

# Voice OF THE VAAAD

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## ARE MY NEW POTS & PANS KOSHER?

With the diversity of materials used today to produce our cookware and bakeware, various halachic issues are in play. First, do my new vessels need to be *toiveled* prior to use? Second, does my set of dishes need to be *kashered* before I use them? Third, can these utensils be *kashered* if I inadvertently use them for the wrong designation down the line? This article will attempt to provide an overview of some of the more popular materials used in the kitchen today; cast-iron, pyrex, silicone and stainless steel.



Therefore, to answer our first question, steel and cast-iron utensils require *tevillah* on a Biblical level, pyrex (glass) would require *tevillah* on a Rabbinic level and silicone (a plastic) would be exempt from *tevillah*.

Can one use new kitchen utensils without first *kashering* them? It would seem safe to assume that utensils purchased in new condition are indeed new and have not been previously used in any food production. The pyrex, silicone and stainless steel

would therefore seem usable without any prior *kasherazation*. Cast-iron utensils, however, are a bit more complicated. Cast-iron cookware requires seasoning to prevent rusting and to provide non-stick properties. The seasoning process involves coating the surface with an oil or fat and heating it to a high temperature until the coating turns black. Since we do not have information regarding whether kosher oils or fats were used for the seasoning process<sup>6</sup>, we need to know what koshering process, if any, is required.<sup>7</sup> First, it needs to be determined if the coating is considered absorbed or whether

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## ARE MY NEW POTS & PANS KOSHER: *Continued from p. 1*

it is a substance on the surface that must be removed prior to *kashering*. Second, is the absorbed flavor *kashered* through *hagala* or *libun gamur*?

A bit of background is in order to understand the *machlokes* on how to *kasher* pre-seasoned cast-iron utensils. In general, *kashering* is only effective to remove non-kosher food absorbed into a utensil<sup>8</sup>, but is ineffective if there is any tangible residue on the surface of the utensil.

Do we consider the seasoning to be tangible or completely absorbed into the utensil? The cookware gives the appearance of being clean, and there is not even a feel of grease/oil on the surface. Hence, it should be that the cookware is clean and ready for *kashering*. On the other hand, if one scrubbed the cast-iron cookware with soap, the seasoning would be removed to the point that a fresh round of seasoning is required. As such, should the consumer be required to clean and scrub the cast-iron before *kashering*?



Typically, when a non-kosher product is cooked into a vessel via a liquid medium (i.e. non-kosher chicken boiling in a pot of water), the pot would require *hagalah* to *kasher* it. However, where a non-kosher item is roasted directly onto a utensil (i.e. a non-kosher chicken baked in a pan), the utensil would require *libun gamur*. What if the non-kosher item is the liquid itself, such as this case where the non-kosher oil is cooked into the cast-iron pot? Here, there is a *machlokes* how we *kasher* it. The *Shach*<sup>9</sup> quotes an opinion that if the non-kosher liquid is absorbed without a kosher medium, *libun gamur* is required. The *Chazon Ish*<sup>10</sup> brings many other opinions stating that an absorbed liquid is *kashered* by *hagalah*.

Among the contemporary *poskim*, we find a wide range of opinions. Rav Yisroel Belsky zt"l<sup>11</sup> was of the opinion that the seasoning on the cast-iron utensils is considered tangible. Since the seasoning is an actual layer of fat that can be scraped off, albeit with difficulty, *hagalah* would not be sufficient to *kasher* it. Thus, pre-seasoned cast-iron cookware must be *kashered* via *libun gamur*, which could be accomplished by running it through the self-clean cycle of an oven.<sup>12</sup>

Rav Gedalia Dov Schwartz shlit" a<sup>13</sup> is of the opinion that although the seasoning on the cast-iron cookware can be removed with soap, it is not considered a tangible material since the surface of the cookware does not exhibit any trace of the seasoning. Therefore, the seasoning is

considered to be completely absorbed into the cookware. Also, we follow the opinion of the *Chazon Ish* (above) and therefore would require *hagalah* on the utensils. However, one must keep in mind that for cast-iron, *hagalah* is slightly more complicated. Due to the weight and thickness of the cookware, the metal will not get hot if one merely dips it into the *hagalah* boiling water for a few seconds. Rather, the item should be put into the boiling water and left there for long enough that the water returns to a boil, indicating that the cast iron itself has become heated to the proper *hagalah* temperatures.<sup>14</sup>

Rav Shlomo Miller shlit" a<sup>15</sup> is of the opinion that anything adhering to the surface of a pre-seasoned cast-iron pot is considered *nifsal meachila* (not suitable for human consumption), since if one scrapes/scrubs off the seasoning from a cast-iron pot, it is totally burnt black material. Also, since *libun kal* is comparable to *hagalah* and in this case we can follow the opinion of the *Chazon Ish* (that *hagalah/libun kal* is sufficient to remove any non-kosher absorbed flavor from the pot), one

can rely on the factory that has already heated the pot sufficiently for that process. Therefore, according to this opinion, pre-seasoned cast-iron pots would not require any *kashering*.

