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Digest
Mishna Berura
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Halacha Highlight

Boiling flour

Shulchan Aruch Siman 454 Seif 3
ליכא בזמן הזה דידע למחלט
No one nowadays is competent at cooking absolutely

Shulchan Aruch writes that nowadays there is no one who knows the permitted method of cooking flour absolutely; therefore all methods of this cooking are prohibited. Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק י"א) explains that according to halacha it is permitted to cook flour absolutely. This involves bringing water to a strong boil and either pouring flour on the water or the water onto the flour and then kneading the mixture into dough. The reason why there is no concern for chometz is that the boiling water quickly cooks the flour before it becomes chometz, and once it is cooked it cannot ever become leaven even after the water ceases to boil. The Gaonim, however, were concerned that we are not experts in this method of preparation and perhaps the water will not be boiling properly when mixed with flour so they prohibited the practice altogether.

Biur Halacha (ד"ה ליכא בזמן הזה) quotes the comments of a number of Gaonim regarding this topic. He observes that it is evident from their writings that flour that was boiled in this manner is prohibited even b'dieved, not only for consumption, but even for benefit and to retain in one's possession. It may not be consumed or used even for someone who is ill with a condition that is not life threatening. He then explains that he felt compelled to highlight this because Magen Avrohom entertains the possibility that the restriction against boiling flour is only l'chatchila. Radvaz also rules that someone who is ill with a condition that is not life threatening may drink "barley water" (A medicine made by boiling barley kernels). He explains that he is not certain that the restriction instituted by the Gaonim includes "barley water;" it may only include boiling flour when making dough. Additionally, even if "barley water" was part of the restriction, it should certainly be permitted for someone who is ill even with a non-life-threatening condition. Biur Halacha points out how the Gaonim addressed both of the suggested reasons for leniency and wrote explicitly that the restriction applies in both cases. Therefore, he concludes that one must be stringent and the only room for leniency is for one who suffers from a life threatening illness for whom this food is necessary for his well-being.

Overview

Siman 454 Seif 3:

There is no one nowadays who knows how to cook flour absolutely, therefore any variety of cooking absolutely is prohibited.

- In other words, according to halacha if one puts flour in boiling water that is on the fire and then kneads it into dough, there is no concern that it leavened while in the water and then once it was cooked, it will never leaven even after the water ceases to boil. The Gaonim, however, prohibited all varieties of cooking flour absolutely out of concern that the water won't be properly boiled. (M.B. 11)
- It doesn't matter whether the water is poured on the flour or the flour was poured on the water. (M.B. 12)
- It is prohibited for consumption as well for benefit. One may also not retain possession of this flour since we are not experts in the process and are concerned that it leavened. If it became intermingled into a food it prohibits it even in the minutest amount. Later authorities write that when it becomes intermingled in other foods the mixture is prohibited for consumption, but the mixture is permitted for benefit and one may also retain possession of it on Pesach. (M.B. 13)