

Laws of Kashering Kitchen for Pesach

יום ד' פרשת ויקרא ער"ח ניסן תש"פ

Due to the current Coronavirus pandemic, there are many individuals who will be remaining home for Pesach this year for the first time; thus, they will *kasher* their utensils and appliances for Pesach for the first time. With this in mind, following is a brief guide with the basic laws of *kashering* to enable everyone to properly prepare their homes.

The Tur (*Orach Chaim* §428) says that our custom is to read *Parshas Tzav* in *shul* on the Shabbos before Pesach (in a typical, non-leap year) because this *parsha* includes laws about *kashering utensils*.

Principles of Kashering:

The primary principle of *kashering* is "*k'bolo kach polto*" – *the manner in which [the forbidden food] was absorbed is the manner in which it can be removed*.

- Thus, a food that has become absorbed in a utensil through the use of direct fire (without liquid) must be removed in the same manner – through direct fire, such as, with a torch. *Kashering* through fire is called **libun** and is required on utensils such as baking pans or roasting spits used with *chametz*, since the *chametz* has become absorbed in them through fire.
- Utensils used for boiling *chametz*, such as pots, require *kashering* through **hagalah**, *boiling in water (on the fire)*.
- Utensils that have absorbed *chametz* through pouring of boiling liquid (called, *iruy*) can be *kashered* in the same manner – through **iruy**, *pouring of hot water*.
- If *chametz* was used in a *kli sheni* (literally: a second vessel) can be *kashered* in a *kli sheni*. Thus, a utensil such as a spoon that was used to eat hot *chametz* soup poured from a boiling pot, can be *kashered* in the same manner – by placing it in a *kli sheni* – in hot water that was poured from a boiling pot (and it need not be *kashered* directly in the boiling pot itself).
- A *chametz* vessel that was used only with cold food or liquid need only be rinsed well in cold water. It does not require any boiling water since it was not used with hot *chametz*. An exception to this is a vessel used to store cold liquid *chametz* for more than 24 hours.

Such a vessel requires *hagalah* to expel the *chametz* that has become absorbed over the 24-hour period.

- *Libun Chumer* - Total burning - Object should heat up to the point where it will glow. This can be seen especially in the dark or it will spark when tapped with a metal object.
- *Libun Kal* - Light burning - Object must be torched directly on the side that touched the *Chometz*, but does not need to glow, yet the back side should be *Yad Soledes Bo* (intense heat that causes the hand to retract). *Libun Kal* will not suffice if erroneously done on the other side.
- *Hagalah* - Boiling water cannot take the place of *Libun*; but to the contrary, anything that *hagalah* would suffice *Libun Kal* would be permissible.
- **Earthenware vessels and porcelain** cannot be *kashered* through *hagalah* (boiling water) or *libun* (heating by fire) because the absorbed *chametz* will not be removed. The only way in which these vessels can be *kashered* is by returning them to a fiery furnace (which is used to manufacture earthenware vessels), for then it is considered as though they were manufactured anew.
- **Hagalah.** One must use only boiling *water*, not other liquids, for *hagalah*. In the event one used another boiling liquid (instead of water) for *hagalah*, the *kashering* is valid *bedieved, after the fact*.
- **Steam** is helpful only for removing food and dirt, but it is not a valid medium for *hagalah*.
- Poskim mention the custom to use a special *kashering* vessel (or to first kasher a *chametz* vessel before using it to boil water to kasher other items). However, according to the letter of law this is not required and one may use a *chametz* vessel for *kashering*.

Laws of Hagalah:

1. The *chametz* vessel (that you wish to *kasher* through *hagalah* – boiling in water) should not be used with anything hot (whether *chametz* or not) for at least 24 hours before *kashering*. [Note: When *kashering* through the method of *libun gamur, complete burning*, such as with a blow torch, it is not necessary to wait 24 hours before *kashering*.]
2. The vessel to be *kashered* must be entirely clean, free of food, dirt, grime and rust. If there are deep scratches, cracks or crevices that cannot be fully cleaned, the item cannot be *kashered* with *hagalah* unless one first torches those crevices with fire to burn out any food or dirt.
3. During the *hagalah kashering* process, the water must be brought to a rolling boil and must remain bubbling the entire time. Small bubbles, however, are sufficient. Thus, one must leave on the fire under the *kashering* pot the entire time, as one continues to place *chametz* utensils into the boiling water. After placing one or two utensils into the *kashering* pot, the water generally begins to cool, and the water stops bubbling. At that point, one should cover the pot and wait until the water starts bubbling again before continuing to insert more items into the *kashering* pot.

