

## 1. Plowing

### החורש

1. The objective of this *av melachah* is to prepare the soil for seeding or planting. You may not plow in any degree and in any form, whether with a plow or another tool, or even by hand. Activities prohibited within this *melachah* include plowing, digging,<sup>1</sup> making a furrow,<sup>2</sup> leveling a small mound of earth, and filling up a hole or hollow in ground that is suitable for sowing.

2. Also included within this *melachah* are activities which do not involve working directly with the soil, but are equally designed to

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1. **Wheeling a Carriage on a Dirt Road** You are permitted to wheel a baby carriage, or a wheel chair for an invalid, on an unpaved street or on a dirt road where there is an *eruv*, since your intention is not to make a track or to level the ground. Moreover, the wheels only cause a depression in the ground, while the prohibition entails digging out the earth and causing a furrow or groove in the ground. Likewise, you are permitted to walk on sand or dirt with shoes that leave the impress of markings or designs that are on the heels.
  2. **Pulling a Chair or Table on the Ground** You are permitted to pull a chair, a bench, or a table along the ground, provided your intention is not to make a groove in the ground. However, if the object is very heavy and bulky, and it is inevitable that it will make a groove, you are not permitted to do so, even if you are indifferent to the groove's existence.

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prepare and improve the soil.<sup>3</sup> For example, you are prohibited from fertilizing soil in order to prepare it for planting, removing weeds from around the roots of trees, removing stones from the ground, and breaking up clods of earth.

3. Rabbinic prohibitions include activities such as sweeping a dirt floor<sup>4</sup> because it may involve leveling holes<sup>5</sup> in the ground.<sup>6</sup>

3. **Other Included Activities** These activities are classified as *toladot*, (subsidiary activities) but are nonetheless Torah prohibitions.
4. **Sweeping Unpaved Ground** You are prohibited from loosening the earth and leveling the ground in the field under the *Melachah* of Plowing, since it renders the ground fit for planting. Sweeping on a dirt floor inside a house or a bungalow is classified under the prohibition of Building (see *Melachah* 34, paragraph 10). Sweeping unpaved ground or an unpaved floor is deemed rabbinically forbidden because it is bound to result in displacing earth and leveling the ground or making grooves and holes in the ground. Even if you do not intend such leveling, it is still forbidden inasmuch as it is inevitable (פסיק רישיה) or because while preoccupied with sweeping you may forget and intentionally level the ground.
5. **Ball Playing** You may not play sports such as soccer, golf, or football on grass or earth as leveling out a hole in the ground is likely. Some permit children to play ball where there is an *eruv*, or in a private area where there is no likelihood that the ball will fall out of bounds. Ping Pong is likewise permitted. Of course, Jews young and old should give thought to finding activities which enhance the spirit of Shabbat.
6. **Sweeping and Cleaning a Floor** You may sweep a floor where the surface is paved or covered with flooring such as wood or linoleum. However, you may not clean the carpet with a carpet sweeper, even if it is not electric, as the greater degree of cleaning provided by the carpet sweeper renders its use עוברין דחול. You may not wash or mop the floor, unless it is a matter of great need. You may not wax or polish the floor.

## 2. Sowing

### הזרע

1. The objective of this *av melachah* is to advance and aid the growth of plants<sup>1</sup> for whatever purpose. You may not sow in any amount and in any form, whether with a tool, a machine, or by hand. Activities prohibited within this *melachah* include sowing a seed in soil (זרע), planting a tree (נוטע), bending a vine or twig underground to produce an independent plant (מבריך), grafting (מרכיב), and pruning the branches of a tree (זוקר).

2. Also included within the *melachah* (*toladot*) are activities which have the same purpose, although the nature of the *melachah* is different,

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1. **Growing Plants in a Flower Pot** You may not sow seeds or plant for growth, whether in the ground or in a flower pot that contains soil. The prohibition applies to a flower pot made of clay, wood, or other material, irrespective of whether it has an opening on the bottom and rests on the ground or not. A large flower pot that is fixed and immovable is in any case considered like planting in actual earth. Since the object of the *melachah* is to promote growth, you also may not remove a flower pot from a table or some other surface and place it on the bare ground if the pot has an opening on the bottom, as contact with the ground will facilitate its growth. Likewise, you may not remove it from the ground and stand it on planks or stakes, as this would violate the *Melachah* of Reaping (קוצר). In practice you are rabbinically prohibited even from lifting a perforated flower pot from the ground and suspending it in the air. You also may not place even a non-perforated flower pot on the ground or remove it from the ground. Indeed, a flower pot is considered *muktzeh* and may not be moved altogether.

