What is Work? - Handout

# Exodus 20

**7** Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

**8** Six days shalt you labor, and do all your **work**;

**9** but the seventh day is a Sabbath unto the LORD thy God; you shall not do any manner of **work** …

**ז** זָכוֹר אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ.

**ח** שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲבֹד וְעָשִׂיתָ כָּל-**מְלַאכְתֶּך**ָ.

**ט** וְיוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי--שַׁבָּת לַיה’ אֱלֹקֶיךָ: לֹא-תַעֲשֶׂה כָל-**מְלָאכָה** …

# Exodus 35

**2** Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you a holy day, a Sabbath of solemn rest to the LORD; whosoever does any work therein shall be put to death.

**3** You shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the Sabbath day.

# Numbers 15

**32** And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering sticks upon the Sabbath day.

**33** And they that found him gathering sticks brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation.

**34** And they put him in ward, because it had not been declared what should be done to him.

**35** And the LORD said unto Moses: 'The man shall surely be put to death; all the congregation shall stone him with stones outside the camp.'

# Exodus 16

**22** And it came to pass that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each one; and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses.

**23** And he said unto them: 'this is that which the LORD has spoken: Tomorrow is a solemn rest, a holy Sabbath unto the LORD. Bake that which you will bake, and seethe that which you will seethe; and all that remains lay up for you to be kept until the morning.'

**24** And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses commanded; and it did not rot, neither was there any worm therein.

**25** And Moses said: 'Eat that today; for today is a Sabbath unto the LORD; today you shall not find it in the field.

**29** See that the LORD has given you the Sabbath; therefore He gives you on the sixth day the bread of two days; stay every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day.'

# Isaiah 58

**13** If you restrain your foot because of the Sabbath, from pursuing your business on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the Lord honorable; and shall honor it, not doing your own ways, nor pursuing your own business, nor speaking of vain matters.

# Jeremiah 17

**21** thus says the LORD: Take heed for the sake of your souls, and bear no burden on the Sabbath day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem;

**22** neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the Sabbath day, neither do any work; but sanctify the Sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers;

**23** but they listened not, neither inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff, that they might not hear, nor receive instruction.

**24** And it shall come to pass, if you diligently listen to Me, says the LORD, to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the Sabbath day, but to sanctify the Sabbath day, to do no work therein;

**25** then shall there enter in by the gates of this city kings and princes sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they, and their princes, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and this city shall be inhabited forever.

# Nehemiah 13

**15** In those days I saw in Judah some treading winepresses on the Sabbath, and bringing in heaps of corn, and lading donkeys; also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day; and I forewarned them in the day wherein they sold victuals.

**16** There dwelt men of Tyre, who brought in fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the Sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem.

**17** Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them: 'What evil thing is this that you do, and profane the Sabbath day?

**18** Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? Yet you bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the Sabbath.'

**19** And it came to pass that, when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the Sabbath, I commanded that the doors should be shut, and commanded that they should not be opened till after the Sabbath; and some of my servants set I over the gates, that there should no burden be brought in on the Sabbath day.

# Mishnah Hagigah 1:8

The cancellation of vows floats in the air and they have nothing on which to support themselves. The laws of the Sabbath, *hagigot* and of misappropriation of Temple property are as mountains suspended by a hair, for they have sparse Scriptural references but they have many laws. [Monetary] laws and services, [the laws] of purity and impurity and of forbidden relations have support; [however all of the above] are integral portions of the Torah.

# Talmud Bavli, Hagigah 10a

But why does it say: “as mountains hanging by a hair”? — Because the Torah prohibited [on the Sabbath] purposed work, yet purposed work is not mentioned in Scripture.

# Exodus 35:21

And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and brought the LORD'S offering, for the **work** of the tent of meeting, and for all the service thereof, and for the holy garments.

# Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 49b

The principal categories of labor are forty less one; to what do they correspond? Said R. Hanina b. Hama to them: To the forms of labor in the Tabernacle. R. Jonathan son of R. Eleazar said to them, Thus did R. Simeon b. R. Jose b. Lakonia say: They correspond to [the words] ‘work’ [melakah], ‘his work’ [melakto], and ‘the work of’ [meleketh], which are [written] thirty-nine times in the Torah.

**The Thirty-Nine Melachot**

אֲבוֹת מְלָאכוֹת אַרְבָּעִים חָסֵר אֶחָת. הַזּוֹרֵעַ. וְהַחוֹרֵשׁ. וְהַקּוֹצֵר. וְהַמְעַמֵּר. הַדָּשׁ. וְהַזּוֹרֶה. הַבּוֹרֵר. הַטּוֹחֵן. וְהַמְרַקֵּד. וְהַלָּשׁ. וְהָאוֹפֶה. הַגּוֹזֵז אֶת הַצֶּמֶר. הַמְלַבְּנוֹ. וְהַמְנַפְּצוֹ. וְהַצּוֹבְעוֹ. וְהַטּוֹוֶה. וְהַמֵּסֵךְ. וְהָעוֹשֶׂה שְׁנֵי בָתֵּי נִירִין. וְהָאוֹרֵג שְׁנֵי חוּטִין. וְהַפּוֹצֵעַ שְׁנֵי חוּטִין. הַקּוֹשֵׁר. וְהַמַּתִּיר. וְהַתּוֹפֵר שְׁתֵּי תְפִירוֹת. הַקּוֹרֵעַ עַל מְנָת לִתְפֹּר שְׁתֵּי תְפִירוֹת. הַצָּד צְבִי. הַשּׁוֹחֲטוֹ. וְהַמַּפְשִׁיטוֹ. הַמּוֹלְחוֹ, וְהַמְעַבֵּד אֶת עוֹרוֹ. וְהַמּוֹחֲקוֹ. וְהַמְחַתְּכוֹ. הַכּוֹתֵב שְׁתֵּי אוֹתִיּוֹת. וְהַמּוֹחֵק עַל מְנָת לִכְתֹּב שְׁתֵּי אוֹתִיּוֹת. הַבּוֹנֶה. וְהַסּוֹתֵר. הַמְכַבֶּה. וְהַמַּבְעִיר. הַמַּכֶּה בַפַּטִּישׁ. הַמּוֹצִיא מֵרְשׁוּת לִרְשׁוּת. הֲרֵי אֵלּוּ אֲבוֹת מְלָאכוֹת אַרְבָּעִים חָסֵר אֶחָת:

# Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 10b

Primary categories of “work” are forty minus one:

1) planting, 2) plowing, 3) reaping, 4) gathering sheaves, 5) threshing, 6) winnowing, 7) sorting, 8) grinding, 9) sifting, 10) kneading, 11) baking

12) shearing wool, 13) washing wool, 14) combing, 15) dyeing, 16) spinning, 17) warping, 18) threading, 19) weaving, 20) cutting, 21) tying, 22) untying, 23) sewing, 24) tearing

25) trapping, 26) slaughtering, 27) skinning, 28) salting, 29) tanning, 30) scraping, 31) cutting

32) writing, 33) erasing

34) building, 35) demolishing,

36) extinguishing, 37) kindling, 38) hammering, 39) carrying from one domain to another domain.

These are the primary categories of “work”, forty minus one.