

THE PIRCHEI SHOSHANIM KOSHER KITCHEN PROJECT

# **Koshering Utensils**

## **Lesson One**

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# *Koshering Non-kosher Utensils*



*"Rabbi, How do I kosher my Whole Kitchen?"*

## **Introduction**

Early one Sunday morning, Mrs. Sarasota called me up. "Rabbi, I really need a program on how to make my kitchen kosher. I've spent so much time, money and effort to make my kitchen kosher, yet I still do not understand clearly what to do and then, how to keep it that way. Please help!"

"Mrs. Sarasota, I'm delighted you want to really know what to do. I'll be right over to help you."

"Oh, thank you so much."

This course is a result of scenarios like the one above and from the thousands of questions that have been asked over the years. The making of a kosher kitchen takes a certain level of consciousness of the "doings" in a kitchen. Without knowing the laws, problems **will** arise. In fact, without knowing the laws, one may not even see the problems that tend to arise even in the most scrupulously kosher households. By learning a few basic principles, you will become aware of the most common potential disasters and will be prepared to take the necessary steps to prevent them from occurring and dealing with them when they do.

We will start with the basics, with the assumption one is setting up an entirely new kitchen environment. Using this method, speaks to the greatest number of people and we reasonably assure that everyone will benefit with some piece of knowledge they were not aware of beforehand. So, please follow us along on this three-month course, as we use Mrs. Sarasota's kitchen for our laboratory and testing ground. I hope you find this journey entertaining and rewarding.

I would like to take a moment to emphasize that the Laws of Keeping kosher are many and detailed. This course is an attempt at initiating you in this important area of Jewish Law (*Halacha*), which is pertinent to every single Jew. It is meant to introduce you to the general laws and give you the ability to understand the basic issues at hand. I encourage you to use the knowledge presented in these lessons as a basis for asking questions to your local Rabbi or the Va'ad Hakashrut of Pirchei Shoshanim. For those who would like to learn about this topic in greater detail, we would suggest continuing with our advanced Kashrus program.

## The Three T's: Taste, Temperature and Time

Keeping kosher is a lot simpler than one may think. With the help of heaven, we devised a special mnemonic device, which will be referenced throughout the course. It is the rule of the Three T's: **Taste, Temperature, and Time**. Throughout our presentation and whenever one encounters an unfamiliar situation, one must remember these three simple words, which will shed light upon situations, which seemed incredibly dark. Always stop, hold your breath and recall those **ALL-IMPORTANT, THREE T's**. Immediately, you will logically and carefully be able to recall the laws of keeping kosher.

Just relax and enjoy what your journey through the “makings of a kosher kitchen”. It will be a most enjoyable and fun experience in this most practical area of Torah study that you have ever undertaken. This Lesson will start with **Taste**.

## Kosher and Non-kosher Foods

The Torah<sup>1</sup> defines for us what is deemed both kosher and not. Examples of kosher animals and fowl are Cattle, Sheep, Goats, Deer, Chickens, Domestic Ducks, and Turkey, which must have been properly slaughtered (*Shechita*). Kosher animals (*Beheima Tabora*) must chew their cud and have split hooves. Fowl are considered kosher according to a list we received as tradition at the time Torah was given at Sinai as passed down by oral tradition. Animal or fowl must first be ritually slaughtered (*Shechita*) to be considered kosher to eat their meat. Their milk or eggs are permitted during their lifetime. If they die through improper slaughtering, through sickness, or in any other way that does not include Ritual Slaughtering, they are called **Neveila** and are deemed Non-kosher. Animals or fowl, which have specific life threatening internal

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<sup>1</sup> Vayikra 11: 3-8

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defects or missing limbs, are called **Treifah**, which the Torah considers not kosher as well. In addition all Milk and Eggs, from these animals are also not kosher.

Animals such as a Pigs, Horses, Camels, and Donkeys which do not both chew its cud and have split hooves are forbidden and are called Non-kosher animals (*Beheima Temeia*). Non-kosher fowl include Swan, Pheasant<sup>2</sup>, and Peacock<sup>2</sup> etc. Their Eggs are also forbidden.

