

THE SHABBOS WEEKLY

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If someone carelessly scraped his shoe on my Shabbos trousers, may I dust it off?

The *gemora Shabbos* 147a says that one who shakes his garment on Shabbos violates a Torah transgression, and is required to bring a sacrifice. *Rashi*¹ explains the *gemora* to be referring to shaking **dust** off one's clothes. The *Rama* quotes this opinion and is the accepted *halacha*.² Therefore one may not dust jackets, hats, and trousers, or any clothing. It is irrelevant whether one dusts one's clothing with a brush, a rag or with one's hand, the point is that one is **cleaning** clothes. There are other criteria involved, see further. The *Mishna Berura* suggests that one be careful, on Shabbos, not to place one's hat on a dusty surface, because it might easily lead to the desecration of the Shabbos.

Is there a difference whether they are Shabbos trousers or regular trousers?

The *gemora* continues that this prohibition only applies to **new** and **dark** clothing, and to clothing one is **meticulous** about being dirty. **New** is defined as a garment that still looks fresh and new, see footnote.³ **Dark** is a criteria; because dust on a light colored-garment goes unnoticed and dusting it is not considered cleaning.

¹ Other *Rishonim* explain the *gemora* as referring to shaking dew off one's clothes. See further.

² *M"B* 302:6

³ *M"B* 302:1. The *Bi'ur Halacha* quotes the *Chayei Adam* who says that we do not know until when a garment is considered **new**. The *B"H* concludes that therefore it is advised to brush dust with a *shinui* – in a back-handed manner.

What if I would wear those clothes without dusting?

Clothing that one normally wears without bothering to dust before wearing may be dusted on Shabbos, because it is not considered "dirty", and hence the dusting is not called cleaning.

Clothing that one would not wear without carefully dusting beforehand, may not be dusted and cleaned on Shabbos, even without the aid of water.

Therefore, Shabbos trousers, suits and hats – **dark** clothing that usually look **new**, may not be dusted on Shabbos, because one is *makpid* – meticulous about their appearance, and dusting them involves a Torah prohibition.

Even though the *Mechaber* did not prohibit dusting clothes, Sephardim should also refrain from dusting clothes on Shabbos.⁴

What is the halacha with regards to shaking off dandruff and feathers?

We must differentiate between dirt that has penetrated a garment, where the laws of *libun* (cleansing of garments) are applicable, and dirt that sits atop the garment. "Cleaning" a garment applies to cloth which has become dirty: consequently feathers and straw may even be stuck between the threads, but they do not "dirty" or soil the garment, and therefore removing feathers and straw from a garment is not "cleaning" it. One may even remove dust sitting **on top** of a jacket, because in such a case the jacket is not "dirty". A dusty sleeve or trouser leg may be **lightly** dusted to remove the outer layer of dust that has not penetrated the garment, but extreme care must be taken not to

⁴ *Ohr Letzion* vol.2 24-1.

overdo it, because there is only a fine line between dust that has penetrated the garment and the dust that has not. Dandruff also rides ones shoulders and may be gently patted off one's clothes.

Is one permitted to shake out a wet raincoat or a wet sweater?

Other *Rishonim*⁵ explain the above-mentioned *gemora* (*Shabbos* 147a) as referring to clothing **wet** from **dew**. The *Shulchan Aruch* explains that shaking such a garment is as effective as laundering, and therefore one would be violating the transgression of *libun*. All the same criteria apply as were mentioned with dusting, i.e. **new**, **dark** and **meticulous**. Therefore, when one takes in a jacket, which was left in the open overnight and is drenched with dew or if after one comes in from the rain and removes a rain-drenched suit, one must take care not to shake out the dew/rain, as it involves a Torah prohibition.

Is one really not allowed to fold one's tallis on Shabbos?

Rashi tells us in the *Mishna* in *Shabbos* 113a, that the reason one is forbidden to fold clothes is because it is as if one is repairing them. Either folding into their creases 'repairs' them⁶ by accenting the folds, or folding irons out⁷ the creases.

Based on the *gemora*, the *Mechaber*⁸ teaches us that when certain conditions are complied with, one may fold one's clothes. The conditions are:

1. One needs to wear these clothes again that *Shabbos*, and is folding them to keep them in good condition.
2. One must fold them by himself, without the aid of a second person. The *Mishna Berura*⁹ says that it needs to be folded in midair and not on a bench etc.
3. The clothes have not yet been laundered. The *M'B* explains that

⁵ *Tosefos* and others.

⁶ *Rashi* in the *Mishna*.

⁷ *Kol Bo* brought down in the *Bais Yosef*

⁸ *Simon* 302:3

⁹ *Simon* 302:14

before laundering they are still a bit stiff and do not crease easily, hence folding them does not appear to be much of an improvement.

4. Only **white** clothes may be folded. It is more of an improvement to fold **colored** clothes.
5. One does not have other clothes to wear besides these ones.

Accordingly, one is forbidden to fold one's *tallis*, as some of the conditions are not applicable. The first one being that the *tallis* is only worn for *shacharis*. Also, the *tallis* may have been dry-cleaned or washed.

However, the *Mechaber* quotes the *Mordechai* who holds that one may fold any garment not on its original folds. Hence one is allowed to fold a *tallis* in a different manner than one usually does.

Vort on the Parsha

(35:18) **וַיְהִי בְּצָאת נְפָשָׁה כִּי מַתָּה**

The *Zohar Hakadaush* writes that Rachel died because Yaakov Avinu said to Lavan that whoever stole the *teraphim* shall not live. Words are like swords that can harm. Rav Sternbuch relates that when he came to Eretz Yisrael, he heard R' Aharon Rokach, the Belzer Rebbe referred to *Shabbos* violators as Jews who do not know how to differentiate between *Shabbos* and Sunday. He would not refer to them in a derogatory manner because words are harmful and he did not want to refer badly to Jews.

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Note: The purpose of this series is intended solely for the clarification of the topics discussed and not to render halachic decisions. It is intended to heighten everyone's awareness of important practical questions which do arise on this topic. One must consult with a proper halachic authority in order to receive *p'sak*.