

Basically, no work is to be performed. But what is work? The Rabbis designated as work all those activities that were once performed in building the sanctuary in the desert. In this manner, they wished to indicate that the entire world is God's sanctuary (Isa. 66:1); we toil for Him and we cease from work at His behest.

They arrived at seven basic categories of prohibited work, subdividing them into a total of 39 prohibitions:

1. The growing and preparation of food; 11 prohibitions.
2. The production and preparation of clothing; 13 prohibitions.
3. Leather work and writing; 9 prohibitions.
4. Providing shelter; 2 prohibitions.
5. Kindling and extinguishing fire; 2 prohibitions.
6. Work-completion; 1 prohibition.
7. Transportation; 1 prohibition.

Included in category 1 are plowing, sowing, reaping, all agricultural work; also all cooking, baking, and broiling.

Included in category 2 are shearing, weaving, washing, bleaching, dyeing, spinning, making loops, and separating of threads.

Included in category 3 are catching an animal, slaughtering, flaying, tanning, salting, curing, preparation of fur, preparation of parchment, writing, and erasing.

Included in category 4 are building and demolition work.

Included in category 5 are kindling and extinguishing fire.

Included in category 6 is the final hammerstroke that completes the object.

Included in category 7 is transportation of goods outside the immediate confines of the home.

In addition, the Rabbis laid down injunctions that would prevent any violation of the laws of Torah.

1. **MUKZAH:** Tools used for work, such as pens, pencils, and hammers, may not be touched or moved.

2. **SHVUT:** Regulations imposed for the sake of ensuring true rest. They include prohibitions against sports, dancing, swimming, boating, and anything that interferes with the spiritual character of the rest.

3. **UVDA DE-HOL:** Anything that may give the Sabbath a workaday character, including the use of the telephone [Shabbat 150a, b].

Implications

This has led to wide implications and arrangements:

1. Objects other than clothing, be they as small as a handkerchief, may not be carried outside the home. Persons, however, may be carried—for instance, babies. A person may not carry a Tallit in its bag

to the synagogue, but may put it on at home, whereupon it becomes a garment. Jewelry may be worn. To alleviate hardships, the Rabbis also ruled that a whole city may become a private domain, within which carrying is permitted. This can be done by erecting a wall around the city; it may be a symbolic wall, such as a wire, but it must not have any holes in it. Thus the whole city becomes a condominium, an *Eruv*. Jerusalem is a city with such a wall, and carrying objects in it is permitted on the Sabbath.

2. Movement from city to city is prohibited. The limit for walking beyond the built-up section of town is 2,000 cubits, roughly 1,200 meters or 1,300 yards. If food is placed at the outermost limit of the 2,000 cubits, this spot becomes a dwelling place, and the person is allowed to walk another 2,000 cubits in the same direction. In Europe, farmers living beyond the 2,000-cubit limit from the synagogue found it possible to walk to the synagogue by this means, having established an *Eruv*.

3. Fire means any kind of flame. It includes the turning-on of electric light, of heat, or the use of the automobile, radio, or television; all are prohibited.

4. The law against providing shelter includes opening an umbrella.

5. A private letter may be read on the Sabbath, if it is already open; a business communication may not be read even if it is open.

6. Although cooking is prohibited, the use of food simmering in heat (though not on an open fire) is permitted. Jewish women customarily placed a dish in the oven on Friday afternoon, where it would simmer until Sabbath noon, serving as the midday meal. This was called *cholent*, a term derived from the French, *chaud*, hot.

The strictness of these rules called for the employment of a *Shabbes Goy*, a Gentile with whom it was arranged beforehand to turn out the light, heat the stove in the morning, milk the cows, and perform the essential chores.

The Jew who thus observes the Sabbath dwells on an enchanted island in time. He is removed from the world, serene and secure.

The Sabbath may be broken, and must be broken, if life is in immediate danger. Rabbi Jonathan ben Joseph stated: "Torah says: 'The Sabbath is holy for *you* [Exod. 31:14].' This means, it is given to *you* [man], not you to the Sabbath [Yoma 85b]."

Here we are dealing with a universal rule. Any Mitzvah of Torah must be broken in behalf of a human life in immediate danger. The Rabbis explain:

Whence do I know that danger to life pushes the Sabbath aside? Rabbi Judah in the name of Samuel explained it. It is written: "You shall keep My laws and My norms, by the pursuit of which man shall live; I am the Lord" [Lev. 18:3]. This means that he *lives* through them, not dies through them [Yoma 85b].