

# TEVILLAS KEILIM: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS PART 1

*by Rabbi Doniel Neustadt*

Question: Do utensils which are manufactured by a Jewish company but sold in a store owned by non-Jews require tevilas keilim?

Discussion: Yes, they must be immersed.[1] While most poskim hold that a blessing is recited,[2] some hold that no blessing is recited in this case[3].

Question: Do utensils manufactured by a company owned by non-observant Jews require tevilah?

Discussion: No[4].

Question: Do utensils which were manufactured by a Jewish-owned company whose workers are not Jewish, or which were manufactured by a gentile-owned company whose workers are Jewish, require tevilah?

Discussion: Most poskim maintain that the determining factor is the owner of the factory or company which manufactures the utensil — who the workers are is irrelevant[5]. The following rules apply:

If the manufacturing company is —

1. owned by a Jew, no tevilah is required even if the workers are not Jewish[6].
2. owned by a non-Jew, tevilah is required even if the workers are Jewish[7].
3. co-owned by a Jew and a non-Jew, tevilah is required.[8]
4. a public corporation (or a government agency[9] ) which is controlled by non-Jews, tevilah is required. If the corporation is controlled by Jews, tevilah is not required[10].

Important note: As stated in yesterday's Discussion, if the utensil was bought from a non-Jewish store, it still requires tevilah even if it was manufactured by a Jewish-owned company. For example, utensils that were made in Israel are only exempt from tevilah if they are bought in a store owned or controlled by Jews.

Question: What should be done if — after research — one cannot determine if the utensil was manufactured by Jews or non-Jews?

Discussion: If the item was manufactured anywhere in the world except Israel, the utensil should be immersed and the blessing recited, as the vast majority of manufacturers world-wide are non-Jewish[11]. If the item was manufactured in Israel and the item was bought in a Jewish store, no tevilah is required at all. If one cannot determine where the item was manufactured, tevilah should be performed without reciting the blessing.

Question: Does a sticker left on a utensil invalidate the tevilah?

Discussion: In most cases, when the sticker should have been removed or will be removed at a later date, the sticker is considered a chatzitzah which invalidates the tevilah and the immersion must be repeated. In the atypical case where the sticker is supposed to remain on the utensil, then the sticker does not need to be removed before tevilah and is not considered a chatzitzah[12].

Question: If a utensil inadvertently falls into the mikveh, is the immersion valid or must it be repeated l'sheim mitzvas tevilah?

Discussion: The immersion, although inadvertent, is valid and need not be repeated. Tevilas keilim does not need to be performed l'sheim mitzvah[13].

Question: May a boy under the age of thirteen or a girl under the age of twelve be given the task of performing tevilas keilim?

Discussion: Technically speaking, yes. As mentioned yesterday, even utensils which fell into the mikveh inadvertently are considered immersed; surely then, if they were immersed by a child the tevilah is valid. But practically speaking, if an adult did not supervise the tevilah, we have no assurance that the utensil was immersed properly. Merely relying on the child's say-so, even a child who is generally responsible and trustworthy, is not always halachically sufficient, especially in cases where the obligation of tevilah is min ha-Torah. The following rules apply:

5. Utensils made of gold, silver, copper, iron, tin and lead, which require tevilah min ha-Torah, may not be immersed by a minor[14] unless an adult supervises the tevilah.[15] If an adult failed to supervise the tevilah, then it must be repeated by an adult. The blessing, however, should not be repeated[16].
6. Utensils which must be immersed mi-deRabanan, such as those made of aluminum[17], glass[18] (including Pyrex, Duralux and Corelle), glazed earthenware, lead-coated earthenware, china, Corningware or porcelain enamel[19], l'chatchilah should also be immersed by an adult[20]. But if an adult is not available, they may be given to a responsible and trustworthy minor for tevilah[21]. The minor then recites the blessing over the tevilah[22].

Question: May tevilas keilim be performed by a non-Jew?

Discussion: Since, as explained previously (18 Shevat), tevilas keilim does not need to be performed l'sheim mitzvah, it is permissible for a non-Jew to perform the tevilah as long as a Jew is standing by and supervising that it is being done properly[23]. It is permitted — even l'chatchilah — for a Jew to recite the blessing and immerse the first utensil and then have a non-Jew immerse the rest of the utensils[24].

If a non-Jew claims that he immersed utensils but there was no proper supervision, the tevilah must be repeated. Whether or not a blessing should be recited over this tevilah will depend on several factors. A rav should be consulted[25].

Question: Some refrigerator parts, such as the racks or vegetable bins, are made from metal or glass,

and food is sometimes placed directly on or in them. Do they require tevilah?

