



Halachos of
MUKTZAH



Halachos of MUKTZAH

Please note that the material presented is not meant to be a comprehensive guide to the halachos of Muktzah. In any case of question or doubt a Rabbi should be consulted.

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Day 1

This month we will learn about the halachos of *muktzah*. Undoubtedly, questions of *muktzah* are among the most common halachic concerns that arise on a weekly basis. As such, it is imperative that one familiarize him/herself with at least a general understanding of the various potential concerns of *muktzah*.

The term *muktzah* refers to an item that is not considered “distinguished” for Shabbos use. We will learn which items fall under this category and are classified as *muktzah*.

Broadly speaking, Chazal prohibited moving items that are *muktzah*. The *Rishonim* provide two main reasons as to why Chazal enacted the prohibition of *muktzah*:

1) *Muktzah* serves as a deterrent to performing prohibited *melacho* on Shabbos. For example, the restriction on moving a pencil on Shabbos helps guarantee that one will not write on Shabbos.

2) Were one permitted to move whatever he wanted to on Shabbos, it is possible that he would spend the entire Shabbos engaged in rearranging and moving items from place to place etc. and not rest on Shabbos at all. To help ensure that Shabbos is observed as intended, Chazal enacted the prohibition of *muktzah*.

רמב"ם וראב"ד פכ"ד הל' שבת הי"ב



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Day 2

There are four main categories of *muktzah*:

- 1) מוקצה מחמת גופו - *Muktzah* due to inherent uselessness on Shabbos
- 2) מוקצה מחמת חסרון כיס - *Muktzah* due to concern of potential monetary loss
- 3) כלי שמלאכתו לאיסור - A utensil used exclusively to perform an act that is prohibited on Shabbos
- 4) בסיס - Something that is supporting a *muktzah* item

It is critical to determine the category to which a particular *muktzah* item belongs, because the parameters of the *muktzah* prohibition can vary depending on category. We will begin our learning this month discussing the various methods of moving a *muktzah* item, which are applicable to all *muktzah* items. For the duration of the month, we will discuss the category of *muktzah machmas gufo* – items that are *muktzah* due to inherent uselessness. Next month, with Hashem's help we will cover the other categories of *muktzah (bli neder)*.



Day 3

Items that are considered *muktzah* may not be moved on Shabbos. One may not even move part of an item that is considered *muktzah*.

To illustrate: Goldie forgot to unplug her cellphone charger before Shabbos began. Goldie wants to move part of the wire out of the way so that it does not accidentally get stepped on during the course of Shabbos. Because the charger is *muktzah*, Goldie is prohibited to move even part of the wire (to be continued).

שו"ע ס' שיא ס"ז, מ"ב ס' שח ס"ק קנא



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Day 4

We have learned that a *muktzah* item may not be moved (even partially) on Shabbos. It is permitted to touch a *muktzah* item on Shabbos. Nonetheless, one may not touch a *muktzah* item on Shabbos in a manner that it is likely to cause it to move.

For example, it is permitted to touch a car on Shabbos. Although the car is *muktzah*, merely touching it will certainly not cause it to move. However, at times, leaning on a car on Shabbos may be prohibited, because doing so may cause part of the car to move.

מ"ב ס' שח סקי"ז



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Day 5

Chazal only prohibited moving *muktzah* in the normal manner in which the item is usually moved. Thus, one is permitted to use one's body to move a *muktzah* item in an abnormal manner. This is referred to as טלטול בגופו *moving with one's body*. This includes moving an item with one's feet, elbows, breath etc. Below are a few illustrations of this idea:

Penina's long awaited package arrived at her doorstep on Shabbos. Although the package is *muktzah*, Penina may kick the box inside her front door.

Shira forgot to remove a bill that was sitting on her kitchen table. Shira may scrape the bill off of the table using her elbow.

Tehilla was about to sit down at her seat when she noticed a dead ant on the chair. Tehilla may blow the ant off of the chair.

שו"ע ס' שיא ס"ח,
ועיין ספר הל' מוקצה פ"ג ס"ג ובהערה שם



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Day 6

At times, one may be permitted to employ **טלטול מן הצד** *indirect movement of an item*, to move something that is *muktzah*. Indirect movement of an item refers to moving a non-*muktzah* item with a *muktzah* item on top.* Moving a *muktzah* item in such a manner is permitted only if the *muktzah* is being moved for the sake of the non-*muktzah* item underneath, and not vice-versa.

