FOOD NULLIFICATION: UTENSILS (KASHERING)

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Food Nullification in Utensils: *Torah*-Law and *Rabbinic* Decree

By *Torah* law (*d'oraita)*, any clean utensil, countertop, etc., automatically reverts to neutral/*pareve* and *kosher* after not being heated to more than 120° F (49° C) for 24 hours.

But by *rabbinic* decree, utensils do not automatically become neutral/*pareve* even after 24 hours and must be *kashered* by heat (*libun*—direct heat; *hag'ala*—boiling in a pot; or *eruy rotchim*—pouring boiling water over item) or, if some types of glass, by soaking in water (*meluy v'eruy*).

Changing Gender of Utensil

You may *kasher* a pot or cooking/eating utensil from:

- Non-*kosher* to *kosher*, or
- Year-round use *(chametz)* to *kosher* for *Passover*.

You may not intentionally *kasher* a utensil in order to change it from *dairy* to meat or meat to *dairy*; you must first *kasher* it from accidentally (or intentionally) non-*kosher* to *kosher/pareve*, or from non-*Passover* to *Passover*/*pareve*. You may then use it for either *dairy* or meat.

Once you have used it for that gender, the item retains that gender (unless you re-*kasher* it for *Passover* or you make it non-*kosher* first, then *kasher* it to neutral/*pareve*).

But if you accidentally heat meat with a *dairy* utensil or vice versa, you may *kasher* it back to its original gender by any one of the *kashering* methods, depending on how it became non-*kosher*.

Items/Materials that Can Be *Kashered*

The following materials can be *kashered*:

- Glass, including Corelle, if not used directly on the stove or oven. Glass does not change gender or other *kosher* status unless heated on a flame or in the oven. Unless it is heated in this way, glass does not ever need to be *kashered* (except for *Passover*) (see *Meluy v'Eruy*, below).Glass, including Corelle, if not used directly on the stove or oven. Glass does not change gender or other *kosher* status unless heated on a flame or in the oven. Unless it is heated in this way, glass does not ever need to be *kashered* (except for *Passover*) (see *Meluy v'Eruy*, below).Glass, including Corelle, if not used directly on the stove or oven. Glass does not change gender or other *kosher* status unless heated on a flame or in the oven. Unless it is heated in this way, glass does not ever need to be *kashered* (except for *Passover*) (see *Meluy v'Eruy*, below).

NOTE Glass used directly on fire or in the oven (*kli rishon*) cannot be *kashered* except by heating in a kiln.

- Granite (not granite composite)
- Marble
- Wood, if smooth (see notes on *Eruy Rotchim*, below)
- Metal, including stainless steel, cast iron, and aluminum.

NOTE While metal can be *kashered* if thoroughly cleaned, welded handles and other difficult-to-clean parts may render a metal utensil not *kasherable*. You might be able to use *libun kal* on the problematic area and

still use *hag'ala* for the remainder of the utensil.

Items/Materials that Cannot Be *Kashered*

- China
- Corian
- Corningware
- Crockpot
- Formica
- Glass that has been used directly (*kli rishon*) on a stove or in an oven; however it can be *kashered* in a kiln
- Granite (composite)
- Knives with Plastic Handles (knives with wooden handles may be *kashered* if there are no cracks in the wood and if the rivets do not have spaces that catch food and prevent you from cleaning it completely)
- Mixer-there might be exceptions. Consult a *rabbi*.
- Plastic
- Porcelain (Enamel)
- Pyrex (if used directly on stove or in oven--*kli rishon*)
- Rubber (synthetic)
- Silestone
- Silverstone
- Stoneware
- Teflon
- Toaster/Toaster Oven
- Waffle Iron.

Pot Lid Handle

Kashering

The handle on a pot lid does not need to be *kashered* for normal use during the year.

REASON It does not normally get hot.

Cleaning

However, the pot lid handle must be removed and the lid cleaned where the handle attaches, if possible.

NOTE If the gap between the handle and lid cannot be completely cleaned, you may not use that lid for *Passover* and you normally may not *kasher* it if it becomes non-*kosher*. If the lid handle cannot be removed, consult a *rabbi*.

