Practical Modern-Day Kashering the **n Hilchos** Kitchen: n Ti You have heard the shaylos . . . An Overview Now learn the issues & the opinions

A summary of the weekly Wednesday night shiur by Rabbi Shmuel Stein at the Miami Beach Community Kollel / To receive a copy send an email to InHilchosShabbos@gmail.com

The Shulchan Aruch¹ writes that, "thirty days before the Yom Tov of Pesach arrives one should begin reviewing the halachos of Pesach." The Mishnah Berura² explains that the halachos of Pesach are extensive and it is therefore necessary to begin reviewing them in advance. Perhaps one of the most difficult halachos of Pesach is the halachos of kashering our kitchens for Pesach. In the following chapter we will review the background and basic halachos of kashering. The Mishnah Berura³ writes, "the halachos of kashering are very complex, and it is therefore recommendable that someone who is knowledgeable in the halachos of kashering be charged with this task." Indeed, the poskim4 recommend that one should have separate dishes and utensils for Pesach, rather than relying on kashering one's utensils for Pesach. Still, for many items this is not practical, such as sinks, counters and ovens, which must be kashered for Pesach. Thus, before kashering such items, one should consult a ray for halachic guidance in order to ensure that the kashering is done properly.

Introduction: Bliyos - The absorbed "Taste" of prohibited foods

There are numerous prohibitions in the Torah that forbid eating different types of foods, one such prohibition is eating Chametz on Pesach. The Gemara⁵ teaches that not only is it prohibited to eat an actual piece of Chametz but included in this prohibition is also eating any "taste" which is extracted from these foods. For example, if barley (Chametz) is cooked together with potatoes, the potatoes may not be eaten on Pesach, because the cooking process extracts the "taste" of the barley and transfers it into the potato. Therefore, eating the potato is prohibited mid'Oraisa because by doing so one eats the "taste" of the Chametz which is absorbed inside the potato.6 This principle is referred to as "taam k'ikar," which means that the taste of a food has the same forbidden status as the food itself.

Bliyos (absorbed taste) in the walls of a vessel

When Chametz (e.g., barley) is cooked in a pot, the "taste" of the Chametz is absorbed into the walls of the pot. The taste absorbed inside the walls of the pot is referred to as "bliyos"absorbed taste. If the pot is used again to cook other foods, the bliyos of the Chametz will be expelled from the walls of the pot and infused into the food inside the pot. As a result, one may not eat such food on Pesach, because it now contains the "taste" of Chametz. This presents an obvious challenge with using pots, dishes, utensils, and ovens that have been used throughout the year and have absorbed bliyos of Chametz. Even our sinks, and counters have come in contact with hot Chametz, and have absorbed bliyos of Chametz. Therefore, to permit using these items on Pesach, we must remove the Chametz bliyos from these items. The Torah gives us a method to remove Chametz bilyos (or any non-kosher bilyos) from our vessels known as "kashering" (making utensils kosher).

The Kashering Process: Removing the Bliyos

The Torah7 recounts, how after Bnei Yisroel won the battle against Midyan they returned to the Jewish camp with the spoils of the war. Included in the spoils were non-kosher pots and utensils. Hashem commanded the Jewish people that they must first kasher the pots and remove the non-kosher bliyos before using them. The Torah then gives the basic guidelines for kashering:

- Utensils were used for cold food or liquid. If a vessel or utensil came in contact I) with cold non-kosher food or liquids, it does not absorb non-kosher blivos. Without the use of heat, the bliyos cannot be transferred into the walls of the pot. Therefore, the Torah writes that to permit using such vessels one must merely wash them with cold water before using them.
- Utensils that have been used for hot food or liquid: If a vessel or utensil came 2) in contact with hot non-kosher food or liquid, it does absorb the non-kosher bliyos from the food. Therefore, the Torah writes that to remove the non-kosher bliyos one must kasher the by "passing them through the fire."

We will now define the requirement of "passing them through the fire," and how it relates to kashering modern-day kitchens and utensils.

The two levels of kashering: Libun and Hagalah

Rashi⁸ explains that when the Torah writes that utensils used for hot food must be "passed through the fire," it includes two different kashering processes: Libun and Hagalah.

