The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
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סימן רס"ה סעיף ג'-ד'

Overview

Siman 265 Seif 3:

One may not place a vessel under a lamp to catch the dripping oil since that nullifies the vessel from its use. It may be placed there during the day but the oil that drips onto it may not be used on Shabbos. It is prohibited to touch the lamp that is burning while it is suspended even though one does not move it. Although generally touching something does not violate the prohibition of muktzah, nevertheless it is prohibited out of concern that it will be moved and thereby tilted.

- If no oil drips onto it the utensil is not prohibited. Elya Rabba writes that if oil drips on it before Shabbos his intent was fulfilled and it is considered a kli shemelachto l'issur. (M.B. 7)
- Even if there is a greater quantity of permitted oil in the vessel it is prohibited since it is a davar she'yesh lo matirin. (M.B. 8)
- This implies that were there no concern that the lamp would be tilted there would be no concern for the slight movement of the muktzah item. Magen Avrohom asserts that there is something permitted on the lamp and one intends to remove the permitted item so that it is tiltul min hatzad that is permitted but it is prohibited to outright touch the lamp even if the fire is not burning. (M.B. 10)

Siman 265 Seif 4:

One may place a vessel under a lamp to catch the sparks since there is no substance to them and it does not involve nullifying a utensil from its use. One may not place water into the vessel even before Shabbos since that hastens the extinguishing of the sparks. It is permitted to add water to the lantern that is kindled before Shabbos since one's intent is not to extinguish the fire; it is to raise the level of the oil. Some maintain that even if one's intent is to extinguish the fire it is permitted since the water is not visible as it sits below the oil and it involves only indirect extinguishing which is permitted and this is the custom.

- The ash of the sparks is prohibited since it has substance. (M.B. 14)
- Generally starting a melacha before Shabbos is permitted even though it will continue on Shabbos but in this case it is prohibited since one may think that there is no melacha involved and will do so on Shabbos. There is also a concern that one will lift the plate to hasten the extinguishing of the sparks. (M.B. 15)
- Elya Rabba cites authorities who permit placing a vessel filled with water beneath a lamp when there is a concern for a fire. Similarly, if one fears that a lamp will tilt and fall one may place beneath it a vessel filled with water. Pri Megadim questions this leniency but in a pressing circumstance one may ask a child to do this. (M.B. 16)
- To add water to a candleholder before Shabbos so that the fire goes out when it reaches the water is prohibited according to all opinions since one's intent is to extinguish the fire. In a pressing circumstance one may be lenient and rely on the Poskim who maintain that the prohibition is limited to where the water is in another vessel since there is concern that one may do the same thing on Shabbos. One must add the water before kindling the candle. According to all opinions one may place a candle in sand since that only involves indirect extinguishing of the fire. (M.B. 18)

Halacha Highlight

Touching a lamp

Rema Siman 265 Seif 3

ואסור לגע בנר דולק כשהוא תלוי

It is prohibited to touch a burning lamp while it is suspended

Rema (סע' ג') rules that it is prohibited to touch a burning lamp when it is suspended in the air even if one does not transport it. Although one does not violate the prohibition of muktzah by merely touching a muktzah object, nevertheless, in this circumstance it is prohibited. The concern is that it will move and tilt as a result of one's touch and one will violate either the prohibition of kindling a fire or extinguishing a fire. Mishnah Berurah (סק"י) notes that the implication of Rema's explanation is that were it not for the concern that the lamp would tilt it would be permitted to touch and cause the lamp to move without regard to the prohibition against moving muktzah. This, however, is difficult since it is prohibited to cause muktzah items to move.

Mishnah Berurah (שם) cites Magen Avrohom who explains that Rema is referring to a circumstance in which there is a permitted item resting on the lamp that one wishes to take. In the event that the lamp moves it is only indirect movement of the muktzah which is permitted. Mishnah Berurah then adds that it is prohibited to even touch a suspended lamp. The reason, as explained elsewhere (סי' רע"ז ס"ק י"ט), is that touching a suspended lamp will in all likelihood cause the lamp to move. In the event that the lamp is permanently affixed to something that it will not move when touched it is, in fact, permitted for one to touch it on Shabbos even while the oil is burning (סי' רע"ז שם ובביה"ל שם סע' ג' ד"ה נרות). The truth is that there is a disagreement between the Poskim whether it is permitted to touch a muktzah item if one will not move it (ע' מ"ב סי' ש"ח ס"ק י"ז). Mishnah Berurah, however, rules in accordance with those who are lenient (מ"ב סי' ש"י ס"ק כ"ב).