

A high-speed photograph of a silver fork positioned diagonally from the top right towards the center. The background is a dynamic splash of clear blue water with numerous small droplets and bubbles scattered throughout. The lighting is bright, creating a clean and fresh aesthetic.

Tevillas Keilim

Introduction

Utensils that are used in the preparation or consumption of food, and which were once owned by a non-Jew and are now owned by a Jew, must undergo *tevillas keilim* (ritual immersion in a *mikvah*) before they can be used. The following is an outline of some of the basic *halachos*:

Tevillah is only required for items made of metal or glass; e.g., aluminum, cast iron, chrome, pewter, Pyrex, silver, stainless steel, tin, etc. Disposable aluminum pans are metal, but, due to their disposability, they do not require *tevillah*, regardless of how many times they are used. *Tevillah* is not required for utensils made of cardboard, ceramic, cork, leather, paper, plastic, rubber, stone, Styrofoam, or wood. China should have *tevillah* without a *bracha*.

Materials

Tevillah is only required for utensils which have food contact. Therefore, a stovetop grate does not require *tevillah*, since it never touches food, and neither does the water pan used with a chafing dish, but *tevillah* is required for a barbecue spit or the food pan used with a chafing dish. The cover of a chafing dish must also undergo *tevillah*; although it seemingly does not have contact with the “actual” food, it is considered to have food contact because of the considerable amount of steam that rises from the food to the cover.

Food Contact

A glass cake tray requires *tevillah*, even if the cake is always placed in cupcake holders or on a doily (i.e., never touches the actual tray), because the doily, etc. is considered *tafel*/trivial to the food. A can opener does not have (intentional) food contact, and, therefore, it does not require *tevillah*. The tray in a toaster oven or microwave, requires *tevillah*, because people put food right onto it, but the chambers of those appliances do not require *tevillah*, since they do not have (intentional) food contact. The following are some other examples of items which have no food contact and, therefore, do not require *tevillah*: corkscrew, dishwashing basin, knife sharpener, and napkin ring.

Eating and Cooking

Tevillah is primarily required for utensils that either have contact with food that is “ready to eat” (e.g., flatware, plates), or used to

bring the food to the point that it is ready to eat (e.g., pots, pans). If a utensil is intended for use with raw food, but the same item could also be used for meal-ready food, then *tevillah* should be performed without a *bracha*. For example, a pair of kitchen scissors purchased for cutting raw meat will not be used with meal-ready food, but since there are others who would buy those scissors for cutting vegetables, *tevillah* should be performed without a *bracha*. There is a difference of opinion as to whether *tevillah* is required at all if the utensil can only be used for raw foods (e.g., meat tenderizer).

Peelers, graters, and food processors which will be used with meal-ready food (e.g., carrots) require *tevillah* with a *bracha*. If they will only be used for foods that require further cooking (e.g., potatoes), then *tevillah* should be performed, but no *bracha* should be recited. Colanders, skewers, and spatulas are used with food that is fully cooked, and, therefore, they require *tevillah* with a *bracha* (assuming they are metal or glass).

Containers used for storage of food, and from which no one ever eats directly, should have *tevillah* without a *bracha*.

Miscellaneous

Rav Gedalia Dov Schwartz, zt”l ruled that any electrical appliance that might get ruined because of *tevillah* is excused from the requirement of *tevillas keilim* and may be used without *tevillah*.

The item undergoing *tevillah* must be free of *chatzizos* – items that block the water from having direct contact with them. This means that not only must all stickers and labels be removed before *tevillah*, but the person performing the *tevillah* should be sure not to grip the item too tightly when it is in the *mikvah* (for if he does, his hand will be a *chatzizah*).

The *bracha* of אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו על טבילת כלים is recited before *tevillah* begins. If more than one person will be performing *tevillah*, one person can recite the *bracha* for all the participants.

