

Shabbat: An Exploration of Rabbinic Aggadah

This thesis is a study of aggadic attitudes towards Shabbat. The focus of the research was in the following sources: The Babylonian Talmud, The Jerusalem Talmud, Genesis Rabbah and Leviticus Rabbah. Using Otzar Ha-Aggadah and Sefer Ha-Aggadah various passages were collected about Shabbat and linked together in an effort to learn about Rabbinic attitudes of Shabbat.

Advisor:

Dr. Eugene B. Borowitz

Number of Chapters:

There are three chapters in the thesis:

- 1) Preparation for Shabbat.
- 2) Spiritual aspects of Shabbat.
- 3) The Impact of Shabbat on Jewish life.

Goal of the Thesis:

To explore attitudes and ideas of Shabbat through the lens of the Rabbinic world. The study was one of aggadic comments not of halakhic formulations.

Research included the following material:

- 1) The Responsa Project, Bar Ilan Univ. CD-Rom 1999
- 2) אוצר האגדה
- 3) תלמוד בבלי
- 4) תלמוד ירושלמי
- 5) מדרש רבה

Shabbat: An Exploration of Rabbinic Aggadah

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ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, שהחזינו וקימנו והגינו לזמן הזה.

Praised be You, Eternal our God, Ruler of the universe,
who has kept us in life, sustained us and permitted us to reach this season.

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Introduction

Shabbat is a Jewish observance that captures the imagination. We are first told that the seventh day is holy in the context of the creation story in Genesis when we read:

וַיְכַל הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ וְכָל-צְבָאָם: בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְלָאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר
עָשָׂה וַיִּשְׁבֹּת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְכָל-מְלָאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה: ג וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-יוֹם
הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדֵּשׁ אֹתוֹ כִּי בּוֹ שָׁבַת מְכָל-מְלָאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר-בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת:

The heaven and earth were finished, and all their array. On the Seventh day God finished the work that He had been doing, and He ceased on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because on it God ceased from all the work of creation that He had done.¹

The concept of Shabbat expressed in Genesis is an imitation of the divine act of resting on the seventh day. At first, the notion of taking one day of the week off seemed radical and lazy to the outside world, most vocally the Romans. Despite criticism and concern Shabbat, as the day of rest, became one of the greatest contributions of the Jewish people to the world. Among the strength of the day is that it not only called for people to cease from work it also affirmed the importance of the work week While a day of rest was perhaps revolutionary the days of working were considered fundamental. Abraham Joshua Heschel described Shabbat in the following way:

The meaning of the Sabbath is to celebrate time rather than space. Six days a week we live under the tyranny of things of space; on the Sabbath we try to become attuned to *holiness in time*. It is a day on which we are called upon to share in what is eternal in time, to turn from the results of creation to the mystery of creation; from the world of creation to the creation of the world.²

Heschel describes Shabbat as both holiness in time and a cathedral in time. Clearly the elements of time are central considerations of Shabbat observance but the development of

¹ Genesis 2:1-3

Shabbat throughout the ages goes beyond just notions of time to push a core of Jewish values and ideas. Imbedded within the laws and customs that surround Shabbat are numerous theological and moral concepts that say a great deal about the Jewish people. It is precisely these larger issues that motivated this study.

The question became one of how these deeper messages of Shabbat could best be approached? Through what material would the most information about Shabbat be revealed? It became clear, after study, that Shabbat had undergone the most transformation in the hands of the Rabbis. They had taken the Biblical references and notions of Shabbat and shaped the day almost entirely. While the Halacha of Shabbat is rich with many of these ideas it seemed that the world of aggadah was a richer source for this type of study. This was further emphasized in the work of Bialik when he wrote, "Halacha and Aggadah." He believes that, there is actually very little material that appears, in either the one hundred and fifty seven double pages in Tractate Shabbat, or the one hundred and five in Tractate Eruvin, on the surface seem to be Aggadic material. He writes that despite what may appear as a lack of Aggadic text on the subject:

When I turn over those pages and see the various groups of *Tannaim* and *Amoraim* at their work, I say to myself that these whom I see are in very truth artists of life in throes of creation. Such mighty spiritual work as this, ant-like and giant-like at once, work performed for its own sake and out of boundless love and faith, could not be done without inspiration. Every one of those men did his own part of the task according to his own bent and inclination, and all of them were bowed before an overmastering higher will. One lofty idea, one supreme image of the Sabbath hovered before these scattered men like a visible thing, and its spirit gathered from here from out of all the generations, and made the co-workers in its fashioning and perfecting. Every question, every challenge, every limitation and definition is but a new piece added to the mosaic, another bit of the pattern, which had to be put in because without it the whole

² Heschel, 10

could not have been what it must be. And the day of all this tiresome work of Halacha is- a day which is wholly Aggadah.³

The day of Shabbat is deeply rooted in both Halacha and Aggadah, both of which are well represented in Rabbinic literature. The day, Bialik is explaining, and the creation of the laws surrounding it are both Halacha and aggadah as one. While surely the two are deeply intertwined Shabbat frequently appear in aggadic texts. In fact, the study of aggadic material would seem to offer a larger entrance into the world of the Rabbinic attitudes about Shabbat. Aggadah, or Rabbinic narrative, while deeply concerned with matters of Halacha embraces religious exhortation as it tries to justify observance and ritual. After a review of *Otzar Ha'Aggadah*, it became apparent that there was no lack of aggadic material on the subject of Shabbat. It was then decided that the focus of this study would be an in depth analysis of aggadaic material about Shabbat. The study would be in the following works: The Babylonian Talmud, The Jerusalem Talmud, Genesis Rabbah and Leviticus Rabbah. These four works represented a wide span of material from about the time of the completion of The Babylonian Talmud and clearly had a great deal to reveal about the Rabbinic attitude towards Shabbat.

The methodology of this project was to first identify passages of Aggadic material using *Otzar Ha-Aggadah*, *Sefer Ha-Aggadah* and The Bar-Ilan CD Rom. Once the passages were located each passage was translated and analyzed using a variety of resources. Each passage was first considered in its own context. This meant trying to identify what the rationale may have been for the passage in comparison to the surrounding material. Once all of the texts were found, translated and analyzed they needed to be grouped together. The texts obviously connect in many ways and could

³ Bialik, 4-8

have been laid out in a variety of patterns. The various chapters and sections of this thesis are the result of how the texts seemed to flow best topically.

Once the categories came together the texts were analyzed not only in their own context but also in a larger framework. It was important to try and understand what each text added to the Rabbis' understanding of Shabbat. The chapters fell into three basic subject areas.

The first chapter focused on preparation for Shabbat. The issues surrounding these texts had to do with fulfilling basic human needs so that people could focus energy on Shabbat observance.

The second chapter dealt with the time of Shabbat itself. The texts closely link Shabbat observance with the connection of the Jewish people to God. The relationship with the divine, that is implied by these passages raised issues of responsibilities, practice, punishment and reward. The texts also reveal much about the theological notions of the Rabbinical world.

The third section focused more on Halachic contrasts between Shabbat and other Jewish practices. In this chapter various texts are presented to try and illustrate the debate that results from the clash of Torah values.

The result of this process is what appears on the pages of this thesis. The question that led this study was, what can be learned from an in depth focus of Shabbat through the eyes of the Rabbinic world?

Chapter 1 Shabbat Preparation

The Rabbis stress the observance of Shabbat. They understood that a proper Shabbat required thorough preparation. Much of the material on preparation is a pragmatic push for readiness stressing the message from the Rabbis that the more effort you put into preparation the more seriously one would consider the day. Imbedded within these texts about preparing are greater messages about Shabbat itself, political debates, and realities of the day.

A) Preparation:

Rav: Chisda said: A man should always arise early [on Friday] to the duty of Shabbat. As it is stated: "And it shall be on the sixth day that they shall prepare that which they shall bring in." (Ex. 16:5) Immediately.⁴

Preparation for Shabbat is both an obligation and an opportunity: an obligation within the Halachic system carrying the weight of law, and an opportunity for release from the routine of the, 'regular days of the week.' Within this system, the Rabbis believed that one should begin preparation as early as possible on the day before Shabbat. The text from Shabbat 117b above states, "אמר רב חסדא לעולם ישכים אדם להוצאת שבת," "A man should always arise early (on Friday) to the duty of Shabbat." When the text further explains that it is allowable to go to market for Shabbat and to attend the morning services afterward, it gives Shabbat preparation precedence over almost all activities.

The final line of the text that states that the preparation needs to be done immediately signifies how concerned with readiness the Rabbis were. The Rabbis believed that people should hurry to finish their pre-Shabbat work so they could better

⁴ Shabbat 117b

observe the day. Preparation requires readying the basic essentials of sustenance, comfort and security. These needs are reflected in the following Gemara text. The passage cited below deals with the ways in which Shabbat preparation is to be done and also sheds light on the over arching themes that will serve as the basis for the sub-sections within this chapter, including: food, clothing, shelter and safety.

The following text is presented as a line by line analysis on how various Rabbis treated Shabbat. In many ways this custom guide becomes the ideal steps of Sabbath preparation in the minds of the Rabbis:

A1 and A2 are both connected with preparing special clothing for Shabbat.

רבי חנינא מיעטף וקאי אפניא דמעלי שבתא, אמר: בואו ונצא לקראת שבת המלכה.

A1. R' Channina would wrap himself and stand to facing the evening on Friday and say, "Come, let us go out to greet the Sabbath queen."

In the case of A1 R. Channina is actively going out to greet Shabbat, but he is not ready to do so until he is fully and formally dressed.

רבי ינאי לביש מאניה מעלי שבת, ואמר: בואי כלה בואי כלה.

A2. R' Yanni would put on his [shabbat] clothes on Friday and say, "Come, o' bride, come o' bride."

In the case of A2 R. Yanni is more passive and is inviting Shabbat to enter, again once he is dressed in his Shabbat clothes he seems ready to accept Shabbat. This text also seems to be the connection for going to the Mikveh prior to Shabbat, so one is going in clean and pure.

B1-B8 are all related to the preparation of food for Shabbat

רבה בר רב הונא איקלע לבי רבה בר רב נחמן, קריבו ליה תלת סאי טחיי. אמר להו: מי הוה ידעיתון דאיתנא? אמרו ליה: מי עדיפת לן מינה.

B1. Rabbah Bar Rav Huna visited the home of Rabbah bar Rav Nachman. They brought him 3 se'ah of oiled wafers. He [Rabbah Bar Rav Huna] said to them, "Did you know that I was coming?" They said to him, "are you any more important to us than it?" [Meaning Shabbat]

רבי אבא זבן בתליסר אסתירי פשיטי בישרא מתליסר טבחי, ומשלים להו
אצינורא דדשא, ואמר להו: אשור הייא, אשור היי;

B2. R' Abba would buy meat from 13 butchers for 13 common astiras and they would deliver it to his door, and he would say to them, "Be energetic and hurry, be energetic and hurry."

We find the obligation is not simply preparing food but of going one step beyond to having elegant meals for Shabbat. In other words it is not about scraping together something at the last minute but preparing as extravagant a meal as we can. The examples from the text include fish⁵ and the meat from thirteen butchers.

רבי אבהו הוה יתיב אתכתקא דשינא ומושיף נורא

C1. R' Abahu would sit on a stool of ivory and fan the fire.

רב ענן לביש גונדא

B4. R' Anan would wear a black smock.

Although this refers to clothing it is about what one wears to cook and not what one wears on Shabbat, even it is special. Furthermore, it is clear from the above text that the Rabbis believed they also needed to participate directly in preparation for Shabbat. The idea is that Shabbat itself is a universal enterprise in which all are responsible for participating. This notion is first developed in two places in the Torah.

Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of the Lord your God: you shall not do any work – you, your son or daughter, your male or

⁵ Fish seems to be a customary food because of its connection with fertility.

female slave, or your cattle, or the stranger who is within your settlements. For in the six days the Lord made heaven and earth and sea, and all that is in them, and he rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.⁶

Observe the Sabbath day and keep it holy, as the Lord your God has commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of the Lord your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or your female slave, your ox or your ass, or any of your cattle, or the stranger in your settlements, so that your male and female slave may rest as you do. Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt and the Lord your God freed you from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day.⁷

Exodus 20: 8-11 and Deuteronomy 5:12-15 show that Shabbat is a common possession, the entitlement of all, rich and poor. Therefore, the very idea of Shabbat is that it is the possession of all and is a universal, truly democratic notion. Judaism unlike other religions mandated that this day of rest was for all of God's creatures. So, this equality emerges even with the preparation for Shabbat. R. Irving Greenberg elegantly described the shift in class structure:

The test of freedom is control over time. A slave must work all the time or whenever the master orders it. A free man has the choice of not working. Shabbat gives this right to everyone, including slaves. In one sense, Shabbat is a spiritual affirmation of freedom that is oblivious to social classes. The master, too, can be inwardly enslaved to his work, and the Shabbat seeks to free the master as well. By releasing all people from work for a day, Shabbat insists that life is not a prison sentence of hard labor that must be served continually. However, the Shabbat commandment goes beyond spiritual dignity to make a statement for equality...By equating slave and master, the Shabbat commandment objects to the very hierarchy that the Torah has temporarily accepted!⁸

דתנא דבי רבי ישמעאל: בגדים שבישל בהן קדירה לרבו - אל ימזוג בהן כוס

⁶ Exodus 20:8-11

⁷ Deuteronomy 5:12-15

⁸ Greenberg, 149-150

לרבו.

B5. A Baraita of the academy of R' Yishmael taught: The garments one wore when one cooked a pot for his master, one should not wear to pour a cup of wine for his master.

This is directly related to B4. This also shows that the smock was not festive for Shabbat and had to be removed before the Shabbat Kiddush and pouring of the wine.

רב ספרא מחריק רישא

B6. Rav Safra would singe the head.

רבא מלח שיבוטא

B7. Rava would salt the large fish.

C1-C7 are all related to the physical dwelling or shelter and preparations

רב הונא מדליק שרגי

C2. Rav Huna would light lamps

רב פפא גדיל פתילתא

C3. Rav Pappa would twine the wicks

רב חסדא פרים סילקא

B8. Rav Chisda would mince the beets.

רבה ורב יוסף מצלחי ציבי.

C4. Rabbah and Rav Yosef would split the wood.

רבי זירא מצתת צתותי.

C5. R. Zeriaha would kindle the kindling.

רב נחמן בר יצחק מכתף ועייל מכתף ונפיק, אמר: אילו מקלעין לי רבי אמי ורבי אסי מי לא מכתפנא קמייהו?

C6. R. Nachman bar Yitzchak would lift up and bring in, and lift up and take out. He said, "If R' Ami and R' Assi were to visit me would I not lift up bundles in front of them?"

ואיכא דאמרי: רבי אמי ורבי אסי מכתפי ועיילי מכתפי ונפקי, אמרי: אילו איקלע לן רבי יוחנן, מי לא מכתפינן קמיה?

C7. And there are those who say R' Ami and R' Assi would lift up and bring in and lift up and take out. They said, If R' Yochanon were to visit us, would we not lift up bundles [firewood] in front of him?

The text stresses the importance of preparing for Shabbat and can be divided into three major categories: food, clothing and shelter. These are basic human needs. A need can be defined as "a biological or psychological requirement; a state of deprivation that motivates a person to take action towards a goal."⁹ It is these very practical needs that helped the Rabbis set priorities for what needed to be accomplished during preparation for Shabbat observance.

⁹ Darley, 743

B) Food

How could one imagine being interested in the spiritual pursuits of Shabbat while lacking the basic nutrition to live? The safeguard of readying for Shabbat, first and foremost, included food. The concept was not only to provide a basic ration of food but also to elevate the quality and importance of the food of Shabbat. The Rabbis in fact put such a strong emphasis on food that they described how one should spend their time on Shabbat:

Set aside part of the day for study of Torah and part for eating and drinking.

The Rabbis elevated food to the same level as the study of Torah. As a result, they taught we should put foods aside the entire week to have a special Shabbat meal. The meals of Shabbat are important to save and prepare for, especially to those who lacked hearty meals during the week. In the following text this is more clearly explained. In the first section there is a prescription for the spending of 'every man':

כל מזונתיו של אדם קצובים לו מראש השנה ועד יום הכפורים,
חוץ מהוצאת שבתות והוצאת יום טוב, והוצאת בניו לתלמוד
תורה. שאם פחת - פוחתין לו, ואם הוסיף - מוסיפין לו.

All of a persons income is fixed each year, from Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur, with the exception of expenditures for Shabbat and festivals, and the expenditures of teaching one's children Torah. For, if one spends less, He receives less; and if he spends more, he receives more.

The expenditures for festivals, teaching Torah to one's children, and Shabbat can not be restricted by the limitations of a specific budget line by the Rabbis. They describe the expenditures for Shabbat in this way because of the strong value placed on the day. The key to this section is the closing line, "If one spends less, he receives less; and if he spends more he receives more." The "more" that one will receive can be understood as a very direct connection to income. In the following section from the same page of Talmud

we are taught what the Rabbis, who had money for Shabbat meals, do in order to prepare food for the day:

תניא, אמרו עליו על שמאי הזקן, כל ימיו היה אוכל לכבוד
שבת מצא בהמה נאה אומר: זו לשבת. מצא אחרת נאה הימנה -
מניח את השניה ואוכל את הראשונה. אבל הלל הזקן מדה
אחרת הייתה לו, שכל מעשיו לשם שמים. שנאמר (תהלים סח)
ברוך ה' יום יום. תניא נמי הכי: בית שמאי אומרים: מחד שבין
לשבתך, ובית הלל אומרים: ברוך ה' יום יום.

It was taught in a Bariata: They say about Shammai the elder. Every day he would eat to honor Shabbat. If he came across a great piece of meat; he would say, "Put it aside for Shabbat." If he came across an even better one he would leave the second and eat the first. But, Hillel the Elder, used a different standard, his actions were all for the sake of heaven. As it says, "Blessed be my God day by day." (Ps. 68:20) Shammai says, "from the first day of the week prepare for Shabbat." Hillel says, "Blessed be my God day by day."¹⁰

In this section it is the Rabbis who are concerned with food for Shabbat itself. The lesson to the "every man" is clearly that even the Rabbis were concerned with the quality of their Sabbath meals. It should be noted that Hillel's statements do add importance to the eating of every day as well as Shabbat. In the following text the concern for and importance of Sabbath meals is further extended. Since cooking itself is actually prohibited on Shabbat, any food mentioned from the Sabbath day itself is considered by the Rabbis to connect directly with the preparation of food done prior to Shabbat.

One may save food for three meals, what is fit for people [is saved for] people, and what is fit for animals [is saved for] animals.
How so? [If] a fire broke out on erev Shabbat he may save food for three meals. [If it happened] in the morning he may save food for two meals. [If it happened] In the afternoon [one can save enough] food for one meal. R' Yose says, "One may always save food for three meals."¹¹

¹⁰ Beitzah 16a

¹¹ Shabbat, 117B

Within the passage above there are three issues that are important to observe. The first issue is that is that of being prepared with three full meals for Shabbat. This concept relates directly to the notion of preparing your physical dwelling for Shabbat rest so that one can focus on spiritual notions and not on 'hunting and gathering,' so to speak. The second issue is that both animals and people are mentioned in terms of saving food for three meals during Shabbat. This conceptually supports the notion that all, including animals, must be given Shabbat rest.

The third element of this piece of Mishnah is the statement that comes at the end of the section from R' Yose. What is the reason that R' Yose interjects the thought that one may always have three meals? This statement is meant to tell the reader that on Shabbat, which is when the issue of fire is being mentioned, one should not worry about the direct amounts of food. They are allowed to go and save what they can as quickly as possible, without worrying about amounts, so they can return to the essential work of the day: Shabbat rest. There seems to be no debate amongst the Rabbis about the concept of saving some portion of food to honor Shabbat.

