

# CHAPTER 18 - WORK DONE BY A NON-JEW ON THE SABBATH

*by Rabbi Dr. Azriel Rosenfeld*

A Jew must not ask a non-Jew to do work for him on the Sabbath; see 247:4-5 and 252:2. However, a Jew is allowed to hire a non-Jew to do work or business for him as long as he does not specify that it be done on the Sabbath (245:5;247:1;252:2;307:2-4) and does not benefit from it being done then (see 244:5;247:1,6), provided the work is not done on the Jew's premises and it is not known that it is being done for him (252:2-3), and provided the payment was specified in advance or the work was given to the non-Jew before Friday (see 247:2-3;252:2).

A non-Jew may be told to do things on the Sabbath that are only rabbinically forbidden to Jews, provided sickness, or great need, or religious purposes are involved; see 306:11 and 307:5,19. A Jew must not even hint that a non-Jew should do work for a Jew on the Sabbath, except in an emergency (334:26), but it is permitted to hint that he should do such work after the Sabbath (307:22). A Jew's converted slave is forbidden to do work on the Sabbath even for himself; if he has not converted, he may do work for himself, provided it is evident that he is not doing it for his owner (see 304:1-3;307:21).

A non-Jew may do work on the Sabbath on property (or financial rights; see 244:6) that he is known to have leased from a Jew, even if the Jew benefits from it (243:1-2). He may do work on a Jew's property as a contractor in a place where no Jews are present or if it is not known that the property belongs to a Jew (244:1-2,4). If the non-Jew does forbidden work without the Jew's permission, the Jew should not benefit from the results (see 244:3;245:6;304:1;305:21-23).

Equipment that is used for work should not be lent to a non-Jew on (or immediately before) the Sabbath, and should not be rented to a non-Jew even on Friday (246:1-2). If such equipment is rented to a non-Jew, the Sabbath portion of the rent should not be itemized (246:1). An animal that is used for work must not be lent or rented to a non-Jew unless it is specified that it be returned for the Sabbath (246:3) or unless the non-Jew is made fully responsible for it (see 246:4-5). Other things, however, may be given to a non-Jew even on the Sabbath if it is not certain that he will carry them away (see 252:1; 306:10;307:4;325:1,3) or if it is necessary to give them to him (see 325:2).

If a Jew and a non-Jew are partners in an enterprise that operates on the Sabbath, the Jew should stipulate that the income earned on the Sabbath belongs entirely to the non-Jew; but even if this was not done, the Jew is allowed to take his share of the total income as long as the portion earned on the Sabbath is not itemized (245:1-4;246:5).

A Jew may take goods from a non-Jew on the Sabbath, use them, and pay for them afterward, but must not discuss their price on the Sabbath (252:4; 307:22). If work was done for him by a non-Jew, he must not benefit from it until a sufficient amount of time after the Sabbath (see 276:1-5; 307:20; 325:4,6,10-14), but he may use goods that are brought to him even if the non-Jew worked on them on the Sabbath (see 252:4). On things brought by a non-Jew from outside the Sabbath boundary see 325:8,15; on cases of doubt see 325:5-7,9,16; on work that was done on behalf of a sick person see 306:9 and 318:2.

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