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Halochos compiled by HaRav Chaim Bleier – Translated from the Hebrew edition by R' Zerachya Shicker

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Chatzitza by Tevilas Keilim

General Rules of Chatzitza

1. The halachos of chatzitza apply to toiveling dishes the same way they do to tevila of a person, as set forth in Shulchan Aruch (י"ד סי' ר"ב, ערוה"ש שם סי"ג). The rule is that a chatzitza on the majority of a dish that one is makpid on is a chatzitza d'oraisa. There is a gezeira d'rabanon on a chatzitza on the minority of a dish that one is makpid on or the majority of a dish that one is not makpid on.
2. **"Makpid."** It is considered a hakpada if the chatzitza generally bothers people, even if it does not bother him personally (ש"ע שם). If it bothers him, it is a chatzitza even if it does not generally bother people (ט"ז סי' קצ"ח סק"ג). Even if one toiveled a dish with a chatzitza, he must remove it and toivel the dish again with a bracha [if it is the type of dish which requires a bracha] if he had a hesech hada'as from the first bracha.
3. **Minority and not makpid.** One should try to remove a chatzitza from a dish before toiveling it even if he is not makpid and it is on the minority of the dish (א"ח, רמ"א סי' קצ"ח סי"א, חכ"א כלל ע"ג סי"ד). However, if he already toiveled it, he does not need to toivel it again. Also, if he cannot get it off, he may toivel it with its chatzitza (ש"ע סי' ק"כ סי"ג).
4. **Inspecting the dish.** Often, when one goes to toivel a dish at a mikva, he finds dirt or stickers and does not have the tools or materials to remove them. Therefore, it is advisable to inspect dishes for chatzitzos or dirt before leaving home to the mikva. Some say one is halachically required to inspect the dish before toiveling it (חוט שני הל שבת ח"א עמ' ר"ט).

Stickers, Labels

5. New dishes are generally clean but often have all sorts of stickers. Any stickers generally removed before use, e.g., price tags, barcodes, etc., must be totally removed prior to tevila.
6. **Stickers generally left on.** There are some stickers that are typically left on, e.g., a sticker with the name of a reputable company on a crystal dish which is left on to show it off (ש"ע ח"י הלוי ח"א סי' נ"ז); a sticker on a kettle, warning to beware of the heat or the like; a decorative, flowery decal on an urn which does not cover its majority; or labels on a coffee jar or a wine bottle one is toiveling to refill (see Chukai Chaim 93, par. 9), even if he is filling it with a different type of food. One does not need to remove these before tevila since they are usually left on (בעל השב האפוד). ספר מבית לוי י"ד עמ' קנ"ד סי"י, בעל השב האפוד). The tevila works even if one eventually removed the sticker or it fell off.
7. However, if the sticker got partially removed before the tevila and no longer enhances the dish, it must be entirely removed before tevila since, in such a case, people are makpid.
8. **Glue residue.** Often, when removing a sticker from a dish, some glue remains, sometimes clear, sometimes blackish. Since people are makpid on this, one must make sure to remove all the glue before tevila [this can be done with nail polish remover, Goo Gone, acetone, or paint thinner].
9. If, after toiveling, one found a very small amount of glue which did not come off and is either so small that people are not makpid or on the underside of the dish, where people are not makpid, he does not need to toivel it again. Similarly, if one did everything he could to remove glue from a dish prior to toiveling, but an amount smaller than people are makpid on remained, he may toivel it as is (above, 3).

How to Toivel

Entirely Submerged at One Time

10. When toiveling, the entire dish must be in the water; no part of it may be out (הכ"א כלל ע"ג דין ט"ז). If the dish has a handle, even one made out of a material which does not require tevila (בעל ד"ק ש"ע סי' ק"כ סי"ב), the handle must also be toiveled, even if it is long (ק"כ סי"ב). It must also be free of any grime.
11. **Dish with an interior.** When toiveling a dish with an interior, one must make sure water goes inside and touches everywhere inside. Therefore, one must toivel a dish with its opening facing up to ensure the water touches all of it.

Utensil Comprised of Different Parts

12. **A utensil comprised of different parts** should preferably be toiveled while assembled, as that is the way it is used. The tevila is kosher even if there are places the water cannot touch since those areas are considered "beis hastorim" [hidden areas]. Still, if one toiveled each part separately it is kosher (ש"ע מנה"י ח"ג סי' ע"ז).
13. **A pocketknife** whose blade folds into its handle should be toiveled with the blade out (ערוה"ש).