1) Libun - Getting the vessel red-hot. The highest form of kashering is called Libun, which is accomplished when the walls of the vessel are heated up until they get red-hot.9 When a vessel gets red-hot the blivos inside the vessel are burnt and destroyed, effectively kashering the vessel.



2) Hagalah - Immersing the utensil in boiling hot water. The next level of kashering is Hagalah, which is accomplished when a vessel is immersed in boiling hot water (212°F). When a vessel is immersed in boiling hot water the bliyos are extracted from the vessel.

Rashi continues to explain that depending on how a vessel will determine which one of these two processes must be used to kasher the vessel. This principle is known as k'boleyah kach palto - the manner that the bilyos entered the vessel is how they must be removed.

Libun: Required for utensils used to cook food which are directly on the fire

Utensils that foods are cooked on by means of a direct flame, require Libun to remove the bliyos.¹⁰ For example, grill pans, barbecue grills and frying pans all cook food directly on the heat of the fire. There is no water or liquids used as an intermediary to cook

the food on these utensils. Since the bliyos are absorbed into these utensils through the direct heat of a pure fire they can only be removed by using Libun which removes the bliyos by using a pure fire to get the vessel red-hot.

Kashering an oven and stovetop grates. The most practical example of a vessel

needing Libun is an oven. The Rema¹¹ discusses kashering a tripod. When a pot of food (that contains Chametz) is cooked on a tripod, very often the Chametz food will splatter onto the tripod causing it to absorb bliyos of Chametz. The Rema rules that since the Chametz food touches the tripod when it is directly over the fire, it is necessary to perform Libun to kasher the tripod for Pesach. Our modern-day ovens and stovetop grates can be compared to the tripod



discussed in the Rema, because when they are used throughout the year Chametz may have accidentally splattered onto the walls or shelves of the oven. Therefore, in order to kasher these items for Pesach one would need to perform Libun.

The Two Levels of Libun: Libun Gamur and Libun Kal The Rema12 writes that there are really two levels of Libun:

- Libun Gamur (a complete Libun) where the walls of the vessel get red-hot. Ι.
- 2. Libun Kal (a lenient Libun) where the walls of the vessel get hot to the point that it can cause something to catch on fire, but do not turn red-hot.

The Rema13 rules that we generally follow the first opinion which requires Libun Gamur. Accordingly, Rav Moshe Feinstein¹⁴ and other poskim¹⁵ rule that to kasher an oven for Pesach one must perform Libun Gamur and can be accomplished by running a complete self-cleaning cycle. When the oven is set on self-clean cycle the oven reaches a heat of 900-1000°F (480-520°C), and according to many poskim¹⁶ this satisfies the requirement of Libun Gamur. To kasher the oven racks and stovetop grates, one may place them into the oven when selfcleaning cycle is run.¹⁷ Before kashering the oven one should be careful to first clean the doors of the oven well (including under the rubber door-seal and the bottom of the doors) as these areas are generally not cleaned well by the self-clean cycle.

Ovens that do not have a self-clean function. If an oven does not have a self-clean feature, it is difficult to perform Libun Gamur and can be accomplished by using a blowtorch on each spot of the oven. Some poskim¹⁸ rule that ovens that do not have a self-clean feature may be kashered with the lower level of Libun Kal. This is based on a number of halachic factors, one of which is due to the fact that since foods are generally not placed directly on the oven racks or stovetop grates, one may rely on the lenient opinion that permits Libun Kal to kasher for Pesach. Before performing Libun Kal the oven must be cleaned with a cleaning agent, and not used for twenty-four hours prior to kashering.¹⁹ The oven is then turned onto the highest temperature for forty minutes²⁰ to an hour.²¹

Since there is a dispute as to whether ovens and stovetop grates may be kashered with Libun Kal, one must consult a ray on this issue.