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as for example, weeding out harmful plants, watering plants,<sup>2</sup> flowers,<sup>3</sup> or trees, soaking seeds such as wheat and barley in water thereby causing them to sprout and grow,<sup>4</sup> coating a tree with a substance to protect it from insects or from injury and decay, and smoking out or otherwise removing insects from a bush or a tree.

3. You may not throw seeds on ground that is wet or damp from the rain, as they may sprout or take root in the soil. You may not wash your hands over grass, even though you have no intent to water it.<sup>5</sup>

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2. **Watering Plants in a Flower Pot** You may not water flowers or plants, whether they are growing in the ground or in a flower pot. In the latter case, you are not allowed to water it even if the pot has no opening on the bottom and is not set on the ground.
  3. **Placing Cut Branches and Flowers in Water** You should not put cut branches and flowers into a vase with water on Shabbat, nor may you add water or change the water on Shabbat. You may, however, move a vase containing flowers on Shabbat, and, on Yom Tov, you may put branches in water. Therefore, on Sukkot, you may place your *Arba Minim* in water or into a moist towel.
  4. **Washing and Soaking Vegetables and Dried Fruits** You may wash cut vegetables to keep them from withering so as to eat them on Shabbat. You may soak grain in water to soften it for feeding cattle and animals, since there is not intention to have it sprout, but only to soak for a short time and then use it as fodder. You may spread seed as feed for chickens and fowl in small quantities, such that you would expect they will be consumed in a day or two and will not remain on the ground in the event that it rains after that. You may also soak raisins and dried fruits to be eaten on Shabbat, but not in order to make preserves.
  5. **Eating and Drinking in the Garden** If you eat or drink in a garden setting, you must be extremely careful not to spill on the grass. Some authorities advise avoiding such a setting altogether, while some take a lenient view with regard to serving wine and similar drinks, which if spilled onto the grass would tend to inhibit rather than to promote growth.

### 3. Reaping

#### הקוצר

1. The objective of this *av melachah* is to sever a plant from its place of growth. You therefore may not, by virtue of this *melachah*, cut the grain crop and produce in the field, cut grapes from the vine, or dates, figs and other fruit from their trees, when you perform these acts with a tool or a machine.

2. Also included within this *melachah (toladot)* are acts which involve detaching growing plants by hand (תולש), for example, plucking plants, flowers,<sup>1</sup> berries, and fruits that grow on trees, on bushes and in the soil,<sup>2</sup> or shaking a bush or a tree and knocking off its fruit. Furthermore, you may not detach mushrooms, moss and other fungi from wherever they are growing or plants growing in a perforated flower pot set directly on the ground or over it with no obstruction beneath it. *Halachah* considers removing the perforated flower pot with the plant from the ground and placing it on another surface a similar and prohibited act of detaching.

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1. **Reaping and Plucking** Plucking (תולש) by hand is a derivative of the *Av Melachah* of Reaping (קוצר), which necessarily involves a tool.
  2. **Smelling Fragrant Fruit and Flowers** While on a stroll in a garden, you are not permitted to smell any edible fruit, such as an *etrog* or an apple, while it is still attached to the tree or to the ground, for fear that you may inadvertently pluck it to eat it. However, you may smell a flower or an aromatic plant that is not edible, for *Chazal* had no such fear regarding inedible plants.

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3. *Chazal* prohibited activities which may lead to a violation of the *melachah*,<sup>3</sup> such as eating fruit that fell from a tree, or vegetables that were detached from the ground on Shabbat.<sup>4</sup> Also, you may not remove a honeycomb or honey from a beehive, climb a tree,<sup>5</sup> or make use of a tree by placing an object on it or removing the object from it.<sup>6</sup> *Chazal* also forbade riding an animal on Shabbat for fear that the rider will cut or break off a branch to use it as a whip to direct the animal.<sup>7</sup> You may not detach a plant that is growing in a non-perforated flower pot, or even lift the pot from the ground onto posts or onto the table or some other surface.

