



Immersion of Coated and Lined Utensils

An important factor regarding the laws of *tevilat keilim* (immersing utensils) is whether food directly touches the utensil. Normally utensils must be immersed only when they come in direct contact with food or liquid (*Shulchan Aruch* YD 120:4, *Chochmat Adam* 73:9). Stove grates, for example, are exempt from immersion, as they don't directly touch food.

As mentioned in previous articles, the *Rema* (120:7) rules that wherever only a small area of a material requiring immersion (such as glass or metal) touches the food, there is no obligation to immerse. The *Rema's* logic is that the metal or glass component is so insignificant that halacha doesn't consider it substantial enough to require immersion.

In today's kitchen, it is common to find permanent or temporary coatings on dishes, pans, and other cookware. This article will discuss the halachic status of these materials.

Among the later authorities who discuss

coated utensils, the *Maharsham* (3:20) considers the obligation of *tevilah* for enameled pots. Enamel is a coating used on metal utensils to give them a smooth finish. The coating is usually made of clay or ceramic. The *Maharsham* rules that enameled utensils require *tevilah*. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (cited repeatedly in *Sefer Tevilat Keilim*) rules likewise. Both *poskim* agree that the coating is insignificant to the utensil and thus doesn't change the obligation of *tevilah*. In addition, since the coating is baked onto the utensil, they're considered one entity made of metal with a clay overlay; the coating is negated by the utensil (Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, cited in *Sefer Tevilat Keilim* p. 124). (Modern enamel is also made partially from silica glass, which would obligate the utensil to be immersed in any case.)

Modern authorities apply the same logic to Teflon nonstick pans. Since the Teflon becomes part of the utensil and is only a coating, *tevilah* is required (*Mayim Chaim* 163; *Encyclopedia of Kosher Food*, p.100, cites that this was the opinion of Rav Mordechai Eliyahu).

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach extends this logic to numerous scenarios associated with *tevilat keilim*. If a utensil is covered for decorative purposes, *tevilah* is still required. For example, metal



utensils covered with a thick coat of paint require *tevilah*, because a layer of color is halachically insignificant. Likewise, a metal breadbasket into which a decorative napkin is always placed under the bread requires immersion.

Rav Shlomo Zalman added that simply wrapping a piece of paper or cloth around food doesn't exempt the container in which it is placed. As such, a glass candy jar containing wrapped sweets must be immersed.

The principle behind all these halachot is that a minor covering or coating doesn't change the requirement of immersion.

Another practical application relates to baking paper or paper towels used to line utensils. Baking pans lined with baking paper require immersion, as the paper isn't part of the pan and is insignificant to the utensil (see *Chelkat Binyamin* 120:34 and *Bein Yisrael LaAmim* 13:20).

Similarly, a paper towel placed on a glass microwave turntable doesn't exempt it from immersion. Although food is usually not placed directly on the

turntable, if food is placed there even once, or even on a paper towel, the glass requires *tevilah* (see OU Kashrut page, *Parashat Devarim* 5780).

Likewise, a metal oven rack must be immersed if food, such as bread, will be placed on it directly or even on aluminum foil.

To summarize:

A glass or metal utensil requires immersion if it comes in direct contact with food. Generally, stove grates are exempt from immersion.

Enamel and Teflon-coated pots/pans require immersion, as the coating merges with the utensil and is halachically insignificant.

Painted glass or metal utensils must be immersed.

Baking pans, glass microwave turntables, and oven racks require immersion even when separated from food by a minor layer such as baking paper or paper towels, which are halachically insignificant. ■

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