

Melakhah - Work Part 2

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We have examined the words Avad, Eved, and Avodah, which are in reference to service or one who serves. A form of work in which what you do is in the service of another. We are going to look now at Mala'khah and see what forms of work are described in the Tanakh and which are and are not prohibited on Shabbat. Yes, there were forms of Mala'khah that were allowed and commanded for Shabbat. So we will look at what specifically is work and also identifying whether it was prohibited or not.

What was the very first Mala'khah (work) recording in the Tanakh?

Bereshit/Genesis 2:1-3

1 The heaven and the earth were finished, and all their array. 2 On the seventh day Elohim finished the **work (mela'khato מְלַאכְתּוֹ)** that He had been doing (asah עָשָׂה), and He ceased on the seventh day **from all the work (mikol-mela'khato מִכָּל-מְלַאכְתּוֹ)** that He had done (asah עָשָׂה). 3 And Elohim blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because on it Elohim ceased (shavat שָׁבַת) **from all the work (mikol-mela'khato מִכָּל-מְלַאכְתּוֹ)** of creation (bara) that He had done (la'asot לַעֲשׂוֹת).

The first form of work we see is creation. We see he ceased from it on the seventh day. Creating is a broad area what was specifically created. So the question is if we create something on Shabbat are we doing a form of mala'khah. Creation for Yehovah was his mala'khah and he ceased from it. He we must consider whether we can create as Yehovah does. As a Elohim, Yehovah creates and it is his Melakhah. We as humans can not create like he does. None of us can call on light to shine and it does. None of us can make a land mass appear. And none of use can make a human out of earth.

The creation of the items for the Tent of Meeting and the Preists.

Shemot/Exodus 31: 2-11

2See, I have singled out by name Bezalel son of Uri son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. 3I have endowed him with a divine spirit of skill, ability, and knowledge in every kind of craft (mala'khah); 4to **make designs for work (to make - la asot 6213 לַעֲשׂוֹת)** in gold, silver, and copper, 5to **cut stones for setting and to carve wood—to work (to make - la asot 6213 לַעֲשׂוֹת)** in every kind of craft (bakal melakhah

(בְּכֹל-מְלָאכָה). 6 Moreover, I have assigned to him Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan; and I have also granted skill to all who are skillful, that they may make everything that I have commanded you: 7 the Tent of Meeting, the Ark for the Pact and the cover upon it, and all the furnishings of the Tent; 8 the table and its utensils, the pure lampstand and all its fittings, and the altar of incense; 9 the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils, and the laver and its stand; 10 the service vestments, the sacral vestments of Aaron the priest and the vestments of his sons, for their service as priests; 11 as well as the anointing oil and the aromatic incense for the sanctuary. Just as I have commanded you, they shall do.

He we see that creating plans for a design whether for metal, wood or stone. And the carving or shaping of those materials is work (mala'khah). Also the sewing and embroidering of the vestments and materials were also commanded and so the making of these also constituted work (Mala'khah). This these things were not to be done on shabbat. Some of the other work done was embroidered work, making of cloth, etc... We see this also continued to be described in Shemot 35-36.

Bamidbar/Numbers 4:2-4

2 Take a [separate] census of the Kohathites among the Levites, by the clans of their ancestral house, 3 from the age of thirty years up to the age of fifty, all who are subject to service, **to perform tasks (la'asot Mela'khah לַעֲשׂוֹת מְלָאכָה)** for the Tent of Meeting. 4 This is the responsibility of the Kohathites in the Tent of Meeting: the most sacred objects.

Here we have a clan of the Levi'im who are to make/do Mala'khah for the Tent of Meeting. This was to be done whenever the camp was to move. Here we see a direct relationship os Asah and Melakhah in that one makes work or does work.

