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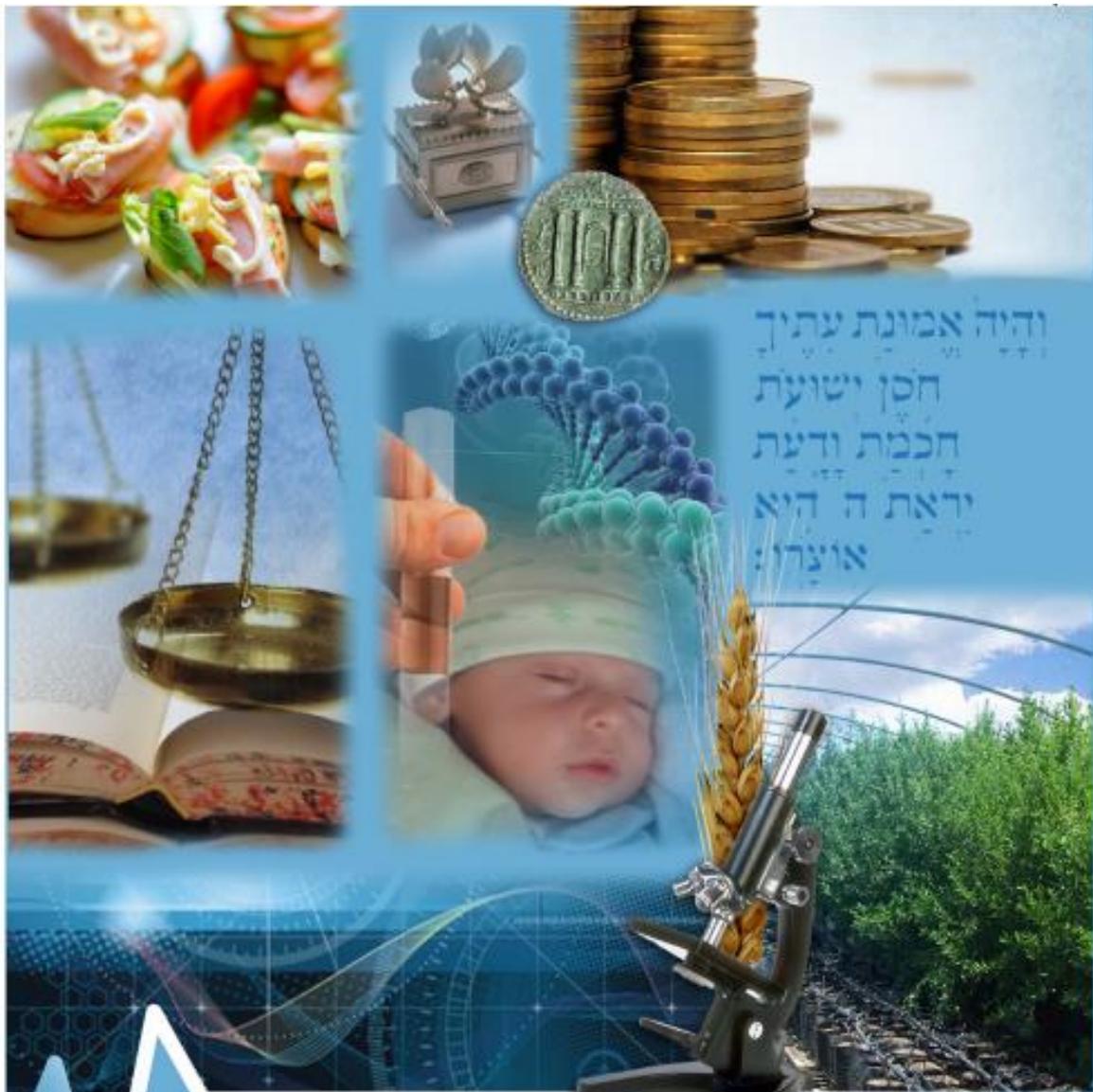
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# Emunat Itecha

The platform for articles combining  
Torah study and its practical application  
in the Land of Israel

Tishrey 5779 121



## **Emunat Itecha**

The platform for articles combining Torah study  
and its practical application in the Land of Israel

Vol. 121

Tishrei 5779 - September 2018

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Published by:

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Annual subscription – free

Mailing fee in Israel – NIS 50 annually

Mailing fee outside of Israel – \$40 annually

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## Laws of *terumot* and *ma'aserot* for Trio planters / **Rabbi Yoel Friedemann**

Hishtil recently came out with a new product, Trio, featuring a carton planter with three different plants. The triple planter is for growing plants in the kitchen and it is very convenient and easy to use, especially for herbs and tea leaves. You can grow and pick several leaves from the planters and put them straight into your salad or cup of tea. Even though the planter grows different crops, this does not constitute *kila'im* for two reasons: (1) each plant sits independently in a separate planter, and (2) it is apparent that they are not mixed together. The question that arises, though, is whether these plants are subject to *terumot* and *ma'aserot* (T&M).

Plants grown in an unperforated pot inside one's home are subject to T&M but without a blessing. Some claim, however, that Trio plants should be exempt from T&M since they are grown hydroponically and T&M are taken in the factory before they are sold.

It seems, though, that the T&M taken in the factory are not sufficient for two reasons: (1) These crops are not really hydroponically grown, since each plant has its own platform and does not grow only with water. Therefore the separation of T&M in the factory is insufficient, since it is as if they are taken from crops that are connected to the soil. (2) Since the plants continue to grow, one needs to take T&M from the additional growth.

