

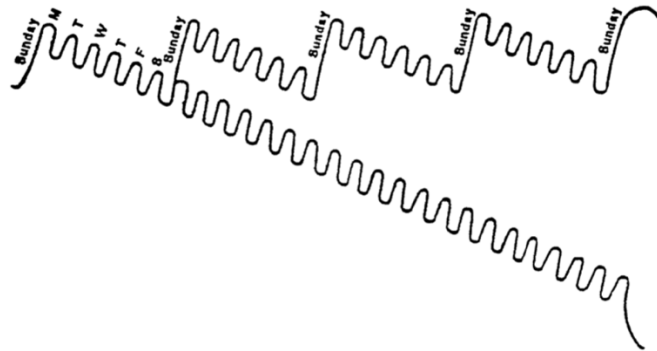
Work, Rest, Recreation, and the Changing Meaning of Shabbat

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I. Introduction

1. Diagram in *Sabbath Essays* (1880). New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations. (From Alexis McCrossen, *Holy Day, Holiday: The American Sunday*)

The Natural Law of the Weekly Rest-Day



“Beginning on Monday morning, each downward stroke to E (Evening) marks the daily expenditure of energy, and the upward stroke the nightly recovery, which does not rise quite to the height of the previous morning; so that there is a gradual decline during the week, which only the prolonged rest of Sunday repairs.

II. Rest Against the Machines

2. Exodus 20:8–10

(7) Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. (8) Six days you shall labor and do all your work; (9) but the seventh day is a sabbath for Hashem your God. Do not do any manner of work, neither you nor your son, daughter, male servant, female servant, animal, nor the stranger in your gates.

(ח) זָכוֹר אֶת-יּוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ: (ט) שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲבֹד וְעָשִׂיתָ כָּל-מְלַאכְתְּךָ: (י) וַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שַׁבָּת לִיקְנוֹת אֱלֹהֶיךָ לֹא-תַעֲשֶׂה כָּל-מְלָאכָה אַתָּה וּבְנֶה-וּבִתְךָ עֹבְדֶיךָ וְאִמְתְּךָ וּבְהֵמָתְךָ וְגֵרְךָ אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ:

3. Amos 8:5

Listen to this, you who devour the needy, annihilating the poor of the land, saying, “If only the new moon were over, so that we could sell grain; the sabbath, so that we could offer wheat for sale, using an ephah that is too small, and a shekel that is too big, tilting a dishonest scale, and selling grain refuse as grain! We will buy the poor for silver, the needy for a pair of sandals.”

שמעו זאת השאפים אביון ולשבית ענוי- [עניי] ארץ: לאמר מתי יעבר החדש ונשבירה שבר והשבת ונפתחה בר להקטין איפה ולהגדיל שקל ולעית מאזני מרמה: לקנות בכסף דלים ואביון בעבור נעלים ומפל בר נשביר:

4. Mishnah Shabbat 7:1–2

They stated a major principle of Shabbat: anyone who forgets the essence of Shabbat and performs many violations on many Shabbatot—is only responsible for one sin-offering. One who knows the essence of Shabbat and does many forbidden activities on many Shabbatot—is responsible [to bring a sacrifice] for each Shabbat. **One who knows that it is Shabbat and does many forbidden activities on many Shabbatot, is responsible for every category of activity. One who does many forbidden activities that are within one variety of activity—is only responsible for one sin-offering.**

The categories of activity are forty less one: sowing, plowing, reaping, binding sheaves, threshing, winnowing, selecting, grinding, sifting, kneading, baking, shearing wool, bleaching, hackling, dyeing, spinning, weaving, the making of two loops, weaving two threads, dividing two threads, tying and untying, sewing two stitches, tearing in order to sew two stitches, capturing a deer, slaughtering, or flaying, or salting it, curing its hide, scraping it [of its hair], cutting it up, writing two letters, erasing in order to write two letters [over the erasure], building, tearing down, extinguishing, kindling, striking with a hammer, [and] carrying out from one domain to another, These are the forty categories of activity less one.