Melekhim Aleph/I Kings 5:27-30

27 King Solomon imposed forced labor (levy) on all Israel; the levy came to 30,000 men. 28 He sent them to the Lebanon in shifts of 10,000 a month: they would spend one month in the Lebanon and two months at home. Adoniram was in charge of the forced labor (levy). 29 Solomon also had 70,000 porters and 80,000 quarriers in the hills, 30 apart from Solomon's 3,300 officials who were in charge of **the work (hamela'khah הַמְלָאכָה)** and supervised the gangs doing the **work (bamele'khah בַּמְלָאכָה)**.

Here we see that the people were drafted into **service (work)** in the building of the temple. The work they were doing was the gathering of the materials for the temple. The gathering of building supplies is mala'khah. Thus, something we should not do on Shabbat.

Melekhim Aleph/I Kings 7:13-14

13 King Solomon sent for Hiram and brought him down from Tyre. 14 He was the son of a widow of the tribe of Naphtali, and his father had been a Tyrian, a coppersmith (engraver in bronze). He was endowed with skill, ability, and talent **for executing all work** (la'asot kol mela'khah **לְעֵשׂוֹת כָּל־מְלָאכָה**) in bronze. He came to King Solomon and executed **all his work** (et kol mela'khato **אֶת־כָּל־מְלָאכָתּוֹ**).

Again like earlier in the making of the tent of meeting the working with metal, word and materials are work (mala'khah) also. Thus they would be prohibited on Shabbat. Reading through This chapter will show all that was designed and made at the direction of Hiram.

Melakhim Bet/II Kings 12:12-16

12 Then they would deliver the money that was weighed out to the overseers of **the work** (**ha mala'khah הַמְּלָאכָה**), who were in charge of the House of Yehovah. These, in turn, used to pay the carpenters and the laborers who worked on the House of Yehovah, 13 and the masons and the stonecutters. They also paid for wood and for quarried stone with which to make the repairs on the House of Yehovah, and for every other expenditure that had to be made in repairing the House. 14 However, no silver bowls and no snuffers, basins, or trumpets—no vessels of gold or silver—were made at the House of Yehovah from the money brought into the House of Yehovah; 15 this was given only to the overseers of the **work** (**mala'khah הַמְּלָאכָה**) for the repair of the House of Yehovah. 16 No check was kept on the men to whom the money was delivered to pay the workers; for they dealt honestly.

We see here the work being done to repair the temple was done by workers skilled in their work (mala'khah). Thus Masons, Carpenters, Stonecutters, and Laborers what ever they did were work. Thus should not be done on the Shabbat.

Yermiyahu/Jeremiah 17:21-24, 27

21 Thus said Yehovah: Guard yourselves for your own sake against carrying burdens (massa **מַשָּׂא**) on the sabbath day, and bringing them through the gates of Jerusalem. 22 Nor shall you carry out burdens (massa **מַשָּׂא**) from your houses on the sabbath day, **and do not any work** (vekal mala'khah lo ta'asu **וְכָל־מְלָאכָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ**), but you shall hallow the sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers. (23 But they would not listen or turn their ear; they stiffened their necks and would not pay heed or accept discipline.) 24 If you obey Me—declares Yehovah—and do not bring in burdens (massa

מִשָּׂא) through the gates of this city on the sabbath day, but hallow the sabbath day and do no work (kol mala'khah כָּל-מְלָאכָה) on it,...

27 But if you do not obey My command to hallow the sabbath day and to carry in no burdens (massa מִשָּׂא) through the gates of Jerusalem on the sabbath day, then I will set fire to its gates; it shall consume the fortresses of Jerusalem and it shall not be extinguished.

What were these burdens that were being carried? This carrying of burdens is considered work.

