

כל דבר אשר יבא באש תעבירו באש וטהר, אך במי נדה יתחטא

"All vessels that were used in fire, pass them through fire and they shall be pure, but in the "Mei Nidda" they must be purified."

Klal Yisrael has just vanquished the nation of Midyan. Prior to the division of the spoils, the Torah commands that all metal vessels that were taken from the spoils must be purified before they can be used. Rashi explains that this purification was a two-step process. The first step was to "kasher" the vessels from the non-kosher food that may have been absorbed in them. This was done by passing them directly through a fire (for the vessels that were used for cooking directly on the fire), or by washing them (for those that were only used with cold food). However, following this step, an additional process was required - immersion in a Mikve. This second step is not connected in any way with absorbed food, rather was a spiritual purification. Through the immersion in the Mikve, the vessels were elevated from the lowly state of being the possession of an Akum, to being the property of a Yid. Just as a Ger must undergo an immersion in a Mikve to elevate himself to the holiness of being a Yid, similarly the vessels of an Akum need to be sanctified through a Mikve¹.

This Mitzva, given to us at Milchemes Midyan, applies to all Keilim purchased from an Akum, and is known as "Tevilas Keilim".

As we explained, Rashi understood this Mitzva to be Min Hatorah from this Pasuk. (וכ"כ בתרגום יונתן) The Ramban argues that this Mitzva is only Midrabanan, and the Passuk is referring to purification with the ashes of the Poroh Adumah, not Tevilas Keilim. Most Rishonim concur with Rashi, and even the Ramban himself does not opine conclusively. In any case, all agree that a Brocho is required².

I. Some of the details of this Mitzva are as follows:

1) Prior to using a vessel purchased from an Akum, one must immerse it in a Mikve. This is only required if one wishes to use it for food and the surface will touch the food. One is not required to Toivel the Keli as soon as it is purchased³.

2) In the Torah only metal Keilim are mentioned. However, the Gemara (ע"ז ע"ה ע"ב) equates glass to metal since they both can be melted down, and therefore glass Keilim also require Tevilah⁴. There is a discussion in the Poskim if glass is compared to metal even Midoraysah or it is only a rabbinical decree. Either way, even glass Keilim require a Bracha on their Tevilah⁵.

¹ירושלמי ע"ז פ"ה ה' ט"ו

²ע' תוס' יומא ע"ח ע"א, רי"ף בע"ז דף ע"ה וברשב"א וברא"ש שם, דכולם ס"ל דהוה דאורייתא. וכ"מ מהרשב"א בתו"ה ש"ז ב"ד. וכ"פ הרמב"ם מא"ס פי"ה ה"ה לפמש"כ הרשב"א בשו"ת ח"ג ס' רנ"ה וכן בביאור הגר"א ס"ק ל"ז ובתרוה"ד ס' רנ"ז. אמנם בתוס' רי"ד בע"ז שם ובכל בו ס' פ"ו ובפר"ח ביו"ד ק"כ כתבו דהוה דרבנן וכפשוטו לשון הרמב"ם שם דהוה "מדברי סופרים". ובישועות יעקב שם כתב כן בשם רוב פוסקים, ולכאורה זה אינו נכון דרובם ס"ל דהוה דאורייתא וצ"ע

³לשון הטור יו"ד ס' ק"כ "אסור להשתמש בהן"

⁴וכ"פ בשו"ע יו"ד ס' ק"כ ס"א

⁵ע"ש במאירי, ובאו"ה שער נ"ח כתב דהוה ספק חרס ספק מתכת ומ"מ שם בס' פ"ב כתב דמברכין. וע' פר"ח שם ס"ק ג' שכתב דהוה דרבנן ובד"ת השיג עליו בראיות. אמנם בקרית ספר למבי"ט ובפמ"ג או"ח ס' תנ"א ס"ק ו' ובשאג"א ס' נ"ו ובנו"ב מה"ת יו"ד ס' קמ"ב ובערוה"ש כולם כאחד אומרים דזכוכית חייב רק מדרבנן, ומ"מ הרבה מהם הזכירו דחייב לברך, ככל מצוה דרבנן דמברך "וצונו" - והיכן צונו מלא תסור

3) As far as plastic Keilim are concerned, there is obviously no mention of it in the Gemara and Rishonim, as plastic is a relatively recent invention. As such, most Poskim say that although it can be melted like metal and glass (see above #2), we cannot make up decrees on our own. Therefore they do not require Tevilah. However some Poskim require Tevilah without a Bracha since it's properties are comparable to glass and metal. (There are various minhagim regarding this, for practical Shailos ask a Rov.)⁶

4) Unglazed earthenware, stoneware, and wooden Keilim do not require Tevilah. (שו"ע שם) In regard to porcelain and china dishes, although there is basis to not require Tevilah, many have the minhag to Toivel without a Bracha⁷. Glazed Keilim should be Toiveled without a Bracha⁸.

