

Shabbos Learning Project

Keeping It Better Together

Week 3: Gift-Giving and Measuring

ANSWERS!

1. After your vacation in NY, you decide you want to hold on to some of that “in-townieness” for just one more Shabbos. So if you can’t be in NY, you bring NY to you. That’s right. You invite Joe Northerner for what will prove to be another memorable Shabbos meal. (Did you know he actually prefers to be called Joi?). Joe walks in on Shabbos Day afternoon with a brown bag sure to contain some delicious cosmopolitan goodies. “What’s in the bag, Joi?”, you ask, hoping it’s something good. “I wanted to buy you a unique dessert for your Shabbos meal. It’s specially imported Insanely Exorbitant Ice Cream from Brookreenceneck. The best part about it is that it’s dairy!”, Joe proudly remarks. The air is sucked out of the room. Nobody moves. A plate drops and shatters in the kitchen. DAIRY!? “Of course,” explains Joe. “I’m sure with your crazy long Southern meals, we’ll be long Milchig when it comes time for dessert!”, he continues. You look at the clock. “But it’s already 4:30pm!”, you exclaim. “Right. I forgot how slow you...all (carefully enunciated to prevent an inadvertent “y’all”) are. Sorry,” he says with a smirk. “Can you accept this gift?”, he asks in a sincerely concerned tone.
- Nope. Ask him to bring it back for a late Melave Malka.
 - You have no choice. And the truth is, we’ve all wanted to try this. You’ll just have to have dessert first.
 - You can graciously accept it but have in mind not to acquire it until after Shabbos.
 - Maybe convert to Yekke-ism just for this Shabbos.

Most popular answer C (94%) . CORRECT ANSWER: C.

2. After a beautiful davening in Shul, you come home to find the table set exquisitely with the best dishes and tableware...with little pointy party hats at everyone’s seat and birthday balloons all around. You should be excited but you’re feeling too guilty to enjoy. It’s your spouse’s birthday and you forgot...again. Thinking fast, you remember that you won last week’s SLP raffle. You are about to wrap up the gift certificate in some pre-cut paper towels...but this reminds you that you forgot something even more important - you forgot to listen to this week’s SLP podcast about gift-giving! To give or not to give that is the question?
- Give! Give! It’s *sakanas nefashos* (a life-threatening situation).
 - It’s permissible to give gifts on Shabbos. It’s business transactions that are forbidden.
 - Tell your spouse you are giving him/her the gift of Shemiras Shabbos by waiting to give him/her gift until after Shabbos.
 - Jump out the window and run.

Most popular answer C (89.5%) . CORRECT ANSWER: C.

Only gifts that will be used to enhance enjoyment of this Shabbos may be given. (A learned and astute SLPer sent an email noting that the unique Halachic financial partnership of spouses might make this case permissible.)

3. As a professor of ancient economics, you are so enthralled by your book on the intricacies of ancient Yuan-era Chinese horse bartering that you are running late for your Shabbos meal! You rush out the door and are feeling bad about coming so late. You hope your hosts haven’t been waiting. You really want to show them a sincere apology so you decide to give them your incredible book — all 732 pages of those detailed horse-driven calculations. Is that a good idea?

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- a. Neigh. As an economist, you should have realized that the only way to give it on Shabbos is to have someone acquire the book for them before Shabbos.
- b. Great idea. Who doesn't love ancient Chinese horse bartering?
- c. It will only work if you use the book at the meal. Stand on a chair and read excerpts until everyone falls asleep. Then take extra dessert!
- d. Yes, but make sure you close the window so nobody jumps and runs.

Most popular answer A (78.9%) . CORRECT ANSWER: A.

4. As we pass through Chanukah and the middle of winter, your extremely prepared and organized neighbor is starting to clean for Pesach. "Pesach is only 13 weeks away," she says smugly, as you try with all your might to smile and practice *ahavas chinam* (unconditional love). On Shabbos morning, she knocks at your door. "I'm weighing my matzos to make sure we have the proper volume for each person and I heard you have a food scale. Can I borrow it?", she asks. What should you respond?

- a. I appreciate the whole organized thing, but there are limits, lady.
- b. Sure!
- c. Actually, it is forbidden to weigh on Shabbos. Especially when doing so makes people nervous.
- d. You can borrow the scale since you are weighing for a Mitzvah purpose.

Most popular answer C (57.9) . CORRECT ANSWER: C.

Many people answered D, which has merit. In general, it is indeed permissible to weigh for a Mitzvah purpose. But in this case, the Mitzvah purpose is a stretch as it is not needed to weigh the Matzos 13 weeks in advance. This also may be a problem of preparing for after Shabbos.

5. Last week, you spent a vacation Shabbos in a remote location. It was great to get away and you remembered to pack up everything for Shabbos, including the Shabbos hotplate, hot water urn, Shabbos lamps, cut toilet paper, Shabbos lamps and even your recliner and dining room set. Just like home! What a vacation! As you began your meal on Friday night, you realized you forgot to bring cups. That's fine - you'll drink straight out of the bottles. Nobody was there to see you anyway. But then on Shabbos morning, it was time for your extremely necessary Shabbos coffee and you realized you didn't have a mug or cup to use for your coffee. Oh no! All is lost. After some extra Tehillim and heartfelt prayers, you looked around your tens of suitcases and boxes with all your "vacation" material and you found...a measuring cup! Success! Have your prayers been answered?

- a. They may have been answered but not with the answer you were looking for. You can't use a measuring cup on Shabbos!
- b. Yes! You can use the measuring cup since everyone knows there is no greater mitzvah than coffee on Shabbos morning.
- c. As long as you don't pay attention to the measurement markings, you can use the cup.
- d. Aren't you glad you're home this week? Welcome back!

Most popular answer C (100% - extra points for everyone!) . CORRECT ANSWER: C.