Creatures such as Mice, Rats<sup>3</sup>, creeping or flying insects are as well forbidden.

Fish must have fins and scales<sup>4</sup> to be kosher. All shellfish such as Lobster, Clams etc. are strictly forbidden.

The Torah forbids blood from both kosher or Non-kosher animals and fowl<sup>5</sup>. Meat must be salted within the first three days in order to release the blood trapped inside it. Liver is cut with a criss-cross or punctured many times, salted and broiled over an open fire in order to release the blood. If this is not done within three days, it becomes problematic how to kosher it. A Rabbi must be consulted in such an event.

The above is a partial list of kosher and *non-kosher* animals. Please consult with your Rabbi regarding any type of animal not listed, for their kosher status.

## **Taste<sup>6</sup>**

The Laws of **Taste** center around the concept of (*Ta'am K'ikar*). This term means that the flavor or taste emitted by a forbidden food is prohibited as much as ingesting the food substance itself. It will be considered not kosher, as long as the forbidden taste can be tasted in the mixture. The absorption of Non-kosher tastes into kosher food is a very pertinent issue in the field of kashrus, from the kitchen at home to the food manufacturing plants worldwide. Non-kosher tastes absorbed by kosher Pots or Milk/Meat splatterings, are from the most frequently asked questions to a Rabbi of a

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<sup>2</sup> These particular birds for all practical purposes are considered non-kosher since they lack tradition linking them to any of the kosher species.

<sup>3</sup> Vayikra 11:29

<sup>4</sup> Vayikra 11:12

<sup>5</sup> Vayikra 7:26,27

<sup>6</sup> 1 of 3 of the Three T's

Jewish community. There are specific guidelines that the Torah provides for us regarding nullification, which may allow the food to be consumed despite it mixing with Non-kosher food through taste or substance.

### The Majority Rules - Nullification of Forbidden Tastes

Whenever the taste of forbidden food gets mixed with permitted kosher food, there are two possible ways they may become negated and nullified; one is called Nullification by the Majority<sup>7</sup> (*Bitul Be'rov*). The second is called Nullification by a proportion of Sixty to one (60:1 - *Bitul b' Shishim*)<sup>8</sup>. When similar tasting, cold, dry foods (*Min b'Mino*) are mixed, we follow the Majority to determine whether the food is still kosher. (The details, qualifications, and exceptions to this rule will be discussed in subsequent lessons). In the event that the taste of the Non-kosher food is noticeable in a mixture, such as when two different kinds of tasting foods mix (*Min b' She'eino Mino*), we apply the concept of "food is defined by its taste" (*Ta'am K'ikar*) to determine when it is nullified and permitted and when not.

In the latter case we apply the Nullification Process of 60:1. When Biblically<sup>9</sup> prohibited foods such as Milk and Meat or other prohibited foods or tastes combine, their flavor will become diluted and nullified when for example, the Milk part is negated by 60 times as much Meat<sup>10</sup>.

After learning the basics about kosher and Non-kosher foods, taste transfers and nullifications, we will discuss their status when absorbed into the wall of Pots and Pans.

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<sup>7</sup> Shemos 23:2. We learn this out that the Majority of Judges is needed for a guilty verdict. Here too we follow the Majority of the food. If the Majority is kosher then the entire food is deemed kosher.

<sup>8</sup> The Gemora in Chullin 98a-b derives this concept from the portion of a sacrifice (the *z'roah* – the foreleg) that is set-aside for a Kohen (descendant from the family of Aharon the brother of Moshe), which is strictly forbidden for a non-Kohen to eat. Yet, the Torah specifically commands us (Vayikra 6:19) to cook it together with the rest of the sacrifice. This part is referring to the *Nazarite* offering belonging to the *Kohanim*. (pl. for Kohen) Since we see that the *Nazir* can eat the *korban* after the *z'roah* has been separated even though both have been cooked together we see that the taste (*ta'am*) of the *z'roah* was nullified (*batul*). Otherwise the *Nazir* could not eat the *korban* he brought because the taste of the *z'roah* is an absorbed forbidden taste (*issur balua*). The Rabbi's calculated that the proportion of the foreleg - *z'roah* to the rest of the animal is at least 60:1.

