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לעילוי נשמת ר' יצחק מאיר בן אליהו ובריינא בת אברהם ע"ה ור' גדליה בן אברהם מנחם הכהן ומרים בת ישראל ע"ה

## Waiting to Eat Meat after Eating Dairy

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*How long must one wait after eating dairy before eating meat?*

*What type of cheese requires waiting six hours before eating meat?*

The restriction against consuming dairy after eating meat is well-known; a previous article (*Waiting to Eat Dairy after Eating Meat* Chayei Sara 5782/October 29, 2021) discussed the origins and details of this halacha. Less known and understood is the restriction against consuming meat after eating certain types of dairy. This article will explore the origins and details of this law.

**The source:** As discussed in the aforementioned previous article, although on a *diOrayso* (Torah) level, the prohibition is limited to cooking (including baking or roasting) milk and meat together, eating such a combination or benefiting from it, Chazal extended the prohibition to eating the two together even though they are not cooked together, as well. This is evident from the Mishna (Chullin 103b) which states that two people may not eat at the same table if one is eating dairy while the other is eating meat, out of a concern that they will share their food with each other.

The Gemara (ibid. 105a) discusses a requirement to wait after meeting meat before consuming dairy. Regarding eating meat following dairy, however, the Gemara is more lenient. The Gemara (Chullin 104b-105a) teaches that one may eat meat after eating dairy. However, one must check his hands in a lit area to ensure they are free of dairy residue; if it is at night (i.e., there is insufficient light), one must wash his hands. In addition, Bais Hillel and Bais Shammai both say that before eating meat, one must wipe and rinse his mouth<sup>1</sup>. The Gemara rules that “wiping” means eating any food besides for flour, dates and vegetables, because these are soft foods which will stick to the interior of the mouth rather than clear out any dairy residue.

Seemingly, the discussion ought to end here; simply ensuring clean hands and wiping and rinsing one’s mouth after eating dairy suffices to allow one to eat meat afterwards. However, later halachic authorities discuss additional restrictions.

The Bais Yosef (Orach Chaim 173) states that some are stringent upon themselves not to eat meat in the same meal after eating dairy due to a passage in the Zohar (Parshas Mishpatim) which states a number of negative things that occur as a result of eating meat and dairy “together, or *bsha’ata chada*<sup>2</sup>, or during one meal.”

The Bais Yosef further cites the Mordechai (Chullin 687) who says that the Maharam MiRuttenburg (Responsum of Maharam MiRuttenburg [Prague Edition] 615) said that he once found cheese in his teeth following a dairy meal, and therefore decreed upon himself not to eat meat after eating cheese. The Mordechai continues that he is lenient regarding poultry after eating dairy, since the Gemara is more lenient and allows eating poultry after dairy without any preparation, such as cleaning one’s hands<sup>3</sup>. The Bais Yosef, after citing the Mordechai’s words, says that the Maharam MiRuttenburg and the Mordechai did not see the passage of Zohar regarding eating meat and dairy together, and the Maharam’s stringency was thus based only on his personal experience. The Bais Yosef concludes that, based on the Zohar, one should abstain even from eating poultry after dairy.

**The halacha:** The Shulchan Aruch (Yoreh Deah 89:2) states that one may eat meat

after consuming dairy, so long as one checks his hands to ensure no dairy has adhered to them and, if it is nighttime when there is insufficient light to check, one should wash his hands. One must also wipe and rinse his mouth (as explained above). The Shulchan Aruch continues that this is only necessary for one who wishes to eat animal meat, but for poultry, these steps are unnecessary. The Shach (ad. loc. 20) adds that checking the hands in the light suffices for plain cheese only, but for a cooked dairy item, which tends to adhere to the hands to a greater degree than plain cheese, one must always wash his hands.

The Darkei Teshuva (89:30), citing the Reshash (Chullin 103b s.v. *viasur*) rules that for liquid dairy (e.g., milk), only rinsing of the mouth is necessary, but cleaning the hands or wiping the mouth are not necessary.

Interestingly, the Shulchan Aruch makes no mention of the Zohar’s restriction that he discussed in his Bais Yosef commentary. However, some have a custom to wait one hour after consuming any type of dairy before eating meat. This custom is based upon the Zohar cited by the Bais Yosef, and is cited by the Gra (Yoreh Deah 89:11) and the Shach (Yoreh Deah 89:16); the Shach explains that a period of one hour between dairy and meat suffices for the Zohar’s concern. There is a widespread custom to wait a mere half-hour, not a full hour. There is much discussion as to the origin of this shorter waiting period (see Teshuvos Vihanhagos 2:390). The question may hinge on how one understands the term *sha’ata chada* of the Zohar (see footnote 2). If this means “one hour,” then one must wait an hour. If, however, it means “at one time,” the custom may have developed that half an hour suffices. Although the Bais Yosef makes clear that there is no distinction between animal meat and poultry for the Zohar’s restriction, the Pri Chadash (89:15) disagrees and limits the Zohar to animal meat. Rabbi Moshe Shternbuch (Teshuvos Vihanhagos ibid.) states that if one consumed only liquid dairy (e.g., milk), there is more room to be lenient and not require a waiting period, and rinsing one’s mouth may suffice (though he does not conclusively allow it). He adds that if one ate solid food with the liquid dairy, and the solid food absorbed some of the dairy (e.g., cake with a dairy coffee), it would be similar to eating solid dairy.