Hagalah: Required for utensils used to cook foods through water or other liquids

Utensils that cook foods through the use of water or other liquids require Hagalah (immersion in boiling hot water) to remove the blivos.22 For example, to kasher a pot one would be required to perform Hagalah, because one uses a pot to cook food with water that is boiled in the pot. Since one generally



does not use a pot to cook foods with pure heat but by means of water it therefore suffices to kasher them using Hagalah. Similarly, cups, utensils, and ladels, generally do not come in contact with food while they are directly on the fire, therefore they



may be kashered through Hagalah. Countertops and sinks may be kashered with Hagalah as well, because although they may come in contact with hot food their contact is not directly on the fire, it therefore suffices to use Hagalah.

There are several important halachos to keep in mind when performing Hagalah (i.e., before immersing a vessel in boiling water or pouring boiling water on a countertop or sink):

1. The utensils, counters and sinks must be cleaned well. The Shulchan Aruch²³ writes that before performing Hagalah one must clean the utensils well. If any dirt or rust²⁴ remains on the utensil, sink or countertop it will invalidate the Hagalah process.

1 O.C. 429:1 2 429:1 3 452:8 4 Rav Shmuel Kamenetzky (Kovetz halachos pg. 101). See also Y'sod v'shoresh ha'avoda (hilchos hagalas keilim) 5 Pesachim 44 6 Shuchan Aruch Y.D. 98:2 Taz 98:3 7 Bamidbar 31:21-23 8 Bamidbar 31:23 9 Shuchan Aruch 451:4 "until sparks can come out of the metal" 10 Shuchan Aruch O.C. 451:4 11 451:end of 4, Mishna Berura 541:34 15 Rav Elyasiv 12 451:4, see Mishna Berura 451:28 13 451:4, see Mishna Berura 451:28 14 Quoted by Rabbi Forcheimer (on halachos of Pesach) pg. 23, Rabbi Eider pg. 180 note 136 (Asrei Ish 3:53:35) Rav Vosner (kovetz m'bais levi I pg. 29) see also Kovetz Halachos pgs. 111-113 note 33 and 35 16 See Shulchan Halevi pg. 234 from Rav Yakov Kamenetzsky and many poskim. Although the oven does not get red-hot this heat is still sufficient. The reason for this is that in truth the heat is sufficient to get the aluminum red-hot it is only because only iron becomes red-hot not aluminum. Some poskim require that the inside of the oven door be covered as it does not reach the heat of Libun Gamur during the self-cleaning process. A rav should be consulted on this issue. 18 Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky Emes l'Yakov haarah 440, Rav Ahron Kutler quoted by Rabbi Forcheimer pg. 23, Kovetz Halachos pg. 119. This is based on the Mishna Berura Rabbi Forcheimer pg. 24 451:34 that in a time of need one may rely on the fact that the Chametz generally does not come directly in contact with the oven 19 Rav Forcheimer pg. 23, Rav Eider pg. 181. However, see Kovetz 20 Heinemann Star-k article 21 Rabbi Belsky (Shulchan Halevi pg. halachos pg. 122 writes that although some people wait 24 hours before performing Libun Kal it is not halachically necessary. 238). See Kovetz Halachos (pg. 119) where he writes that one must allow the oven to run for a half an hour after the oven is preheated. 22 See Shuchan Aruch 452:1



2. The water must be boiling. The Rema²⁵ rules that in order for the Hagalah to be effective the water must be boiling [212°F (100°C)²⁶]. The Mishna Berura²⁷ adds that the water in the pot must be boiling throughout the entire Hagalah process. For example, if one is *kashering* many utensils in the pot of boiling water, he must be careful not to place too many utensils in the pot at once as this will cool down the temperature of the water. Rather, the utensils must be placed in the pot of boiling

water only one at a time, allowing the water in the pot to remain at 212°F. When *Hagalah* is used to *kasher* a countertop or sink, water is poured over the entire surface of the counter or sink. The Mishna Berura²⁸ writes that when *kashering* a counter or sink there

is halachic considerations that may permit using water that is only yad soledes bo ($160^{\circ}F/71^{\circ}C$).

3. Vessels should not be used for twenty-four hours prior to the Hagalah process. The Rema²⁹ writes that when using Hagalah to kasher utensils, sinks or counters they should not be used for twenty-four hours prior to performing Hagalah. Waiting twenty-four hours make the bliyos in the vessel into aino ben yomo and are less difficult to kasher.

