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WEEK 6: MAASER

Halachah

With a special focus on the mitzva of tithing Israeli produce, this week's MaaserText asks 'What is the halachic need for a dedicated Maaser Sheni coin?'

The Federation's MaaserText service allows you to make one use of their coin, but why is a coin necessary when taking Maaser?

If you are separating Terumos and Maasros, one of the resultant tithes is called 'Maaser Sheni'. The primary mitzvah of Maaser Sheni is to take it to Yerushalayim and eat it there in a state of *taharo* (purity). As this is not possible today without a *Beis Hamikdash*, it is necessary to remove the kedushah from the produce and transfer it to a small coin.

What is special about the Federation's coins?

The halochos of the Maaser Sheni coin are complex and a 'perutah chamurah' - special Maaser Sheni coin - is necessary in some cases. Procuring this special coin is a difficult exercise, and the Federation's MaaserText service makes our dedicated coins available for all members of the community.

Can you provide a brief insight into the considerations which lead to the need for a special coin?

The principle behind the Maaser Sheni coin is that Maaser Sheni kedushah which is assigned to a portion of the fruits during the hafrosho declaration must be transferred from the produce onto a coin.

When the volume of produce which has been tithed is small, and the resultant maaser sheni is of almost insignificant value, Halocho teaches that you will not be able to transfer the *kedushah* onto a coin unless it has already been previously part-used for Maaser Sheni. The Federation's Maaser Sheni coins have been prepared to meet these requirements.

Maaser Oni must be separated from this year's produce –should we still text Maaser to MaaserText before tithing?

As was discussed in last week's article, this year is a Maaser Oni year. Establishing the Maaser Sheni/Oni status of one's produce can prove to be a challenging exercise. In many cases, even after thorough research, halachic doubt will force the produce to be deemed of sofeik – doubtful status. Both Maaser Sheni and Maaser Oni will need to be separated.

The MaaserText declaration covers both options. The final 10% which is verbally dedicated is the subject of a stipulation made by the owner during his hafrosho. When using our short hafrosho text, the user in effect stipulates that if Maaser Sheni is indeed needed, then the said 10% should hereby be Maaser Sheni and be redeemed on the Federation's coin. If Maaser Sheni is not needed but Maaser Oni is needed, then the 10% should hereby be Maaser Oni. Using this wording, both options are covered.

Even in this Maaser Oni year, the public are encouraged to continue to text Maasertext to receive permission to make use of our coin.

Next week, Dayan Y.D. Hool examines why the Federation Beis Din have so strongly encouraged members of the public to separate Maaser.



A Quick Vort: Ma'ayanah shel Torah

BY YISROEL AVROHOM KAYE

The pasuk (Bamidbar 31:14,15) says "and Moshe was angry with the officers of the host....and.... said to them: have you saved all the women alive?"

The Ma'ayanah shel Torah brings the Shelah HaKadosh who points out that Moshe had not actually given any specific instruction to kill the women of Midyan, why then was he now angry with the officers for having allowed them to remain alive?

This incident proves that when it stands to reason that a thing should be done, one must do it without first waiting for an explicit command to that effect.

Similarly, Bilaam too said "I have sinned for I didn't know that You were standing opposite me in the road. Now if it displeases You, I'll go back (22:34)"

Ignorance or failure to understand what should be easy to understand constitute sins in themselves.

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This week's Shailatext is

לע"נ שמעון בן שרגא ז"ל

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2. Why the need for such detail in the splitting of the booty between the soldiers and the other Jews?