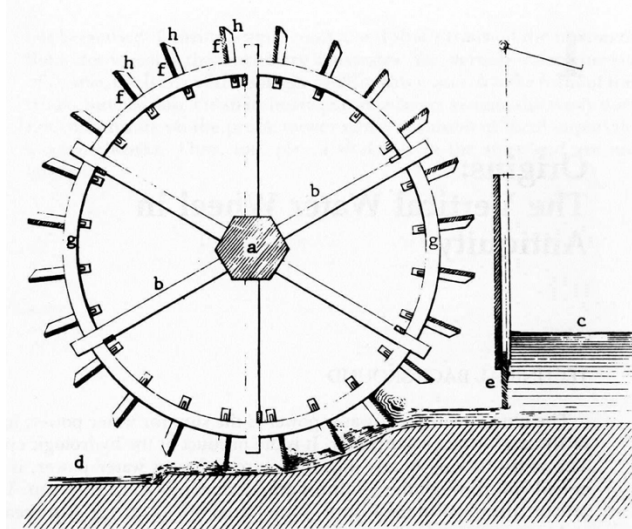
כלל גדול אמרו בשבת. כל השוכח עקר שבת ועשה מלאכות הרבה בשבתות הרבה, אינו חייב אלא חטאת אחת. היודע עקר שבת ועשה מלאכות הרבה בשבתות הרבה, חייב על כל שבת ושבת. היודע שהוא שבת ועשה מלאכות הרבה בשבתות הרבה, חייב על כל אב מלאכה ומלאכה. העושה מלאכות הרבה מעין מלאכה אחת, אינו חייב אלא חטאת אחת:

אבות מלאכות ארבעים חסר אחת. הזרע. והחורש. והקוצר. והמעמר. הדש. והזרה. הבורר. הטוחן. והמרקד. והלש. והאופה. הגוזז את הצמר. המלכנו. והמנפצו. והצובעו. והטווה. והמסד. והעושה שני כתי גירין. והאורג שני חוטין. והפוצע שני חוטין. הקושר. והמתיר. והתופר שתי תפירות. הקורע על מנת לתפר שתי תפירות. הצד צבי. השוחטו. והמפשיטו. המולחו, והמעבד את עורו. והמוחקו. והמתכו. הכותב שתי אותיות. והמוחק על מנת לכתב שתי אותיות. הבונה. והסותר. המכה. והמבעיר. המכה בפטיש. המוציא מרשות לרשות. הרי אלו אבות מלאכות ארבעים חסר אחת:

5. Al-Maqdisī (10th century, Palestine?), *Kitāb al-bad' wa-l-ta'riḥ*

These are the 39 varieties of work. Anyone who performs one of them on the Sabbath or on the night of the Sabbath is deserving of death: Plowing the earth, Sowing the earth, Harvesting crops, Channeling water to crops, Churning butter, Milking, Chopping wood, Lighting a fire, Kneading dough, Baking bread, Sewing garments, Weaving a thread, Writing two letters, Capturing game, Slaughtering animals, Leaving the village, Conveying [an object] from place to place, Selling, Buying, Beating [a garment for the purpose of whitening], Grinding [wheat, etc.], Collecting firewood, Cutting cheese [=making cheese?], Pounding meat [for the purpose of the skin?], Fixing a sandal when it breaks, Mixing animal feed.

6. Terry S. Reynolds, *Stronger Than a Hundred Men*, p. 10



7. Tosefta (Lieberman ed.) Shabbat 1:23

One may aim water towards a garden, which will go and water [the garden], on Friday when it is almost dark. One may put a collyrium salve on the eye or a healing compress on a wound on Friday when it is almost dark, even though they will provide healing continuously throughout Shabbat. One may put sulphur beneath [silver] vessels on Friday when it is almost dark, even though they will darken through sulphuring on Shabbat. One may put perfume upon coals on Friday when it is almost dark. But one may not put wheat in a water mill unless it is for the purpose of grinding [that will be completed before Shabbat begins].

