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לזכות ילדי השכונה

בס"ד

ברוכים הבאים לישראל !

Welcome to Israel!

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Rav, Kehillas Hagra, Ramat Beit Shemesh

INTRODUCTION

This pamphlet has been prepared to address many of the common Halachic questions that *Olim Chadashim* have asked me over the past number of years.

As we are all aware, the level of קדושה (holiness) here in Eretz Yisrael is greater than in *Chutz la-Aretz*. The Torah describes Eretz Yisrael as being "The land that Hashem constantly watches" and it is our privilege to live here with Him. However as is always the case, with privilege comes responsibility. In this case we have increased responsibilities in our requirement to exercise greater meticulousness in the performance of all Mitzvos and especially in keeping those Mitzvos which are unique to Eretz Yisrael (מצות התליות בארץ).

In much the same way as a Kohen or a Levi has specific laws, prohibitions, and requirements in his service of Hashem, the inhabitants of Eretz Yisrael have their own special relationship with Hashem that brings about its own obligations. By choosing to live in Eretz Yisrael we have made an extraordinary step towards coming closer to Hashem and to a more fulfilling Judaism. The most important thing to keep in mind is that many matters which we took for granted in our former surroundings now require more careful attention. The reward for our vigilance will be the merit to exist successfully in this Land of Holiness.

There are many Halachos which must be kept in Eretz Yisrael even with respect to those mitzvos which we have been keeping previously in *Chutz la-Aretz*. Some of these Halachos are explicitly stated as applying to Eretz Yisrael by Torah law (מדארייתא); some are of Rabbinic origin (מדרבנן); and some are customs (מנהגים) that the communities living in Eretz Yisrael have adopted over the years. Regardless of one's origin, one who lives in Eretz Yisrael should keep all of these Halachos - even if in *Chutz la-Aretz* he did not keep them.

Settling in Eretz Yisrael gives one enormous potential for personal spiritual growth. Without belittling the level of *Yiddishkeit*" (Judaism) we may have had in *Chutz la-Aretz*, if we open our hearts and eyes we will discover that there is a higher level available for us here in Israel.

NOTE: This pamphlet is not meant as a definitive Halachic guide. Rather, it is meant to alert you to potential Halachic issues which you should then discuss with your personal Rav.

פירות וירקות - Fruits and Vegetables

It is important to understand that although in *Chutz la-Aretz* the main focus of Kashrus is on meat and meat by-products, here in Israel all fruits and vegetables require a reliable *Hechsher* as well. This is because there are many laws concerning products which grow in Israel (מצוות התלויות בארץ).

תרומות ומעשרות - Terumos and Ma'asros

There is an obligation to take a specified portion of produce grown in Eretz Yisrael and designate it as *Terumah* and *Ma'aser*.

Any produce that has not had the proper *Terumos* and *Ma'asros* removed from it, is called *Tevel* (טבל) and is forbidden to be eaten. One should keep in mind that eating an apple without separating *Terumah* from it, is the equivalent of eating chicken baked in butter!

Therefore, when buying any produce grown in Israel (even if it is purchased in *Chutz la-Aretz*) it is very important to check for a reliable *Hechsher* that states that the produce you are purchasing has had the proper *Terumos* and *Ma'asros* removed. Many shops and markets will have a sign from a Rabbinic authority that has a specific date on it stating when the *Terumos* and *Ma'asros* were taken and until when one can safely purchase the produce. These signs are usually updated on a daily basis.

Nevertheless, there are times when one must know how to separate one's own *Terumos* and *Ma'asros*. Instructions for this follows.

Fruits and vegetables bought from roadside stands or in a *Shuk* (without a *Hechsher*), or fruits and vegetables grown in one's personal garden MUST have *Terumos* and *Ma'asros* removed before the produce can be eaten.

Note: Produce picked from ownerless (*Hefker*) areas (i.e. fruits picked from a tree while on a trip) can be eaten without removing *Terumos* and *Ma'asros*.

What is Terumah?

Terumah (תרומה גדולה) is a portion of the produce which is separated and then given to a Kohen who eats it if he or she is *Tahor* (ritually clean). The obligation to separate *Terumah* is independent of the obligation to give it to a Kohen. Nowadays, although Kohanim are not *Tahor*, this does not free one from the obligation to separate *Terumah*, for if one does not separate *Terumah*, the produce is forbidden to eat as *Tevel*. Even a Kohen may not eat *Tevel* and therefore must separate *Terumah* from his own produce, even though he may eat the *Terumah* himself, provided he is *Tahor*.

