

There is another verse concerning which there is a dispute whether it refers to one of the prohibited Shabbat labors or if it is a separate prohibition: “Sit every man in his place; let no man go out of his place on the seventh day” (*Shemot* 16:29). According to Rabbi Akiva (see, e.g., *Sota* 27b, 30b, *Eiruvin* 51a), this verse is referring to the prohibition of **boundaries**, i.e., the prohibition to venture out of the place or city in which one was staying at the start of Shabbat more than two thousand cubits in any direction. According to the **Rambam** (37:1; see also Yerushalmi, *Eiruvin* 3:4), the Rabbis, who disagree with Rabbi Akiva, agree that the verse is speaking of the prohibition of boundaries, but in their opinion the prohibition by Torah law concerns one who travels twelve *mil*, while the measure of two thousand cubits applies only by rabbinic law. Many *Rishonim* (Ramban, Rashba, Ritva, Rosh, on *Eiruvin* 17b) disagree with this claim, maintaining that according to the Rabbis the prohibition of boundaries applies by rabbinic law alone. As for this verse, it is speaking specifically of someone who leaves his place **while carrying something**, thereby violating the prohibition against removing an item from domain to domain,<sup>6</sup> or that it is addressing solely the topic

6. This is indicated by the **Gemara** in *Eiruvin* (17b), which expounds the verse: “Let [no man] go out [*al yetzte*],” as though it stated *al yotzi*, let him not take out. According to *Tosafot* (s.v. *lav*), and many *Rishonim* ad loc. (in contrast to **Rashi**), even Rabbi Akiva, who derives from this verse the prohibition of boundaries, concedes that the prohibition of Carrying Out from the private to the public domain is **also** derived from this verse.

The statements of the Gemara and the *Rishonim* invite the question of why it is necessary to have a source for the prohibition of Carrying Out from the private to the public domain, more than for the other labors. This difficulty is even more pronounced in light of the **Gemara** (96b), which asks: “Carrying Out itself, where is it written?” before proceeding to cite an exposition as a source for this specific labor. Why does the Gemara seek a source for the prohibition of Carrying Out rather than deriving it from the Tabernacle, like the other labors? The *Rishonim* (*Tosafot*, 2a, s.v. *pashat*; **Ramban** and **Rashba** ad loc.) explain that Carrying Out is “an inferior labor,” that is, it seems to be an unimportant activity. It does not involve creation or fixing but merely the transfer of items from one place to another. Consequently, it might have been thought that it should not be prohibited,

of that chapter, those who gathered the manna, and it is not teaching a prohibition that applies for all generations (see also Rashi on the Torah ad loc.).

The obligation  
of rest

Apart from the prohibitions of Shabbat that appear explicitly in the Torah, there are several positive commandments that apply to Shabbat. One of them is the obligation of rest: “But on the seventh day you shall rest” (*Shemot* 23:12, 34:21).<sup>7</sup> This mitzva, which corresponds to the prohibition of performing labor on Shabbat, means that one who performs labor on Shabbat has not only violated a prohibition but has also neglected to fulfill the positive mitzva to rest.<sup>8</sup> The *Rishonim* disagree whether this positive commandment applies specifically to resting from the thirty-nine primary categories of labor (Rashba, Ritva, on *Yevamot* 6a, citing Rabbeinu Yona), or if it encompasses all the prohibitions of Shabbat, including the rest of one’s animal, directing an animal, and other such prohibitions (*Tosafot* ad loc., s.v. *venigamer*).<sup>9</sup>

Another positive commandment is to “remember the Sabbath

Remembering the  
Sabbath day

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despite it having been performed in the Tabernacle (see the *Rishonim*, who explain why both the verse “let no man leave his place” and the source cited by the Gemara there are necessary for this purpose).

7. Similarly, in several places (*Shemot* 31:15, 35:2; *Vayikra* 23:3) it is stated that this day must be “a Shabbat of solemn rest.”

8. The *Minhat Henukh* (5:1) notes that this obligation results in a practical ramification: one who unwittingly violates Shabbat must bring a burnt-offering to atone for the positive mitzva he has transgressed, in addition to the sin-offering he is obligated to bring for violating the negative commandment.

