

What Should I Do if I Find a Large Sum of Money on Shabbos?

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Question: Someone is walking in the street on Shabbos and finds a large sum of money with a *siman*. What should he do?

Answer: The Mishnah Berurah clearly says that if one finds money on Shabbos with no *siman*, he is not allowed to take it for himself. Although there are certain leniencies that apply in cases of a large monetary loss, those leniencies do not apply when one wants to take ownership of money that he didn't previously have.

If the money has a *siman*, the question would be whether the obligation of Hashavas Aveidah takes precedence over Shabbos. Assuming there is an eruv, the specific prohibition under discussion is that of *muktzah*, which is a *d'rabanan*. Still, the consensus of the Poskim is that we do not override a *d'rabanan* to allow someone to fulfill a *mitzvas asei d'ohraysa* like Hashavas Aveidah, therefore, one cannot pick up the money. Furthermore, the Poskim write that he has no obligation to sit and watch it until Shabbos is over.

What if the lost item is a "*kli shemilachto l'issur*" (an item that is *muktzah* because its primary use is for a purpose that is forbidden on Shabbos)?

The general rule about *kli shemilachto l'issur* is that one may not move it for its own sake, but one may move it "*l'tzorech gufo*", to make use of it for a permitted purpose. One could argue that doing a mitzvah with the item is considered "for its use". Regarding hashavas aveidah however, the Chasam Sofer says that if one wouldn't be allowed to move the item if it belonged to him, he wouldn't be obligated nor allowed to move it in order to return it to someone else.

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach explains further that if Hashavas Aveidah would be permitted for a *kli shemilachto l'issur*, a bizarre situation would be created wherein a person would not be permitted to move his own *muktzah* object to protect it from getting ruined, but he would be allowed to tell his friend to move it to save him from a loss, as this would be a case of Hashavas Aveidah. Accordingly, we have to say that if it is forbidden for the owner of an object to move it, the finder of the object also cannot move it. He can leave it where it is, and he has no obligation to watch over it until after Shabbos.