

15. Dyeing

הצובע

1. The objective of this *av melachah* is to change permanently¹ the color of an object or substance. Activities prohibited by this *melachah* include dyeing fabrics, dyeing clothing, and painting a utensil or a wall. Applying a coat of whitewash or plaster to a wall violates two *melachot*—Dyeing for changing the color and Building for adding to the wall surface.

2. Also included² within this *melachah* are mixing or blending colors,³ mixing chemical solutions that effect a change in color, making color reaction tests for medical diagnosis, and dissolving coloring matter

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1. **Permanently** Although the Torah prohibition relates to permanent change, changing a color temporarily is rabbinically prohibited. Therefore, you may not use colored chalk on a sidewalk, even though the coloring will not last.
 2. **Other Included Activities** These activities are classified as *toladot*, but are nonetheless Torah prohibitions.
 3. **Wearing Photochromatic Eyeglasses** You may wear eyeglasses with lenses that darken and change color in sunlight. Even though the lenses have been sensitized to react when exposed to light, the person wearing the eyeglasses is not involved actively in the actual coloring of the lenses. Although you may not wear sunglasses in a public domain for fear that you will remove and carry them in the shade, these photochromatic eyeglasses resume their original state in ordinary light and, therefore, may be worn in the street, even where there is no *eruv*. Also, the prohibition against wearing sunglasses where there is no *eruv* applies only to non-prescription sunglasses.

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in water.⁴ However, the prohibition against dyeing does not apply to color changes to food which occur during standard preparation.⁵

3. *Chazal* included in this prohibition: adding coloring to food to improve its appearance for ornamental purposes or, as is the practice of merchants, so that the food will retain its color and fresh appearance for a longer time; and applying a coloring to the face, around the eyes or on other parts of the body.⁶ In addition, if possible, you should refrain from wiping your hands or lips with a cloth, when they are stained from eating or handling certain fruits, such as cherries and blueberries.⁷

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4. **Flushing a Toilet Containing a Cleansing Agent** You are allowed to flush a toilet where the tank contains a bowl cleaner and deodorizer that colors the water which flows into the toilet bowl, cleaning and disinfecting it and producing a pleasant odor. However, unless you need it to dispel a malodor in the room, you would be well advised to be stringent and remove it from the tank on Shabbat, if it is in your control to do so, as there are opinions that prohibit it.
 5. **Coloring Food and Beverages** You are permitted to put coloring into food or into a beverage that is being prepared for the meal on Shabbat, so long you do not intend only to add color, but rather to improve its flavor. For example, you may add instant tea or coffee to water, mix raspberry juice with water, put paprika into soup, and pour red wine into white wine, etc. However, you may not add coloring to cakes and other food products for ornamental and commercial purposes.
 6. **Use of Cosmetics** A woman may not color her face, paint her eyebrows or eyelids, dye her hair, or color her fingernails on Shabbat. As a woman, you are forbidden to apply nail polish, irrespective of whether it is colored or colorless. You may apply make-up powder to your face, as it does not adhere to the skin, provided it is not oil based or mixed with cream or ointment. As a practical measure, women are advised to apply cosmetics which last over Shabbat before Shabbat begins.
 7. **Causing Stains** Since many *poskim* do not consider coloring brought about by unwanted stains a violation, you may be lenient in wiping your stained hands on a cloth napkin if it is unavoidable. It is better to wash your hands first, or to use paper napkins which you then discard. Likewise, you should refrain, if possible, from applying a cloth to a superficial wound. If the bleeding is severe, you should apply the cloth directly to cover the wound and stem the flow of blood. You may always use a gauze bandage and absorbent cotton intended for this purpose and discarded upon use. Similarly, a woman may perform a *bedika* or insert a *moch dachuk* on Shabbat.

16. Spinning

הטווה

1. The objective of this *av melachah* is to draw out and twist fiber into yarn or thread, making it fit for weaving, sewing and the like. Activities prohibited by this *melachah* include producing yarn and thread from wool, flax, cotton, silk, hair, sinews, and other raw materials, irrespective of whether you spin it by hand or with a device such as a spinning wheel.