Holding the Dish in the Water

14. When holding a dish in the water, one must make sure water also gets between his hand and the dish. The poskim differ on how this is accomplished, as follows:
15. **Loose grip.** Most poskim hold that if one holds a dish more loosely than it is normally held (ט"ז י"ד סי' קצ"ח סק"ז), we assume water will get between his hand and the dish and he may toivel it in that manner (ש"ע סי' ק"כ סי"ב). Some say that even if one toiveled a dish holding it loosely, there is a concern that he did not hold it loosely enough and the tevila does not work (רמב"ם ועוד הובאו בש"ך סי' ק"כ סק"ז). Similarly, some say we are not expert enough to distinguish between what is considered loose versus tight (רמ"א ריש סי' קצ"ח). Thus, l'chatchila one should employ one of the following methods:
16. **Wet hands in water first.** One solution is to wet one's hand considerably ["טרופה על מנת להטפיד"] before toiveling; then he does not need to hold it loosely (ש"ע סי' ק"כ סי"ב), he just cannot grip it very tightly (מהר"י ברונא הובא בחלקת בנימין אות כ"ז). Some say this works with tap water (הגר"א); others say this only works with mikva water. Even with mikva water, some say this only works as long as he did not take his hands out of the mikva; if he did, the water on his hands is like tap water (רמ"א שם).
17. Therefore, l'chatchila one should put his hand into the mikva; then put the dish into the mikva with his other hand; he should then pass the dish from hand to hand inside the mikva so it ends up in his hand which was wet with mikva water without having been taken out. In this manner, one does need to let go of the dish, which can lead to dropping it and being unable to retrieve it.

Tevila Inside a Basket

18. When toiveling small things, one may place them into a net or basket with lots of holes and toivel them all together, making sure that they all entirely go into the water. He should not fill the net or basket too much to ensure that the water touches all the dishes. Similarly, he should shake the basket or net under the water so that the water reaches all parts of the dishes.

Tevilas Keilim on Shabbos

19. Some poskim say one may toivel new dishes on Shabbos (תומת המחבר) (ש"ע א"ח סי' שכ"ג סי"ז); they are not like tamei dishes which may not be toiveled on Shabbos (ביאר"ל שם ד"ה מותר). Others say it is assur since toiveling it looks like fixing it (שם, מ"ב שם סק"ל).

"Cheder Horoah" | 20 Minchas Yitzchok St.
052 761 9332 | paskenshtibel@gmail.com

20. **Giving it to a non-Jew.** An option which satisfies all opinions is to give it to a non-Jew as a gift (שׁוּעֵי שֶׁם וּבִיּוּד סִי קִיב סִטִּיז) through a kinyan hagbaha, or meshicha for something that cannot be lifted (מִלֵּב סִי תַנְיָא סִקְטִיז). This may be done on Shabbos since it is for a Shabbos need (מִלֵּב סִי שְׁכִינָה סִקְלִיד). Afterward, he should borrow it back to use it; as long as the non-Jew owns it, it does not need tevila.
21. **Long-term.** Some poskim hold he should take it back and toivel it after Shabbos since it will remain with him [a Jew] and is considered as belonging to a Jew. He should toivel it without a bracha or with another dish (טִיז סִקְיִה). However, others argue and hold this strategy works permanently and he does not need to toivel it (בְּנִסְתַּת הַגְּדוּלָה, רַעֲיָא).
22. **Bein hashmashos.** One should not toivel a dish bein hashmashos at the entrance of Shabbos (שׁוּעֵי אֲרִיחָ סִי רַסְיָא סִיָּא) unless he needs it for Shabbos and has no other dishes (מִלֵּב שֶׁם סִקְיִה). It is better to toivel it at bein hashmashos than to rely on other abovementioned strategies (שְׁעוּדָה צִצְ שֶׁם סִקְיִה).

Dish which Cannot be Toiveled

23. **Giving it to a non-Jew.** If one has a utensil which cannot be toiveled due to its size or weight or which uses electricity and will **definitely** break if toiveled, given that there is no other choice he may rely on giving it to a non-Jew permanently and borrowing it to use it (שְׁלֹחַ גְּבוּהָ) (אֲרִיחָ סִי תַנְיָא חִיב אֲתוּז, יוּד סִי קִיב סִקְיִה הַבּוּבָ בְּדִרְכֵי סִי קִיב סִקְיִה קִיב (רַמְלָא סִיָּא) or partnering with a non-Jew in its ownership, which exempts it from tevila (הַכֵּיָא סִיָּא).
24. **Disassembled by a Jewish professional.** The poskim also give the option of giving a utensil which cannot be toiveled to a Jewish professional to take it apart in a way that a regular person would not be able to put it back together. This is considered as if a Jew completed its construction, which exempts it from tevila (הַכֵּיָא כֻּלָּ) (עִיג דִּין יִיג הַבּוּבָ בְּפִתְחֵי סִקְיִה). A regular person merely removing some screws and putting them back or disconnecting and reconnecting the plug, is not considered a skilled act which would exempt it from tevila whatsoever (שׁוּעֵי מִנְהַת שְׁלֵמָה חִיב סִי סִיז אֲוֵת דִּי).