4. Rinsing the vessel with cold water after performing Hagalah. The Shulchan Aruch³⁰ writes that the custom is to rinse the vessel with cold water after performing Hagalah. The Mishna Berura³¹ explains that this is due to the following concern: if the hot water of the Hagalah remains on the vessel, the bliyos which are now in the hot water may become reabsorbed in the vessel. Therefore, this water must be rinsed off the vessel. If one did not rinse the vessel afterward Hagalah, it does not invalidate the Hagalah.³²

Being knowledgeable in the halachos of Hagalah. The Mishna Berura³³ writes "The *achronim* state that because the *halachos* of *Hagalah* are complex, one should appoint someone knowledgeable in these halachos to perform *Hagalah*." Similarly, one should consult a *rav* for practical guidance on how to properly perform *Hagalah*.

Which Material Can Be Kashered?

The Torah³⁴ writes that the following metals may be *kashered*: gold, silver, copper, iron, tin and lead. The *poskim* discuss *kashering* other types of materials which are not explicitly mentioned in the Torah. In the following paragraphs we will discuss these different materials, and review some practical halachos involved in *kashering* one's kitchen.

I) Metals. The Shulchan Aruch³⁵ writes that not only may one *kasher* the metals listed explicitly in the Torah, but all types of metals may be *kashered* for Pesach. For example:

 Stainless-steel utensils (e.g., forks, spoons) that were used for hot Chametz may be kashered through Hagalah by immersing the utensil in boiling hot water.³⁶ [Regarding kashering knives. The Mishna Berura³⁷ writes that it is not uncommon for knifes to have been used to cut foods that were directly on the fire which may require *Libun* to kasher them. The Mishna Berura³⁸ concludes that "when it is possible, it is a mitzvah to acquire new knives for Pesach rather than kasher them."]

• Stainless-steel Sinks. Many poskim³⁹ rule that a stainless-steel sink may be kashered for Pesach with Hagalah by pouring boiling hot water on the entire surface of the sink. One should ensure that the boiling hot water is poured over the entire surface of the sink.⁴⁰ [Before performing Hagalah one should clean the sink (and the drain) with ammonia rendering any Chametz which remains in the sink unfit for consumption.] However, other poskim⁴¹ rule that to properly kasher a sink one must use a hot stone (e'ven m'luban) to aid the Hagalah process (see footnote⁴² for elaboration); a ray should be consulted on this issue.

Using a Sink Insert. Some *poskim*⁴³ rule that if one does not wish to perform *Hagalah* on a sink he may cover the sink by placing an insert in the sink. The sink insert will block any *bliyos* from transferring from the walls of the sink into the Pesach dishes. Before performing *Hagalah* one should clean the sink (and the drain) with ammonia rendering any Chametz which remains in the sink unfit for consumption.⁴⁴ Some are accustomed to first *kasher* the sink and then cover it with an insert.

• Silver Kiddush cups may be kashered for Pesach with Hagalah by immersing the Kiddush cups into a pot of boiling hot water.⁴⁵ Technically, since the Kiddush cups are not used for hot drinks it would suffice to merely wash out the Kiddush cups with cold water, nevertheless, the prevalent custom is to use Hagalah to kasher the Kiddush cups.⁴⁶

• **Ovens**, which are made of aluminum or other metals, may be *kashered* for Pesach.⁴⁷ However, as we discussed earlier, it is necessary to perform *Libun* (either *Libun Gamur* or *Libun Kal*) on the oven since Chametz may have come in direct contact with the oven while on the fire.

2) Wood: The Shulchan Aruch⁴⁸ rules that utensils made of wood may be *kashered* for Pesach. For example:

• A wooden spoon or bowl may be *kashred* for Pesach through *Hagalah* by immersing it in boiling hot water.⁴⁹

• A wooden table may be *kashered* through *Hagalah*, by pouring boiling hot water on the table.⁵⁰ However, the Mishnah Berura⁵¹ suggests that since it is difficult to clean out the crevices of the wooden table and small pieces of Chametz may remain there, one

should ensure that the table is covered for Pesach. Once the table is covered no further *Hagalah* is necessary, because there is no longer a concern that the *bliyos* (which are absorbed in the table) will transfer into food served on the table as the covering will block the *bliyos* from reaching the food.⁵² One should ensure that the table is properly covered with a covering that will not tear or fall off during Pesach.