<sup>9</sup> Avoda Zara 69a One Olive size of milk with 60 of Meat or Pork the size of an Olive combined with 60 Olives size of permitted food is nullified and therefore permitted.

## The Due Process of Koshering Pots

Koshering means discharging and purging the tastes of *non-kosher* foods. When foods are absorbed by foods we have an outline of the nullification process. In pots we also have to deal with this issue as tastes from different kinds of food get absorbed inside the walls of the pot itself and are subsequently released the next time the pot is used.

## How Tastes Transfer In and Out of Pots

The Torah states the following guidelines for Koshering:

*Elazar the Cohen said to soldiers who came to the battle, "This is the Torah Decree, which Hashem commanded Moshe. Only the gold, silver, copper, iron, tin and lead - Anything that is used with fire – you must pass through fire and it will be purified (tabor), however, it must be purified with the sprinkling water, but anything (of these materials) that is not used with fire you must pass through water."<sup>11</sup>*

## Used With Fire

The term **used with fire** denotes something that was used either for 1) Roasting or for 2) Cooking. During these processes, the tastes of the *non-kosher* foods are absorbed into the walls of the pots and are released subsequently into the food cooked in it the next time.

## Not Used With Fire Must Pass Through Water

Anything **not used with fire** denotes tableware, which is used for cold foods that do not require Koshering but are require to be **passed through water**, i.e. immersed in a body of water (*mikvah*<sup>12</sup>). This refers specifically to utensils acquired from non- Jews. Since this tableware does not get heated over a fire, they do not absorb any forbidden

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<sup>11</sup> Bamidbar – 31:21-23

<sup>12</sup> A *mikvah* is a specific type of body of water, which must primarily be gathered into a hole dug into the ground and filled with water that is not drawn with any vessel or container. Jewish communities worldwide construct these easy to use *mikvas* specifically designed for the immersion of new kitchen utensils purchased from non-Jewish suppliers.

tastes and require immersion in a *mikvah* as a form of “conversion” which elevates it to Jewish ownership.

## Five Categories of Utensils

After the determining a utensil is used, we can begin to determine what process must be used for *koshering* them. Listed below are the basic categories:

- 1) **Pots and Pans - Roasting, Baking, Grilling etc.**
- 2) **Pots and Pans - Cooking**
- 3) **Dishes and Silverware**
- 4) **Cups or Glasses**
- 5) **Storage Containers - Pickling and Soaking for 24 hours**

“Mrs. Sarasota, you must keep in mind that each group above represents a different type of usage and that according to how they were used is how we will kosher them. Let me explain...”

### 1) **Pots and Pans - Roasting: Through Fire Alone**

This is a form of "dry" cooking, using the utensil directly on the fire without liquid. Examples of this are grills, ovens, and frying pans with little or no oil.

### 2) **Pots and Pans - Cooking: Through Fire and Water**

This form of cooking involves using a liquid medium. For example, soup, deep frying or boiling milk. The minimal temperature according to Jewish Law (*Halacha*) to affect a transfer of taste is at least 43° C (109.4° F)<sup>13</sup>. Even after a pot is removed from the fire, it still cooks if it remains at this temperature. This is referred to as **first-degree hot vessel (KLI RISHON)**.

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<sup>13</sup> Iggras Moshe Orach Chaim 4:74. This temperature is called *Yad Soledes Bo* – the temperature that will cause one to withdraw his hand for fear of getting a burn.

### 3) Dishes and Silverware<sup>14</sup>: Lost its Steam

Technically, once the food has been emptied from the pot onto a serving dish it can no longer cook and therefore does not effect any taste to transfer from the food into the plate or <sup>15</sup>*vice versa*. This is referred to as a **second-degree hot vessel (KLI SHEINI)**. However, in practice there are many exceptions to this rule. Some criteria are if it is so hot that it can scald a hand, if it is a solid, or it is a sharp tasting food<sup>16</sup>.

