



Dairy Bread

The prohibitions against cooking, consuming, or deriving benefit from a mixture of meat and milk are well known and extensively detailed in Halacha. Equally significant are the rabbinic safeguards instituted by Our Sages surrounding these prohibitions. These include restrictions such as eating meat and dairy on the same table without a separation, waiting between the consumption of meat and milk, and many others.

Chazal established these safeguards because both meat and milk are independently permissible foods. Since they are intrinsically kosher and commonly consumed, the possibility of accidentally mixing them is substantial. Therefore, strict preventative measures were enacted to avoid any violation even close to *Basar Bechalav*.

One of the lesser-known rabbinic decrees in this area is the prohibition against producing dairy bread.

THE SOURCE

The *Gemara* in *Pesachim* (31:a) relates that רבי יהושע בן לוי advised his sons to knead dough with milk. The *Gemara* questions this practice and concludes that it is prohibited to bake bread with milk because it may lead to sin. Rashi explains that the concern is straightforward: dairy bread may mistakenly be eaten together with meat, resulting in a violation of *Basar Bechalav*.

The *Pri Chadash* (YD 97:1) further explains

the rationale behind this decree. Bread is a staple food served at virtually every meal, and it is uncommon to designate bread specifically for either dairy or meat meals. *Chazal* therefore feared that if dairy bread were permitted, it could easily be consumed with meat.

Although the *Gemara* discusses dairy bread explicitly, it is evident from other sources that the same concern applies to meat bread as well (see *Pesachim* 30:b). The *Gemara* does not focus on meat bread because such cases were either less common or because visible pieces of meat in the bread would generally make its status obvious, thereby reducing the concern for confusion (see *Aruch Hashulchan* YD 97:3).

BASIC PARAMETERS OF THE DECREE

Like many rabbinic enactments, this decree functions as a broad and binding prohibition with practical ramifications in numerous situations. Although the *Gemara* itself records certain exceptions, we will focus here on the fundamental parameters of the prohibition.

If milk or dairy products such as butter or cream are mixed into dough and baked into bread, the bread becomes prohibited for consumption — even when eaten with dairy foods. Once such bread is produced in violation of the decree, it may not be eaten and must be discarded. It may not be given to others for consumption (*Shulchan Aruch* YD 97:1).

This prohibition applies regardless of the circumstances. For example, it remains in effect even if the baker is vegetarian or if the bread was made during the Nine Days, when meat consumption is traditionally avoided.



Likewise, the decree still applies even if the only available meat is chicken, even though the prohibition against mixing chicken and milk is rabbinic rather than Biblical in nature (see *Pri Megadim* 97:1).

The *Chatam Sofer* (YD 107) adds that the prohibition is not limited to bread kneaded by a Jew. Even if a Jew instructs a non-Jew to prepare the dough, the resulting bread remains prohibited because it was produced on behalf of a Jew.

INADVERTENT MIXING

The *Poskim* discuss a case in which milk was inadvertently added to bread dough. Does the prohibition still apply *bedi'eved* (after the fact)?

The *Pri Megadim* (Ibid) analyzes this issue by examining the nature of the decree itself. He questions whether the prohibition serves primarily as a penalty for disregarding the enactments of Our Sages, or whether it is fundamentally rooted in the practical concern that dairy bread may eventually be eaten with meat.

If the prohibition is punitive in nature, one could argue that bread baked accidentally with milk should remain permitted, since no intentional violation occurred. However, if the decree is based on the ongoing concern of confusion and accidental mixing, then the bread would remain prohibited regardless of how the milk was added.

The accepted ruling appears to follow the more stringent approach: even when milk was added inadvertently, the bread remains prohibited (See *Pesakim Uteshuvot* 97:3).

CRACKERS AND SIMILAR PRODUCTS

Later authorities discuss whether this decree applies only to bread or also to other baked goods made from dough whose *berachah* is *Borei Minei Mezonot*. Although products such as bourekas and croissants warrant separate discussion, crackers present a particularly relevant case because they are commonly eaten with both meat and dairy foods.

Some *Poskim* adopt a stringent position regarding dairy crackers (*Pesakim Uteshuvot* 97:5). However, Yisroel Belsky maintained that crackers were never included in the original decree of Chazal, which was directed specifically toward bread and bread-like staples.

Based on Rav Belsky's ruling, OU Kosher certifies certain dairy crackers and labels them with an "OU-D" designation.

We will continue in the coming weeks by exploring additional details and applications of these *halachot*. ■

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