4. The utensils to be *kashered* should be dry, otherwise the moisture on the utensil might cool down the boiling water.
5. One must be careful when *kashering* several items, that the items do not touch each other as they are being *kashered*. Thus, one should place one item at a time into the boiling water. [Once the first item sinks to the bottom of the pot, a second item can be immersed (as long as the water is bubbling, as stated above).]
6. The boiling water must make contact with every part of the utensil being *kashered*. However, it is not necessary to submerge the entire utensil at one time. Thus, if one wishes to *kasher* a large spoon, for example, he may first immerse one side into the boiling water, and then remove it, and [when the water begins to boil again] he then immerses the second side of the spoon. If the utensil is very large and part of it cannot be submerged in the boiling water, one cannot *kasher* the utensil unless he performs *libun kal* (light burning through high heat) on the portion than has not been immersed in water.
7. If one wishes to *kasher* a pot which is too large to be submerged into the *kashering* vessel, he should fill that pot with water and bring it to a boil while it is on the fire. Then, a red-hot stone [or piece of metal, such as a hammer] is thrown into the pot, causing the pot to overflow, thus the entire pot is *kashered*.
8. Pot handles also require *kashering*. Therefore, one must try to remove the handles and clean the crevices before *kashering* the pot.
9. After a utensil is *kashered* and is removed from the boiling water it should ideally be rinsed off in cold water. However, in the event that this was not done, the *kashering* is still valid.
10. Utensils that might have actual *chametz* stuck to them cannot be *kashered* through *hagalah*, (because *hagalah* only helps for absorbed *chametz* and not for actual *chametz*). Therefore, a silver wine decanter (that was used with *chametz*), for example, which cannot be easily cleaned due to its narrow top, cannot be *kashered*, for there might be a bit of actual *chametz* stuck inside it (see *Orach Chaim* 451:19).

Kashering the Kitchen Area

11. **Dining Room Table:** There is no need to *kasher* the dining room table since one does not eat directly on the table, hence a table covering is enough..
12. **Kitchen Table & Countertops:** If they are made of granite or marble they can be *kashered* in the following manner: One heats up a stone on the flame and then, using tongs, holds the hot stone right above the surface while pouring boiling water over it, ensuring that the bubbling reaches all parts of the table or countertop. After this type of *kashering*, the counters and table may be used on Pesach without any covering. However, if they are cleaned well and covered well with two coverings, they do not need to be *kashered*.
13. If the kitchen table and counters are made from other materials, such as Formica, they must be covered. In addition to covering them, the custom is to *kasher* them in the manner

described above. However, if they are cleaned well and covered well with two coverings, they do not need to be *kashered*.

14. **Metal Sink:** A metal sink could be *kashered* with a heated stone and boiling water. One stops the sink drain and fills the sink with boiling water and then throws in a red-hot stone, so that the water boils over. Afterwards, one rinses the sink with cold water, and it may be used for Pesach without a covering.
15. **Ceramic Sink:** Some Poskim hold that ceramic has the halachic status of earthenware and cannot be *kashered*. Therefore, a ceramic sink must be covered with a sink insert. However, the custom is to *kasher* a ceramic sink in the manner described above, and then use an insert, then the sink can be used on Pesach even with hot water.
16. The **faucet, the aerator and the strainer** in the sink must be *kashered* in boiling water. Alternatively, hot water may be poured over them with use of a red-hot stone to ensure the water is bubbling hot.
17. To ensure there is no edible *chametz* remaining in the **sink drain**, one should pour a strong cleanser, such as Drano, Mr. Plumber, or bleach down the drain.
18. **Gas Stove:** There are three stove parts, each requiring a different level of *kashering*.