פּוֹתְקִין מִיָּם לַגֶּנֶה בְּעֶרְבַּ שַׁבָּת עִם חֲשִׁיכָה וְהִיא שׁוֹתָה וְהוֹלֶכֶת בְּשַׁבָּת נוֹתְנִין קִילוֹר לַעֵין וְאֶסְפְּלִינִית לַמָּכָה בְּעֶרְבַּ שַׁבָּת עִם חֲשִׁיכָה וְהֵן מֵתְרַפִּין וְהוֹלְכִין כֹּל הַשַּׁבָּת כֹּלֵה נוֹתְנִין גַּפְרִית תַּחַת הַכְּלִים בְּעֶרְבַּ שַׁבָּת עִם חֲשִׁיכָה וְהֵן מֵתְגַפְּרִין וְהוֹלְכִין בְּשַׁבָּת נוֹתְנִין מִגְּמֵר עַל גְּבֵי גַחְלִים בְּעֶרְבַּ שַׁבָּת עִם חֲשִׁיכָה וְאֵין נוֹתְנִין חֲטִיִּם לַרְחִים שֶׁל מִיָּם אֵלָּא כַּדִּי שִׁיטְחוּ

8. Babylonian Talmud Shabbat 18a

Why? Rabbah said: because it makes noise. Rav Yosef to said to him: why not say it's because of [the principle of] "the resting of utensils?" For it was taught: "And observe *everything* that I have instructed you to do" (Ex 23:13)—this is to include "the resting of utensils." Rather, Rav Yosef said: because of "the resting of utensils."...Which Tanna says that "the resting of utensils" is a Biblical precept? It is Beit Shammai, not Beit Hillel. According to Beit Shammai, [the use of utensils on Shabbat] is forbidden, whether the utensil is actively working or not. According to Beit Hillel, it is permitted [to use utensils], even if they perform an action.

מאי טעמא? - אמר רבה: מפני שמשמעת קול. אמר ליה רב יוסף: ולימא מר משום שביתת כלים! דתניא: ובכל אשר אמרתי אליכם תשמרו - לרבות שביתת כלים. אלא אמר רב יוסף: משום שביתת כלים...מאן תנא שביתת כלים דאורייתא - בית שמאי היא ולא בית הלל. לבית שמאי, בין דקעביד מעשה בין דלא קעביד מעשה - אסור. לבית הלל, אף על גב דקעביד מעשה - שרי.

III. What Should Happen on Shabbat?

9. Terumat Hadeshen (R' Israel Isserlein, d. 1390, Germany), §61

...דאסור להרבות בשיחה בטילה בשבת כדמוכח בעובדא דאימא דרשב"י. כדאיתא בויק"ר דהוי לר"ש אימא סיבתא, דהוי משתעי סגי, א"ל אימא שבתא הוא ושתקה, משמע דאין כ"כ לדבר בשבת כמו בחול, ובירושלמי אמרינן דבדוחק וטורח התירו בשאלות שלום בשבת עכ"ל. הא קמן להדיא דאסור להרבות דברים כמו בחול, וכש"כ יותר מבחול. אמנם אם אותם בני אדם מתענגים בכך, כשמדברים ומספרים שמועות מהמלכים ושרים ומלחמותיהם וכה"ג, כדרך הרבה בני אדם שמתאווים לכך, נראה דודאי שרי. דכה"ג כ' בסמ"ק דבחורים המתענגים במרוצתם ובקפיצותם, מותר; וכן לראות כל דבר שמתענגים בו לראות ע"כ. הא חזינן דאע"ג דדרשו חכמים וכבדתו מעשות דרכיך, שלא יהא הלוכך של שבת כהלוכך של חול, פי' שלא ירוץ ויקפוץ, ואעפ"כ אם עושה להתענג ולאות נפשו שרי...

