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are reviewed by Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita

Matanas L'evyonim

During the days and weeks before Purim the mail is full of letters requesting *matanas l'evyonim*. In this issue we will discuss which people one has to give to, how much to give, when to give and other relevant *halachos* pertaining to this *mitzvah*.

The Source

The *posuk* in the *Megilah*¹ is the source of the *mitzvah* to give *matanas l'evyonim* on *Purim*. This means that one has to give “*matanas*” to two people,² which in essence means that one has to give one *matana* to each of two poor people.³ The more that one gives to poor people on *Purim* the more fortunate he is.⁴ One should give more money to the poor on *Purim* than he spends for *mishloach manos* or the *seuda*.⁵ One who gladdens the hearts of these

unfortunate people is comparable to the *shechina's* presence.⁶

Reason

One of the basic reasons for the *mitzvah* of giving *matanas l'evyonim* is in order to make poor people happy on this day when everyone else is happy.⁷

Giving Generously

Aside from the minimum requirement of the *mitzvah* of *matanas l'evyonim*, one should go a step further and give to anyone who sticks out a hand on *Purim*.⁸ However, it should be pointed out that this only refers to poor people who are collecting for themselves and not to groups or people who are collecting for other

¹ 9:22.

² Mesechtas Megilah, Rosh 1:7, Rif page 6, Shulchan Aruch 694:1, Chai Adom 155:28, Aruch Ha'shulchan 694:1, see Taz 1. Refer to Lekutei Maharich 3:page 726 (new) on why no *beracha* is recited on this *mitzvah*. See Kaf Ha'chaim 694:4. Some say a *leshem yichud* before doing this *mitzvah* (Kaf Ha'chaim (ibid)).

³ Chai Adom 155:28-29, Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 142:3. Refer to Rivevos Ephraim 5:455:1.

⁴ Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 142:1.

⁵ Refer to Rambam Hilchos Megilah 2:16, Sharei Teshuva 1, Elya Rabbah 694:6, Chai Adom 155:29, Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 142:1, Aruch Ha'shulchan 2, Mishnah Berurah 3. There is no need to give the money before

chatzos on *Purim* Day (opinion of Horav Elyashiv Shlita quoted in Piskei Shmuos page 142).

⁶ Rambam Hilchos Megilah 1:17.

⁷ Refer to Natei Gavriel Purim page 586.

⁸ Rambam Hilchos Megilah 2:16, Tur, Shulchan Aruch 694:3, Chai Adom 155:28, Aruch Ha'shulchan 694:1. This also refers to a young child who comes to collect money for himself (Moed Lechol Chai 31:86, Sheilas Rav page 403, Divrei Shalom 3:129, see Mekadesh Yisroel 204). Refer to Piskei Shmuos page 150 who says this means that one may give to any poor person and there is no need to check if he is really poor.

people.⁹ The *poskim* say that one may even give to a non-Jew because of *darchei sholom*.¹⁰ Although others say that the custom is not to give to non-Jews, but one who has the custom to do so may continue with it.¹¹

What's Considered Money?

Check- The *poskim* maintain that giving a check to a poor person fulfills the *mitzvah* of *matanas l'evyonim*.¹² Some say one should make sure that either the bank is opened or he can get something with the check i.e. food.¹³ Others say that there is no reason for the bank to be opened in order to fulfill the *mitzvah*,¹⁴ but he should be able to buy something.¹⁵ Some *poskim* say that one is permitted to give a post-dated check as well.¹⁶ However, the custom is not to give a post dated check for the *mitzvah* of *matanas l'evyonim*.¹⁷ Some *poskim* say the same would apply to one who gives a check but does not have the funds to cover the check.¹⁸ However, if one will have funds when the poor person cashes the check then it is permitted.¹⁹

One may use a credit card for *matanas l'evyonim* if it will be processed by *Purim*.²⁰

Money which can not be spent in the country it is given in can not be used for the *mitzvah* of *matanas l'evyonim*.²¹

Food- The opinion of many *poskim* is that one does not have to give money in order to fulfill the *mitzvah* of *matanas l'evyonim*²², and one is permitted to give anything which the poor person will benefit from.²³

Switching Meals

One who gives a *seuda* to his friend and his friend gives him a *seuda* to his friend then they were both *yotzei matanas l'evyonim*.²⁴

Who Are Obligated?

