

THE SHABBOS WEEKLY

HALACHA SERIES ON HILCHOS SHABBOS

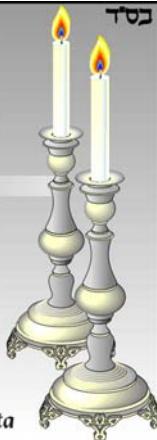
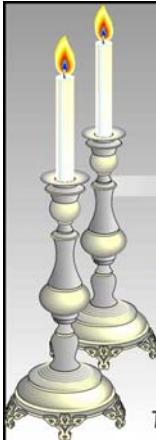
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Parshas Beshalach 5762

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If oil is dripping from an oil lamp, is it permitted to place a plate beneath the lamp to catch the dripping oil?

This involves a concept called ‘*mevatel k’li meheichano*’, which means that one is forbidden to cause a utensil to become *muktze*. By doing so, *Rashi*¹ says that it is as if he has cemented the utensil in its place, and is similar to the *melacha* of *Boneh*. Since the oil is *muktze*, by placing a utensil below the oil – once the oil falls in, the utensil becomes *muktze*, and it is as if he has cemented it in its place.²

Then if water is dripping from an air conditioning unit, is it permitted to place something beneath it to catch the water?

It is a big problem because that water is *muktze*. The *Mishna Berura* says³ that the water dripping from the trees in the month of *Nisan* is *muktze* because of *Nolad*.⁴ The explanation being that condensed water, which came about through condensation is a **new existence**, unlike rainwater, which the *gemora* says is already in the clouds. Hence the condensed water dripping from an air-condition unit is also *Nolad* and therefore *muktze*. By placing a bowl to catch

the dripping water you are revoking use of the bowl, which is ‘*mevatel k’li meheichano*’.⁵

So what is one supposed to do?

Obviously, place a bowl before Shabbos. If one forgot, and the water is dripping in a living room or bedroom, a *Rav* should be consulted as to the *halacha* of carrying a “*g’raf shel re’i*”, a special *heter* to carry a *muktze* which is repulsive.

Is one permitted to soak up water with soiled clothing?

This will fall into the same category. The *gemora*⁶ brings a case of an animal that fell into a water canal, and the way to get her out was to place pillows and quilts into the water, enabling the animal to stand on higher ground and thus climb out of the water. The *Mechaber*⁷ says that the reason one is permitted to be ‘*mevatel k’li meheichano*’ is because of ‘*tsa’ar ba’alei chayim*’ – animal suffering. We see that wetting linen or clothing, thereby revoking its use, is ‘*mevatel k’li meheichano*’.

So if water spills on the floor, one may not soak it up with clothing, to the extent that the clothing will become unusable, rather one may use rags and such which is normal

¹ *Rashi Shabbos* 42b.

² *Simon* 265:3

³ *Simon* 310:32

⁴ A *halachik* term describing a ‘new existence’; it is also *muktze* but is more severe than the regular *muktze*.

⁵ See *simon* 338:8.

⁶ *Shabbos* 128

⁷ *Simon* 305:19

for them to get wet, and hence it is not '*mevatei k'li meheichano*'.

If making something unusable is '*mevatei k'li meheichano*', how is one permitted to use a tissue or a napkin, after all it becomes unusable and probably muktze?

One of the answers to this question⁸ is that since these items are intended for that purpose, it is not considered annulling the utensil. For that reason it is permitted to put garbage inside a new garbage bag even though the garbage is *muktze*, and one is now causing the bag to be *muktze* as well. The essence of '*mevatei k'li meheichano*' is making a movable item halachically immobile, but if the utensil is made for that purpose, one cannot say that the utensil has digressed from its original intention and is now grounded.

Tu Bishvat

Chazal tell us that Tu Bishvat is the New Year for trees because it is at this time that the resin begins entering the trees and from hence the fruit shall grow.

Harav Shamshon Rafael Hirsh Ztz"l asks that would it not be more suitable for the new year to be around Nissan, when the trees are already in the beautiful stage of blossoming, instead of in the middle of winter when nothing is yet noticeable on the trees?

He answers that Chazzal always looked at the cause and the core of the matter, not at the result. In his time, it looked as if there nothing would be left of Jewry. The Neologism was taking a very firm hold, and

⁸ *Sh'vus Yitschak* Chap.20. *SS"K* 22 footnote 47.

its poisonous teachings were taking a firm foothold. Rav Hirsh said that the roots of Judaism are too strong to be pushed over by some passing phase, and even though the times were as black as night, the true Judaism will prevail.

Chazzal saw that in the dark of winter a new future is in store. One should not be fooled by the dark of winter and despair; a new beginning is in the making.

Food For Thought

If a non-Jew switched a light on for me, may I benefit from it?

What if he was prepaid before Shabbos to do so?

What if the non-Jew switched the light on for his own benefit?

What if he switched it on for both of us?

Answers coming next week.

Iggeres HaGra - (part 8)

I have left behind several Yiddish books on Mussar (morality). See that [the children] read them constantly, especially on the Holy Shabbos, when Mussar is the only thing they should read. Always instruct them according to Mussar books. Don't hold back from hitting them when they curse, swear or lie. Don't be lenient with them, because parents will be punished severely for the corruption of their children, G-d forbid. And even if one constantly teaches them Mussar, but they do not follow it, one's sorrow and shame in the World-to-Come will be great.

In honor of the BarMitzvah of Mordechi Shalom Amoyelle

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If you would like to send a question to Rav Ostroff, you can write to him at shabbosweekly@shemayisrael.com.

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.