

The 39 Prohibited Categories of Creative Labor

Class 1

משנה מסכת שבת פרק ז משנה ב

אבות מלאכות ארבעים חסר אַחת. הזרע. והחורש. והקוצר. והמעמר. הדש. והזרה. הבורר. הטוחן. והמרקד. והלש. והאופה. הגוזז את הצמר. המלבנו. והמנפצו. והצובעו. והטווה. והמסך. והעושה שני בתי גירין. והאורג שני חוטין. והפוצע שני חוטין. הקושר. והמתיר. והתופר שתי תפירות. הקורע על מנת לתפר שתי תפירות. הצד צבי. השוחטו. והמפשיטו. המולחו והמעבד את עורו. והמוחקו. והמתכו. הכותב שתי אותיות. והמוחק על מנת לכתב שתי אותיות. הבונה. והסותר. המכבה. והמבעיר. המכה בפטיש. המוציא מרשות לרשות. הרי אלו אבות מלאכות ארבעים חסר אַחת:

The 39 primary categories of creative labor are:

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|------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Sowing | 21. Tying/Knotting |
| 2. Plowing | 22. Untying |
| 3. Reaping | 23. Sewing two stitches |
| 4. Binding Sheaves/Gathering | 24. Tearing in order to sew two stitches |
| 5. Threshing | 25. Capturing/Trapping a deer |
| 6. Winnowing | 26. Slaughtering |
| 7. Selecting/Sorting | 27. Flaying/Skinning |
| 8. Grinding | 28. Salting/Tanning |
| 9. Sifting | 29. Smoothing/Scraping of its hairs |
| 10. Kneading | 30. Scoring ¹ |
| 11. Baking/Cooking | 31. Measured Cutting |
| 12. Shearing | 32. Writing two letters |
| 13. Whitening/Scouring | 33. Erasing in order to write two letters |
| 14. Hackling/Combing | 34. Building |
| 15. Dyeing | 35. Demolishing |
| 16. Spinning | 36. Extinguishing |
| 17. Stretching the Threads/Warping | 37. Kindling |
| 18. Making two meshes/heddles | 38. Striking with a hammer |
| 19. Weaving two threads | 39. Carrying out from one domain to another |
| 20. Dividing two threads | |

Divisions

1 - 11

The Order of Bread

12 - 24

The Order of Garments

25 - 31

The Order of Hides

32 - 39

The Order of Construction

1. The Mishnah states salting and tanning. The Gemarah explains they are the same and as such places scoring משרטט in to the list of 39.

Primary Reason:

לא תעשה כל מלאכה - You shall not do any creative labor.

These are defined as the 39 forms of labor used in creating the Mishkan, the Tabernacle. (This is hinted to in the proximity of this prohibition to the discussion of the construction of the Mishkan.)

Division Reasons:

The Order of Bread

1. The steps needed to produce from the ground up the לחם הפנים, the Show Bread
2. The process of producing the herbs needed for creating dyes for use in the constructions

The Order of Garments

The process of fabricating the curtains used in the construction

The Order of Hides

The process of preparing the skins of the תחש, the Tachash (a species of animal with particularly beautiful fur) for use on the top covering of Mishkan.

The Order of Construction

The process of creating, assembling, and working with the beams and other framework in the construction of the Mishkan

וְהִזְרִיעַ - Sowing

What:

Any act that begins or facilitates plant growth including:

Sowing, Planting, Watering, Sunning Plants

Do:

Urinating on the Grass.

Putting cut flowers back in to their vase if they spill out.

Don't:

Don't discard your pits and cores where they can grow.

Removing rubbish and leaves from a lawn.

Placing a potted plant over (even hanging) the ground.
Specifically opening the shades for your plants to let the sun in.
Picnicking on the lawn since drinks will likely spill.
Washing ones hands over the grass.
Pull off weak leaves to strengthen the plant

החורש - Plowing

What:

Any action making the ground more usable for growing plants including:
Plowing, Digging, Fertilizing, Leveling Dirt

Do:

Let kids play in a dry sandbox
Walk on soft soil (compressing the dirt)
Push a carriage forward on soft dirt lifting to turn to avoid making sideways digs
Play marbles on a mat or table

Don't:

Dragging a heavy item on loose ground
Pull out weeds
Remove rocks or twigs from the ground
Sweeping outside on the dirt
Rub phlegm in to the soil
Preparing a pot with soil for potted plants
Play marbles outside
Rinse or wash all types of floors