



Immersion for Utensils Used Unconventionally

The Gemara (Avodah Zara 75b) debates whether all utensils require immersion in a *mikveh*, or just utensils used for food. One opinion suggests that scissors used to shear sheep may require immersion. The Gemara rejects this view, stating that only *klei seuda* (utensils that are connected to eating) require immersion. An interesting question arises regarding a utensil that is not associated with food consumption, which is being used for eating purposes. An example would be the use of a Swiss Army knife to cut fruit.

Later authorities discuss which factors determine whether a utensil is used for eating purposes. Is the status dependent

on the intent of the manufacturer or the buyer? Does the frequency of the utensil's use for eating purposes play a role?

The *Issur V'heter* (*Siman* 85), writes that if someone purchases a knife to cut parchment for a *Sefer Torah* and then decides to use it for cutting meat even once, immersion is required beforehand. From this ruling, it is obvious that no matter what the purpose or how many times it was used for food, it requires *tevilah* (immersion).

If he then wants to use it even once for a meal, it requires *tevilah*, since in essence it is a *kli seuda*

The *Pri Chadash* (YD 120:19) disagrees, pointing out that in many areas of Torah law we go by majority use. The same is true with *tevilat keilim*; in order to consider a utensil a *kli seuda*, we consider its majority use. Thus, according to the *Pri Chadash*, if someone

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occasionally uses a Swiss Army knife to cut vegetables, yet it is mostly used for camping purposes, no immersion is required. (Other authorities agree, see *Pitchei Teshuva* 120:6.)

The *Aruch Hashulchan* (YD 120:40) disagrees with the *Pri Chadash*. He asserts that it's the mindset of the purchaser that is the deciding factor in requiring immersion. If someone purchases a utensil exclusively for a non-meal related use, even if he uses it once for food, the utensil

is exempt from *tevilah*. However, if the buyer's initial plan is to use it occasionally for food, even only rarely, the utensil must be immersed before any food use. An example of the *Aruch Hashulchan's* opinion is small shot glasses. It was common to buy small glasses for both lighting candles and for occasionally drinking liquor at special occasions. According to the *Aruch Hashulchan* if the owner purchased the small glasses specifically to hold oil for candles, no immersion is required **even** if they are used, rarely, for drinking.

TISHA B'AV
WOMEN'S YOM IYUN
THURSDAY, JULY 30

9:15 AM Kinnot - Rebbetzin Ruthie Karlinsky

9:45 AM "Why Is It Hard For Us To Mourn The Churban & What Can We Do About It?"
Rebbetzin Dina Schoonmaker

11:00 AM "They Hung Up Their Harps" - Rebbetzin Golda Warhaftig

12:15 PM "Zecher LeChurban: Can we Live Without Music?" - Rabbi Anthony Manning

1:30 PM "Tisha Ba'av: Mourning a Homeless Gd" - Rabbi Yitzchak Shurin

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However if the glasses were purchased with the intent of using them for both lighting and an occasional shot of whisky, *tevilah* is required.

The *Pri To'ar* (YD 120:11) brings a different approach, distinguishing between two types of utensils. If a utensil is manufactured and used by most people for food purposes, and someone decided to use it for a different purpose, then if it will be used once for food, *tevilah* is required beforehand. For example, if someone purchases a kitchen knife and decides to use it to sharpen things, if he then wants to use it even once for a meal, it requires *tevilah*, since in essence it is a *kli seuda*. It would seem the *Pri To'ar* agrees that a utensil that was not made for meal purposes goes by its majority use.

To summarize:

1. A utensil that is not made for meal purposes and is never used for food is exempt from *tevilah*.
2. According to the *Pri Chadash*, in a case where it is used occasionally for food it does not require *tevilah*.
3. The *Aruch Hashulchan* holds that it depends on the intent of the buyer. If it was purchased for both purposes, *tevilah* is required. However, if the

buyer intended it only for non-food purposes, it does not need immersion even if it is later used occasionally for food.

4. The *Pri Toar* rules that majority use is only relevant when the utensil is not meant and used in the general public for food. However if its main purpose is food and the owner uses it mainly for other purposes, that does not exempt it from immersion.

Later authorities (see *Sefer Hakashrut* p.111) rule stringently on many of these matters and recommend immersing most of these utensils, but without a bracha because of doubt.

Here are some practical examples of what we learned above:

- a. A steak knife used to sharpen pencils requires immersion if it is used in a meal even once.
- b. A camping knife that is used occasionally for food should be immersed. However, if someone wants to use it once or twice without *tevilah* that is permitted. (Based on the *Aruch Hashulchan* Ibid).
- c. Shears used for cutting cardboard and used on numerous occasions to cut chicken require immersion.

All these utensils should be immersed without a bracha. ■



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