The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
Shabbos, Jun 24 2023 ■ ה' תמוז תשפ"ג
סימן רע"ה סעיף ב'-ה'

Overview

Siman 275 Seif 2:

The restriction applies to a single person but two people may read together because if one person reaches to adjust the flame his friend will remind him. This applies when they are reading about the same topic so that each one will watch the other but if they are reading different topics the leniency does not apply. Some maintain that if they are reading from different sefarim even if it about a single topic it is prohibited, therefore, it is prohibited for one to recite piyutim in the bais haknesses on the night of Yom Tov when it coincides with Shabbos and this is the custom.

- There is a disagreement whether this allowance is limited to reading that involves a mitzvah or does it include even optional activities. (M.B. 6)
- Even the above authorities who permit reading by candlelight would agree that in the bais haknesses it is prohibited to recite piyutim since occasionally they use oil and the concern for adjusting the lights applies. (M.B. 8)
- One may use lamps to daven the rest of davening since people are more familiar with it and it does not require one to look closely at the siddur. (M.B. 9)

Siman 275 Seif 3:

If someone else is present and one asks him to make sure that he does not tilt the lamp it is permitted and the same is true if one makes this request from one's wife.

- One must specifically ask and it cannot be assumed that someone will warn him not to do so even if many people are present. (M.B. 10)

Siman 275 Seif 4:

An important person who does not even tilt a lamp during the week may read by the light of a lamp.

- Meaning that it is clear that he will not tilt the lamp even while he is learning. Pri Megadim writes that nowadays the leniency of an important person no longer applies but if the question also involves a wax candle there is no need for stringency. (M.B. 12)

Siman 275 Seif 5:

Regarding a bonfire even if there are ten people present they may not read because they are spread apart from one another and the ends of the burning logs are near them and as a result no one will realize if one person will ignite or stoke the fire.

Halacha Highlight

Two people reading together

Shulchan Aruch Siman 275 Seif 2
אבל שנים קורין ביחד
But two people may read together

Shulchan Aruch (סע' ב') writes that if two people are reading about the same topic they may read by the light of a lamp without concern that one of them will adjust the lamp. The reason is that if one of them were to reach out to adjust the lamp the other would stop him from doing so. If, however, the two people are reading about different topics it is not permitted. Biur Halacha (ד"ה בשני ענינים לא) explains that even if the two people are reading from the same sefer it is prohibited as long as they are reading about different topics. Even if they ask one another to be attentive to prevent the other from adjusting the lamp it may be prohibited since each one may become engaged in what he is doing so that he will not be an effective custodian for the other.

Mishnah Berurah (סק"ו) presents a disagreement whether the leniency of two people together is limited to reading for the sake of a mitzvah or whether any activity is permitted when two people are together. Magen Avrohom (סק"ה) maintains that this leniency is permitted specifically for the sake of fulfilling a mitzvah. What led him to this conclusion is an apparent contradiction. Regarding the restriction against reading by a lamp there is an allowance for two people to read together and the concern that someone will tilt the lamp is alleviated. When it comes to the prohibition against riding an animal that is rooted in the concern that one will pull a branch off of a tree, we do not find a leniency when two people are riding together. Magen Avrohom answers that even when two people are together halacha would not adopt a lenient position unless it is for the sake of a mitzvah. Since people generally ride an animal for non-mitzvah purposes Chazal did not incorporate a leniency when people are together as opposed to reading which is commonly done for the sake of a mitzvah and consequently this leniency was employed (מחה"ש שם).

- Olas Tamid writes that if one asks someone to watch him to make sure that he doesn't stoke the fire, it is permitted. (M.B. 13)
- Although it is permitted to sit near a fire for warmth one should not sit too close to the burning wood out of concern that he will touch it so that it should burn better. Others write that there is no such concern. (M.B. 14)