

# A Kashering Primer

One of the many preparations one must make for Passover is kashering, a process to prepare *chametz* vessels for Passover use. (Although most people kasher utensils only in preparation for Passover, the following directions apply to kashering utensils all year-round as well.) As with all areas of *halachah*, those

who are unsure of how to apply the rules of kashering to their situation should ask their Rabbi.

## { The Basics of Preparing Your Kitchen for Passover

### ▀ General rules

There are two steps in kashering for Passover.

**1 CLEANING**—removing all tangible traces of *chametz*, and

**2 PURGING**—using heat to remove all absorbed *chametz* flavor. Items which have narrow cracks, crevices, deep scratches or other areas that cannot easily be cleaned, cannot be kashered for Passover. Therefore, the following, for example, cannot be kashered:

- > Colanders
- > Decanters or baby bottles (due to their narrow necks)
- > Filters/ screens over drains in sinks
- > Graters

> Knives (or other utensils) where food or dirt can get trapped between the blade and handle

- > Slotted spoons
- > Sponges
- > Toothbrushes

Utensils made from the following materials

cannot be kashered:

> Ceramic—all types—including brick, china, coffee mugs and enamel.

> Glass—all forms—including Corning Ware, Corelle, fiberglass, porcelain enamel (for example, porcelain sinks and enameled pots), Pyrex or Thermoses.

> Plastic—Rabbinical authorities disagree as to whether it is possible to kasher plastic and other synthetic materials (including Teflon, rubber, Formica). If a synthetic material is a minority component of a substance (like Silestone), many Rabbis believe that one may kasher it, even if one does not normally kasher artificial materials for a number of reasons. Ask your Rabbi for guidance.

As a rule, materials such as fabric, metal, wood, rubber and stone (for example, granite and marble) can be kashered.

### ▀ Cleaning

All *chametz* utensils that will be used for Passover must first be thoroughly cleaned. This involves the removal of all food, rust, dirt, calcium deposits and anything else that protrudes; it does not include the removal of discolorations.

### ▀ Purging

In addition to cleaning, most items require some form of hot purging in order to remove the flavor that has been absorbed. As a rule, any utensil that came in contact with hot food, was washed with hot water, or was used to store liquids, requires hot purging. A comprehensive analysis regarding when hot purging is required and how one determines which form of purging is effective is beyond the scope of this article. Rather we will describe the standard method of purging flavor from the most common items.



All methods of kashering noted in this section presuppose that the equipment was thoroughly cleaned, as described above.

## ► Silverware, Pots and Other Small Items

Small items are kashered with *hagalah*, which involves:

**1 NOT USING THE UTENSIL** for anything, including non-*chametz*, for twenty-four hours. This also applies to the (non-Passover) pot in which the *hagalah* water will be boiled.

**2 SUBMERGING THE UTENSIL** in boiling water that is over the fire. The water must be at a rolling boil before the utensil to be kashered is put into it, and the water must touch every surface of the utensil. Therefore, each item should be kashered individually, and the water should be allowed to return to a boil before the next item is placed into the pot. Large utensils may be submerged in the water one part at a time.

**3** Removing the utensil from the water and **RINSING IT IN COLD WATER.**

## ► Ovens

### KASHERING A SELF-CLEANING OVEN:

**1** Remove any visible pieces of food (or other items) from the oven;

**2** Go through one complete self cleaning cycle with the racks in place.

### KASHERING A NON-SELF-CLEANING OVEN:

**1** Clean walls, floor, door, ceiling and racks thoroughly with an abrasive cleaner (for example, Easy-Off) to remove tangible *chametz*. Pay special attention to the temperature gauge, the window in the door and the edges of the oven chamber. Black discolorations that are flush with the metal do not have to be removed.

**2** Once the oven is clean, it is preferable that it remain unused for twenty-four hours.

**3** Place the racks back into the oven, and turn the oven to broil for one and-a-half hours.

**4** Passover food or pans may be placed directly on the door or racks once the oven has been kashered.



If the oven has a separate broiler chamber, it should be kashered in the same manner as the oven chamber. A broiler pan that comes in direct contact with food cannot be kashered.

*Note: The method of kashering described above is based on the ruling of Rav Aharon Kotler zt'l. However, Rav Moshe Feinstein zt'l ruled that the oven must either be kashered with a blowtorch, or that an insert should be placed into the oven for the duration of Passover. Consult your Rabbi for guidance.*

## ► Stovetops

The grates of a gas stovetop should be kashered in the oven chamber in the same manner described above. For an electric stovetop, just clean the coils and turn on high for ten minutes. If you have a glass-topped stovetop, you should consult your Rabbi for directions if/how it can be used for Passover.

For a gas or electric stove, it is preferable to replace the drip pans that are under the burners; if this is not possible, the area should be covered with aluminum foil. The work area between the burners should be cleaned and covered with aluminum foil. The knobs and handles of the oven and stovetop should be wiped clean.



## ► Sinks

### KASHERING A STAINLESS STEEL SINK:

**1** If the filter covering the drain has very fine holes, remove the filter and put it away for Passover with the *chametz* dishes. If the holes are larger, the filter may be kashered with the sink.