



Expanding the Scope of the Dairy Bread Decree

Biblically, the mixture of meat and milk through cooking, eating, and, in certain cases, even deriving benefit from it, is strictly prohibited. Our Sages instituted numerous additional safeguards regarding the laws of meat and milk to distance a person from even the slightest possibility of transgression.

The rationale for these safeguards is clear. Unlike other areas of kashrut, such as non-kosher meat or fish, both kosher meat and kosher dairy products are inherently permitted and are commonly found in every kitchen. Because these foods are individually permissible, the possibility of inadvertently mixing them is quite real.

When discussing the various rabbinic restrictions related to meat and milk, it is important to evaluate both the source and scope of each safeguard.

EXPANDING THE DAIRY BREAD DECREE

In recent weeks, we learned that our Sages prohibited the production and consumption of dairy bread, that is, bread made with dairy ingredients such as milk or butter mixed into the dough. Since dairy bread often appears identical to pareve bread, there is a concern that it may inadvertently be eaten together with meat.

Later authorities debated whether the rationale behind this decree should be extended to other areas of Kashrut. Since the purpose of many rabbinic safeguards is to distance a person from the possibility of mixing meat and milk, some authorities argued that similar restrictions should apply elsewhere.

The *Taz* (YD 97:1) maintains that any situation involving a realistic concern of meat and milk being mixed should be included within the spirit of this decree. He cites the case of a spice grinder. In halacha, when a sharp spice is ground, the grinder may absorb the halachic status of the food being processed. Therefore, if a grinder that had always been used for pareve foods was used even once to grind a meat-based spice mixture, for example, garlic that had been cooked with beef—the grinder would require koshering before being used again for pareve foods.

The *Taz* goes even further. He rules that

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spices subsequently produced in such a grinder should not be eaten together with meat, drawing a parallel to the prohibition of dairy bread.

Later authorities discuss another application of this principle. The Responsa *Tzemach Tzedek* and others (see *Pitchei Teshuva* YD 97:1) were asked about the permissibility of mixing milk into wine. The *Tzemach Tzedek* ruled that since wine is commonly consumed at both meat and dairy meals, adding milk to wine should be prohibited for the same reason that dairy bread is prohibited.

Many later authorities, however, strongly disagree with these extensions. As the *Aruch HaShulchan* (YD 97:2) explains, the decree concerning dairy bread is unique and should not be expanded to unrelated cases. Bread serves as the staple accompaniment to most meals and is consumed with a wide variety of foods. Because of bread's central role at the table, the Sages enacted a specific decree regarding dairy bread. According to the *Aruch HaShulchan*, no additional applications should be inferred from this ruling. This approach is also adopted by numerous authorities, including the *Chavot Da'at*, *Pri Chadash*, and *Minchat Yaakov*.

Practically speaking, since the accepted halacha follows the more lenient view, a utensil that was designated as pareve and was accidentally used with either meat or dairy does not become subject to a similar decree. The owner may redesignate the utensil if desired and is not required to label it. Furthermore, pareve food produced with such a

utensil may still be eaten with the corresponding category of food.

For example, if a pareve knife accidentally cut hot dairy food and was then used to cut a sharp food such as onions or garlic, that garlic may be eaten with dairy. We do not impose an additional prohibition based on an analogy to dairy bread.

Similarly, these authorities disagree with the ruling of the *Tzemach Tzedek* and permit dairy ingredients to be mixed into alcoholic beverages such as wine (See *Chatam Sofer* YD 97).

THE CUSTOM OF NOT INTERCHANGING UTENSILS THROUGH KASHERING

There appears to be one notable exception to the principles discussed above. The *Magen Avraham* (OC 509:11) records a custom not to routinely interchange utensils between meat and dairy use through the process of kashering.

The *Magen Avraham* explains that if people were accustomed to kashering utensils back and forth between meat and dairy use, confusion could eventually arise. As a result, one might improperly kasher a utensil, leading to the use of dairy in a meat utensil or vice versa.

For practical reasons, this custom has been preserved by many communities and remains widely observed today. It is noteworthy, however, that the *Aruch HaShulchan* strongly disagrees with this position, consistent with his broader rejection of extending meat-and-milk safeguards beyond their original scope. His criticism of the *Magen Avraham* parallels his disagreement with the *Taz* discussed above.

It should also be noted that Sephardic communities generally never adopted such a custom and have traditionally permitted the kashering of utensils from meat to dairy and vice versa.

Furthermore, even according to the *Magen Avraham*, there are many circumstances in which a utensil may be kashered and redesignated from meat to dairy use or vice

versa. Since the details of these situations are nuanced and involve numerous halachic considerations, one should consult a competent Rav regarding any specific case. ■

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