

## Are Automated Sales Permitted on Shabbos?

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**Question:** Is it permitted for someone to leave his website open for automated sales on Shabbos?

**Answer:** As we noted previously, it is forbidden to engage in business transactions on Shabbos because one might come to record the transaction in writing.

Rav Akiva Eiger adds that if two parties put a deal into motion before Shabbos and schedule it to go into effect on Shabbos, that too is forbidden, as it is as if they are making the deal on Shabbos itself.

When vending machines were a new phenomenon, the Maharshag wrote a *teshuva* about them and said that even according to Rav Akiva Eiger, there is no problem with allowing non-Jews to make purchases from them on Shabbos. He explains that Rav Akiva Eiger was talking about a case where a Jew deliberately sets in place a mechanism before Shabbos that schedules a transaction to go into effect on Shabbos. In the case of a vending machine, however, the Jew did nothing before Shabbos to create a transaction on Shabbos. On Shabbos, the non-Jew came on his own and put his money in the machine. Although the Jew's machine is working for him, it is not forbidden to allow one's possessions to work for him on Shabbos. Even though the money is put into the machine, the Jew did nothing to make a *kinyan* and is not intending to do any deal on Shabbos. Therefore, he argues, there is no reason to prohibit this.

Websites are even easier to permit than vending machines. When someone places an order on Shabbos, he is not making a transaction at all. He is simply placing an order to be filled later. The Jew is not making any *kinyan* on anything on Shabbos, nor providing any goods. The order is only filled after Shabbos and nothing is actually being done on Shabbos.