Nehemyah/Nehemiah 13:15-18

15 At that time I saw men in Judah treading winepresses on the sabbath, and others bringing heaps of grain and loading them onto asses, also wine, grapes, figs, **and all sorts of goods (and all burdens – vekol massa' וְכָל-מִשָּׂא)**, and bringing them into Jerusalem on the sabbath. I admonished them there and then for selling provisions (makh'ram tzyid – selling meat/hunted food מִכְרָם צִיד). 16 Tyrians who lived there brought fish and all sorts of wares and sold them on the sabbath to the Judahites in Jerusalem. 17 I censured the nobles of Judah, saying to them, “What evil thing is this that you are doing, profaning (umechal'lim) the sabbath day! 18 This is just what your ancestors did, and for it Elohim brought all this misfortune on this city; and now you give cause for further wrath against Israel by profaning (challel) the sabbath!”

Thee burdens being talked here were the wares being made and sold on the Shabbat.. These are thing too we should not do which are Melakhah.

The work of the house of Elohim.

Nehemyah 10:34

34for the rows of bread, for the regular meal offering and for the regular burnt offering, [for those of the] sabbaths, new moons, festivals, for consecrations, for sin offerings to atone for Israel, **and for all the work (vekol mele'khet וְכָל מְלָאכָת)** in the House of our Elohim.

Hear we see the many Mala'khah (work) that was done in the Tanakh. Whatever the Priests were commanded to do even on the Shabbat they were to do. But the people were restricted to not do Mala'khah during the shabbat. Most work we see was for hard physical labor or craftsmen labor. But there are also instances where the work done was that of service work (mala'khah Avodah). We can see that service work is not

exclusively occupation as translated though in most cases it is related. This is especially true when it is a work that is done to serve another. (e.g., a servant)

We also see that some work is the creating of things. You will see this in the word **asah**, which is reference number 6213 and is do as in performing a work or making something. Found on page 793 in the BDB. It is a verb and the root.

We find a relationship to the word in that the creation was made (**asah**) by Elohim.

Bereshit/Genesis:1:31

31And Elohim saw all that He had **made** (**asah עָשָׂה**), and found it very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Creating an Altar is something made and the effort to build it would be work.

Bereshit/Genesis 13:4

4the site of the altar that he had **built** (**asah עָשָׂה**) there at first; and there Abram invoked YHVH by name.

Bereshit/Genesis 33:17

17But Jacob journeyed on to Succoth (**סֹכְתָה**), and built a house (**בַּיִת**) for himself and **made** (**asah עָשָׂה**) stalls (**Sukkot סֹכְת**) for his cattle; that is why the place was called Succoth (**סֹכּוֹת**).

Building a booth/sukkah is work of construction.

Bereshit/Genesis 37:3

3Now Israel loved Joseph (Yosef) best of all his sons, for he was the child of his old age; and he had made (**ve'asah וַעֲשֶׂה**) him an ornamented tunic.

Making of a garment here is the same word.

Shemot/Exodus 20:4

4You shall not **make for yourself** (**ta'eseh lekha תַּעֲשֶׂה-לְךָ**) a sculptured image, or any likeness of what is in the heavens above, or on the earth below, or in the waters under the earth.

We are not to make or fashion a idol. Something we would worship.

Shemot 20:8-10

8 Remember the sabbath day and keep it holy. 9 Six days you shall **labor (avodah) and do (va asiyta) all your work (kal mala'khateha)**, 10 but the seventh day is a sabbath of YEHOVAH ELOHEYKHA: you shall not **do/make (taasah) any work (kal mala'khah)**— you, your son or daughter, your male or female slave, or your cattle, or the stranger who is within your settlements.

All the items in made in Shemot/Exodus 36-39 were all made or asah. The effort to make them is Asah and the this is classified by the noun Mala'khah or work.. All the offerings in Vayikra offered up (made – asah) by the priest were Mala'khah Avodah. We can see that there are mostly construction or manufacturing is creating something and is work (mala'khah). Also, the caring for animals and farming is Mala'khah too. A servant or Slave does Mala'khah Avodah.