There is an extensive debate regarding whether one may eat meat following dairy in the same meal; this may be based upon the Zohar, as well, which warns against having dairy and meat in the same meal. The Magen Avraham (494:6) rules that there is no need to recite *Birkas Hamazon* after a dairy meal before eating meat unless hard cheese was consumed; his ruling is cited by the Mishna Berura (ad loc.:16). However, the Darkei Teshuva (89:14) cites other opinions who say that one may not consume meat after cheese in the same meal, and *Birkas Hamazon* must be recited in between. This dispute creates a no-win situation, as one may not recite a blessing unnecessarily. Thus, according to the Magen Avraham, one may not decide to act “stringently” and recite *Birkas Hamazon* and then recite a new blessing and eat the meat, as these blessings are unnecessary. Practical custom varies, and if one does not have a custom, a halachic authority should be consulted. Regarding the Maharam MiRuttenburg’s stringency to wait after eating dairy before eating meat, the Maharshal (Yam Shel Shlomo Chullin 8:6) states in strong terms that the Maharam MiRuttenburg intended his statement as a stringency only for himself, but did not mean to introduce a new halacha. The Levush (89:2), as well, does not mention the stringency.

<sup>1</sup> Drinking something achieves “rinsing.”

<sup>2</sup> This term may mean “at one time” or “within one hour.” The two possible meanings have ramifications; see further.

<sup>3</sup> This is because poultry and dairy is only Rabbinically forbidden in the first place; see aforementioned previous article for more details.

However, the Issur Viheter Ha'aruch (40:8) states that it is a *midas chassidus* to follow this stringency. The Shach (ad loc.:17) cites the opinion of the Maharshal but disagrees, stating that the language used by the Maharam MiRuttenburg indicates that it was meant as a new halacha. The Rema (89:2) states that there are those who are stringent even regarding meat following dairy<sup>4</sup>. The Rema continues that it is the custom (in the Ashkenazic communities) to avoid eating even poultry following consumption of hard cheese in the same fashion as one waits before eating dairy after consuming meat. Nonetheless, says the Rema, some are lenient, and one needn't protest against such people, so long as they rinse their hands and wipe and rinse their mouths. However, concludes the Rema, it is good to be stringent in this matter.

It thus emerges from the Rema (whose rulings are generally followed by Ashkenazic Jewry) that one should wait after eating hard cheese before eating meat in the same way one would wait after eating meat before eating dairy. The Taz (ad loc. 4) makes explains that this means one must wait six hours<sup>5</sup>.

What is considered "hard cheese" for the purpose of this halacha? The Taz (ibid.) cites the Issur Viheter Ha'aruch (ibid.) that cheese that was aged for six months, or that has holes in it (i.e., such as Swiss cheese), is included. The Shach cites the six-month aging period, as well.

From the Maharam MiRuttenburg it appears that the issue is that hard cheese may get stuck in one's teeth. In the aforementioned previous article regarding waiting after eating meat before consuming dairy, there were two opinions cited as to the need for the wait. The Rambam (Ma'achalos Asuros 10:28) explains that meat remains between the teeth that would not be removed through the standard rinsing and wiping of the mouth. Rashi (Chullin 104b s.v. *assur*) says that because meat is fatty, some residue remains in the mouth and the flavor lasts. Several practical differences are discussed by the Tur (Yoreh Deah 89:1) between these two approaches, including a situation where no chewing took place; according to the Rambam, there is no concern, since no food could be caught between the teeth. The Tur concludes that we follow both opinions.

The Maharam MiRuttenburg's stringency is based on the fact that he found cheese between his teeth, which is in line with the Rambam's opinion, but not that of Rashi. If that is the case, if one swallowed but did not chew hard cheese, there should be no need to wait at all.

However, the Taz (ibid.) disagrees entirely and argues that cheese stuck in one's teeth is not considered cheese at all. He bases this on the Gemara (Chullin 105a) which requires a verse to teach that meat stuck in the teeth is still considered meat. There is no such verse for cheese, says the Taz, and so cheese between one's teeth is no longer considered cheese. (Many disagree with this assertion; see Aruch Hashulchan Yoreh Deah 89:11.) However, says the Taz, cheese with holes does leave a taste in the mouth for some time, and so that reason would be applicable for cheese that has holes, but not for aged cheese<sup>6</sup>. According to the Taz, cheese with a very strong flavor that will linger in the mouth thus poses a problem; this reasoning is similar to Rashi's approach regarding waiting for dairy after meat.