Pot or Pan Handle

A plastic handle that gets hot, especially if it is over a flame on a burner, may not be *kashered*. If the handle becomes non-*kosher*, it must be replaced. If a plastic handle connects directly to the metal of the utensil, consult a *rabbi* about what to do.

Food Nullification: Heat-*Kashering*

Three Methods of Heat-*Kashering*

Heat-*Kashering* is of three types: *Libun*, *Hag'ala*, and *Eruy Rotchim*.

1. ***Libun* (Direct Heat)**
   How It Works Burns up any residual food taste

What It Works On

Complete Burning *(Libun gamur* --heating metal red-hot). Stoves, ovens, grills, grates, baking pans, roasting pans, etc., that were ever used with direct heat MUST be *kashered* by heating to red-hot (*libun gamur*). *Libun gamur* works on anything except pottery (this is a *rabbinic* injunction since you might not do a good job).

Light Burning *(Libun kal*--heating metal hot enough to burn paper on the side opposite the one being heated). You may use this method whenever there is a question of whether an item needs *libun*. For example, food may have overflowed onto gas-stove grates. Due to *safek*, we use *libun kal*-- gas-stove grates do not need *libun gamur*.

Process

Libun Gamur The entire metal substance of a utensil, oven, or other cooking surface becomes red hot, but the item does not need to be red hot all at the same time: it may be heated sequentially as long as the entire surface gets red hot at some time. *Libun gamur* can be done by blowtorch or by placing the item in a kiln.

Libun Kal

- Direct a flame, such as a blowtorch, onto the inside of a pot. Pot is hot enough when a piece of paper that touches the outside of the utensil burns (it does not need to burst into flame, just to smolder), or
- Put the pot into the oven at 500 ° F for 40 minutes. (First, remove any non-metal handles; they will need to be *kashered* separately or not used.)

Waiting Time You do not need to wait at all before *kashering* by *libun*--and certainly not the 24 hours needed before *kashering* by *hag'ala*.

2. ***Hag'ala* (Boiling)**

How It Works

Any non-*kosher* or meat or *milk* taste is removed from the walls of the utensil during boiling (*hag'ala*). You may *kasher* a pot or utensil by either:

- **Boil Method** Boiling water within the pot to be *kashered*, and making the boiling water overflow, or
- **Dip Method** Dipping a smaller pot or utensil to be *kashered* into a larger pot of boiling water.

What It Works On

Pots and utensils that are used with liquids (meaning, liquid all the time) can be *kashered* by being immersed in boiling water (*hag'ala*). The utensil being *kashered* by *hag'ala* must be made of a material that can release flavor, such as metal or wood. Materials that cannot be *kashered* (except in a glazing furnace!) are pottery--and, by extension--china, enamel, and similar materials.

NOTE The Boil Method only helps if the utensil became non-*kosher* due to food inside the utensil. If the non-*kosher* food was on the outside of the utensil, you may only *kasher* it by the Dip Method or by *libun kal*.

NOTE The boiling water must reach at least the same temperature during *kashering* as when the utensil became non-*kosher*.

NOTE Once the *Passover* holiday has begun, *chametz* cannot be nullified with hot water/*hag'ala* (only *libun* can *kasher* something during *Passover*). You may only *kasher* during *chol hamoed*, not during the first and last (festival) days.

NOTE Whenever *hag'ala* is effective, you may instead use *libun kal*, since *libun kal* is a stronger form of *kashering*. Sometimes you may find it more convenient to use *libun kal* to *kasher* an item that needs only *hag'ala*.

SITUATION A metal pot of the opposite gender went through a dishwasher cleaning.

WHAT TO DO Even though the pot only needs *hag'ala*, you may instead *kasher* it by *libun kal* by putting it in an oven at 500° F (for this application).

Process

The Boil Method can be used as:

- Batel BaShishim ("nullifying in 60 times" the volume), or
- Batel BaRov ("nullifying in a majority"--that is, boiling the item in water that is more than twice the volume but less than 60 times the volume of the non-*kosher* element).

NOTE If a pot is hot (over 120° F, or 49° C) when only part of the pot becomes non-*kosher*, the entire pot is non-*kosher* and its volume is figured into the volume of water needed for boiling.

NOTE For whether the lid becomes non-*kosher*, consult a *rabbi*.