In any event, dishes are not commonly used for cooking. Therefore, if hot non-kosher food that was cooked in a pot was transferred to a plate directly by pouring it requires koshering, but there will be a leniency. Since they were not used directly on the fire the method used for koshering will be more lenient. **Instead of koshering in a boiling pot of water (*Hagala*), it can be koshered<sup>17</sup> by pouring hot water over the dish or silverware. This is when we are dealing with hot LIQUIDS. If it is a hot SOLID there are different opinions and circumstances that need to be decided by a Rabbi that is familiar with these laws.**

### 4) Cups: Cool Stuff

Cups or utensils that are used with cold foods do not absorb.

### 5) Storage Containers - Pickling and Soaking: Alternative Heat

If liquid is stored for 24 hours it begins to pickle (*kavush*) and the container will absorb the contents. Pickling is considered the same as cooking (*kavush ke'mevushal*). If the liquid is very salty or sharp it will absorb in 18 minutes.

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<sup>14</sup> I.e. cutlery

<sup>15</sup> This is because when pouring from a KLI RISHON it is stricter then when transferring out from a KLI SHEINI.

<sup>16</sup> Even in these instances, sometimes we will deal with utensils that **cannot** be koshered in a lenient manner. Therefore, a Rabbi that is familiar with these laws **must be consulted**.

<sup>17</sup> Provided it is made of a material that can be koshered.

## Determining the Right Method of Koshering

“Mrs. Sarasota, now that you know how the utensils were used, are you able to tell me how they should be koshered?”

“I’ll give it a try, but you’ll have to help me ...”

“Fine, let’s begin with the most common methods used to kosher a kitchen:

## Different Methods of Koshering

“Mrs. Sarasota, there are various methods of koshering as we will explain. Choosing the right method should not be hard if you remember these terminologies developed especially for our lessons. It’s the kind of terminology used in different industries.

Inventory Terminology:

FIFO – First in First Out

LIFO – Last in First Out

Computer Terminology:

WiFi – Wireless Fidelity

Kosher Kitchen Terminology:

FIFO - Fire in Fire Out

WIWO - Water in Water Out

WIFO - Water in Fire Out

## FIFO: Fire in Fire Out

### 1. Roasting: Ashes, Ashes ...

A utensil, which absorbs through **direct** heat from a fire, would be koshered through the same process of heating through **direct** fire. The same rule applies to utensils heated by electricity, such as an electric grill.

There are two levels of heat intensity necessary for this process: 1) strong torching (*Libun Chamur*) and 2) light torching (*Libun Kal*).

**Libun Chamur** (*strong torching*) is when a pot is heated to a point that it can give off sparks.

**Libun Kal** (*light torching*) is when a pot is heated to a point that it can ignite a straw that touches it.

The purpose of **Libun** is to burn off the absorbed *non-kosher* tastes in the walls of the pot.

**Libun Chamur** is applied to utensils used for baking, roasting or grilling that absorb *non-kosher* or meat and milk

**Libun Kal** is applied when a Milky utensil absorbs Meaty taste or *vice versa*.

## WIWO - Water In Water Out

### 2. Cooking: Now We're in Hot Water!

A utensil, which absorbs through **indirect** heat from a fire, would be koshered through the same process of heating through **indirect** fire. Cooking is considered indirect fire since the water or liquid inside the pot gets heated by fire and in turn it transfers tastes from the food into the pot and *vice versa*. The method of Koshering in this case is by immersing the pot or utensil into boiling water (*Hagala*). The purpose of koshering with this method is to flush out the absorbed tastes out of the walls of the pot or utensil.

### Two Methods for Koshering with Boiling Water (*Hagala*)

#### **Hagala and 60**

If the pot absorbed *non-kosher* tastes within the last 24-hour period, then the process of *Boiling in hot water (Hagala)* draws the forbidden tastes out of its walls and into the water used in the *Hagala* process. To avoid the hot water transferring the forbidden taste back into the vessel at the end of the *Hagala* process, it is important that there be at least **60** times the amount of water against the taste which is being purged out from the vessel. Having a **60:1** ratio against the forbidden taste will dilute it to a point that assures us that there will be no residual taste noticed afterwards. Since there is no substance or taste remaining from the original forbidden food, which was originally cooked in this pot, the pot is kosher again.