To further stress the centrality of food on Shabbat, the Rabbis tried to elevate the level of the food itself:

He blessed it with tasty dishes. Our teacher made a meal for Antoninus on Shabbat. Cold dishes were set before him; he ate them and found them delicious. [Another time] he made a meal for him during the week, Hot dishes were again placed before him. He said, "I enjoyed the other dishes more." These lack a certain condiment. He [our teacher] replied, "they lack Shabbat."¹²

The passage above from Genesis Rabbah is similar to one found in Shabbat 119a:

¹² Gen. Rabbah 11:4

Caesar [The roman emperor] said to R. Joshua b. Haninah, "Why is this food so fragrant?" He said, "We have a certain spice named Shabbat that we put into it and it renders the dish fragrant." He said, "Give us some of it." He said to him, "The spice is effective for anyone who keeps the Sabbath but will not work for anyone who does not keep Shabbat."¹³

In both of these stories, Shabbat is seen as the special spice that makes the time like no other and certainly the food like no other. It seems unlikely that the Roman emperor would have made any comments about the Jewish Shabbat rituals or even the food of Shabbat. So, what is this text trying to tell the reader? The Jews believed that the food they prepared was special and was truly fit for a king.

Shabbat was clearly supposed to be a universal enterprise in which all people had enough food on the table to celebrate the day properly. The question then arises: how does one who cannot provide for themselves handle the matter of food on Shabbat? How does one avoid causing such potential embarrassment? The Rabbis explore this in the following case:

R. Judah said in the name of Rav: Every day a heavenly voice is heard declaring: The entire world draws sustenance because of Hanina, my son. Hanina, my son, suffices himself with a Kab of Carobs from one Shabbat to the next. Every Shabbat his wife would light the oven and throw twigs into it so as not to be put to shame. She had a bad neighbor who said, "I know that these people have nothing, what then is the smoke?" She knocked on the door. Feeling humiliated she [Hanina's wife] went to another room. A miracle happened [the neighbor] saw the oven filled with loaves of bread and the bowl full of dough. The visitor called to her to get a shovel and take the bread from the oven. Hanina's wife replied, "I went to get it." A Tanna taught: She was accustomed to miracles and went to get it.¹⁴

In this scenario, Hanina and his wife clearly lack the essentials for elegant meals during Shabbat. What is clear from the text is that they see the importance of preparing for

¹³ Shabbat 119a

¹⁴ Ta'anit 24b-25a

Shabbat in whatever way they can. The first is that they need to eat less during the week. This is what the text means when it describes, "Hanina my son suffices himself with a Kab of Carobs from one Shabbat to the next." He does this in an effort to save for Shabbat. Before Shabbat, the wife of Hanina tries to give the appearance to her neighbors that she is preparing for Shabbat. The moral of this text is that if one makes the effort, God will provide, it is however not so much a matter of spirit to the Rabbis but rather a very practical reality that some would not have enough food. The last words brought in from the Tanna help us to see the true faith of Hanina and his wife: "She was accustomed to miracles and went to get it." It is not enough though to pray for food and not prepare. Even in this tale an effort was made. The Rabbis set boundaries explaining how far one could travel or what they could do on Friday because while they believed God would provide, they stressed the importance of one's own responsibility of preparation. This is the case of the following text:

Aviu said in the name of R' Elezar bar Tzadok: One should not walk more than three parsos on a Friday.¹⁵ R. Khanah said: we do not say this except [on traveling] to his home. But he may travel to an inn. More since he is relying on food that he has. But some say R. Khana said: The ruling is not needed unless one is traveling home. R. Khana said. There was such an incident with me (when he traveled). He didn't even eat Casa Deharsena¹⁶ (fish in its own oil with flour).¹⁷

One was not allowed to travel beyond a certain distance before Shabbat because they may find themselves unprepared. The Rabbis are explaining that individuals must consider their own needs on Shabbat. The following text further considers this notion:

¹⁵ A single parsa according to Jastrow is equal to a seventy-two minute walk.

¹⁶ The fish, Casa Deharsena according to Shabbat 118:b is a minimal amount of food required for a Shabbat meal.

¹⁷ Sukkah 44b

Raba said to Rafram b. Papa: Tell me some of the good deed which R. Huna had done. He replied...: On the evening of every Shabbat he would send a messenger to the market and any vegetable left he bought and threw into the river. "Should not he have given them to the poor?" (He worried) They would rely on him and would not trouble to buy for themselves. Why did he not give it to the animals? He believed food fit for humans was not for animals. Then why did he purchase them? This would lead them (the growers) to do wrong in the future (no adequate supply) ¹⁸

This story at first glance is troubling. Why is it considered a good thing that R. Huna destroyed food instead of feeding those who needed it? The Rabbis wanted to stress the importance of thinking about one's own need for sustenance on Shabbat. R. Huna threw away food so as not to make people dependent on him. The reason that he purchased the food was so that the growers would continue to stock the same amount of food. If growers found extra food at the end of the week repeatedly they may have found reason to cut back on supplies. If individuals began to properly prepare for Shabbat when supplies were reduced it may have caused a shortage. So by buying and getting rid of food he not only helped keep the supply up but also perhaps helped to show others why there should be a demand in the first place.

The following text does not believe that one is required or even allowed to borrow for Shabbat:

R. Yochanan said three things in the name of the men of Jerusalem...Treat your Shabbat as a weekday, but do not be dependent on people. ¹⁹

Not being dependent on people means not asking them for financial help to celebrate Shabbat. In other words, Shabbat must be celebrated within one's own means. The understanding is that one must prepare both quickly and cautiously, meaning that they

¹⁸ Ta'anit 20b

¹⁹ Pes. 113a

must consider what they need to save during the week in order to have the finest Shabbat that they can. What one works and struggles for, they will more fully appreciate. It is not acceptable to this text to think ahead and try to have another pay for your Shabbat celebration. This line does not reflect a problem with the community helping individuals. Rather, it puts the onus on the community because an individual can no longer ask for direct help with money for Shabbat, and the community should know and anticipate that.

C) Clothing

Clothing can at its most basic level help one to feel a protection from the elements and give a sense of comfort. The Rabbis' understanding the importance of clothing moved its significance one step beyond that of basic needs. Not only do clothes make the man, so to speak, but also man makes Shabbat. By extending importance to the very clothing on peoples' backs, the Rabbis took a mundane basic need and elevated it to a holy purpose. The following text emphasizes the importance of one bringing honor to the Sabbath day through their clothing:

It says, "Honor it [Shabbat] by not doing your own ways" (Is. 58:13).
"Honor it means that your Shabbat clothes should not be like your
weekday clothes." R. Yochanon called his clothes "My dignifiers."²⁰

The meaning of this text is that clothes bring dignity to the day of Shabbat itself. Shabbat becomes a day and time like no other day, making the ordinary extraordinary. All week one may work in the field in tattered clothes unconcerned about appearance, but on Shabbat, washing and changing already make the day special and unique. The emphasis on clothing is continually addressed by the Rabbis. The following texts help to examine how one could change clothing from mundane to holy even if they had no new garments:

Genesis Rabbah 11:2

וברכו בעט

He blessed it with robing

This section of text is examining the line from Genesis that says, "And God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it." (Gen 2:3) "וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדְּשֵׁהוּ אֹתוֹ"

²⁰ Shabbat 113a

The question that the writers of this text are asking is: with what did God bless Shabbat? They are implying here that God blessed Shabbat by requiring that people wear special clothing to honor the day.

רב הונא אמר צריך להחליף,

R. Huna said: A man must change.

In this first comment R. Huna explains that a person must fully change in order to be appropriately dressed for the day.

ר' חייא בשם ר"י אמר צריך לערב,

R. Hiyya said in the name of R. Yochanon: A man must mix his garments.

In this second comment we are given a more lenient stand. If a person cannot afford to fully change their clothing they must some how wear at least a new piece of clothing. In other words, by adding a new piece of clothing they make the entire outfit new and fulfill their obligation to change for Shabbat.

אבין בר חסדאי אמר צריך לשלשל

Abin b. Hisde said: He must let his coat hang down.

During the workweek, one would tuck in their garment when they worked in the field so as to avoid damage. On Shabbat, one who has no new clothes to change into should at least untuck their clothing so they make the effort to dress in a different way than the profane workweek.

רבי ירמיה ור' זעירא חוון מהלכין כחדא, ואסתלקת גולתיה דר' ירמיה,
ושילשלה רבי זעירא, הדא אמרה צריך לשלשל,

R. Jeremiah and R. Zeira were walking together. R. Jeremiah's cloak being tucked up when R. Zeira pulled it down. This shows one must let their cloak hang down.²¹

What one wore to the Rabbis was tantamount to how a person or with what seriousness a person took Shabbat. This is further reflected in the following text, which has captured Jewish imagination and has become one of the fundamental ideas behind the Kabbalat Shabbat service written by the Kabbalists in the 16th century:

R. Chanina would wrap himself and stand towards evening on Friday and say, "Come let us go out to greet the Sabbath queen." R. Yanni would put on his clothes and say, "come o bride, come o bride."²²

Once the Rabbis in this text are dressed they are truly ready to run out and embrace Shabbat or to bring Shabbat into their own home.

The stress on style and color of clothing became more specific throughout Jewish history. Some groups believed one should wear white clothing on Shabbat because of the connection with white and ritual purity in Jewish tradition. Perhaps the custom of wearing white is actually more practical:

R. Tzadok said: so it was the custom of Rabban Gamliel's household, they would give white clothes to launder three days before Shabbat and colored clothes even on Friday. So we can learn it is harder to launder white clothes than colored clothes.²³

According to this text, if one wanted to wear white clothing, they needed to launder the clothes many days before Shabbat. This was true simply because white clothes may have needed to be washed several times before they were considered ready. Colored clothes on the other hand could be washed much later in the week. It would have been obvious to those living in this world that if one wore white they had been thinking about and

²¹ Gen. Rabbah 11:2

²² Shabbat 119a

preparing for Shabbat all week. Since this is the case, white clothes became even more special than regular clothing for observance of Shabbat.

In the following text the concept of clothing has extended even further in the minds of the Rabbis:

We learned in a Baraita: Chanina said, "you should examine [the pockets] of your garments on Friday evening before it gets dark." R. Yosef remarked this is an important Halacha concerning Shabbat.²⁴

The first issue that should be considered in this text is the Rabbis' consideration of Halachic issues. In other words, the emphasis in this text is on avoiding carrying and breaking Shabbat laws, even if it is as simple as a forgotten object in a pocket. But the other idea behind the text can be taken as some have read that we need to 'check our pockets' in a spiritual sense before we can fully enter Shabbat. Our clothing needs to be treated with a degree of respect and honor to dignify the occasion.

²³ Shabbat 19:1

²⁴ Shabbat 12a

D) Shelter

Shelter is defined as a shield from trauma, something that protects from the elements, danger, etc.²⁵ While certainly the basic feelings of safety and comfort are essential, the Rabbis elevated the importance of shelter making it not just a physical need but a spiritual tool. The Jewish home was transformed by Shabbat, making it a *Mikdash Me'at*, a miniature sanctuary (Ezekiel 11:16). With the destruction of the Temple, the scene of Jewish worship shifted not only to the synagogue but also to the home. It was the Pharisees that made the home a place of religious significance by introducing such ceremonies as candle lighting [to be discussed later in this section].

The Rabbis continued to push the significance of home ritual with almost none as strong as Shabbat. As a result, readying the home before Shabbat became essential to observance of the day. The following Talmudic passage tells the story of a man who didn't fix his own fence on Shabbat:

The Rabbis taught in a Baraita. It happened with a certain pious man, a hole appeared in his fence in the field. He decided to fix it but remembered it was Shabbat. That pious man refrained and did not [fix] fences [on Shabbat]. A miracle was performed for him. A caper tree grew [in the hole] providing his livelihood as well as the livelihoods of the members of his household.²⁶

The fence story also appears in the Jerusalem Talmud in Shabbat 15:3. It is clear that the "pious man" of whom this story is told never considered actually performing the repair of the fence on Shabbat. The story is here to dissuade individuals from even thinking about labor on Shabbat. In other words, we are presented with the question: Is thinking about a

²⁵ Webster's New World Dictionary

²⁶ Shabbat 150b

forbidden activity forbidden on Shabbat? The text of the following addresses the same issues:

From that it is inferred that a man is forbidden to pray for [material] desires on Shabbat. R. Zeira put a question to R. Hiyya b. Abba, he said to him, "What of those who say, 'our shepherd nourish us, sustain us' (Birkat Hamazon) on Shabbat?" He replied, "That is the formula of blessings."²⁷

It is only permitted to pray for physical desires in the context of formulas of prayer that have been written. It is not permitted to ask for physical needs in other cases. The home was central to Shabbat, yet could not really be dealt with in a physical way during celebration. It was this contrast that made preparation of the home a central concern to the Rabbis.

In the following text, after learning that a death sentence had been passed on him,

R. Shimob B. Yochai and his son ran away:

He and his son went and hid in the Beit Midrash. His wife brought him bread and a jug of water and they dined. When the decree became harsher he said to his son, "women are of unstable temperament, she may become tortured and expose us." So they went and hid in a cave. A miracle occurred and a carob tree and a water-well were created for them. They would strip their garments and sit up to their necks in sand. The entire day they studied; for prayer times they robed, covered themselves, prayed and then put off their garments again so they should not wear out. Thus they stayed twelve years in the cave. Then Elijah came and stood at the entrance to the cave and exclaimed, "Who will inform the son of Yohai that the emperor is dead and his decree annulled?"

They emerged, and upon seeing a man plowing and sowing they said, "They forsake life eternal and engage in life temporal." What ever they cast their eyes on was burnt up. Then a voice from heaven cried out, "Have you come to destroy my world? Return to your cave!" They returned and stayed twelve months saying, "The punishment of the wicked in Ghenna is twelve months." A voice came from heaven and said, "come out of your cave." They came out, and wherever R. Eleazar was wounded, R. Simeon healed. He said to him, "My son you and I are all right for the world." On Erev Shabbat, before sunset, they saw an old man holding two bundles of myrtle and running at twilight. "What are these for," they

²⁷ Lev. Rabbah 34:16

asked. He replied, "They are in honor of Shabbat." They relied, "But shouldn't one be enough?" The man relied to them saying, "One is for 'remember' and one is for 'observe'". He said to his son, "See how precious the commandments are to Israel. Their minds were eased!"²⁸

Their minds were eased when they discovered that the people still cared greatly about Shabbat. In this case the old man was carrying bundles to prepare his home for Shabbat and to R. Shimon B. Yochai and his son, this signified that he was preparing to celebrate Shabbat to the fullest extent.

In the following text we again are given a glimpse into the pre-Shabbat rituals:

When R. Judah was about to die he said, "I require my sons." When his sons came he instructed them, "Take care to show respect to your mother." The light shall continue to burn in its usual place, the table set at my place, and the bed is to be made. What is the reason? He used to come home at twilight every Shabbat eve. One Erev Shabbat, a neighbor came to the door speaking loudly when his handmaid whispered, "Be quiet Rabbi is sitting there!" As soon as he heard this he came no more so no reflection was cast onto the righteous ones who could not come.²⁹

In this scenario R. Judah wanted the house to be prepared, as it always had been when he was alive. It became so "normal" that he in fact worried that others who could not come back to such luxurious treatment would be thought of as lesser, so he stopped returning to his own home.

The ritual of candle lighting is also worth considering in this section of shelter, because of the connection between fire and basic comforts, including both warmth and light to see and read by. The lights of Shabbat symbolize much more to the Rabbis than these elements. The kindling of Shabbat lights apparently began as a utilitarian act; the Torah forbids the making of fire once Shabbat has started: "You shall kindle no fire throughout your settlements on the Sabbath day" (Ex. 35:3). By reciting a liturgical

²⁸ Shabbat 33b

²⁹ Ketubot 103a

formula, however, this simple practical act was transformed into a ritual: one of the most emotionally resonant in the entire tradition.³⁰

R. Huna said: Whoever regularly fulfills the mitzvah of kindling [Shabbat] lights will have children who are Torah scholars. Whoever is careful to observe the mitzvah of mezuzah will merit having a beautiful dwelling. Whoever is careful to observe the mitzvah of tzitzit will merit having beautiful garments. Whoever is careful about reciting Kiddush will merit to fill barrels of wine [being very wealthy].

R. Huna regularly passed by R. Avin, the carpenter's house. Noticing that he used to light many Shabbat lights, he commented that two great men will come from his home [He indeed had two great sons: R. Idi b. Avin and R. Chiya B. Avin]. R. Chisda used to pass by the house of R. Shizbi's father, noticing that he used to kindle many lights. He remarked, "a great man will come forth from here." R. Shizbi was born there. R. Yossef's wife was in the habit of kindling Shabbat lights late. So R. Yosef said to her, "We have learned, 'The pillar of cloud did not move away by day, nor the pillar of fire at night'" (Ex. 13:22). This teaches us the pillar of fire arrived before the pillar of cloud departed." She then decided to kindle the lights early. But an old sage told her, "we have learned provided you don't do it too early or too late."

Rava said: Whoever loves the Rabbis will have sons who are Rabbis. Whoever respects the Rabbis will have Rabbis for sons-in-law. Whoever stands in awe of the Rabbis will himself become a Torah scholar; but if he is not suited for this, his words will be like those of a Torah scholar.³¹

This text is clear evidence of the importance of candle lighting in the minds of the Rabbis, since anyone who lit candles would have children who would rise to their level of importance. The importance of candle lighting to the Rabbis goes far beyond the basic human need for shelter and warmth. So why did the Rabbis go to such length to stress the *mitzvah* of lighting candles? For the Rabbis it was about authority and control.³²

³⁰ Eskenazi, 37

³¹ Shabbat 23b

³² Groups such as the Karaites who did not believe in Oral law felt that the command to kindle no fire on Shabbat from Exodus 35:3 naturally extended to deriving benefit from any fire, including fires light before Shabbat. The Sages took an even stronger position in reaction to the Karaites and made the act a mandatory Mitzvah. The Geonim continued the political push and added a mandatory blessing to candle lighting, in order to demonstrate their opposition to the Karaite position.

The vast rewards and punishments associated by the Rabbis to Shabbat had more to do with their control and interpretation of Oral law.³³ Since the Rabbis believed that only the written law was revealed at Sinai they felt interpretation and the writing of Oral law to be essential. They played a creative role in the emergence of oral law. This concept is explained in the following:

The release from vows hovers in the air. They have no [scriptural] support. The laws of Shabbat, of the Chaggigah offerings, and of Meilah are like mountains suspended by a hair for there are few references in Tanakh but many laws.³⁴

The implications go even further, as seen in the following text, wherein Jeremiah laments about the destruction of the Temple:

"My soul despaired of having peace, I have forgotten goodness" (Lam. 3:17). What does, "My soul despaired of having peace" refer to? R. Abahu said: A reference to candle lighting on Shabbat.³⁵

The implication of R. Abahu is that the Temple may have been destroyed because people neglected candle lighting. In other words, that people neglected the Rabbis and the oral law itself. The Rabbis assumed if the people saw a punishment for not lighting candles, they would feel an obligation to never miss lighting them again. Rashi further explains the above text by adding, without oil there can be no Shabbat and without Shabbat no peace.

Shabbat candle lighting is one of three mitzvot that pertain directly to women and show that women have little to no role in the public sphere and that their influence was in the private or home realm. The three mitzvot are: niddah (the laws of the menstruant woman); hallah (burning a tenth part of the dough of the bread as a symbol of the tithe

³³ Jacobson, 3

³⁴ Chaggigah 10a

³⁵ Shabbat 25:2

paid to priests), and the lighting the Shabbat candles.³⁶ All three deal directly with domestic and marital obligations. Niddah regulates the rhythm of sexual relations and is, of course, exclusively female for biological reasons. Hallah symbolizes the woman's role as baker of the bread, and by extension, in charge of the household. The Sabbath candles accent the woman's place in the home where she lights the candles just before Shabbat begins. Abraham Joshua Heschel described the ritual of candle lighting by women in the following manner:

When all work is brought to a stand still, the candles are lit. Just as creation began with the word, "let there be light!" so does the celebration of creation begin with the kindling of the lights. It is the woman who ushers in the joy and sets up the most exquisite symbol, light, to dominate the atmosphere of the home.³⁷

The following text deals directly with woman's obligations and punishments for not fulfilling them:

Women die in childbirth on account of three transgressions: for being careless in observing the laws of Niddah, Challah, and candle-lighting.

"I have called you the first" (Jer. 2:3). I have cautioned you on matters of the first. The soul I have placed in you is called a candle. I have cautioned you concerning matters of candles [The kindling of candles for Shabbat] If you will fulfill the responsibility all is well. If not, I will take back your soul. "The candle of God is Mans soul" (Prov. 20:27).³⁸

According to this text, women are responsible for niddah, hallah, and candle lighting and failure to fulfill the obligations will result in direct punishment from God. The Rabbis stressed that not only would a woman be punished but also a man who did not make sure that these duties were being carried out would be held responsible as well.

Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: Whoever instills excessive fear in his household eventually comes to three transgressions: Illicit relations, bloodshed, and desecration of Shabbat.

³⁶ Biale, 40

³⁷ Heschel, 66

³⁸ Shabbat 32:1

R. Bar Channah said: That which the Rabbis stated (in Mishnah) there are three things a man must say in his home on erev Shabbat before dark. Have you tithed? Have you prepared the Eruv? Light the lamp! [a command and not a question] [a man] needs to say these things calmly so that they will accept these from him.³⁹

The three transgressions that one will commit if they instill fear in their household are considered the most serious infractions. The message is a strong one to men and woman and carries a serious political message. That message is that the Rabbis have determined candle lighting is essential so those who do not listen will be punished in the most serious of ways. This is also a classic example of hyperbole. The Rabbis wanted people to follow certain rules and if they did not there would be consequences.

In the next text, similar to the one above, the Gemara is seeking the scriptural source for the mitzvah of candle lighting:

A person must say three things in his home on erev Shabbat just before dark: Have you tithed? Have you prepared the Eruv? Kindle the Shabbat lights! From where do we know this? Said R. Yehoshua b. Levi: It says, "You will know that all is well with your tent, you will visit your home, and you will not fail." (Job 5:24) Rabba b. R. Huna said: Although the Rabbis said: a person must say three things..., he should say them in a gentle tone of voice, so that his instructions will be accepted. R. Ashi said: although I never heard this statement of Rabbah b. Huna, I have always followed this practice because I thought it the sensible thing to do.⁴⁰

The Rabbis in the above text give very practical advice in home leadership. He should speak these rules in a gentle calm manner so that they are not rejected outright.

The Rabbis believe that the home should emphasize physical warmth and comfort, but they believed strongly that it all should be done through their vision of what a home is and how it operates, in order to be fully prepared for Shabbat.

³⁹ Gittin 7A

⁴⁰ Shabbat 34a

E) Saving a life

Shabbat is the only ritual law mentioned in the Ten Commandments. Its sanctity is so great that most Jews once assumed that they were commanded to die rather than violate it. The Book of Maccabees records a group of pious Jews in revolt against Antiochus around 167 BCE. When the Syrian emperor's troops attacked them on Shabbat, they refused to fight back and were all slaughtered:⁴¹

And they died, with their wives and children and cattle, to the number of a thousand persons. When Mattathias and his friends learned of it, they mourned for them deeply. And each said to his neighbor: "If we all do as our brethren have done and refuse to fight with the gentiles for our lives and our ordinances, they will quickly destroy us from this earth." So they made this decision that day, "Let us fight against every man who comes to attack us on the Sabbath day; let us not all die as our brethren died in their hiding places."⁴²

The redefining of human life as more important than even Shabbat has helped guide Rabbinic thought in these matters. The previous sections of this chapter (food, clothing and shelter) fit neatly into the model of basic human needs. The Rabbis considered safety equally paramount and deserving of careful consideration.

The story from Maccabees, cited below, might very well be the basis for the kind of teaching about what defense is appropriate on Shabbat:

R. Yehudah said in the name of Rav: If foreigners lay siege to a Jewish town it is not permitted to strike out at them or desecrate Shabbat because of them. We have learned a proof of this in a Baraita: If foreigners laid siege, etc. Regarding which case was this statement said? Only when invaders came for money matters, but if they came to take lives, then the people are permitted to strike out against them even on Shabbat. If an enemy attacked a town close to the border [over running the entire town]

⁴¹ Jewish wisdom 85

⁴² 1 Maccabees 2:3-41

then even if they did not come to take lives but only to rob straw, the people are permitted to launch an armed counter attack and desecrate Shabbat in the process.⁴³

While this text clearly shows how seriously the Rabbis took violation of Shabbat, it also shows the very strong clarification of values. When it came to the decision of observance of Shabbat laws or saving a life the Rabbis stated unequivocally that life was to be saved at all costs. If a town could justify that something as basic as their hay was threatened then they could act. The implication is that if in any way they truly felt threatened then they act to save their lives. The Talmud takes the implications of saving a life far beyond the political realm. In each of the three following texts, the Rabbis are exploring a difficult question: How do we know the saving of a life supersedes Shabbat? Yet in each case, the Rabbis find what is the written Torah foundation for breaking Shabbat when a life is threatened.

How do you know the duty of saving a life supersedes the Sabbath? R. Jonathan B. Joseph said: It is written in the Torah, "You shall keep Shabbat for it is holy unto you." (Ex.31:14) This shows that Shabbat is committed to you, not you to Shabbat. R. Simeon B. Menasia said: It is written, "And the children of Israel shall keep Shabbat." (Ex. 31:16) The Torah says, "Desecrate for a man one Shabbat so that he may be able to keep many."⁴⁴

חלל עליו שבת אחת, כדי שישמור שבתות הרבה.

In this previous case the Rabbis justify saving a life on Shabbat and desecrating the day by saying that Shabbat is committed to us, not us to Shabbat. This idea seems to imply that we are going to break many laws and we are going to struggle with our commitment so we might as well break the law to save a life. The last line that recollects the Torah concept of saving a life is the strongest justification in this text. Although you would

⁴³ Eruvin 45a

⁴⁴ Yoma 85b

break one Shabbat, you are helping someone to fulfill many more Shabbats so it is worth it in the larger scheme.

The subsequent text seems to be a stranger justification for breaking Shabbat in order to save a life:

From where do we derive saving a life overrides Shabbat? R. Yishamel spoke and said, if a thief is discovered while tunneling in it is permitted for the owner to kill him. So certainly we override Shabbat if a life is in danger.⁴⁵

If we have to kill a thief, then we have to save one who is trying to follow the law, even if we have to break Shabbat to do so. The explanation continues in this final text:

Certainly saving a life overrides Shabbat. R. Elezar spoke up and said: Now if circumcision, which is one of a person's two-hundred-and-forty-eight limbs overrides Shabbat, certainly the entire body should override Shabbat.⁴⁶

The community has certain obligations, in the minds of the Rabbis. Among those obligations are circumcision and saving a life. We must fulfill certain obligations at all costs at all times even if that means violating Shabbat. It would be unrealistic to think that one could fully devote themselves to a day or time if they felt physically threatened, this safety feature of saving a life any time prevents an obvious excuse for neglecting Shabbat.

⁴⁵ Yoma 85a

The previous sections of this chapter addressed the practical questions of what one needs to do in order to prepare for Shabbat. Food, clothing and shelter are the mundane acts that we must fulfill in order to accomplish preparation for Shabbat. Why though is it so important to spend the day rushing and accomplishing these various tasks? In the cases cited above, Friday has been shifted from the ordinary pattern of the week. Already on Friday morning we are a step closer to Shabbat, and one step out of the 'normal week'. It is considered, after all, a great act within Judaism to, 'get up early', or to rush to perform a Mitzvah. Shabbat preparation has the same exciting tone. We jump out of bed so that we can fulfill all of our obligations of preparing. It is such a special time to the Rabbis, that, they believe the very pace of the day had to be different:

We learned in a Baraita (If two are walking and one is running, one walking and walker injured by runner), Issi B. Yehudah says that the man who was running is liable, because he acted in an unusual way; but Issi agrees that if this happened on Erev Shabbat before sunset the one running would be exempt.⁴⁷

The shift in the criterion for the day is very telling. Here, the usual pattern on Friday was running and one would not be held responsible if they caused an accident. In fact, the runner would be exempt from any liability because of their responsibility to prepare fully for Shabbat. Hurrying became the standard during Shabbat preparation and has been further validated by the Rabbis. Clearly the Rabbis believed that readying brought great significance to the celebration and observance of Shabbat. The focus and rush of the day is a necessary transformative time, allowing, the Rabbis believed, people to fully experience Shabbat.

⁴⁶ Yoma 85b

⁴⁷ Baba Kama 32a-32b

Through the lens of the next text, and others like it, we continue to see how important it is to prepare for Shabbat. Yosef who honors the Sabbath is held up as a model and the theme of preparation is further extended in Shabbat 19a:

...There was once a certain Christian in the neighborhood of Yosef who honors Shabbat, whose possessions were very great. The astrologers⁴⁸ said to him, "all your possessions, Yosef who honors the Sabbath, will consume them" [So,] He went and sold all his possessions and [with the money] he bought a pearl, and placed it in his hat. As he was passing over a river, a gust of wind sent the hat flying and it went into the water. The fish was brought up late in the day [by a fisherman] on Friday. "Who will buy it at this hour?" They said to him [the fisherman] bring Yosef who-honors-the-Sabbath. They brought it to him and he bought it. When he cut it open, he found the pearl. He then sold the pearl for thirteen attics of gold dinnars.

A certain elder [Elijah?] encountered him and said, "he who borrows for Shabbat, Shabbat repays him."⁴⁹

מאן דזיף שבתא - פרעיה שבתא

While there are many issues within the text cited above, the overarching concepts of Shabbat priming are what need to be considered for this study. The final line of this text, in the Hebrew above, explains the quotation. The text wants it to be known that when one invests themselves in the preparation for Shabbat, they are rewarded. The main character of the story is Joseph who-honors-the Sabbath, clearly to be seen as a role model. He is rewarded for purchasing a fish to be used on Shabbat with a large sum of Gold. Although not all who honor Shabbat will receive gold coins, the reward, this text wants the reader to believe, will be from God and will come during Shabbat.

⁴⁸ Dr. Norman J. Cohen in his article, *Structural Analysis OF A Talmudic Story: Joseph-Who-Honors-The Sabbaths*, explains that, "The Rabbis, in acknowledging the power of astrology, were faced with the serious problem of how to harmonize it with their own world view. How was it possible to maintain at one and the same time that astrology can predict the future and the fate of the Jew is determined within the Mitzvah system? It is this crucial issue, I believe, that gave rise to our story of Joseph-who-honors-the Sabbath."

⁴⁹ Shabbat 119a

The Rabbis believe that by investing our time in the mundane simple acts of preparation we will be capable of transcending the normal moments in our lives and perhaps glimpse or taste the holy. We are not capable as human beings, the Rabbis believed, of just being ready for Shabbat it took time to enter into the day:

If circumcision is so precious why was it not given to Adam? [You must do it] What ever was created in the first six days requires further preparation. Mustard needs sweetening...wheat needs grinding, and man to needs to be finished [through the act of circumcision.].⁵⁰

People need to move past their basic human needs so they can attain higher levels.

Various scholars in the field of Psychology explained this theory of needs, perhaps best and most famously by American-born psychologist Abraham H. Maslow (1908-70). He developed a theory of motivation describing the process by which an individual progresses from basic needs such as food and shelter to the highest needs of what he called self-actualization — the fulfillment of one's greatest human potential. His model was called the 'Hierarchy of Needs.' In this paradigm the first four levels of need are:

- 1) Physiological: hunger, thirst, bodily comforts, etc.
- 2) Safety/security: out of danger
- 3) Belonging and Love: affiliate with others, be accepted
- 4) Esteem: to achieve, be competent, gain approval and recognition

If and only if the deficiency needs are met is the individual ready to act upon the growth needs:

- 5) Cognitive: to know, to understand, and explore
- 6) Aesthetic: symmetry, order, and beauty

⁵⁰ Gen. Rabbah 11:6

7) Self-actualization: to find self-fulfillment and realize one's potential

8) Transcendence: to help others find self-fulfillment and realize their potential

Maslow's basic position explains that as one becomes more self-actualized and transcendent, one becomes more wise (develops wisdom) and automatically knows what to do in a wide variety of situations.⁵¹ Maslow's theory has been criticized for the very obvious reason that people do not always appear to behave as the theory would predict. But criticisms aside, Maslow's theory does give us a way of looking at the whole person, whose physical, emotional, and intellectual needs are all interrelated.⁵² It also helps, for this specific study, to help illuminate the basic progression and sequence of man's needs.

It was these steps that the Rabbis seemed to have in mind when they considered our obligations to prepare for Shabbat. The Rabbis though go one step further than Maslow in that they did not understand the higher levels to be self-actualization, the fulfillment of human potential, rather they saw it ultimately as the ability to transcend ourselves and glimpse a greater reality of God. The object of the Rabbis in the texts included in this chapter was to help people prepare all of their physiological needs ahead of time. This was so that all would be able to step for a full day out of an economy of scarcity and into a comfortable world that provided the basic necessities. To get this done was truly a great accomplishment. It is interesting to note that the thirty-nine prohibitions of work on Shabbat found in the Mishnah can be divided into the same categories of food, clothing and shelter. Imbedded in the Halachic system is the realization that basic human needs had to be provided for and then let go of for Shabbat itself so that one could move to a higher spiritual plain. The source for the thirty-nine

⁵¹ -<http://www.valdosta.edu/~whuitt/psy702/regsys/maslow.html>

major categories lies in the Biblical juxtaposition of the laws of the Sabbath with the description of the Tabernacle (Exod. 31:12-17). The fact that Shabbat laws immediately precede the account of the construction suggested to the Rabbis that the term *work* covered all manner of work done in connection with the construction of the Tabernacle (M Shab. 7:2). Robert Goldenberg describes the connection between the laws of work and a basic understanding of human existence in the following paragraph:

The nature of this list therefore cries out for further exploration. On more careful examination, it turns out to contain an early Rabbinic enumeration of the fundamental activities of civilized life. The first portion of the sequence has to do with the preparation of food, using bread as the food par excellence. This part of the list starts with sowing, ends with baking, and identifies nine intermediate activities that are needed for the production of bread. The catalogue proceeds to the preparation of clothing. Starting in the same way with the shearing of the wool and ending with "tearing in order to sew two stitches."... The enumeration concludes with the preparation of shelter, a category that includes the use of fire and the division of the world into units of property....these are the indispensable foundations of civilized life as the early Rabbis understood them. These are also, it turns out, the materials that one must prepare before the Sabbath day sets in, so that the sacred day itself can be devoted to the higher activities which these preparations make possible.⁵³

Since Shabbat is not only about physical rest but, also rejuvenation, it became important for the Rabbis to stress that one needed time to disengage from weekday concerns and to create a physical and spiritual mood for Shabbat. In this text, quoted earlier in the chapter, we read:

רב נחמן בר יצחק מכתף ועייל מכתף ונפיק, אמר: אילו מקלעין לי רבי אמי ורבי
אסי מי לא מכתפנא קמיהו?

R. Nachman bar Yitzchak would lift up and bring in, and lift up and take out. He said, "If R' Ami and R' Assi were to visit me would I not lift up bundles in front of them?"⁵⁴

⁵² Woolfolk, 383

⁵³ Goldenberg, 16

⁵⁴ Shabbat 119a

As one would prepare for a guest, so too does one need to prepare for Shabbat. Since we know when this guest, Shabbat, will arrive we are obligated to ready our homes.

Preparation is the impetus to making Shabbat special. When all of our physical needs are taken care of, we will be able to get much closer to our own spiritual needs. This is why many of these texts do not focus on the restrictions of Shabbat but rather on the joy of preparation. One should be, "energetic and hurry." in order to greet Shabbat. The Rabbis felt that the entire sixth day, Friday, stood under the radiance of Shabbat and as the hours got closer to the actual Shabbat so did the anticipation.

The stress is not simply on being ready for Shabbat but also the process of getting ready. Each person it would seem from the above text is responsible for preparing for Shabbat. It cannot simply be put in the hands of servants but must instead be a shared responsibility. It is clear that each of the people mentioned in the text takes some active role in preparing the food, clothing and shelter for Shabbat. This is also important because the servants must also prepare for their own Shabbat physical needs. Since Shabbat is considered the perfect world, it becomes a day when Jews are supposed to forget their pains and troubles and taste the world to come. We are told in the Talmud, "They felt so strongly about the need for intense preparation time they taught that, Elijah would not come the day before Shabbat (or a Yom Tov) to announce the Messiah because, it would take away from the time set aside for preparation.

(Why is he [Elijah] permitted on Shabbat and Yom Tov?) There it is different. There the verse says, "Behold I will send to you Elijah the prophet..."(Malachi 3:23) And Elijah did not come the previous day. [The day before Shabbat or Yom Tov]⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Eruvin 43b

The Gemara text goes on to examine the question of if even the Messiah may even arrive on the day before Shabbat concluding, "Elijah may not arrive but, the Messiah may arrive. Because as soon as the Messiah arrives, they will all be servants to Israel." Once Shabbat enters, we are told by the Talmud, we are changed people:

R. Simeon ben Lakish said, "On the eve of the Sabbath the holy one, blessed be he, gives each person an extra soul. At the end of Shabbat the extra soul is removed. As it is written, "Shavat Va'yinafash" [Va'ye = woe, Nefesh = soul] on the seventh day God ceased from work and rested.⁵⁶

This change and added soul are made possible only because our basic human needs are put aside for the time of Shabbat. We are, if we have prepared according to the instructions of the Rabbis, no longer concerned with physiological concerns such as food, clothing, shelter, or safety that fill our minds during the ordinary days of the week. Through the rigors of intense preparation for Shabbat, the Rabbis have given us the opportunity to move from the ordinary and enter the extraordinary.

⁵⁶ Betzah 16a

Chapter 2 Spiritual Aspects of Shabbat

The contents of chapter one detailed the physical aspects of preparing for Shabbat. The Rabbis addressed these aspects so that individuals could focus on other concerns. This chapter will focus on Shabbat itself, from the its entrance to its observance. The following text details the last moments before the entrance of Shabbat:

Outline Of Shabbat 35b

תנו רבנן, שש תקיעות תוקעין ערב שבת: ראשונה להבטיל את העם ממלאכה שבשדות,

A1. Our Rabbis taught: Six blasts were sounded on Erev Shabbat. The first, for people to stop work in the fields.

According to this opening section of the text, A1, the shofar blasts before Shabbat entered. The first obligation of the community was to set aside the work of the week, in this case agricultural, and begin the transition to Shabbat. Perhaps those who worked in the field needed more time to prepare themselves for Shabbat so they were signaled first, since we next read of

שניה - להבטיל עיר וחגירות,

A2. The second, for the stores and the city to [stop working.]

In the case of A2 the city and stores needed to stop transactions and close for Shabbat. This seems to indicate a consideration for those who worked in the fields, giving them time to come and buy last minute goods for Shabbat. The process continues with

שלישית - להדליק את הנר,

A3 . The third, for the Shabbat lights to be kindled.

Candle lighting, as discussed in the last chapter, signified the last physical act of the work week. In addition, we read:

דברי רבי נתן. רבי יהודה
הנשיא אומר: שלישית לחלוץ תפילין.

A4. This is the view of R. Natan. R. Judah Hanassi said: The third is for the teffilin to be removed.

According to the Babylonian Talmud the sages, "never walked four cubits without wearing teffilin."⁵⁷ Tefillin were worn during the day, all the time, except on Shabbat. The teffilin serves as a reminder of the biblical notion that we should, "bind them as a sign upon your hand and for frontlets between your eyes."⁵⁸ They helped to serve as a symbol to the wearer of commandments on days with multiple burdens. But Shabbat itself is a symbol of the covenant between God and man, strong enough, the Rabbis believed, to make the wearing of teffilin superfluous.

Perhaps the most important thing to be observed from A3 and A4 is a serious disagreement about what could be done after candle lighting. A3 clearly indicates that candles could be kindled before the last blast of the shofar.

ושוהה כדי צלימת דג קטן, או כדי להדביק פת
בתנור,

A5. Then there was a time as long as necessary in order to bake a fish, or in order to put a loaf in the oven.

The text of A5 is a chance for those who did not prepare for Shabbat meals to bake food for the day. The fire itself could not be made at this point but it was still possible to cook and prepare food. Fish and bread seem to be the most basic of food in the minds of the Rabbis. Bread made a meal complete in the minds of the Rabbis and was a staple of diet.

⁵⁷ Ta'anit 20b

⁵⁸ Duet. 6:8

The abundance of fish in the Babylonian rivers and canals made it a food readily available to all.⁵⁹

תוקע ומריע ותוקע ושובת

A5. And then a Teki'ah, Teru'ah and a Teki'ah were blown. Then, (following the shofar blasts) Shabbat started.