Returning to our third question, what can one do if they inadvertently used their pot for the wrong designation? Can it be *kashered*? For stainless steel utensils, all opinions agree that *kashering* is allowed. Typically, the procedure would be *hagalah* after a 24 hour down period. Similarly, with cast-iron cookware *hagalah* would be an option if the prohibited matter was cooked with a liquid medium.<sup>16</sup> If not, then *libun gamur* would be required. With silicone bakeware and pyrex the *halchah* would be different. There is a wide-ranging dispute amongst the *Rishonim* how we should treat glass. Do we consider it to be "smooth" meaning not absorbing any flavor, or does it absorb flavor but nonetheless can't be *kashered* since we are concerned that it might crack. Or do we say that glass is comparable to earthenware vessels and cannot be *kashered*.

The *Shulchan Aruch*<sup>17</sup> rules in accordance with the opinion that glass does not absorb and therefore does not need to be *kashered*. However, the *Rema* rules that the custom is to treat glass as earthenware vessels, therefore they cannot be *kashered*.<sup>18</sup> Following the ruling of the *Rema*, *Ashkenazi* custom is not to *kasher* glass utensils.

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# THE IMPOSSIBLE™ DILEMMA

With meat-substitute products gaining popularity amongst consumers<sup>1</sup>, *halachic* considerations to ponder begin to sprout. Obviously, these products cannot be purchased without proper kosher supervision as their complex make-up necessitates it. However, after they are deemed kosher, other *halachic* questions linger.

One issue that intrigues the kosher consumer is how do we treat these "meat" products. Are there any concerns consuming them together with dairy foods? Should we be concerned for the onlooker to suspect that I may be consuming real meat with milk? The *Rema*<sup>2</sup> rules that if one serves almond milk at a meat meal, they must put some actual almonds on the table (a *heker*) so that people will realize that the "milk" is not dairy and not suspect he is eating milk with meat. Nowadays that milk substitutes are so common some do not require a *heker*<sup>3</sup>, nonetheless common custom is to have at least a sign on the table stating that all "milk" products are pareve.

Do we apply this to pareve cheeseburgers as well? In the opinion of contemporary poskim we apply the above ruling of the *Rema* to this situation. Therefore, a restaurant which sells cheeseburgers made with imitation meat and cheese (or vice versa) must note on their menus that the meat is pareve so that the customers will have the appropriate



*heker*<sup>4</sup>. Similarly if a customer is ordering an order over the phone for delivery, it should be noted on the receipt that the "meat" is seitan<sup>5</sup>.

Another issue which is raised with the rise of popularity of the Impossible™ burger is, would such a product be subject to the rules of *Bishul Yisroel*<sup>6</sup>. As we have previously discussed<sup>7</sup> one of the requirements for a food item to require *Bishul Yisroel* is, that it must be suited to be served at a royal banquet<sup>8</sup>. This qualification requires continuous monitoring as styles of society change. A few years back it was safe to assume that meat-substitute products were

not something that would be fit for a royal banquet. This seems to be changing as the quality of these products is improving. As the public is accepting more and more of these products to replace the traditional beef, it has even found its way into some upper-class settings<sup>9</sup>. The Vaad's current policy is that an Impossible™ meat substitute item is suited to be served at a royal banquet and would require *Bishul Yisroel*.

The *Gemarah*<sup>10</sup> records that Yalta the wife of Rav Nachman said that for every non-Kosher food there exists a counterpart which is Kosher. Although the *Gemarah* does not list our contemporary example, the kosher menu today is not lacking in developing dishes to satisfy all palates.

1 See - <https://www.kosherstoday.com/meatless-upscale-foods-a-blessing-in-disguise-for-kosher-confrere-hears/>

2 YD 97:3

3 See Badei HaShulchan 87:48, who brings such an opinion and rejects it. See - <https://the-halacha.com/wp-content/uploads/Vol5Issue12.pdf> - pg. 3.

