

כל הטועם תבשילו בערב שבת מאריכין לו ימיו ושנותיו (ברייתא מחזור ויטרי)

A fairly common practice on the eve of Shabbath is tasting the Shabbath food.

The first mention of this practice is in a barayatha which is preserved only in the Makhzor Vitri (#291, pg. 174) expounding on the verse “those that taste it merit life” (I Samuel 21).

How does tasting the Shabbath food lengthen a person’s days? The Makhzor Vitri, explains in the name of the (Talmud) Yerushalmi, that if a person makes sure before Shabbath that the food does not get ruined, it will prevent him from getting angry at the members of his household.

שלא יכעוס על בני ביתו מפני הקדחת תבשילו

Apparently, anger curtails a person’s lifespan.

A different version of the teaching is cited by Rabbi Moshe of Premishla (Matteh Moshe, 4:405 ) also in the name of the (Talmud) Yerushalmi is that the purpose of tasting the food is to honor the Shabbath by making sure that the food is tasty. One extends his days by honoring Shabbath.

The two versions have two differences underlying them. Unlike Matteh Moshe, according to the Makhzor Vitri it appears that the head of the household specifically is the target of the encouragement to taste the food.

Neither versions are actually attested in the Talmud Yerushalmi but it is possible that they originate in the Sefer Yerushalmi or dropped out of our texts.

The custom is codified by Magen Avraham (Orach Chayyim, 250:1) and Mishnah Berurah (Orach Chayyim, 250:2)