



**When Can I Use an Item or Letter Which Was
Delivered On Shabbos or Yom Tov?
(Mail or Amazon etc. Deliveries)**

[#74]

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Video Transcription

Today we are going to be discussing the question of receiving a letter or a package on Shabbos. The question is whether or not you're allowed to use the item right away, as that would be a benefit from the *melachah* that the goy did in order to get that package to you on Shabbos.

The question is brought up in a *sefer* called *Commerce and Shabbos*, by Rabbi Yosef Kushner. He brings that the halacha is that we are not allowed to get benefit from *melachah* (one of the 39 general non-allowed activities) that was done for a Jew by a goy on Shabbos. Even if the Jew did not instruct the goy to do the *melachah*, we are still not allowed to benefit from that *melacha* which was done.

There are two reasons brought down for this. The first reason is, to protect the sanctity of Shabbos, the *Rabanan* (Rabbis of previous generations) prohibited getting benefit from that *melachah*. The second reason is, because the *Rabanan* were afraid that if we allowed a person to benefit from *melachah* that was done by a goy for a Jew, even without them asking for it, the Jewish people may come to actually ask a goy to do something directly on Shabbos. That, as we spoke about in earlier videos, is an *isur/prohibition* called *amirah l'akum*. So in order to protect the Jewish people from coming to *amirah l'akum*, they did not allow a person to get benefit from that *melachah*.

So in this case over here, where a person gets a package or a letter on Shabbos, what is the halacha? There are times that you're not allowed to use the item until the end of Shabbos, and sometimes you even have to wait a little bit after Shabbos. There is something called *kedei she'ya'aseh*. It's that we make you wait a little bit longer after Shabbos ends, so that you don't benefit from the time that was used/saved on Shabbos of the goy to get the item to you.

For example, if the goy had to spend an extra 10 minutes to get the package to your house, then that means there was 10 minutes of *melachah* (driving the car or carrying outside of eruv, etc.) done specifically for the Jewish person. So you are going to have to actually wait until 10 minutes after Shabbos ends before getting any benefit from the item.

We're going to discuss which cases you can use the item right away, which cases you have to wait until after Shabbos, and which cases you have to wait even after Shabbos for a specific amount of time.

Let's first discuss when it comes to a personal letter or a printed publication, something like that, where it just comes by itself and you don't order it. We're not talking about a newspaper or a magazine subscription which arrives on Shabbos. That's something else, which we're going to have to deal with in another video as a follow-up to this one. (We

already spoke about ordering/subscribing to newspapers which include Saturday delivery [video #66]). In regards to this, it's talking about a friendly letter or something like a printed thing that comes in the mail which you didn't order/subscribe to.

He says over here that most of the *Poskim* (halachic authorities) allow a letter to be read on Shabbos. Why? Number one, because you did not really tell the person to send you a letter, so we're not worried about you coming to tell the goy to do *melachah* for you afterwards in another situation. As well, it's not really considered getting "benefit" from the *melachah* that a goy did. So those *Poskim*, most of them say that it would be allowed to read a letter that came in on Shabbos.

However, according to the *Mishnah Brurah*, he brings that there are *Poskim* who hold that it is called getting a benefit and, therefore, it would be best to wait until the end of Shabbos to read/benefit from that letter. But you wouldn't have to wait until the extra period of time after Shabbos. All *Poskim* agree that immediately at the end of Shabbos, you would be allowed to read that letter.

One important note that he says over here is that when the mailman or someone delivers that letter, he should be told to put it down first and then you should pick it up. We're not getting into the reason why (it's a discussion of its own), but they should put it down first.

In regards to a delivered item on Shabbos which has clear benefit/use, such as clothing or toys, what's the halacha? Those things you will for sure be getting benefit from and if the goy did do a specific *melachah*, like they drove in order to get the item to you, then we see clearly again see that a goy did a *melachah* for a Jew on Shabbos, and therefore, in such a case, you would have to wait this time of *kedei sheya'aseh*, after the end of Shabbos, before getting benefit from the item.

So if the goy had to drive an extra ten minutes out of the way to get to your house to drop off that package, then you'd have to wait an extra 10 minutes after the completion of Shabbos to get benefit from the item. We don't calculate and add in all of the time starting from when the package left the warehouse, because usually there are other packages for goyim that are also in the shipment. Since the work was done for goyim as well then that time where it was along with those other packages is not counted. We're only worried about the amount of time that was spent specifically doing the *melachah* for the Jew.

Also, another thing he brings over here is that it's only a case where it was a non-Jewish person who sent you the item or a non-Jewish company or a non-religious Jew. Those are people that we were worried that you could actually come to tell them to do a *melachah* on Shabbos in the future. However, if it was sent from a Jewish person who keeps Shabbos, then you would be allowed to use the item right away, even on Shabbos. Because

we're not worried about you telling a religious person to send something to you in the future on Shabbos, because he would never listen to you and send it on Shabbos. So in this case, where it's an item of clear use/benefit (clothing/toys) and it comes to you on Shabbos, this rule that you have to wait until after Shabbos the amount of time that it comes to you, is only in cases where it's not a religious Jew. Then you would have to wait that amount of time.

In cases where the item is urgently needed, such as clothing needed for Shabbos or Yom Tov, then there is a case where you would be able to use it and you wouldn't have to wait until the end of Shabbos. That's in a case where the sender, the person you bought it from, was paid a set shipping fee or if everything was included in the sale price of the item. In such a case, along with the fact that the item is urgently needed, we say that the goy is not doing the *melachah* for a Jew; rather, he is doing the *melachah* for himself, in order to complete the sale. In such cases, you would be allowed to use the item right away on Shabbos if its urgently needed. ***

***Please note that these halachos are intended to inform and educate the reader/listener in general. For any specific questions which arise, it is recommended to speak over the exact case with a competent halachic authority in order to assess the halacha accordingly as any small change will greatly affect the final halacha. You can send your questions in to us as well by replying via WhatsApp to our halacha Q & A number on the group, sending an email to Ask@MoneyHalacha.com, or via our contact page at MoneyHalacha.com/contact-us

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