2. Also included within this *melachah* (*toladot*) are manufacturing plush and felt; twining threads; and twisting¹ or braiding strands together to form a cord or rope.

3. Rabbinic prohibitions include retwining a thread or strand that has unraveled.

1. **Twist-Ties** You are allowed to use twist ties to close plastic bags on Shabbat. The act of twisting in no way creates a thread, which is the objective of the *Melachah* of Spinning. It is also not a violation of the *Melachah* of Tying for two reasons, 1) the twist-tie is made to be opened and closed and is not permanent, and 2) there is no actual knot involved.



17. Stretching the Threads

הַמְסָךְ

1. The objective of this *av melachah* is to stretch out the threads of the loom,¹ extending them from the top to the bottom and thus forming the warp of the loom.

2. Also included within this *melachah* (*toladot*) is beating the threads so as to straighten and position them in the loom.

3. Stretching out yarn or threads of wool, silk and the like on a frame for knitting is likewise considered a transgression of this *melachah*.

1. **Weaving** The *avot melachot* discussed in chapters 17-19 involve the weaving process. Weaving is done by moving horizontal threads (woof) through tightly held vertical threads (warp).



18. Making Meshes

הַעוֹשָׂה שְׁנֵי בְּתֵי נִירִין

1. The objective of this *av melachah* is to insert and arrange the threads of the warp in the upper and lower sections of the loom in such a manner that when one is raised the other is lowered, thereby enabling the cross-roads of the shuttle to intersect and the threads of the woof to interlace with the threads of the warp.

2. Also included within this *melachah* (*toladot*) are meshing material to make a sieve, a sifter, a basket or a net; interweaving ropes or other material to make a bed; or constructing anything made out of two meshes.

3. Prohibited activities include intertwining flowers to form a wreath or a garland of flowers, and meshing wires to make a wire netting.



19. Weaving

האורג

1. The objective of this *av melachah* is to form a cloth by interlacing threads of the warp and the woof in the loom. Activities prohibited by this *melachah* include weaving, knitting, and embroidering. Lanyard, the popular children's craft activity, is prohibited as well.

2. Also included within this *melachah* (*toladot*) are smoothening and disentangling threads in order to even the woof, plaiting threads, braiding strands of detached hair, and interweaving slats of wood or other materials, as in the construction of a fence, a window shutter, or a cane chair.

3. *Chazal* also prohibited the braiding of hair.¹

1. **Braiding Hair** The *Melachah* of Weaving applies in the case of braiding hair when it is detached. Braiding a wig, however, as the *Mishnah Berurah* explains, is still only rabbinically prohibited, since the braids are not permanent and will eventually be undone. As such, he categorized it as one of the instances where the principle of *mutav yihyu shoggegin* is applied. The Rabbis also prohibited braiding hair attached to your head, but not under the *Melachah* of Weaving; rather this falls under the *Melachah* of Building. (See *Melachah* 34, paragraph 11 and notes.)



20. Separating the Threads

הַפּוֹצֵעַ שְׁנֵי חוּטֵינ

1. The objective of this *av melachah* is to separate woven material into its component threads for some constructive purpose. Activities prohibited in this *melachah* include separating the threads of the warp from those of the woof, or vice versa, for the purpose of repairing the weave; detaching the threads in order to remove the woven fabric from the web of the loom; and separating threads in order to interweave a torn thread.

2. Also included in this *melachah (toladot)* are unraveling the threads of a woven or knitted garment, or removing threads from a sewn or stitched garment for the purpose of repairing or improving it.

3. *Chazal* also prohibited separating tangled threads and tearing off a piece from a layer of cotton. Removing the basting threads from a sewn garment violates this *melachah* and is also prohibited because it is the finishing touch to the garment.¹

1. **Use of Absorbent Cotton** If you use absorbent cotton to bandage or swab a wound, or to clean a baby on Shabbat, it is better not to tear a roll of cotton, but to prepare a supply of individual cotton balls or to purchase a bag of individual cotton balls before Shabbat.