

# Introduction to the 39 Forbidden Activities

Source Sheet by Rabbi Federgrun

1. **שמות ל"ה:ב'** .א  
 (ב) עֲשֵׂת יָמִים תַּעֲשֶׂה מְלָאכָה וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי יִהְיֶה לָּכֶם קָדֵשׁ שַׁבַּת שַׁבְּתוֹן לַיהוָה  
 כָּל־הַעֲשֶׂה כּוּ מְלָאכָה יוּמָת:

## Exodus 35:2

(2) On six days work may be done, but on the seventh day you shall have a sabbath of complete rest, holy to the LORD; whoever does any work on it shall be put to death.

2. **בבא קמא ב' א'** .ב  
 ולרבי אליעזר דמחייב אתולדה במקום אב אמאי קרי ליה אב ואמאי קרי לה תולדה  
 הך דהוה במשכן חשיבא קרי ליה אב הך דלא הוה במשכן חשיבא קרי לה תולדה

## Bava Kamma 2a

The Gemara asks: **And according to Rabbi Eliezer, who deems one liable to bring two sin-offerings even if one performs a labor classified as a subcategory together with a labor that is its primary category, why is one labor characterized as a primary category and why is the other labor characterized as a subcategory?** The Gemara explains: Of the labors prohibited on Shabbat, **that which was a significant labor in the Tabernacle**, the Sages **characterized** it as **a primary category**, and **that which was not a significant labor in the Tabernacle**, the Sages **characterized** it as a **subcategory**. The labors prohibited on Shabbat are derived from the labors employed in the construction of the Tabernacle; therefore, their classification is also based on their significance in its construction.

3. **תוספות על בבא קמא ב' א'** .ג  
 ה"ג הך דהואי במשכן חשיבא קרי ליה אב הך דלא הואי במשכן חשיבא קרי ליה  
 תולדה - ולפי הך גירסא בא לאפוקי כמה מלאכות שלא היו חשובין והיו במשכן  
 דתולדות נינהו ולא אבות מלאכות... ואית גרסי הך דהוה במשכן וחשיבא קרי ליה  
 אב אך דלא הוה במשכן ולא חשיבא קרי לה תולדה ולפי גירסא זו צריך לומר דבעי  
 תרתי אבל חשיבא ולא הוה במשכן או איפכא הוה תולדה:

## Tosafot on Bava Kamma 2a

This is the text: Those activities performed in the Mishkan and are significant are called an "av" [primary] and that which is not viewed as significant in the Mishkan is

called a "Toldah." And, according to this version, there were activities that were performed in the Mishkan and are not significant and are viewed as Toldot [subcategories]...And, some have the version that activities performed in the Mishkan and are significant is called primary, but those that were not in the Mishkan and are not significant are called subcategories. And, according to this version, one has to say that you need it to be both [an act performed in the Mishkan and significant for it to be viewed as primary], but if it is either significant and not performed in the Mishkan, or it was performed in the Mishkan, but not significant then it is a subcategory.

4. **רש"י על שמות ל"ה:ב'א'** .ד  
 (א) ששת ימים. הקדים להם אזהרת שבת לצווי מלאכת המשכן, לומר  
 שאינו דוחה את השבת (מכילתא):

**Rashi on Exodus 35:2:1**

(1) SIX DAYS [MAY WORK BE DONE] — He intentionally mentioned to them the prohibition in reference to the Sabbath before the command about the building of the Tabernacle in order to intimate that it does not set aside (supersede) the Sabbath (cf. Mekhilta d'Rabbi Yishmael 35:1:1).

5. **שמות ל"ה:ל"ג** .ה  
 (לג) ובחנשת אבן למלאות ובחנשת עץ לעשות בכל-מלאכת מחשבת:

**Exodus 35:33**

(33) to cut stones for setting and to carve wood—to work in every kind of designer's craft—

6. **אונקלוס שמות לה:לג** .ו  
 בכל מלאכת מחשבת- בכל עבידת אומנון  
 in evrey thoughtful act- in all professional work

7. **רשב"ם על בבא בתרא נ"ה ב** .ז  
 במסכת שבת תנן המוציא אוכלין חייב בגרוגרת דבשבת מלאכת  
 מחשבת אסרה תורה ולא חשיבא הוצאת דבר חשוב בפחות מכגרוגרת:

**Rashbam on Bava Batra 55b**

In the Tractate Shabbos it is taughtL One that takes outside food that is the size of a dried fig has violated Shabbos on a Biblical level because

on Shabbos- the Torah forbade a significant act, and when one carries less than the size of a dried fig then it is not halachically significant.

8. **תוספות על שבת צ"ו ב** .ה  
 אבל אי גרסי' הך דהוות במשכן חשיבא וקרי לה אב הך דלא הוות במשכן לא חשיבא וקרי לה תולדה לפי זה התולדות לא היו במשכן:

#### **Tosafot on Shabbat 96b**

Nut, if the version is as follows: that which was performed in the Mishkan is defined as significant and is called primary, and that which was not performed in the Mishkan is defined as not significant and is called a subcategory. According to this- the subcategories are the actions that were not performed in the Mishkan.

9. *The building of the Mishkan, if not from the point of view of art, still surely from the point of view of the idea and the purpose to be realized by the idea, "And they shall make for me a sanctuary, and I shall dwell among them," is the very highest conceivable plan for human artistic activity. The mastery of man over matter, in getting, producing, changing, manufacturing the raw materials of the world, attained its highest meaning in the Temple. The world submits to man, for him to submit himself and his world to God, and for him to change this earthly world into a home for the Kingdom of God, to a Temple in which the Glory of God tarries on earth. The building of the Temple is a sanctification of human labor, and in the context here, it is represented as being a combination of all those creative activities of Man, by the cessation of which - by resting from work - Shabbat is made into an acknowledgment of man's allegiance to God. (Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, commentary to Shemot 35:2)* .ט



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