



Parshas Tazria/Metzora 5766

April 28, '06
Volume V Issue 21

Wet clothes on Shabbos are muktze. May they be handled after they dry?

Firstly we must appreciate that wet clothes are *muktze* on Shabbos. ¹ *Chazal* were concerned that when handling wet clothing one might wish to wring them, which results in the violation of an *issur d'oraisso* (a biblical violation).

The *Mishna Berura* adds ² that damp clothing is not *muktze* as one will not squeeze them.

- A partly ³ wet garment is also *muktze*. ⁴
- Wet wiping cloths and towels that one does not care if they are wet, may be handled, provided one does not squeeze them when handling. ⁵

In the previous shiur we learned the *halacha* of *migo d'itkatsai*, whereby an item that is *muktze* at the onset of Shabbos remains *muktze* for the entire Shabbos. This manifests itself with respect to wet clothing at the onset of Shabbos, which remains *muktze* even after becoming dry. ⁶ Therefore, clothes hanging on the line to dry before Shabbos that were wet at the onset of Shabbos are *muktze* even when dry. (See below where this may not apply).

What if it's going to rain - may I remove them from the lines?

I am afraid not. They are *muktze* and may not be removed from the lines even to prevent them from getting wet.

What if I know that they will dry at some point on Shabbos?

In the previous shiur we learned about a complicated concept called *gomro bidei odom*, i.e. an item that will definitely lose its *muktze* status during the course of Shabbos is not *muktze*. This concept explains why potatoes in a *cholent* that were raw at the onset of Shabbos are not *muktze* and may be eaten on Shabbos, as we know that in due course they will be edible. (One may only place raw food in a *cholent* when certain conditions are met, such as using a *blech* or hotplate, not an open fire, or when a significant piece of raw meat is placed inside the *cholent* very close to Shabbos). ⁷

Accordingly we could assume that wet clothing on a line in a dry and hot climate will not be *muktze* when dry as we know for certain that in due course it will dry on Shabbos. ⁸

But did the Mishna Berura not write that wet clothing is muktze even after dry?

Indeed he did, but we can assume that he is referring to a wet climate or cloudy days when it is not certain that clothes will dry. And yet, since this is a novel idea, one must ask one's rav for a *p'sak*.

¹ *Simon* 301:46 Rama.

² *Simon* 301:171.

³ Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach limited this to a significant or major part of the garment. *SS"K* 15 footnote 48.

⁴ *SS"K* 15:15.

⁵ *SS"K* ibid and footnotes 51-52.

⁶ "B *simon* 308:63.

⁷ These *halachos* may be found in *simon* 253 and in previous shiurim.

⁸ See *SS"K* 22 footnote 20 and *Tehilo l'Dovid simon* 310:4.

Is this case pertinent in locales where laundry is machine dried and not hung?

Indeed yes and even more so.

Wet laundry placed in a clothes drier switched on before the onset of Shabbos that will automatically stop on Shabbos after the set time (assuming this is *mutter*, as the noise the machine makes might be a halachic problem) will definitely dry the laundry, and following the above assumption, once the clothes are dry they will not be *muktze*.

As such, this question could be more pertinent nowadays than in previous times.

Would there not be a problem to open the drier on Shabbos?

Once the drier has stopped, opening the door will not break or make an electric circuit. The issue involved is *muktze*, specifically a *ke'li she'melachto l'issur* (a *ke'li* used for performing an *issur*, such as a pen, or an *issur* is done when using the *ke'li*, such as a flashlight). A *ke'li she'melachto l'issur* may be handled *l'tzorech gufo um'komo*, i.e. to use the *ke'li* or move it out of the way. In this case the door is "in the way" of the clothing and may be "moved" out of the way once the drier has stopped.

Must washing be removed from clothes lines before Shabbos?

The issue is *mar'is ayin*⁹ – people might say that one laundered clothes on Shabbos and hung them to dry. The *Shulchan Oruch* writes that clothes need not be removed from lines before Shabbos. The *Mishna Berura* explains¹⁰ that the reason it is forbidden to hang wet washing (after rain etc.) on clothes lines on Shabbos is because people will suspect that one laundered them on Shabbos. Accordingly, clothing hanging from lines before Shabbos does not involve *mar'is ayin*. It is known though that the *Chazon Ish* was of the opinion that laundry should be removed from clothes lines before Shabbos because of

mar'is ayin, but this is contrary to *Shulchan Oruch* and *Mishna Berura*.

If I thought something was muktze and I realized my mistake, may I handle it?

An item is usually *muktze* when mentally set aside before Shabbos due to its prohibited use or from the fact that it is not a *ke'li*, such as a stone. If one **thought** something was *muktze* but in fact it was not, it is not *muktze*.

Laundry is a classical example. If one thought clothes were wet at the onset of Shabbos and intended not to use them and contrary to his presumption he learned that they were dry, they may be handled and worn.¹¹

Similarly, if one presumed that certain fruit were *orlah* – fruit born from a tree within its first three years – and *muktze* and subsequently learned that they are not, one may eat the fruit.

Vort on the Parsha

The Torah states that the punishment for speaking *Lashon Harah* is leprosy, which would lead one to think that the only way to prevent speaking *lashon harah* is to distance oneself from people.

Dovid Hamelech cries out Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it (34:14-15). He teaches us that one must do good, which includes learning Torah and performing mitzvos; one must seek and make peace between Jews. He does not command us to break off from society rather inject goodness and well being. (Ta'am v'Da'as al hatorah).

Food For Thought

Is bathing in hot water permitted on Shabbos?

What about taking a cold shower during a heat spell?

Do the sick and infirm share the same halachos as the rest of the populace?

Answers coming be"H next week.

⁹ Appears to the beholder that one violated an *issur*.

¹⁰ *Simon* 301:167.

¹¹ *SS"K* 22:20.

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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.