁴⁹
2. Until six hours the meat is not fully digested and one still has the taste of meat in one's mouth.⁵⁰

Halachically both reasons are accepted as valid.⁵¹ Therefore:

If one only chewed on meat but did not swallow, he still has to wait before eating milk (according to reason 1).

If one tasted meat without chewing or swallowing he does not have to wait. However he is required to eat something *pareve* that does not stick to the mouth⁵² (*kinu'ach*) and to rinse out his mouth (*hadacha*) before eating milk products.

If the interval has passed and one still has meat between his teeth, the meat has to be removed before eating milk (according to reason 2, since the digestion begins only after swallowing). In this case *kinu'ach* and *hadacha* also have to be performed.

One is required to wait even after eating *pareve* foods that were cooked in the same pot with meat. However, if they were cooked in a clean meat pot there is no obligation to wait.

One who swallows a tablet which contains meat does not have to wait before eating milk but it should not be swallowed together with milk.

The time interval between eating meat and milk

The time interval is counted from the cessation of eating meat and not from the end of the meal.

There are different customs among Jews regarding the time period of this interval: Sefaradim (and many Ashkenazim) generally wait six hours (the time between two meals on an average day).⁵³ Many

49. *Rambam Ma'achalot Assurot* 9/28.

50. *Tur Y.D.* 89.

51. *Shulchan Aruch Y.D.* 89/1.

52. For example a biscuit is recommended whilst dates are not.

53. *Shulchan Aruch Y.D.* 89/1.

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Ashkenazim have a custom to wait three hours.⁵⁴ The custom of Dutch Jews is to wait one hour.

Children or sick people should ideally wait for one hour.⁵⁵

Eating meat after milk

After eating milk products one does not have to wait in order to eat meat. Nevertheless *hadacha* and *kinu'ach*⁵⁶ are required. One is also required to clean one's hands before eating meat after eating cheese.⁵⁷

If one wants to eat chicken after eating milk products one is only required to check that his hands are clean; *hadacha* and *kinu'ach* are not required.⁵⁸

There are those who have the custom to wait after eating hard cheese,⁵⁹ for the same amount of time that they would wait after eating meat, in order to eat milk.

Separation of meat and milk eaten at the table

It is forbidden to eat meat at a table which has milk placed on it and vice versa.⁶⁰

Similarly it is forbidden to eat meat at a table where someone else is eating a milk meal out of concern that one will come to partake of the other's meal.

In order for this to be permitted one is required to change something at the table, e.g., placing an object on the table that is not usually found there as a separation, or eating on different place mats.

A table cloth that was used for a milk meal may not be eaten on directly during a meat meal and vice versa.⁶¹

54. See Rabeinu Yerucham Issur Ve'heter 39, *Peri Chadash* 89/6 and *Darhei Teshuva* 89/1/6 in the name of the *Mizmor leDavid*.

55. HaRav Shlomo Levi, *shlita*; see also *Yabia Omer Y.D.* 1/4.

56. There are *posekim* who maintain that if one only drank milk and did not eat cheese one does not need *kinu'ach* and *hadacha* is sufficient.

57. *Shulchan Aruch Y.D.* 89/2.

58. Since the prohibition to eat chicken with milk is only of rabbinic origin.

59. Blue Cheese (*Taz Y.D.* 89/4) or cheese that has undergone an ageing process of six months (*Shach Y.D.* 89/15).

60. *Shulchan Aruch Y.D.* 88/1.

61. *Shulchan Aruch Y.D.* 89/4 with *Pitchei Teshuva ad loc.*