9. According to the **Ramban** (*Vayikra* 23:24), in addition to the obligation to rest there is a general command here that Shabbat should be a day of leisure and relaxation, without effort and toil (see below, p. 82, note 16). The **Rambam** (21:1) further states that the mitzva to rest includes adhering to the rabbinic prohibitions of rest [*shevut*] on Shabbat. The *Maggid Mishne* (ad loc.) discusses whether the Rambam means that this mitzva serves as a **support** for prohibitions added by the Sages, or whether he maintains in accordance with the Ramban that there is a general command that Shabbat must not be a day of grind and toil. In his opinion, this mitzva is the **basis for several rabbinic prohibitions**: The Sages prohibited the performance

day, to keep it holy” (*Shemot* 20:7). This mitzva requires one to perform actions that bring to mind the greatness and sanctity of Shabbat. This is the source for the obligation to recite *kiddush* on the night of Shabbat, and according to the majority of *Rishonim* this commandment is also the basis for the *havdala* ritual at the conclusion of Shabbat, which demarcates the passage from holy to secular time. This mitzva is also fulfilled in other ways, but this is not the place to elaborate further.<sup>10</sup>

Two additional mitzvot are derived from a statement of the prophet Yeshayahu: “And call the Sabbath a **delight**, and the holy [day] of the Lord **honored**” (58:13). This verse teaches that one must delight in Shabbat and honor Shabbat. The mitzva of delight in Shabbat is to perform activities that bring one pleasure and delight, e.g., eating tasty foods. The mitzva of honoring Shabbat requires a person to perform actions that express an attitude of honor toward Shabbat, e.g., cleaning and tidying the house in honor of Shabbat, washing one’s body, and wearing fine clothing. According to the **Rambam** (30:1), honor and delight are mitzvot by rabbinic law, since they are based on a verse in one of the books of the prophets, Yeshayahu, but there are *Rishonim* and *Aḥaronim* who maintain that these mitzvot apply by Torah law (e.g., *Yere’im*, 412, 429; *Shulḥan Arukh HaRav* 242:1).<sup>11</sup>

Honor and delight

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of various actions in order to prevent people from engaging in toil and unnecessary efforts on Shabbat.

10. The mitzva of “remembering” and the various other positive commandments of Shabbat (e.g., *kiddush*, *havdala*, lighting the Shabbat candles, the Shabbat meal) will be analyzed at length in another book in the series *Halakha from the Sources*, which will be published soon, God willing.

11. According to the *Yere’im* (ad loc.), Yeshayahu did not institute a new mitzva, but reminded the people of a pre-existing mitzva derived as a tradition, in the form of a *halakha* transmitted to Moshe from Sinai. By contrast, the *Shulḥan Arukh HaRav* (ad loc.) maintains that Yeshayahu was interpreting the Torah’s instruction (*Vayikra* 23:3) that Shabbat must be “a holy convocation.” With regard to the Festivals it is stated in *Torat Kohanim* (*Emor* 12:4) that “holy convocation” means that one must sanctify the day

Apart from the general prohibition of labor, and several specific prohibitions, the Torah mentions on several occasions that there is an obligation to “observe” or “keep” (*shomer* in Hebrew) **Shabbat**. It is stated in the Ten Commandments in *Parashat Vaethanan* (*Devarim* 5:12): “Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy,” and it is also stated a number of times in the book of *Vayikra* (19:3, 30; 26:2): “[And] you shall keep My Sabbaths,” and at length in *Parashat Ki Tisa* (*Shemot* 31:13–17):

“However, you shall **keep** My Sabbaths, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the Lord who sanctifies you. **You shall keep the Sabbath**, for it is holy to you; everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days shall work be done; but on the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the Lord; whoever does any work on the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. The children of Israel **shall keep** the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day He ceased from work and rested.”

The wording of these verses implies that there is no additional Shabbat mitzva here. Rather, the Torah is referring to the prohibition of labor already known from other passages, and it is emphasizing the obligation to observe and fulfill those commands.<sup>12</sup> This is indicative

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with food, drink, and clean garments. If so, the phrase “holy convocation,” when it appears with regard to Shabbat, should be interpreted in the same manner. Alternatively, Yeshayahu could be seen as interpreting the mitzva to “remember the Shabbat day, to keep it holy,” and was, consequently, providing practical ways to highlight the uniqueness of Shabbat in relation to the other days of the week (see in detail the book mentioned in the previous note, in the chapter that discusses the honor and delight of Shabbat).