To illustrate: Leah came into her bedroom on Shabbos and saw that her phone was mistakenly left on her pillow. She may carry the pillow off of the bed in order so that she can now use her bed. This is because the pillow and phone on top of it are not being moved for the sake of the phone, but rather in order to use the bed. This idea will be clarified further below.

* Note: At times, an item that is supporting a *muktzah* item resting on top of it, may itself become *muktzah* due to the concept of *bosis* (the concept of *bosis* will be discussed next month *bli neder*). The above halacha applies when the item on the bottom is not a *bosis*.

שׁו"ע ס' שיא ס"ח



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Day 7

It was previously mentioned that one may move a non-*muktzah* item with a *muktzah* item on top, provided that one is not doing so for the sake of the *muktzah* item. There is an important limitation to this leniency. This is only permitted if one is unable to tilt the non-*muktzah* item and shake off the *muktzah* item. This is referred to as *ניעור* *shaking off*. Only when shaking off is not an option, is one permitted to carry the non-*muktzah* item with the *muktzah* item resting on top.

For example, we learned previously that if Leah comes into her bedroom and finds that her phone was left on her pillow, she may carry the pillow off the bed in order to be able to use her bed. In such an instance, tilting the pillow to shake off the phone is not an option because it may result in damage to the phone. However, if Leah finds that a hairbrush was left on her pillow, she may not carry the pillow off of the bed. Rather, she should tilt her pillow so that the hairbrush falls to the floor.

שו"ע ס' שט ס"ג, מ"ב ס' שי סקל"ו



Day 8

The poskim discuss the status of one who accidentally picked up something that is *muktzah machmas gufo* (inherently *muktzah*). Some say that that in such an instance one is obligated to put down the item immediately, while others maintain that once the item is already in one's hand, it may now be carried to a desired location and placed there. Ideally, one should be stringent and put down the *muktzah* item immediately.

מ"ב ס' שח סקי"ג



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Day 9

We will now begin discussing the halachos of something that is *muktzah machmas gufo*, *muktzah* due to inherent uselessness. Simply speaking, *muktzah machmas gufo* refers to something that is not a utensil. One should be concerned that anything that does not have a clearly defined use - as is - falls under this category. A classic example of *muktzah machmas gufo* is rocks and twigs. Something that is *muktzah machmas gufo* may not be moved for any reason on Shabbos.

To illustrate: One Shabbos, Shevy was pushing her baby Dovi in a stroller* and noticed a large branch blocking the sidewalk. Shevy may not bend down to pick up the branch and remove it from the sidewalk because it is *muktzah*. However, Shevy may kick the branch to the side, because doing so is טלטול בגופו moving with one's body in an abnormal manner which is permitted as mentioned above (to be continued).

* Note: Pushing a stroller on Shabbos is prohibited if there is no eruv.

שו"ע ורמ"א ס' שח ס"ז



Day 10

Food that is currently inedible is considered *muktzah machmas gufo* and may not be moved on Shabbos. One must be mindful that many raw foods fall under this category, such as raw flour, uncooked rice, raw noodles etc.

To illustrate: One Shabbos afternoon, Tova opened the fridge to take out the egg salad for *shalosh seudos*. Tova realized that the egg salad was completely blocked by a big bag of raw potatoes. Tova may not move the raw potatoes aside in order to access the egg salad. Because the raw potatoes are inedible, they are *muktzah machmas gufo* and may not be moved (to be continued).

שׁו"ע ס' שח סל"ב



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Day 11

In a number of cases, the halachos of *muktzah* on Yom Tov are different than the halachos of *muktzah* on Shabbos. One application of this is as follows:

Although it was mentioned that raw inedible food is *muktzah* on Shabbos, this does not apply to Yom Tov. This is because on Yom Tov raw food has a potential use, because cooking is permitted on Yom Tov. Thus, raw flour etc. is not *muktzah* at all on Yom Tov.

שש"כ פכ"א הערה י"ז



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Day 12

Something that is *muktzah machmas gufo* may not be moved even if it can potentially result in monetary loss. In case of severe financial loss, a Rov should be consulted.

