



Volume 4. Issue 37

Say Cheese!

The Mishnah in the second perek of Avodah Zara, discusses an interesting question that was raised by Rabbi Yishmael to Rabbi Yehoshua: "Why is it that cheese from a non - Jew is forbidden?" The answer given is that for cheese to solidify, one needs to let it stand in the stomach of an animal. This point needs some clarification.

It is common knowledge that the source of the dietary laws in the Torah are learnt from the verse, which is repeated three times: "thou shall not cook a kid in its mother milk". This verse teaches that mixtures of milk and meat are forbidden whether it is to eat, cook or gain any benefit from. However, there is one condition. In order to be classified as a mixture for Torah purposed, they must be cooked, heated and not pickled or constitute any other form of mixing.

There is a debate between the poskim as to whether, when Chazal forbade the mixture of milk and meat which was either pickled or mixed together in another manner, it was based on the same principles, as that of the Torah or not. According to the Rama the Rabbis did not mimic the Torah prohibition of milk and meat and therefore, if something was mixed on a Rabbinical level, then only eating was prohibited and not the other two prohibitions. Both the Shach and Taz disagree with the Rama and explain that if the Rabbis were introducing a prohibition that was based on a Torah concept, then the Rabbis would follow the structure of the Torah. Accordingly, not just eating would be prohibited, but also cooking and gaining any benefit. The Taz offers an explanation for the Rama's position, citing our case concerning the cheese made by a non-Jew. He explains, based on the Gemara, that the prohibition is because the milk is left in the

stomach of the animal and it absorbs rennet from the animal, so the milk now becomes the Rabbinical prohibition of milk and meat. However the Gemara does not forbid any form of benefit from this mixture. Therefore one can conclude that the prohibition is only eating and not benefitting.

This question of cheese has been raised by many different Rabbis. The problem seems to have been that there were some Jews, who were accustomed to eat cheese made by a non-Jew which had been in the stomach of a kosher animal. Therefore was there ever a reason for allowing cheese or not? The Tosafos explains that the reason for cheeses to permitted is that there is either certainly 60 times more milk than the absorbed rennet or minimally it is a doubt if there is less than 60 times more milk, since this is only a Rabbinical prohibition, one can really on the rule of *safek d'rabbanan le'kulah*. The Ri MiGash cited in the Rambam, explains that there is always 60 and that the only potential prohibition would be that of "ma'amid"(catalyst). The problem of a catalyst would be that the rennet is drawn into the milk, however one basic principle of ma'amid is that the catalyst can only move an איסור and not create an איסור.

There are those, Rabbi Akiva Eiger and others who disagreed on either one or both premises and rejected the *heter* to use the cheese.

In conclusion, some Rabbis believed that the cheese that was made using the rennet from an animal would not violate any prohibitions either Torah or Rabbinic. Nowadays, when we are blessed and are able to purchase cheese made by Jews, it would seem good advice to purchase this.

Rabbi Natan Rickman

Revision Questions

עדיות ח' א' – ז'

- How does R' Yehoshua ben Beteira rule regarding the earlier debate (5:1) between Beit Shammai and Beit Hillel concerning the blood of a *neveilah*? (ח' א')
- Regarding what does R' Shimon ben Beteira rule "יגע טמא בקצתו טמא כולו" and how does R' Akiva expand this rule? (ח' א')
- What one of R' Nechunya's laws (7:9), do R' Yehuda ben Beteira and R' Yehuda HaKohen also bring and what do they add? (ח' ב')
- Regarding the case that R' Yosi Ha'Kohen and R' Zecharya ben haKatzav presented, why did the family in Ashkelon distance themselves from one of their members and how did the Chachamim respond? (ח' ב')
- What is an *almanat issa*? (ח' ג')
- What did R' Yehoshua and R' Yehuda ben Beteira present regarding the previous case and how did Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel respond? (ח' ג')
- What three laws did R' Yosi ben Yo'ezer ish Tzreida present? (ח' ד')
- What was the ruling given after they found bones in the *dir eitzim*? (ח' ה')
- Explain the debate regarding how they constructed the *heichal* in the Beit Ha'Mikdash. (ח' ו')
- What are the various opinions regarding the task of *Eliyahu Ha'Navi*? (ח' ז')

עבודה זרה א' א' – ז'

- When is one prohibited from trading with *goi'im*? (א' א')
- What else is prohibited at that time? (א' א')
- What is R'Yehuda's opinion? (א' א')
- On what point does R' Yishmael argue? (ב' א')
- Which "festival" is debated between R' Meir and the Chachamim? (ג' א')
- When is one allowed to enter a city of idol worship during their festival? (ד' א')
- List some items that may not be sold to an *Akum* at any time during the year? (ה' א')
- Regarding the previous question, what is the general rule regarding all other items? (ה' א')
- What are the three opinions regarding which (farm) animals can be sold to an *akum*? (ו' א')
- What other animals may not be sold? (ז' א')
- Which joint-construction venture may one not partake with an *akum*? (ז' א')

Local Shiurim

Sunday -Thursday

Between mincha & ma'ariv
Mizrachi Shul

Friday & Shabbat

10 minutes before mincha
Mizrachi Shul

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Malka

Next Week's Mishnayot...

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
3 rd February כ"ז שבט	4 th February כ"ח שבט	5 th February כ"ט שבט	6 th February ל' שבט ראש חודש	7 th February א' אדר א' ראש חודש	8 th February ב' אדר א'	9 th February ג' אדר א'
Avodah Zara 1:8-9	Avodah Zara 2:1-2	Avodah Zara 2:3-4	Avodah Zara 2:5-6	Avodah Zara 2:7-3:1	Avodah Zara 3:2-3	Avodah Zara 3:4-5

