

The Art of Halacha

Shiur 42 - Kashering Keilim - Libun 3 - How Libun Works - Kashering Ovens

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בדק בבית בית ד' שער ד' ופוי' ודג... שבתוכו

עיה: השוכר את הפועל פרק חמישי עבודה זרה

האור"ה (כלל נ"ח דין י"ט)

בכלי מתכות דהתם להפליט מה שבלע אבל ליבון בשום מקום אינו מפליט כל איסור שבו אלא כלוי²² הוא שהוא מכלה איסור שבתוכו,

כל דבר אשר יבא צאש. שנשתמשו בו בני מדין על ידי האור תעבירו צאש כעין צולעו לאיסור יפליטנו כדאמרו¹¹ כצולעו כך פולטו: וטהר.

יט. וה"ה אפי' יש עליו טלאי והוקדם האיסור לטלאי ואפי' בדבר שצריך ליבון מדינא דכה האש שורף כל דבר ומה שנשאר בו עתה לא יפלט ממנו לעולם¹² וכ"ש מבשר להלב ואפילו מהמין למצה דהא התירא בלע. וכ"כ בסמ"ק שלענין ליבון אין חילוק בין ב"י לשאינו ב"י אלא יכול ללבנו באותו היום שנאסר דהא פולט כל דבר ונפול לארץ:

The Distinction Between Hag'alah and Libun

We mentioned that sometimes kashering is effected by placing a vessel in boiling water (*hag'alah*), while other times a utensil must be placed directly in a fire (*libun*).⁵ The two processes function differently; kashering with boiling water extracts (*maflit*) absorbed taste, whereas kashering with fire chars the absorbed taste until it is utterly destroyed, removing its halachic status as food.⁶

The Problem with Kashering Conventional Ovens

Kashering a conventional oven is significantly more difficult than kashering a pot. *Hag'alah* is not practical, and it seems that libun would anyway be required because the oven's walls appear to absorb directly from the fire.⁷ The *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 451:4) rules that *libun* is accomplished when sparks fly (*nitzotzot nitzin*) from the object being kashered.⁸ Rav Hershel Schachter told me that it seems to him that the general practice is to require 950 degrees Fahrenheit for *libun*, since that is the temperature at which sparks fly from untreated iron.⁹ Since conventional ovens that do not self-clean can be heated only to approximately 550 degrees Fahrenheit, it would seem that they cannot accomplish *libun*. Nevertheless, as we shall see, contemporary authorities have debated this point.

The Strict View-Rav Moshe Feinstein

Both Rav Shimon Eider (*Halachos of Pesach* 1:180) and Rav Aharon Felder (*Ohalei Yeshurun*, p. 77)¹⁰ record that Rav Moshe Feinstein (*Teshuvot Iggrot Moshe, Yoreh Deah* 1:59) requires libun for an oven, which may be accomplished only by focusing a blowtorch for seven minutes on an area no larger than eight square inches at a time. Since this task is time-consuming and difficult for many people to perform, many families instead thoroughly clean their ovens and then insert a box that covers the walls of the oven. In this way, no *chametz*

can move from the oven walls to the food, as the *chametz* particles do not penetrate the insert's walls.¹¹

The Lenient View—

Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik and Rav Aharon Kotler

Many families follow the lenient opinion of Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik and Rav Aharon Kotler (quoted by Rav Eider, *ibid.*) that one can kasher a conventional oven by setting it to its maximum temperature for an hour or two.¹² They base their view on the aforementioned principle of *kevol' o kach polto* (flavor is extracted from a utensil in the same manner as it was absorbed). Rav Soloveitchik argues that this principle can determine precisely how to kasher a specific item.¹³ Since an oven never absorbs flavor at a higher temperature than its maximum setting, it can be kashered at that temperature.¹⁴ On the other hand, Rav Moshe Feinstein believes that this rule merely determines which fundamental method of kashering should be used (*hag'alah* or *libun*), and that once one has determined that *libun* is required, rather than *hag'alah*, the general parameters of *libun* apply. Thus, sparks must fly from the utensil even if it never absorbed food at such intense heat.¹⁵

