

☞ chapter twenty ☜

Kashering Utensils for Pesach and Year Round

I. Kashering Utensils

Kashering is the method used on *treife* utensils to allow their use with kosher food, or on *chometzdike* utensils to allow their use on *Pesach*. Although theoretically one can *kasher* a dairy utensil so that it can be used for meat (or vice versa), it is customary not to do so. However, a *chometzdike* utensil that was used for meat, may be *kashered* for *Pesach* and used for dairy foods on *Pesach*.¹

Being that the laws of *kashering* utensils are quite complex, the purpose of this chapter is to summarize the basic principles of *kashering*, and to list various circumstances that may arise in one's house. One should consult a *Rov* for all the exact details prior to attempting the *kashering* process by himself.

II. Methods of Kashering

There are several methods of *kashering* utensils. This chapter will focus on the three most frequently used methods.

1. מג"א סי' תק"ט ס"ק י"א, ועיי מ"ב ס"ק כ"ה, ועיי דרכי תשובה י"ד סי' קכ"א ס"ק נ"ט, אם ה"ה בליבוון, ועיי סי' תנ"א ס"ק י"ט.

A. הגעלה - Hagalah

The underlying principle of *kashering* by means of *hagalah* is כבולעו כך פולטו. This means that the method by which the *issur* is removed must be similar to the manner in which the *issur* was absorbed.² For example, a utensil that was used to cook liquid foods directly on the fire (i.e. a pot or a stirring spoon) must be *kashered* in a vessel filled with liquid which is resting on the fire (as will be explained below). *Hagalah* is accomplished by immersing the utensil in boiling water, thereby extracting and diluting all remains of *treife* or *chometzdike* food that may have been absorbed by the utensil. This method is used to *kasher* pots, spoons, forks, and other similar utensils, which were either not used directly on the fire, or according to most *poskim*, those that were used directly on the fire but while the food was in a liquid state.³ One who is unable to do *hagalah* on a utensil, may use either of the two methods of *libun* (discussed below) to *kasher* the utensil.⁴

2. סי' תנ"א ס"ק ל"ה.
3. ס"ק כ"ז.
4. עיי ס"ק י"א וס"ק ל"ב.

B. ליבון – Libun

Libunis accomplished by heating a utensil until it becomes red hot, thereby burning out the *dovor ho'assur*. This is accomplished by heating the utensil on a flame or in an oven without any water in the utensil. One may also use a blowtorch to perform this method of *kashering*. There are two methods of *kashering* utensils via *Libun*.⁵

a. ליבון גמור - Libun Gomur

Libun gomur is accomplished by heating a utensil until it becomes red hot. The utensil should be heated to such a degree that if one were to scrape the side of the utensil, sparks would fly out. This method of *kashering* is normally used to *kasher* utensils which were used directly on a flame without water in the utensil (e.g. a spit or baking pan).

b. ליבון קל - Libun Kal

Libun kal is accomplished by heating a utensil until the heat penetrates. Sufficient heat must penetrate to the inside of the utensil so that if one were to place a tissue on the inside wall of the utensil, the tissue would catch fire or show scorch marks. This method is used to *kasher* a utensil where *hagalah* is not possible or insufficient.

III. Materials Which Can be Kashered

One may only *kasher* a utensil made of wood or metal. Utensils made from earthenware, china, or porcelain that were used for hot foods may not be *kashered*.⁶ A competent *halachic* authority should be consulted with regard to *kashering* plastic.⁷ If a utensil made of one of the above materials was used strictly for cold items, it may be *kashered* by a process known as *מילוי ועירוי*. This is accomplished by completely immersing the utensil in cold water for 24 consecutive hours,

5. ס"ק ל"א, ושר"ע ורמ"א שם.
6. שר"ע סעי' א', ועי' אג"מ או"ח ח"ב סי' צ"ב, ועי' מ"ב ס"ק קס"ג.
7. לפי הגר"מ פיינשטיין אינו יכול, ולפי הגר"י קמנצקי ורב הענקין יכול.

and then changing the water and repeating this process two more times.⁸ Formica surfaces (e.g. counter tops or tables) preferably should not be *kashered* at all.⁹ For use on *Pesach*, they should be washed down and covered properly. Glassware should not be *kashered*, even if it was only used with cold foods.¹⁰

