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Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
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סימן רנ״ב סעיף א׳

# Overview

Siman 252 Seif 1:

**It is permitted to begin a melacha on erev Shabbos close to the onset of Shabbos even though it will not be completed before Shabbos and will finish on Shabbos. For example, to soak ink and herbs in water so that they soak for the entire Shabbos, or to put bundles of flax in an oven to whiten them, or to put wool into a vat that is not on the fire and is sealed with clay. If it was on the fire, it would be prohibited out of concern that he will stoke the coals and even if it is not on the fire but the vat is not sealed with clay it is prohibited out of concern that one will stir it with a spoon and one who stirs a pot, even if it is not on the fire has violated the prohibition against cooking on Shabbos. It is permitted to set up a trap for undomesticated animals, fowl and fish even if they become trapped on Shabbos. It is permitted to sell merchandise to a gentile before Shabbos and load him up as long as he leaves the doorway before Shabbos begins.** Some permit the gentile to remove items on Shabbos if one designated for him a place in the Jew's home to store his merchandise but one should be stringent about this. See below siman 325.

- It is permitted even if the oven is not sealed with clay, since we are not concerned that he will remove the cover and stoke the coals since wind is harmful to the flax. (M.B. 2)
- Even if there is time for the color to become absorbed into the wool it is prohibited out of concern that one will stoke the coals so that the color takes hold better. (M.B. 4)
- Although Shulchan Aruch equated stirring a vat and a pot, they are not exactly the same. In a pot, once the contents are fully cooked there is no longer an issue but regarding a vat one violates a prohibition no matter what as explained below in siman 318:18. Therefore, one should not place wool into a vat close to the onset of Shabbos if the cover is not sealed even if the color will become absorbed before Shabbos. (M.B. 5)
- If one was setting a trap on Shabbos and as it was being set the animal entered the trap he is liable for violating the prohibition of trapping. (M.B. 7)
- If there is not time for him to leave or if the gentile stipulates that he will take it out on Shabbos the sale of the merchandise was prohibited. (M.B. 8)
- Later authorities agree that one should not be lenient about this since we conclude below in siman 440 regarding chometz that designation of a place is not permitted. Additionally, the onlooker will think that the Jew instructed him to remove the item; therefore one should not be lenient other than in a circumstance of significant loss. Olas Tamid writes that if one rented the gentile a room for Shabbos for even a perutah one need not be stringent but other authorities write that even in this case one should not be lenient. (M.B. 11)

# Halacha Highlight

## Setting a timer before Shabbos

Shulchan Aruch Siman 252 Seif 1

**מתר להתחיל במלאכה בערב שבת סמוך לחשכה**

**It is permitted to begin a melacha on erev Shabbos close to the onset of Shabbos**

Shulchan Aruch writes that it is permitted for one to begin a melacha on erev Shabbos close to the onset of Shabbos even though one will not be able to complete the melacha before Shabbos and it will finish on Shabbos. Numerous examples of this type of activity are enumerated with various restrictions that apply when there is a concern that one may perform a related melacha on Shabbos. Mishnah Berurah (סק״א) explains that even though these activities involve Biblical melacha, since they were started at a time that it is permitted and the melacha will finish on its own it is permitted.

Poskim discuss the permissibility of setting a timer before Shabbos to go off on Shabbos to start an electronic device. Rav Moshe Feinstein (שו״ת אג״מ או״ח ח״ד סי׳ ס׳) writes very strongly against the practice. He asserts that there is no greater degradation of Shabbos than using timers to turn on electrical devices, for if this was permitted one could have his factory run on Shabbos without any human intervention. He also contends that had timers been around in the time of Chazal they certainly would have prohibited their use on Shabbos. He is only lenient regarding lights, air conditioners and heaters. He also writes that it is prohibited to set a timer so that food should cook on Shabbos. This is different than one who, according to the guidelines of halacha, places food on a fire the moment before Shabbos begins even though the food will cook on Shabbos. The reason for the difference is that all a person does to cook a food is place the food over the fire since the fire does the actual cooking. Therefore, when someone places the food on the fire before Shabbos he has completed the human contribution to the cooking. In contrast, when the food is not on a fire when Shabbos begins it cannot be said that the human contribution was completed since no melacha began before Shabbos and thus it is prohibited.