

How Can One be Paid to Babysit on Shabbos? How Can a Landlord Accept Rent For Shabbos?

Question: How is a landlord permitted to charge rent for Shabbos? How is a babysitter who watches kids over Shabbos allowed to accept payment?

Answer: In the case of the landlord, if he charges rent by the week or month, there is no problem of *Schar Shabbos*. Even though part of the rent is for Shabbos, since it is charged as one lump sum for a longer time period, it is not halachically considered to be *Schar Shabbos*. This concept is known as "*havlaah*", which means that the payment for Shabbos is absorbed by the payment as a whole. It would only be a problem of *Schar Shabbos* if a renter rented an apartment or room and was charged separately for Shabbos itself.

If a babysitter works only on Shabbos itself, that would be a problem of *Schar Shabbos*. To get around this, she would have to be required to do some work on Friday or *Motzoei Shabbos* as well. She can then be paid for the work she did during the weekday and on Shabbos and this would be considered *havlaah*. The same would apply if one hired a Jewish waiter to work at a simcha on Shabbos. In order for him to be allowed to accept payment, he would need to be required to do some work, such as setting up cleaning, either before or after Shabbos. He can then be paid one sum for all of his work.

When a choir is hired to sing on Shabbos, it also could be a problem of *Schar Shabbos*. Some claim that they also do some work during the week since they have to practice. In my opinion, this will not suffice, as they are not actually being paid for their practice. If they could somehow perform without practicing, they would not be paid any less. Therefore, it cannot be said that practicing is part of the job that they are being paid for and this cannot be relied upon to employ the leniency of *havlaah*.

Some Poskim say that there is a *heter* in the case where one's job is mitzvah-related and, in such instances, the decree of *Schar Shabbos* was not instituted. If a *baal koreh* is paid to read the Parshah on Shabbos, he may be able to rely on this. However, the Poskim write that he will not see a siman bracha from those earnings.