



Immersion for Mixed- Material Utensils Part II

The previous article examined the various factors that require a mixed utensil to be immersed. The *Maharam* of Rothenberg states that the requirement of immersion is dependent on the essential part of the utensil (known as a *ma'amid*). Based on this view, a wooden wine barrel with metal hoops would require immersion, as the hoops are essential to the function of the barrel. *Tosfot*, however, is of the opinion that the material that touches the food determines whether it must be immersed. For example, a plastic peeler with a metal blade must be immersed, as the metal touches the food. Most authorities rule like the *Tosfot* (*Biur Ha'gra* 120:16).

Critical parts of a utensil

The *Rema* (YD 120:7) in his commentary to the *Shulchan Aruch* states that a pepper mill made of wood with an integral metal piece inside requires immersion (based on the *Isur V'heter* (58:87)). The *Rema*

explains that even though the metal piece does not directly touch the food, it requires immersion, as the pepper grinder **cannot function** without the metal piece. This is based on the understanding that the metal piece of the utensil is critical for the utensil to function properly and is therefore considered one entity, rather than two separate parts. Many later authorities (*Chochmat Adam* 73:10, *Misgeret Hashulchan* 37:5) support the opinion of the *Rema* and rule accordingly.

A practical application of the *Rema's* ruling is regarding a spatula. There are spatulas that are made with both a metal handle and a plastic blade that touches the food. As the spatula is useless without the metal handle, it requires immersion, even though only the plastic comes in direct contact with the food.

Modern authorities debate whether the *Rema's* logic may exempt certain materials from immersion. For example, food processors have metal blades, which enable the device to function. Based on the *Rema*, the plastic component is essential to enabling the blades to function, possibly exempting the blades from immersion. However, authorities (see *The Kosher Kitchen* p. 460, *Ben Yisrael L'amim* 13:40) rule that the metal blades all require immersion. This ruling is based on the



understanding that a metal blade is a separate utensil that is detachable. An additional aspect is that the plastic is merely considered a handle for the metal utensil. This differs from the example of the spatula in which the metal handle makes up an essential component of the utensil (see *Ma'adnei Asher* 154).

Non-essential metal pieces

The *Rema* (at the end of his commentary on YD 120:7) comments that insignificant metal pieces on wood (or other exempt materials) are exempt from immersion even if they directly come in contact with food. He brings the example of a spout made completely out of wood with a small amount of iron at the edge. The *Rema* rules that even though the liquid touches the metal, immersion is not required, as the iron is not critical for the utensil's use. A practical application of this ruling relates to ceramic knives. Ceramic is one of the materials that are exempt from immersion. However, there are certain models of ceramic knives with a small metal trim on the blade. There is no need to immerse these knives, as the ceramic knife is fully functional and may be used to cut even without the metal.

It is important to note that when the metal comes in contact with food and serves a significant purpose, the utensil must be

immersed according to all opinions. Plastic thermos bottles with metal or glass linings fall under this category.

To summarize:

Direct contact of the metal or glass component with food determines if a utensil requires immersion.

If the metal or glass does not directly touch the food but is essential for the basic function of the utensil, the *Rema* and later authorities require the utensil to be immersed. Examples include a pepper grinder with essential metal parts and a plastic spatula connected with a metal handle.

Metal blades of a food-processor or blender require immersion even though the blades can only function when attached to the plastic container.

Insignificant pieces of metal found in plastic, wooden or ceramic utensils, such as ceramic knives with a metal trim, do not require immersion.

Plastic thermos bottles with a metal or lining require immersion. ■

Kashrut Questions in Israel?

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