Today *Terumah* must be disposed of as described below.

The Torah does not prescribe how much *Terumah* has to be separated; even a minute amount is sufficient.

What is Ma'aser?

Ma'aser means "a tenth" and is an additional amount of produce that must be separated from produce. There are three sorts of *Ma'aser*:

Ma'aser Rishon (מעשר ראשון) – Ten percent (10%) of the produce remaining after separating *terumah* must be separated and given to a Levi. Unlike *Terumah*, *Ma'aser Rishon* does not have to be eaten while *Tahor* and can be eaten by anyone,

even by a *Yisrael* (a non-Kohen or a non-Levi). Nowadays, we do not give our *Ma'aser Rishon* to a Levi because we are not sure who is a true Levi. Therefore, we may eat the *Ma'aser Rishon* ourselves after separating it, since, as above, it is permitted to a *Yisrael*.

***Terumas Ma'aser* (תרומת מעשר)** One-tenth of the *Ma'aser Rishon* is known as *Terumas Ma'aser*. When a Levi receives *Ma'aser Rishon*, he must separate the *Terumas Ma'aser* and give it to the Kohen. If the *Yisrael* keeps the *Ma'aser Rishon* for himself (as above), then he must separate the *Terumas Ma'aser* from it. This *Terumas Ma'aser* has all the Halachos of regular *Terumah*. Therefore, even though we do not give the *Ma'aser Rishon* to the Levi (as above), we must still remove the *Terumas Ma'aser* and set it aside as *Terumah*, before we may eat the produce.

***Ma'aser Sheyni* (מעשר שני)** – *Ma'aser Sheyni* is an additional 10% of the remaining produce which must be separated in addition to *Terumah*, *Terumas Ma'aser* and *Ma'aser Rishon*. However, *Ma'aser Sheyni* is not meant to be given to anyone; rather it is supposed to be eaten by the owner of the produce in Yerushalayim. Nowadays when there is no Beis Hamikdash, we must redeem the *Ma'aser Sheyni* with a coin as explained below.

The Year 5766 (until 22 Sep 2006) is the 5th year of the Shemittah cycle.

Ma'aser Sheyni must be taken from all produce that grows in the 1st, 2nd, 4th, & 5th years of the seven-year *Shemittah* cycle.

***Ma'aser Oni* - (מעשר עני)** – *Ma'aser Oni* is 10% of the produce which must be separated in addition to *Terumah*, *Terumas Ma'aser* and *Ma'aser*. It is separated on those years when *Ma'aser Sheyni* is not separated, i.e., in the 3rd & 6th years of the seven-year *Shemittah* cycle.

Ma'aser Oni is meant to be given to poor people. If you are unsure whether *Ma'aser Oni* was taken, then it may be eaten. If you are *certain* that it was *never* taken, it must be given to poor people. Many local Tzedakos will accept *Ma'aser Oni*. Ask the Gabbai Tzedekoh for more information regarding the distribution of *Ma'aser Oni*.

How to Take Terumos and Ma'asros:

The following is the exact procedure that should be used if you have to take *Terumos* and *Ma'asros* by yourself.

NOTE: This process must be followed for each type of produce you are dealing with individually. This means that you must take *Terumos* and *Ma'asros* from tomatoes on tomatoes, and from apples on apples. You CANNOT use apples as *Terumos* and *Ma'asros* for tomatoes.

When you take the *Terumos* and *Ma'asros*, all the produce should be in the same room and not in closed containers.

You can only separate *Terumos* and *Ma'asros* from produce that has already been already picked, but NOT from produce that is still attached to its tree or bush.

IMPORTANT - READ INTRODUCTION ON PREVIOUS PAGE

If you know for sure that the produce has never had *Terumos* and *Ma'asros* separated from it, then you should make a *Beracha* before performing the below process. The *Beracha* to be said is "אשר קדשנו במצוותיו וציונו להפריש תרומות ומעשרות..."

If you are not sure if *Terumos* and *Ma'asros* have been separated, follow the same process, but do NOT make the *Beracha*.

