

# Introduction to Koshering for Pesach

The Shulchan Aruch says in Siman 451, Seif 5, that vessels that were used for hot food need to be koshered at the same level of heat that the food was. Food taste that is absorbed into vessels with heat needs to be at the same level of heat to release it.

Therefore, a pot that was used for chametz directly on fire must also be koshered with boiling water directly on fire. One must take a large pot of water and place the pot needing koshering inside it once the water has started boiling.

Before one places the chametz pot into the water, they should make sure to fully clean it of any food left over.

Pots and pans can only be koshered through Haga'alah (immersion in boiling water) if they are made of metal or plastic. However, earthenware or porcelain vessels cannot be koshered whatsoever.<sup>1</sup>

If one used a vessel throughout the year only for chametz food that was poured from a vessel that was directly on the fire, and was never actually used with chametz directly on the fire, it only requires koshering through pouring boiling water that was on the fire, and does not need to be koshered directly on fire. In summary, anything that is not directly used on the fire, like plates, serving bowls, and cutlery, may be koshered with water that is not directly on the fire. This also means that one may take a pot with water and heat it to 160 degrees Fahrenheit (71 Celsius), which is the amount of Yad Soledet Bo, and kosher the aforementioned vessels in it.

Utensils used directly with fire with no water, like barbecue spits, must be koshered with Libun Chamur (heavy blow-torching) to the point that sparks fly off the utensils, or until the surface of the utensil starts to peel. Rabbi Moshe Feinstein says that the temperature needed is at least 700 degrees Fahrenheit (371 degrees Celsius). It's better to simply buy new utensils, as this level of heat may ruin old ones that need to be koshered.

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<sup>1</sup> Since earthenware vessels easily absorb a lot of the taste of the chametz and do not release it as easily, we are concerned that there will be some chametz taste left during Pesach, and therefore koshering them does not help. The Shulchan Aruch says that even if one didn't use the earthenware vessel on the fire itself, but rather poured in food from a vessel that was on top of the flames, or even from a second vessel that was poured into from a vessel that was on flames, it still cannot be koshered.

According to some opinions<sup>2</sup>, utensils that directly touch solid food that was on the fire, even though it is no longer on the fire, the vessels that absorb its taste have the status as if it were actually on the fire. Thus, according to this opinion, one would need to actually kosher it in boiling water over fire. Therefore, it is better that everything should be koshered with boiling water over fire.

The Shulchan Aruch<sup>3</sup> says that when it comes to koshering vessels, we follow the majority of its usage. So, if a vessel is used mostly directly on the fire, it should be koshered with boiling water directly on fire. If it is used mostly for food that is poured from a vessel on the fire, then it can be koshered with boiling water that is not directly on the fire. However, the Rama argues and holds that we do not follow the majority, and even if it was used once directly on fire, it can only be koshered with boiling water on fire.

Even according to the Rama, he is stringent only in the first place, but after the fact, one can even be lenient like the Shulchan Aruch.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> This is the opinion of the Ohr LeTzion. However, many argue and hold that it is still considered a second vessel from the fire. Thus, those who are lenient have a basis to rely on, especially considering that the vessels of our days are different from those of the past, and don't absorb as much taste.

<sup>3</sup> Siman 451, Seif 6

<sup>4</sup> In summary, here are a few examples: 1. Small plastic bowls or cups which the only chametz eaten in them is usually cereal, and only from time to time are used for hot oatmeal or the like.

According to the Shulchan Aruch, it is enough to simply kosher it as a vessel used for cold food only, which entails thoroughly washing and cleaning it, as it is used mostly for cold foods. However, according to the opinion of the Rama, the koshering should be done through pouring water from a vessel that is directly over fire, because even a single use with heat is enough for it to require that same level of koshering.

2. A serving spoon that usually is used with food in a second vessel (like a plate) from the vessel over the fire, but is sometimes used to mix boiling food over the fire itself.

According to the Shulchan Aruch, the serving spoon requires koshering in boiling water in a second vessel, because that is its majority of use. However, according to the Rama, it requires boiling directly over fire in order to kosher it, as it was used at least once over fire.

## Haga'alah

One should be careful that when they kosher vessels through immersion, the water should be boiling to the point that it bubbles.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, one should make sure to clean any rust from the vessel that needs koshering before immersing it (only rust that is thick enough that you can feel the difference with your hands).<sup>6</sup>



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Despite the fact that it is allowed regarding Tevilat Kelim (ritual immersion), one should be careful not to put all the vessels to be koshered in a pile or to gather them in a basket with holes, because the bubbling water needs to entirely surround the vessels.<sup>7</sup>

When one immerses the vessels in the water, it is good to hold it there for three or four seconds.