#### **Hagala and 24**

If the pot absorbed *non-kosher* tastes more than 24 hours ago, then the taste inside the pot is considered a spoiled taste (*ta'am pagum*) and it has lost its status of forbidden

food. Nevertheless, the Rabbis required that we purge the pot from this spoiled taste before using it again even though technically the forbidden tastes are no longer forbidden. The reason for this requirement is to safeguard that we do not accidentally use a *non-kosher (treif)* pot without koshering before the 24 hour period elapses. In this case, the process of *Boiling in hot water (Hagala)* draws the forbidden tastes out of its walls and into the water used in the (*Hagala*) process.

### **The Custom Regarding Koshering in Boiling Water (*Hagala*)**

The **Rama** states that the custom (*minhag*) is to kosher only by the method of ***Hagala and 24*** to avoid any mistake of trying to kosher a vessel used within the last 24 hours and where there might not be a ratio of 60:1 against the forbidden taste.

## **WIFO - Water In Fire Out**

Although when a pot absorbs forbidden taste through cooking, it can be koshered by *boiling it in hot water (Hagala)*, if one chooses to kosher it by torching (**Libun**), it effectively eliminates the forbidden taste and renders the pot kosher again. In this situation, **Libun Kal (light torching)** is sufficient<sup>18</sup>.

## **Alternate Hagala: “Iru” - Pouring Boiling Water**

“Iru” is the process of pouring boiling hot water from the first-degree hot vessel it was boiled over a vessel, which requires koshering. Iru is considered a second-degree hot vessel (*kli sheini*) and cannot actually cook.

This type of *Hagala* is less effective and is only used where the taste has not been fully absorbed into the walls of the utensil. This method cannot be used in a case where the transfer of taste occurs through methods similar to roasting or cooking. It is only valid where at most the utensil absorbed something forbidden through pouring something hot (*iru*).

### **3. Dishes and Silverware: Only Skin Deep**

Dishes and silverware absorb very little taste if they are not used to cook with on the stovetop. Therefore, the transfers of taste by hot foods that come into contact with these utensils are limited to its surface layer.

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<sup>18</sup> Orach Chaim 451: 4

Rarely is a dish ever used to cook on. Silverware is more complicated because sometimes a spoon or fork is used to stir a pot on the fire. This would require *Boiling in hot water (Hagala)*.

#### **The Custom of Sephardim**

Sephardim follow the opinion of the **Mechaber**<sup>19</sup> who holds that since dishes are mostly used with hot foods, for example a plate (hot food is put on a cold plate) and silverware (used to cut hot food), they can be koshered by **pouring boiling water (*irui*)** even though these types of utensils were used sporadically for cooking.

#### **The Custom of Ashkenazim**

Ashkenazim follow the opinion of the **Rama** who is concerned for even an occasional use that may be considered cooking. Therefore, he requires *Boiling in hot water (Hagala)* for dishes and silverware because of the possibility they were used in a way that is considered cooking. However, he is lenient after the fact if one only poured boiling water over them and then used them for eating.

#### **4. Cups: Squeaky Clean**

Cups, and other utensils, which are used exclusively for cold liquids<sup>20</sup> do not absorb taste unless the liquid sits for 24 hours without being poured out. Therefore, all that is needed to kosher them is to clean them well.<sup>21</sup> The exception to the rule is a new, unglazed earthenware container. Some say that until such a container has been used three times it absorbs liquids immediately.

#### **5. Storage Containers for Liquids: Even I'm in Hot Water**

If a liquid is stored for an uninterrupted 24 hours the container will absorb the taste of that liquid.<sup>22</sup> This is called *kavush*, (pickling) and is an alternate form of cooking since it transfers the taste of food without heat. The preferred method for koshering a utensil

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<sup>19</sup> Hilchos Pesach 451:6

<sup>20</sup> Any temperature under 43° C (109.4° F) is considered cold.

<sup>21</sup> Yoreh De'ah 121: 1

<sup>22</sup> Yoreh De'ah 105: 1

that absorbed the taste of *non-kosher* food through *kamush* (pickling) is to do *Hagala* (boiling in water).