1. Start by separating an amount that contains MORE than 1% (1/100th) from the produce. It's easiest to measure by weight. If in doubt take a bit more.
2. Say (in English): "That which is **MORE** than the 1% is proclaimed *Terumah Gedolah* on the north side of the produce that I separated " (i.e. the little bit over the 1% but not the 1% itself). You do not need to know which direction is north; it will take effect by itself.
3. Then say: "The 1% of the produce that I have separated, plus another 9% of the produce on the northern side of the rest of the produce, shall be *Ma'aser Rishon*".
4. Then say: "The 1% that I have previously proclaimed *Ma'aser Rishon* is now proclaimed *Terumas Ma'aser* on the *Ma'aser*."
5. Now take the bit that you separated at the beginning in #1 (which is now *Terumah Gedolah* and *Terumas Ma'aser*) and put it in a plastic bag and discard it.
6. In the 1st, 2nd, 4th, & 5th years of the seven-year *Shemittah* cycle, you should then say: "The *Ma'aser Sheyni* is now proclaimed in the southern side of the remaining produce".
7. The *Ma'aser Sheyni* must then be redeemed onto money. (See 8 below) If you are certain that *Ma'aser Sheyni* has never been separated from this produce, you must make a *Beracha* before redeeming it. The *Beracha* is "אשר קדשנו במצוותיו וציונו על" "פדיון מעשר שני" (if you are uncertain if *Ma'aser Sheyni* was removed, follow the same procedure, but do NOT make a *Beracha*).
8. Take a coin (e.g. a shekel coin) and say "I am redeeming the *Ma'aser Sheyni* plus another fifth of its value, on a *Perutah* (based on the current price of silver, its value is approximately 5 agurot) in this coin that I have set aside for redeeming *Ma'aser Sheyni*". The coin may be used again for redeeming *Ma'aser Sheyni* until you used its entire value for redeeming *Ma'aser Sheyni*. Consult your Rav regarding what to do with the coin.
9. **To avoid all problems of פדיון מעשר שני and נטע רבעי it is recommended that one becomes a member of קרן המעשרות. By paying a very nominal fee one can redeem an unlimited amount of fruit onto their coin which they take care of. For details contact : "בית המדרש להלכה בהתישבות" 02-538 3123**
10. In the 3rd and 6th years of the seven-year *Shemittah* cycle in place of the above proclamation of *Ma'aser Sheyni*, say "The *Ma'aser Oni* is now proclaimed in the southern side of the remaining produce". If you are certain that *Ma'aser Oni* was never taken then this tenth should then be given to a poor person. Ask your Rav for more information.
11. NOTE: If the fruit is *Neta Revai* (see section below, "*Orlah*") then *Terumah* and *Ma'aser* are not separated off, however, the fruit must be redeemed. Follow the procedure outlined in 7& 8, but replace the words "I am redeeming the *Ma'aser Sheyni*" with the words "I am redeeming the *Neta Revai*"

ערלה - Orlah

After planting a new tree, the fruit that grows in the first three years is forbidden to be eaten. This fruit is called *Orlah* from which you may not derive ANY pleasure. This is true both in *Chutz la-Aretz* and in Eretz Yisrael. However, in *Chutz la-Aretz* if you are unsure if the fruits came from a tree that is less than three years old, you can assume it is permitted and you may eat the fruits. In Eretz Yisrael the fruit cannot be eaten unless you know for sure that the tree is more than three years old.

Although most trees do not bear significant fruit in their first three years, this still presents a problem. Many fruit trees are raised in a nursery and then replanted in a field. In many circumstances the replanting gives the trees a Halachic status of a newly planted tree and you must wait another three years before eating the fruits.

When planting fruit trees in your yards, it is advisable to ask a Rav about potential *Orlah* issues related to replanting nursery-raised fruit trees.

Many *Hechsherim* Israel make sure that there is no *Orlah* in the fruit that is sold under their auspices. When buying fruit without a *Hechsher* you should make sure that there are no *Orlah* problems.

In addition to *Orlah* (the first three years of the tree), the fruits of the fourth year are called *Neta Revai* which has the same Halachic status as *Ma'aser Sheyni* (see above). These fruits do not require the separation of *Terumos* and *Ma'asros*; however they must be redeemed onto a coin like *Ma'aser Sheyni*.

כלאים - Kilayim

Although some of the Halachos of *Kilayim* (mixed seeds) apply in *Chutz la-Aretz* as well as in Eretz Yisrael, it is more common for people to plant produce in their yards here. For this reason these Halachos are included here as well. (Additionally, *Kil'ai Zera'im* does not apply in *Chutz la-Aretz*).