### **Conclusion**

Anyone who buys the Trio planters needs to take *terumot* and *ma'aserot* without a blessing each time they pick a leaf, as is the *halacha* for plants in unperforated pots growing inside the house.

## The obligation to separate *terumot* and *ma'aserot* in Jerusalem and throughout Israel today / **Rabbi Netanel Oyerbach**

The Rishonim disagree whether the obligation of taking *terumot* and *ma'aserot* (T&M) today is biblical or rabbinic in nature. Some maintain that the second measure of sanctity that Ezra and *olei Bavel* imbued in the areas they returned to in the Land of Israel was not nullified upon the Second Temple's destruction and exile from the Land of Israel. According to this opinion, T&M would be a biblical injunction. Others believe, however, that this sanctity was voided, and that today T&M is a rabbinic injunction.

In this way many *Rishonim* link the sanctity of the Land of Israel today and the level of obligation of separating T&M. The Rambam, though, does not link the two, and has an innovative approach to the topic. According to the Rambam, despite the fact that the sanctity of Ezra continues to exist and was not nullified upon the destruction of the Land of Israel and the subsequent exile, he rules that this is still insufficient grounds to obligate T&M from the Torah. The Rambam's reasoning is that when Ezra returned to the Land of Israel, not all (or most) of the Jewish people made Aliya with him; the condition for a biblical obligation being *bi'at kulechem* ("when you [all] come", a reference to *bevo'achem*, "in your coming," *Bamidbar* 15:18).

The Rambam's super-commentators were divided in their understanding this deficiency, whether or not this is an integral deficiency relating to the sanctity of the Land of Israel. One approach is that in order for the sanctity of the Land of Israel to apply in full, at the time of sanctification process most of the Jewish people need to be living there. If this is true, since most Jews lived abroad in Ezra's time, the Land's sanctity will not return without an additional sanctification process.

Another approach to the Rambam is that the obligation of separating T&M is linked to the situation at hand. That is, the biblical obligation of T&M applies only when the majority of the Jewish People are in the Land of Israel. According to this understanding, the moment that the majority of the world's Jewish population lives in Israel, separating T&M becomes a biblical obligation, without a need for an additional sanctification process.

An additional practical implication of this issue is the obligation of separating T&M in Jerusalem and the Temple mount today. These areas, according to the Rambam,

were imbued with sanctity from the time of Yehoshua and *olei Mitzrayim*. Some maintain that since at that time the vast majority of Jews lived in the Land of Israel, the obligation is currently biblical, even if today the majority does not live in Israel. Others, though, view *bi'at kulechem* as a standing condition for obligating of separating T&M. It follows that since there were times when most of the Jews did not live in the Land of Israel, the obligation of separating T&M in Jerusalem is only rabbinic.

### **In practice**

Some interpret the Rambam to say that the moment the majority of the Jewish population resides in the Land of Israel (which will probably occur in the next few years), separating T&M throughout Israel becomes a biblical obligation, even without an additional sanctification process. Others read into the Rambam that separating T&M in Jerusalem's Old City today is a biblical obligation, while other halachic opinions view this mitzvah as rabbinic in nature.

## **Raising locusts for human consumption: a halachic challenge in a changing world / Agronomist Shimon Biton**

Approximately one billion people worldwide suffer from chronic starvation. By 2050, it is projected that the world population will grow by 9 billion, and along with it will grow the need for protein. Alongside this data, studies indicate that the meat industry is one of the greatest polluters on the planet. A UN study shows that meat production is responsible for 14%–22% of all greenhouse gas emissions.

### **The solution: Insects?**

One of the most important studies on the topic of insects as food was carried out by the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization) of the UN, together with the entomophagy lab of the University of Vachningen in Holland. The report subsequently published outlines the use of insects as the main solution for the worldwide food crisis. The trend of the growing world population and a higher standard of living on the one hand, and dwindling agricultural soil and water resources on the other hand; along with differences in climate, are expected to

exacerbate the state of food deficiency that one billion people experience today, and underlines the need to find alternate sustainable food sources.

There are many benefits to eating insects: nutritional, environmental, and social. From an environmental perspective, raising insects is characterized by a considerably lower level of greenhouse gas emissions as compared to raising cattle; it is also less demanding in terms of utilizing soil and other resources. Insects can be fed with organic waste, and are especially efficient in food consumption. The agricultural cultivation of insects is a specialized field, called "minilivestock." From a social aspect, since it entails little investment of resources, raising minilivestock can provide employment in urban and rural areas alike. While this branch of agriculture is considered "low-tech," there is certainly a potential to sophisticate it and develop innovative, cutting-edge methods.

On this backdrop, there is a growing movement of entomophagy proponents, who believe that insect cultivation is the solution to the food crisis. They claim that the repulsion involved is only a result of Western social norms, and from all the possibilities for increasing protein supply to the world, insect cultivation is the most nourishing and environmentally friendly. In the Far East today insect consumption, in many different forms, is prevalent.

While there are only nascent studies in the field, there is much scientific evidence that corroborates these claims. It is possible that **locust consumption could be the halachic solution to this trend**, and today there is an Israeli company that develops locust powder.

It is well known that most Yemenite Jews and some Jews from North Africa eat a particular species of locust that bear signs of kashrut, as this is a halachic tradition that they carry with them. However, the Taz rules: "Today we do not eat any type of locust, even if we know it is called a *chagav*, since we are not proficient in their names."