To illustrate: Temima realized that somehow her frozen salmon was left out of the freezer when Shabbos began. If the fish sits until Motzaei Shabbos before being put back in the freezer, it will defrost and become ruined. Temima may not return the fish to the freezer. (However, she may pick up the fish with her elbows and put it back in the freezer, since doing so is טלטול בגופו which is permitted, as mentioned above).

ארחות שבת פי"ט ס"ק רכא והערה ש"ו



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Day 13

We have learned that food that is inedible falls under the category of *muktzah machmas gufo*. Included in this are foods that have spoiled or became ruined.

To illustrate: One Shabbos morning, Chaviva was about to make Kiddush, when she suddenly realized that the grape juice was brown. The grape juice had spoiled! Because the grape juice is unpotable, it is *muktzah* and may not be moved.

שש"כ פ"כ סוף סכ"ו



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Day 14

Peels, pits and bones that **are edible are not *muktzah***. Peels, pits and bones that **are inedible are *muktzah machmas gufo***. Peels, pits, and bones that can be eaten by animals that are common in one's area, are not *muktzah*. For example, orange peels are not considered *muktzah* on Shabbos. Orange peels can be eaten by cats which are common in most locations (to be continued).

רמ"א ס' שח סכ"ט, שש"כ פ"כ סכ"ז



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Day 15

It was previously mentioned that peels, pits, and bones that are inedible are considered *muktzah machmas gufo*. If some of the food is still stuck to the peel/pit/bone, it is not *muktzah*. This applies even if one does not intend to eat that food. For example, a watermelon/pineapple peel is *muktzah machmas gufo*. However, if some of the edible part of the watermelon/pineapple is attached to the peel, the peel is not *muktzah*.

ביה"ל ס' שח ד"ה גרעיני



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Day 16

Peeled eggshells are considered *muktzah machmas gufo*, because they are not fit for human nor animal consumption. Consequently, one who wishes to peel eggs on Shabbos should ideally peel them over the garbage can so that the shells fall into the can.*

* Note: One may not peel eggs on Shabbos significantly before the beginning of a meal due to a concern of *borer*, selecting. The eggs may only be peeled within the window of time it usually takes one to prepare for a meal (see ארחות שבת פ"ג סצ"א, וסמ"ח).

ספר הלכות מוקצה פי"ד ס"ח



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Day 17

We have previously learned that peels, pits, and bones that are inedible are *muktzah machmas gufo*. It can be quite common that such items remain on the table following the conclusion of a Shabbos meal. How then does one go about clearing the table?

If such items are on a plate that also has on it some edible food, the plate may be carried to the garbage and emptied. At times, there may not be any other food on the plate (i.e. a pile of nutshells). In such an instance, if one needs the spot where the shells are, or desires that the table be clean in honor of Shabbos, one is permitted to indirectly move the shells. One should take a utensil and push the shells onto a plate that does have on it some edible food, and then empty the contents of the plate into the garbage.

ספר הלכות מוקצה פי"ד ס"ב



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Day 18

A broken item which is unusable is considered *muktzah machmas gufo*. This applies regardless of whether or not the item broke prior to the onset of Shabbos or on Shabbos itself.

For example: The handle of Chana's mug broke off. The handle is *muktzah* because it has no use. The mug however, is not considered *muktzah*, because it can be used without a handle (to be continued).

שׁו"ע ס' שח ס"ו



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Day 19

It was previously mentioned that a broken item which has no usage is considered *muktzah* and may not be moved. Nonetheless, Chazal waived the prohibition of *muktzah* where there is a concern that the *muktzah* item may cause damage to the public. In such an instance, one may move the *muktzah* item.

To illustrate: Donny, Haddassah's lively three-year-old, yanked the tablecloth and sent the dishes crashing to the floor. The dish shards may be picked up and removed, so no one gets injured from them.

רמ"א ס' שח ס"ו



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Day 20

Something that was attached to a house and became detached is considered *muktzah*.

Examples of this can include a detached door, door handle, faucet, light switch, etc.

מ"ב ס' שח סקל"ה



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Day 21

Wrappers and bags that cannot be reused have no inherent function and therefore are *muktzah machmas gufo*.

