The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
Mon, Dec 19, 2022 ■ כ"ה כסלו, תשפ"ג
סימן תרע"ז סעיף ב'-ג'

Halacha Highlight

Children kindling *Chanukah* lights

Shulchan Aruch Siman 677 Seif 2
קטן שהגיע לחינוך צריך להדליק
A child who has reached the age of *chimuch* must kindle lights

Shulchan Aruch (סע' ב') rules that a child who has reached the age of *chinuch* must kindle *Chanukah* lights. Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק י"ג) notes that this is a strange ruling for Shulchan Aruch. Above (671:2), Shulchan Aruch ruled that even those who want to fulfill the *mitzvah* מן המהדרין מהדרין only kindle lights on one *menorah* in their home and everyone's obligation is discharged. Why then would he rule in our *siman* that a child who reached the age of *chinuch* must kindle lights? He answers that Shulchan Aruch must be referring to a circumstance in which a child has a house of his own and that is why he is obligated to recite the *beracha* and kindle lights for himself. According to Rema who maintains that each member of the house kindles his own lights, this ruling is not addressing a child who owns his own house since every child is obligated to kindle lights. Mishnah Berurah then notes that there are authorities who maintain that even according to the *Ashkenazi* custom it is not necessary to have a child kindle his own lights unless he has a house of his own.

When a child kindles his own lights there are authorities who maintain that it is unnecessary for the lights to burn for half an hour. Since a young child does not have a sense of the duration of half an hour it is sufficient if the lights burn for what he considers to be half an hour (אשל אברהם מהדו"ת). Others disagree and contend that even the lights of a child must burn for at least a full half an hour. When a child becomes *bar-mitzvah* during *Chanukah,* if his practice was to kindle the lights after *shekiah* he should kindle the lights at that time on the night he becomes a *bar-mitzvah* and it is unnecessary for him to wait until *tzeis hakochavim* to kindle the lights (הליכות שלמה עמ' ש"י).

Overview

Siman 677 Seif 2:

A child who reaches the age of chinuch must kindle lights.

- According to Shulchan Aruch's opinion above (671:2) he refers here to where the child has his own home. According to our custom that each person kindles his own lights, a child is kindling for himself anyways. (M.B. 13)

Siman 677 Seif 3:

Some maintain that even when someone is kindling for him in his home if he is in a place where there are no Jews he should kindle lights and recite the beracha since he is obligated to see the lights and this is the custom. Even one who is together with other Jews and sees their lights but wishes to be stringent and kindle lights for himself may do so and recite the beracha. This is our custom.

- This contradicts the above ruling (676:3) that when someone is kindling lights in his home he does not recite the *beracha* when he sees another's lights. Therefore, one should not kindle lights and recite a *beracha* unless he expresses that he does not wish to fulfill his obligation with his wife's lighting. (M.B. 14)
- He must be sure to have in mind that he does not intend to fulfill his obligation with the lighting of his wife so that his beracha should not be in vain. (M.B. 15)
- There are *Poskim* that assert that once Chazal exempted him via his wife's lighting he cannot decide that he does not want to fulfill the *mitzvah* in that manner and should kindle the lights without reciting a *beracha*. It is more preferred if he listens to someone else's recitation of the *beracha* and then kindle his lights or make sure to kindle his lights earlier than his wife will kindle her lights in their home. (M.B. 16)