Remember The Rule:

The Way In is the Way Out

FIFO, WIWO, WIFO

In Hebrew: *Ke'bolo kach polto*

(The way it is absorbed is the way it is discharged)

## Not all Utensils Are Created Equal

"I think I'm beginning to understand," said Mrs. Sarasota. "Tell me are there any exceptions to the rules? I've heard that glass is unique and so are clay utensils. But I don't know why."

"Yes, you are right. According to some authorities of Jewish Law (*Poskim*), glass utensils don't absorb *non-kosher* food even if they are used for cooking. Earthenware or even a glazed mug cannot be koshered.

### A. Earthenware: Stubborn, Hangs on Forever

If the utensil is made of earthenware (*cheres*), it cannot be koshered through *Boiling in hot water* (*Hagala*) because the taste comes out a little at a time, and some taste is left behind<sup>23</sup>. Therefore, one must destroy the taste by using fire (*Libun*) to kosher it. However, torching (*Libun*) would crack the utensil and someone using this method of koshering would not do a thorough job for fear of ruining it. Therefore, an earthenware utensil can never be koshered<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>23</sup> *Pesachim* 30B.

<sup>24</sup> The only way to kosher it would be by putting it back into a **kiln**

## B. Glass: Slippery Characters?

### The Custom of Sephardim

According to the **Mechaber**, a glass utensil does not absorb taste.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, even if the glass pot is used for cooking on the stovetop, all that it needs is a good cleaning<sup>26</sup>.

### The Custom of Ashkenazim

The **Rama** says that one should be strict to treat glass like earthenware concerning the laws of *Chametz* (leavened bread products) on Passover.<sup>27</sup> There is an argument what the *Rama* holds by other *non-kosher* food. Some hold that glass can be used without *Boiling in hot water (Hagala)*, others hold that glass needs to be koshered by *Hagala*, like metal, still others hold it is like an earthenware utensil because it is made out of sand.<sup>28</sup> One can rely on those who hold that glass can be koshered with *Hagala* (boiling in water) except in the case of *Chametz*; (leavened bread products).

### Glazed Earthenware: Not Glass

Although earthenware mugs, stoneware and china all have a layer of glass over them, this thin layer does not prevent them from absorbing like regular earthenware.

## C. Pyrex®/Duralux®/Corelle®: A New Twist - An Old Argument

According to the *Sefer Hagalas Kalim*, Pyrex and Duralux are the same as glass. There are opinions that Corelle is the same as glazed earthenware and cannot be koshered.

## D. Teflon® Frying Pans: Can't Take the Heat

If a frying pan is used with little or no oil it requires koshering through *Libun* (direct fire). In the case of Teflon frying pans, which are made to be used in a way that food is

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<sup>25</sup> Orach Chaim 451:26

<sup>26</sup> However, a thin coating of glaze on an earthenware vessel does not prevent the taste of food from being absorbed. Such a vessel cannot be koshered by boiling in hot water (*Hagala*) or through torching (*Libun*).

<sup>27</sup> In order to make bread products yeast must ferment the wheat. Fermented wheat products are forbidden on Passover.

<sup>28</sup> See *Sefer Hagalas Kailim* page 312.

directly cooked without oil, *Libun chamur* (intense heat) is required. Therefore, such a frying pan cannot be koshered because *Libun chamur* or (intense heat) would ruin their Teflon coating.

“Thank you, Rabbi. This is a big help. I feel that after one lesson I have already learned so much! But to remember everything by heart is such a daunting task. Can you summarize this in a chart or in some concise way for quick reference?”

“Yes, we’ve prepared the following step by step guidelines on how to kosher your Kitchen Utensils...”

## A Practical Guide for *Hagala*<sup>29</sup>

**"Hagala"** is the process of *koshering* a utensil (*kli*) by complete submersion in boiling water. To *kosher* by *Hagala*, follow these steps:

1. Clean the kitchen utensil thoroughly. If it has any cracks or openings that may have food stuck inside them, these must be thoroughly cleaned out koshering with *Hagala*. Areas that cannot be cleaned should be torched before boiling in hot water (*Hagala*). One can also use a caustic cleanser such as Easy Off® to render any forbidden taste like dirt and then proceed to boil in hot water<sup>30</sup>.
2. Let the utensil sit unused for 24 hours (*mi-et l'et*).
3. Bring a large pot full of water to a rigorous boil. The pot needs to be kosher; it may be dairy, meat, or *pareve*. The amount of water must be sufficient to completely immerse the *utensil* being *koshered* while still maintaining a rigorous boil. (See steps 4 and 7 below for more details on the immersion requirement.)
4. While the pot is boiling rigorously, drop the *kitchen vessel* in. The *kli* must be completely surrounded by boiling water before it either floats to the top or settles on the bottom. *Hagala* is instantaneous -- the moment the *kitchen utensil* is completely surrounded by the boiling hot water, *Hagala* is complete! The *utensil* need not sit in the water for any length of time.

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<sup>29</sup> Prepared by R' David Bendory.

<sup>30</sup> (See notes below regarding kitchen utensils with detachable plastic handles.)

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5. Remove the *keli* and immediately rinse it completely under cold water. Use (kosher) tongs, a pair of spoons, etc. to remove the *keli*. If necessary, the tongs may be *koshered* in this same fashion prior to its use. Rinse the tongs under the cold water along with the *keli* being *koshered*.

6. The *kitchen* utensils are now *kosher*.

7. Multiple items may be *koshered* at the same time or one after another as long as the pot continues to boil rigorously and as long as there is enough space in the pot for all items to be completely surrounded by boiling water. One must avoid koshering two items when they are touching each other.

8. When finished *koshering*, some people have a custom to do *Hagala* on the pot that was used for *Hagala*. There are those who say that *le'chatchila* it is enough to pour out the large pot and rinse it with cold water. In either case, even if you forget to do so the large pot need not be *koshered*.

**Koshering a Pot Too Large to Immerse All At Once in Another Pot:**

1. Place a brick or large stone with the oven turned to its highest temperature. After the stone gets hot, remove it with a tong. (One can also use a piece of metal; a large nut or bolt that gets hot very quickly. A stone placed on the stovetop flame, heats up quickly as well.)

2. Follow steps 1-3 above. Fill the pot nearly to the top so that it starts to boil over.

3. Drop the hot rock into the pot. BE CAREFUL! When you do this, the pot will rigorously boil over and overflow.

4. Once it is safe to do so, use another pot to scoop hot water out of the pot and pour it out until the pot is light enough to lift.

5. Once the pot is light enough to lift, pour it out into the sink and fill and rinse it with cold water.

6. BE CAREFUL! The rock will still be VERY HOT!

**Notes:**

This same procedure is followed whether the kitchen utensil needs to be *koshered* due to milk and meat, *treif* (not-kosher) or *issur* (forbidden), or *Chametz* (leavened bread product) prior to Passover (*Pesach*).

**THE PIRCHEI SHOSHANIM KOSHER KITCHEN PROJECT**  
**LESSON ONE**

The custom is not to *kosher* dairy kitchen vessels for meat use or *vice versa*, in order to avoid confusion. However, one may kosher a vessel (*keli*) to render it *pareve*. For example, one may change a meat knife into a *pareve* knife and use it to cut food that will be used with dairy.

Any material that will be able to withstand the heat of the koshering procedure, may be koshered using the appropriate method outlined above.

If the vessel (*keli*) cannot withstand these processes -- perhaps it is made of plastic and would melt, or perhaps it is glass and would break -- it cannot be *koshered* in this fashion and may sometimes not have a valid way to be *koshered*. Consult your Rabbi in such a case.

The vessel cannot be koshered if it is made from earthenware (*cheres*). Earthenware includes what we commonly call “China” or Stoneware. It certainly includes anything made of pottery or clay.

Plastic may be *koshered* by *Boiling in hot water (Hagala)* according to some Authorities of Jewish Law (*Poskim*) if it can withstand the temperatures involved. Others disagree. If a vessel (*keli*) has plastic handles that cannot withstand *Hagala*, the handles must be removed. If they can withstand the heat of *Boiling in hot water (Hagala)* it may be koshered even according to the Authorities of Jewish Law in a case where the primary use is the metal blade<sup>31</sup> and not the plastic handle. Many modern pots have plastic handles that can tolerate *Boiling in hot water (Hagala)* and need not be removed. Such pots can be *koshered* with their handles still attached, provided that there are no cracks or spaces between the pot and the handle. Food could be stuck inside such a crack and it must be cleaned before koshering.