Kilayim is the Torah prohibition of planting dissimilar types of produce in a single field. There are three types of *Kilayim*:

- *Kil'ai HaKerem* (כלאי הכרם) - A grapevine may not be planted next to (or draped over) planted grains or vegetables. If a vine was intentionally planted with grains, legumes or vegetables, you must uproot the vine **and** the grains etc.
If one is planning to buy and plant a grapevine you should consult a Rav to find out what may be planted near the vine and how far the vine must be from other produce.
If you bought a house that already has vegetables planted under a grapevine, you need to consult a Rav on what to do.
- *Kil'ai Zera'im* (כלאי זרעים) – Different types of vegetables, legumes, and grains may not be planted together in the same field. You must consult a Rav to determine how far apart these items must be from each other in a yard or field.
- *Harkovas Ha'ilan* (הרכבת האילן) – You are not allowed to graft dissimilar fruit trees to each other. Even if someone else did the grafting, you are not allowed to let the tree grow in your garden. Many fruit trees bought from nurseries are grafted. You must consult a Rav on how to verify whether the tree was grafted with its own species.

שמיטה - Shemittah

Every seventh year in Eretz Yisrael you must leave your land fallow and must allow anyone to pick fruits from your field. There are numerous Halachos of *Shemittah* that affect just about every produce product sold on the market in Israel.

The next *Shemittah* commences in 5768 (13 Sep 2007) and you should familiarize yourself with those Halachos before then.

חלה - Challah

When you bake bread, cakes or cookies and you use more than 2.6 lbs / 1.2kgs of flour you are required to take off a piece of the dough, proclaim it *Challah* and give it to a Kohen. This piece is called *Challah*. Just as with *Terumah* (see above), today we do not give the *Challah* to the Kohen; rather it should be wrapped in silver foil and burnt in an oven. It shouldn't be burned in the oven at the same time as other food is cooking/baking there.

Although one takes off *Challah* from dough that is 2.6 lbs / 1.2 kgs, one does not make a *Bracha* unless it is larger than 5 lbs / 2.25 kgs

Irrespective of whether you are making a *Bracha* or not, when you take off the *Challah*, say "*Harei zu Challah*".

The Halachos of *Challah* apply both in *Chutz la-Aretz* and in Eretz Yisrael. However in Eretz Yisrael the Halachos are more stringent.

תולעים - Insects

Because of the hot and dry climate of the Middle East, food borne insects are very common in Israel. It is important to check ALL foods during preparation to make sure no insects are in the food. Eating insects involves numerous Torah prohibitions and proper care must be taken to inspect foods.

Bread and cake flour (even purchased in bags) must be sifted before use in order to remove insects that can be found in flour. Most supermarkets or hardware stores sell special flour sifters for this purpose. The flour should be sifted immediately before use, or it can be sifted and then stored in the freezer to prevent the reintroduction of insects.

Macaroni, noodles and rice should also be checked carefully before use. Dried fruit and nuts are especially prone to be infested with insects.

כשרות - General Kashrus

Hechsherim

In Israel, like in *Chutz la-Aretz*, there are many different Kashrus Organizations each of which has its own rules and standards. In Israel you will see products, stores, and restaurants that have symbols and certificates that say "Rabbanut" or "Rabbanut Mehadrin" or different types of "Ba'Datz".

What are the standards of each of these organizations and how can you know which to rely on?

(The following is said in very general terms and is only meant to inform you of the issues which you need to discuss with your local Rav.)

The Israeli Rabbanut Kashrut organization is a governmental agency created for the purpose of providing kosher certification to Israeli products and shops. The Rabbanim of the Rabbanut are all "Frum – Dati" people. The philosophy behind the formation of the Rabbanut *Hechsher* was to insure that all food sold in Israel is certified Kosher. Since many Israelis are not strictly observant, there is a need to make Kosher products easily available so that these people will not feel the need to eat non-Kosher foods. In order to accomplish this, the Rabbanut is often forced to rely on *Heteirim* (leniencies) in standards that you might not want to rely on in your own kitchen. A well known example of this is the fact that they permit the use of gelatin.

This is not a general statement about all Rabbanut *Hechsherim*, as they vary from city to city, but is the philosophy behind the Kashrus standards of the Rabbanut. It is recommended to check with your Rav to find out which *Hechsherim* are up to the standards you are used to from *Chutz la-Aretz*.