So how do we apply this today? Looking at the fact that we live in a service workforce we are servant in one form or another unless we work for ourselves. We all work for someone and receive wages for work we provide.

There was one more word we covered above which was burden. Both Yermiyahu and Nehemyah which was Massa' (mem-sin-aleph) reference number 4853. It is found in the BDB on page 672, 601 and in the NEHC on page 766. It is a masculine noun.

Loading a burden was a form of work for your animal as in most cases it was the animal or men.

Shemot/Exodus 23:4-5

4 When you encounter your enemy's ox or ass wandering, you must take it back to him. 5 When you see the ass of your enemy lying under **its burden (massa'o מַשָּׂא)** and would refrain from raising it, you must nevertheless raise it with him.

Bamidbar/Numbers 4:15, 18-19, 24-27, 29-32

15 When Aaron and his sons have finished covering the sacred objects and all the furnishings of the sacred objects at the breaking of camp, only then shall the Kohathites come and lift them, so that they do not come in contact with the sacred objects and die. These things in the Tent of Meeting shall be **the portorage (burden – massa' מַשָּׂא)** of the Kohathites.

18 Do not let the group of Kohathite clans be cut off from the Levites. 19 Do this with them, that they may live and not die when they approach the most sacred objects: let

Aaron and his sons go in and assign each of them to **his duties (avodatiy)** and to **his portorage (massa'o מַשָּׂאוֹ)**.

24 These are the **duties (avodat)** of the Gershonite clans as to **labor (avod)** and **portorage (ulemassa' וּלְמַשָּׂא)**: 25 they shall **carry (nas'u - bear)** the cloths of the Tabernacle, the Tent of Meeting with its covering, the covering of dolphin skin that is on top of it, and the screen for the entrance of the Tent of Meeting; 26 the hangings of the enclosure, the screen at the entrance of the gate of the enclosure that surrounds the Tabernacle, the cords thereof, and the altar, and all **their service (avodatam)** equipment and all their accessories; and they shall perform the **service (advadu)**. 27 All the **duties (avodat)** of the Gershonites, **all their portorage (lekal-massa'am לְכָל-מַשָּׂאָם)** and **all their service (kol-avodat)**, shall be performed on orders from Aaron and his sons; you shall make them responsible for attending to **all their portorage (kal massa'am כָּל-מַשָּׂאָם)**.

29 As for the Merarites, you shall record them by the clans of their ancestral house; 30 you shall record them from the age of thirty years up to the age of fifty, all who are subject to service in the performance of **the duties (avodat)** for the Tent of Meeting. 31 These are **their portorage (massa'am מַשָּׂאָם)** **tasks in connection with their various duties (lakal-'avodatam)** for the Tent of Meeting: the planks, the bars, the posts, and the sockets of the Tabernacle; 32 the posts around the enclosure and their sockets, pegs, and cords—all these furnishings and **their service (avodatam)**: you shall list by name the objects that are **their portorage [tasks] (massa'am מַשָּׂאָם)**.

Here we see that the burden of the Tabernacle was to the tribe of Levi under the direction of Haaron and his sons.

Nehemyah/Nehemiah 10:32

32 “The peoples of the land (va 'ami ha' aretz) who bring their wares and all sorts of foodstuff for sale on the sabbath day—we will not buy from them on the sabbath or a holy day.

This was part of the oath they took after returning to the land.. This was from the governor Nehemyah.

Nehemyah/Nehemiah 13:15-19

15 At that time I saw men in Judah treading winepresses on the sabbath, and others bringing heaps of grain and loading them onto asses, also wine, grapes, figs, and all sorts of **goods (burdens – massa' מַשָּׂא)**, and bringing them into Jerusalem on the sabbath. I admonished them there and then for selling provisions. 16 Tyrians who lived there

brought fish and all sorts of wares and sold them on the sabbath to the Judahites in Jerusalem. 17 I censured the nobles of Judah, saying to them, “What evil thing is this that you are doing, profaning the sabbath day! 18 This is just what your ancestors did, and for it Elohim brought all this misfortune on this city; and now you give cause for further wrath against Israel by profaning the sabbath!” 19 When shadows filled the gateways of Jerusalem at the approach of the sabbath, I gave orders that the doors be closed, and ordered them not to be opened until after the sabbath. I stationed some of my servants at the gates, so that no **goods (burden massa מַשָּׂא)** should enter on the sabbath.

