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Digest
Mishna Berura
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סימן רמ"ב סעיף א'

Halacha Highlight

Eating fish on Shabbos

Shulchan Aruch Siman 242 Seif 1 (a)

צריך לזרז עצמו לכבד את השבת

He must exert himself to honor Shabbos

Shulchan Aruch writes that one must exert himself to honor Shabbos. Even if one receives financial support from others he must exert himself in order to honor Shabbos. Mishnah Berurah (סק"ב) writes that one should eat at least two cooked foods at the meals on Shabbos. Kaf HaChaim (אות טי) explains that eating two cooked foods differentiates the Shabbos meal from the weekday meal which would usually have only one cooked dish. Accordingly, if one eats two cooked dishes at a meal during the week, on Shabbos he should have three cooked foods. Rav Nissim Karelitz (חוט השני חי"א פי"ד בד"ה שני תבשילים) suggests that two cooked foods indicate that the meal is important and thus on erev Tisha B'Av at the seudas hamafsekes one may not eat two cooked foods. This implies that one should have two cooked foods at each of the meals. The Zohar (ע' שער הציון סק"ח), however, indicates that one should have two cooked for the two meals meaning, one cooked food per meal.

Mishnah Berurah (סק"ט) then cites Magen Avrohom that one should eat fish at each of the three meals on Shabbos. Shulchan Aruch HaRav (קו"א סק"ד) cites an opinion that maintains that there is a Biblical obligation to eat fish on Shabbos but he rejects that position. Shemiras Shabbos K'Hilchasa (פמ"ב הע' ס"ג) wonders whether nowadays that people consider meat to be more important than fish does the obligation to eat fish remain in force. Mishnah Berurah (סי' תקנ"ב סק"ו) in the name of Magen Avrohom writes that the reason it is prohibited to eat fish on erev Tisha B'Av is that fish is included in the category of meat. Biur Halacha (ד"ה זכר) explains that we eat meat and fish because Shabbos is a miniature Olam Haba and in the World-to-Come we will be eating the meat of the שור הבר and the fish of the לויתן. Accordingly, the obligation to eat fish would remain in force. Mishnah Berurah, however, concludes that one who cannot eat fish or does not enjoy eating fish is not obligated to do so since Shabbos was given for enjoyment rather than distress.

Overview

Siman 242 Seif 1 (a):

Even someone supported by others must exert himself to honor Shabbos.

- The primary mitzvah of oneg Shabbos was taught by the Nevi'im but some authorities maintain that it is Biblical. Chazal strongly emphasize the importance of this mitzvah. There are three statements of Chazal regarding how much one must spend to honor Shabbos. One statement emphasizes the importance of obtaining important food for the occasion. A second statement relates that even something special to honor Shabbos is sufficient and the third statement teaches that one should treat Shabbos like a weekday rather than take financial support from others. The first statement applies to those who have the financial means to purchase important foods. One in difficult financial circumstances should treat Shabbos like a weekday rather than take financial support from others. One who has a small amount of extra funds should purchase something special for Shabbos and that is sufficient. Someone who has no funds and has no choice but to take tzedaka should be given food for three meals and something extra for Shabbos. Taz and others maintain that even one who is exempt from having anything additional for Shabbos should still make an effort to be in the middle group who obtain something extra to honor Shabbos. (M.B. 1)
- It is appropriate to make an effort to have no less than two cooked foods. It is also appropriate to eat at each of the three meals some fish unless one despises them, since Shabbos was given to enjoy rather than cause pain. If fish merchants raise their prices an enactment should be instituted that people should not purchase fish in order to reset the market. There is a disagreement how high the prices must go in order to warrant such an enactment. If an enactment was adopted and someone purchased fish before the enactment, that fish is permitted. (M.B. 2)