The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
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סימן תרע"ד סעיף א'-ב'

Overview

Siman 674 Seif 1:

It is permitted to kindle one Chanukah light from another. This allowance is limited to kindling one directly from the other but one may not kindle one light from another with an intermediary but there are authorities that permit this as well unless there is a concern that the non-sacred flame will go out before one kindles the Chanukah light. The custom is to be stringent regarding the Chanukah lights and avoid using one to kindle another since the primary mitzvah is only a single light and there rest are not needed for the mitzvah. Therefore, one should not kindle one from another. This restriction is limited to when they are burning in fulfillment of the mitzvah but after the time for the mitzvah has passed the lights are permitted for benefit so one may certainly light another light from them.

- If one of the candles went out one may not rekindle it from one of the other lights even without an intermediary since rekindling the light does not involve fulfillment of a mitzvah. (M.B. 2)
- The shamash is also considered a non-sacred light. (M.B. 3)
- It is permitted to kindle one light from another for other mitzvah lights, e.g. Shabbos lights or lights of the Bais HaKnesses. (M.B. 5)
- According to this approach if two people are kindling lights they may kindle their lights from one another. (M.B. 6)
- Maharshal writes that concerning the lights in the Bais HaKnesses there is no difference between the shamash and the other lights since they are all called mitzvah lights. (M.B. 7)
- There are Poskim who maintain that as long as the candles remain lit one may not benefit from their light nor may one kindle another light from them. This restriction, however, is limited to kindling non-sacred flames but after the time for the mitzvah it is permitted to kindle a mitzvah flame. (M.B. 8)

Siman 674 Seif 2:

There is an opinion that maintains that the lights of the Bais HaKnesses, of Shabbos and Chanukah are all mitzvah lights and it is permitted to kindle one from another. The same is true regarding lights for Torah study and for one who is ill. Concerning the lights in a Bais Haknesses see above 154:14.

- Biur HaGra writes that according to opinion that one may not even benefit from the Chanukah lights for sacred purposes one may not kindle the lights of the Bais HaKnesses from the Chanukah lights. (M.B. 9)

Halacha Highlight

Kindling one light from another

Shulchan Aruch Siman 674 Seif 1

מדליקין נר חנכה מנר חנכה

One may kindle one Chanukah light from another Chanukah light

Shulchan Aruch (סע' א') rules that it is permitted to kindle one Chanukah light from another. However, this allowance is limited to where one kindles one light directly from another, but if it is necessary to kindle a non-sacred light to transfer the flame from one mitzvah-light to another mitzvah-light it is prohibited. According to a second opinion, one may even use a non-sacred intermediary light to transfer the flame from one mitzvah-light to another unless there is a concern that the flame will go out before one has a chance to kindle the second mitzvah-light. Rema writes that the custom is to be stringent with regards to kindling one light from another since only one flame constitutes the actual mitzvah and the other flames are not mitzvah-flames since they merely beautify the mitzvah and as such one may kindle one from the other.

Teshuvas Shevet HaLevi (ח"ג סי' צ"ו אות ב') notes what seems to be a contradiction in the wording of Rema. Rema first mentions that the custom is to be stringent concerning Chanukah lights to not kindle one from another. He then proceeds to explain that only the first light is essential for the mitzvah and the other lights merely enhance the fulfillment of the mitzvah. This implies that it should be permitted to kindle the extra lights (meaning all the lights other than the first one necessary for the essential mitzvah) from one another. Shevet HaLevi explains that there are three different circumstances under discussion. The first halacha is that one should not kindle one of the additional lights from the essential light. The second halacha is when there are multiple people each kindling a single light in the same home. Since one candle for the entire household is sufficient the custom as mentioned by Rema is to refrain from kindling these lights from one another. The third circumstance is kindling the additional lights from one another and there is no rationale to prohibit this practice and it is not certain that Rema included this in his comment that the custom is to be stringent.

Stories to Share

Oil Lights

ש"ע סי' תרע"ד, א': "מדליקין נר חנוכה..."

Today's amud continues to discuss the halachos of the Chanukah lights.

A certain man always had trouble setting up his Chanukah lamps. Since he only came home from work after the optimal time to light, he had to clean the menorah and set it up the day before. He found this tiring and was gratified when he saw a box of prepared oil lights for Chanukah for a reasonable price. The box held seventy-two cups filled with olive oil, easily lit and ready for use.

When this man was setting up his menorah he noticed that the oil was congealed to keep it from spilling during storage and transport and wondered if it could discharge his obligation l'mehadrin. After all, it was certainly disqualified for use in the Beis Hamikdash!

When this question reached Rav Shmuel Wosner he ruled that lighting with congealed oil discharges ones obligation just like liquid oil. "Since the fire immediately renders the oil liquid again, there is no reason to rule that this is problematic. Like olive oil, it is preferable to other oils or candles.

He added, "The Kol Bo and the Darkei Moshe rule that olive oil is preferred because it is what was used in the mikdash and they surely did not use congealed oil there. Nevertheless, this is no problem since even according to them the oil used in the menorah need not be only what was used in the Beis Hamikdash.

Rav Wosner concluded, "Although the Maharal rules that only olive oil discharges one's obligation and, according to this, perhaps if the oil is congealed it is invalid, the Elyah Rabbah rejects this opinion. In practical terms, the halachah does not follow the Maharal's opinion here."

שו"ת שבט הלוי, ח"ט, סי' קמ"ג .