Here we see that they were bring burdens into the city which was filled with things to sell that were under oath earlier not to do.

The other word we need to look at is Malakh (Messenger) 4397. It is the Masculine Noun.

You might ask why? Well this is a related word to work Mala'khah from the same root. Most version of scriptures translate this an angel but we see that this word is both for a divine being as well as a human being. We will focus on the Human usages for this word.

Messengers sent with a message.

Bereshit/Genesis 32:4-6

4Jacob sent **messengers (mal'akhim מַלְאָכִים)** ahead to his brother Esau in the land of Seir, the country of Edom, 5and instructed them as follows,” Thus shall you say, ‘To my lord Esau, thus says your servant Jacob: I stayed with Laban and remained until now; 6I have acquired cattle, asses, sheep, and male and female slaves; and I send this message to **my lord (Adoni)** in the hope of gaining your favor.’”

Devarim/Deuteronomy 2:26

26Then I sent **messengers (mal'akhim מַלְאָכִים)** from the wilderness of Kedemoth to King Sihon of Heshbon with an offer of peace, as follows,

Shofetim/Judges 6:35

34The spirit of YHVH enveloped Gideon; he sounded the horn, and the Abiezrites rallied behind him. 35And he sent messengers throughout Manasseh, and they too rallied behind him. He then sent **messengers (umal'akim וּמַלְאָכִים)** through Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, and they came up to meet the Manassites.

Shemuel Aleph/I Samuel 6:21

20And the men of Beth-shemesh asked, “Who can stand in attendance on YHVH, this holy Elohim? And to whom shall He go up from us?” 21They sent **messengers** (**mal’akim מַלְאָכִים**) to the inhabitants of Kiriath-jearim to say, “The Philistines have sent back the Ark of YHVH. Come down and take it into your keeping.”

All of these verses show one who works for another. Thus a messenger is a working one. We know the prophets were Yehovah’s messengers thus they work for him.

Prophets

Yeshayahu/Isaiah 44:26

26But confirm the word of **My/his servant** (**avado עַבְדוֹ**)

And fulfill the prediction of **My/his messengers**. (**mal’akayv מַלְאָכָיו**)

It is I who say of Jerusalem, “It shall be inhabited,”

And of the towns of Judah, “They shall be rebuilt;

And I will restore their ruined places.”

Haggai/Haggai 1:13

13And Haggai, Yehovah’s **messenger** (**mal’akh מַלְאָךְ**), fulfilling Yehovah’s mission, spoke to the people, “I am with you—declares Yehovah.”

The Priest is also a messenger

Mal’akhi/Malachi 2:7

7For the lips of a priest guard knowledge, And men seek rulings from his mouth; For he is a **messenger** (**mal’akh מַלְאָךְ**) of Yehovah of Hosts.

We see that messengers/workers here were not always angels/divine messengers or workers, as the text likes to translate but human messengers in these cases. So even Mal’akh is related in that these are workers as derived from Mel’akhah. What we see is that whether great effort is required or not Mel’akhah as work can be service (avad/Eved/Avodah) or made things (asah) or bearing burdens (Massa’). Thus, went one does one of these things they are probably working. We also saw that some activity, which would be related to serving, is selling on Shabbat. Something else we are shown not to do both from the prophets (nevi’im) and the writings (Ketuvim). Using the whole

Tanakh we don't have to define a list of proscribed work but can see actual examples to guide us in what we are trying to observe.