One that cannot find a place locally for Haga'alah, or they cannot immerse the vessels because they are too big, they may fill up the vessel needing koshering to the very end with water, and heat it up to the point that it bubbles. They also should make sure that it overflows a bit. If it doesn't, they can take hot, bubbling, water from a different vessel and pour it into the vessel being koshered so that it should overflow.<sup>8</sup>

The custom is to rinse the vessels with cold water after the Haga'alah in order to remove all the hot water, in case the vessel will reabsorb the chametz from the hot water.

There are four things that need to be done in order to kosher a hot plate. First, he needs to thoroughly clean the hot plate. Second, he needs to turn on the hot plate and leave it until it gets to the highest level of heat. Then he should unplug it and pour hot water on it.

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<sup>5</sup> Mishnah Berurah, Siman 452, Seif Katan 8.

<sup>6</sup> Shulchan Aruch, Siman 451, Seif 3.

<sup>7</sup> Shulchan Aruch, Siman 452, Seif 3.

<sup>8</sup> Shulchan Aruch, Siman 452, Seif 6.

## Baking Ovens

If one needs a baking oven on Pesach very much, one may kosher it through Libun Kal (light increased direct heat). They should first thoroughly clean the oven of any Chametz with a chemical that will spoil any chametz (like bleach or the like). Then, they should wait for 24 hours afterwards, and turn on the oven for an hour or two at the level of heat that the chametz was absorbed in the first place.<sup>9</sup>

All this is only regarding koshering the body of the oven itself, but koshering the molds that they used for Chametz with heat from the oven, no koshering is sufficient for them other than Libun Chamur (heavy increased direct heat).<sup>10</sup>



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## Pans



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A pan that is used to fry chametz in oil may be koshered through Haga'alah (immersion in boiling water), despite the fact that sometimes the oil under the chametz is entirely burned and consumed, and the chametz is directly absorbed into the pan without any liquid.<sup>11</sup>

If there is a layer of fat left on the pan that is irremovable, one should not kosher it for Pesach.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Chazon Ovadiah, Siman 452, Sign 2, Haga'alat Kelim, note 432.

<sup>10</sup> Chazon Ovadiah, *ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Shulchan Aruch, Siman 451, Seif 11.

<sup>12</sup> Ohr LeTzion, Chelek 3, Perek 10, sign 8.

The Halacha is that pans covered in Teflon that are used to fry food without oil and were used for chametz require Libun Chamur (heavy direct heat to the point that sparks fly off it). However, since this level of heat would ruin these vessels, one cannot kosher them for Pesach.<sup>13</sup>

## Baking Mold and Pots



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Molds that are used for baking bread or cakes, or pots for baking are considered as vessels that absorbed chametz through fire with no liquid. Thus, the Halacha is that they would need Libun Chamur, to the degree we mentioned previously (even though usually one pours a bit of oil into these vessels before baking so that it should not burn, it still is not considered chametz that was absorbed with liquid. This is because it is so little and the

dough doesn't sizzle from the oil). If one chooses to kosher these vessels through Haga'alah.<sup>14</sup>

There is no concern regarding baking pots that because one might be worried that the vessel will be ruined, one will not kosher it properly.<sup>15</sup>

## Gas Stoves

One wishes to kosher a stove, he should first remove the grates which the pots are placed onto. Since sometimes some food is spilt from the pot that has no liquid, some say that these grates require Libun Chamur. But, if one is unable, it is enough with simply Libun Kal. Despite the fact that when a vessel absorbs chametz with heat and no liquid, it usually requires Libun



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<sup>13</sup> Yalkut Yosef, Chelek 5, page 365, Seif 16, Haga'alat Kelim, Perek 13, Seif 203.

<sup>14</sup> Chazon Ovadiah, ibid, sign 1.

<sup>15</sup> Chazon Ovadiah, ibid.

Chamur, here we can be lenient. Really, the Halacha is that one can use these grates without koshering them at all, as the pots would not absorb any taste from them when they are placed on them. Taste from vessel to vessel is only absorbed if there is sauce or liquid in between.<sup>16</sup> Some even say that one may immerse them through Haga'alah in the first place after one has cleaned them well. Even if one poured boiling water from a vessel that was over fire onto the grates, they have sufficiently koshered them.<sup>17</sup> Some also write that instead of koshering the grates, one should simply cover them thickly with aluminum foil so that it shouldn't tear open on Pesach.<sup>18</sup>

The gas burners which the flames actually come out of don't require koshering, and just need to be cleaned well.<sup>19</sup>

Some say that the surfaces of the stove underneath the grates should be simply cleaned well, and if usually some chametz or chametz vessels touch it, one should thickly wrap them in aluminum foil after.<sup>20</sup> Others say that one should clean it well and kosher it with boiling water.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Rav Pa'alim, Chelek 4, Siman 17.

