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Digest
Mishna Berura
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סימן ר"ע סעיף א'-ב

Halacha Highlight

Studying במה מדליקין

Shulchan Aruch Siman 270 Seif 1
נוהגים לומר פרק במה מדליקין
The custom is to read the chapter of במה מדליקין

Shulchan Aruch (סע' א') mentions the practice to read the chapter of במה מדליקין on Shabbos night and relates that amongst the Sephardim it is recited before ma'ariv, and he comments that this is the correct practice to follow. Mishnah Berurah (סק"ב) explains that in the places to which Shulchan Aruch refers they davened ma'ariv early and by reading this chapter before the onset of Shabbos they will be aware of what may be used for kindling Shabbos lights and will be reminded of the three things that one is supposed to mention to his household before Shabbos. It is for this reason that he feels that studying the chapter before ma'ariv is appropriate since once it is Shabbos there is no value to reading this chapter. Mishnah Berurah that cites the commentary of Mahara Klausner who justifies the practice of those places that study this chapter after ma'ariv. They are concerned that people who come late may not be finished davening by the time everyone else is done and by adding the study of this chapter it allows the people who arrived late to catch up. He then mentions that even in those places where it is studied after ma'ariv there are two different practices. Bach maintains that it should be recited after kiddush since the earlier that kiddush could be recited the better. In other places במה מדליקין is recited first and Perisha explains that since a person with limited funds purchases Shabbos lights before wine for kiddush, so too we study במה מדליקין before reciting kiddush.

Nowadays, common custom is to recite it before ma'ariv but interestingly, since it is after the recitation of לכה דודי and מזמור שיר ליום השבת it is studied after the tzibbur has accepted Shabbos. Poskim explain that the practice could be justified in accordance with the above mentioned explanation of Mahara Klausner. Bach adds that there is, in fact, value to studying the chapter after ma'ariv since it will remind a person of what is permitted and what is prohibited as far as using a light on Shabbos (פסקי תשובות אות א').

Overview

Siman 270 Seif 1:

The custom is to recite במה מדליקין and Sephardim recite it before ma'ariv and this is correct.

- In their location they davened ma'ariv early so this recitation reminded them of the three things that one must prompt the members of his household to prepare for Shabbos. The rationale for those places that recite it after ma'ariv is to give time to those who come late to catch up. For this reason it is not recited on Shabbos Chol HaMoed since people do not come late being that they did not work. There is a disagreement whether it is recited before or after kiddush. (M.B. 2)

Siman 270 Seif 2:

There are some who do not recite it when Yom Tov falls on erev Shabbos and some do not recite it on Shabbos Chanukah. This is not our custom on Chanukah. On Shabbos Chol HaMoed it is not recited and when Yom Tov coincides with Shabbos it is also not recited.

- When Yom Kippur falls on Shabbos it is not recited. (M.B. 5)