



Dairy Challah on Shavuot

Our Sages instituted many decrees relating to the possible mixture of milk and meat. One such decree is the prohibition against making dairy bread — meaning bread baked with dairy ingredients such as milk or butter mixed into the dough. Since dairy bread often appears identical to regular pareve bread, and because bread is a staple of nearly every meal, *Chazal* were concerned that one might mistakenly eat dairy bread together with meat, thereby violating the prohibition of *Basar Bechalav*.

Nevertheless, there are certain exceptions that permit the production of dairy bread, as we will discuss below. This halacha is particularly relevant in connection with the upcoming holiday of *Shavuot*.

WHAT IS A DAVAR MU'AT?

The *Gemara* in *Pesachim* (36:a) rules that although making dairy bread is generally prohibited, if it is made “*Ke’ein Tura*” it is permissible both to produce and consume. There are different interpretations of this term. *Rashi* and several other commentators (see *Hagahot Sha’arei Dura* 60:2) explain it to mean that one may bake only a small amount. In halachic terminology, this is referred to as a *Davar Mu’at* — literally, “a small amount.”

The rationale is straightforward: a small

quantity is typically designated for immediate use at a specific meal, and therefore the baker will remember that the bread is dairy and use it only for a dairy or pareve meal. *Chazal’s* concern was primarily with larger quantities that might remain for a later meal, at which point one could forget that the bread is dairy and inadvertently eat it with meat.

Shulchan Aruch rules, following *Rashi*, that a “small amount” refers to enough bread for only one meal (YD 97:1). Any quantity beyond that is prohibited. If one baked more than this amount, the entire batch would become prohibited for consumption.

Rema (ibid), however, citing the *Terumat HaDeshen*, disagrees and maintains that the amount of bread normally consumed over the course of one full day is still considered a *Davar Mu’at*. Although the source of this dispute is not entirely clear, it would seem that according to *Rema*, one day is still considered a short enough period that a person will remember the bread’s dairy status.

DETAILS OF DAVAR MU’AT

The ruling of *Rashi* appears quite strict and inflexible. According to *Rema*, however, several practical questions arise.

For example, if someone bakes dairy *challot* on Thursday for Shabbat, would the passage of time prohibit the *challot* from being considered a *Davar Mu’at*? Another question concerns *Seudah Shlishit*. In many communities, especially in shul, the meal can continue past *shekiyah*. Would one then be required to stop eating dairy challah once Shabbat has ended?

The answer to these questions is



straightforward. Although *Rema* permits enough bread for one full day, the definition is based on the amount normally eaten for that occasion — not necessarily on a strict twenty-four-hour period. Therefore, if it is clear that the *challot* were baked specifically for Shabbat meals, they may be baked on Thursday for use on Shabbat. Likewise, regarding *Seudah Shlishit*, if the *challah* was baked for the meals of that day, one may continue eating the leftovers even after *shekiyah*, since the original baking was within the permitted amount.

Aruch HaShulchan (YD 97:4) and other authorities' further rule that the measurement of a *Davar Mu'at* depends not only on one individual, but on the number of people participating in the meal. Accordingly, a large family may bake a much greater quantity of dairy bread, provided it will be consumed within the permitted timeframe. The same applies to large festive meals, such as a *Sheva Berachot* or *Brit Milah*, where the permissible quantity is determined by the expected participants.

Based on this ruling, later *poskim* discuss a case in which dairy bread was baked for a large gathering, but due to unforeseen circumstances the guests did not arrive or the meal was canceled. Are the leftovers still permitted, even though they will not be consumed that day?

The later *poskim* rule that since the bread was initially baked in a permissible manner, the decree against dairy bread does not “reappear” afterward. Therefore, even if the leftover bread remains for several days, it is still permitted for consumption (see *Arugat*

Habosem 97:4, *Darchei Teshuva* 97:5).

The same principle applies to Shabbat *challah*. However, if *challah* is consistently left over each week, it would indicate that too much is being baked, and the amount should therefore be reduced. Regarding baking dairy bread for one day and then freezing the leftovers for future use, this would also appear to be permitted according to *Rema*.

SHAVUOT CHALLAH

As mentioned above, *Rema* rules that dairy bread baked for one full day is still considered a *Davar Mu'at* and is therefore permissible. *Rema* further notes that this opinion is supported by the custom of baking dairy *challah* for the dairy meal on *Shavuot*. Similar customs are mentioned by other authorities as well.

However, according to those who follow the ruling of *Shulchan Aruch*, one would need to make a recognizable change in the shape or appearance of the *challah* to indicate that it is dairy. This serves as another method of permitting dairy bread, a topic that will be discussed further in future installments.

Darchei Teshuvah (97:33) adds that even according to the *Rema*, one may bake only

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enough dairy *challah* for the first day of *Yom Tov*. One would not be permitted to bake dairy *challah* initially for *Yom Tov Shen*i (the second day observed outside of Israel), since that exceeds the one-day limit established by the *Rema*.

This ruling is relevant in Israel this year as well. Since Shabbat immediately follows *Shavuot*, one should not bake enough dairy *challah* for both days together. If this was done, the *challah* would be prohibited unless it was made in a clearly unique and recognizable shape indicating that it is dairy.

However, as explained above, if dairy *challah* remains from the *Shavuot* meals, the leftovers may still be consumed on Shabbat.

SUMMARY

- *Chazal* permitted making dairy bread when it qualifies as a *Davar Mu'at* (“small amount”).

- *Shulchan Aruch* defines a *Davar Mu'at* as enough bread for one meal, while the *Rema* permits enough for an entire day.
- The permissible amount depends on the number of people participating in the meal. Leftovers from such a permitted baking remain permissible.
- There is a custom to prepare dairy *challah* for *Shavuot*. Ideally, the bread should only be baked for the first day of *Yom Tov*.
- If one wishes to bake a larger amount of dairy bread, the bread should be made in a distinctive shape so that it is clearly recognizable as dairy. ■

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