5) Disposable dishes and cups are exempt, since they do not have the status of a Keili. (שו"ת מנחת יצחק ח"ה) (ס' ל"ב) For this reason they also should not be used for Kiddush and Bentching, unless under extenuating circumstances. The same would apply with soda cans and the like⁹.

If one uses the "disposable" vessel more than once, some Poskim require Tevilah¹⁰. However, R' Moshe Feinstein ZT"L paskened, that as long as the vessel is not going to last for extended use it does not require Tevilah¹¹. (Many "disposable" Keilim that are sold nowadays, can last for extended use and may require Tevilah, for practical שאלות ask a Rov.)

6) One only needs to Toivel a Keli once he has purchased it. If one is only borrowing, renting, or otherwise using the Keli of an Akum, it does not require Tevilah¹². Therefore for example, in a hotel owned by an Akum one may use a clean glass cup for cold drinks since he is using the cup of an Akum. However, if the hotel is owned by a Yid, then one must be sure that the Keilim were Toiveled before using them¹³.

If one found an abandoned Keili that was owned previously by an Akum, there is a Machlokes Acharonim if the Keili requires Tevilah¹⁴.

7) A common issue that is debated by the Acharonim is regarding Mechiras Chametz. Since the dishes used all year long often have chametz stuck to them, it was common for people to include in their Mechiras Chametz contract all of their dishes. This poses a problem, since upon the conclusion of Pesach and their re-acquisition of their dishes, they have in essence purchased dishes from an Akum and they would require Tevilah. Most Poskim agree that in such a case Tevilah would be necessary, albeit without a bracha. They therefore suggest that to avoid this problem, only the chametz that is stuck on the dishes should be sold, not the dishes themselves¹⁵. Others are of the opinion that even if one sold the dishes they would not need Tevilah¹⁶.

⁶ע' שו"ת חלקת יעקב ח"ב ס' קס"ג ובציץ אליעזר ח"ז ס' ל"ז וכן אומרים בשם החזו"א דאין לנו לחדש גזירות, אמנם בשו"ת מנחת יצחק ח"ג ס' ע"ו מחייב טבילה בלא ברכה וכ"פ ר' משה שטרנבוך שליט"א

⁷אמת ליעקב שם ויד אפרים ופת"ת שם

⁸יוסף אומץ עמ' 345, נוהג כצאן יוסף עמ' פ"ז. וע' פמ"ג מש"ז ס' תנ"א ס"ק ל"א ובערוה"ש ודע"ת שם. וע"ע שאילת יעב"ץ ח"א ס' ס"ז

⁹ע' שו"ת אגרות משה או"ח ח"ג ס' ל"ט שכ"כ מטעם דאין לו שום חשיבות

¹⁰כך שמעתי בשם החזו"א

¹¹כך הביא משמו בס' טבילת כלים

¹²שו"ע שם

¹³הובא שם עמ' פ"ט בשם החזו"א והגר"ח קנייבסקי והגר"מ פיינשטיין

¹⁴הכלי חמדה עה"ת על אתר פוטר, בהסבירו שמשה"ה רק במלחמת מדין הצריכו טבילה דלא זכו מן ההפקר ומתורץ קושיית

הרמב"ן ע"ש, ובשו"ת הר צבי יו"ד ס' ק"ט חולק עליו

¹⁵חכ"א כלל ע"ג ס"ג, קש"ע ס' קי"ד ס"ב, שו"ת חת"ס או"ח ס' ק"ח וכן איתא במעשה רב בשם הגר"א