Women - women are obligated in this *mitzvah*.²⁵ Although some say a married woman is *yotzei* the obligation when her husband gives, one should not rely on this,²⁶ and instead she should ask her husband for money and give on her own.²⁷ A man can give to a poor woman and a woman can give to a poor man.²⁸ Additionally when giving money

⁹ Shiurei Halacha (Rabbi Felder Shlita) page 38, B'leila Ha'hu page 12, Mikadesh Yisroel 203, 205, See Natei Gavriel Purim page 368:3.

¹⁰ Shulchan Aruch 694:3, Taz 2.

¹¹ Aruch Ha'shulchan 7.

¹² Refer to Rivevos Ephraim 5:455:2, Toras Hamoadim 10:1, Halichos Shlomo Moadim page 342:23, Modanei Shlomo page 120.

¹³ Yismach Yisroel page 122:footnote 185, B'orach Tzedaka page 411.

¹⁴ Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita, see B'leila Ha'hu page 12 quoting the opinions of Horav Elyashiv Shlita and Horav Sheinberg Shlita.

¹⁵ Modanei Shlomo ibid:footnote 36, Shalmei Moed page 280, B' orach Tzedaka page 363.

¹⁶ Refer to Shiurei Halacha (Rabbi Felder Shlita) page 60, Opinion of Horav Elyashiv Shlita quoted in B'orach Tzedaka page 347.

¹⁷ Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita, see Mikadesh Yisroel 220.

¹⁸ Mikadesh Yisroel 221. Refer to Yismach Yisroel page 123:footnote 186 who quotes Horav Wosner Shlita who argues.

¹⁹ Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita.

²⁰ B'orach Tzedaka page 363 quoting the opinion of Horav Wosner Shlita, see Piskei Shmuos pages 140-141.

²¹ Natei Gavriel page 368, Yismach Yisroel pages 122-123.

²² Rambam Hilchos Megilah 2:16, Halachos Ketanos 2:163, Kaf Ha'chaim 6, Mishnah Berurah 2, Toras Hamoadim 10:1.

²³ Refer to Divrei Yatziv O.C. 298, Natei Gavriel page 367:1, M'ein Omer 3:page 268:26.

²⁴ Mishnah Berurah 2. Refer to Biur Halacha "litien."

²⁵ Shulchan Aruch 695:9, Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 142:4, Mishnah Berurah 1, Kaf Ha'chaim 694:3.

²⁶ Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 142:4. see Aruch Ha'shulchan 695:18.

²⁷ Avnei Yushfei 1:133:2, Mekadesh Yisroel 198, Shevet Ha'Levi 9:147, see Shalmei Moed page 279, Halichos Bas Yisroel 22:16.

²⁸ Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 142:4, Aruch Ha'shulchan 695:18.

for one's wife he should tell the *gabbai* to be *koneh* the money for his wife and give it for her.

Poor Person- A poor person is obligated to give *matanas l'evyonim* from the money which he receives.²⁹

Children- A child should be trained in this *mitzvah*³⁰ and his father should either give him money to give to the poor,³¹ or the father should tell the child that he is giving on his behalf.³²

How Much to Give

The opinion of the *Ritva* is that one may give a *pruta* (a minimal amount) for *matanas l'evyonim*.³³ Others say that one should give the amount that the poor person will be able to buy a *seuda* with.³⁴ Others say it should be a *chasuva* amount.³⁵ The opinion of *Horav Moshe Feinstein zt"l* is that one should give one dollar.³⁶ However, this opinion was expressed many years ago, and today one can not buy much with that amount. One should give the amount of money that one can buy a bagel with cream cheese, and a coffee.³⁷ *Horav Elyashiv Shlita* is quoted as saying that one can

give fifty *shekalim* (in *Eretz Yisroel*).³⁸ It is praiseworthy to give small amounts of money to many poor people instead of a lot of money to fewer people.³⁹

From Masser Money

Since the *mitzvah* of giving *matanas l'evyonim* is an obligation, one may not give the *ikkur* obligation of *matanas l'evyonim* from one's *masser* money. However, if one will be giving to more than one poor person then he may use his *masser* money for the other recipients.⁴⁰

Eating Before Sending Matanas L'evyonim

There are some *poskim* that say one should not eat (a substantial amount of food, tasting is permitted) before performing the *mitzvah* of *matanas l'evyonim*.⁴¹ However, most *poskim* say that one is permitted to eat before the *mitzvah* is performed.⁴² The reason for this leniency is because one will not forget to send the *matanas l'evyonim*.⁴³ *Horav Moshe Feinstein zt"l* said one can give *matanas l'evyonim* before the reading

²⁹ Refer to Bach, Mishnah Berurah 1, Rivevos Ephraim 4:172:page 325, see Sharei Teshuva 1.

