

Snowman: Abominable?

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Q May one build a snowman on Shabbos?



A Clean rainwater is not *mukztech*, whether it fell before or on Shabbos (Mishnah Brurah 338:30); most *poskim* apply this to snow as well. But R' Moshe Feinstein (O.C. 5:22) holds that snow is *mukztech*, even if it fell before Shabbos (Halachos of Muktzah by R' Pinchas Bodner p. 165; heard from R' Moshe by the author).

Other *isurim* are also involved. The Rambam (Hil. Shabbos 7:6) says that assembling parts until they are fused together is a *toldah* of the *melacha* of *boneh* (building). His example is cheesemaking, in which a loose gel (the curd) is turned into a solid mass.

The Shmiras Shabbos Kehilchasah (16:45) compares the making of a snowball to cheesemaking, in that myriad snowflakes are pressed together. The Chashukei Chemed (Shabbos 45b) says that if the weather is mild and the snow will melt before the day is done, it is only a *deRabanan* violation of *boneh*, because to qualify as *boneh mide'Oreisa*, the built object must be durable enough to make it through the day (Sha'ar HaTziyon 303:68).

The Be'er Moshe (6:30) rejects the comparison of snowballs to cheese, saying that a fusion of foods is only *boneh* if it changes the consistency, as in cheesemaking, where the final product has a different texture than the original curds. A snowball, however, is just tightly packed snowflakes. But he nevertheless forbids making snowballs, because it involves applying pressure to the snow, which inevitably causes some melting, and melting snow manually is forbidden on Shabbos (320:9).

Some suggest (see Machazei Eliyahu 21:30) that shaping the parts of the snowman's body violates the *melacha* of *memacheik* (smoothing).

So adults may not make snowmen on Shabbos. Because of *chinuch*, older children (from age 9 or 10) should also be prevented from doing so (Be'er Moshe *ibid.*).