

Shabbos Learning Project

Keeping It Better Together

Week 4: Shabbos Wages

ANSWERS!

1. The room is full. The crowd is silent. The rabbi was delivering a resounding sermon. Just as he neared the crescendo of his delivery, a rumbling sound pierced the air! Maybe it's a storm or another tornado coming? The rabbi thinks fast and instructs the congregants to move toward the side walls, away from the windows. Confused but concerned, the crowd scampers and disperses with efficiency and purpose...except for one fellow sitting toward the front. Doesn't he realize the emergency? No he does not. In fact, he seems quite relaxed. As he shifts position, the rumbling sound rushes back! It's...extremely loud snoring. Poor guy didn't get enough Shabbos *shluff* last night. The rabbi decides that for the good of the community it's time to start a capital campaign to hire Professional Pokers who can walk the aisles and ensure that people can properly appreciate the weekly sermon. But is it permitted to hire them for Shabbos work?
- Creative thinking! But he'll have to hire backup Pokers to poke the Pokers and keep them awake. And the truth is neither hire is permissible because he'll be paying them Shabbos wages.
 - Since it's for a Mitzvah purpose, it's OK.
 - Everyone knows Pro Pokers don't work on weekends. The only choice is to hire amateurs or P.I.T's and since they aren't effective enough, they cannot be hired for Shabbos work.
 - Yawn. Stretch. What was the question again?

Most popular answer A (52.4%) . CORRECT ANSWER: A.

38.1% chose B. And it's hard to argue against the special benefit of listening to a rabbi's sermon, but it seems a stretch to call the Poking a mitzvah.

2. The Chayyimtovim family just finished their Friday night meal. The family settles in to their post-meal activities. The kids fight over the Shabbos kids magazine, the adults nestle with Seforim and magazines. Just then there is a knock at the door. It's the neighbor. She is in desperate need of a babysitter. They just remembered that there is a Shalom Zachar they would both like to attend but they forgot to arrange a babysitter. Mazal the Sefardi sister jumps up: "B'Simcha!" she exclaims, happily offering her services. Kreindeleh the Ashkenazi *shvester* also offers her services: "It's be my Zechus", she says *frumly*. "You mean Zechut," Mazal corrects her. "Right and the Tetla car repair shop took over Whole Foods," retorts Kreindeleh. The neighbor clears her throat to remind them that they can settle their never-ending Ashkesfard dispute later. "How much do you charge?" she inquires. Kreindeleh answers: "Just a bowl of cholent with ample *kishke*." Mazal counters: "A bowl of Hamin with some extra spicy *sambusak*." Just then Mrs. Neighbor remembers that she listened to the SLP podcast on Friday (sorry it was late this week) and she isn't sure if it is permissible to hire either of the jousting sisters. Is it?
- Mazal may be hired since she follows the rulings of the Shulchan Aruch. But Kreindeleh may not since she follows the rulings of the Rama.
 - Since they are being paid in Shabbos food and not money, it is permissible.
 - They may be hired but only if Mrs. Neighbor hires both of them together.
 - No, they can't be hired as they will be earning wages on Shabbos. Looks like the Neighbor family will have to eat their own chickpeas and celebrate at home.

Most popular answer B (42.9%) . CORRECT ANSWER: D.

3. Your son's Bar Mitzvah is coming up soon. You are finalizing all the details, down to the jelly candies for throwing after his Aliyah and the traditional mandatory Motzei Shabbos slideshow played to your choice of one of three Shwekey songs. Your son has just one special request. Instead of the personalized yarmulkes that some families order, he would like personalized black hats for all. Proud as you are of his creative request, the hat company just won't do it! So you search and search and eventually find a hatter who is willing to create a taxi-top style mini billboard for each hat. Wow! What a great idea. The only

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problem is that the hatter is insistent that he needs to be present on Shabbos to ensure proper balance of everyone's hat and be ready for emergency adjustments throughout the day. Is it permissible to hire the hatter?

- a. Yes! Since you would be paying the hatter for both the hats and the hat balancing services on Shabbos, it is permissible.
- b. No. You can't have him working on Shabbos. Instead you'll have to purchase special hat-levels to be handed out along with the jelly candies.
- c. It is permissible because without the proper hat angle, the hats are worthless. So without the hatter's Shabbos services, you'll be suffering a big loss.
- d. If the billboards have Hebrew writing, it's OK. But if it's English or some kind of logo, it's not Kosher.

Most popular answer A (95.2%) . CORRECT ANSWER: A.

4. The davening is beautiful, the atmosphere uplifting and the decorum fits the holy space. But, what's this? Some not-so-hushed whispers are emanating from the back of the Shul. It's time to call in the big gun. Yes, only one man can inspire true change and reinvigorated devotion. It's time for special ops. It's time for...the Shusher. Just the sound of his name instills fear in the heart of Shul talkers everywhere. The Shusher walks to the back. But to his disappointment the noise has subsided. Instead of encountering the talkers, it's just the SLP quiz and Shabbos flyer readers. Disappointed, the Shusher returns to his post. After Shabbos, the revered Shusher files for his weekly pay. The accountant isn't sure how to handle this since he didn't actually Shush as planned. Should he be paid? After consulting with the rabbis, the decision is to reduce the Shusher's Shul dues in exchange for his attempted services this past Shabbos. Is this agreement permissible?
- a. Great idea. Reducing dues is not considered payment, so it's fine.
 - b. Nope. Not permissible. And the accountant should break the news gently or he may be Shushed into oblivion.
 - c. Actually any kind of wages are fine because they include paying the Shusher for his Shushing services which begins at the weekday Mincha on Friday.
 - d. Not sure. Why don't we ask some of those back-of-the-Shul SLP quiz readers for their Halachic insights?

Most popular answer C (85.7%) . CORRECT ANSWER: C.

5. The Shusher has a brilliant idea to build on the successes of the Shul's proper decorum. It's called the Kavannah Claw. He would like to install "toy claw" style vending machines throughout the Shul. The idea is that he would patrol the aisles throughout davening and hand out pre-designated Kavannah Coins to those davening nicely. Those who collect enough Kavannah Coins can insert them into the Shabbos-friendly mechanical Kavannah Claw and try to grab one of the prizes in the basket below. He takes his idea to the rabbi and presents it to him, with eyes full of hope. So, rabbi, is his plan permissible?
- a. I'm afraid not. Even the best behaved davener is not permitted to earn Kavannah Coins on Shabbos.
 - b. It depends on what the prizes are. If they are usable on Shabbos, it is fine.
 - c. Yes! Totally fine.
 - d. If the rabbi gets extra Kavannah Coins, it is indeed permissible.

Most popular answer B (47.6%) . CORRECT ANSWER: B. Week 4's most popular question (44.5%)!

While there are probably better and more Shabbos-friendly ideas, this seems permissible. The "earnings" are more of a gift to promote better davening, which is a Mitzva purpose. The Kavannah Coins, Claw and prizes should be designated and designed for Shabbos use.