The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
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סימן תרע״א סעיף ג׳-ד׳

Overview

Siman 671 Seif 3:

A lamp that has two lips counts as two lights.

- This is when inside the lamp the wicks are next to one another but they emerge from separate places. (M.B. 11)
- It is permitted for two people to use the same menorah, one person lighting on one end and the second person on the other end since it is evident that each light is being lit by a different person. (M.B. 12)

Siman 671 Seif 4:

If a container is filled with oil and multiple wicks emerge; if a cover is placed on top - each wick is considered a separate light, but if one does not place a cover on top - it does not even count as one since it is a bonfire. Therefore, the lights should be aligned in a row rather than in a circle. One may use a candelabra for a menorah since each light is separate from the others. When lighting candles one should not attach them since they become a bonfire and this same caution should be applied to the Shabbos and Yom Tov lights.

- One must place the cover and then kindle the lights. If one did not follow this order he must extinguish the lights and rekindle them. (M.B. 13)
- One should not even arrange the lights in a zigzag pattern (M.B. 15)
- If a barrier the size of a finger separates each wick it is permitted even without a cover on the container. (M.B. 16)
- פמוטות is defined as a candelabra that has many branches that emerge from a central shaft. (M.B. 18)

Stories to Share

The Two Mouths of the Chanukah Light

ש״ע, ס׳ תרע״א, ג׳: ״נר שיש לו שתי פיות עולה לו בשביל שנים...״

How we use our mouth is what determines our spiritual level, since speech is what connects us to Hashem, whether through Torah or prayer. Yet it is very difficult to attain completion in even one of these areas, let alone both. This is why chassidim would say, "We have seen many great servants of Hashem who attained amazing levels by focusing on prayer. And we have also seen geonim who had true Torah greatness. But both attainments in one person is a very rare find..."

The Erchei Yehoshua, zt"l, once expanded on this theme. "Tefilah is called a closed mouth—פה—since Chanah—the paradigm of prayer—moved her lips but made no sound. Torah is referred to as an open mouth as well since we are taught that life is attained by those who fully enunciate its words. This is one whose Chanukah light has 'two mouths' discharges his obligation.' If during one's lifetime he worked hard on his Torah study but he let his prayers slide, he will have to come back to this world to work on that which was neglected. And one who focuses exclusively on tefilah will also return to immerse himself in Torah. But one who used his mouth properly to pray and learn and pray will not need to return for another try."

The Mishnah Berurah says a similar thing in the Sha'ar Hatzion. "Some people figure that they may as well give up, since they feel as though they can never rectify what they have damaged anyway… This is a fallacy since if we don't change for the better in this lifetime we will come back to this world again and again until we fulfill the mission Hashem has set for us."

Halacha Highlight

The correct alignment of the Chanukah lights

Rema siman 671 : 4

ולכן יש לזהר להעמיד הנרות בשורה בשוה ולא בעגול

Therefore one should be careful to place the lights in a straight line rather than in a circle

Rema's ruling that the lights of the menorah must be placed in a straight line must be understood in their context. Shulchan Aruch discussed a case of one who fills a container with oil and wants to have numerous wicks extend out of the container in different directions and each wick should be considered a separate light. Shulchan Aruch rules that if a cover is put on the container so that each wick stands separate and apart from the others then each wick is counted as a separate light. If one does not place a cover on the utensil it is considered as though he did not light any Chanukah lights since the different flames will merge into one "bonfire." As a follow up to this ruling, Rema writes that one should place the lights in a straight line rather than a circle. His concern is that if the lights are placed in a circle too close to one another it will appear like a "bonfire." Mishnah Berurah adds that one should not even place the lights in a zig zag pattern (or according to Pri Megadim (א״א סק״ג) a semi-circle) so that one should not mistakenly place the lights in a circle that could look like a "bonfire."

Rema does permit the use of a candelabra (פמוטות שקורין לאמפי״א) that has many arms extending from a central shaft. The reason a candelabra may be used even though the lights form the shape of a circle is that each arm is separate and distinct from the next in addition to the fact that each light has its own walls see (מ״ב ס״ק י״ח). Biur Halacha (ד״ה ומתר להדליק) however writes in the name of the Maharshal that using a candelabra is not an ideal manner (הידור) of fulfilling the mitzvah and one should make an effort that the lights should be aligned in a straight row. As far as the height of the lights is concerned, Teshuvas Rivevos Ephraim (שו״ת רבבות אפרים ח״ד סי׳ קס״ג אות ט׳) reports that Rav Moshe Feinstein ruled that there is no requirement for the lights to be uniform in height.