The stove **Burners** must be cleaned well and *kashered* through the method of *libun kal, light burning*, which can be accomplished by leaving the gas flame on high for a half hour.

The stove **Grates** require *libun gamur, full burning*, which can be accomplished by placing a Shabbos blech (metal sheet) over the stove top having the gas flames burn for 30 minutes. It is best, however, to acquire new grates for Pesach.

The **Stovetop** should be cleaned well and *kashered* through boiling water with a red-hot stone. Alternatively, the stovetop can be covered well with a double covering [of heavy duty aluminum foil] and it need not be *kashered*.
19. **Electric Stove:** An electric stove must be cleaned well and then all of the burners should be turned on the highest setting for two hours. Afterwards, one should disconnect the electricity and *kasher* the stove by pouring boiling water on it with the use of a red-hot stone.
20. **Glass Stove** is difficult to *kasher* for Pesach. If one is stuck with no other option, one should turn the stove on high for two hours and then use it on Pesach only if covered with a blech. [Note: It is dangerous to cover a glass stove with aluminum foil.]
21. **Stove Knobs** should be cleaned well, or, if possible, new ones should be acquired for Pesach since it they can be difficult to clean well.
22. The **Range Hood** should be cleaned well of any *chametz* and grime, and then covered well with aluminum foil.

23. **Self-Cleaning Oven** can be *kashered* by turning on the self-cleaning cycle, for this accomplishes libun. The oven door, however, must be covered with aluminum foil (since it is made of glass).
24. **Other Ovens** must be turned on the highest temperature for one hour. Then they may be used on Pesach only with an oven insert. The glass portion of the oven door should be covered with aluminum foil. [Ovens should not be *kashered* with a blow torch or coals.]
25. **Microwave Ovens** should generally **NOT** be *kashered* for Pesach. In an extenuating circumstance, when no other option is available, one may clean the oven well, then [after waiting a period of 24 hours] place a cup of water in the microwave and turn on the oven until the water boils for a while, thereby steaming the oven. Then the oven may be used to heat food on Pesach, but only if one first double wraps the food and covers it very well.
26. **The Shabbos Blech** can be *kashered* by cleaning it well and placing it on the stove top [while all of the stove flames are on] and allowing it to heat up for two hours. Then it should be covered with aluminum foil.
27. **Dishwashers** are difficult to *kasher* for Pesach, for it is difficult to clean well, and certain materials (such as ceramic and plastic) cannot be *kashered*. In an extenuating circumstance an aluminum dishwasher may be *kashered* in the following manner. First the entire dishwasher with all the parts, especially the filter, must be scrubbed and cleaned well. Then after leaving it idle for at least 24 hours, a red-hot stone should be placed in the dishwasher and it should be turned on to the longest, hottest cycle. Then boiling water should be poured over the racks.
28. **Dental Braces, Crowns and Bridges:** Since these items can become *chametzdig* during the year when a person eats hot *chametz*, a person with these dental items should stop eating hot *chametz* the day before Erev Pesach, at least 24 hours before the *sof zman achilas chametz* (deadline for eating *chametz* on Erev Pesach). Then, on Erev Pesach right before the *sof zman achilas chametz*, he should rinse his mouth with hot water – as hot as he can endure (without scalding his mouth). It is also praiseworthy if such a person would then refrain from heating very hot food on Pesach, especially very hot *solid* food.
29. **Tablecloths:** Strictly speaking, one may wash his *chametz* tablecloths and use them on Pesach. It is customary, however, to buy special tablecloths for Pesach (see *Daas Torah* 451:18). However, if one always covers his tablecloths with plastic, there is no need to buy special tablecloths for Pesach, since he never places food directly on the tablecloth.
30. **Hand Towels & Dish Towels** may be washed and used on Pesach, and there is no need to conduct oneself stringently and buy new ones.

May we be zoche to soon see miracles and wonder similar to those witnessed when we left Mitzrayim!

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