The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
Wed, February 2, 2022 ■ א' אדר א', תשפ"ב
סימן קנ"ד סעיף י"ב-י"ד

Overview

Siman 154 Seif 12:

If a mouse is found in the oil of the *Bais HaKnesses* and as a result it is repulsive the oil may not be used for in the *Bais HaKnesses*.

- There is a disagreement whether the mouse is nullified in 60 parts oil even though it is repulsive. (M.B. 49)
- Pri Megadim asserts that the same *halachah* is true for other *mitzvos* that involve lighting the oil. (M.B. 50)

Siman 154 Seif 13:

It is permitted to read by the light of the *Bais HaKnesses*.

- Torah reading is permitted but not secular reading. (M.B. 52)

Siman 154 Seif 14:

It is prohibited to kindle a private flame from the flame in the *Bais HaKnesses*. In the opinion of one authority this restriction applies when the flame is fulfilling a *mitzvah* but once it is time to extinguish the flame it is permitted. Nevertheless, the custom is that people are not particular about this and they light a flame for private use when there is a great need. It is also possible that there is a stipulation of *Bais Din* that permits this and the same rationale applies to all those things from which people customarily benefit from sacred objects.

- The restriction is based on the fact that they have the sanctity of the *Bais HaKnesses*. (M.B. 53)
- Sha'arei teshuvah permits lighting tobacco from a yahrtzeit candle but prohibits lighting it from the candle used for *davening*. (M.B. 56)

Stories to Share

The Former Tenants

ש"ע קנ"ד, י"ב: "אם הוא מאוס אסור..."

Today's amud discusses things which are unusable for holy purposes because they are disgusting.

Beis Medrash Hagadol on the East Side of New York was confronted with a serious problem. They were required to find new premises in the area, but the only place for sale was an apartment that had been used as a church for several years. Although Rabbi Avraham Yosef Asch knew that many authorities prohibit this in general, here the structure had been a regular apartment which had not originally built for religious purposes. In addition, the prior tenants had not brought in idols or icons of any sort. Nevertheless, they asked the Binyan Tzion if this was permitted.

The Binyan Tzion ruled "It is certainly not prohibited to purchase the property, since one can buy a place used for idolatry for his personal use. The moment the idolator sells the property he has nullified the idolatrous use of it and the apartment is permitted.

"However, there is a dispute whether a house of idol worship that has been nullified is considered disgusting for use as a shul and the like. The Magen Avraham permits this, as does the Yerei'im. (או"ח, ס' קנ"ד, ס"ק י"ז) But the Dagul Mervavah brings from Tosafos that it is considered disgusting and may not be used.

דג"מ שם, מתוס' במגילה ו'

"Yet there are two reasons to be lenient in this case. First of all, the halachah follows the Ravad that non-Jews are permitted to adhere to a belief that is 'b'shutafus'—a theological partnership, chas v'shalom. The second point is that they did not bring any actual idols into the apartment, which you mentioned in your question. As far as the first point, it clearly makes no difference since, for Jews, belief in partnership is definitely idolatry. The other point is also irrelevant since surely having a place where people call out to a foreign deity is a bona fide house of idol worship whether or not they happen to have an icon before them.

"But if there is no choice you can rely on the lenient authorities and purchase the apartment for use as a shul."

שו"ת בנין ציון, ס' ס"ג

Halacha Highlight

Using the light of the *Bais HaKnesses*

Shulchan Aruch Siman 154 Seif 13

מתר לקרות לאורו

It is permitted to read by its light

Shulchan Aruch (סע' י"ג) writes that it is permitted to read by the light of the *Bais HaKnesses*. Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק נ"ב) in the name of Magen Avrohom explains that this ruling is limited to reading Torah related matters, but it is forbidden to read mundane matters by the light of the *Bais HaKnesses*. The reason it is permitted to read by the light of the *Bais HaKnesses* but prohibited to read by the Chanukah lights is that if one was to read by the light of the Chanukah lights it would not be evident that the lights were kindled for the sake of the *mitzvah*. But the purpose of the lights in the *Bais HaKnesses* is to illuminate the room, therefore, when people read by the light of the *Bais HaKnesses* they are using the light for its intended purpose.

Rav Yaakov Emden (מור וקציעה הכא) and Gaon Chida (ברכי יוסף) disagree with Magen Avrohom's ruling that one may not read non-Torah matters by the light of the *Bais HaKnesses*. Since the light serves its purpose of illuminating the *Bais HaKnesses* and the benefit is from the light that shines forth anyways it should be permitted. Regarding the Biblical prohibition against benefitting from sacred property – *me'ilah*, an exception to the rule is that sound, appearance and smell does not violate this prohibition although Rabbinically it is prohibited. Accordingly, when it comes to benefitting from the light of a *Bais HaKnesses* it should be permitted altogether.

The discussion of the earlier *Poskim* related to benefitting from the light of the *Bais HaKnesses* is limited to their times when they lit candles or oil lamps to produce light. Nowadays that we have electric lights, all opinions would agree that one may benefit from the lights of the *Bais HaKnesses* since the *Bais HaKnesses* is constructed with the stipulation that benefit should be permitted. However, it is not clear that this leniency would extend to the lights that are lit by the *amud* since those lights honor the *mitzvah* of *davening* and are not designed to provide light for reading (שו"ת שבט הלוי ח"א סי' מ"ב).