If a kitchen utensil is too big to fit into the pot of boiling water all at once, it can be *koshered* in two or more passes. For example, a barbeque spatula could be about 18 inches (45 centimeters) long. To *kosher* it, one would follow the above steps up to step 4. In lieu of steps 4 and 5, one would dip one end of the vessel (*keli*) into the boiling water; there are those who rinse that end under cold water before proceeding to kosher the other end. Next one would turn the *keli* around and dip in the other end and rinse it. One must make sure that the two immersions overlap a little making sure that the entire vessel undergoes *Boiling in hot water (Hagala)*.

**Glass:** Whether or not glass can be *koshered* by *Boiling in hot water (Hagala)* is arguable:

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<sup>31</sup> I.e. a metal knife with a plastic handle that was accidentally used to cut hot meat and milk or non-kosher. (Piskei Teshuvos Orach Chaim Simon 451)

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1) There are opinions that hold glass does not absorb and therefore does not need koshering.

2) There are other opinions that hold glass is like metal and can be koshered through *Boiling in hot water (Hagala)*.

3) Other opinions hold glass is like a clay utensil and therefore cannot be made kosher.

Due to the varying opinions on this matter, it is incumbent on each person to ask the opinion of their Rabbi.

**Clay or China: Earthenware** cannot be *koshered*

**Correlle:** Some hold it has the law of **glass**. Others hold it is *cheres*.

**Corning ware:** Some hold it has the law of **glass**. Others hold it is *cheres*.

**Duralex:** Some hold it has the law of **glass**. Others hold it is *cheres*.

**Fiberglass:** Is considered the same as **Earthenware**; it cannot be *koshered*. It is made of compressed fibers of glass and has microscopic pores similar to clay.

**Porcelain: Earthenware** cannot be *koshered*.

**Porcelain Enamel:** Some hold it has the law of **glass**. Others hold it is *cheres*.

**Plastic:** Some hold it has the law of **glass**. Others hold it is *cheres*.

**Pyrex:** Some hold it has the law of **glass**. Others hold it is *cheres*.

**Teflon Coated Pots:** Can be koshered by boiling in hot water (*Hagala*).

**Teflon Coated Pans:** If the food was cooked directly on the pan with little or no oil, it must be koshered by *Libun* (direct fire). Since this would ruin the Teflon, one should ask advice of their Rabbi. In certain cases, *Hagala* can be done. A Rabbi should be consulted.

There are also many other modern man-made materials that generally fall into one of the above categories. There is a fundamental argument whether all materials can be koshered unless the Torah states otherwise or whether the Torah listed only those materials that are able to be koshered and others not. Consult with your Rabbi for the proper custom.

When *Koshering* for Passover, it is customary that the large pot be *koshered* for Passover before it is used for koshering through boiling hot water (*Hagala*).

The laws regarding koshering glass kosher for **Passover** use may be different than for general koshering; consult with your local Rabbi.

## Review Questions

- 1) Why did Mrs. Sarasota separate her utensils into five different categories?
- 2) What are the rules of classification for each of the five categories?
- 3) What is the general rule to follow for choosing the proper koshering method?
- 4) In each of the categories what is the procedure for *koshering*?
- 5) Explain the difference between Sephardim and Ashkenazim concerning the method of koshering dishes and silverware.
- 6) Why can't an earthenware utensil be koshered?
- 7) Explain the difference between Sephardim and Ashkenazim concerning the status of glass; does it absorb during cooking?
- 8) Why do cups only require washing? Is that true for coffee cups?
- 9) If a pot was used for pickling *non-kosher* meat, what are the ways it can be koshered?
- 10) Why can't earthenware be koshered by boiling in hot water? Why not by torching with fire?
- 11) What is the particular problem of a glazed cup concerning kashrus?
- 12) What is the status of Duralex, Pyrex and Corolle; do they absorb and if so can they be koshered?
- 13) If salami was fried in a Milky Teflon frying pan that was not previously used for 24 hours, can it be koshered and how? What if *non-kosher food* was fried in it?