Terumat Ha-Deshen #61

...It is forbidden to speak as excessively as one does during the week, all the more so to do so more than one does during the week. Nonetheless, if people enjoy speaking and telling tales about kings and princes and their wars—as many people love to do—it seems it is certainly permissible. For [R. Yitzhak of Corbeil] wrote similarly that “young men who get pleasure from running and jumping are allowed to do so... similarly, [it is permissible] to watch anything that one gets pleasure from watching.” We see from here that even though the Sages derived from verses... that one should not run and jump, it is nonetheless permissible to do so if one does it for pleasure and fulfillment of desire.

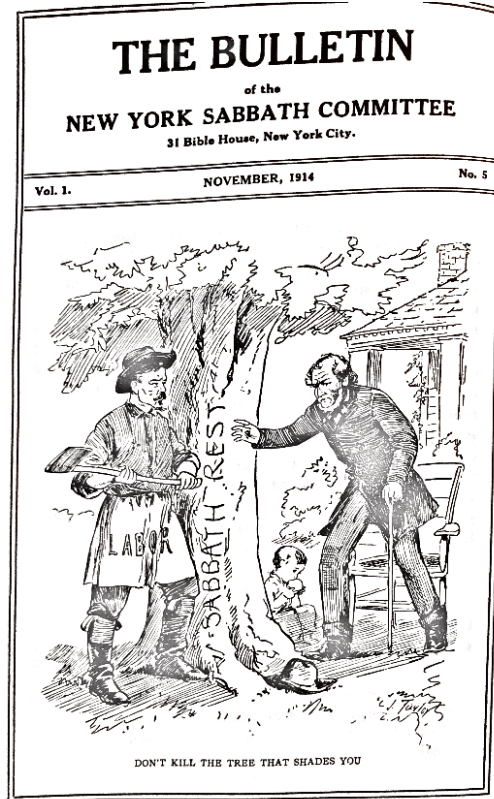
10. R' Menaḥem Meiri (d. 1306), *Beit Ha-Beḥirah*, Shabbat 118b

The obligation of “Shabbat delight” (*oneg shabbat*) is very great; its substance is according to a person’s finances and according to what is normal on weekdays; thus they said, “even a small thing done in honor of Shabbat—they have fulfilled the obligation of “Shabbat delight.” The general principle is, “[It is better to] make your Shabbat like a weekday than to be dependent on others [for one’s Shabbat meals]” (bPesahim112a). In the [Talmud] Yerushalmi (cf. yShabbat15:3) they said: “How does one make it a pleasure? One said with sleep; another said with Torah study. There is no argument—one is in reference to a Torah scholar, the other to a worker (*ba’al habayit*).” My teachers explained that a scholar delights in Torah study and a worker in sleep, but I say the opposite: a scholar who studies the entire week on Shabbat observes the “delight” of sleep so that his mind does not weary too much, but for a worker, who is busy with his affairs during the week, it is fitting for him to busy himself a little on Shabbat with Torah as a “delight.”

מצות עונג שבת גדולה עד מאד וענינה הוא לפי ממונו של אדם ולפי מה שרגיל בו בחול והוא שאמרו אפ"ל דבר מועט ועשאו לכבוד שבת הרי קיים מצות עונג שבת וכלל הדברים עשה שבתך חול ואל תצטרך לבריות ובירושלמי אמרו במה מענגו מר אמר בשינה ומר אמר בתלמוד תורה ולא פליגי כאן בתלמיד כאן בבעל הבית ופירשו בה רבותי שהתלמיד מענגו בתלמוד תורה ובעל הבית בשינה ואני אומר הפך הדברים שהתלמיד ששונה כל ימי השבוע מקיים בשבת עונג שינה שלא יהא שכלו לואה יותר מדאי אבל בעל הבית שמתעסק כל ימות החול בעסקיו ראוי לו להתעסק מעט בשבת בתלמוד תורה דרך עונג

IV. American Industrial Shabbat (and Sabbath)

11. Bulletin of the New York Sabbath Committee (1914) (From Alexis McCrossen, *Holy Day, Holiday: The American Sunday*)



12. Hermann Cohen, "The Sabbath" (1869)

First man, the slave, rests on the seventh day. Then, in order to give religious sanction to the holidays of a people split into different social classes, God is represented as resting from his work of Creation on this day. Finally, man rests on the Sabbath because God had consecrated it by his own rest. . . .