³⁰ Refer to Pri Megadim Eishel Avraham 695:14, Avnei Yushfei 1:133:3, B'leila Ha'hu page 13 quoting the opinion of Horav Elyashiv Shlita, Chanoch L'nar 27:7, Mekadesh Yisroel 201.

³¹ Opinion of Horav Korelitz Shlita as quoted in Piskei Shmuos page 128.

³² Shalmei Moed page 279, Piskei Shmuos page 123 quoting the opinion of Horav Chaim Kanievesky Shlita.

³³ Mesechtas Megilah 7a, see Sharei Teshuva 1, Mishnah Berurah 2, Tzitz Eliezer 7:27:7. Refer to Sheilas Rav page 402:12, Piskei Shmuos page 126. Refer to Divrei Shalom 6:page 315. Chut Shuni Shabbos 2,pages 313-314. .

³⁴ Sharei Teshuva 1, Kaf Ha'chaim 7, Toras Hamoadim page 326:2, B'leila Ha'hu page 11.

³⁵ Maharsha Mesechtas Megilah 7a, Moadim V'zemanim 6:107.

³⁶ Moadei Yeshurin page 82:footnote 239. See Divrei Shalom 3:129.

³⁷ Refer to Shiurei Halacha (Felder) page 38.

³⁸ B'orach Tzedaka page 281, Piskei Shmuos page 126, See Sharei Yimei Purim page 59.

³⁹ Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita. Refer to Lehoros Nosson 3:37.

⁴⁰ Magen Avraham 1, Mishnah Berurah 3, Kaf Ha'chaim 14, Sheilas Rav page 403:17, Mekadesh Yisroel 223, Yechaveh Da'as 1:87, Emes L'Yaakov 694:footnote 614, Piskei Shmuos page 138.

⁴¹ Moadim V'zemanim 2:186, 8:186, Oz Nedberu 6:65, B'orach Tzedaka page 412. Refer to Orchos Rabbeinu 3:page 53:75.

⁴² Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita. This is the opinion of Horav Elyashiv Shlita (B'orach Tzedaka page 347, Sharei Yemey Purim page 62:14, Piskei Shmuos page 120), see Halichos Shlomo Moadim 19:9, Oz Nedberu ibid, Tzitz Eliezer 15:32:16, Betzel Hachuchma 6:81, Moadim V'zemanim 8:186, Mekadesh Yisroel 196, Toras Hamoadim pages 322-323, Yemey HaPurim pages 81-82. Some performed the *mitzvah* right after *Shacharis* (Toras Chaim page 108, Darchei Chaim V'Sholom 849, Kovetz Bais Aron V'yisroel 99:page 117:1).

⁴³ Avnei Yushfei 4:82:3.

of the *megilah* (by day).⁴⁴ Others give it before *davening*.⁴⁵

Mishloach Manos First or Matanas L'evyonim?

Many say that one should give *matanas l'evyonim* before giving *mishloach manos*.⁴⁶ Others maintain that *mishloach manos* should be given before *matanas l'evyonim* since *mishloach manos* is stated first in the *posuk*.⁴⁷ One who does not have enough money for both *mitzvahs* should give *matanas l'evyonim*.⁴⁸

Sending before Purim

Many times one sends a check in the mail before *Purim* and it reaches the poor person after *Purim*. The *poskim* say that in order for one to fulfill the *mitzvah* properly one should make sure that the poor person receives the money on *Purim* because of a concern that the poor person will use the money before *Purim*.⁴⁹ One who will be sending to many poor people can send the money even if it reaches the poor person before *Purim*.⁵⁰ If the poor person has the money one was *yotzei* and there is no difference if the poor person actually used the

money of the *seuda* or not.⁵¹

Classifying a Poor Person

The opinion of some is that an "*evyon*" is different than a poor person and one only has an obligation to give an "*evyon*" on *Purim*.⁵² A poor person is someone who has embarrassment to ask for money, and an "*evyon*" does not have embarrassment. The accepted opinion is that any poor person may be given money on *Purim*.⁵³ Some say a poor person in this regard, means one who does not have a steady salary and cannot support his family.⁵⁴ Others say that one since it is not common to find a person who does not have money for a *seuda*, one can give for *hachnasas kallah*, health etc.⁵⁵ A son who is being supported by his parents is not a poor person and one cannot give him *matanas l'evyonim*.⁵⁶ There is a discussion in the *poskim* whether a husband and wife can qualify as two separate people in regard to *matanas l'evyonim*.⁵⁷

⁴⁴ Moadei Yeshurin page 83:footnote 240. See Kaf Ha'chaim 694:18 who argues. Some performed the *mitzvah* right after *Shacharis* (Toras Chaim page 108, Darchei Chaim V'Sholom 849).

