



GUIDE TO KOSHERING WITH HAGALAH

Introduction:

The Torah teaches when a utensil is used to cook or heat food, the flavors of the food being cooked become infused into the walls of the utensil, and when this utensil is subsequently used to cook other foods, the flavor of the first food will be suffused into the current item being cooked.

For example, a pot used to cook bacon will become infused with bacon flavor and if the pot is subsequently used to cook kosher meatballs the meatballs will absorb the bacon flavor embedded in the pot and render them non-kosher.

Similarly, a pot which has been used to cook chometz has absorbed the chometz flavor and may not be used to cook foods intended to be used on Pesach.

The Torah prescribes systems for purging non-kosher and chometz utensils of their absorbed flavor. This process is known colloquially as Koshering.

The details associated with Koshering are extremely complex. This presentation will discuss the basic concepts. Specific questions not addressed in this presentation should be presented to an orthodox rabbi.

Note: The focus of this presentation will be on Koshering for Pesach, but the primary concepts are mostly identical when Koshering from non-kosher to kosher.

Five Koshering Methods

The basic premise of Koshering assumes *K'bolo kach polto*, which means: the method by which a utensil absorbed flavor is the method by which it is purged.

Practically speaking, there are five primary Koshering methods which are utilized for various types of kitchen utensils and equipment, and they are as follows:

1. **Tzonen** – Literally, cold.



- a. The utensil is cleaned thoroughly with cold water and detergent.
 - b. This process is used for utensil which have been utilized exclusively for cold foods, such as an ice cream scooper. If the scooper may have been washed with hot water or in a dishwasher one would need to employ the Hagalah procedure outlined below.
2. **Iruy** – Literally, pouring.
- a. Pouring boiling water from a pot heated on the fire directly onto the surface or equipment.
 - b. This process is used for surfaces and equipment that may have encountered spillage of non-kosher or chometz, such as countertops. Some situations may require passing a heated stone over the poured water on the surface as well.
3. **Hagalah** – Literally, purging.
- a. Dipping the utensil into boiling water to purge the flavor.
 - b. This process is used for utensils which have been used with hot liquid chometz on the fire, such as pots and mixing spoons, as well as items which have been used with any kind of hot chometz while not directly on the fire, such as cutlery.
4. **Libun Kal** – Literally, light burning.
- a. Utilizing direct heat to heat a metal utensil until the metal gets hot enough to singe a paper.
 - b. This process is used for utensils as an alternative to Hagalah, as well as to remove food particles and grease resistant to ordinary cleaning methods.
5. **Libun Gamur** – Literally, intense burning.
- a. Utilizing direct heat to heat a metal utensil until the metal is glowing red.
 - b. This process is used for utensils which have been used for chometz cooked, roasted or broiled on the fire with minimal liquid, such as baking pans, barbecue grates and according to most opinions, frying pans.

This presentation will be focused exclusively on Hagalah; the process of Koshering utensils by dipping them into boiling water.

Utensil Material

The Torah teaches us that only certain materials are Kasherable. The following materials may be Kashered:



1. Metal
2. Wood
3. Stone

The following materials cannot be koshered:

1. Ceramic
2. Porcelain

Glass is subject to dispute among the early halachic authorities. In practice, Ashkenazic custom assumes glass cannot be koshered, while Sephardic custom assumes that they may actually be used as-is and Koshering is not even necessary.

Plastic and other synthetic materials are also a subject of dispute amongst contemporary halachic authorities. Currently, some major agencies assume it may be koshered, others posit that it cannot and some only allow it in a situation of need.

Cleanliness

A basic prerequisite for Koshering with Hagalah is that the utensil must be perfectly clean from any chometz residue or grease.

Special attention must be made to the area around pot handles which are often difficult to clean of grease and residue. If possible, the handles should be unscrewed, cleaned well and reattached. If the handle cannot be removed, it should be cleaned very well with an abrasive cleaning agent and brush.

