

*Rav Hershel Schachter, Rosh Yeshiva of YU/RIETS, issued the following Psak (halachic guidance) today regarding Tevillas Keilim (immersion of vessels):*

In these days where the Coronavirus has closed many mikvaos and it is not possible to use the regular community keilim mikvah, a reasonable effort should be made to find a natural body of water (ocean, pond, river etc) where utensils can be immersed. Please note that when using a natural body of water, care must be taken to immerse the item in its entirety below the water.

If it would be overly strenuous to travel and immerse the utensils in such a body of water, one should try and use disposable utensils whenever possible relying on the opinion of Rav Moshe Feinstein that disposable aluminum utensils do not require tevilas keilim.

If these options are not available, the Shulchan Aruch Y.D. 120:16 permits one to transfer ownership of the vessels to a non-Jew in order to relieve the obligation of tevilas keilim and the prohibition of using the utensils prior to immersion. However, this is not necessarily a reasonable option at this time when people are committed to maintaining standards of social distancing.

Therefore, since we are facing a unique situation of great need and limited options, it is permitted to use utensils that have not been immersed after renouncing ownership of the utensils.

When declaring the utensils as ownerless one must:

- Have full intent that they are truly declaring the items as truly ownerless and that if someone were to take the item before the original owner were to reclaim them they would be willing to let the item go.
- The declaration must be to 3 people who live in your neighborhood, so that one of them has the ability to potentially acquire the item and two people could be witnesses to say that the other person did not steal the item. 2 of the people should be valid Halachic witnesses.
- This doesn't have to be done in front of 3 people. It can be declared over email or social media to 3 people.

After declaring that the items are ownerless you should move the items out of your physical house or apartment and let them remain outside for a few minutes where someone could potentially come and take them.

Because the above approach is due to the difficult and pressing circumstances that we are currently facing, once a Mivkah, or an opportunity for immersing the utensils, becomes available the individual must take the items to be immersed without a blessing before using them again.