**Shabbat, Chapter One, Mishnah Eleven**

**Introduction**

This mishnah continues to discuss lighting fires in ovens on Friday so that they will stay lit over Shabbat. Since the prohibition of putting something into an oven on Friday was only “derabbanan”—of rabbinic origin—and intended to prevent a person from committing a transgression of biblical law, there are cases where this prohibition may be suspended. This is generally the case with rabbinic law—it is more flexible than toraitic law.

**Mishnah**

1. The passover sacrifice may be lowered into the oven just before nightfall;
2. And the fire may be lighted in the fireplace of the Chamber of the Hearth.
3. But in the provinces there must be time for the fire to take hold of its greater part.
   1. Rabbi Judah says: in the case of charcoal, just a little [is sufficient].

***Explanation***

**Section one**: In yesterday’s mishnah we learned that one is not allowed to put meat into an oven on Friday unless it will already be cooked before Shabbat begins. Today’s mishnah relates an exception to this rule: the Passover sacrifice. The reason that one is not allowed to put meat into an oven is that we are concerned lest on Shabbat itself she come to rake the coals in order to speed up the cooking, which is prohibited on Shabbat. However, in this case, since people eat the passover sacrifice in a group setting, we are not concerned that one of them will rake the coals, because others will stop her. These people are engaged in fulfilling a commandment and it is unlikely that they would transgress a commandment at this time. In addition, because of the quantity of people who had to sacrifice their passover sacrifices, not everybody could roast theirs before the Shabbat began. Hence the usual restrictions did not apply.

**Section two**: The Chamber of the Hearth was where the fire was kept constantly lit in the Temple. The priests would gather around there to keep warm. Hence, they could add to the fire there on Friday without fear that someone would stoke the fire, since the priests would make sure that would not happen.

**Section three**: Outside of the Temple it is forbidden to light a fire on Friday unless it the fire has time to take hold before the Shabbat. Small fires need to be stoked, and therefore the fire must be fully lit before Shabbat begins.

**Section four**: Rabbi Judah adds in a leniency concerning lighting coals on Friday. Once coals are lit, they will stay lit and therefore there is little fear that he will stoke them. Hence it is permitted to light them on Friday afternoon as long as they will be at least a little bit lit before Shabbat begins.