Coffee Machine

25. Many people ask about coffee machines with various parts, some made of plastic, and others, e.g., pipes, a heating element, etc., made of metal. Some machines also have a coffee bean grinder inside which requires tevila without a bracha (פְּתוּחֵי סִקְיִה) (עֵרֵוּהֵי שִׁיל, פְּתוּחֵי סִקְיִה).
26. **Simple model.** Some models are simple and small and are moved when necessary. These can be toiveled without breaking if they are not used before they are fully dried, which can be done by leaving them in a hot area or the sun for five days. These must be toiveled.
27. **Sophisticated model.** However, other models are sophisticated and consist of many different parts. They operate via electronic control cards which will definitely break if toiveled. Also, due to their size and weight, they are not moved from their set spot. Some poskim hold one may rely on the fact that they do not require tevila at all – since they have their own set place, they are not considered dishes used at meals (כְּלֵי סְעוּדָה), and also, the owner is in a state of oneis regarding tevila (מְיֹרֵד בְּעַל שֶׁבֶט הַקְּהָתִי). However, some poskim hold they really must be toiveled. But one can rely on the above solutions, e.g., having a Jew take it apart (24) or permanently transferring ownership to a non-Jew and using it on loan from the non-Jew (23).

Minibar Filter

28. A minibar filter is a special machine which dispenses cold and hot water. Some in Eretz Yisroel come with a mehudar Shabbos hechsher. Sometimes there is a hechsher stating it does not need tevila. Currently, models with an Eida Chareidis hechsher do not have a hechsher for tevila. Nevertheless, one may rely on the line of reasoning that since they are connected to the ground via pipes connected to the water supply system, they do not require tevila.
29. **Appliances with a hechsher sold by non-Jews.** Electric appliances which say on them that they do not require tevila but are sold in non-Jewish-owned American chain stores become chayav in tevila again. The American tzibur should be careful about this.

Ownership of the Dish

Non-Jew's Dish

30. **Dishes in a non-Jewish hotel.** Dishes belonging to a non-Jew that were not sold to a Jew are not chayav in tevila and may be used. Thus, one may use dishes in a non-Jewish hotel if they have no concerns of forbidden foods. Also, the dishes in the non-Jewish-owned hotels with a hechsher found in Europe that serve Jews may be used without tevila (שׁוּעֵי סִי קִיב סִטִּיז).
31. **Jewish-owned dishes designated solely for non-Jews.** A Jew who owns dishes specifically meant for non-Jews, e.g., in a Jewish-owned hotel or nursing home intended for non-Jewish occupants, does not need to toivel these dishes, especially considering that they are for his business (דְּרִכֵּי סִי קִיב סִקְיִה). However, one may not serve food to a non-Jew in his house in a non-toiveled dish, as that is considered the Jew using the dish (סִפְקֵי הַגְּרִיזֵי יוּד עַמְלֵי פִיז).

Imported Dishes Throughout the World

32. **Israeli company name.** Dishes made in non-Jewish factories require tevila even when made for a Jewish company. Thus, one must even toivel an Israeli company's dishes bought in a Jewish store in Eretz Yisroel if they were manufactured in Chutz l'Aretz. Even silver dishes purchased in Eretz Yisroel from well-known companies are occasionally manufactured in Chutz l'Aretz and require tevila misafeik, albeit without a bracha.
33. Dishes manufactured in Eretz Yisroel do not require tevila. Even if the company is mechalel Shabbos, lo aleinu, and considered a mumar, the minhag is not to require tevila (קוֹבֵץ מִבֵּית לִי).
34. **Dishes made in the United States.** There are many Jews in the United States involved in all sorts of enterprises, causing some to be concerned that dishes manufactured there were owned, or at least partly-owned by Jews. As a result, although the dishes require tevila since most people in the United States are not Jewish, they are concerned that perhaps we do not follow rov regarding the bracha, so they do not make a bracha on the tevila (שׁוּעֵי תַשׁוּרֵת שִׁי סִי עִיד הַבּוּבָ בְּדִרְכֵי סִי סִפְיָא, הַגְּרִישִׁא, תַשׁוּרֵי חִיב סִי תִיחָ).
35. Nevertheless, most poskim hold that dishes made in a place with a majority of non-Jews require tevila with a bracha as long as it is not known that they were owned by Jews (הוּט שְׁנֵי הֵל) (הַגְּרִיזֵי וּוְאוּנֵר, הוּט שְׁנֵי הֵל) (טְבִילַת כְּלִים עַמְלֵי יִיט).
36. **Dishes made in the Far East.** Many things today are manufactured in the Far East, e.g., China, Japan, Hong Kong, etc. There is barely a Jewish population there and all agree dishes made there require tevila with a bracha [with the exception of dishes with a hechsher stating they do not require tevila], as we are not concerned that Jews have part-ownership of factories in these places (שׁוּעֵי אֲגִימָ אֲרִיחָ). We are also not concerned about Jewish-owned shares if they do not have influence over the factories since these shares do not exempt from tevila (שׁוּעֵי וִיבְרַךְ דּוּד חִיָּא סִי צִיז). Although some today never make a bracha on tevila, it would be a pity to completely forfeit a bracha Chazal established without good reason.