3) Stone. The Shulchan Aruch⁵³ rules that any utensil made from stone may be *kashered* for Pesach. For example:

• A granite countertop or sink may be *kashered* through *Hagalah* by pouring boiling hot water over the counter.⁵⁴ As we mentioned earlier some *poskim*⁵⁵ rule that when pouring the boiling hot water onto the counter, the use of a hot brick is necessary to aid the *Hagalah* process.

There are many countertops and sinks are made from granite composite which is made of a mixture of granite and plastic. As we will soon discuss, many *poskim* rule that one may not *kasher* plastic items for Pesach, and accordingly these counters may not be *kashered*, and must be covered.⁵⁶ One should consult a *rav* on this issue.

4) Earthenware. Earthenware vessels cannot be *kashered*. The Gemara⁵⁷ teaches us that due to the nature of earthenware material, *bliyos* which are trapped inside the earthenware walls cannot be expelled by merely performing *Hagalah*. Although the stronger *kashering* process of *Libun* can expel the *bliyos* from the earthenware walls, the Gemara⁵⁸ explains that as a general rule *Libun* may not be performed because we are concerned one will not perform *Libun* properly out of fear that the extreme heat of the *Libun* process will damage the earthenware utensils. Therefore:

• China or earthenware dishes and utensils may not be kashered for Pesach.⁵⁹ Accordingly, one must have a separate set of dishes for Pesach use.

• Sinks made of porcelain or enamel should not be *kashered* for Pesach as many *poskim*⁶⁰ compare these materials to earthenware. Therefore, sinks made of these materials should be covered with a sink insert.⁶¹ Many *poskim*⁶² rule that once the sink insert is in place no further *kashering* is necessary. One should first clean the sink (and the drain) with ammonia rendering any Chametz which remains in the sink unfit for consumption.⁶³ Some *poskim*⁶⁴ suggest that because of this concern one should only wash dishes on Pesach in a separate dish pan.

5) Glass. There is a dispute amongst the poskim how to treat glass materials. The Shulchan Aruch⁶⁵ rules that glass is the most lenient of materials as it cannot absorb any *bliyos*. Accordingly, Sephardim who follow the ruling of the Shulchan Aruch may use glass vessels on Pesach by simply washing them thoroughly, because Chametz *bliyos* cannot be absorbed inside them. However, the Rema⁶⁶ rules stringently that glass materials have the same *halachic* status as earthenware and cannot be *kashered* for Pesach. *Ashkenazim* who follow the ruling of Rema will thus have a difficult time *kashering* items made of glass. For example;

• Pyrex dishes should not be kashered for Pesach.67

• **Drinking glasses** should not be *kashered* for Pesach use.⁶⁸ The Mishnah Berura⁶⁹ explains that although these glasses are generally only used for cold drinks, since they occasionally come in contact with hot Chametz (e.g., when washing dishes) they should preferably not be *kashered* for Pesach use.

• **Glass stovetops:** It is difficult to *kasher* a glass stovetop for Pesach, since removing the *bliyos* of Chametz that are absorbed in glass is challenging.⁷⁰ One should consult a *rav* regarding the proper way to *kasher* or use a glass stovetop for Pesach.