Any utensil that may get ruined during the *kashering* process may not be *kashered*, since *Chazal* were concerned that the owner will not *kasher* the utensil properly for fear of damaging it.¹¹

IV. הגעלה - Hagalah

Hagalah purges any taste of *treife* or *chometzdike* food that may have been absorbed into the walls of a utensil. However, *hagalah* has no effect on any actual food, dirt, or residue that may be on the surface of the utensil. Consequently, it is imperative that one clean the entire utensil thoroughly before making *hagalah*. One should also remove all rust spots on the inside surface of the utensil, since it is possible that particles of food are trapped between the utensil and the rust that is on the inside surface. However, one does not need to be concerned about removing rust stains, for no food particles can be trapped underneath them.¹² If a rust spot or any other surface material cannot be removed, *libun kalmust* be performed on that area prior to performing *hagalah*.¹³

Before doing *hagalah*, one must wait at least 24 hours from the last time the utensil was used with heat.¹⁴ One should then fill a pot (the pot may be a *chometzdike* or *kosher l'pesachdike* pot) with clear water. The water should be heated until it reaches its boiling point, and large bubbles appear (approx. 212 degrees F). This pot may now be used to

8. ס"ק ק"ח, ועי' י"ד סי' קל"ה סו"י.

9. ספר הל' פסח (מר"ש איירער) בשם הגר"מ פיינשטיין, ועי' ציון 7 לעיל.

10. ס"ק קנ"ד.

11. סעי' א'.

12. עי' רמ"א בסעי' ה', ועי' מ"ב ס"ק מ"ג.

13. סעי' ג', ועי' ס"ק כ"ה.

14. תנ"ב סעי' א', ומ"ב שם.

kasher utensils (i.e. those utensils which are listed in IIA and are not made out of those materials excluded in III).¹⁵ In order to use the *kashering* pot after the *kashering* process is completed, one should insert either a hot stone or hot piece of metal into the pot while it is boiling, causing the water to flow over the top. Alternatively, one may *kasher* this pot by immersing it in a larger pot of boiling water.¹⁶ When inserting a utensil into the hot water with tongs or pliers, one must change the position of the tongs where they grip the utensil, so that the entire utensil will come in contact with the water. For this reason, it is preferable to insert the *treife* or *chometzdi*ke utensils into the *kashering* utensil using a perforated basket. (Even if one uses a perforated basket, one must make sure that every part of the utensil is *kashered*. This can be accomplished by shaking the basket in the water.) One may immerse two utensils simultaneously, but care must be taken that they do not touch each other.¹⁷ One need not immerse the utensils for more than just a few seconds.¹⁸ After being immersed, the utensils should be rinsed with cold water.¹⁹ The pot of water should remain on the fire during the entire process of *hagal*ah, so that the water remains as hot as possible during the entire procedure. When many utensils are *kashered* in the same pot, the water usually decreases in temperature. Therefore, if the water stops bubbling, one should wait a few seconds until the water reheats.²⁰ If the water turns thick or filmy like brine, it should be changed. Therefore, when *kashering* many utensils in the same pot, the water should be changed periodically, since dirt and residue from the utensils will cloud the water.²¹

V. ליבון - Libun

One does not need to wait 24 hours from the last time a utensil was used before performing *libun* on a utensil.²² Furthermore, although there is no requirement to *scrub* the utensil clean before *kashering* it through *libun*, it is still preferable to do so.²³ One may perform *libun* by using a flame, blowtorch, or charcoal. Likewise, one may place the pot inside an oven while running the self-cleaning process. When performing *libun kal*, it is sufficient to place the pot into the oven while heating the oven at its highest temperature for one and a half hours.²⁴ There is no requirement to rinse the pot with cold water after the *kashering* process of *libun* has been completed.²⁵

VI. Practical Applications:

A. Ovens

The *poskim* dispute whether one is required to do *libun gomur* when *kashering* an oven or if *libun kal* is sufficient. Rav Moshe Feinstein rules that an oven requires *libun gomur*. Gas and electric ovens do not reach the temperature required for *libun gomur*, even at their highest settings. Therefore, since it is not practical and quite hazardous to do *libun gomur* on contemporary ovens by using a flame or blowtorch, one must clean the entire oven and line the inside with aluminum foil, or use an oven insert, in order to permit its use on *Pesach*. One who has a self-cleaning oven, may *kasher* it by running it through the self-cleaning cycle, thereby performing *libun gomur*. Other *poskim* are more lenient and permit one to *kasher* an oven by performing *libun kal*.²⁶ Prior to *kashering* an oven with *libun kal*, one should remove all of the racks. (The racks should be *kashered* separately using *libun gomur*). When performing *libun kal*, one should first spray an abrasive cleaner (i.e.