Toiveling at a Store

37. L'chatchila, one should not toivel a dish in a store's mikva until he acquires it via meshicha or hagbaha and pays for it because as long as it belongs to the store, it is considered merchandise, which does not have a chiyuv tevila. Nevertheless, if a non-Jewish worker – who may toivel dishes (שׁוּעֵי סִי קִיב סִטִּיז) – took a dish from a customer's cart and toiveled it with a Jew watching (רַמְלָא שֶׁם) before the customer paid, the customer is yotzei and does not need to toivel it again.

Select Halachos of Mikva

Chumra of "נתן סאה ונטל סאה"

38. In a previous Chukai Chaim issue (269, par. 15), we wrote at length about the concern of נתן סאה ונטל סאה. We mentioned that for a tevila d'oraisa, it is proper to be machmir and consider it posul in a case of רַבִּינָא הַבּוּבָ (בְּשִׁיךְ סִקְיִה, שׁוּעֵי דְבָרֵי חַיִּים הֵל מְקוּאוֹת אֲוֵת כִּי, שׁוּעֵי מִנְחֵי חִיב סִי כִיג).
39. **Keilim mikva.** Some point out that this chumra should also apply to tevilas keilim, which is d'oraisa according to most poskim, (Issue 93). However, we do not see anyone in the world strictly makpid on this (הוּט שְׁנֵי הֵל) (מְיֹרֵד בְּעַל קִנְיָה בִּשְׁם, הֵיכַל הוּרָאָה חִיד הוּרָאָה קִיב, הוּט שְׁנֵי הֵל) (טְבִילַת כְּלִים עַמְלֵי לִיָּה). Sometimes they add a "bor hashaka" [40 sa'ah of rainwater connected to the mikva with a pipe], which helps somewhat, but they do not do it with every detail, e.g., an additional bor hashaka or bor al gabei bor etc. Perhaps this is because it does not come with the severity of kareis. The main reason is that when people toivel their dishes, mikva water comes out of the mikva in the dish and gets spilled back into the mikva. After a short time, the water has the p'sul of נתן סאה ונטל סאה. Since this is unavoidable, people are not makpid on it.

In the Rain

40. "זחילה נכנסת." A mikva's water must all be sitting in one place. If water flows out of the mikva, the mikva is posul. There are many intricacies regarding where the water is moving from, how much water makes it posul, etc. The Divrei Chaim (הֵל מְקוּאוֹת אֲוֵת הֵ) has a well-known chumra which also considers נתן סאה ונטל סאה, i.e., the mikva is posul even when water runs into the mikva. This chumra has been taken on – at least l'chatchila – by high-level mikva'os for שׁוּעֵי שׁוּאֵל וּמְשִׁיב מַהֲדוּת חִיג סִי מִזִּז דִּיָּה וְקִנְיָה, דְּרִכֵּי סִי רַיָּא) (סִקְיִה, הַיְבֹוֹר לְטַהֲרָה כְּלָל אֲוֵת מִיב, שׁוּעֵי דְבָרֵי יְצִיב יוּד סִי קִיב וְקִיב וְקִיב).
41. Based on this, some rule one may not toivel dishes in an outdoor, uncovered mikva during the rain due to זחילה נכנסת (גְּלִיּוֹן מְרַבָּה תוֹרָה פִּי יִתְרוֹ). However, we have never heard of such a thing. It is clear that people always toiveled in collected waters, rivers, and the like, and did not avoid doing so in the rain. This is clearly not called זחילה נכנסת since the water comes straight from the sky and does not flow over anything.