Utensils with small crevices and holes may not be koshered with Hagalah at all, since we assume that it is virtually impossible to clean these items appropriately. Some examples of these items include:

1. Graters
2. Strainers
3. Riveted knives with a small space between the blade and the handle
4. Wooden utensils with cracks
5. Baskets

Similarly, tangible rust or calcium deposits and the like must be removed prior to Koshering. Water stains and other intangible discolorations do not need to be removed.



Timing

Utensils being koshered must not be used for a full 24 hours prior to Koshering.

Koshering must be completed prior to the end-time for burning chometz on Erev Pesach. If the Koshering was not completed prior to this time, a rabbi should be consulted.

Prerequisite Checklist

Prior to beginning the Koshering process, the following checklist should be reviewed:

1. **Method** – Is Hagalah the appropriate Koshering method for this utensil? See *Five Koshering Methods*
2. **Material** – Can this material be Kashered? See *Utensil Material*
3. **Cleanliness** – Is the utensil perfectly clean? Does it have cracks and crevices? See *Cleanliness*
4. **Timing** – Has the utensil been used within 24 hours? Will the Hagalah be completed prior to the end-time of burning the chometz? See *Timing*
5. **Stovetop** – Is the stovetop clean of grease and residue?

Koshering Fundamentals

Rolling Boil: Koshering is only effective while the water maintains a rolling boil. One should be particularly careful when Koshering multiple utensils that the water maintains an active boil throughout the entire process.

Completely Submerged: Utensils must be completely submerged in the water to be effective, but do not necessarily need to be completely submerged at the same time. The utensil handles should be submerged as well.

1. If a utensil is grasped while it is being submerged, the location covered by one's grasp should be subsequently submerged. This may require two successive dippings.



2. A long serving spoon which doesn't fit into the pot should be dipped in twice, once on each side.

The Koshering Process

The Koshering process is as follows:

1. **Choosing a Pot:** The pot being used for Hagalah should ideally be a chometz pot which has not been used in 24 hours and is clean.

[Alternatively, a Pesach pot may be used, but it is generally simpler to use a chometz pot since whichever pot is being used will be re-koshered after the Hagalah procedure is completed before being used for Pesach cooking.]
2. **Checklist:** Ensure the *Prerequisite Checklist* has been completed for the pot being used for koshering, as well as for the utensils being Koshered.
3. **Fill:** Fill the pot with water until the top.
4. **Rolling Boil:** Place pot on stovetop and bring to a rolling boil.
5. **Submerge:** Each item being Kashered should be dropped gently into the boiling water.
 - a. If the item is too large to fit into the pot at one time, each part of the utensil should be inserted independently.
 - b. If the item is too large and does not fit into the pot at all, the procedure outlined in *Koshering Large Pots* should be followed.
6. **Removed:** When feasible, the item should be removed with a pliers or Pesach tongs after approximately five seconds. Smallware and cutlery which may be difficult to remove may be left on the bottom of the pot until the Koshering is completed.
7. **Cold Water:** Once the utensils are removed from the pot they should be rinsed in cold water. Smallware and cutlery left on the bottom on pot should be rinsed upon completion of the entire Koshering process.
8. **Designation:** The utensils are now Kosher for Pesach and may be designated as either Pareve, Meat or Dairy, irrespective of the original designation.

Note: The pot used for Koshering must be Kashered once again before being used for cooking on Pesach. The process for Koshering the pot for cooking use is outlined below (*Koshering Large Pots*).



Koshering Large Pots

The process of Koshering large chometz pots which do not fit into the Koshering pot is as follows:

1. Prepare the pot being Kasherred, as well as another small saucepan.
2. Ensure the *Prerequisite Checklist* has been completed for both pots.
3. Fill the pot being Kasherred with water until the top and place on fire.
4. Fill the saucepan with water and place on fire.
5. Once both pots are brought to a rolling boil, lift the saucepan and gently insert it into the large pot until the pot overflows over the sides.
6. Empty the large pot.
7. Gently pour hot water from the saucepan on the handles of the large pot.
8. Rinse the large pot with cold water
9. The pot is now Kosher for Pesach.

Safety

Koshering with boiling water is a dangerous procedure and extreme caution should be exercised throughout the entire process.