



B'NAI DAVID-JUDEA

Shabbat Shorts

So here's a muktzah situation you've surely been in, and will surely be in again! You arrive in shul on Shabbat morning (for example) and discover to your chagrin that your wallet is in your jacket or pants pocket, or that there is a pen or phone in your diaper bag or Tallit bag. What, if anything do you do now?

The first question to explore here is whether it is now forbidden to handle/move your jacket or bag because of the fact that it *contains* something that is muktzah. Putting the question into different words, does the container ("בסיס") of muktzah *itself* become muktzah? The answer is "not usually". The only circumstance in which an object containing muktzah or upon which muktzah is placed is *itself* treated as muktzah, is one in which you initially placed the muktzah object there *with the express intention that it remain there over Shabbat*. This is not typically the case when you find your wallet in your pants or your phone in the diaper bag.

In principle then, as long as you are in a place that has an eruv, you need not do anything in this case. Obviously the item in question cannot be directly handled in any way, but there is no need to get it out of your pocket or bag. Nonetheless, the Halacha expresses a preference that we do find some kind of way to avoid carrying the item around with us the rest of the day. As we cannot handle the item directly, we cannot simply remove it with our hands though. Which leaves us only with the option of finding a way of shaking it out.

And now comes what is the most interesting part of this discussion. *If it were so* that the muktzah item rendered the clothing or bag muktzah as well, then we'd need to find a way to shake the item out immediately, certainly before we continued to move about in our clothing, or make any further use of the bag. But since as we've said, this is typically *not* the case, and all we are aiming to do is to satisfy a halachic "preference" that we not spend the rest of the day moving a muktzah item around, we are granted considerable leeway as to how, when, and where we do the great shake-out. Specifically:

- (1) In the case of clothing, you may walk over to a place where no embarrassment will result from the partial disrobing that may be required.
- (2) If the muktzah object is of value, and you are concerned about its becoming damaged or stolen before you come back to retrieve it after Shabbat, you may shake it out in a place that is more secure.

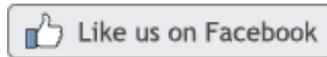
(3) Same goes if you will feel embarrassed simply by everyone around you realizing that you had had your wallet in your clothing on Shabbat. Again, you can retreat to a place out of the public eye.

I am thinking now of the pencil I had been keeping in one of my tallit bags, about 18 years ago. Printed on it were the words "Y2K Compliant". I sadly wound up shaking it out of my tallit bag one Shabbat morning when I was visting the Kemp Mill Synagogue. In case you happen to come across it...

I love feedback!
ravyosef@bnaidavid.com

B'nai David-Judea 8906 West Pico Blvd. Los Angeles, CA 90035
director@bnaidavid.com

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