

THE BETH JACOB SHABBOS LEARNING PROJECT

Keeping It Better Together

Muktzeh Quiz 2: *Valuable Objects*

ANSWERS!

- 1) Yes, it's election season, and all eyes are on us here in Georgia. On Shabbos you actually witness a voting irregularity! Your absentee ballot that will shape world politics for the next few years fell off your desk and is now lying on the floor – in the direct path of your baby, crawling on a collision-course with active cholent-hands! Can you pick up the ballot and move it to a safe place?
- a) No need. They can't possibly invalidate cholent. It will be fine.
 - b) Pick up the ballot and use it as a "bookmark".
 - c) It depends who you voted for....
 - d) You can't move it.

Answer: D

The ballot is a valuable item and cannot be moved in a normal way on Shabbos.

(There may be permissible ways to move the ballot in an indirect or unusual way, which we will learn about in the coming weeks.)

- 2) Your overly wealthy friend just purchased the Mona Lisa. He decided that in this day and age it doesn't make sense to have the Mona Lisa displayed without a mask. It's just not realistic anymore. So, he hires a world-famous artist to attach a blue surgical mask at exactly the right angle onto the famous portrait. Your friend invites you to join him for a Shabbos meal and you jump at the opportunity to get a peek at the newly masked masterpiece. He leads you into the dining room where he has it displayed and excuses himself for a moment to greet another guest. As you walk forward to take in this beautiful and unusual sight, you trip on your untied shoelace, stumble forward and crash into the painting! Fortunately, you caused no damage – but the most famous painting in the world is now crooked and...unmasked! Can you gently push the painting back in place?
- a) Yes.
 - b) No, you cannot. Tell your host she has antibodies.
 - c) No, but you can save yourself by moving the mask so it sits in the right place.
 - d) Run!

Answer: C

The painting cannot be moved because it is a valuable item. (Note there are Poskim who maintain that a painting does not become Muktzeh as it is a decorative household item).

It would seem that the mask itself is not *muktzeh*, as it is not very valuable and it is a real mask that is still usable by someone who may need it.

- 3) It's a legal holiday weekend and your kids are engaged in all sorts of creative art projects. You are relieved that the "art" remains on papers and not on walls and furniture and are therefore content to let things be. As Shabbos approaches, relaxed vacation mode turns into frantic Shabbos prep mode and in your haste you don't have time

to pick up all the papers. Completed drawings and blank papers blanket your house when you come home on Friday night. You go to take out your Kiddush cup – and there is a blank paper perched on top of it. Is paper *muktzeh*? You shrug, go to take out the Challah board – same thing. You take a deep breath and survey the paper landscape around you, wishing you had listened to the Shabbos Learning Project podcast this week. If you did you would realize that:

- a) Blank paper is definitely *muktzeh* and is deemed a “valuable item”. This is going to require some creativity.
- b) True, paper is *muktzeh* but that’s because it’s used for writing or drawing. That makes it an item of prohibited use and you can move it to get to your thing.
- c) These questions are getting stranger and stranger. Paper? *Muktzeh*?
- d) Huff and puff and blow all the papers down.

Answer: D

The Mishna Berura rules that writing paper is *muktzeh* as a valuable item, as people are particular not to get it bent or dirtied. Many contemporary Poskim maintain that nowadays paper is no longer considered *muktzeh*. Even according to the more stringent approach, blowing on *muktzeh* is a permissible way of moving it. That makes D the best answer.

(In the coming weeks, we will discuss if the items under the paper are now *muktzeh* due to their being a base for *muktzeh* items.)

- 4) Looking for a new hobby after you’ve completed your Corona-era herb garden, you decide it’s time to start woodworking. After building up your skills, you’ve begun to design Challah boards that are good enough to sell on Amazon. (Is that good?) So, when you encounter your Challah board under paper, you decide to get around the issue and fetch one of your newly crafted wood Challah boards. Even though it will be used once, you can still sell it with “artistic knife grooves.” Is this OK?
- a) Yes, it’s fine. I’ve seen your Challah boards and nobody is going to buy them anyway. Stick to gardening.
 - b) No – merchandise is *muktzeh* as something valuable and you can’t use it at all!
 - c) Yes, it’s OK because you are allowed to use *muktzeh* for a permissible purpose.
 - d) You can use it, but you have to have in mind to return it and keep your hand on it the whole time.

Answer: B

Merchandise that you were planning on selling is *muktzeh* because you are very particular with it so you can eventually sell it.

- 5) It’s almost Chanukah and you want to take out your menorah to get it ready. Unfortunately, you left it on your kitchen counter before Shabbos. What can you do now?
- a) Move the menorah to a safe place so you can use your counter.
 - b) “Use” the menorah as an air-guitar as you practice your favorite “Yevanim Yevanim” song.
 - c) It depends on what the menorah is made out of. If it’s silver, you’re stuck. But if it’s other materials, you can move it.
 - d) You can’t move it, but that’s ok - it will get people into the Chanukah spirit

Answer: C

The material that the menorah is made out of may make it a “valuable item” if one is particular with it.