4 Rav Yisroel Belsky zt"l - Shu"t Shulchan HaLevi 22:9. See also Shu"t Mishne Halachos 5:96.

5 Noting that the "meat" is Impossible™ should satisfy this requirement.

6 This issue was recently raised at an online forum for kashrus professionals, a final ruling amongst the national kashrus agencies has not yet been reached.

7 See <https://ovk kosher.org/voice-of-the-vaad-2/>

8 The poskim explain this to mean that a person would invite over a friend for a dinner and serve such a food. See discussion in Ohel Yaakov YD 113:fn 36.

9 See <http://news.aa.com/news/news-details/2019/Layover-Luxury-American-Air-lines-Brings-Flagship-Experience-to-DFW/> - they have announced that they will be serving the Impossible Burger in their First Class airport lounge.

10 Chulin 109b



## UPDATED FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS LIST FOR OVK CERTIFIED

### BAKED GOODS:

- **Breadsmith** (Pas Yisroel & Pareve) – 10031 Manchester Rd. – 63122
- **Cham Bakery** (Pareve) – 6818 Manchester Ave. – 63143
- **Dierbergs** (Dairy - Cholov Stam/Pareve) - West Oak – 11481 Olive Blvd. – 63141 (Bakery) - items bearing OVK sticker
- **Krispy Kreme** (Dairy - Cholov Stam) – 5 Locations:
  - 10880 W. Florissant Ave – 63136
  - 1871 Bowles Ave – 63026
  - 6935 South Lindbergh – 63129
  - 6021 Mid Rivers Mall Dr. – 63304
  - 5812 North Illinois St. – 62208
- **Schnucks** (Dairy - Cholov Stam/Pareve) - 4 Locations:
  - Chesterfield – 141 Hilltown Village Center – 63017 (Bakery, Take & Bake Pizza) – items bearing OVK sticker
  - Ladue Crossing – 8867 Ladue Road – 63124 (Bakery, Take & Bake Pizza, Rotisserie Chicken and Fish/Sushi) – items bearing OVK sticker
  - Mason - 12756 Olive Blvd Olive Blvd – 63141 (Bakery) – items bearing OVK sticker
  - Spode - 10650 Olive Blvd, 63141 (Bakery) – items bearing OVK sticker
- **The Dapper Doughnut** (Dairy - Cholov Stam) - 11600 Olive Blvd. - 63141 - Check OVK letter for approved items
- **Toby's Challah House** (Pas Yisroel & Pareve) – 8262 Tulane Ave. - 63132

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## UPDATED OVK LIST

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### RESTAURANT & TAKE OUT:

- **Cafe Coeur** (Dairy - Cholov Yisroel & Pas Yisroel) - 10477 Old Olive Street Rd. - 63141
- **Circle @ Crown Café** (Dairy - Cholov Stam) – 8350 Delcrest Dr. - 63124
- **Elefant Pizza** (Dairy - Cholov Yisroel & Pas Yisroel) – 8262 Tulane Ave. - 63132
- **Gokul Indian Restaurant** (Vegetarian/ Dairy - Cholov Stam) – 6101 Delmar Blvd – 63112
- **Kohn's Kosher Delicatessen** – 10405 Old Olive Street Rd. – 63141
- **Busch Stadium – Kohn's Kosher Stand** – Located in Sections 147 & 446
- **Scotttrade Center – Kohn's Kosher Stand** – Located in section 111
- **Washington University South Forty Dining** (open to the public) (Dairy - Cholov Stam/Meat) – Bear's Den/ L'Chaim - <https://diningservices.wustl.edu/items/lchaim/>

### CANDY & NUTS:

- **Mound City** – 7831 Olive Blvd. - 63130 - Only items marked with OVK sticker
- **Wine and Cheese Place** – 457 N New Ballas Rd – 63141 - Only items marked with OVK sticker

### FROZEN TREATS:

- **ColdStone Creamery & Rocky Mountain Chocolate** (Dairy - Cholov Stam) - 12416 Olive Blvd. - 63141 - Check OVK letter for approved items
- **Ted Drewes** (Dairy - Cholov Stam) - 2 Locations:
  - 6726 Chippewa - 63109 - Check OVK letter for approved items
  - 4224 S. Grand Blvd. - 63111 - Check OVK letter for approved items
- **Tutti Frutti** (Dairy - Cholov Stam / Pareve) - 2 Locations:
  - 7708 Delmar Blvd. – 63130 – Only items marked with OVK sticker
  - 4906 Laclede Ave. – 63108 - Only items marked with OVK sticker

