

PAYING ON TIME PART 17

by Rabbi Yehonasan Gefen

Bal tolin applies even if the worker is a child. Accordingly, one must be as careful to pay a child on time as he is with regards to paying adult workers. Moreover, there is an aspect of the obligation of payment of a child that makes it more difficult to avoid than payment of an adult: This is that a child is unable to forgive a legal obligation once it has been entered into. Therefore, if a person asks some children to do some work for him, he must pay them before nightfall unless he asks them at the beginning of the work if they don't mind being paid at a later date. However, once he has entered into the 'agreement' he is unable to simply phone them and ask them to forgive the obligation, as he could with an adult, because children cannot do this. If he fails to pay them before nightfall he transgresses bal tolin.

Adults may have a tendency to be less careful with paying children small amounts of money for minor jobs. In truth, the laws of bal tolin apply in exactly the same way as with payment of adults.

1. Much of the information for this essay is taken from "Halachos of Other People's Money" by Rabbi Yisroel Pinchos Bodner.

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