Discussion: This question was presented to Rav S.Z. Auerbach[26], who responded that it has become customary that neither the refrigerator itself, not its removable parts, undergo tevilah[27]. He suggested that the custom is based on the fact that a refrigerator is a large, stationary object which is generally not shifted around. Thus neither it nor its parts are considered keilei seudah, utensils used for a meal, and they are therefore exempt from tevilah[28].

Note, however, that other poskim disagree and hold that the size of the utensil and the way that it is used have no bearing on the issue and do not exempt the utensil from tevilah[29].

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1. Based on Y.D. 120:11.
  2. See Darchei Teshuvah, Y.D. 120:81 and Tevilas Keilim 3:2. See also oral ruling by Rav M. Feinstein (quoted in Oholei Yeshurun, pg. 41).
  3. Igros Moshe, Y.D. 3:21.
  4. Chasam Sofer (quoted in Tzitz Eliezer 8:19); Doveiv Meisharim 1:85; Igros Moshe, O.C. 3:4; Rav C. Kanievsky (Halichos Chayim, vol. 2, pg. 117).
  5. Aruch ha-Shulchan, Y.D. 120:58; Darchei Teshuvah 120:81; Igros Moshe, O.C. 3:4.
  6. A minority view dissents and requires tevilah without a blessing; see Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 37:6.
  7. A minority view dissents and permits — under extenuating circumstances — using utensils made of glass without tevilah in this case; see Pischei Teshuvah, Y.D. 120:12.
  8. Based on Shach, Y.D. 120:26. See Beiur ha-Gra 28. A minority view dissents and maintains that no blessing is recited over this tevilah; see Sho'el u'Meishiv, Kama, 2:73.
  9. Igros Moshe, Y.D. 2:39.
  10. Rav M. Feinstein (oral ruling, quoted in Oholei Yeshurun, pg. 41). See also Tevilas Keilim, pg. 64, quoting Rav S.Z. Auerbach.
  11. Chazon Ish, Y.D. 37:15; Igros Moshe, O.C. 3:4; Yabia Omer, Y.D. 6:12. A minority view holds that the blessing should not be recited; see Darchei Teshuvah, Y.D. 120:81, quoting Teshuras Shai.
  12. Tevilas Keilim, pg. 122, quoting Rav Y.Y. Weiss and Rav S. Wosner.
  13. Shach, Y.D. 120:28; Chochmas Adam 73:22.
  14. Some poskim hold that merely being over bar or bas mitzvah age is insufficient; to perform tevilas keilim one must display signs of puberty. See Pischei Teshuvah, Y.D. 120:14.
  15. Rama, Y.D. 120:14. If an adult is supervising, then even l'chatchilah a minor may immerse the

utensils and recite the blessing; Levush, Y.D. 120:14.

16. Based on the view of Be'ur ha-Gra, Y.D. 127:32, that a minor can be trusted when it is beyado lesaken. See also Chochmas Adam 72:16.

17. Igros Moshe, Y.D. 3:22.

18. Mishnah Berurah 509:30.

19. Binas Adam 73:65. See also Pri Megadim, Mishbetzos, O.C. 451:31.

20. Since Pri Megadim, Mishbetzos 451:6, quoted by Pischei Teshuvah, Y.D. 120:14 remains doubtful if a minor can be trusted in cases of ischazek isura.

21. Rav Akiva Eiger, Y.D. 120:14; Chochmas Adam 73:21. See also Mishnah Berurah 437:17 and Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 19, who rules that minors may be trusted in mi-deRabanan cases of ischazek isura.

22. Darchei Teshuvah, Y.D. 120:105.

23. Y.D. 120:15.

24. Taz, Y.D. 120:

25. Under certain conditions, we may, to some extent, accept a "trustworthy" non-Jew's word, e.g., mesiyach lefi tumo; see Chochmas Adam 72:17.

26. Minchas Shlomo 2:66-8. [Based on this response, we can assume that a spring-water cooler (Oasis), which is a large stationary object, and a microwave turntable which is part of a stationary object, do not require tevilah either.]

27. See also Be'er Moshe 4:99 who notes that it has become customary not to immerse refrigerator parts.

28. See Aruch ha-Shulchan, Y.D. 120:39, who applies the same principle to exempt large metal vats from tevilah.

29. See Chochmas Adam 73:13 and Binas Adam, Teshuvos Mahri Asad 216, Tevilas Keilim, pg. 196 and 237 and Chelkas Binyamin 120:3. See also Halichos Chayim, vol. 2, pg. 116, where Rav C. Kanievsky remains undecided on this issue.

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