12. It is taught in *Pirkei deRabbi Eliezer* (19): “You shall observe the Shabbat.” What is observing Shabbat? Not performing labor on Shabbat, and

of the great importance the Torah places on Shabbat. Generally, the Torah does not mention “observance” in connection with a specific mitzva, but only with regard to commandments in general.<sup>13</sup> For example, we read, “You shall therefore observe the commandment, and the statutes, and the ordinances” [*Devarim* 7:11], and “And you shall observe the commandments of the Lord your God” [*Devarim* 8:6]), whereas the Torah stresses the obligation to observe Shabbat

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not kindling a fire on it, etc. The *Midrash HaGadol* (*Shemot* 31:16) further derives from here the *halakha* of *tosefet Shabbat*, adding some time to one’s observance of Shabbat: Since one must be especially careful to refrain from performing labor on Shabbat, it is necessary to stop work some time before Shabbat begins and start again only a little while after the day has ended.

By contrast, the *Yere’im* (411) counts the obligation to observe Shabbat as a separate mitzva. He writes: [God] commanded that one should place the observance of Shabbat on one’s heart, as it is written in *Parashat Ki Tisa*: “You shall keep the Sabbath for it is holy to you,” and it is written in the second version of the Ten Commandments: “Observe the Sabbath day to keep it holy,” and **keeping is in the heart**, as it is written: “But his father kept the saying in mind [*shamar et hadavar*]” (*Bereshit* 37:11), and it is written: “For it is a pleasant thing if you keep them [*tishmerem*] within you” (*Mishlei* 22:18). The *Yere’im* (411) further counts as a separate mitzva the **fear of Shabbat**: “Just as God commanded that one must fear and honor the Temple, He commanded the same with regard to Shabbat, as they are juxtaposed to each other in the verse: ‘You shall keep My Sabbaths, and revere My Sanctuary’ (*Vayikra* 19:30). And what is the fear of Shabbat? That a person should think in his heart of honoring Shabbat and keeping it, and care about this. And it is not Shabbat that you should fear, but He who warned about Shabbat.” According to the *Yere’im*, when one is in a state of constant awareness that they must honor Shabbat and be careful not to perform labor, this fulfills two positive commandments in addition to the prohibition against performing labor: Keeping Shabbat and fearing it.

13. Exceptions to this are the mitzvot relating to the Paschal offering, with regard to which the obligation of keeping, or observing, is also mentioned several times (e.g., *Shemot* 12:17, 24, 25): “And you shall observe the feast of unleavened bread... And you shall observe this day throughout your generations... And you shall observe this thing... And you shall keep this service.” Indeed, no proof need be cited for the centrality of the Paschal offering and Seder night.

on many occasions.<sup>14</sup> The Torah considers Shabbat a central mitzva that one must take special care to observe properly.<sup>15</sup>

On each occasion when the obligation to keep Shabbat is mentioned in this chapter, the Torah adds a justification: “However, you shall keep My Sabbaths, for it is a sign between Me and you”; “You shall keep the **Sabbath**, for it is holy to you”; “The children of Israel **shall keep** the Sabbath . . . It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever . . .” The Torah commands that one must take pains to observe Shabbat due to its unique importance as a day of sanctification and elevation, and a day that marks the special relationship between God and the people of Israel.<sup>16</sup>

14. The *Midrash Tanhuma* (*Ki Tisa* 33) derives from here that Shabbat is equal to all the mitzvot of the Torah. There are additional sources for this idea (see, e.g., *Yerushalmi*, *Nedarim* 3:9; *Shemot Rabba* 25:12).

The desecration of  
Shabbat

15. This passage, in *Ki Tisa*, is the first time that the Torah mentions the death penalty for one who desecrates Shabbat. In effect, it is here that the idea of the desecration of Shabbat is initially formulated: “Everyone who profanes it shall be put to death.” This concept recurs frequently in the Prophets (e.g., *Yeshayahu* 56:2; *Yehezkel* 20:13, *Nehemya* 13:17), and in the language of the Sages and modern parlance it is accepted to say that one who performs labor on Shabbat is considered a “Shabbat desecrator [*mehalel*].” Perhaps this phrase merely reflects the fact that such a person **treats Shabbat like a weekday** [*hol*], by belittling its sanctity (see, e.g., *Yehezkel* 22:8: “You have **despised** My holy things, and have **profaned** [*hilalta*] My Sabbaths”). In many places in the Torah the term *hilul* does not mean mere disparagement, but the **actual impairment of sanctity**. For example, it is stated in a verse discussing a priest who marries a woman whom he is forbidden to marry: “And he shall not profane his seed among his people” (*Vayikra* 21:15), which means that his seed becomes profaned and the sanctity of his priesthood is impaired. Here too, one can say that someone who performs labor on Shabbat impairs the status and sanctity of Shabbat.

16. The various reasons and meanings of Shabbat will be addressed at length below (pp. 57–98).