



Tevilat Keilim for Plated Utensils, Porcelain and China

The biblical mitzvah of immersing utensils only pertains to metal objects, as described in *Bamidbar* 31:23. Wood, bone, and stone utensils are exempt from immersion. The *Gemara* (*Avodah Zara* 75B) notes that our sages added glass as a compound requiring immersion. The requirement to immerse glass is rabbinic. In today's market many utensils are made from multiple elements and therefore a more in depth analysis of the laws of immersion is required. The *Gemara* (Ibid) sheds light on this issue, with practical application for plated utensils as well as other modern day porcelain and china dishes.

The *Gemara* describes a utensil called a *kunaya*, a type of pot or dish that is made from earthenware and plated with metal on the inside. One opinion in the *Gemara* requires immersion for a *kunaya*, while the other opinion exempts. The

conclusion of the Talmud is that a plated utensil requires immersion.

Early authorities debate what the final ruling is. *Tosfot* maintains that a ceramic dish would only require immersion when plated with metal on the inside, as the food directly comes in contact with the metal. The *Raviah* understands the *Gemara* differently. He rules that even if the utensil is plated with metal only on the outside, immersion would be required, as plated metal becomes an important element of the utensil. The *Issur V'Heter* requires immersion whether the utensil is plated on the exterior or interior. However, a blessing is only recited when both sides are plated. The *Shulchan Aruch* (YD 120:1) cites the opinion of *Tosfot* that only materials plated on the inside require immersion, while the *Rema* (Ibid) brings the *Issur V'Heter* as his ruling.

The accepted custom is to immerse metal plated utensils without a bracha if they are plated on the interior **or** the exterior of the utensil. However, if they are plated on both sides, a bracha is required (*Pri Chadash* 120:7).

Porcelain and china (bone or other type) are both a form of earthenware and are commonly used for nicer occasions. These types of dishes are almost always glazed with a layer of glass. Would the



glass coating require immersion?

The *Sheilat Yavetz* (See *Pitchei Teshuva* 120:2) exempted porcelain dishes from immersion altogether. However, it is very likely that he was discussing porcelain that had no glass finish (see *The Kosher Kitchen* by Rav Binyomin Forst, appendix C, for a detailed discussion regarding this issue.)

Without the glazed finish, people would refrain from eating out of a regular clay dish

The opinion exempting porcelain dishes from immersion is based on the fact that the glass glaze is merely ornamental. Others claim that the glaze is so thin that it does not compare to the plated utensils discussed in the *Gemara* and early authorities (See *Igrot Moshe* YD 2:46). In some instances of the glazing process, the glaze partially melts into the dish and becomes incorporated into the dish itself.

The opinions that require immersion for glazed china and porcelain note that the purpose of the glass coating is not merely ornamental. Rather, the glaze is an important part of the dish, as it provides a hard surface to protect the food and to aid in the cleaning process (see *The Kosher Kitchen* p.532). According to others, even if the purpose is merely ornamental, it still requires immersion (see *Sefer Tevilat Keilim* 1:7). An additional claim is that without the glazed finish, people would refrain from eating out of a regular clay dish. According to this view, the glaze no matter how thin, is a “*makeh bepatish*” (a finishing act), making it an essential component of the dish which therefore requires immersion.

There is a consensus among modern authorities to immerse china and porcelain without a *bracha* (*Melamed L'Hoil* YD 47, *Aruch Hashulchan* YD 120:29).

Regarding caterers and restaurants, OU policy is to recommend to immerse china and porcelain utensils whenever possible. ■

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