<sup>17</sup> Chazon Ovadiah, ibid, sign 2&

<sup>18</sup> Ohr LeTzion, ibid, sign 3.

<sup>19</sup> Ohr LeTzion, Chelek 3, ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ohr LeTzion, ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Chazon Ovadiah, ibid.

## Electric Hot Plates and Stoves



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To kosher an electric hot plate or stove, first one should unplug them and clean them thoroughly from any visible chametz. Some say that one should place a sheet of metal on it or thickly cover it with strong aluminum foil,<sup>22</sup> and others suggest to kosher it by pouring boiling water over it.<sup>23</sup> It is good to do both.

## Microwave Oven

In microwave ovens, there is no actual live fire, and its heat is made through electronic waves which only heat the food. The walls of the microwave don't heat up themselves, and only heat up from the food and the steam rising up from it. Therefore, if one knows for sure that most of the time the walls of the microwave don't reach the level of heat of Yad Soledet



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Bo, it is enough to simply clean the microwave well. However, if the walls of the microwave reach Yad Soledet Bo, one should clean it well, place a bowl or the like with water inside it, and let it run at the highest level for ten minutes. In any case, one should place food into the microwave on Pesach inside of a closed container.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Ohr LeTzion, ibid, sign 4, Haga'alat Kelim Perek 13, Seif 381.

<sup>23</sup> Chazon Ovadiah, ibid, Haga'alat Kelim ibid, note 366.

<sup>24</sup> Yalkut Yosef, Chelek 5, Questions and Answers regarding Holidays, Siman 5.

## Water Heater

Regarding urns and other water heaters, there is no concern that there might be a crumb of chametz covered by the sediment commonly found on the inside of urns.<sup>25</sup> Thus, one may immerse the urn in boiling water as is. Despite this, it is proper to first fill it with water and a strong cleaning chemical and turn it on in order to entirely nullify any potential chametz, and then to kosher it. When koshering it, keep the spout open in order that the water should also reach into it and kosher it.

## Dishwashers

One is unable to kosher a dishwasher if it is made of porcelain, as like we mentioned previously, porcelain is considered as an earthenware vessel in this regard.

If it is made of aluminum or the like, one should clean it well, and afterwards turn it on to wash with boiling water and with cleaning chemicals that will nullify any potential chametz.<sup>26</sup>

The trays and racks which the dishes are placed onto inside the dishwasher should also be thoroughly cleaned from any visible chametz in every groove and crack. Then one should place them inside the dishwasher and turn it to wash in a way that the boiling water should splash onto the racks.<sup>27</sup>

## Mortar and Pestles

A mortal that is used to crush and grind spices, and is usually used to crush spicy things with crumbs of bread, it is enough to simply immerse it in boiling water.<sup>28</sup> One should clean it well beforehand.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Ohr LeTzion, *ibid*, sign 5, Haga'alat Kelim, Perek 13, note 375.

<sup>26</sup> Yalkut Yosef, Collection of Laws pertaining to Women and Girls, page 548

<sup>27</sup> Haga'alat Kelim, Perek 13, sign 227.

<sup>28</sup> Shulchan Aruch, Siman 451, Seif 16.

<sup>29</sup> Chazon Ovadiah, *ibid*, sign 2.



## **Glass Vessels**

Glass vessels do not absorb any taste, and thus it is enough to just clean them thoroughly.<sup>30</sup> There are some Sefaradim in the diaspora who are accustomed to be stringent like the opinion of the Rama that one cannot kosher a glass vessel from chametz for Pesach.

The custom is to kosher glass vessels by filling it and pouring three times.<sup>31</sup>

## **Porcelain Vessels**

Porcelain vessels have the status of an earthenware vessel and thus cannot be koshered in any way.<sup>32</sup>

## **Plastic Vessels**

Vessels made of plastic and the like (nylon, bakelite, and celluloid) are koshered like other vessels. If they are used directly over the fire, it should be koshered in boiling water directly over fire, and if it is used with food poured from a vessel over fire, then it should be koshered with boiling water poured from a different vessel, etc (see introduction).<sup>33</sup> If there is a concern that the vessel will be ruined if it is dipped into boiling water, and one must use it, they kosher it by leaving water in it for three days.<sup>34</sup>

## **Pots and Pressure Cookers**

Even though some pots reach a high level of heat, even more than that of the boiling water used for koshering (like pressure cookers), one can still kosher them though immersing them in boiling water directly over fire. One should also kosher the rubber seals and the like commonly found in pressure cookers after having cleaned them well.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Shulchan Aruch, Siman 451, Seif 26.