The Prophets, who in their political activity and suffering as well as in their private and public thinking revealed a wonderful unity of political and moral consciousness, who shrank back from no national limitations in trying consistently to realize the brotherhood and unity of peoples—these Prophets urged the keeping of the Sabbath in the same breath that they sang of the Golden Age and prophesied the coming of the Messiah.

13. R' Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Sabbath* (1951)

To set apart one day a week for freedom, a day on which we would not use the instruments which have been so easily turned into weapons of destruction, a day for being with ourselves, a day of detachment from the vulgar, of independence of external obligations, a day on which we stop worshipping the idols of technical civilization, a day on which we use no money, a day of armistice in the economic struggle with our fellow men and the forces of nature—is there any institution that holds out a greater hope for man's progress than the Sabbath?

In regard to external gifts, to outward possessions, there is only one proper attitude—to have them and to be able to do without them. On the Sabbath we live, as it were, *independent of technical civilization*: we abstain primarily from any activity that aims at remaking or reshaping the things of space. Man's royal privilege to conquer nature is suspended on the seventh day. What are the kinds of labor not to be done on the Sabbath? They are, according to the ancient rabbis, all those acts which were necessary for the construction and furnishing of the Sanctuary in the desert. The Sabbath itself is a sanctuary which we build, *a sanctuary in time*.

14. Anson Rabinbach, *The Human Motor* (1990)

If fatigue could be linked to the body's natural resistance to the demands of productivity, that correlation might also establish the need to reduce the burdens of economic expansion and suggest the way to achieve a just order of work and society. Fatigue also represented the legitimate boundary of the individual's physiological and psychological forces beyond which the demands of society become illegitimate or destructive. Fatigue thus defined both the limits of the working body and the point beyond which society could not transgress without jeopardizing its own future capacity for labor.

V. Epilogue

15. Kraybill, Johnson-Weiner, and Nolt, *The Amish* (2013)

New technology enters the Amish community when early adopters begin experimenting with outside devices—installing a propane refrigerator, a fax machine, or an inverter to run a word processor on 120-volt electricity. Their experiments typically result in one of these five outcomes within the community:

1. Swift rejection with little discussion and consideration
2. Limited use over several months or years and eventual rejection
3. Creeping use as well as dissent and gradual acceptance by default
4. Growing use with little dissent and rapid acceptance
5. Modification to make the technology fit the moral order

[...] Decisions emerge within a dynamic matrix of sociocultural forces, and a single factor will rarely explain a particular outcome. Some of the pertinent regulators include the following:

1. *Economic Impact*. New technologies related to “making a living” are more acceptable than those involving pleasure, convenience, or leisure. Thus, a motor on a hay mower in the field is more acceptable than one on a lawn mower.

2. *Visibility*. Invisible changes are more acceptable than visible ones. Using fiberglass in the construction of buggies is easier to introduce than changing the external color of the carriage itself.
3. *Relation to the Ordnung*. New items that overturn existing Ordnung are more difficult than those that are free from previous rules or than can be grafted on to present regulations. Because it is new technology, accepting a string trimmer may be easier than accepting a push power mower that has been forbidden for forty years.
4. *Symbolic Ties*. Changes unrelated to key emblems of ethnic identity—horse, biggy, and dress—are more acceptable than one that threaten sacred symbols. Likewise, changes linked to negative, “worldly” markers are less acceptable than those without such ties. A word processor with a small screen, for example, would likely be more acceptable than a computer with a large monitor resembling a television.
5. *External Connections*. Technologies that open avenues of influence from mainstream culture and outsiders are less acceptable than those that do not.