



Kashering Factory Machinery

The OU certifies factories in over eighty countries and more than six thousand facilities worldwide. In many cases, these facilities are kosher all year round, based on a tight and detailed system developed by the OU's rabbinical staff. In certain cases, such as Pesach or special productions, the OU requires the kashering of equipment in the facility. This article notes OU policy regarding the proper preparations needed to kasher machinery.

In order to properly kasher most utensils,

the utensil must not be used twenty-four hours before the kashering process (see *Shulchan Aruch* OH 452:2). The reason is that a utensil that is *ben yomo* (used in the past twenty-four hours) cannot be kashered with hot water, since the water absorbs the flavor from the utensil which then re-enters the utensil. However, regarding an *eino ben yomo* utensil whose absorbed flavor is distasteful, even when the flavor re-enters the utensil, it is considered *notein ta'am lifgam* rendering it permissible (see *Chayei Adam* 125:12). The *Shulchan Aruch* (YD 122:6) rules that when there is doubt whether a utensil was used in the last twenty-four hours, we may rely on a *sfeik sfeika* (double doubt) in order to use the utensil. As explained in the previous article, the double doubt refers to (1) perhaps the utensil was not used in the last twenty-four hours; and (2) if it was used, perhaps the food did not give flavor or its flavor is distasteful in relation to the food that will be subsequently cooked in it.

In a typical factory environment, can kashrut organizations rely on the *sfeik sfeika* regarding machinery that requires kashering? Later authorities such as the *Pri Chadash* (OH 547:5) and *Darchei Teshuva* (YD 122:18) discuss relying on the *sfeik sfeika* in cases where the utensils are used on a constant basis. They rule

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stringently, based simply on the fact that when a utensil is used on a daily basis the double doubt logic is irrelevant, since only one doubt remains. In a factory environment, cooking machinery is used on a constant basis, and thus it would seem that the *sfeik sfeika* is not applicable. Rav Belsky ז"ל (OU *posek*) adds another interesting point. The second doubt in the *sfeik sfeika* is that perhaps the new food being cooked becomes *lifgam* (distasteful) from the previous food. However, regarding a factory, it is clear which foods were previously cooked on the machinery. If there is no negative effect on the subsequent food, then there is no additional, second doubt. In short, based on these points there is no basis to rely on the double doubt in a factory setting. Although certain certifications do use the *sfeik sfeika* principle in factories to do an immediate kashering of the machinery (in order to prevent having to shut a line down for twenty-

four hours), the OU is quite strict on this issue. As such, in most cases the OU will only allow kashering after a full twenty-four hour hiatus in production on the machine. There are many other aspects involved in how the OU kashers equipment worldwide which will be addressed in future articles. ■

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