To illustrate: Shira came into her kitchen on Shabbos afternoon to find that her children left torn popsicle wrappers all over the counter. If they were torn in a way that renders them unusable, they are *muktzah* and may not be moved. One who requires the use of the counter is permitted to move the wrappers used the method of *טלטול מן הצד* *indirect moving*, which was discussed earlier this month.

ארחות שבת פי"ט ס"ק קס



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Day 22

Dirt that is stuck to a shirt/skin/utensil may be removed on Shabbos. Doing so poses no problem of *muktzah*.

ארחות שבת פי"ט ס"ק רה



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Day 23

Medicine that is commonly used (i.e. Tylenol etc.) is not *muktzah* on Shabbos. Medicines that are not commonly used (i.e. medicines used to treat a specific condition) are considered *muktzah machmas gufo*. In the event that prior to the onset of Shabbos someone in the house is feeling unwell and requires the use of a specific medicine, the medicine is considered "prepared" for Shabbos and thus is not *muktzah*.*

* Note: If the Tylenol is blocked by medicine that is *muktzah*, the *muktzah* medicines may be moved for the sake of a sick person. Ideally, one should move the *muktzah* medicine in a backhanded manner if possible.

ארחות שבת פי"ט ס"ק קכז והערה קעג



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Day 24

It is questionable if a button that fell off of a garment before or on Shabbos is considered *muktzah*. Ideally one should not move such a button on Shabbos. New buttons that were never part of a garment are certainly considered *muktzah machmas gufo*.

שש"כ פט"ו סע"ב,
ספר הלכות מוקצה פ"ד ע' 111



Day 25

Flowers that are used to beautify a house are not considered *muktzah* on Shabbos. Thus, one is permitted to move a vase with flowers from place to place on Shabbos.*

* Note: One may not place flowers into or remove them from water on Shabbos.

ארחות שבת פי"ט ס"ק קמג-קמד



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Day 26

Toilet paper rolls are not considered *muktzah machmas gufo*. Since in the event that one does not have prepared toilet paper, they may tear from the roll, the roll is considered “prepared” for Shabbos use.

ארחות שבת פי"ט ס"ק קכו



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Day 27

We have discussed at length that something that has no inherent function is considered *muktzah machmas gufo* and may not be moved on Shabbos. Chazal waived this prohibition of *muktzah* when one is repulsed by the *muktzah* item; in such a case, it is permitted to remove the item from one's presence. For example, a soiled diaper is *muktzah machmas gufo*. Nonetheless, one may carry a diaper out of the room/house because its smell or very presence is repulsive (to be continued).

שו"ע ס' שח סל"ד



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Day 28

A garbage bag full of garbage is *muktzah machmas gufo* and may not be moved. Thus, one may not bring a garbage bag that contains garbage to the table in order to place waste into it. Nevertheless, if the garbage bag smells, one is permitted to remove it from the room. Similarly, if the garbage bag is full, one may remove it in order to have a place to start a new bag so that additional garbage should not pile up.

מ"ב ס' שח ס"ק קלד



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Day 29

Previously we learned the special dispensation that a repulsive item may be moved on Shabbos, despite it being *muktzah machmas gufo*. Another application of this halacha is in regards to removal of disgusting insects or wildlife.

Although such creatures are *muktzah*, one may move them on Shabbos if they or others around are repulsed by them.*

* Note: If the insect is alive, there may often be a problem of *tzad*, trapping.

ספר הלכות מוקצה פ"ד ס"א



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Day 30

Something that is *muktzah machmas gufo* can be designated to be a useful item (prior to Shabbos) and is then considered “prepared” for Shabbos use. To achieve this designation, one must resolve that the particular use will be the permanent function of the item.

To illustrate: Sand and dirt are considered *muktzah machmas gufo* and may not be moved on Shabbos. Thus, one may not allow a child to play with dirt in a backyard or with sand at a beach on Shabbos. Nonetheless, one may allow a child to play with sand/dirt that prior to Shabbos was designated to be played with, i.e. the sand in a sandbox.

שש"כ פט"ז ס"ד



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Halachos of
MUKTZA



Mazel Tov on
completing a month
of Halacha Yomi!