## ARE MY NEW POTS & PANS KOSHER: *Continued from p. 2*

The question remains how we view silicone items. Can we say that *hagalah* would be sufficient to purge it of any absorbed non-kosher flavor? There is a dispute amongst contemporary *poskim* how to treat synthetically produced materials. Common custom in the USA is to allow them to be *kashered* for year-round use and not allow them to be *kashered* for *Pesach*.<sup>19</sup> However, with regard to silicone items, they are usually used in the oven for dry products such that *libun gamur* would be required and, of course, that's not physically possible.

Enjoy your cooking!

- 1 Bamidbar 31:23
- 2 Before immersing, the utensils must be completely clean. All labels and even residual glue from the labels must be removed prior to *tevilah*. The Rama (Yoreh De'ah 120:16) writes that if one used a vessel that requires *tevilah* without *toiveling* it first, the food remains kosher. However, as soon as one realizes, they should remove the food from the vessel.
- 3 Avoda Zara 75b
- 4 R. Moshe Feinstein (Igros Moshe, Yoreh De'ah 3:23) says that for this same reason, the rabbinic requirement of *tevilah* would apply to aluminum utensils (non-disposable) as well, since aluminum resembles the six metals even more closely than glass.
- 5 See Shu"t Yabia Omer 4:YD:8
- 6 Some permit contacting the company and inquiring about the source of the oil. If the company will provide in writing that they only use vegetable oil, and they will tell you which vegetable oil they use (and it is kosher) then there is a basis to be lenient. See IG"MYD 1:55.
- 7 We are only discussing the purchase of pre-seasoned cookware. If one purchases un-seasoned cast-iron cookware, one can simply rinse off the temporary protective coating they are packaged with and then season it themselves.
- 8 Another prerequisite for *kashering* is the requirement for the utensil to be *aino ben yomo*. In this case we can safely assume that the seasoning has been applied in the factory days or weeks before the consumer purchases the cookware.

- 9 YD 121:8 and Rav Akiva Eiger ad loc. Also see Aruch HaShulchan YD 121:11.
- 10 YD 44:4
- 11 Rabbi Eli Gersten of the OU in the name of Rav Belsky zt"l in a personal email communication with this author.
- 12 The cookware would also need to be *toiveled* and re-seasoned.
- 13 Available at: [http://www.crcweb.org/Sappirim/Sappirim%2022%20\(Jan%202012\).pdf](http://www.crcweb.org/Sappirim/Sappirim%2022%20(Jan%202012).pdf)
- 14 Similarly, the Star-K policy (in a personal email communication with this author) is that people should wash the new pot in cold or lukewarm water and then *kasher* it with *libun kal* by putting it in the oven at 550 degrees for 45 minutes. (This may cause it to lose its shine.)
- 15 Available at: [http://cor.ca/view/873/cast\\_iron\\_cookware\\_preseasoned.html](http://cor.ca/view/873/cast_iron_cookware_preseasoned.html)
- 16 In the opinion of this author, this option is not practical. As *hagalah* requires the item to be completely clean of all tangible matter. A cast-iron pot with continuous cooking becomes more and more seasoned and has a build-up of matter on it. Therefore, it would be more practical to do *libun gamur* which would burn off all the surface material.
- 17 OC 451:26
- 18 The *Mishneh Brurah* quotes in the name of the *Rishonim* the rationale for this, as since glass is formed from the sand, it is therefore treated as earthenware vessels.
- 19 See <https://oukosher.org/halacha-yomis/can-one-kasher-plastic-bowls-and-utensils-for-pesach/>.



## MIKVAH UPDATE

The Millstone Campus Mikvah will be available for men to use on Erev Shabbos, Friday, June 7 - 11:30 am - 4:30 pm

The Shabbos Mikvah will NOT be available for men to use Thursday, June 6 through Sunday, June 9 (1st day Shavuos). The regular schedule will resume Monday, June 10 (2nd day Shavuos).

During office hours the Kelim Mikvah is available via entrance through the Vaad office door. At other times the Kelim Mikvah is accessible through a rear door entrance. The code to enter is aleph, gimmel, hey. Please use parking lot in the front of the building. During the winter months (November-March) the Kelim Mikvah may not be accessed after 4 pm and in the summer not after 7 pm.

# KASHRUS ALERTS



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