It was only at the last possible moment that Shabbat itself began. But clearly text A1 to A5 show that even the entrance of Shabbat itself was practical and paced so that everyone could fulfill their obligations. What is not clear, however, is exactly what the delay was between blasts. The Rabbis seem to imply that it was a period of transition. This also seems to be a very realistic approach to the entrance of Shabbat. After all, how many individuals could really spend the entire day before Shabbat worrying about preparation? In a world where work was the norm, it was just not realistic to think that one could take time above and beyond Shabbat. Understanding this, the Rabbis instituted a system that seems to come at a later time, where the shofar was used as a warning and allowed people to leave their work and still have enough time to prepare. The following text seems to justify this time when the shofar blasts occurred. The Rabbis wanted to explain how it was that extra time was allowed between the sixth day and Shabbat. The found their rationale in the following text:

ויהי ערב ויהי בקר יום הששי

"And there was evening, and there was morning, the sixth day"
(Gen. 1:31)

אמר רבי יודן זו שעה יתירה שמוסיפין מחול על קדש ובה נגמרה
מלאכת העולם,

R Judan said: this explains the extra hour which we add from the profane to the sacred, and in it the work of the world was finished.

⁵⁹ EJ, 1327

על כן כתיב הששי

(That is why it written with the definite article, we take time from the sixth day)⁶⁰
הששי

In this case they use the definite article to explain that indeed an extra window of time does exist. This helps them to explain the blasts of the shofar and the seemingly delayed start of Shabbat. Later, on the same page of Talmud as the first text in this chapter, a similar outline of the entrance of Shabbat appears but the second time more detail is included:

תנא דבי רבי ישמעאל, שש תקיעות תוקעין ערב שבת:

B1. The school of R. Ishmael taught: Six blasts were sounded on Erev Shabbat.

התחיל לתקוע תקיעה
ראשונה - נמנעו העומדים בשדה מלעדור ומלחרוש ומלעשות כל מלאכה
שבשדות,

B2. When the first blast sounded, those who stood in the fields ceased to hoe, plow, or do any work in the field.

ואין הקרובין רשאים ליכנס עד שיבואו רחוקין ויכנסו כולם כאחד. ועדיין חנויות
פתוחות ותריסין מונחין,

B3. Those who were near (the city) were not permitted to enter it until the more distant ones arrived, so they should all enter (together) as one. Still the shops remained open and the shutters open.

According to B3, the shops remained open after the people entered the city so that, they could still purchase basic provisions if they had been working all day and did not have time to prepare.

⁶⁰ Gen. Rabbah 9:14

Furthermore, it is also important to note that all of the people entered the city as one. While this could have just been a basic concern for security, in terms of letting in people to the city, it seems to be a message that appears in many of these texts that all are equal in the eye of Shabbat. Despite this romanticized notion, it is still apparent that not everyone will be able to participate in Shabbat in the same way, many will not have food, clothing or wine. The concept that everyone embraced Shabbat together is a metaphor that the Rabbis used to try and justify a moment where perhaps despite the differences in amount of material wealth, all people are equal. In some way this rationale must have succeeded because Shabbat was observed by many of the people.

התחיל לתקוע תקיעה שניה - נסתלקו התריסין ונעלו
החנויות, ועדיין חמין מונחין על גבי כירה וקדירות מונחות על גבי כירה.

B4. When the second blast sounded, the shutters were closed and the store shut. Still hot pots sat on the range.

התחיל לתקוע תקיעה שלישית - סילק המסלק, והטמין המטמין, והדליק
המדליק.

B5. When the third blast sounded, what was to be removed was removed, what was to be stored was stored, and the lamp was lit.

ושוהה כדי צליית דג קטן, או כדי להדביק פת בתנור

B6. Then there was a time as long as necessary in order to bake a fish, or in order to put a loaf in the oven.

, ותוקע ומריע ותוקע ושובת

B7. And then a Teki'ah, Teru'ah and a Teki'ah were blown. Then, (following the shofar blasts) Shabbat started.⁶¹

With these blasts of the shofar, Shabbat had officially begun. It was no longer acceptable to be doing work or to be engaged in 'normal' weekday pursuits. Up until this point, the

contents of the aggadic texts have stressed physical responsibilities that one needed to accomplish in order to prepare for Shabbat. Only after all of the preparation is complete can we to understand that, " Shabbat becomes more than a social institution; it becomes a contemplation of nature and its divine creator, a listening to the heartbeat of the cosmos, a devotional exercise and a spiritual experience."⁶² While clearly the Rabbis had many agendas for stressing Shabbat observance it seems highly likely that they did believe it was a chance to focus on something higher, meaning they understood a contemplation of God was one of the possibilities of those who observed Shabbat. It is this notion that was expressed by Abraham Joshua Heschel when he wrote:

He who wants to enter the holiness of the day must first lay down the profanity of clattering commerce, of being yoked to toil. He must go away from the screech of dissonant days, from the nervousness and fury of acquisitiveness and the betrayal in embezzling his own life. He must say farewell to manual work and learn to understand that the world has already been created and will survive without the help of man. Six days a week we wrestle with the world, wringing profit from the earth; on the Sabbath we especially care for the seed of eternity planted in the soul. The world has our hands, but our soul belongs to someone else. Six days a week we seek to dominate the world, on the seventh we try and dominate the self.⁶³

While the role of God and holy concepts cannot be ignored in these Aggadic passages there are also political messages that underlie much of the material. There clearly was a need for the Rabbis to stress the importance of Shabbat observance, the question is, what created this push from the Rabbis? While certainly God and our relationship with God is central in the following texts there are often pragmatic reasons that a concept is presented. In each section as the texts are presented both the spiritual and political aspects will be considered, this after all represents the world of the rabbis.

⁶¹ Shabbat 35b

⁶² Goldberg 340

⁶³ Heschel 13

A) Entering of Spirit/ Gaining of Soul

Shabbat is perhaps the closest that humans come to spiritual inflation, to seeing life as being richer and fuller than during the mundane week. Leo Baeck explained the notion of soul as our human way of relating directly with God:

The optimism of Judaism consists of belief in God, and consequently also a belief in a man, who is able to realize in himself the good which first finds its reality in God...one's soul is created in the image of God and is therefore capable of purity and freedom; the soul is the arena in which reconciliation with God is always possible.⁶⁴

It is Shabbat that brings this possibility of reconciliation to us each week. Both the reconciliation of our soul with ourselves and with God. On Erev Shabbat God gives each person an extra soul, which he takes back at the termination:

דאמר רבי שמעון בן לקיש: נשמה יתירה נותן הקדוש ברוך הוא
באדם ערב שבת, ולמוצאי שבת נוטלין אותה הימנו, שנאמר (שמות
לא) שבת וינפש, כיון ששבת ווי אבדה נפש. עושה אדם תבשיל מערב
יום טוב.

R. Simeon ben Lakish said, "On the eve of the Sabbath the holy one, blessed be he, gives each person an extra soul. At the end of Shabbat the extra soul is removed. As it is written, "Shavat Va'yinafash" (Va'ye= woe, Nefesh=soul) on the seventh day God ceased from work and rested.⁶⁵

This is the Rabbinic way of emphasizing the spirituality of the soul, its closeness in nature to God, and the extra spirituality with which it is imbued on Shabbat. The soul is pure as God is pure.⁶⁶

It is clear that while the Rabbis are concerned with matters of the soul there is more going on in this text. In order to be rewarded with this added soul one must refrain

⁶⁴ Baeck, 87

⁶⁵ Betzah 16a

⁶⁶ EJ, 1165

from work on Shabbat. The reward for Shabbat preparation and celebration is further explained in the following text:

תניא, רבי יוסי בר יהודה אומר: שני מלאכי השרת מלוין לו לאדם בערב שבת מבית הכנסת לביתו, אחד לטוב ואחד רע. וכשבא לביתו ומצא נר דלוק ושלחן ערוך ומטותו מוצעת, מלאך טוב אומר: יהי רצון שתהא לשבת אחרת כך. ומלאך רע עונה אמן בעל כרחו. ואם לאו, מלאך רע אומר: יהי רצון שתהא לשבת אחרת כך, ומלאך טוב עונה אמן בעל כרחו.

It was taught, R. Jose son of R Judah said: two ministering angles accompany man on the eve of Shabbat from the synagogue to his home, one good and one evil. When he arrives home and finds the candles burning, the table set and the bed made, the good angel says, "may it be the same next Shabbat," and the evil angel answers 'amen'. But if not, the evil angel exclaims, "may it be the same next Shabbat," And the good angel answers, 'amen'.^{67 68}

In many ways, the concepts in this text are similar to those expressed with the notion of an added soul. The message is that Shabbat is important so we must do it properly. Whether we are given an added soul or approval of 'the good angel' the importance of Shabbat observance is what the Rabbis are stressing. Those who chose to ignore Shabbat would, the above text explains, suffer consequences for their actions.

It was not just the 'ordinary people' that benefited, even priests could be given an added soul on Shabbat:

(The men of Mishmar fasted four times a week.) On Friday they did not fast out of respect for Shabbat. Reish Lekish said because of the additional soul. For Reish Lekish said: Man is given an added soul Friday, but at the conclusion of Shabbat it is taken from him. As it is said, "He ceased from work and he rested (Shabbat Vayinafash) That is to say once the rest ceased, woe! That soul is gone."⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Shabbat 119b

⁶⁸ It is this Talmud text that eventually become the basis for *Shalom Aleikhem*

⁶⁹ Ta'anit 27b

Furthermore, the message of the above text is about the Rabbinic attitude towards fasting on the Sabbath. Those who refrain from fasting will be rewarded, those who ignore the prohibition and do fast will be punished:

R. Jacob B. Abba gave instructions to scribes, "If a woman should come and ask you, say to her, "on all days it is permitted to fast, except for the Sabbath, festival days, the celebrations of the first day of the new month, the intermediate days of the festivals, Hanukah, and Purim."⁷⁰

The Sabbath was to be a time of rejoicing and fasting would destroy the spirit of the day. The Rabbis prohibited fasting on Shabbat and made rules about it clearly because it was being done. The words of the Rabbis were very strong on the subject:

And R. Elazar related in the name of R. Yose. Ben Zimra: whoever sits [engages in] fasting on the Sabbath, they [the heavenly court] annul on his behalf a decree of seventy years of evil. Nevertheless, [even if he had done good deeds] they return and exact punishment from him for the offense of [neglecting to] delight in Shabbat.⁷¹

The concept of added soul served as a reward for those who celebrated Shabbat by ceasing work and following the rules set by the Rabbis. The punishment is severe for those who choose to ignore the Rabbi's edict on the subject of fasting on Shabbat.

Ahad Ha-am wrote, "More than Israel has kept the Sabbath, it is the Sabbath that has kept Israel." The Rabbis stressed the importance of Shabbat because they realized that Shabbat kept the community together. While the individual stood to benefit from Shabbat celebration equally profound was the influence with which Shabbat exerted on the group life of the Jews. It is no exaggeration to state that Shabbat was to some degree responsible for the development of the synagogue. The rest day of Shabbat allowed time

⁷⁰ Nedarim 8:2

⁷¹ Berachot 31b

for study and group meetings. These weekly Shabbat gathering seem to be one of the roots of the synagogue itself⁷² This is clearly reflected in the writings of Josephus:

He [Moses] appointed the Law to be the most excellent and necessary form of instruction, ordaining, not that it should be heard once for all or twice or on several occasions, but that every week man should desert their occupations and assemble to listen to the law and to obtain a thorough and accurate knowledge of it, a practice which all other legislators seem to have neglected.⁷³

Similarly Philo wrote:

Even now this practice is retained, and the Jews every seventh day occupy themselves with the philosophy of their fathers, dedicating that time to the acquiring of knowledge and the study of the truths of nature. For what are places of prayer throughout the cities but school of prudence and courage and temperance and justice, and also of piety, holiness, and every virtue by which duties to God and men are discerned and rightfully performed.

The concept of added soul became, perhaps, one of the many motivations for people to observe Shabbat. The idea of added soul can be taken literally. After six intense days of labor to take a full day off and spend time with family and friends learning and not working was truly an innovation of the highest order. The soul surely would delight in such a break from the regular grind of work. The Rabbis saw the concepts of holiness and soul as essential in their lives, while they surely had political motivation the spiritual realities cannot be ignored.

⁷² Millgram, 3

⁷³ levine, the ancient synagogue.....Josephus: against Apion 2,185

B) God Sanctified It

God sanctified Shabbat. What do these words mean? In the Torah we read:

וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת-יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדְּשֵׁהוּ אֵתוֹ כִּי בּו שְׁבִת מְכַל-מְלָאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר-בָּרָא
אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת:

And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because on it God ceased from all the work of creation that he had done.⁷⁴

The Hebrew root קדש means, to make sacred or holy; to set apart for a holy or religious use; to consecrate by appropriate rites; to hallow. In the Bible, where the root appears over 850 times, holiness is seen as a positive cultic or moral condition of God, people, things, places and time. It is defined on the one hand as that which is consistent with God and God's character, and on the other as that which is threatened by impurity.⁷⁵ Shabbat is a day that has been set aside by God and is not controlled by human intervention:

The festival of God required the sanctification of the Beit Din but the Sabbath of creation does not require any sanctification of the Beit Din.⁷⁶

This text is based on Leviticus where it is written,

These are My fixed times, the fixed times of the Lord, which you shall proclaim as sacred occasions.⁷⁷

The Beit Din was obligated to establish the seasons and to decide the dates of all festivals and holidays. Yet, they had no control over the timing of Shabbat. Not only is God willing for us to be partners in the sanctification of holidays, He even accepts our declaration when it proves to be in error; and even if the error was deliberately

⁷⁴ Gen. 2:3

⁷⁵ Anchor Bible Dictionary 3:237

⁷⁶ Nedarim 78b

⁷⁷ Lev. 23:4

perpetrated.⁷⁸ Shabbat is truly like no other day since God has sanctified the day and humans are not needed to set the day in motion. It is this notion that leads to the metaphor of Shabbat being a gift from God:

תניא נמי הכי: לדעת כי אני ה' מקדשכם. אמר לו הקדוש ברוך הוא למשה:
מתנה טובה יש לי בבית גוזי ושבת שמה, ואני מבקש ליתנה לישראל - לך
והודיעם.

And this was also taught in a Baraita: Scripture states: To know that I am God and I am Holy. The Holy one, blessed be God, said to Moses: "I Have a wonderful gift in my treasure house, and Sabbath is its name, and I wish to give it to the Jewish people; go and inform them. (Ex. 31:13)⁷⁹

The text reminds us that God is holy and that God has given Shabbat as a gift. The presentation of Shabbat makes it hard to ignore. God, the Rabbis explain, has chosen the people Israel to receive Shabbat it is our obligation then to receive the gift and preserve it. The development of this idea also included the notion that Shabbat should not merely be treated as a commandment but be hailed as a special and unique gift from God. The following text again stresses that God gave us a gift that we must grapple with on our own:

R. Chana son of R. Chanina said: One who gives a gift to a friend need not inform him. As it said, "And Moses did not know that the skin of his face had become luminous." (Ex. 39:29)...I have given Shabbat as a gift...(Ex. 31:13)⁸⁰

Such a text clearly gives credence to the rules and laws that the Rabbis developed about Shabbat. Moses, we are reminded, did not know that the skin of his face had become luminous just as we may not understand that Shabbat is a gift from God. The Rabbis set themselves up as the ones able to fully understand and interpret this gift from God.

⁷⁸ RH 25a

⁷⁹ Shabbat 10b

⁸⁰ Beitzah 16a

The Rabbis continuously build their case that God gave and set Shabbat for the Jewish people to observe. In the case cited below, the Rabbis not only use the example of Shabbat to explain that the day is divine in origin, but also they use it to prove the supremacy of the Rabbinic way of life:

Our Rabbis taught in a Baraita [The term] a practitioner of Ov.⁸¹ Denotes both him who conjures up the dead by means of soothsaying and one who consults a skull. What is the difference between them? The dead conjured up by soothsaying does not ascend naturally [but feet first], nor do the dead ascend on Shabbat. While if consulted by his skull it ascends naturally on Shabbat also. [You say,] it ascends; but whither does the skull not lie before him? But say this: It answers naturally, and on the Sabbath as well.

The text above is proof that the Rabbis saw how strongly people looked towards divination. The Rabbis, particularly the Babylonina Amoriam, lived in an environment which was the classic home of divination, where it was extensively practiced. In the case cited above they explain the success of the diviner not on the practitioner of Ov but, rather that the skull responds on Shabbat, the God given day. In the second half of this text the Gemara brings a related story:

ואף שאלה זו שאל טורנוסרופוס הרשע את רבי עקיבא. אמר לו: ומה יום
מיוחד? אמר לו: ומה גבר מגוברין? - אמר ליה: דמרי צבי. - שבת נמי, דמרי צבי.
- אמר ליה: הכי קאמינא לך, מי יימר דהאידנא שבתא? - אמר לו: נהר סבטין
יוכית, בעל אוב יוכית, קברו של אביו יוכית, שאין מעלה עשן בשבת. אמר לו:
בייזתו, ביישתו, וקיללתו. שואל אוב היינו ודרש אל המתים דורש למתים -

And this question also. The evil Turnus Rufus [A Roman governor of Judea] asked R. Akiva. He said to him [Akiva] "In what way is Shabbat different from other days?" He [Akiva] replied, "In what way is this man [Different then others]?" He said because he [Hadrian] desires it. The Sabbath [is special] because my master desires it. He [Rufus] replied, "this is what I meant to say to you: who says today is Shabbat?" He

⁸¹ The practitioner of Ov is a diviner, one who uses various methods to predict the future. According to the encyclopedia Judaica The Hebrew word Ov is derived from the Hittite a-a-bi, means the pit from which the spirit of the dead raises, or the spirit of the dead which raises from the pit.

[Akiva] said, "The river Sambatyon proves it [it subsides today], a practitioner of Ov proves it [dead will not ascend] and the grave of your father proves it because it will not emit smoke on Shabbat."⁸²

In the above passage Akiva explains to Turnus Rufus that Shabbat is special because God desires that it be special. This story of the justification of Shabbat to a Roman Governor does not really seem to make much sense taken at face value. The Rabbis are using a device to explain why Shabbat has been placed on the day that it has, and why we as a Jewish people observe it. The story seems to have been placed here to further show that Shabbat is beyond human control. This connection with the practitioner of Ov seems to be saying that God is supreme over all of the magic and divination practices that people knew. An alternative version of the same story appears in Genesis Rabbah:

The wicked Turnus Rufus asked R. Akiba: 'In what way is Shabbat different than other days? 'In what way does one man differ from other men?' he replied. 'What did I ask you and what did you answer?' he asked. 'You asked me' he replied, 'Why does Shabbat differ from other days?' And I answered, 'Why does Rufus differ from other men?' 'Because the emperor desired to honor him,' he said. 'Then this day, too the Holy One wished to honor. How can you prove it to me? [That Shabbat was chosen by God?] 'Let the river Sambatyon⁸³ prove it, which carries stones the whole week but allows them to rest on the Sabbath.'⁸⁴

The two versions are similar, the difference seems to be in the details of the Sambatyon river. The concept of God giving Shabbat, as a gift is similar to the notion that God finished the world for people and the resting of God was an example for people and not something that God needed.

R. asked R. Ishmael b. R. Jose: "have you learned from your father the actual meaning of, "And on the seventh day God finished." [God finished

⁸² Sanhedrin 65b

⁸³ The Sabatyon is a legendary river across which part of the ten tribes were exiled by Assyrian king, Shalmaneser, and which rested on Shabbat.

⁸⁴ Gen Rabbah 11:5

work on the sixth day not on the seventh] He said to him. "Like a man striking a hammer, raising it by day bringing it down by night." R. Simeon b. Yohai said: mortal man who does not know his minutes, his time or his hours must add from the profane to the sacred; but the Holy One, blessed be he, who knows his moments, times, and hours can enter it by a hair's breadth.

Genibah and the Rabbis discussed this. Genibah said: this maybe compared to a king who made a bridal chamber, which he plastered, painted and adorned. Now what did the bridal chamber lack? A bride to enter it. Similarly, what did the world still lack? Shabbat! [In other words, with Shabbat the world was truly finished]

The Rabbis said: imagine a king who made a ring; What did it lack? A signet. Similarly, what did the world lack? Shabbat! And this is one of the texts they changed for King Ptolemy, "And he finished on the sixth day and rested on the seventh."⁸⁵

In the above text, we are again reminded by the Rabbis that we as humans need to prepare for Shabbat in a way that God does not have to. This means that we need to prepare by stopping work on the sixth day itself where God's work continued right up until the moment of Shabbat. According to the text, after God's work of creation, something was still missing. God Himself designed Shabbat as the ultimate act of creation.

