The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
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סימן רע"ז סעיף ג'

Overview

Siman 277 Seif 3:

If one forgot a lamp on a tray he may shake the tray so that it should fall even if the lamp is lit as long as one does not intend to extinguish the fire. It is preferred if this is done by a gentile when there is not such a great need to move the lamp. **This applies when the lamp is fueled by wax or something similar or if there is no more oil but if there is oil in the lamp it is impossible that the oil won't be moved closer to the wick and one would thereby be kindling the fire. If one placed the lamp there intentionally it is prohibited to move the tray since the tray constitutes a base for a prohibited item.** It is permitted to touch the tray since that does not involve moving the lamp. It is also permitted to touch the lamp in the bais haknesses, even if it is lit as long as one does not move it.

- Even if one placed the lamp down intentionally but intended to remove it before Shabbos and then forgot it there, it is considered as though it was forgotten. (M.B. 12)
- Extinguishing the flame is not inevitable and thus since it is unintended it is permitted. Meiri writes that one must shake it gently since a rigorous shaking would inevitably cause the flame to become extinguished. (M.B. 14)
- A gentile may do this even if the lamp is fueled with oil. Maharil implies that if a gentile is not available it should be done by a child. (M.B. 15)
- Moving the table or tray is permitted even if the lamp is fueled with oil if one moves it slowly so that the flame will not inevitably become extinguished. (M.B. 17)
- There is a disagreement whether intent means that one intended that it should be there for the entire Shabbos or whether it is sufficient if one intended for it to be there at the outset of Shabbos. A lamp which was kindled on a table with the intent that a gentile will move it on Shabbos may be moved according to the lenient opinion and in a circumstance of need one may follow that position. If bread or some other item needed for Shabbos was also on the table it is permitted to move the table. If tipping the table would break something it is permitted to move the table before tipping it. If one needs the place where the table is standing it may be moved even if the lamp is burning and this is the origin of the custom for women to place bread needed for Shabbos on the table before candle lighting and it is a proper custom to follow. Pri Megadim writes that once the flame goes out one may not move the table with the lamp on it since one could tip the lamp off the table. (M.B. 18)
- If a lamp is suspended one may not touch it even after the flame went out since it will cause it to move. (M.B. 19)

Halacha Highlight

A base for a muktzah and non-muktzah item

Shulchan Aruch Siman 277 Seif 3

ואם הניחו עליה מדעת אסור לנערה

If one placed it there intentionally, it is prohibited to move it

Shulchan Aruch writes that one who intentionally places a lamp on a table or tray for Shabbos with the intent that it should remain there for, according to one opinion, the entire Shabbos and according to the second opinion, for the outset of Shabbos, it is prohibited to move the table or tray since it is a base for the prohibited item which is the flame. Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק י"ח) writes that if bread or other items were also on this table or tray, the non-muktzah items are considered more important. Consequently, the table or tray is a base for a muktzah item and a non-muktzah item and since the non-muktzah item is more important the table or tray is subordinate to the non-muktzah item. This is the basis of the custom that women have to place bread that will be needed for Shabbos on the table before kindling Shabbos lights. The rationale behind the custom is to permit moving the table or tray on Shabbos.

The wording of the Mishnah Berurah implies that the importance of the bread is based on the fact that it is needed for Shabbos and the fact that the Shabbos lamp is worth more money is irrelevant. Rav Moshe Feinstein (או"ח ח"ה סי' כ"ב אות י"ז) writes that a non-muktzah item can be considered more important than a muktzah item even if it is not needed specifically for Shabbos if it is more important to the owner for Shabbos. For example, if a person's glasses or siddur are in a drawer together with a large sum of money, the drawer is considered a base for the non-muktzah items even though one can make do without them for Shabbos and are worth less money than the sum of money. Only if the person has another pair of glasses would the money be considered more important than the glasses. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (שולחן שלמה סי' ש"י ס"ק כ"ח אות ג') contends that the relative importance of two items is measured based on which item one would forgo before the other. Therefore, if one would be willing to give up the bread rather than the money, the table or tray would be a base for a muktzah item and prohibited to move even though one needs the bread for Shabbos.