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Digest
Mishna Berura
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סימן ת"ס סעיף א'

Halacha Highlight

Those who are unfit to make matzos

Shulchan Aruch Siman 460 Seif 1
אין לשין מצת מצוה וכו'
The kneading of the matzos that will be used for the mitzvah

Shulchan Aruch enumerates different categories of people who are unfit to help make the matzos that will be used to fulfill the mitzvah of matzah. This is comprised of gentiles, deaf-mutes, people who are insane and minors. The reason these people are disqualified is that the pasuk writes (שמות י"ב י"ז) ושמרתם את המצות— You should safeguard the matzos, and this implies that while one is guarding the matzos to assure that it does not become chometz one should have in mind that he is doing so for the sake of the mitzvah. The categories of people enumerated above are incapable of that type of thought, and thus may not be involved in the preparation of the matzos (מ"ב סק"ג). Poskim debate whether it helps to have an adult overseeing these categories of people to remind them to have the necessary intent and Mishnah Berurah (שם) cites authorities who rule that one may be lenient about this matter only when there is no alternative.

Pri Megadim (א"א ריש הסימן) writes that Jews who are apostates or who publicly desecrate Shabbos are less qualified than gentiles and may not be involved in making matzos since they have no credibility when it comes to matters of kashrus. Even if someone is there supervising them it is ineffective since they will not have the necessary intent to guard the matzos for the sake of the mitzvah. Regarding those who are non-religious, the Poskim divide them into two different categories. The first category are those that although are not personally religious are generally supportive of religious people. As such, as long as they are instructed what to do and the proper intent and there is someone present to supervise their work, they may make the matzos. The second category consists of those who not only are not religious but show disdain for religious practices. Regarding such people there is a concern that they will not be meticulous to follow the instructions they were given and may not be involved in making matzos (פסקי תשובות אות ג').

Overview

Siman 460 Seif 1:

The kneading of the matzos that will be used for the mitzvah should not be done by a gentile, someone deaf-mute, someone insane, or a child.

- The same is true regarding the rolling of the matzos. It is preferable l'chatchila that the holes put into the matzos should also not be made by these people. Some authorities are lenient and permit even l'chatchila for a child to make the holes as long as an adult is standing over him. (M.B. 1)
- Regarding other matzos, it is permitted for these people to make them if an adult oversees their work. However, the Jewish people are holy and are accustomed to guard all matzos. (M.B. 2)
- There is a disagreement whether the matzos are acceptable if an adult was instructing them to work for the sake of the mitzvah. Bach and Magen Avrohom rule that one may rely on the lenient opinion if there is no alternative. In such a case, a deaf-mute, someone insane or a child is preferred to a gentile. Even according to the lenient opinion one must constantly remind them to work for the sake of the mitzvah. (M.B. 3)
- Many people are lenient and permit children to pour water on the flour and that is improper. (M.B. 4)