6) Plastic. There is a dispute amongst the *poskim* as to what status plastic and synthetic materials have. Rav Moshe Feinstein⁷¹ ruled that one may not *kasher* plastic materials for Pesach. Since these materials were not around during the times of *Chazal*, we cannot assume that they can be *kashered*. Accordingly:

• Plastic utensils or kitchenware may not kashered for Pesach, rather new utensils should be bought for Pesach use.⁷²

• **Rubber utensils** (that are made of synthetic materials) may not be *kashered* for Pesach,⁷³ rather new utensils should be bought for Pesach.⁷⁴

• Formica or granite composite counters or sinks may not be *kashered* for Pesach.⁷⁵ One may cover these counters and sinks for Pesach. Once these counters are properly covered (with a covering that will not tear or fall off during Pesach) no further *kashering* is necessary.⁷⁶

However, other *poskim*⁷⁷ disagree with the ruling of Rav Moshe Feinstein, and rule that plastic and other synthetic material can be *kashered* for Pesach. Accordingly, the items mentioned above may be *kashered* for Pesach through *Hagalah*. A *rav* should be consulted on this issue.

The intention of this summary is to discuss common practical shaylos. One should consult a Rav concerning p'sak halacha.

23 Shuchan Aruch 491:3, see Mishna Berura 491:22 24 The Mishna Berura (441:22) points out that rust is only a problem only if there is mamashos (actual rust) on the vessel which prevents the hot water from reaching the vessel. However, if the vessel is merely discolored it does not disqualify the Hagalah. 25 See Rama 452:2 26 Shulchan Halevi pg. 230 27 Mishna Berura 452:8 28 29 Based on Mishna Berura 452:8. Since generally the counters and sinks only come in contact with Chametz with an iruy kli rishon they only need to be koshered with water that is yad soledes bo. 34 Bamidbar 31:22 35 451:8 36 Rabbi Eider pg. 168; 452:2 **30** Shuchan Aruch 452:7 **31** Mishna Berura 452:34 **32** Mishna Berura 452:34 **33** 452:8 37 Mishna Berura 451:19 38 41 Poskim cited in Mishna Berura 451:114 [Rav Forcheimer pg. 27, heard from Rabbi Belsky, see Rabbi Eider page 173] **39** Rabbi Eider pg. 173 **40** Kovetz halachos pg. 103 451:19 42 This brick (e'ven m'luban) is mentioned in the Rema (451:6) and is used on a vessel that requires Hagalah in a kli Rishon but cannot fit into a pot. As the water is poured onto this hot stone the water again begins to bubble and is considered to be a kli rishon, and not just an iruy kli rishon. Countertops and sinks may need Hagalah of a kli rishon because if a davar gush (a solid food) fell on the countertop or sink it may have the status of a kli rishon. Accordingly pouring the boiling water (which is only an iroy kli rishon) is not sufficient to kasher it. The red-hot stone heats up the water giving it the status of a kli rishon. 43 Kovetz halachos 44 Rabbi Forcheimer pg. 27 45 Kovetz Halachos pg. 101 46 See Shuchan Aruch and Rema 451:25, see Kovetz halachos pg. 101, Rabbi Eider pg. 169 49 Rabbi Eider pg. 137 50 See Shuchan Aruch 451:20 51 See Mishna Berura 451:115 (Rabbi Eider pg. 172) 52 Kovetz halachos pg. 109 53 451:8 pg. 106 47 Rabbi Eider pgs. 179-181 48 451:8 49 Rabbi Eider pg. 137 53 451:8 54 Rabbi Heinemann article for Star-55 ibid 56 see notes 41 and 42 57 See Pesachim 30 (also see Rosh in Avoda Zara 5:36 based on passuk) 58 Pesachim 30a; Shuchan Aruch 451:1 59 Rabbi Eider pg. 138 60 Rabbi Eider pg. 173 61 ibid 62 Kovetz halachos pg. 106 63 Rabbi Forcheimer p. 27 64 Rabbi Heinemann in an article with the Star-k 65 Shulchan Aruch 451:26 66 451:26 67 Rabbi Eider pg. 171 68 See Mishna 69 Mishna Berura 451:154 70 See article by Rabbi Heinemann of Star-k 71 Igros Moshe O.C. 2:92 72 Igros Moshe O.C. 2:92 Berura 451:154 73 Igros Moshe ibid 74 Rabbi Eider pg. 138 75 77 According to Rav Yaakov Kaminetzky (see Emes L'Yakov O.C. haarah 442 also quoted in Halacha Berura note Rabbi Eider pg. 140, Rabbi Heinemann in article for Star-k 76 Kovetz Halachos pg. 109