3. **Walking on the Grass** You may walk on grass, whether it is dry or moist, even if the grass is tall, and irrespective of whether or not you are wearing shoes, since you have no intention to tear the grass.
4. **Fruit Fallen from the Tree** You may not eat fruit that may have fallen from a tree on Shabbat or vegetables that may have dropped to the ground until Shabbat is over. They may not be handled, as well, because they are *muktzeh*. If fruit fell before Shabbat, you are not allowed to gather them, but you may pick them up and eat them one at a time.
5. **Climbing and Leaning on a Tree** *Chazal* sought to distance a Jew from using trees on Shabbat for fear that unfettered access would result in plucking their fruit or tearing off their leaves. As a result, trees have been placed essentially off limits on Shabbat, without regard to the intention of each climber or the status of every tree. Therefore, the prohibition applies even to a tree that is barren of fruit or leaves. Moreover, once trees were made off-limits, all interaction with trees was prohibited. For example, you should not lean against a tree, or even touch it, if it will move with your touch. However, if the tree is sturdy and immovable, you may lean against the trunk as long as you do not support your full weight on it (i.e., steadying your foot on a tree trunk in order to tie your laces). A tree stump is not included in this *gezerah* and is not subject to the above considerations.
6. **Use of a Swing or Hammock** Although the original restriction was to ensure that people would not remove fruit from the tree, the prohibition extends to any use of a tree. For example, you should not swing from a swing or hammock that is attached directly to trees. However, you may use a swing or hammock attached to hooks attached to a tree; since *Chazal's* enactment was intended as a safeguard against picking fruit, it does not apply to indirect uses of the tree.
7. **Riding an Animal or in a Wagon Drawn by an Animal** You may not ride an animal even when there is no likelihood of breaking off a branch to use as a whip. Just as *Chazal* placed trees off limits (see the previous note), they did so for animals as well. Therefore, you are likewise forbidden from making use of an animal by sitting or leaning on it while it is standing still, or by placing an article on it unless it is for its own benefit, such as a blanket to keep it warm. This applies to all animals regardless of their size. You are also forbidden from sitting in a wagon drawn by an animal, even when it is led or driven by a non-Jew. Apart from the fear of violating Shabbat by tearing off a branch, we are also obligated to allow the animal its due rest on Shabbat.

## 4. Binding Sheaves

### הַמְעַמָּר

1. The objective of this *av melachah* is to gather and bind or heap products that grow in the soil after they have been detached from the ground, as is customarily done with sheaves of grain. This *melachah* includes gathering corn, fruit, vegetables, flowers, wood, and other products that grow in the soil, and piling them up in a heap for storage or for sale.<sup>1</sup> Gathering these products in the field or in the garden is forbidden as soon as you do it in a quantity or in amounts in which they are minimally collected, such as two plants or two flowers, even if they were cut and detached before Shabbat.<sup>2</sup>

2. Also included within this *melachah (toladot)* are activities of a similar nature, such as collecting and pressing figs into a round cake, pressing other fruits into one mass, or piercing figs and inserting a cord through them and tying them together. You may not do this even in a

1. **Gathering Natural Products** The *melachah* involves only raw products in their natural state. It does not apply to grain or fruit that has been ground, cooked or baked. It also applies only to gathering natural products in their place of growth, but not in the house or in the courtyard.
2. **Making a Bouquet of Flowers** Making a bouquet of flowers is a violation of the *melachah* if it is done in the place where the flowers were grown. One should not, however, arrange flowers into a bouquet on Shabbat even elsewhere, as this is considered an act of *metaken* (perfecting an object).

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place other than where the fruit was grown, as it is normal to process the product in this manner in a building as well as in the field or orchard.

3. It is rabbinically forbidden to gather products such as salt and other minerals from where they are mined, even though they do not grow in the soil. Some authorities, however, maintain that this would be in actual violation of the *melachah*, as they understand the *melachah* to apply even to products that are not grown in the soil. You may not gather fruit that is strewn about over a considerable area in the courtyard, and heap them in a pile or put them into a basket, as this is considered a weekday activity (עִוְבְּדִיזֵן דְּחֹל). However, you may collect them individually and eat them. Furthermore, you may gather fruit and collect other articles such as household utensils scattered about the house.