

A Sticky Situation

January 26, 2023

**Q** May I *tovel* a utensil in the mikveh with a sticker attached?



**A** All parts of an item that requires *tvilah* must contact the waters of the mikveh. An attached foreign object is considered a *chatzitzah* (obstruction) and disqualifies the *tvilah*. But not every sticker would pose a problem, because Chazal teach that unless the object covers most of the *kli*, only a *davar hamakpid* (something the user is particular about removing prior to use) is considered a *chatzitzah*.

Bar codes and price stickers are considered *davar hamakpid*, because people generally remove them. But stickers that display instructions may remain, because people often leave them on (Chut Shani, *Tvilas Keilim* p. 53).

A brand-name sticker would generally be a problem, but the sticker of a high-end brand is not, because it confers value on the utensil (Mesores Moshe p. 227).

If a sticker was removed but residue remains—a common problem—the residue is a *chatzitzah* if it can be felt. If it cannot, even if it is visible, it is not a *chatzitzah* (see Chut Shani, *Nidah* p. 309). If tangible residue cannot be completely eliminated, it suffices to remove enough that what remains is a *davar she'aino makpid* (Shiurei Sheivet Halevi, *Nidah* 198:17). One may be lenient about an unremovable sticker in an unnoticeable area, like the underside of the *kli*, because it is a *davar she'aino makpid* (Teshuvos Vehanhagos 2:406).