שפמו לכאן ולכאן קודם אכילתו, כדי שלא ישתלשלו הרבה על שפתיו ויתלכלכו הרבה. ובכל דברים אלו יתנהג אפילו בביתו על שלחנו, וכל שכן כשהוא אוכל עם בני אדם, והמזמין אורחים בביתו ומביא לפניהם תבשיל רוטב, ואינו מביא להם כפות לאכול בהם, הרי זה חוטא ומזלזל בכבוד האורחים. [בן איש חי שם הלכה ח]

יט. לא ימהר בלעיסתו ואכילתו, אלא יתנהג לאטו, אפילו אם מסב עם אדם גרגרן, ואם הבשר קשה, לא יהא נושך בשיניו ומושך בידיו, אלא יסלק ידו ממנו. ולא ימצוץ אצבעותיו בפיו, בין אכילה לאכילה. ולא יראה חיבה וחשק על האכילה. ולא ימלא פיו, אלא רק בכדי שיוכל לדבר בשפה ברורה. ולא יושיט ידיו לקערה עד שיגמור לבלוע מה שבפיו, ויפסיק מעט בין לעיסה אחת לאחרת, ואם המסובין עמו סילקו ידיהם מאותו מאכל, גם הוא יסלק ידו, אף על פי שעדיין תאב לאכול, דלאו אורח ארעא לאכול יחידי בין המסובין. [באו"ח פ' בהר הלכה ט]

כ. כל העובר על הלכות דרך ארץ הנזכרים לעיל וכיוצא בהם, הרי זה רעבתן וגרגרן, מסטרא דההוא דאמר הלעיטני נא, והנה הוא נאחז בסבך הסטרא אחרא, ואם הוא בעל תורה ועושה כן, הרי זה מחלל שם שמים, ולכן אמרו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה, דרך ארץ קדמה לתורה, וכאשר האריכו בזה בספרי המוסר והיראה. [באו"ח פ' בהר הלכה ט]

Even when alone at home, one must practice these behaviors, and certainly when eating together with others. If someone serves a wet and sticky food to his guests without providing them spoons, he is guilty of treating them disrespectfully.

Proper manner of eating

19) It is forbidden to wolf down one's food. One should chew the food sufficiently and calmly before swallowing. It is forbidden to fill one's mouth with food. One should not refill one's spoon or fork until one has swallowed the previous mouthful. A person should insert a small amount each time, so that he would be able to speak clearly if necessary even with the food in his mouth.

Even if others at the table behave with gluttony, one must maintain dignity and eat with proper etiquette. If the others in a group have finished eating and one person still feels hungry, he should nevertheless stop eating as well. It is improper to be the only person eating while one's colleagues are not eating.

If the meat is so tough that it would be necessary to bite down on it and pull the rest away with one's hands, one should simply refrain from eating it. Also, one must not lick one's fingers between courses.

Disgrace of a glutton

20) Anyone who ignores the rules of behavior listed above is considered an uncouth glutton, a disciple of Esav, who demanded that his food be poured into his open mouth. He is entrapped by the satan. If he happens to be a student of Torah, he is guilty of bringing disgrace on the Torah and those who cherish it. This is a prime example of what our Sages taught, "Proper behavior comes before Torah study," as explained at length in the classical ethical works.

כא. הנכנס לבית כל שיאמר לו בעל הבית יעשה. [ש"ע שם ס"ה]. אפילו דבר שיש בו קצת גסות ושררה שלא היה עושה כן האורח משום ענוה, אף על פי כן יעשה. [ברכ"י אות ה, משנ"ב ס"ק טז]. והוא הדין אם יאמר לו לעשות דבר שאין כבוד לו כל כך, ימחול על כבודו ויעשה. [ברכ"י שם], אלא אם כן הוא דבר שיש בו בזיון. [כה"ח ס"ק כה]

Obeying one's host

21) A guest must obey all the instructions given him by his host.[285] Even if the host wishes to honor his guest and elevate his status in a manner that he would never demand on his own, he must accept his host's gesture. Likewise, if the host instructs his guest to do something that he considers to be somewhat beneath his dignity, he should nevertheless obey his host and overlook the slight to his honor. If the host instructs his guest to do something degrading, however, he is not obligated to obey him.

285. Our Sages taught (*Pesahim* 86b), "Whatever your host instructs you, obey him, except if he instructs you to leave." There are many interpretations for this surprising statement, and some will be presented here. In fact, Rabbenu Menahem Hame'iri cited some *Rishonim* claiming that this is a corrupted text.

The *Bayit Hadash* explained that this passage is referring to a guest who is a traveler from another town. It means that if the host instructs his guest to go out and run an errand for him, he is not obligated to obey him. Since the guest is from another city, he cannot be expected to wander about searching for an address that is unfamiliar to him.

The *Derisha* and the *Matte Moshe* explained that the passage means that if a host tells his guest that he is no longer welcome to stay in his house, the guest can still stay on. If the host would be able to evict his guest, it would stain the host's reputation. The Maharsh"a rejected this interpretation, arguing that it makes no sense to say that a guest would have the power to remain in someone else's home against the owner's will. The Maharsh"a then offered another explanation, which is that one must obey all the host's instructions until the host tells him to leave. At that point, he is no longer the host's guest and he is free of any obligations toward him.

The *Sefat Emet* (comment on the Talmud) suggested that this passage was instituted after the tragic episode of Kamtza and Bar Kamtza (*Gittin* 55b). In that incident, the host forcibly removed Bar Kamtza from his home, and this resulted eventually in the destruction of the second *Bet Hamikdash*. Our Sages then instituted a rule that whenever a guest would be terribly shamed by being evicted by his host he is permitted to remain despite the host's protests.

