

Instructions for Separating Terumah and Ma'aser

תמוז תשפ"ה / Revised July 2025

Periodically, we are fortunate enough to obtain fruits and vegetables from *Eretz Yisroel* (Israel). Due to the sanctity of *Eretz Yisroel* there are special obligations that apply to its produce. Namely, before eating the produce we must determine that it is not from *shemittah* or *arlah*,¹ and then we separate certain tithes, known as *terumah* and *ma'aser*.

These instructions will explain (a) how to separate the tithes, (b) the wording that should be said, and (c) how to dispose of certain portions of the tithes, for the most common situations. [A *bracha* is typically not recited, due to the possibility that the separations were already made in *Eretz Yisroel*.]

Furthermore, this procedure will (d) only be effective if the value of the produce is at least 1 (American) dollar, and (e) will require the use – and eventual discarding – of a coin worth at least 5 cents.

1. The following procedure should be performed for each type of food (e.g. clementine, avocado, pepper) separately. In this example, we will assume the procedure is being performed for clementines.

2. Separate a bit more than 1% of the total clementines and place that portion on a plate.

In the coming paragraphs, the clementines on the plate will be conceptually divided into two parts: one part is equal to 1% of the total clementines, and the other part is comprised of the rest of the food on the plate.



3. Use a permanent marker to mark the designated coin with the Hebrew letter “נ”, and place the coin on the plate.



4. Say the following:

- a. *The clementines on the plate can conceptually be divided into two parts: Part A is the amount which is equivalent to 1% of the total clementines, and it is located on the southerly side of the plate. Part B is the rest of the clementines on the plate, and it is located on the northerly side of the plate. The part referred to as “Part B” is hereby designated as terumah gedolah.*
 - b. *Of the clementines which are on the northern side of those which are off the plate, nine portions equal in size to the clementines in “Part A” will be referred to as “Part C”.*
 - *“Part A” and “Part C” are hereby designated as ma’aser rishon.*
 - *“Part A” is hereby designated as terumas ma’aser.*
 - c. *10% of the clementines which have not been designated in any form, and which are located on the southern side of the clementines which are off the plate, shall hereby be designated as ma’aser sheini or ma’aser ani as appropriate.²*
 - d. *If ma’aser sheini was designated, its kedushah, plus the required extra “chomesh” (25%), should hereby be redeemed onto the coin which is on the plate.*
- ❖ If a person does not have enough time to say the entire wording noted above (a-e), they should say the following abbreviated text: *I hereby separate and designate terumos and ma’asros and the redemption of ma’aser sheini, as needed, in accordance with the details contained on the cRc website.*

5. The clementine portions which are on the plate may not be eaten or used in any manner. Rather, they should be placed into a bag and disposed of in a dignified manner.
6. The designated coin should be defaced and thrown into a lake or river.³
7. The above procedure should be repeated for each type of food (e.g., avocado, pepper) with a separate coin.

¹ Special restrictions apply to food which grows in Israel during the *shemittah* (Sabbatical) year. The most recent of these septennial events was in the year 5782 (Sep. 2021-Sep. 2022) and the next one will be in 5789 (Sep. 2028-Sep. 2029). For the first three years after a tree is planted the fruit which grows is forbidden as *arlah*, and there are special restrictions on fruit which grows in the fourth year. [*Arlah* applies in a more limited fashion for fruit which grows out of Israel.]

² During the 1st, 2nd, 4th, and 5th years of every *shemittah* cycle (corresponding to 5783, 5784, 5786, 5787, respectively in the current *shemittah* cycle) one must designate approximately 9% of each batch of produce as *ma’aser sheini*, and during the 3rd and 6th year of the cycle (corresponding to 5785 and 5788 of the current cycle) that amount is instead designated as *ma’aser ani*.

³ This procedure must be completed before *Pesach* of the 4th and 7th year of the *shemittah* cycle (which will be in 5786/2026 and 5789/2029), but to avoid complications it seems prudent to do it as soon as possible. For more on the *mitzvah* of *biur ma’asros* see our video at <https://youtu.be/JBAi-4B2N4U>.

