



THE SHABBOS WEEKLY
HALACHA SERIES ON HILCHOS SHABBOS

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These halachos were shown by Rabbi Ostroff to **HaGaon HaRav Moshe Sternbuch, shlita**

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Is the sand in a sandpit muktze? In other words, is a child allowed to play in a sandpit on Shabbos?

The *Shulchan Aruch*¹ teaches us that one may bring sand into one's house before Shabbos and use it for covering dirt and slime on Shabbos.² In other words, even though sand is usually *muktze*, if prepared for use it is permitted to handle.

Accordingly, sand in a sand pit was prepared for children's use and is therefore not *muktze*.³ On the other hand sand on the beach or on a building site are *muktze*.

May I blow a feather on Shabbos?

Blowing *muktze* is permitted.⁴ The question is, is it because it is **irregular** to move *muktze* through blowing or because it is not considered handling at all, and *Chazal* only forbade the **handling** of *muktze*? The *nafka minah*⁵ would be blowing a feather. Since it is normal to blow a feather it would not be called handling *muktze* **irregularly** and according to one side of our query should be forbidden.

¹ *Simon* 308:38.

² This was common practice in their times when the flooring was sand.

³ *SS"K* 16:4.

⁴ *Simon* 308, *Rama se'if* 3, and *Mechaber se'if* 43.

⁵ Aramaic for outcome. In other words, the difference between the various explanations materializes in the following case.

The *Eshel Avraham* (*Butchatch*) says that one may move anything through blowing, because blowing is better than *keilachar yad* (irregular handling of *muktze*), as it is not considered moving *muktze* at all.

It is therefore permitted to blow feathers, dust etc from one's clothes on Shabbos even though they might be *muktze*. As for **brushing** *muktze* from one's clothes, according to the *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*⁶ it is forbidden, because it is considered handling *muktze*, and according to the *Chazon Ish*⁷ it is permitted. He understands that it is as if one is dealing with the garment and not with the *muktze*.

Is one permitted to pat a pet on Shabbos?

Animals per se are *muktze*, and therefore may not be lifted, dragged, pulled etc.⁸ We learn from the *halachos* of the handling of a dead body⁹ that moving part of a *muktze* is also forbidden. Accordingly it is forbidden to move even one limb of an animal, as moving a limb is similar to the handling and the moving of the whole animal.

On the other hand we find that Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach *ז"ל*¹⁰ ruled that a **lead dog** is not *muktze* on Shabbos, as it is set

⁶ *Simon* 302:3.

⁷ *Orach Chayim* 47:15.

⁸ *Simon* 308:39.

⁹ *Simon* 311:7.

¹⁰ *SS"K* 18 footnote 621

aside specifically for that purpose, and its use requires it to be handled. With regards to pets however, we do not find contemporary *poskim* permitting its handling, and unless one hears from his rav otherwise it should be regarded as *muktzeh*.

If my child "sits down" in the middle of a Shabbos walk and refuses to continue, am I permitted to carry him home?

The answer to this frequent scenario will greatly depend on where it takes place. Obviously we are not talking about a case where there is a kosher *eiruv*, because in such a case he may be picked up and taken home. Likewise in a life-threatening situation, he may be lifted and taken home.

If he is in a *reshus harabim* (a public domain where carrying four cubits is biblically prohibited) you are forbidden to carry him. You will have an opportunity to practice your coaxing/ threatening/ pleading abilities, because there is not much else you can do. If he leans on you while walking in a way that one foot is always on the ground, it is permitted as long as you do not drag him.

If he is in a *carmelis* (a public domain where carrying four cubits is Rabbinically prohibited) carrying is likewise prohibited, but you may ask a non-Jew to carry him home.¹¹

Vort on the Parsha

After the B'nei Yisroel were bitten by the

¹¹ *Simon* 308:41, and *M"B* 154. In a *carmelis* there is more of a leniency as far as dragging a child goes, but it will depend on the age and a few other factors. In this limited space we cannot delve into it.

poisonous snakes, Moshe Rabeinu was commanded by Hashem to make an antidote in the form of a snake for the bitten people to see. Moshe then fashioned a **copper** snake, which he was not commanded to do. What was the reason for this?

In nature, when an animal bites someone, he is told not to look at the animal that bit him because the anxiety will cause the poison to circulate faster in the blood stream. The *Ramban* says that Moshe perceived that if the antidote was to gaze at an artificial snake, then the cure is not a natural one, rather it is the submissiveness to Hashem that will cure. In order to emphasize that the cure is Divine he fashioned a snake from copper, because in Hebrew copper has the same resonance as a snake – *n'chash* – *n'choshes*. In such a manner the bitten people will reminisce even more over the artificial snake, which again is an antithesis to medicine. Moshe Rabeinu wished to emphasize that just as the punishment is Divine, so is the cure.

Food For Thought

If my child is carrying a stone in his hand, may I lift him up? Is it as if I am carrying the stone as well?

What if he is carrying money?

If a bowl of fruit has a stone inside it as well, am I permitted to lift the bowl?

Does it depend on the type of fruit in the bowl?

Answers coming next week.

Dedicated to the memory of Rebbetzin Tamar bas Shraga Shamai,
wife of HaRav HaGaon Aryeh Leib Shteinman, 24th Sivan

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Note: The purpose of this series is intended solely for the clarification of the topics discussed and not to render halachic decisions. It is intended to heighten everyone's awareness of important practical questions which do arise on this topic. One must consult with a proper halachic authority in order to receive p'sak.