A third reason is offered by the Aruch Hashulchan (ibid.); he explains that cheese

<sup>4</sup> The Gra (89:11; mentioned earlier) understands that the Zohar is the source of "those who are stringent" cited by the Rema (see further), although the Rema himself seems to use the Maharam MiRuttenberg as the source for his final ruling. It appears that the Gra understood that the initial mention of "those who are stringent" are a separate group who observed the Zohar's stringency.

<sup>5</sup> See aforementioned previous article regarding various opinions of how these six hours are calculated.

<sup>6</sup> It is unclear why only cheese with holes has this quality, but aged cheese, which also has a strong flavor, does not fit this category. The Taz also discusses a difference between cheese produced with the *kaiva* (stomach) of the animal (i.e., rennet) as opposed to cheese produced through other means; later authorities seem to understand that such cheese has a stronger flavor. See Yad Yehuda 89 *pirush ha'aruch* 4 where he disagrees with the Taz.

## Points to Ponder

***Must one rinse and wipe his mouth before eating meat if waiting half an hour or even one hour after dairy?***

***Must one wait if eating a non-dairy food in which dairy was cooked?***

which is very fatty leaves a flavor for an extended period of time, and so one must wait. This is along the same lines as the Taz, and seems to be in line with Rashi's approach.

**Leniencies:** The Yad Yehuda (89 *pirush hakatzar* 30) states that if the cheese is melted, one needn't wait. However, the Badei Hashulchan (89:2 *biurim s.v. vichein*) states that this leniency is predicated on the assumption that the only issue is the cheese getting caught in one's teeth due to its hardness, and so, if melted, this problem is obviated. However, says the Badei Hashulchan, if one takes the approach that the problem is because the flavor remains in the mouth, there is no difference whether the cheese is melted or not. The Badei Hashulchan leaves the matter unresolved. Rabbi Yosef Shalom Eliashev (Kovetz Teshuvos 1 58:2) seems to reject the Yad Yehuda's leniency for the same reason. In addition, there is debate whether the Yad Yehuda's leniency is for any melted cheese (e.g., cheese on pizza) or only cheese melted *into* another food, but not melted cheese that is an independent entity. The Sefer Atzei Haolah (Basar Bichalav 3:17 with Chukey Chaim 15) states that when the cheese is melted into another food, it will not get caught in the teeth, and the strong flavor is reduced since it is mixed with another food. This approach answers the Badei Hashulchan's question of how melting the cheese removes the issue of the flavor remaining in the mouth, but he is also clear that only cheese melted into another food is subject to the Yad Yehuda's leniency. This leniency and its exact application is obviously very relevant, and a halachic authority should be consulted for a practical ruling.

There is another debate regarding standard cheeses used on a regular basis in the Jewish world, such as mozzarella or non-aged cheddar cheese. Many American *poskim* (including Rabbi Moshe Feinstein [cited in Mishneh Halachos 16:9] and Rabbi Aharon Kotler [cited in Kitzur Shulchan Aruch (Rabbi Pfeiffer) Basar Bichalav Vol. 1 Kuntres Habiurim pg. 138]) are quoted as having ruled that such cheese does not fall into any of the stringent categories. These cheeses are soft, not aged for significant periods of time, and do not have very strong flavor. However, some prominent Eretz Yisrael *poskim* (including Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach [see Halichos Shlomo Moadim Hilchos Shavuos 12:13 with footnote 50<sup>7</sup>] Rabbi Yosef Shalom Eliashev [Kovetz Teshuvos ibid.]) are quoted as having ruled that such cheese may indeed require one to wait before consuming meat. There are many other halachic authorities from both America and Eretz Yisrael who weigh in on this question. In America and its environs, common custom is not to wait six hours after eating such cheese. In Eretz Yisrael, some are stringent, and one living in Eretz Yisrael should consult with his halachic authority for a practical ruling.

Some traditionally hard cheeses (e.g., parmesan cheese) are often produced today without significant aging. Often, the time the cheese is aged is printed on the product label. Some have argued that since special methods are used to quick-age the cheese, they should have the same status as regular aged cheeses. However, Rabbi Yisrael Belsky (Shu"t Shulchan Halevi 1 22:1) ruled that these are not considered aged cheeses.

It must also be noted that the Rema, whose ruling is the primary source for this stringency, says that the custom is to be stringent, and that it is good to be stringent. While the custom must certainly be followed, if one is faced with extenuating circumstances, a halachic authority should be consulted, as there is room for leniency in case of difficulty.

In conclusion, there is a widespread, if not universally observed, custom to wait at least some time after eating dairy before eating meat, and there is a custom that has become enshrined as a requirement to wait six hours after eating aged cheeses. Because there are a number of halachic complexities regarding these laws, it is a good idea to seek the guidance of a halachic authority to ascertain the practical approach one should follow.

<sup>7</sup> There is enormous debate as to what exactly Rabbi Auerbach's position on the matter was. The source cited provides a glimpse into some of the complexity and attempts to resolve it.

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Please consult with a qualified halachic authority for all practical questions of halacha*

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