Another interpretation, reputed to be that of Harav Eliyahu of Vilna, is that a guest must never allow a situation to deteriorate until his host evicts him. He should make sure to leave on his own before that happens.

The *Reshit Hokhma* (cited in the *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer 170:27) explains that this passage must be understood allegorically. The host is the Blessed Holy One. If He would tell someone, "Leave My presence. I do not want you anymore," meaning that someone has become guilty of such grievous sins that God tells him that he is not welcome to repent and return to Him, he must ignore that and repent anyway. This is in contrast to what happened to Elisha ben Avuya (Aher), who tragically refused to repent since he understood that he was no longer welcomed by God to return to a life of Torah and His service.

Accepting the host's honor

The *Magen Avraham* (170:10) ruled that if the host wishes to honor his guest, the halakha expects the guest to refuse it, accepting it only if the host entreats him repeatedly to accept the honor. If the host is a person of high stature, however, the guest should immediately obey the instructions. The Maharsh"a, cited by Harav HIDA (*Birke Yosef*), disagreed and ruled that the guest must obey immediately no matter who the host is. The *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer (170:23) cited both opinions, but the *Mishna Berura* cited the opinion of Maharsh"a only.

Eating unwanted food

The *Bigde Yesha* (cited in *Mishna Berura* 170:17) stated that if the guest is full and his host pushes him to eat more than he wants, the guest may refuse to eat. This is not considered being disrespectful to the host. The same applies if a host asks his guest to eat or drink something that he abstains from for health reasons.

Abstaining from accepting gifts from others

The *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer (170:28) added that if a guest has adopted the practice of refusing monetary assistance

כב. אם האורח נוהג איזה פרישות בדבר שעושה משום סרך איסור אינו מחוייב לשמוע לבעל הבית לעבור, אבל דבר שהוא פרישות בעלמא, טוב לגבר להסתיר מעשיו. [ברכ"י אות ו, שם]

Guests who practice stringencies

22) If the guest observes certain stringencies in order to distance himself from any possible sin and his host serves him a food from which he abstains due to his stringent practices, the guest is not obligated to obey his host. If the guest has adopted a practice of abstaining from certain foods as an act of piety, but there is no possibility of sin in eating those foods, it is preferable for him to accept the food from his host and eat it rather than reveal his devout practices to others.[286]

from others, he may refuse to eat even when his host offers food to him. The Talmud (*Berakhot* 10b) teaches that it is permissible to adopt such a policy, emulating the practice of the Prophet Shemuel. Even if this is not the guest's regular practice, if he realizes that his host is a stingy person and offers sustenance to his guests begrudgingly, he may refuse to accept his host's food. Our Sages taught (*Sota* 38b) that if someone accepts food from a stingy host he transgresses two verses.

Other family members

Harav HIDA (*Birke Yosef* 170:7, cited in the *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer 170:24) wrote that this halakha applies not only to the host but also to any adult members of the host's household. By obeying their instructions, the guest displays honor to his host.

Visitors

The *sefer Ketzot Hashulhan* (39:20) states that he deduced from the *Reshit Hokhma* that the halakha requiring a guest to obey his host applies only to someone who is being treated to a meal or a bed. When someone pays a visit to others out of courtesy, this halakha does not apply.

286. When served foods with a less-reliable kashruth certification

The Rama (gloss to *Y.D.* 112:15) ruled that if a group of people are eating together and one of the group avoids eating bread baked in a non-Jewish bakery, he may nevertheless eat the same bread as everyone else on this occasion in order to avoid insulting the others and creating strife. The Rama stressed that this leniency applies only to this case since bread is the main ingredient of any meal. One may not apply this leniency to other halakhic issues. The *Sifte Kohen* (112:27) explained that according to this, if one person avoids eating non-Jewish butter and he is eating with others who eat that food, he may not eat it on this occasion although this may insult his colleagues.

The *sefer Piske Teshuvot* (page 481) explained that this is because there is some suspicion that non-Jewish butter might be nonkosher. If the entire issue is that this person has the practice of eating only foods with a particular kashruth endorsement and the others are eating foods that are endorsed by some other kashruth organization, he should not refuse to eat the food and thus insult his host. If there is a substantial basis to suspect that the other kashruth organization is unreliable, however, he should not eat the food even if he risks angering his host.

A host who serves bread that might be *hadash*

If someone is a guest (during the winter months) of a host who is not careful to avoid eating grain products that are *hadash*, he is in a quandary. It is well-known that according to Maran in the *Shulhan Arukh*, grain that is *hadash* is absolutely forbidden. As Sefardic Jews, we are obligated to follow the rulings of Maran. Nevertheless, there might be room for leniency in this case based on a compound doubt. First of all, the *Bayit Hadash* ruled that in countries outside the Land of Yisrael *hadash* grain raised by non-Jewish farmers is permissible. Second, although the host does not take care to avoid *hadash*, the bread or other grain products that he is serving today might be made with older grain that is not *hadash*. See the *Yalkut Yosef Yamim Nora'im English Edition* (footnote on page 253).

This does not mean that one can simply ignore the problem of *hadash* all the time and rely on this *safek sefeka*. Harav Yitzhak Yosef (*Yalkut Yosef Hilkhot Hadash*, page 469) related that he was once served some cookies while on a visit to Los Angeles and he refused to eat them since it was possible that they contained *hadash* flour. In that instance, there was not an issue of insulting any host. If someone accepts an invitation to eat at someone's house, however, and he is served grain products as part of the meal, there is room to rely on the *safek sefeka* in order to avoid insulting the host.