In Batel BaShishim, by the actual *halacha*, you do not need to wait at all before *kashering*. But the custom is to wait 24 hours--except in extreme circumstances--because it is too hard to figure out 1/60th. In Batel BaRov, you must wait 24 hours.

The Boil Method: Batel BaShishim

Using batel ba'shishim for the Boil Method is not customary. You may use it for emergencies ONLY; ask a *rabbi* in this case.

EXAMPLE To *kasher* a spoon with the batel ba'shishim type of hag'ala, immerse the spoon in boiling water of a volume at least the volume of 60 spoons. No waiting is needed before *kashering* with this method.

The Boil Method: Batel BaRov

To *kasher* a pot or utensil by hag'ala using batel ba'rov:

- Clean the pot or utensil well.
- Wait 24 hours after the pot or utensil was last heated to more than 120° F, or 49° C (such as when it was cleaned).

REASON Waiting 24 hours allows the taste to become “ruined” and then to be nullified (*batel)* in a majority *(ba'rov*) of boiling water.

NOTE During the 24-hour waiting period, you could still “use” the utensil for watering plants, etc., as long as the water remains under 120° F.

- Fill the pot to the brim with water.
- Bring the water in the pot to a boil.
- Cause the water to overflow the entire rim of the pot by:
    - Plunging something hot into the pot (any item that will not cause the water to stop boiling is OK), or
    - Tilting the pot to slosh water over all of the pot's rim.
- Cool off the pot by dipping it in cold water or putting it under cold running water.

NOTE If you did not put the utensil under cold water, it is still *kosher b'di'avad.*

The Dip Method

To *kasher* a smaller pot or any other *kasherable* cooking or eating utensil by *hag'ala*, you may dip the pot or utensil into a large, *kashered* pot containing boiling water.

- If the pot in which you are *kashering* the items had been heated to 120° F (49° C), with food of that gender in the pot, or more within the previous 24 hours, the items you are *kashering* will assume the gender of the pot.
- If the pot in which you are *kashering* the items had NOT been heated to 120° F or more for at least 24 hours, any items that are *kashered* in it will become *kosher* and *pareve.*

NOTE When *kashering* a utensil by *hagala*, you may dip it into boiling water one part at a time; that is, you do not need to immerse the entire utensil under the water all at the same time. This is different from doing *tevila* since for *tevila*, the entire utensil must be immersed completely.

Calculating 24-Hour Waiting Time

Once a pot has become non-*kosher* due to any reason, if it gets heated to 120° F (49° C) or more with any food or liquid in it, you must wait another 24 hours from the latest heating before you can *kasher* it, since everything inside the utensil becomes non-*kosher* again.

Calculating Volume

If only part of a pot becomes non-*kosher*, as long as the pot was hot (over 120° F, or 49° C), the entire pot becomes non-*kosher* and its volume gets figured into the volume of water needed for boiling.

3. ***Eruy Rotchim*** (Hot-Water Pour)

Process Pouring hot water over, for example, a sink to *kasher* it.

Waiting Time You must wait 24 hours before *kashering* by *eruy rotchim.*

NOTE Only items that became non-*kosher* by being poured onto, may be *kashered* via *eruy rotchim*.

NOTE Smooth-surfaced wood may be *kashered* through *eruy rotchim* (pouring boiling water) but ONLY if it became non-*kosher* through *eruy*. If it became non-*kosher* by being cooked or heated in an oven, it may not be *kashered* via *eruy rotchim.*

NOTE A wooden cutting board may be *kashered* if the board is smooth. If it has cracks and crevices, it can be sanded until smooth and then *kashered*.

Food Nullification: *Meluy V'Eruy*

***Meluy V'Eruy* To *Kasher* Glass**

Halachically, “glass” includes Arcoroc, Corelle, crystal, Duralex, and Pyrex.

NOTE In pre-war Europe, where glass was expensive and hard to obtain, it was customary to *kasher* drinking glasses, especially for *Passover*, by soaking the glasses for three 24-hour periods (*meluy v'eruy*), as follows:

Step 1: Submerge glasses in cold water for 24 hours.

Step 2: Empty water, refill, and submerge glasses again.

Step 3: Repeat Step 2.

NOTE If any of these materials were heated directly on a flame or other heat source, they cannot be *kashered* by *meluy v'eruy*!

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