15. סק"ז.

16. סעי' ו', ומ"ב ס"ק ב"ט.

17. סעי' ד' וס"ק ב"ג.

18. שעה"צ סק"ג.

19. ס"ק ל"ד.

20. סק"ח וס"ק י"ג.

21. רמ"א סעי' ה', ועיי' מ"ב ס"ק ב"ז.

22. דרכי משה יו"ד סי' קכ"א ס"ק ט"ו, וערוה"ש שם.

23. פמ"ג מ"ז סי' תנ"א סק"ז.

24. ספר הל' פסח פרק ט"ו הע' קי"ג.

25. ע"י ספר הגעלת כלים פי"ב הע' ו'.

26. שם פט"ז הע' קל"ז וקמ"ב.

Dow® or Easy-Off®) on the oven walls, floor, and on the door (including the glass). After all the areas are covered with the cleaner, the oven should be heated to 300 degrees for about 20 minutes. After this is done, the oven should be scrubbed with a brush, using cold water and soap to remove all dirt. One should be careful to remove any baked-on dirt or grease. After completing all of these steps, one may finish *kashering* the oven by heating it to approximately 500 degrees for one and a half hours.

B. Microwave Ovens

One may not use a microwave for 24 hours prior to *kashering* it. The microwave should be thoroughly cleaned prior to *kashering* it. After cleaning the microwave, one should insert a cup of water and heat the microwave until a thick cloud of steam forms and fills the oven (approximately 15-20 minutes). One should then perform עירוי (pouring hot water from a *kli rishon*, i.e. the cup that was just heated in the microwave or from a teakettle) on to the spot where the cup was placed, because the spot that the cup previously occupied was not *kashered*. According to many *poskim*, the previous method applies only to a microwave made of stainless steel.²⁷ However, if the walls of the microwave are made of plastic, they should be cleaned and properly covered (e.g. contact paper, cardboard). When inserting items into such a microwave, one should insert them in a closed container. Preferably, the microwave should also be *kashered* prior to covering it.²⁸

27. לפי הגר"מ פיינשטיין, ועיי' ציון 7 לעיל.
28. כך שמעתי מהגר"י בעלסקי שליט"א כדי לחוש לשני שיטות הובא לעיל בציון 7, והוא היה מסופק אם אחר שכבר הוכשרה בהגעלת מים אם צריך שני כיסים לכל מאכל שהכניס לשם או אפשר שסגני גם בכיסוי אחד.

C. Gas Ranges

To *kasher* a gas range, one should thoroughly clean the stovetop, and then cover the entire surface with many layers of foil with the shiny side facing down. Alternatively, one can place a *blech* on top of the stove (the *chometzdike blech* may be used). One should then turn on all the burners to their highest level. After 5-6 minutes one should carefully check if *libun gomur* has been accomplished, by checking for a glowing red color on the stovetop.²⁹

D. Stainless Steel Sinks

One may not use a sink for 24 hours prior to *kashering* it. One should clean the sink thoroughly, paying special attention to the faucet and drain areas, removing any dirt that may have built up. One must clean all exposed parts of the sink, such as exposed pipes and underlips. One should also clean the back splash and faucet. Many sinks have crevices around the drain cover. If these cannot be cleaned thoroughly, *libun kal* should be performed on those areas, or they should be covered. In order to *kasher* the sink, one should take a *kli rishon* of hot water and pour it over the entire sink. One should preferably heat a stone or a piece of metal on the fire, and then, while pouring the boiling water on the surface to be *kashered*, move the stone over the surface. Afterwards, one should rinse the sink with cold water. Sinks made of porcelain cannot be *kashered*, and should be used with a plastic insert.³⁰

29. כך שמעתי מהגר"י בעלסקי שליט"א.
30. כך שמעתי מהגר"י בעלסקי שליט"א.