When eating at a Rabbanut certified restaurant or hotel it is recommended to seek out the on-site Mashgiach to verify the standards in place in that particular restaurant.

Over the years, a demand for a higher level of Kashrut standards developed due to the religious population. Hence the "Rabbanut Mehadrin" *Hechsher* was introduced. This *Hechsher* applies a much higher level of standards in their supervision of products and restaurants. Again, consult your local Rav for details.

The various "Ba'Datz" *Hechsherim* apply a stringent level of standards to all their products. Speak to your Rav for more information. Be aware that there are even some specific *Hechsherim* that follow Sepharadi customs and may not be suitable for Ashkenazim. This is especially important to keep in mind around Pesach time when many products will contain *Kitmayos* (legumes) and may only be Kosher for Pesach for Sephardim.

Packaging

Packaging of products in Israel is very different than packaging in the US. If you can not read Hebrew, be very careful about what you are buying!

In general, *Hechsherim* in Israel have different Halachic standards than those in *Chutz la-Aretz*. It is important to know your standards and pick *Hechshrim* that are on par with your standards.

Issues to be aware of:

- Sometimes the identical product may be manufactured with and without the *Hechsher*! Check that all your products bear a *Hechsher*.
- Ice cream comes in Pareve and dairy versions; however the packaging often looks exactly the same. Make sure you look for the little marking saying "Chalavi - חלב" or "Pareve - פרווה" on the box.
- The raw liver that is sold in supermarkets is NOT koshered. It must be broiled before it can be eaten. Consult your Rav for details. (This does not apply to chopped liver which has already been broiled during production.) Very often the same company sells similar products, one with a Mehadrin *Hechsher* and one without. Make sure you are getting the product you want.
- Margarine and butter packages look similar in Israel. Make sure the margarine you are buying is Pareve!
- Be aware of products that might contain "Kitniyos" around Pesach time.
- Restaurants will sometimes change *Hechsherim* overnight! Check with the restaurant to be sure they still have the *Hechsher* you want.

- *Tevilas Kailim* (טבילת כלים) - All pots or utensils purchased from a non-Jewish owner require *Tevilah* (immersion) in a *Mikveh* before they may be used. Not every pot sold in Israel has been manufactured by a Jewish company. In fact, many of the large Israeli manufacturers are actually owned by foreign investors and the pots they manufacture require *Tevilah*. Consult your Rav for details.

מזוזה – Mezuzah

When purchasing or renting a home in Israel you must put up Mezuzos on the day you move in. This is unlike *Chutz la-Aretz* where you can wait 30 days.

If you need *Mezuzos* immediately, there are *Gemachim* (free loan societies) that can lend you *Mezuzos* for short periods of time until you buy the needed *Mezuzos*.

תפילה וכו' – Tefillah etc.

- It is forbidden to talk during davening. This is true both in Israel and in *Chutz la-Aretz*.
- The Kohanim *Duchen* every day during *Shacharis* and twice on days with *Mussaf*. *Ein Ke'elokainu* is said during the weekday also.
- An additional *Borechu* is said at the end of every *Shacharis* that does *not* have *Krias Hatorah*, and at the end of every *Ma'ariv*.
- In the קדיש דרבנן the word קדישא is added - אתרא קדישא הדין -
- The paragraphs of *Boruch Hashem Le'Olam* before *Shemoneh Esrei* in *Ma'ariv* are not said. Most shuls do not say *Veshomru* at *Ma'ariv* on *Shabbos* or other *Pesukim* on *Yom Tov*.
- One does NOT wear *Tefillin* on *Chol Hamoed*. *Hallel* is said in Shul on the first night of *Pesach*.
- One starts saying ותן טל ומטר on the seventh day of *Cheshvan* (ז' חשוון). מוריד הטל is said (even in *Nusach Ashkenaz*) from the first day of *Pesach*.
- In many Shuls a special *Shir Shel Yom* is said on *Yom Tov* and *Chol Hamoed*. (On *Rosh Chodesh* ONLY *Borchi Nafshi* is said).
- *Selichos* - In most Shuls *Selichos* are said on fast days. On the *Be"hab* days the *Pizmon* is switched from the first Monday to the Thursday.
- A זכר לחורבן (unplastered area) should be made on the wall opposite the entrance of the apartment. The size of this area should be 48²cm according to ר' חיים נאה and 57.6²cm according to the חזון איש.

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