



## **Six Days Shall You Labor: Shabbat and the Meaning of Work**

***Dr. David Kraemer***

David Kraemer is the Joseph J. and Dora Abbell Librarian at The Jewish Theological Seminary, where he has also served as Professor of Talmud and Rabbinics for many years. As Librarian, Prof. Kraemer is at the helm of the most extensive collection of Judaica—rare and contemporary—in the Western hemisphere. On account of the size and importance of the collection, Prof. Kraemer is instrumental in setting policy and establishing vision for projects of international importance.

Prof. Kraemer is a prolific author and commentator. His books include *The Mind of the Talmud* (1990), *Responses to Suffering in Classical Rabbinic Literature* (1995), *The Meanings of Death in Rabbinic Judaism* (2000), and *Jewish Eating and Identity Through the Ages* (2007, 2009), and *A History of the Talmud* (2019) among others. He is also the author and co-creator of The Haggadah app, for iPads.

## **1. Mishnah Shabbat 7:2**

The generative categories of acts of labor [prohibited on the Sabbath] are forty less one: (1) he who sews, (2) ploughs, (3) reaps, (4) binds sheaves, (5) threshes, (6) winnows, (7) selects [fit from unfit produce or crops], (8) grinds, (9) sifts, (10) kneads, (11) bakes; (12) he who shears wool, (13) washes it, (14) beats it, (15) dyes it, (16) spins, (17) weaves, (18) makes two loops, (19) weaves two threads, (20) separates two threads, (21) ties, (22) unties, (23) sews two stitches, (24) tears in order to sew two stitches; (25) he who traps a deer, (26) slaughters it, (27) flays it, (28) salts it, (29) cures its hide, (30) scrapes it, and (31) cuts it up, (32) he who writes two letters, (33) erases two letters in order to write two letters; (34) he who builds, (35) tears down; (36) he who puts out a fire, (37) kindles a fire; (38) he who hits with a hammer; (39) he who transports an object from one domain to another — lo, these are the forty generative acts of labor less one.

## **2. Babylonian Talmud Shabbat 74b**

### **A. Kneads and bakes:**

B. *Said R. Pappa, “The Tannaite before us has neglected the boiling of ingredients for dyeing [for example, for hangings and curtains], even though this took place in building the tabernacle, but treats nonetheless of baking [which didn’t]!”*

C. *Our Tannaite authority is following the order of baking bread.*

### **3. Talmud Berakhot 58a**

A. [When] Ben Zoma saw a crowd on steps of the Temple Mount, he said, "Blessed is he who is wise in knowing secrets. Blessed is he who created [all] these [people] to serve me."

B. He would say, "How hard did Adam toil before he could taste a morsel [of food]: he seeded, plowed, reaped, sheaved, threshed, winnowed, separated, ground, sifted, kneaded, and baked, and only then could he eat. But I arise in the morning and find all these [foods ready] before me.

C. "How hard did Adam toil before he could put on a garment: he sheared, bleached, separated, dyed, spun, and wove, and only then could he put it on. But I arise in the morning and find all these [garments ready] before me.

### **4. Babylonian Talmud Shabbat 117b**

*The Tannaite authority of the household of R. Ishmael [stated],* ““You shall not do any work’ (Ex. 20:10) — **excluding** the sounding of the ram’s horn and the removal of bread from the oven wall, **which is an act of skill and not work.**