The above text includes a metaphor of Shabbat as bride. The Rabbis stress the idea that Shabbat is part of our covenant with God. The imagery of bride and marriage speak to notions of partnership and responsibilities. Clearly those who were married had very clear roles and obligations that they were required to fulfill. The Rabbis are using concepts that all the people would be familiar with so that a parallel can be drawn to the importance of Shabbat observance.

The Rabbis wanted people to know that while laws could be created to better observe the day Shabbat itself is beyond human ability:

⁸⁵ Gen. Rabbah 10:9

The words, "Remember the Sabbath day." (Ex. 20:8) and "Safeguard the Sabbath day." (Deu. 5:12) Were proclaimed as a single utterance, something the human mouth cannot utter and the human ear cannot hear.⁸⁶

The Rabbis want us to understand that our observance is still essential in the equation of Shabbat:

The Rabbis taught in a Baraita: Adam was created on Friday. And for what reason? So heretics should not say that he was a partner to the holy one blessed be he in the creation of the world.⁸⁷

In this text, the Rabbis continue the notion that, we are not partners in the creation of the enterprise of Shabbat. Yet in other texts we are given a seemingly contrasting message:

ד"א למה ברכו, ר' ברכיה ורבי דוסתאי ורבי שמואל בר נחמן, רבי דוסתאי אומרים שאין לו בן זוג, חד בשבתא, תרי, תלתא, ארבעתא, חמשא, ערובתא, שבתא לית לה בן זוג, ר' שמואל בר נחמן אמר שאינו נדחה, י"ט נדחה, יו"ה כ" נדחה, שבת אינה נדחית, תני ר"ש בן יוחאי אמרה שבת לפני הקב"ה רבש"ע לכולן יש בן זוג, ולי אין בן זוג, א"ל הקב"ה כנסת ישראל היא בן זוגך, וכיון שעמדו ישראל לפני הר סיני אמר להם הקב"ה זכרו הדבר שאמרת לי שבת כנסת ישראל היא בן זוגך היינו דבור (שמות כ) זכור את יום השבת לקדשו.

Now why did he bless it? R. Berekiah said: Because it has no mate. The first day of the week has the second, the third has the fourth, the fifth the sixth, but Shabbat has no partner. R. Samuel b. Nahman said: because it cannot be postponed. A festival can be postponed, but Shabbat cannot be postponed.

R. Simeon b. Yohai taught: Shabbat pleaded to the holy one, blessed be he, "All have a partner, While I have no partner!" [God responded] "The community of Israel is your partner." God answered. And when they stood before the mountain of Sinai, He said to them, remember what I said to the Sabbath the community of Israel is your partner, "remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." (Ex. 20:8)⁸⁸

The important part of the above text is that to balance the Shabbat experience as both an individual experience and as a communal experience. The people of Israel's loneliness, caused by constant struggles and tribulations, can be overcome by the realization that it is

⁸⁶ Shavuot 20b

⁸⁷ Sanhedrin 38a

mated with Shabbat. In other words, the people through all of their struggles are not alone since Shabbat comes to serve as one of the symbols of the relationship between God and the community of Israel. We are told in Exodus 31:17:

בֵּינִי וּבֵין בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֹת הוּא לְעֹלָם כִּי־שָׁשַׁת יָמִים עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם
וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שָׁבַת וַיִּנָּפֶשׁ:

It shall be a sign for all time between Me and the people of Israel.
For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day
He ceased from work and was refreshed.⁸⁹

It is this concept, that Shabbat serves as a sign that the Rabbis want to remind the people of. The sign is a reminder of the relationship between God and the Jewish people. Again it appears directly as an explanation of the origin of Shabbat:

And let them be for signs: This refers to Shabbat; And for season; to the three pilgrimage festivals; And for days: to the beginning of the months; and years means the sanctification of years.⁹⁰

Shabbat is a day that the Rabbis say and believe is sanctified by God. It is a time that is supposed to bring the community together and remind them of God's gift. Since Shabbat does function as a sign between God and Israel, the desecration of Shabbat is tantamount, in the minds of the Rabbis to an outright denial of God as creator of the universe. It is a day that is supposed to add to and uplift the soul and a time to leave behind what may other wise be a troubled and difficult life. Shabbat is seen as something that may fill a void:

And God blessed the seventh day (Gen. 11:3) The blessing of the lord makes rich. (Prov. 10:22) This refers to Shabbat. As it is written, "And

⁸⁸ Gen. Rabbah 11:8

⁸⁹ Ex: 31:17

⁹⁰ Gen. Rabbah 6:1

God blessed, etc.” “And grief adds nothing” this refers to mourning, as is written, “the King grieves for his sons.” (II Sam. 14:3)⁹¹

It is the blessing of God that makes the day great and reminds the Jewish people that they are truly not alone. The partnership that has been created means that humans have to receive it from God and then fulfill obligations themselves.

Although clearly the Rabbis believed in God and God’s role in the creation of Shabbat, emphasizing that Shabbat is our connection with God helps to raise the level of importance of the interpreters of the tradition, the Rabbis.

⁹¹ Gen Rabbah 11:1

C) Sanctification by people

Shabbat, according to the understanding of the Rabbis, as explored in the previous section, is a sanctified, holy and unique gift from God. This belief is first found in the Torah:

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: וְאַתָּה דַּבֵּר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר אֲדָתְ-שַׁבָּתוֹתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ כִּי אוֹת הוּא בֵּינִי וּבֵינֵיכֶם לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם לָדַעַת כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה מְקַדְּשְׁכֶם: וְשַׁמְרֶתֶם אֶת-הַשַּׁבָּת כִּי קֹדֶשׁ הוּא לָכֶם מִחֻלְלֶיהָ מוֹת יוּמָת כִּי כָל-הָעֹשֶׂה בָּהּ מְלָאכָה וְנִכְרְתָה הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַהִוא מִקֶּרֶב עַמִּיהָ: שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים יַעֲשֶׂה מְלָאכָה וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שַׁבָּת שַׁבְתּוֹן קֹדֶשׁ לַיהוָה כָּל-הָעֹשֶׂה מְלָאכָה בַּיּוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת מוֹת יוּמָת: וְשַׁמְרוּ בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת-הַשַּׁבָּת לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת-הַשַּׁבָּת לְדֹרֹתֶם בְּרִית עוֹלָם: בֵּינִי וּבֵין בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אוֹת הוּא לְעֹלָם כִּי-שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֶת-הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת-הָאָרֶץ וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שַׁבָּת וַיִּנָּפֶשׁ:

And the Lord said to Moses: Speak to the Israelite people and say: nevertheless, you must keep my Sabbaths, For this is a sign between Me and you throughout the ages, that you may know that I the Lord have consecrated you. You shall keep the Sabbath, for it is holy for you. He who profanes it shall be put to death. The Israelite people shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout the ages as a covenant for all time: it shall be a sign for all time between Me and the people of Israel. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He ceased from work and was refreshed.⁹²

More than a gift however it is a responsibility. It is a day sanctified by God for the people and likewise sanctified by the people. The Rabbis understood that while the day was a creation from God, if it was not practiced or maintained by the people the day would disappear. People had to have obligations in order to fully comprehend the privileges of the day and on a broader level the commitment of being a Jew.

But Shabbat is a gift likely to have been revealed. Its reward would not have been revealed (had it not been for Moses)⁹³

⁹² Ex. 31: 12-17

⁹³ Shabbat 10b

In other words, Shabbat may have existed and been created by God but without the human intervention of Moses, Shabbat may not have been observed. It was, after all, Moses who spoke to the Israelite people on behalf of God. In fact, we are taught in the Talmud that there are many forms of gifts. A gift may be conferred on a person without their knowledge, because it is assumed they will get a benefit. But the rule itself says:

A benefit may be conferred on a person in their absence, but an obligation may only be imposed on him in his presence.⁹⁴

It is, in that same way, assumed by the Rabbis that Shabbat is a gift that the people of Israel were present to receive. Therefore, they are responsible for fulfilling the obligations of the day, even the obligations imposed by the Rabbis.

Conceptually, there are two main differences between the two versions of the Decalogue on the topic of Shabbat. The first states:

זָכוֹר אֶת-יְמֵי הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ:

Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.⁹⁵

This idea serves to remind the people of Israel of all that God has given to them including taking them out of the land of Egypt. The Rabbis do not focus on this connection in large measure with Egypt as a justification for Shabbat observance. It is obvious that the Rabbis do not see the paradigm offered by the escape from Egypt as the most relevant one in their lives. They do certainly mention many times the reminder that God gave Shabbat to the people. The Rabbis also use this portion in Exodus to stress the connection with creation. The greater concern of the Rabbis seems to be from the version found in Deuteronomy:

⁹⁴ Gittin 11b

⁹⁵ Ex. 20:8

שְׁמֹר אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקֹדֶשׁוֹ כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ:

Observe the Sabbath day and keep it holy, as the Lord you God commanded you.⁹⁶

Observing Shabbat to the Rabbis means first, following the Shabbat laws that they designed and secondly, observing Shabbat as we are told that God did, by ceasing work. But, the Rabbis do not want Shabbat to give an impression of difficulty. They want people to embrace the day so they emphasized the joy of Shabbat celebration:

אמר רב יהודה אמר רב: כל המענג את השבת נותנין לו משאלות לבו,
שנאמר (תהלים לו) והתענג על ה' ויתן לך משאלות לבך. עונג זה איני יודע
מהו, כשהוא אומר וקראת לשבת ענג, הוי אומר: זה ענג שבת

R. Yehudah said in the name of Rav: Whoever delights in the Sabbath is granted his heart's wishes, as it says, "And take delight in God and God will grant your hearts wishes." (Ps. 37:4) I do not know what is meant by delight? However when it says, "You shall proclaim the Sabbath a delight." (Isaiah 58:3). I would say it refers to delight of Shabbat
R. Chyia bar Abba said: whoever observes Shabbat according to its laws, even if he worships idols, like the generation of Enoch, he is forgiven. As it says, happy is the man who does this, safe guarding Shabbat from desecration. Do not pronounce Mechallo [desecrating it] but rather Machu Lo [It is forgiven him.]⁹⁷

Taking delight in Shabbat for the Rabbis was equal to delighting in and affirming the presence of God as creator. If one observed Shabbat, we are taught by the above text, they will be rewarded in some way even if they have committed other sins. One Shabbat is seen as recognition of a relationship between God and the people Israel.

In this next text we are told that we should have a double portion of bread on the Shabbat table:

R. Abba said: And on Shabbat a person is required to break [bread] over two loaves. What is the reason? Because a double portion is written in

⁹⁶ Deut. 5:12

⁹⁷ Shabbat 118b

the Torah. R. Ashi said: I saw R. Kahana hold two loaves, but he broke one loaf. R. Zeriaha would break for the meal. Ravina said to Rav Ashi: Why this seems gluttonous! R. Ashi replied: since every day he does not do this and today he does it is not voraciousness.⁹⁸

The Rabbis mandate the use of two portions of bread at the Shabbat table by connecting it with the double portion of Manna that the Israelites received in the desert. The connection to oneg though cannot be ignored. Bread was seen as a staple food and to be able to have two loaves on the table showed great rejoicing and certainly not everyone living in an economy of scarcity could afford bread each day, let alone two loaves. As the text explains, "since every day he does not do this and today he does it is not voraciousness." The double portion of bread also helps people celebrate Shabbat in a way that is perhaps unique from the other days of the week.

The first Sabbath meal begins with the recitation of Kiddush over a glass of wine. The term Kiddush means, sanctification; it is a slightly different form of the word used in Genesis 2:3 to describe God's sanctification of the day. Here, the word denotes not a divine act transforming the day but a human act acknowledging divine transformation. The Rabbis placed a great deal of emphasis on the act of Kiddush and human recognition of Shabbat:

Once Rabbi ordained a fast and no rain fell. Then R. Ilfi recited [the prayer], "He caused wind to blow," and wind blew. "He caused rain to fall," and rain fell. Rabbi then asked him, what is your special merit? He replied: I live in a poor remote place where wine for Kiddush and havdallah is unobtainable but, I take trouble to get wine and help others fulfill their duties.⁹⁹

Those who fulfill their obligation of Kiddush are rewarded with special merit. For many people it meant saving just to be able to fulfill the obligation. Practically speaking, some

⁹⁸ Berachot 39b

may not have been able to have wine for Shabbat so those who helped others were also rewarded. In the next text we are again shown examples of the merit of those who say Kiddush with wine:

שאלו תלמידיו את רבי זכאי: במה הארכת ימים? אמר להם: מימי
לא השתנתי מים בתוך ארבע אמות של תפלה, ולא כניתי שם לחבירי, ולא
ביטלתי קידוש היום. אמא זקינה הייתה לי, פעם אחת מכרה כפה שבראשה
והביאה לי קידוש היום. תנא: כשמתה הניחה לו שלש מאות גרבי יין, כשמת הוא
הניח לבניו שלשת אלפים גרבי יין. רב הונא הוה אסר ריחא וקאי קמיה דרב,
אמר ליה: מאי האי? - אמר ליה: לא הוה לי קידושא, ומשכנתיה להמיינאי,
ואתאי ביה קידושא. אמר ליה: יהא רעוא דתיטום בשיראי.

The disciples inquired of R. Zakkai: On account of what have you attained longevity? He said to them: In all of my days, I never urinated within four amot of my [place of] prayer, I never coined or nicknamed for a friend, and I never neglected kiddush on Shabbat.

In the first portion of this text we are told that R. Zakkai attained not only merit but also longevity from his actions, including never neglecting Kiddush for himself and also helping friends to observe Kiddush. The second portion of the text illustrates in stronger terms the emphasis that the Rabbis placed on Kiddush:

[He elaborates] I had an elderly mother. One time she sold the veil on her head and bought me wine for Shabbat Kiddush.

We learn: When [she died] she left him three hundred barrels of wine. When he died he left three thousand for his children. Rav Huna girded himself with a grass belt and stood before Rav. Rav said to him, "What is this?" Huna replied: I do not have wine for kiddush so I gave my belt as collateral and purchased wine. Rav responded: [with a blessing] May it be God's will that you will be covered with silk.¹⁰⁰

In this text, the sacrifice of his elderly mother is evidence of how seriously the Rabbis took the obligation of Kiddush. Leaving barrels of wine became, in many ways, a gift of the highest order.

⁹⁹ Ta'anit 24a

¹⁰⁰ Megilah 27b

It was not only through simple human acts like Kiddush that the Rabbis felt we were obligated to observe Shabbat but also in a sense the imitation of the divine. In other words, how God acted on Shabbat should serve as a model for the day.

Said R. Abbahu, "It is a Sabbath to the Lord..." (Lev. 23:3) Observe Shabbat as does the Lord. Just as the Holy One, blessed be He, observed a Shabbat in regard to speech [By not giving revelation on Shabbat] So, you should observe a Shabbat in regard to speech...

R. Hiyya Bar Bar, "When Simeon b. Yohai would see his mother chattering a great deal he would say to her, 'mother, it is Shabbat!'" ¹⁰¹

The instruction is that we should observe Shabbat as God did. In reality thought the only way we come to know how God acted on Shabbat other than some examples in the Torah itself is the explanations of the Rabbis. The message behind this seems to be that one doesn't act as they would on an ordinary day, God should be central in our minds and actions on Shabbat.

Cessation of work is another way that the Torah and the Rabbis themselves explain that we should act as God. There are drastic penalties in the Bible for those who desecrate Shabbat by working. According to Talmudic law, an individual guilty of such conduct is deprived of many privileges associated with being a member of the Jewish community and in some respects is treated as a non-Jew. In the following case, Elisha Ben Abuyah is one of those cast out by the community:

Acher strayed to bad [elements of] society. He went out and found a prostitute and asked for her. She said to him, "but you are Elisha Ben Abbuah?" [In response] [acher] uprooted a radish on Shabbat, and gave the radish to her." She said, "this must be someone else."
(Hence his name, Acher meaning....another one. ^{102 103}

¹⁰¹ Jerusalem Talmud Shabbat 15:3

His actions in the mind of the Rabbis are reprehensible. It is believed in fact that, while we read, 'Aher' in our text later Geonic literature use the form of "Ahor" (retrograde) explained as his having fallen away from Judaism.¹⁰⁴ The following is an aggadic passage about Elisha Ben Avuyah from the Yerushalmi:

Elisha said, "Once I was passing before the holy of holies riding upon my horse on Yom Kippur which happened to fall upon a Sabbath, and I heard an echo coming out of the holy of Holies saying, 'Repent, children, except for Elisha b. Abuyah for he knew my power and still rebelled against me.'¹⁰⁵

Elisha Ben Avuyah was one of the greatest sages of his day who later renounced Judaism. The texts do not mention any of his teachers and do not quote any of his halachic statements. He seems to be in many ways the archetypal evil character who violated much of Shabbat law. In a similar fashion the following case is of the Mekosheish, the man who gathered sticks, a story of a man who violated Shabbat during the wandering of the people in the desert:

תנו רבנן: מקושש זה צלפחד, וכן הוא אומר (במדבר טו) ויהיו בני ישראל במדבר וימצאו איש וגו' ולהלן הוא אומר (במדבר כז) אבינו מת במדבר, מה להלן צלפחד, אף כאן צלפחד, דברי רבי עקיבא. אמר לו רבי יהודה בן בתירא: עקיבא, בין כך ובין כך אתה עתיד ליתן את הדין. אם כדברך, התורה כיסתו ואתה מגלה אותו ואם לאו - אתה מוציא לעז על אותו צדיק. ואלא, הא גמר גזירה שוה

Our Rabbis taught in a Baraita: The man who gathered sticks on Shabbat was Zelophehad. And so it says, "while the children of Israel were in the desert, they discovered a man gathering sticks on Shabbat." (Num. 15:32): Elsewhere it says, [Zelophehad's daughters said to Moses] "our father died in the desert." (Num. 27:3) [It was derived through a gezarah shava meaning a verbal analogy/syllogism] Just as the verse, "our father died." Refers to Zelophehad, so does the present one [carrying sticks] refers to Zelophehad, so said R. Akiva. R. Yehudah b. Betirah said

¹⁰³ Chagigah 15a

¹⁰⁴ EJ 6:669

¹⁰⁵ Yerushalmi Hagigah 2:1

to him, "Akiva regardless of whether you are right or wrong you will have to give justification for your statement. If you are right you disclosed the name of a person whose identity the Torah shielded; if you are wrong you slandered a righteous man." But [R. Akiva] derived it from a gezarah shava. R. Yehudah b. Beteriah did not learn it from his teachers.¹⁰⁶

In the Torah text itself, the daughters of Zelophehad appear before Moses to ask for the right to inherit their father's land and property. Their father had died leaving no sons. Since property passed through the male line in Israel, if they don't inherit, their father's name will disappear from the land. Their purpose is to perpetuate their father's line within that practice. Nevertheless, their plea breaks new ground and sets a precedent. Moses carries it to God, who agrees with the women and then dictates the laws of inheritance presented in the Torah.

The Rabbis, impressed with the daughters, were curious about Zelophehad himself. Oddly, in the text cited above they conclude that he was a sinner. It seems, that their speculations grow from a description the daughters use. "Our father died in the wilderness," they say. "He was not one of...Korah's faction, which banded together against the Lord, but died for his own sin..."(Num. 27:3). Korah and his followers rebelled against Moses and God, and were punished by having the earth swallow them up (Num. 16). The sisters seem to be saying that their father was not among the rebels or the leaders of the rebellion, but died for other reasons. But what other reasons, the rabbis wanted to know, and what did the women mean when they said he died "for his own sin?" What was that unspecified sin?

¹⁰⁶ Shabbat 96b

Rabbi Akiva in this text declares that Zelophehad's sin was gathering wood on Shabbat. The Torah relates that in the wilderness some Israelites once came upon an unnamed man gathering kindling wood on the Sabbath. Not knowing how to punish him, they turned to Moses. Commanded by God, the community took the man outside the camp and stoned him to death (Numbers 15: 32-36). The gatherer this text believes Zelophehad, and that is why the women spoke of their father as having died in the wilderness "for his own sin."

