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Concurring Opinion

*This paper was submitted, in June 2023, as a concurrence on “The Meatless Manu” by Rabbi Avram Israel Reisner. Dissenting and Concurring papers are not official positions of the CJLS.*

I very much appreciate Rabbi Reisner’s detailed teshuvah on the permissibility of eating in vegan and vegetarian restaurants that are not under rabbinic supervision. His work on *safeik* and *s’feik s’feika* is particularly helpful. I would, however, like to add a diyuk to his blanket prohibition of eating in restaurants on Shabbat.

When Rabbi Reisner ruled that one cannot eat at a vegetarian or vegan restaurant on Shabbat, he was no doubt picturing a patron walking into the restaurant, ordering food that would be cooked on the spot, and then paying for the meal. This would certainly be forbidden on Shabbat. But it seems to me that this is not the only option.

A traveler, for example, might go into a vegetarian or vegan restaurant on a Friday, prepay for the meal, order something that does not need special cooking on Shabbat, then come back and eat it on Shabbat. This is somewhat unconventional, but it can be and has been done. It might even be helpful to suggest to our congregants that they do that when they travel, thus enhancing both Shabbat and kashrut observance.

Similarly, passengers on a cruise ship pay for their meals in advance. There is no issue of payment on the spot or even promise of payment on the spot (at least in the regular ship restaurants, as opposed to the specialty restaurants). If the food is cooked in quantity and if most of the passengers are not Jewish, it is clear that the food is not being cooked on Shabbat for the Jewish passenger. And if the food is cooked incidentally rather than deliberately for Jews, a Jew may eat it even on Shabbat, according to many poskim. One might comfortably have a cup of tea or a hard boiled egg or eat a roll that was just baked that morning, or, indeed, eat anything that was cooked in quantity in the vegetarian or vegan kitchen. And certainly one may enter the ship restaurant on Shabbat and eat that which is not cooked, for example, fruit, cereal, cheese, etc.

I present this concurrence with humility, in the belief that it adds to Rabbi Reisner’s otherwise excellent analysis.

