The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
Thurs, May 30, 2024 ■ כ"ב אייר, תשפ"ד
סימן תקי"א סעיף א'

Halacha Highlight

Universal need

Shulchan Aruch Siman 511 Seif 1
מתר לעשות מדורה
It is permitted to make a fire

Shulchan Aruch rules that it is permitted to kindle a fire (from an existing flame) on Yom Tov to provide warmth. Mishnah Berurah (סק"א) challenges this ruling. The *pasuk* states regarding *melacha* on Yom Tov that one may only perform *melacha* that is necessary for food preparation (אך אשר יאכל לכל נפש), why then is it permitted to kindle a fire for warmth which is not related to preparing food? He offers two answers to this question. The first is that once the Torah permitted a *melacha* that is necessary for food preparation, it is also permitted for non-food preparations provided that it is necessary to satisfy a universal need (דבר השוה לכל נפש). Alternatively, *melacha* that provides physical benefit to the body is included in the Torah's allowance to perform *melacha*.

In his comments here Mishnah Berurah emphasized twice that *melacha* is permitted only when it satisfies a universal need. This prerequisite gives rise to numerous questions regarding the application of the principle. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (שמירת שבת כהלכתה פי"ט הע' ה') addressed the question of transporting a book that is written in a foreign language that only a few people speak. Is it permitted to transport such a book, or perhaps since most people do not speak that language it does not rise to the prerequisite of a universal need? He ruled that since reading is considered a universal need, it is permitted even though few people could read this specific book. Similarly, he ruled (שו"ת מנחת שלמה ח"ב סי' נ"ח אות ו') that it is permitted to cook very spicy food that only a few people would eat. Once again the matter is not determined by whether people would eat this food. Instead the issue is whether eating is considered a universal need. Once the answer to that is affirmative, cooking is permitted even though only a few people will eat that particular food. Rav Nissim Karelitz (חוט שני יום טוה פי"ב סק"ב) also adopts this approach and writes that one is permitted to cook food for others even though he would never eat that food since cooking food is permitted.

Overview

Siman 511 Seif 1:

It is permitted to kindle a fire to warm oneself by it. Some maintain that it is prohibited to warm a winter home on Yom Tov since there are times when it is not so cold and the fire is for those who are delicate and is comparable to bathing and incense that are prohibited but the custom is to be lenient.

- Any benefit for one's body is included in the allowance to perform *melacha* on Yom Tov provided that it represents a universal need. (M.B. 1)
- It is permitted for a gentile to do so and the custom is to be lenient and permit even a Jew to kindle the fire. (M.B. 2)
- The fire is kindled just to produce heat. (M.B. 3)
- Even if it is not so cold that one would kindle a fire for warmth but the food has fat which will congeal, it is nevertheless permitted to kindle a fire according to all opinions since it is necessary for food. (M.B. 4)
- Since kindling a fire because it is cold is permitted and constitutes a universal need, we do not differentiate between very cold or only slightly cold. (M.B. 7)