Not all agreed with Akiva's interpretation. If the Torah kept the wood gatherer's identity a secret, why is Rabbi Akiva presuming to reveal it? And if Zelophehad was not the wood gatherer, Akiva is slandering him unnecessarily.

This also means one cannot have others do the work in their place:

One who pronounces a neder [a vow prohibiting benefit] from those who rest on Shabbat. Is forbidden to [benefit] from Jews or Cutheans.^{107 108}

The case below is one that seems to be less clear than the other two previously cited:

The cow of R. Elazar b. Azariah used to go out [on Shabbat] with a strap between her horns, but this was against the wishes of the sages. [This was the equivalent of carrying] Did R. Elazar b. Azariah have only one cow? [It said, THE cow.] Didn't Rav, others say R. Yehudah in Rav's name say, "The annual tithe of R. Elezar b. Azariah's herd was 12,000 calves?" We learned in a baraita: The cow in question did not belong to R. Elazar b. Azariah, but to a female neighbor of his. But because he did not admonish her it is considered as his cow.¹⁰⁹

R. Elazar b. Azariah, according to the above text broke Shabbat law not by use of his own animal but rather he was held responsible for not admonishing his neighbor. The above

¹⁰⁷ The Cutheans were brought by King Shalmanesser to settle in Eretz Yisrael. Lions caused conversion and many observed the Jewish laws. (II Kings 17:24-41)

¹⁰⁸ Nedarim 31a

text also is motivated by an attempt to save the reputation of R. Elazar b. Azariah while at the same time admonishing him for his actions. This certainly sets up a very tight communal system when others are responsible for making sure that laws of Shabbat are not broken. Perhaps the Rabbis are referring to the notion that one's donkey / ox must rest on Shabbat:

שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲשֶׂה מְעֹשֶׂיךָ וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי תִשָּׁבֵת לִמְעַן יָנוּחַ שׁוֹרְךָ וַחֲמֹרְךָ
וְיִנָּפֵשׁ בֶּן־אֲמֹתֶיךָ וְהַגֵּר:

Six days you shall do your work, but on the seventh day you shall cease from labor, in order that your ox and your ass may rest, and that your bondsman and the stranger may be refreshed.¹¹⁰

Thus you are not allowed to let your animal do any work, including carrying on Shabbat.

Another text also pushes the notion that animals may not work on Shabbat:

In no place is it permitted to sell big cattle etc. What is the reason? Though there is no fear of immoral practice, there is a fear of his making the animal work [on Shabbat]. Then let him make it work; since he has bought it, he owns it! The prohibition is because of lending and hiring. When he borrows it he owns it, or when he hires it he owns it. Then said Rami the son of R. Yeba: the prohibition is because of the probability of trying. For he might happen to sell it to him close to sunset on Erev Shabbat and the heathen might say 'Come let us try it.' And hearing the owners voice it will walk because of him, and he indeed desires it to walk, so that he acts as a driver of his burdened beast on Shabbat and he who drives his animal on Shabbat is liable to bring a sin-offering.¹¹¹

In the passage cited above we are told that on Erev Shabbat a Jew cannot sell his animal.

The reason is that there is a chance that it will be driven before the ownership of the animal is fully of the non-Jew. To avoid the risk the sale at that time is prohibited. There seem to be many factors at work in this text.

¹⁰⁹ Shabbat 54b

¹¹⁰ Ex. 23:12

¹¹¹ Avodah Zerah 15a

The first is really a method of keeping Jews away from non-Jews during and at the start of Shabbat. It is also making a very clear statement that not only are we responsible for our fellow Jews but also if we cause a non-Jew to break Shabbat with our animals it reflects on us as well. The Torah text is clear on what Shabbat is; work stops not only for you but those around you.

The question that is presented in the next text has more to do with intention than actual labor:

The Rabbis taught in a Baraita. It happened with a certain pious man, a hole appeared in his fence in the field. He decided to fix it but remembered it was Shabbat. That pious man refrained and did not [fix] fences [on Shabbat]. A miracle was performed for him. A caper tree grew [in the hole], it provided his livelihood as well as the livelihoods of the members of his household.^{112 113}

The man in the above text is considered pious by the Rabbis because he refrained from working on Shabbat it is an example of another reward story. The text explains that he was rewarded for his lack of action in building on Shabbat. The reward is so vast that it provides livelihood for future generations. The text seems to be making it very clear that the man was rewarded, and called pious, because despite the hole in the fence he had no intention of mending it. It was more a matter of acknowledging the fence was broken.

Miracles are also performed in the following text for one who refrains from working on Shabbat:

The Rabbis taught in a Baraita: There was an incident in which the courtyard of Yosef Ben Simai in Shichin caught fire [during Shabbat]. And the men of the governor of Tzipori came to extinguish it. Because he was the king's treasurer. However, he did not allow them on account of the honor of Shabbat. And a miracle occurred on his behalf and rain

¹¹² This aggadic passage also appears in the Jerusalem Talmud. Shabbat 15:3

¹¹³ Shabbat 150b

fell and put it out. That night, [after Shabbat], he sent two selaim to each member of the garrison and to the lieutenants he sent fifty. When the sages heard the story they said, He did not need to do that." For we learned in the Mishnah a gentile who comes to extinguish they may not say to him. "Extinguish it" nor, "do not extinguish it."¹¹⁴

Putting out a fire is technically prohibited during Shabbat since it is one of the thirty-nine categories of work mentioned in the Mishnah. However, it should be noted that this law was to be violated if lives were in any way in danger. A miracle occurred in this story it seems because Yosef Ben Simai did not extinguish the fire, showing how pious in Shabbat observance he was. The contrast in basic Torah values becomes apparent in this section. How are the Rabbis to handle it when two fundamental beliefs clash? In this story the miracle of rain helped prevent his home from burning down simply because he didn't violate the valued prohibition against working on Shabbat.

Yehuda b. R. Shmuel said in Rav's name: a fire breaks out only in a house where there is desecration of Shabbat. For it says, "For if you do not obey my commandment to sanctify the Sabbath day and to carry in no burdens through the gates of Jerusalem on Shabbat. Then I will set fire to the gates; and it shall consume the palaces of Jerusalem and it shall not be extinguished." (Jer.17:27) What does, "and it shall not be extinguished" mean? Said R. Nachamn b. Yitzchak [fire will happen] When no people will extinguish it [meaning on Shabbat]. Abayye said: The reason Jerusalem was destroyed was because of the sin of desecrating Shabbat for it said, "They have closed their eyes to my Shabbats, and I was desecrated among them." (Ez. 22:26)¹¹⁵

Since fire fighting requires a large number of people, particularly before the invention of modern equipment, when the entire town would have to come and fight the fire, the rule against putting a fire out on Shabbat was not only about an individual breaking the Shabbat rules but rather an entire town. According to the Talmud, one could put out a

¹¹⁴ Shabbat 121a

¹¹⁵ Shabbat 119b

fire not only to save human life but also in order to rescue sacred texts from a fire¹¹⁶, or in order to save provisions for Shabbat itself. While the ruling about not putting a fire out on Shabbat may seem harsh it must be remembered that the Rabbis dealing with a clash of two core concepts. The Rabbis believed fully that they were defending Gods law and felt justified making rulings that may seem questionable to a modern reader. These texts are evidence of the Rabbis mediating between these conflicting values. In this case, as in many, the definition of saving a life that one could use to break Shabbat could be re-interpreted in a number of ways. For example, if one fire threatened a neighbor's life then the fire could be and had to be put out. There are other exceptions to the rules on work that the Rabbis recognized were necessary:

Is talking about [business] forbidden [on Shabbat]? Didn't R. Chisda and R. Hamenuna both say: you are allowed to discuss charity accounts on Shabbat? And R. Elezar said, "you may decide on the amounts of charity to be distributed to the needy on Shabbat." And R. Yaakov b. Idi said in R. Yochanon's name: You may take care of averting life threatening situations and matters of importance to the community on Shabbat." And R. Shmuel b. Nachmani said in R. Yochanon's name, "you may go to theatres, circuses, and civic centers to take care of communal affairs on Shabbat." In the Yeshivah of Maneshe they taught a father is allowed to arrange a match for his daughter and for his son to receive a Torah education and to be taught a trade on Shabbat. Scripture says, "refrain from pursuing [your own affairs] and talking about business." (Is. 58:13) You may not discuss your own business on Shabbat but business of heaven you may [charity/community] you may.¹¹⁷

The full line of the Isaiah text provides scriptural support to the argument that some believed that not only could one not work on Shabbat but, one should avoid even mentioning it:

¹¹⁶ Shabbat 115a

¹¹⁷ Shabbat 150a

אם תִּשְׁכַּח מִשְׁבַּת רְגֵלךָ עֲשׂוֹת חֲפָצֶיךָ בְּיוֹם קֹדֶשׁ וְקִרְאתָ לִשְׁבַּת עֹגֵג לְקֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה
מְכַבֵּד וְכִבְדָתוֹ מֵעֲשׂוֹת דְּרָכֶיךָ מִמַּצּוֹא חֲפָצֶיךָ וְדַבַּר דְּבָרֶיךָ

If you refrain from trampling the Sabbath, from pursuing your affairs on My holy day; if you call the Sabbath "delight," The Lord's holy day "honored"; And if you honor it and go not your ways nor look to your affairs, nor strike bargains.¹¹⁸

The Rabbis again find categories that stand in opposition to the rule that one may not speak about business on Shabbat. If that business pertains to charity or communal affairs for example then there is no problem in discussing it. In other words, the Rabbis didn't want one to spend Shabbat talking about their work, but communal responsibilities became a focus of Shabbat and this was acceptable to the Rabbis. Realistically If there was no community there could be no Shabbat. So well the Rabbis may not have liked this notion they realized thinking about communal affairs was necessary.

The next category of exceptions involves obligations that parents have to their children. In these cases it is specifically the father that is obligated to find a husband for his daughter and to educate his son and see that he also learns a trade or profession. One section of the Talmud, that seems to be a divergent opinion, stresses this obligation to the point where it is written:

Who ever does not teach his son a craft teaches him to become a thief.¹¹⁹

Until the age of six the father must carry out these obligations even if he is of little financial means.¹²⁰ These exceptions are not connected with actual work that would violate Shabbat but, rather the notion that even on Shabbat there are still things in our lives that we are responsible for.

¹¹⁸ Is. 58:13

¹¹⁹ Kiddushin 29a

¹²⁰ Kid. 29b

In this section it is clear that the Rabbis wanted to stress the responsibilities of the people of Israel. Shabbat, clearly a gift from God, was not a passive experience. The Rabbis are pushing on every level that Shabbat is not about what you do but rather, exists because God ordained it. When you participate in the day you are involved in what God says needs to be done as God intended.

D) Redemption/Punishment

The Rabbis used rewards to try and enforce more observance of Shabbat. To those who lead difficult lives filled with back breaking labor the promise of a day of rest and a future of hope was more than enough to inspire Shabbat observance. In the Prophets we read:

אֲשֶׁרִי אֵנוֹשׁ יַעֲשֶׂה-זֹאת וּבֶן-אָדָם יִחְזֹק בָּהּ שֹׁמֵר שַׁבָּת מִחֻלּוֹ וְשֹׁמֵר יְדוֹ
מַעֲשׂוֹת כָּל-רָע:

Happy is the man who does this, the man who holds fast to it: who keeps the Sabbath and does not profane it.¹²¹

It is exactly this happiness that the Rabbis hoped to capture in the hearts of those observing Shabbat.

חמש"ה ושש"ה ועשר"ה סימן]. חמשה אחד מששים, אלו הן: אש, דבש, ושבת, ושינה, וחלום. אש - אחד מששים לגיהנם, דבש - אחד מששים למן, שבת - אחד מששים לעולם הבא, שינה - אחד מששים למיתה, חלום - אחד מששים לנבואה.

Five, six and ten [this is] a mnemonic. Five are a sixtieth part [something else]. These are: Fire, honey, Shabbat, sleep and a dream. Fire is a sixtieth part of Gehinom. Honey is a sixtieth part of the manna. The Shabbat is a sixtieth of the world to come. Sleep is a sixtieth part of death. A dream is a sixtieth part of prophecy.¹²²

Halacha explains that if one part of a forbidden substance mixes with fifty-nine parts of a permitted substance, the entire mixture is becomes forbidden.¹²³ The message of this text seems to reverse this idea and say that a one-sixtieth of something is a taste of the larger. It is then implied that this small fraction of Shabbat being a piece of the world to come is enough to show a very strong connection between the day of Shabbat and the world to

¹²¹ Isaiah 56:2

come. The Rabbis stressed that Shabbat, while seemingly reward in itself, also served to help enter the world to come.

R. Hanina b. Isaac: said: There are three incomplete phenomena: the incomplete experience of death is sleep; an incomplete form of prophecy is the dream; the incomplete form of the next world is the Sabbath. R. Abin added another two: the incomplete form of the heavenly light is the orb of the sun; the incomplete form of the heavenly wisdom in the torah.¹²⁴

The following text shows again the strong connection of Shabbat and the notion that reward will come to those who celebrate the day:

Israel has already been assured that Elijah will not arrive on Erev Shabbat or on Erev Yom Tov. Because of the difficulties [preparation for Shabbat] It was assumed Elijah would not come on that day, the Messiah to will not arrive [on these days] let him be permitted on Erev Shabbat. Elijah will not arrive, the Messiah may arrive. Because as soon as the Messiah arrives they [all of the other] nations will all be servants to Israel.¹²⁵

While the forerunner to the Messiah may not arrive and interrupt preparation for Shabbat the above text explains that it is possible that the Messiah could arrive on Shabbat. Not only could the Messiah arrive on Shabbat but it could actually be the observance of Shabbat that inspires the Messiahs arrival:

R. Levi said, "If Israel would keep a single Sabbath in the proper way, quickly the son of David will come." What is the scriptural basis? "Moses said, "eat it today, for today is a Sabbath to the Lord." (Ex. 16:25) And it says, "for returning and rest you shall be saved." (Is. 30:15) By means of returning and rest you will be saved.¹²⁶

¹²² Berachot 57b

¹²³ Chullin 98a

¹²⁴ Gen Rabbah 17:5

¹²⁵ Eruvin 53b

¹²⁶ Ta'anit 1:1

Through proper observance of the Shabbat laws, as is often the case with proper observance could serve as a factor that would help one enter *olam habah*. In the following text, we are reminded that observance of Shabbat is linked to forgiveness and atonement:

Rav Chisda said in the name of Mar Ukba, "One who prays on the eve of Shabbat and recites the verse, 'And the heaven and the earth were finished.' (Gen. 2.1) receives the blessing of two ministering angels who accompany a person on Shabbat. They place their hands on his head and say to him, "Your sin is taken away, and you have made amends for your transgression." (Isaiah 6:7) It was taught, Rabbi Jose son of R. Judah two angels come home....amen¹²⁷

The message is that one who takes Shabbat seriously will be rewarded even if they have transgressed at other times. This does not atone for all sins but is rather a way for the Rabbis to express directly to the people that there is a reason to observe Shabbat and follow the laws. The concept of reward also meant that there was a way to observe the laws better, to perhaps merit more reward. The following text reflects this notion:

R. Yose also said, "May I share in the reward of those who usher in Shabbat in Tiberias and end Shabbat in Tzipori."^{128 129}

Those in Tiberias and Tzipori refers to those who observed Shabbat in those locations. In low lying Tiberias Shabbat enters at a very early time, while in Tzipori Shabbat ends later than other places. Curiously these are major Rabbinic centers and further show that the Rabbis not only felt that people should follow Shabbat law as defined by the Rabbis but also follow the very example set by the them.

¹²⁷ Shabbat 119b

¹²⁸ Shabbat 118b

¹²⁹ This is the thought of Rashi

The following text explains the belief that it is actually Shabbat that will be one of the factors that serve as the force behind Israel's entrance in to the world to come:

"And when one brings a meal offering." (2:1) R. Isaac commented, "better is a handful of quietness than both the hands full of labor, and it is the desire of the spirit..." R. Hiyya b. Abba said: better is a handful of quietness." Means Shabbat; "Than both the hands full of labor." Refers to the six work days; but that there is the desire of spirit." If it is one's desire to do his work [during the six days of the week] you have proof that this is so, in that Israel are to be redeemed by the merit of Shabbat, as it is said, "Through rest and repose you will be saved." (Is. 30:15)

Those who observe Shabbat by ceasing work and following the laws will benefit directly with the reward of a taste of the world to come. In essence a taste of perfection and of the ideal.

In contrast to these rewards, the Rabbis wanted to stress that those who ignored Shabbat laws would be punished for their actions. Certainly in a world where much was beyond the realm of science people put a great deal of faith into notions of reward and punishment. The following text connects directly with the notion of the importance of preparation for Shabbat there are larger issues being handled by the Rabbis:

R. Isaac said: If rain falls on Erev Shabbat then the years be [full of draught], as in the days of Elijah it is none-the-less a sign of divine anger. [Rain makes preparation for Shabbat more difficult] This is in agreement with the statement of R. abbah b. Shilah who said: The day when rain falls is as hard as a day of judgement. Amemar said: Were it not that humankind must have rain we would pray and have it stop. R. Isaac further said: Sunshine on Shabbat is an act of kindness to the poor. As it is stated, "But unto you that fear my name shall the sun of the righteousness arise with healing in its wings."¹³⁰

Shabbat is a time of judgment in the minds of the Rabbis, those who ignore the day are judged by God in a physical way. The Rabbis try and show that God

¹³⁰ Ta'anit 8b

responds to all that people do so they push the notion of judgment to imply involvement. Rain is a symbol of divine anger and if it occurs on Shabbat it is considered a bad omen. The following text deals very strongly with the notion of reward and punishment:

The Rabbis taught: How many meals is a person required to eat on Shabbat? Three. R. Chisda said: Four. [One Friday night and three during the day] R. Yochanon noted that both the Rabbis and R. Chisda expounded the same verse to substantiate their opinions. "Moses announced: eat it [Manna] today, for today is God's Shabbat. You will not find anything in the field today." (Ex. 16:25) [hayom appears three times] R. Chisda holds the three "todays" refer to three meals that a person must eat on Shabbat, aside from the evening meal. The Rabbis hold that the three, "todays" include the Friday night meal. R. Shimon b. Pazzi said, in the name of R. Yeshoua b. Levi who spoke in the name of Bar Kappora: A person who observes the practice of eating three meals on Shabbat is saved from three calamities: The pains of Moshiach, the suffering of Gehinom, and the war of Gog and Magog [pre-moshiach, described by Zacharia and Ezekiel as time of suffering and dread.] We know that he will be saved from pangs of messiah. Because it says here "yom," in connection with Shabbat. [meaning Ex. 16:25] and it says, "I will send the prophet Elijah to you before the coming of the awesome, fearful day, yom of God." (Malachi 3:23) [Observing three meals protects from the feared day.] He will be shielded from suffering of Gehinom because it says here "yom", and it says, "that yom will be a day of wrath." (Zephaniah 1:15) [He will be saved] From the war of Gog and Magog, because it says here "yom" and it says, "On that yom when Gog sets foot on the soil of Israel." (Ezekiel 38:18)¹³¹

These three quintessential calamities frame for the rabbis a very serious set of consequences for neglecting Shabbat meals. The stress on Shabbat and its observance is one of the main motivational tools that the Rabbis have. In essence they use text and tradition to persuade and further, "sell" their beliefs, values and way of life.

The Rabbis lived in a world where they could safely assume that people believed in God. The focus of their questioning became the specifics of what people believed in

¹³¹ Shabbat 117b/118a

and how they practiced their religion. Were they going to follow the laws and ideas of Judaism and the Rabbis or would they reject the concepts and assimilate. The Rabbis were agents in creating a new form of life. Among the myriad of challenges that they faced it should be remembered that the people have been living with certain ideas and have had a certain way of doing things and now needed to adapt to the Rabbinic style of observance. Recognizing this struggle the Rabbis push reward and punishment in an effort to foster observance of their system and practices.