<sup>31</sup> Shu"t Rav Pa'alim, Chelek 3, Orach Chaim, Siman 29.

<sup>32</sup> Chazon Ovadiah, ibid, sign 8.

<sup>33</sup> Chazon Ovadiah, ibid, sign 9, Ohr LeTzion, Chelek 3, ibid, sign 13.

<sup>34</sup> Mishpetei Uziel, Chelek 8.

<sup>35</sup> Chazon Ovadiah, ibid, sign 2, Haga'alat Kelim, Perek 13, Seif 323.

The lid of the pot and its handles should also be koshered.<sup>36</sup>

## **Plates, Spoons, and the like**

Plates and other utensils which are not used with food that is directly over fire are koshered in the same way, with boiling water in a second vessel from the vessel over fire.<sup>37</sup> If they are used with food poured from the vessel over fire, then they should be koshered with boiling water poured from a vessel over fire.<sup>38</sup>

## **Vessels used with Cold Food**

Vessels that are used mostly with cold food are koshered by simply washing and cleaning them thoroughly, despite the fact that they might have been used sometimes for hot food. If one uses a vessel for hot chametz from time to time, one should be stringent and kosher them with heat.<sup>39</sup>

## **Vessels made of Wood, Stone, and Bone**

Vessels made of wood, stone, and bone all share the same laws that metal does, that the same way it received the chametz, it should be released.<sup>40</sup>

## **Tables**

If a dining table is always covered with a tablecloth, it is enough to just wipe it down well and to cover it with a clean table cloth. However, if people eat on it directly, the custom is to pour boiling water over it. If one is concerned that it will be ruined by the boiling water, they may use it during Pesach with a new table cloth.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Chazon Ovadiah, *ibid*, sign 2, *Yalkut Yosef*, *Chelek 5*, page 364.

<sup>37</sup> Yabiah Omer, *Chelek 3*, *Siman 24*.

<sup>38</sup> Chazon Ovadiah, *ibid*, sign 5.

<sup>39</sup> Chazon Ovadiah, *ibid*, sign 6, *Yalkut Yosef*, *ibid*, page 365.

<sup>40</sup> Chazon Ovadiah, *ibid*, sign 9, *Yalkut Yosef*, *ibid*, page 366.

<sup>41</sup> Chazon Ovadiah, *ibid*, sign 12, *Yalkut Yosef*, *ibid*, page 367.

## **Tablecloths**

Tablecloths that are used throughout the year with chametz should be washed with the washing machine set to wash with water at the level of heat of Yad Soledet Bo.<sup>42</sup>

## **Baby Chairs**

One should clean baby chairs carefully and pour hot water over its tray.<sup>43</sup>

## **Refrigerators**

One should empty out and thoroughly clean the refrigerator with soap and water.<sup>44</sup>

## **Sinks and Marble Countertops**

Sinks should be koshered by pouring boiling water over it from a vessel that was directly over fire. This koshering works sinks made of stainless steel, porcelain, and any other material (it is right to pour water three times over porcelain sinks). Many have the custom of placing a large bowl of plastic, metal, or the like into the sink in order to place all the vessels for Pesach into it.<sup>45</sup>

Marble countertops have the same Halacha as sinks and should be koshered likewise.<sup>46</sup>

## **Coffee Machines**

One should activate the coffee machine with water instead of milk and coffee in order to kosher.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Chazon Ovadiah, *ibid*, Yalkut Yosef, *ibid*, page 367.

<sup>43</sup> Minhat Eliyahu.

<sup>44</sup> Minhat Eliyahu.

<sup>45</sup> Chazon Ovadiah, *ibid*, sign 8, Ohr LeTzion, *ibid*, sign 11.

<sup>46</sup> Yalkut Yosef, *ibid*, page 366.

<sup>47</sup> Minhat Eliyahu.

## **Books**

There is no need to open books and shake them of any potential chametz. Books that are used regularly while eating should not be brought to the dining table.<sup>48</sup>

## **Dentures, fillings, and the like**

Someone who has a filling in their teeth, a crown from metal, dentures, braces, or the like, and is unable to remove them from their mouth, they should brush their teeth well and clean in every spot after they finish eating Erev Pesach.<sup>49</sup>

Dentures that can be removed do not need to be koshered, but they should be cleaned well to remove any visible chametz. It is good to pour hot water over it from a vessel that was over fire.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> This is the opinion of Rav Ovadiah and Rav Ben Tzion Abba Shaul. Some argue, like the opinion of the Chazon Ish, and hold more stringently.

<sup>49</sup> Chazon Ovadiah, Hilchot Bedikat Chametz, sign 11.

<sup>50</sup> Chazon Ovadiah, *ibid*, and Hilchot Haga'alat VeHachsharat HaKelim LePesach, sign 5.