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Digest
Mishna Berura
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סימן תס"ב סעיף ד'

Halacha Highlight

Making matzah with fruit juice

Rema Siman 462 Seif 4

ובמדינות אלו אין נוהגין ללוש במי פירות

In these countries, the custom is to refrain from kneading dough with fruit juice

Rema relates that the custom for Ashkenazim is not to knead dough with fruit juice and even to coat the dough with fruit juice is not permitted unless it is done after the matzah is baked while it remains warm. He concludes by stating that one should not deviate from this custom even in a difficult circumstance unless it is for one who is ill or elderly. Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק ט"ו) explains that the Ashkenazi custom is rooted in two concerns. The first is that there are authorities who maintain that fruit juice, even by itself, causes dough to leaven and that leavening process happens at a faster rate than dough kneaded with water. Additionally, there is the concern that some water was mixed into the fruit juice and if that occurred all opinions agree that the dough will leaven. Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק י"ט) also clarifies that Rema's leniency for those who are ill or elderly is limited to kneading dough with just fruit juice but even in a pressing circumstance one may not be lenient and permit kneading dough with a mixture of water and fruit juice.

Rav Moshe Feinstein (אג"מ או"ח ח"א סי' קנ"ד וח"ד סי' צ"ח) writes that according to Ashkenazi custom if one would knead dough with fruit juice and allow it to remain for 18 minutes before baking, it must be treated as actual chometz and is prohibited for consumption, even for one who is ill or elderly. He explains that the concern is that fruit juice actually has the capacity to cause dough to leaven; however, it also contains ingredients that inhibit the dough from fully leavening but some leavening occurs. Therefore, once Rema reports that the custom is in accordance with the stringent opinion, Chaye Adam's principle, namely, when klal Yisroel choose to adopt a stringent practice even the Gedolim do not have the authority to permit that practice, applies.

Overview

Siman 462 Seif 4:

Eggs and other beverages are also considered fruit juice. In these countries the custom is to avoid using fruit juice, even as a coating on the matzos it is not used until after the matzos are baked and it is applied while they are still warm and one should not deviate from this practice unless it is needed for one who is ill or elderly who needs it.

- One may have thought that it is worse than fruit juice since it causes the dough to expand but that expansion is not due to leavening. (M.B. 12)
- The custom is to satisfy those who maintain that fruit juice does cause leavening and leavens faster than water and is out of concern that some water became intermingled with the juice. (M.B. 15)
- Later authorities write that even though the matzos may be consumed they should not be used for the mitzvah since they are matzah ashirah. (M.B. 17)
- Even if the dough was baked immediately after kneading it should not be consumed and one should hold onto it until after Pesach. (M.B. 18)
- This allowance is when only fruit juice is used but one may not knead dough l'chatchila with water and fruit juice even in a pressing circumstance. (M.B. 19)