¹⁶ערוה"ש שם ס' נ"ב, שו"ת האלף לך אלף ס' קצ"ד

8) A final Halacha that is not so well known is that a minor (under Bar Mitzva) cannot Toivel Keilim on his own since he is not halachically believed to say that he did so¹⁷. Therefore unless an adult watched him Toivel the Keili, it would require Tevilah again without a Bracha. In the case of glass Keilim, many Poskim say that he would be believed that he Toiveled the Keilim. In any case, since Tevilas Kelim is a Mitzva, a person should certainly try to do it on his own and not give it to a child to do, even if he watches him.¹⁸

II. Bracha

There are several opinions as to the wording of the Bracha one recites on Tevilas Keilim. The Rishonim mention versions such as: על טבילת כלים, על הטבילת כלים, על טבילת כלי מתכת וזכוכית etc.¹⁹. However, the Shulchan Aruch paskens that on many Keilim one should recite על טבילת כלים and for one Keili על טבילת כלי.²⁰

Many have wondered - why is it that we make a Bracha on Tevilas Keilim and not on Hagolas Keilim (the process of Kashering a vessel by submersing it in boiling water)?

The Rishonim answer that the commandment of Tevilas Keilim is different from Hagolas Keilim, in that Tevilas Keilim is a positive commandment without any negative prohibitions. That is to say, that there is no prohibition to consume food that was prepared in a Keili that was not Toiveled²¹, only a positive commandment to Toivel it. Hagolas Keilim includes a negative prohibition as well, since the food cooked in a vessel requiring Hagala is "treif". Therefore, since only positive commandments require a Bracha, only Tevilas Keilim is included²².

III. Tevilas Keilim is not a physical cleaning, nor is it a hygienic sterilization, rather it is spiritual metamorphosis from the mundane to the divine. All of creation came into existence for the express purpose of assisting Am Yisrael, therefore an item possessed by Am Yisrael has attained a higher level in its intended purpose.²³ This in itself requires a process to deem it fitting of such status. We must learn from here the greatness of our nation and the awesome responsibility that such greatness implies. מי כעמך ישראל גוי אחד בארץ.

Good Shabbos

מאיר הלוי הלמן
פעיה"ק תובב"א

¹⁷ שו"ע שם וברמ"א בשם הת"ה

¹⁸ המחבר פסק דאינו נאמן, ומשמע דה"ה בדרבנן, ע' חכ"א כלל ע"ב ט"ז. וע' בביאור הגר"א ס"ק ל"ו וס' קכ"ז ס"ק ל"ב שפסק דרק בדאורייתא א"נ ובדרבנן כגון זכוכית כשהיא בידו נאמן וכמש"כ הרמ"א ס' קכ"ז ס"ג בשם הריב"ש. המ"א ס' קל"ז סק"ח פסק ג"כ להאמינו בדרבנן, וע' בהג' רע"א שם ובס"ס ק"כ וכ"פ במ"ב. אולם בפמ"ג מש"ז שם וס' ס"ט מש"ז ס"ק מ"ב צידד להחמיר גם בדרבנן כשאיחזק איסורא, והניח בצ"ע. וכ"פ בבן איש חי פ' מטות אות ח'. ואפשר דגם הם מודים כשהקטן מב"ב ע' תוס' עירובין ל"א ע"ב ד"ה כאן.

¹⁹ ע' ב"י בשם המרדכי, הגהות אשר"י ע"ז פ"ה ס' ל"ה בשם או"ז, מהר"ל הל" טבילה, ט"ז ס"ק ה', ולקט ישר יו"ד עמ' ח'. וע"ע בראב"ה פסחים ס' תס"ד, ובס' האורה ח"א ס' פ"ג

²⁰ וכ"פ הלבוש הפר"ח ובקש"ע. ברם בנו"כ לא הביאו מקור לזה, ואדרבה במאירי שם כתב דאין חילוק בין אחד או הרבה דמ"מ מברך "כלים", וכ"פ הערוה"ש שם ס' כ"ב, וכן סתמו הרבה מן הראשונים, ע' מרדכי בשם רשב"ם, ריטב"א, כל בו, וכן בחכ"א כלל ע"ג.

²¹ רמ"א ס' ט"ז

²² או"ה שער נ"ח ס' ק"ד

²³ ע' צדקת הצדיק אות פ"ו וצ"א דכל קניני האדם מישך שייכי לשורש נפשו וכל חיותם ממנו ע"ש עוד דברי סוד