



Parshas Matos-Masei 5762

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Does the tablecloth become a basis l'davar ha'assur as well?

Two rules apply to this particular question. Rule 1: the *gemora* in *Shabbos* 47a says that because a flame is *muktze*, the wick, the oil and the lamp all become a *basis l'davar ha'assur*.¹ In other words, anything placed beneath the *muktze* becomes *muktze* as well, not only the item directly beneath the *muktze*.

Rule 2: When the item beneath the *muktze* is not there to serve the *muktze* but for another purpose, it does not become a *basis l'davar ha'assur*.

Application: A table serves everything placed above it and therefore the table becomes a *basis* to the candles. Even though the candles might be placed on a tray, nevertheless the table becomes a *basis*.² However, the tablecloth was not placed to hold up and be a base to the candles rather to cover and decorate the table, and just as we find that a turnip³ buried in the ground does not become a *basis l'davar ha'assur* to the *muktze*-soil covering it, for this very reason – the turnip is not there to hold up the soil – so too the tablecloth is not there to serve the

candles.⁴ Accordingly the tablecloth would not be *muktze* at all.⁵

However, we find *poskim* who say that the entire tablecloth does become *muktze*,⁶ and others⁷ who say that only the section of the tablecloth beneath the candles becomes *muktze*. The *Mishna Berura* says⁸ that when necessary one may rely on the lenient *poskim* who do not consider the tablecloth *muktze* at all.

Is a drawer with money, or other muktze items, muktze?

Since the drawer's purpose is to store items, it becomes a *basis l'davar ha'assur*. A drawer will **not** become a *basis* when items that are not *muktze* are in the drawer as well and are more important than the *muktze* items.

How does one determine which item is more important than the other?

In the *Sefer Muktze*⁹ we find two definitions: **HaRav Moshe Feinstein Ztz"l:** the evaluation is made according to one's present needs. Therefore, if on a tray or in a drawer there are money and plates, since one has no need for the money on Shabbos and

¹ As was explained in the previous sheets, a permitted item beneath a *muktze* item becomes *muktze* when certain rules are complied with.

² Unless the measures in sheet #29 were taken to counterbalance the candles.

³ *Simon* 311:8.

⁴ *Sha'ar Ha'tsiun* 309:24 in the name of the *Bais Meir*.

⁵ The *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* 309:9 rules according to this opinion.

⁶ *Levushei S'rad* on the *Taz*.

⁷ *P'ri Megadim*.

⁸ *Simon* 309:18.

⁹ Written by Rav Pinchas Bodner

the plates are needed, they are considered more valuable.¹⁰ Accordingly the tray and drawer are a *basis* for the *beter* and not *muktze*.

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach Ztz"l: is quoted as saying that it must be an overall estimation of what a person would surrender if he had to.¹¹ Therefore, in the above case of money and plates, if the money were a substantial sum, a person would prefer to relinquish his hold on the plates and not surrender the money. Accordingly the money would be the important one and the tray or drawer a *basis l'davar ha'assur*.

If Reuven placed money on Shimon's table before Shabbos, does it render the table a basis l'davar ha'assur?

Another rule is that a *basis l'davar ha'assur* can only be instigated by the owner or his agent of the permitted item. Therefore, when Reuven placed money or other *muktze* items on Shimon's permitted items without Shimon's consent or knowledge, it will not become a *basis*, and the *muktze* may be tilted off the *beter*.

The *Mishna Berura*¹² says that many *poskim* agree that if Reuven placed a *muktze* item on Shimon's *beter* for Shimon's benefit it becomes a *basis*, even though Shimon knew nothing about it.

For example: If Reuven placed a plate beneath a burning candle in order to prevent a fire, and the candle fell into the plate from before *bein hashmashos* (twilight) until

nighttime,¹³ since it is obvious that Shimon would have wanted Reuven to place it there, the plate becomes a *basis l'davar ha'assur*.

Vort on the Parsha

Why is it that when *B'nei Yisroel* arrived at *Eilim* the *posuk* says that "they found 12 springs..." and when they arrived at Refidim "there was no water" and yet when they arrived at *Midbar Sinai* (33:15-16), where the most paramount event in the history of the Jews took place, it does not mention "the acceptance of the Torah"?

Rav Dov Eliezroff Ztz"l says that at face value¹⁴ these events took place in the past and are only mentioned historically, whereas the acceptance of the Torah is an everyday commandment and occurrence and was not a one time, historical event. Therefore it would be incorrect to say that the Torah was accepted in *Midbar Sinai*, because it is, and must be, accepted everyday, always!

Food For Thought

Is fruit sold as merchandise muktze or not?

Is there a difference between food products and other merchandise? I.e. if I can obtain paper and plastic plates from a local storeowner on Shabbos it is muktze?

If I placed apple pieces on my porch to dry before Shabbos, may I eat them on Shabbos?

If one erroneously believed that a certain item was muktze and subsequently learned that it is not. May he handle that item on Shabbos?

Answers coming next week.

¹⁰ If he had other plates and the money was a substantial sum, the money would take precedence.

¹¹ See also the *Shulchan Shlomo Simon* 310:28/3, and not as it says in the *SS"K* 20 footnote 203.

¹² *Simon* 309:27.

¹³ *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*. Otherwise the plate would not be a *basis*.

¹⁴ The Torah has many reasons for mentioning certain events, but at face value – *p'shat* it appears only to be a historical event.

Dedicated in memory of Rav Shlomo Ganzfried, author of the *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*, 26th Tamuz and Reb Zohar Harary, 24th Tamuz.

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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.