11. See Rama (*Yoreh Deah* 92:8) and *Teshuvot Iggrot Moshe* (*Yoreh Deah* 3:10:1).
12. Rav Soloveitchik's position is cited by Rav Mordechai Willig (*SOY Guide to Kashrut*, p. 67), and I have also heard it from Rav Aharon Lichtenstein (in a lecture at Yeshivat Har Etzion) and Rav Yosef Adler.
13. The *Aruch Hashulchan* (O.C. 451:14-18) appears to share Rav Soloveitchik's conceptual understanding of *kevol' o kach polto*.
14. See *Yesodei Yeshurun* (6:157-158), *Minchat Chein, Hagadah Shel Pesach* (pp. 12-14) and *Badei Hashulchan* (92:8 *Bei' urim* s.v. *Lechatchilah*) regarding the efficacy of *libun* when the heating source is outside the item that one wishes to kasher and how this issue impacts the kashering of ovens.
15. The *Mishnah Berurah* (451:85) appears to share Rav Moshe's interpretation of *kevol' o kach polto* (also see *Shaar Hatziyun* 451:100). For a thorough discussion of this issue see *Teshuvot Minchat Yitzchak* (3:66), *Sefer Hag'alah Keilim* (introduction to , and Rav Mordechai Willig's essay in *Mesorah* (4:83-96).

סימן ס
בהגעלה בסמים, ובמים שנתהוו מזיעות הסמים, ובאם היה מבחזין לחלוותיה מהאיסור
כ"ז לספירה תשי"ח.

אגרות משה
יורה דעה

אבל משמע לי ממכתב כתר"ה שההגעלה היא רק בסמים, וזה ספק גדול אם מהני דבסברות אין יכולין לומר שמהני בלא ראייה ומסתבר שלא מהני, דאף שחם טובא יותר מרותחים אפשר אינו מפליט. דהא גם ליבון משמע שאינו פולט אלא שורף דלכן מהני גם בכלי חרס אף דאינו יוצא מידי דופיו משום דנשרף שם.

ולכן ניחא מה שכלי שתשמישו ע"י האור אף באופן שלא היו ניצוצות ניתזין מהם נמי צריך ליבון שיהיו ניצוצות ניתזין דלא נמצא הדין דכדרך תשמישן שבלעו כך פולטין אלא בהגעלה בא"ח ס' תנא סעי' ה' וביוד ר"ס קכ"א ולא בנשתמש ע"י האור שצריך ליבון שהוא בס' תנא סעי'

ד' לא הוזכר שיהיה הליבון כדרך התשמיש אלא סתם שהליבון הוא עד שיהיו ניצוצות ניתזין משמע בכל תשמיש שהיה בלא מים צריך ליבון כזה דוקא והוא משום דליבון אינו פולט אלא שורף. ולשון המ"ב בס"ק כ"ז שכתב לפיכך אינו נפלט מהם ג"כ ע"י הגעלה במים רותחין אלא ע"י חום האש דכבולעו כך פולטו עיי"ש אינו מדויק וכונתו היא רק דלכן אינו נפלט ברותחין משום שע"י המים אינו כבליעתו אבל מה שנכשר ע"י אש אינו מצד שפולט משום שהוא כבליעתו דאש אינו פולט אלא שהוא משום שנשרף הבלוע והוא רק כשהניצוצות ניתזין, והא דאיתא בכלים פ"ט מ"ה והובא בנדה

7. See, however, *Mesorah* (4:83-96, especially pp. 86-87), where Rav Mordechai Willig notes that the oven's walls only absorb either through steam or through liquids that spray or spill.
8. This ruling is based on a passage from the *Yerushalmi* at the conclusion of *Masechet Avodah Zarah*.
9. See, however, *Badei Hashulchan* (92:8 *Bei' urim* s.v. *Lechatchilah*) for a dissenting opinion. Also, see *Sefer Hagalah Keilim* (13:464, note 432) that states in the name of Rav Moshe Feinstein that *libun* is accomplished at 700 degrees Fahrenheit.
10. In note 136, Rav Felder cites many other twentieth-century authorities who discuss this issue.