Chapter 3 How Shabbat Impacts Jewish Life

The aggadic texts about Shabbat contain many messages about why the observance of the day itself is important, how one should prepare for Shabbat and how one should observe all of the laws connected with it. This chapter will focus not on the rituals and practices of Shabbat itself but rather what one does in various situations where there might be a conflict with practice, difficulty in celebrating the day, or a mistake of observance. The Rabbis have made their case that Sabbath observance is essential and hopefully rejuvenating but the question remains: what does one do if a conflict with Shabbat observance arises? The discussion of conflicts will include a study of the life cycle, holiday cycle, and prayer. The study of the texts in this chapter will reveal not only details about Shabbat but also show that there were cases which the Rabbis realized needed to take priority over Shabbat.

The material in this chapter is certainly a shift into the world of halacha. All of the passages in this chapter contain legal arguments and stories and are a typical halachic effort to integrate clashing texts and views. The stories themselves have a narrative quality but are often used to clarify a specific matter of law. Since the law of Shabbat is so cast only a select number of texts are studied in this chapter which focus on the issue of the relative importance of Shabbat.

A) Life cycles on Shabbat

When it came to life cycle events that occurred on Shabbat, the Rabbis realized that conflicts could be life threatening if not dealt with properly. Clearly when the Rabbis decided that something overrode the importance of Shabbat it was something that they took very seriously. As a result, they ruled in favor of leniency when there was a question or a concern about health or safety:

ואמר רב נחמן אמר רבה בר אבוא אמר רב: כל האמור בפרשת תוכחה
עושין לחיה בשבת, שנאמר (יחזקאל טז) ומולדותיך ביום הולדת אותך לא
כרת שרך ובמים לא רחצת למשעי והמלח לא המלחת והחתל לא חתלת.
ומולדותיך ביום הולדת - מכאן שמיילדים את הולד בשבת, לא כרת שרך -
מכאן שחותכין הטבור בשבת, ובמים לא רחצת למשעי - מכאן שרוחצין
הולד בשבת, והמלח לא המלחת - מכאן שמולחין הולד בשבת, והחתל לא
חתלת - מכאן שמלפפין הולד בשבת. הדרן עלך מפנין.

R. Nachman b. Yitzchak said in the name of R. Abba b. Abbuha: All that is mentioned in the chapter of reproof (Ezekiel 16), may be done for a woman on Shabbat who has given birth. For it says in that chapter, "as for your birth, when you were born your navel cord was not cut, and you were not bathed in water to soothe you, you were not rubbed with salt nor swaddled." (Ez. 16:4) "As for your birth, when you were born." From this we gather an infant may be delivered on Shabbat. "Your navel cord was not cut." From this we gather the umbilical cord can be cut on Shabbat. "You were not bathed in water to soothe you." From this we gather a newborn may be weighed on Shabbat. "You were not rubbed with salt." From this we gather a newborn may be salted on Shabbat. (Rashi explains this is to toughen the infants skin.) "Nor swaddled." From this we gather infants may be swaddled on Shabbat.¹³²

Certainly not all of the above texts are addressing issues of life or death. Some of the descriptions above are of more of a practical nature and bring basic comfort to the baby. The Rabbis realized that birth was not something that could be rescheduled and therefore, had to be dealt with in an appropriate and timely manner.

¹³² Shabbat 129b

As strongly as the Rabbis emphasized issues surrounding birth their tone became much stronger around issues surrounding circumcision. They created such a strong push to circumcise because they were forced to by Romans and others living around them who at first forbade the practice and found it problematic. The aggadic passages often represent an attempt to rationalize circumcision for the Jewish world and justify it in a larger context of Greco-Roman and Christian civilization. The nature of the justification itself assumes that there was a great deal of opposition to the practice. In fact, the texts suggest that questions arose about circumcision within the Jewish community itself.

In the Greco-Roman world, a corollary to the ideal of perfection of the body was the view that circumcision was mutilation of the body. The Rabbis countered this notion by expressing the viewpoint that circumcision is a technique to improve a slightly imperfect creation, to remove an insignificant blemish. The following text uses imagery from realms of agriculture and royalty, those certainly familiar to the readers of the day. The Rabbis wrote many times about those who were uncircumcised:

R. Judan said: In the case of the fig, its only defect is in its stalk. Remove it and the blemish ceases. Thus, the Holy One Blessed be He said to Abraham, "your only defect is the foreskin. Remove it and the blemish is canceled. "Walk before me and be perfect." (Gen, 17:1)¹³³

The Rabbis continuously stressed the importance of circumcision, as in the following text:

R. Eleazer ben Azariah says: The foreskin [being uncircumcised] is despicable, for the wicked are shamed with it. As it is written, "for all these nations are uncircumcised"(Jer. 9:26)¹³⁴

¹³³ Gen. Rabbah 46:1

¹³⁴ Mishnah Nedarim 3:11

On the surface these concepts seem much more about the emphasis of circumcision than on the importance of Shabbat. But, it is clear that while the Rabbis saw circumcision as essential and mandatory they did not take the fact that it overrode Shabbat lightly. The majority of discussion in the Talmud about circumcision actually focuses on Shabbat practice itself. No work is permitted on the day unless the eighth day after the birth of a male falls on Shabbat, the child must be circumcised on that day because circumcision overrides Shabbat.¹³⁵

R. Yose says: Great is circumcision for it overrides the strict Sabbath laws.¹³⁶

While the Talmudic rationale is the principle that a positive commandment overrides a negative one (Betza 8b), the reality seems to stress that Circumcision takes precedence over Shabbat only because of the difficulties surrounding:

היה ז' ימים תחת אמו ר' יהושע דסכנין בשם ר' לוי אמר משל למלך שנכנס למדינה וגזר ואמר כל אכסנין שיש כאן לא יראו פני עד שיראו פני המטרונית תחלה כך אמר הקב"ה לא תביאו לפני קרבן עד שתעבור עליו שבת שאין ז' ימים בלא שבת ואין מילה

"It shall stay seven days with its mother, and from the eighth day on it shall be acceptable as an offering by fire to the Lord." (Lev. 22:27) R. Joshua of Siknin in the name of R. Levi said: It is like the case of a king who entered a province and issued a decree, saying, "let no visitors that are here see my face until they have first seen the face of my lady." In the same way the Holy one Blessed be He said, "You shall not bring an offering until the Sabbath day (bride) has passed over it, for there can be no continuous days without a Shabbat nor can there be a circumcision without the passing of Shabbat."¹³⁷

The Rabbis recognized that circumcision and Shabbat would indeed conflict in some way. It is after all, they realized, impossible for eight days to occur without Shabbat. In

¹³⁵ Barth, 162.

¹³⁶ Nedarim 31b

other words, they understood the practical nature of their problem. How could the strict laws about circumcision be practiced if they conflicted with Shabbat? In this case Shabbat gave way to circumcision.

There were, in the minds of the Rabbis, questionable cases of circumcision that may appear on Shabbat, as in the following text:

Raba said: Now that it has been stated that sisters also establish a presumption, a man should not take a wife either from a family of epileptics, or from a family of lepers. This applies, however, only when the fact has been established by the occurrence of three. [a third occurrence] What is the decision? When R. Isaac b. Joseph came he related: such a case was once submitted to R. Johanan in the synagogue of Ma'on on the Day of Atonement which fell on Shabbat. A woman, it happened, had circumcised her child, who died; her second [sister circumcised her child] and he also died, and her third sister appeared before him. He said to her, 'Go and circumcise him.' Abaye said to him: see you have permitted a dangerous and forbidden act.

There is a presumption made in this case based on the obvious reality that two children have already died that the procedure needs to be altered.. Because in two cases the babies died there is obviously a problem and the life of the third baby should not be risked so the third circumcision should not be performed on Shabbat. In other words, if it can be proven that it is a risk for a baby to be circumcised on a specific day, in this case Shabbat, then it must not be done. There were some categories of children and circumcisions though that seemed questionable in the eyes of the Rabbis and caused considerable debate:

They disagreed about one who was born circumcised, and the eighth day whose birth fell on Shabbat. Beit Shammai then maintain: The blood of the covenant must flow; while beit Hillel rule; it is unnecessary.¹³⁸

¹³⁷ Lev. Rabbah 27:10

¹³⁸ Gen. Rabbah 47:12

The Rabbis wonder, is a baby who is born circumcised already perfected?

Certainly there is some attention paid to this issue, but in the end even a child who is born seemingly circumcised has to undergo some procedure in regard to circumcision.

However, it is not necessary, according to Hillel, for it to be done in violation of Shabbat since it is somehow a different category of circumcision and they are able to shift the time.

The Rabbis not only stressed the mitzvah of Circumcision but, by relation, much of the work that was necessary in order to fulfill the mitzvah. The following case raises the question of a threat to the life of the baby in regard to washing a baby on Shabbat following a circumcision:

And it came to pass, on the third day when they were in pain. We have learned that the infant may be bathed. The school of Rabbi taught: you may bathe the circumcision. R. Issi said: You must read, you may bathe the infant. R. Zeira said: R. Assi used to say frequently to me, 'study your Mishnah.' For we learned: You do not withhold oil or hot water from a wound on Shabbat. So if you say, you may bathe the circumcision only, where does the wound of an infant differ from that of an adult? [This is to teach] The wound of a baby is not the same as an adult. R. Eleazar B. Azariah said: you may bathe the infant on the third day after circumcision when it falls on Shabbat. R. Jacob b. Aha said: R. Johanan and R. Jonathan used to exhort midwives frequently, saying to them, 'Whatever you do on weekdays, you must do on Shabbat, when that is the third day. Samuel said: Because there is danger, let us heat water for him on the Sabbath? Or we learned: a man may warm a sheet and put it on his stomach on Shabbat; but one may not take a full bath of hot water and put it on his stomach on Shabbat. R. Joshua b. Levi said: There is no prohibition here, for it is indeed permitted. ¹³⁹

The Rabbis wanted in no way for it to be implied that these lenient rulings could be used to justify the behavior of adults who wanted to violate a Shabbat prohibition. The key line to this text is, 'Whatever you do on weekdays, you must do on Shabbat, when that is

¹³⁹ Gen Rabbah 80:9

the third day.' When a procedure or step of the process of circumcision conflicts with Shabbat it is clear that the procedure itself takes precedence if there is a threat to the life of the baby.

In the following two references the Rabbis directly connect circumcision with both Shabbat and Torah study. In essence these texts show that the outside world found these (Shabbat, circumcision and Torah study) among the problematic issues in Judaism. The Rabbis needed to further justify each in the eyes of the Jewish community itself. In these cases it is as though the Roman references seem to be not a direct conversation with the Roman government or individuals but rather a justification to the Jewish people:

R. Tobi b. Mattenah raised the following objection, "on the 28th [of Adar] came news that the Jews should not abandon the practice of law." For the government [of Rome] has issued a decree that they should not study the Torah, not circumcise their sons, and that they should profane Shabbat. What did R. Judah B. Shammua and his colleagues do? They went and consulted a certain Matron who all the Roman notables used to visit. She said, "Go and make a proclamation [of sorrow] at night. They went and cried at night. "In heavens name, are we not your brothers? Are we not the sons of one father? And are we not the sons of one mother? Why are we different from every nation and tongue that you issue harsh decrees against us? The decrees were annulled and it was declared a feast day.¹⁴⁰

In this text the Roman Matron consulted is similar to the Matrona mentioned approximately thirty times in other Rabbinic Midrashim. Tal Ilan in her article, "Matrona and Rabbi Jose; an alternative interpretation," explains that the use of the Matron concept is often for the Rabbis to justify or explain away problems. In the case above we are told that the Roman Matron suggested the proclamation made at night. It seems to make more sense to explain that it was the Rabbis who wanted the community and individuals to make a proclamation at night and stand by the laws. Information and pleading seems to

¹⁴⁰ Rosh Hashanah 19b/ Ta'anit 18a

be addressed directly towards the people with the Roman Matron, who is an outsider of high social standing, responding to them. This was done to prove to the Jewish world that these practices were not so radical and could even be explained to the Romans. The following text is a similar approach to the issues of Shabbat observance and circumcision:

The government [Romans] once issued a decree that they should be prohibited from Shabbat and circumcision, and that they should [be forced to] have sex with menstruate women. Then, R. Reuben, son of Istrobili, cut his hair in a Roman fashion [Jastrow describes as curls on temples] and went and sat among them. [He asked,] "If a man has an enemy, does he want him to be rich or poor?" They said to him, "Poor." He said to them, "If so, let the Jews do no work on Shabbat so that they grow poor." They said, "He speaks the truth. Let this decree be annulled."¹⁴¹

Again, in the above text we are giving an example of a person who stood up for the Jews. In this case it was a Jew who went undercover, so to speak, in order to allow for the practice of Shabbat and circumcision. Again, this is the method the Jews used to escape the evil decree.

In the following text we move to the subject of the responsibility of a child who was taken captive by gentiles, who was converted. This problem raises for the rabbis a double legal issue. In what way is this child responsible to God to observe the Shabbat laws?:

Rab and Samuel both maintain: Our Mishnah treats a child who was taken captive by gentiles, or a proselyte who became converted in the midst of gentiles. [These cases are similarly] But if one knew and then forgot, he is liable [as a sinner] for every Shabbat.¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ Me'ilah 17a-b

¹⁴² Shabbat 68a

In this text we are told that if one was taken captive and knew that they were Jewish, or knew and then forgot that, they were still responsible for and liable legal/religiously for each Shabbat that they had missed. It is exhortative law, both practical in terms of status and a reason for being careful about Shabbat observance. While this text may not seem on the surface like a practical the aim of the law seems to be keeping the Jewish community connected during times of war. Shabbat is an obligation that is to be kept even during the most challenging moments. The only reason, according to the Rabbis that one should violate Shabbat law was when there was a threat to life and a person had to violate Shabbat. But, they believed that one should make every effort not to ignore Shabbat.

The question does arise though about what one does when it comes to Mitzvot that seemed to be in contrast:

סד"א תיתי מכבוד אב ואם דתניא: יכול יהא כבוד אב ואם דוחה שבת? ת"ל: (ויקרא י"ט) איש אמו ואביו תיראו ואת שבתותי תשמורו, כולכם חייבין בכבודי מאי לאו דאמר ליה שחוט לי בשל לי, וטעמא דכתב רחמנא את שבתותי תשמורו, הא לאו הכי - דחי לא,

It might have been assumed that this should be derived from the precept of honoring your mother and father. Since one might have answered that the honoring of one's mother and father should supersede Shabbat. It was stated, "You shall fear you mother and father and you shall keep my Shabbat." It is the duty of all of you to honor me. Now, is not the case and point one where the parents said to him, 'slaughter for me' or, 'cook for me'; [On Shabbat] what is the reason? [Why the parents must not be obeyed] because the all merciful one has written, 'You shall keep my Sabbaths.' But, had that not been in the case it would have been superseded.¹⁴³

In the list of commandments in Exodus chapter 20 the mitzvah to observe Shabbat appears before the commandment to honor one's mother and father. So, what happens

¹⁴³ Yebamot 5b

when these come into conflict? We are taught by the above text that Shabbat takes precedence. We are to honor our mother and father except at the expense of the other laws.

In the following passages the issue of death during Shabbat is explored. While circumcision, for example, may take precedence over the day death is instead linked directly with Shabbat. This is clearly because the people of the day looked for various omens in the circumstances surrounding an individual's death to tell them perhaps what a person faced when they died or perhaps even more directly to learn something of what their fate would be in the judgment after death:

But it was taught in a Baraita: When Rabbe became ill, R. Chiya entered his presence and found him weeping. He said to him: My master, why do you weep? Behold it has been taught in a baraita: [One] Who dies in the midst of laughter it is a good omen for him, but amidst weeping it is a bad omen for him. If his face is turned upward the omen is good, if it is turned downward the omen is bad. If his face is turned toward the people the omen is good, if towards the wall it is bad. If his face is pale the omen is bad; if flush it is good. He who dies on Erev Shabbat it is a good omen for him; if at the end of Shabbat, it is a bad omen for him. Who dies on the Day of Atonement it is a bad omen for him; at its termination it is good. If he dies of an abdominal disease it is a good omen, because most of the righteous men die from this cause.¹⁴⁴

Dying on Shabbat itself was a sign to the Rabbis of a righteous individual, a person who would be rewarded in the world to come. In the following text King David asks, "can I know when I will die" the answer to his question is that he will die on Shabbat, the day that righteous men die:

אמר דוד לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא: רבונו של עולם, הודיעני ה' קצו אמר לו:
גזרה היא מלפני שאין מודיעין קצו של בשר ודם. ומדת ימי מה היא? - גזרה
היא מלפני שאין מודיעין מדת ימי של אדם. ואדעה מה חדל אני - אמר לו:

¹⁴⁴ Ketubot 103b

בשבת תמות. - אמות באחד בשבת - אמר לו: כבר הגיע מלכות שלמה בנך, ואיך מלכות נוגעת בחברתה אפילו כמלא נימא. - אמות בערב שבת - אמר לו: (ותהלים פד) כי טוב יום בחצריך מאלף. טוב לי יום אחד שאתה יושב ועוסק בתורה מאלף עולות שעתיד שלמה בנך להקריב לפני על גבי המזבח. כל יומא דשבתא הוה יתיב וגריס כולי יומא, ההוא יומא דבעי למיטע נפשיה קם מלאך המות קמיה ולא יכיל ליה, דלא הוה פסק פומיה מגירסא. אמר: מאי אעביד ליה? הוה ליה בושתנא אחורי ביתיה, אתא מלאך המות סליק ובחיש באילני, נפק למיחזי. הוה סליק בדרגא, איפחית דרגא מתותיה, אישתיק ונח נפשיה. שלח שלמה לבי מדרשא: אבא מת ומוטל בחמה, וכלבים של בית אבא רעבים, מה אעשה? שלחו ליה: חתוך נבלה והנח לפני הכלבים, ואבך - הנח עליו ככר או תינוק וטלטלו. ולא יפה אמר שלמה (קהלת ט) כי לכלב חי הוא טוב מן האריה המת!

(King David) [May] I die [instead] on a Sunday? God responded to him, [the time] will have arrived for Solomon, and the reign of one may not encroach another even by the breadth of a hair. [Allow it that] I will die on the preceding Shabbat eve. [God] responded, for a day in your courts is better than a thousand. [Meaning] I prefer a single day on which you study Torah, over the thousand of olah offerings that your son Solomon is destined to offer me on the altar. [David decided to use this information to try and avoid death] Every Shabbat he would sit and study the entire day, [when] the day which his soul was destined to come to rest, the angel of death stood before [David] unable to overcome him, for David didn't [let] his mouth rest from studying: the angel asked? What can I do to him? David had an orchard behind his house/ the angel of death came, ascended, and shook the trees. King David went out to see. He was going up the stairs and a stair caved in under him. He was silent and he died. Solomon sent query to the academy: my father has died and [the body] is resting in the sun [and] the dogs of my father are hungry. What shall I do? They replied: cut up an animal and lay it before the dogs. And your father place a loaf of bread or a young child [on the corpse] and carry it to the shade.^{145 146}

In the above aggadic passage, we are presented with a story about King David trying to trick death from arriving on Shabbat. There seem to be two reasons that David was set to die on Shabbat. One, he was considered righteous and had to die on that day. But also Solomon was set to take the throne on Sunday and David could no longer be living at that

¹⁴⁵ This text is also about muktzeh, things that are forbidden to be moved during Shabbat because it might give an appearance of work. Animal remains can be cut up but human remains need non-muktzeh items in order to be able to be moved.

point. There is a greater message about death and Shabbat in this case. Although the righteous may die on Shabbat once they are dead their bodies are to be protected but yet are not to somehow violate Shabbat. Even in the case of King David the body is only to be protected from sun and dogs so it does not get desecrated but, Shabbat is not violated using any of these above techniques presented by the Rabbis but, it is clear honor and dignity is given to a corpse.

