

KAJ NEWSLETTER

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SH'MITTA 5768

Notice from the Rabbinate to our Membership

While *Sh'mitta* implies prohibitions and halachos pertaining to products grown in Eretz Yisroel during the *Sh'mitta* year and impacts daily life there during and after the *Sh'mitta* year, there are many implications for those residing in the United States as well. Below we outline the most important of these implications.

- **Kedushas Shevi'is**: Fruits, vegetables, legumes, herbs and some types of flowers which have grown in Eretz Yisroel during *Sh'mitta* and are imported to the U.S., may possess *Kedushas Shevi'is*. The stage of growth - which varies - determines whether any given product bears *Kedushas Shevi'is* or not. Once one has determined that a given vegetable, fruit, etc., might have *Kedushas Shevi'is*, that product should not be purchased.
- In the event such a product has been mistakenly purchased, it should not be returned to the store. One must consume the product and save the peels, pits, and other non-edible portions in a bag until they are completely decomposed and rotted. At this point, one may discard the bag and its contents.
- **Issur S'fichin**: Vegetables and herbs which have started to grow during the *Sh'mitta* year are considered to be "*ossur m'd'rabbanon*". This is the prohibition known as "*Issur S'fichin*". The same prohibition applies to legumes which have not grown a third of their usual growth before the beginning of *Sh'mitta*. In this case, their consumption is prohibited; if purchased, such products should be kept until completely decomposed and rotted.

Over the next 18 months, we will endeavor to keep the membership informed as to which types of fruits, vegetables, herbs and flowers on the American market at any given time might be subject either to *Kedushas Shevi'is* or *Issur S'fichin* during a particular month.

It is important to note that one must observe the above-noted *Hilchos Sh'mitta* in America only in the event that it is clear that the product in question comes from Eretz Yisroel. Otherwise, one may rely on the presumption that most products of that kind are not imported from Eretz Yisroel and may purchase products as usual. *This, of course, unless we advise the public that the presumption cannot be relied upon with respect to a particular product that comes from Eretz Yisroel.*

The following products from Eretz Yisroel currently on the American market, are subject to *Kedushas Shevi'is*: **cherry tomatoes, peppers and herbs (dill, parsley, etc.).**

The consumer should pay particular attention when purchasing products such as instant soups and canned items which usually carry a reliable *Hashgocho* (e.g. B'datz, Rav Landau, Rav Rubin). It is

possible that these supervisions might remove their *Hashgocho* during the *Sh'mitta* season. Thus, the consumer should continuously check during the *Sh'mitta* season (which can last up to two years) that indeed the usual *Hashgocho* is still on the label of these types of products.

Regarding "Alei Katif" products (which include whole romaine heads, whole romaine leaves, whole lolla rossa, green onions/scallions, beet leaves, parsley, dill, mint, coriander, basil, chives), only those bags of Alei Katif bearing our seal and the inscription מצע מנותק should be bought. (One should avoid purchasing bags that bear the inscription "יבול נכרי"). In this regard, our Rabbinat follows the p'sak of Maran HaGaon HaRav Shalom Yosef Elyashiv שליט"א and להבדיל"ח Maran HaGaon HaRav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach זצ"ל.

Dated: October 22, 2007
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