Two issues:

1. How does libun work?
2. Do ovens require libun gamur?

The Art of Halacha

Keilim - Libun 3 - How Libun Works - Kashering Ovens

Kashrus Halacha
הלכות כשרות - אמרי דוד

Kashering

A systematic analysis of שולחן ערוך סימנים תנ"א ותנ"ב as a means of developing appropriate methods of kashering in the home and industrial settings

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- Rav Belsky argued that in determining the "primary use" of an oven, we consider its overall use, which is to cook food directly over the fire, and do not look at the individual part of the oven to determine how they are used. Thus, the oven as-a-whole requires

²⁰ One could argue that the latter logic presented in the text does not justify relying on רוב תשמיש for Pesach, because for the 8 days of that holiday it is possible to cover the racks and use them in that way which does not allow for any b'lios to transfer from the racks into the food. [The covering would have to be on top and bottom of the racks, to prevent b'lios from getting into the pan from underneath or above. One could, however, perforate the foil wherever there is no metal, since that open area carries no b'lios.] Accordingly, that line of reasoning was only suggested as a basis for kashering racks from non-kosher food for permanent kosher use.

²¹ It is worth noting that the concept that one can kasher an oven by turning it to 550° F for an hour has been attributed to Rav Aharon Kotler, who died in 1962 just before the first self-clean ovens were invented. Thus, in his lifetime there was no option of performing libun gamur on oven racks, and for decades afterwards such a possibility was not reasonably feasible for most people.

²² This is in contrast to the idea considered by Pri Megadim MZ 452:4; more on that in Chapter 61. [See also Avnei Nezer OC 368:4; he is discussing libun gamur, but Rav Schachter understood that the same is true of libun kal.]

libun gamur due to the way it is used, even though the racks per se rarely have b'lios which would demand that level of kashering. Rav Belsky further suggested that this line of reasoning was the impetus for Rav Moshe Feinstein's annual announcement at his Shabbos Hagadol Drashah that ovens should be kashered with libun gamur (or else people should use an insert). [An alternate explanation is noted in the footnote.]²³

The reason to disagree with this is that it may be true that the primary way in which pans are used is to cook food directly over the fire, but the oven (and its racks) are almost never used that way. Thus, even if one chooses to judge the entire oven as a unit rather than as individual parts, it would seemingly still qualify as רוב תשמיש in a way that allows for libun kal.

As noted, the common custom is to kasher ovens for year-round or Pesach with libun kal, especially where self-cleaning is not possible.

Fixed Temperature

The Poskim explain that libun is fundamentally different than hag'alah in that hag'alah draws the non-kosher ta'am out of the utensil, while libun incinerates it in place.⁷ We will see (in Chapter 18) that when ta'am is being drawn out (hag'alah) the concept of כבולעו כך פולטו dictates that whatever temperature ta'am was when it went in, is the temperature of hag'alah water required to get it out. However, Rav Schwartz and Rav Schachter assumed that that does not apply to libun. Since libun gamur incinerates the b'lios, there is a fixed level of heat required to accomplish that goal, regardless of how hot the non-kosher food was.

heating until the metal is red-hot is sufficient when libun gamur is truly required. Nonetheless, it has become accepted that this is an appropriate measure for libun gamur (possibly because the ones cited in the Gemara and Shulchan Aruch no longer apply, as noted in the text).

Presumably, this measure (red-hot) is the one used for libun on cheress (see Chapter 4) as it would appear that the other measures (sparks, peeling) would not apply to a non-metal.

