

# THE BETH JACOB SHABBOS LEARNING PROJECT

## Keeping It Better Together

### Muktzeh Quiz 1: Objects of Prohibited Use (כלי שמלאכתו לאיסור)

#### QUIZ 1 ANSWERS!

- 1) Some people in our neighborhood have a corner alcove used for a washer and dryer right near their kitchen entrance (which, in Toco, is also known as the main entrance). If someone accidentally forgot to close the washing machine door for, like, the twentieth time, and now it blocks easy entryway into the house, could that person close the washing machine door on Shabbos?
- a) He'd better!
  - b) Nope – it's *muktzeh*!
  - c) He has to first put something on top of the washing machine door, like a piece of greasy potato kugel.
  - d) Only if there are clothes inside the washing machine.

Answer: A

You are permitted to move objects of prohibited use when you need the space they occupy.

(Extra credit: Answer D may be correct according to Poskim who maintain that this permissibility only applies to objects that have some permissible Shabbos use. According to this more stringent opinion, it would only be permitted to close the door if you also use the machine for a permitted usage, like for storing soiled clothing.)

- 2) In the course of maneuvering through the Shabbos kitchen obstacle course, a deft spin-move around the open washing machine door results in a shin-shredding encounter with the dishwasher door that someone may have theoretically left open. Could the person close the dishwasher door?
- a) Ouch – yes.
  - b) No! It's *muktzeh* and he should practice his running-back moves outside.
  - c) Only if the family regularly uses the dishwasher for storage on Shabbos.
  - d) He should do a touchdown dance and “happen” to kick the dishwasher door closed.

Answer: A

(Extra credit: In this scenario, all opinions would be more lenient because one can store dishes for convenience in a dishwasher. Therefore it is an object of prohibited use that also has a normal permitted use.)

- 3) Friday night rain is the best - so peaceful, so calming. Until you remember that in your quest for a new workstation that wasn't occupied by a child in Zoom-school, you set up a table outside...and left your super-fancy Montblanc pen there. What can you do now?
- a) Daven that it stops raining.
  - b) Run and get your pen. It's going to get ruined...and your spouse bought it for you, so you're also going to get ruined!
  - c) Decide that you need to use your pen to point to the words in your Chumash and go fetch it.

d) Move the pen inside by carrying it via the notebook that it is resting on.

Answer: A

The pen is a valuable object, מוקצה מחמת חסרון כוון, which is not permitted to be moved in a normal manner.

(Extra credit: Answer C touches on the idea that one can actively choose to make use of an object of prohibited use in order to move it. There is room for this leniency, but it doesn't apply in this case.)

- 4) It's been quite a night. Fortunately your Shabbos Learning Project studying helped you navigate through some practical challenges with grace and confidence that you did the right thing. But now you are exhausted. For once you managed not to fall asleep in your soup and you proudly march into your room to go to sleep. Oh no. Someone left your phone on your pillow. And the alarm is set for 6am. What now?
- a) Give up and go sleep outside in the rain with your water-logged pen and sore shins.
  - b) You can move the phone, but only to the night table right next to your bed. Get ready for an early morning!
  - c) You can move the phone and bury it in your linen closet down the hall so it won't wake anyone up.
  - d) Sorry. Your phone is *muktzeh*. The best you can do is smother the phone with a pillow and hope for the best.

Answer: C

You are allowed to move an object of prohibited use when you need the space that it occupies. Once it is in your hand, you may move it anywhere you wish.

(We are assuming that you use your phone as an alarm and do not treat it as a valuable item that you are particularly careful with.)

- 5) It's elections season and your mind starts to wander and dream about your own run for a Congressional seat. You picture yourself on the floor of the House, reading from a phonebook to filibuster a proposed bill. So, on Shabbos afternoon, you decide you need to review the phonebook in preparation (gotta start somewhere!). As you reach for the White Pages, your spouse notices your unusual choice for Shabbos afternoon reading and asks: Isn't a phonebook *muktzeh*?
- a) Maybe, but there must be some kind of *heter* (leniency) to allow me to save the country!
  - b) A phonebook is not *muktzeh* at all. What is prohibited on Shabbos is calling on a phone, not looking up a number! Besides, who uses a phone book anymore?
  - c) Yes, a phonebook is *muktzeh*, but I'm still allowed to read from it.
  - d) A phonebook may be used for a phone call, but it is also used for looking up an address which is fine on Shabbos. Therefore it's not *muktzeh*.

Answer: C

Many Poskim rule that a phonebook is *muktzeh* as an item of prohibited use. This is because it is used in the course of making a phone call, which is prohibited on Shabbos. Nevertheless, as we have learned, an object of prohibited use may be moved in order to use it for a permitted purpose. Reading through it on Shabbos afternoon is such a permitted purpose.

(Extra credit: Answer D contains an interesting theory mentioned as a possibility in Halachic sources, but most Poskim are stringent).