¹⁴⁶ Shabbat 30a/30b

B) Festivals/holiday and calendar concerns

The texts in this section represent a larger group of ideas about conflicts between Shabbat and holiday observances. It is clear how carefully the Rabbis considered the situations and contrasts that could arise. In the first case cited below the question arises about an egg laid on Shabbat. Would it be problematic, the Rabbis wonder, to eat an egg that was laid on Shabbat which was then followed immediately by a festival? The text is then on the surface grappling with the question about whether the egg itself can be eaten or not:

The host of Rav Papa, some say a stranger, who came to Rav Pappa, asking about eggs laid on Shabbat [if they could be eaten during a festival] He [The stranger] came before R. Papa and asked him: What is the law? May I eat them tomorrow? He [R. Papa] answered him go away today and come back tomorrow. For Rav would not place an [Amora] interpreter by his side from Yom Tov to the next day because [he may have been] intoxicated [after the Yom Tov meal]. When he returned [R. Papa] he told him had you not waited I would have erred [been to intoxicated to answer the question properly] and told you that in a dispute between Rav and Yochanon the halacha is of Yochanon. Whereas Rava said: in three cases halacha is according to Rava regardless if he is lenient or strict [this is one of the three so it is forbidden to eat eggs laid on Shabbat]¹⁴⁷

The example of the egg used above is based on the concern that an egg may be laid at any moment including during Shabbat. The text also seems to be about the observance of Shabbat connected with a festival on a much larger level than simply that of whether the egg can be eaten. Take for example the fact that no ruling is issued until after the Festival itself. The message seemingly is that when these problems arise during celebrations they can only be answered after the fact, therefore it must be assumed that

¹⁴⁷ Beitzah 4a/4b

the stricter answer holds true. As Rav Papa comments, "had you not waited I would have erred [been too drunk to answer the question properly]." In other words he would have been celebrating the holiday and not capable of rendering halachic decisions.

The ruling of the above text in fact has to do with a clash of ideas: There could be no serious food preparation on Shabbat but some food preparation for the festival is permitted on Shabbat. So is an egg laid on Shabbat the equivalent to benefiting from work done on Shabbat or is it related to the food that may be used for a festival? Perhaps the message of the text has more to do with the push to not rule on such matters during a festival Shabbat.

The following text focuses on when the festival of Sukkot conflicts with Shabbat. While there are no major conflicts it is clear there are historical concerns, in other words reporting what in fact happened in the Temple. For example the lulav and Etrog are not to be carried on Shabbat. The following text describes all of the blasts of the Shofar that happen on the holiday of Sukkot in conjunction with Shabbat:

A Shabbat evening during Erev Sukkot there were 48 blasts (of the shofar) three for the opening of the gates, three for the upper gates, three for the lower gate, three for the filling of water, three at the side of the later, nine for the morning Tamid offering, nine for mussaf, three to stay the people from work, and three to distinguish between the sacred and the profane.¹⁴⁸

There is a greater question that the Rabbis of the Talmud struggle with that more directly connects Shabbat and the Shofar:

R. Johanan and Reish Lakish were once sitting and puzzling over the following difficulty. They said, "we have learned on the festival day of the New Year which happened to fall on Shabbat, the horn was blown in the Temple but not in the rest of the country. Now if blowing is described in the Torah, let it override Shabbat in the rest of the country, and if this is

¹⁴⁸ Sukkot 53b

not so it should not override Shabbat even in the Temple. While they were sitting and puzzling over the problem, R. Kahana passed by. The said, Our master comes, let us go and ask him. They went and asked him. They asked, and he answered. One verse says, "A sacred occasion commemorated with loud blasts." (Lev. 23:24) and another verse says, "You shall observe it as a day when the horn is sounded." (Numbers 29:1) How can this be? When the festival comes on Shabbat it is, "A sacred occasion commemorated with loud blasts." We recall the act of blowing but we do not blow. R. Simeon Bar Yoahi replied: it overrides the Sabbath in the Temple because there the precise time of the new moon was known, but not in other parts of the country. [Then if time of the new moon is known it should override it] No, for Simeon bar Yochai explained the verse, "You shall observe it as a day when the horn is sounded. You shall present a burnt offering." (Num. 29:1-2) as signifying that it is a day of blowing in the place where the sacrifices are offered. R. Tahlifa the Cesarean said: In connection with all of the offerings it is written, "you shall offer." While in connection with this it says, "And you shall make a burnt offering." The Holy One. Blessed be He, said to Israel, "My children, I will consider it as though this day has been made before me, as though this day I have created you as a new being." So it is written, "For as the new heavens and the new Earth which I shall make shall endure by will, Said the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain." (Is.66:22)¹⁴⁹

In this text, the Rabbis are making every effort to discern where and when the Shofar can be blown when Shabbat becomes a conflict, clearly a halachic matter. They are trying to draw some distinction between the nuances of the texts. In the first they are trying to claim it means you need to remember the horn, this does not necessitate hearing it:

זָכְרוֹן תְּרוּעָה מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ:

"A sacred occasion remembered with loud blasts." (Lev. 23:24)

תַּעֲשֶׂה יוֹם תְּרוּעָה יְהִיָּה לָכֶם

"You shall observe it as a day when the horn is sounded." (Numbers 29:1)

In the end of the above text they seem to rule that sacrifices replace the use of the shofar. In other words, the custom when the Temple stood was to sound the shofar on Shabbat, but only in the Temple area. The early ruling was that if the festive day of New Year fell

¹⁴⁹ Lev. Rabbah 29:12

on a Sabbath, they used to blow the shofar in the Temple. This practice is not extended to the provinces after the destruction of the Temple. Rabban Yohanan ben Zakai ordained that it should be blown [on Sabbath] in every place where there was a Beth Din. Later in Talmudic times even this was stopped.¹⁵⁰

When the Romans destroyed the holy Temple, a feeling of depression and despair overtook the community. After the destruction, Rabban Yochanan Ben Zakai saw before him a broken and shattered nation. He realized that the people desperately needed the concrete expression of the shofar blast to restore their hopes. Therefore, even when there were those who discouraged shofar blowing in Yavneh on Shabbat, R. Yochanan overruled them and insisted on sounding the shofar (Rosh Ha-shana 29b).¹⁵¹ He ruled that where there is a Beit Din the shofar can be blown. This caused a bitter argument. As the central religious authority broke up the Rabbis opposed to blowing the shofar won out. They feared that the shofar blowing would be taken into public space, a prohibited labor. This debate reflects a greater struggle with laws that conflicted with Shabbat. The Rabbis used this reasoning to prohibit using the shofar on Shabbat.

In the following discussion of Tisha B'av there is also a question about how it may be observed if it conflicts with Shabbat.¹⁵² In this instance the answer is clear and is not left for discussion:

דתניא: תשעה באב שחל להיות בשבת,
וכן ערב תשעה באב שחל להיות בשבת - אוכל ושותה כל צרכו, ומעלה על
שולחנו אפילו כסעודת שלמה בשעתו. חל להיות תשעה באב בערב שבת
מביאין לו כביצה ואוכל, כדי שלא יכנס לשבת כשהוא מעונה. תניא, אמר
רבי יהודה: פעם אחת היינו יושבין לפני רבי עקיבא, ותשעה באב שחל להיות
בערב שבת היה, והביאו לו ביצה מגולגלת וגמעה בלא מלח. ולא שהיה תאב

¹⁵⁰ Rosh Hashanah 4, 1

¹⁵¹ Rosh Hashanah 4, 1

¹⁵² It is interesting to note that in 359 CE when the modern calendar was devised Hillel II, and those who designed the calendar made it so Tisha B'av could not occur on a Friday.

Rava said: Let us see...for it was taught in a baraita: Tisha B'av which falls on Shabbat. And so, too, the day before Tisha B'av which falls on Shabbat, one may eat and drink all he needs, and he may bring up to his table even like the banquet of King Solomon of his time (feast of kings I Kings 5:2-3). If Tisha B'av falls on a Friday, we bring him an egg-sized portion of food and he eats so that he should not enter Shabbat while suffering. It was taught in a baraita: R. Yehudah said: One time we were sitting before R. Akiva and it was Tisha B'av, which had fallen on a Friday, and they brought him a lightly roasted egg. And he swallowed it without salt. Not because he was hungry for it but to demonstrate to his students the law.¹⁵³

It is a general rule that no Rabbinic fast days fall on Friday so that people will not enter Shabbat while fasting.¹⁵⁴ The story of R. Akiva illustrates how strongly the Rabbis felt about Shabbat taking priority over Tisha B'av. The joy of the day was not to be neglected. This even meant that fasting up until Shabbat was unacceptable because it would distract from the day.

The ruling from the above text about not fasting on Shabbat has no connection with Yom Kippur, which is the one day that seems to take precedence over Shabbat. In the following text the discussion of kindling candles for Yom Kippur, which falls on Shabbat, comes into question:

A1. R. Yehudah said in the name of Samuel: We do not recite a blessing over a flame except at the termination of Shabbat since [that time] is the beginning of creation.

The meaning of A1 is that, the flame of the Havdalah ceremony is the only flame that is kindled in connection with Shabbat. The idea, as mentioned in chapter one, is the disagreement about lighting candles on Shabbat at all.

¹⁵³ Eruvin 41a

¹⁵⁴ The exception to this rule is the Tenth of Tevet, which may occur on Friday.

A2. A certain elder, some say Rabbah b. Bar Hanah said to him [R. Yehudah] in reply: well so and so said R. Yochanon, Ula was riding along on a donkey and R. Abba was walking on his right and Rabbah b. Bar Hanah on his left. R. Abba said to Ula: Did you indeed say in the name of Rav Yochanon: We do not recite a blessing over light except at the termination of Shabbat, since it was created for the first time? Whereupon Ula replied angrily at Rabbah b. Bar Hanah.

In A2 we are presented with the story of three sages traveling together discussing the flame. It is clear how angry Ula gets when this notion is presented as his teaching that flame can only be used for Havdalah and not for the entrance of Shabbat.

A3. Rabbah b. Bar Hanah answered: I did not cite on this rather on another matter when a Tanna recited a Baraita before R. Yochanon.

In A3 Rabbah Bar bar Channah quickly explains that the issued he raised was not about the flame of Havdalah but rather a question connected with Yom Kippur itself falling on Shabbat.

A4. R. Shimon Ben Eleizar says: When Yom Kippur falls on Shabbat, even in a place where they maintain that we do not light [a lamp], we do light [it] in honor of Shabbat. And R. Yochanon responded after, but the sages forbid it. Said he to him, Let it be this. [I admit this to be right]¹⁵⁵

In A4 we are given a ruling about what a community which does not light candles in this situation is to do so on Shabbat when Yom Kippur occurs. In this case, of Yom Kippur on Shabbat, there is to be no question and the candles are to be kindled.

The Rabbis give priority to the fasting on Yom Kippur over Shabbat. This in fact is one of the only times that a calendar event overrides Shabbat. The Rabbis found justification for this in the fact that the Torah calls Yom Kippur the Sabbath of Sabbaths, so in their eyes it is a quintessential Shabbat when they occur at the same time.

¹⁵⁵ Pesachim 53b

C) Prayer/Communal obligations

In this section the texts deal with issues surrounding Shabbat worship or study. In the first text there is a discussion about what one is to do if they have prayed Ma'ariv too early:

Rav Yirmiyah bar Abba was different, for he was equal to his teacher [Rav]. And this is what he said to Rav, "Have you abstained from work?" Rav replied, "Yes, I have abstained." Rav Yirmiyah Bar Abba did not say, "has master abstained."

And did Rav actually abstain? But Rav Avin said: one time Rabbi prayed [Maariv] and [then] he entered the bath house and exited and taught us our lesson, and it had not yet become dark. Rava said: That was where he entered to steam bathe, and it was before Rabbinic decree.

Is it so? But Abaye permitted Rav Dimi Bar Leivai to sulfurate baskets. That was [since he had done Ma'ariv earlier] in error. And is an error reversible? But Avidan said, "Once the sky thickened with clouds, and people thought to say it was night, so they entered the synagogue and prayed the conclusion of the Sabbath on the Sabbath. Subsequently the clouds dispersed and the sun shone forth. They came to Rebbi and asked [if they needed to repeat Ma'ariv]. He said, once they have prayed they have prayed. A congregation is different, for we don't trouble them. R Chiya Bar Avin said: Rav prayed Ma'ariv of Sabbath on the eve of Shabbat, may one [who does that] recite kiddush after, or may he not?

Come learn- for Rav Nachman said in the name of Shmuel a person may recite Ma'ariv of Shabbat on Shabbat, and he may do Kiddush over wine.¹⁵⁶

The question arises in this text as to whether not only the appropriate time for Ma'ariv but also a larger question is raised. If one erred and began Shabbat too early, are they prohibited from doing work that they are not allowed to do on Shabbat? The following line from the above text suggests that they would be in fact allowed to perform work if they started Shabbat too early:

¹⁵⁶ Berachot 27b

But Abaye permitted Rav Dimi Bar Leivai to sulfurate baskets.
That was (since he had done Ma'ariv earlier) in error.

According to this piece of the text Abaye permitted R. Dimi bar Leivai to do the work of sulfurating baskets after he had technically started Shabbat. While this ruling may stand in this text it is certainly later overturned so that once one technically started Shabbat they are responsible for Shabbat.

One other line stands out from the text above, "A congregation is different, for we don't trouble them." The Rabbis in this case agree that if an individual mistakenly changed the Shabbat times there were specific consequences but if it was an entire community and it was a question of prayer then we do not trouble them to recite another service.

The Rabbis discouraged people from traveling immediately prior to Shabbat to avoid problems of observance. Even so there were questions that arose about those traveling who got lost or who could not identify the day of Shabbat itself:

If someone is traveling in the desert and does not know what day is Shabbat, he should count six days. [From when he realizes he forgot] and observe the seventh day. Chiya b. Rav said: He should observe Shabbat on the first day after he realizes it and then count six days. Regarding what essential point do they disagree? One Rabbi holds that he should follow the order of the world's creation [Shabbat came after six days of labor] the other Rabbi holds it should be done as in the case of Adam [that he was created on the sixth day so his first full day was Shabbat].

An objection is raised: If one is traveling on a road and does not know when Shabbat begins, he must observe one day for six. Surely that means he counts six days and observes one? No, he keeps one day and counts six. If so, 'he must observe one day for six,' he should say, 'he must observe one day and count six'? Moreover, it was taught; if one is traveling on a road or in the wilderness and does not know when it is Shabbat, he must count six and observe one day. This refutation of Hiyya b. Rab is indeed a contradiction.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁷ Shabbat 69b

The basic disagreement is about when and how one should observe Shabbat. Clearly the Rabbis believed Shabbat was at heart a communal experience. At the heart of the above text is the fact that although one may not be with a community on Shabbat they still are under obligation to observe the day. They are to use the model of six days of work followed by Shabbat observance. In other words, a full workweek has to pass between Shabbats. This seems to not only validate the importance of Shabbat in the minds of the Rabbi but also, in a very real sense, the importance of the workweek. Both the days of work and the day of rest are vital in the minds of the Rabbis

In the following text we are presented with the case of Rabbinical students running on Shabbat to hear a lecture:

אמר רבי זירא: מריש כי הוה חזינא להו לרבנן דקא דקא רהטי לפרקא בשבתא,
אמינא קא מחליין רבנן שבתא. כיון דשמענא להא דרבי תנחום אמר רבי יהושע
בן לוי: לעולם ירוץ אדם לדבר הלכה ואפילו בשבת, שנאמר (הושע י"א) אחרי ה'
ילכו כאריה ישאג וגו' - אנא נמי רהיטנא.

R. Zeira said: At first, when I saw the Rabbinic students running to the lecture on Shabbat, I said that they were desecrating Shabbat. But upon hearing that which R. Tanchum said in the name of R. Yehoshua Ben Levi, "A person should always run to hear a matter of Torah law, even on Shabbat." They shall go after God, who will roar like a lion." (Hosea 10:1) I then began to run.¹⁵⁸

While it may seem antithetical to the day to run the Rabbis recognized that those who rushed to hear Torah were those who loved it. It is not that Torah takes precedence over the day but rather that hearing Torah is an integral part of the Shabbat experience. Perhaps, Yehoshua b. Levi is being emphatic and for him hearing Torah is more important than Shabbat restfulness.

¹⁵⁸ Berachot 6b

The Rabbis believed that Shabbat was central and had to be observed. They did realize that conflicts could arise on a practical individual level and even more importantly a conflict could arise between religious acts. This meant in many senses having to prioritize what the Rabbis considered the most important items of observance. In their minds for example circumcision had to take priority over Shabbat as a statement of importance for the act itself. In questionable cases the Rabbis did not allow the Circumcision to be done on Shabbat but, for the normal cases they required that it be done. In this same way the Rabbis recognize Yom Kippur as a day that takes precedence over traditional Shabbat observance. In this same way issues of health and safety became areas where the Rabbis understood that they indeed had to be lenient. It was these realistic answers that allowed Shabbat to survive despite a multitude of challenges.

Conclusion

The aggadic texts contained in this thesis help to create a picture of Rabbinic attitudes towards the day of Shabbat and its observance. The texts themselves seem to fall neatly into three basic categories or areas of concern.

The first theme is a focus on preparation for the observance of Shabbat. The Rabbis understood that the day of Shabbat could not fully be appreciated if basic physical needs were not taken care. In order to solve this problem, they created a push for Shabbat preparation so that people could move past the most basic physical concerns: food, clothing and shelter. In an economy of scarcity, such as the time of the Rabbis, obligating preparation meant that Shabbat had to be considered throughout the week. For example, if certain types and amounts of food were needed for Shabbat observance it meant that people had to sacrifice other meals during the week. For those who were able to prepare a Shabbat meal that was in some way of more quantity or quality than a standard one the result would be an understanding that Shabbat itself was special. It is also true that when a person prepares for something they value it more. It was this special character of Shabbat that the Rabbis furthered when they explained the need for preparation. On a pragmatic level the Rabbis understood if something is important you prepare for it.

A second theme of the aggadic passages reflects a relationship between God and the people of Israel symbolized by Shabbat. The implications of this relationship, as with any relationship, became responsibilities and obligations. The stress of certain ritual practices such as Kiddush and an emphasis on imitation of the divine all seem to be an

effort to foster this relationship between God and the people. The Rabbis understood basic principles of motivation and added components of reward and punishment to further stress the nature of the day. The rewards, for the most part, could be found in the observance of Shabbat itself. For those who lived in a world where work was the center of life a shift to one full day of rest brought great satisfaction and opportunity. It is this sense of completeness that the Rabbis expressed as, the benefit of an 'added soul'. One is rewarded for Shabbat observance when they recognize that God ordained the day and that they are involved in what God says needs to be done as God intended. In this same way, one who ignored Shabbat was not following divine will and would be punished.

The third set of aggadic passages focuses on the realities of conflict that could and would arise in relation to Shabbat observance. What was to be the practice of two Rabbinic ideas that came into conflict? The first principle that seems to set the framework for much of this discussion is the Rabbinic notion that saving a life must take precedence over all else. Clearly this statement displays an understanding of the hierarchy of values, unequivocally they stated that life is the priority. There were other realities though that did not involve threat against life or safety that may not have been so easy to resolve including, issues surrounding basic life cycle events and calendar observances. The Rabbis use the aggadic texts to consider and express basic priorities and concerns. It is for example, clear that circumcision takes precedence over Shabbat. The Rabbis had to mediate when clashes of Torah values appeared.

The aggadic material explored in this thesis offers incredible imagery and stories that express many of the key Rabbinic concepts and beliefs about Shabbat. The passages serve as a push by the Rabbis for Shabbat observance as they determined it. The very

nature of aggadah and halacha is that when a push is being created by the Rabbis they must, at the most basic level, be worried about behavior. Their worries are rooted in the understanding that people already had methods of Shabbat observance. The Rabbis believed changes were necessary for survival and they had to explain and facilitate changes. The shift to home ritual and worship of Shabbat by the Rabbis is clearly one of the factors that has made its survival possible. In larger measure the sense of obligation that the Rabbis repeatedly expressed served to connect the people with Shabbat and by direct connection God. Obligations and responsibilities helped foster the notion that Shabbat was, at its essence, about our relationship with God.

It is difficult for the modern reader not to see in the Rabbinic writings many things which they do not mention explicitly but which, with our sensibilities, we immediately read into their texts. The Rabbis are able to take questions about belief in God out of their writing for the most part because belief in God was assumed. Instead the issues of authority and practice seem to be their focus. For the modern reader questions about God and spirituality are often the first questions that need to be addressed. After much consideration I have come to appreciate the notion that spirituality is the result of our relationship with God and sacred text. Too often in recent years we have focused on spirituality and forgotten about the place of God in this process. By not subjecting these aggadic texts to our need for spirituality we let them speak from another time and place. Through this exercise of freeing the text we stand to bring meaning to our own Shabbat observance and perhaps push our notions of theology. The study of the aggadic material on its own terms gives a window to Rabbinic notions of Shabbat observance and perhaps a way in which to enter our own Shabbat practice.

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