⁵ Accordingly, some suggest that libun be performed in a darkened room, as this will make it easier to detect when the metal begins glowing red.

⁶ Teshuvos Maimonios describes this libun as יכולה להאדים כי השלהבת אינה יכולה... ללבנה עד שתאדים וכשאין יכולה להאדים כמו הגחלים היתה מכוונת כשיעור האדמת גחלים, להאדים כמות הגחלים, and this implies that only b'dieved is it sufficient for the utensil to be just a bit red.

⁷ See, for example, Rashi, Avodah Zara 76a, s.v. mag'eelan, Taz YD 121:7, Shach 121:17, Pri Megadim AA 451:30, Iggeros Moshe YD 1:60, and Minchas Yitzchok 3:67:10.

This is the reason libun can be performed on Chol HaMoed Pesach but hag'alah cannot (Rema 452:1). Hag'alah draws out the ta'am which means that we must rely on aino ben yomo to ensure that ta'am is not reabsorbed into the utensil (see Chapter 61). On Pesach we do not rely on aino ben yomo (Rema 447:10), we cannot perform hag'alah. In contrast, libun destroys the ta'am and that is effective even on Pesach.

Similarly, this is the reason libun gamur can be performed even if the utensil has been used within 24 hours, while hag'alah cannot (see Darchei Moshe YD 121:15 and Chapter 61).

2. The oven:

It is commonly accepted that a gas or electric oven may be kashered with libun kal.¹⁴ However, there are those who question this practice and require libun gamur. Since it is difficult and dangerous to use a blowtorch in a household oven, the stricter opinions require that, in addition to the method of kashering described below, one place a metal insert into the oven or line the oven with heavy-duty aluminum foil. A full self-cleaning cycle may be sufficient even according to most of the stricter opinions.

²³ See Ohalei Yeshurun (Rav Felder) (Volume 1, Laws of Hechsher Keilim, Chapter 5 footnote 136) who cites Rav Feinstein as saying that the reason is because the oven surface is coated in porcelain which has the status of cheress (היות והתכות מצופה בפורצלן שיש לו דין כורס וצריך שורפה). Rav Shimon Eider (Halachos of Pesach, Chapter XVI:E:2 and there in footnote 136) gives the same explanation. However, Ohalei Yeshurun notes that Rav Feinstein ruled that one need only be machmir for this as relates to Pesach. See Chapter 52 where we note that nowadays the oven chamber is coated in porcelain enamel (not porcelain), and discuss its status as relates to kashering.

Halakhot of Pesach - Lesson 2



Harav Baruch Gigi

Kashering Electrical Appliances

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Lessons from the Beit Midrash

Translated and adapted by Rav Eliezer Kwass

B. Maybe heating the oven to its highest setting is considered "libun chamur": Acharonim differ (see Yechaveh Da'at 2:63 and the book Hag'alah Keilim) about what mechanism is involved in kashering through "libun chamur": Does that level of heat destroy the chametz it comes in contact with, or does it cause the chametz inside to leave the vessel (i.e., a more intense version of hag'alah, needed for materials which entered the utensil through the medium of fire)? One of the practical differences between these two approaches is how hot of a fire is required for "libun chamur": If the "libun" kashers through destroying, nothing less than "hot-enough-to-make-sparks-fly" suffices. If, however, the fire removes what it absorbed, only the level of heat which caused it to be absorbed in the first place (the highest setting on the oven) is required.

סימן תמט-תנא

אמת ליעקב

⁴⁴⁰ הכשר תנורים דידן סגי בליבון קל, והיינו שמחמם את התנור עצמו להמעלה הגדולה ביותר ולזמן הגדול ביותר שאפשר שהשתמש בו, ואין צריך ליבון חמור עד שניצוצות ניתזין ממנו - מפי השמועה.

¹⁴ This is based upon a ruling cited in the name of Rav Aharon Kotler and Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky (in responsa Emes L'Yaakov, page 203, note 440). In Eretz Yisrael the custom is to be more stringent.