⁴⁵ Refer to Teshuvos V'hanhugos 1:404, see Mikadesh Yisroel 194.

⁴⁶ Lekutei Maharich (new) page 727, see Pri Megadim M.Z. 687:3.

⁴⁷ Eishel Avraham Butchatch 4, Piskei Teshuvos 694:footnote 4. Refer to Rivevos Ephraim 2:193 if one can give *mishloach manos* and *matanas l'evyonim* at the same time. See Piskei Shmuos page 126.

⁴⁸ Rivevos Ephraim 6:400:7, see Natei Gavriel page 360:6.

⁴⁹ Magen Avraham 1, Aruch Ha'shulchan 2, Kaf Ha'chaim 15, Halichos Shlomo Moadim pages 340-341. See Natei Gavriel page 380:6. See Piskei Shmuos page 125.

⁵⁰ Machtzis Ha'shekel 1, Biur Halacha "Y'unei." Refer to Yehuda Yaleh 204, 207, Lehoros Nossan 3:38.

⁵¹ Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita, see Halichos Shlomo Moadim 2:page 341:footnote 35, B'orach Tzedaka pages 423-424.

⁵² Some say it is hard to find a true *evyon* today (Moadim V'zemanim 6:106, see Teshuvos V'hanhugos 1:404, 2:352, 3:231, Piskei Shmuos pages 128-129). In regard to giving *Yeshivas* or *tzedaka* organizations see Vayivorech Dovid 1:110.

⁵³ Refer to Aruch Ha'shulchan 694:3, Yismach Yisroel page 124, B'leila Ha'hu page 12 quoting the opinion of Horav Elyashiv Shlita, Piskei Shmuos page 130. The poor people in one's city is first (Opinion of Horav Elyashiv Shlita quoted in Piskei Shmuos page 131, others argue see *ibid* page 132 quoting the opinion of Horav Sheinberg Shlita).

⁵⁴ Halichos Shlomo Moadim 2:page 340:20, Modanei Shlomo page 121, Moadei Yeshurin page 60, Yugel Yaakov page 333, Orchos Rabbeinu 3:page 49. See Mikadesh Yisroel 206, Piskei Shmuos page 132.

⁵⁵ Opinion of Horav Elyashiv Shlita quoted in Piskei Shmuos page 133. See *ibid* quoting the opinions of Horav Chaim Kanievesky Shlita and Horav Wosner Shlita who seem to argue.

⁵⁶ Shalmei Moed page 278.

⁵⁷ Refer to Aruch Ha'shulchan 2.

Using a Messenger

There is no need for one to hand the money to the poor person by himself, rather he may use a messenger for this purpose.⁵⁸ The *Aruch Ha'shulchan*⁵⁹ says one can appoint a messenger before *Purim* to give for him on *Purim*.

Giving Money to Poor People in Eretz Yisroel

Recently it has become the custom to give to poor people in *Eretz Yisroel*. What happens is that whatever pledges are given in America someone in *Eretz Yisroel* lays out the money until he is reimbursed. According to the view of the *Aruch Ha'shulchan* mentioned above it would seem that one is not *yotzei* since the messenger was not made on *Purim*. Nonetheless, the custom is to be lenient.⁶⁰

Money to Rabbbeim

The *Aruch Ha'shulchan*⁶¹ maintains that one should give money on *Purim* to all people who are involved in *klei kodesh*. When giving money to *Rabbbeim* etc one is not *yotzei* the *mitzvah* of *matanas l'evyonim*.⁶² One can use *masser* money for this purpose.⁶³

Mochel

If the poor person said that he is *mochel* the money, the giver was not *yotzei* the *mitzvah* of *matanas l'evyonim*.⁶⁴

Day or Night

The main time to give *matanas l'evyonim* is on the day of *Purim* and not the night before,⁶⁵ one who gave it at night was *yotzei* according to

some *poskim*.⁶⁶ If one will be giving to more than one person then one may give the *matanas l'evyonim* at night as well.⁶⁷ When groups come collecting at night after the *Purim seuda* there is no *mitzvah* of *matanas l'evyonim* at that time. Giving to them is still a *mitzvah* of *tzedaka*.⁶⁸ One should give the *matanas l'evyonim* before *shekiah* on *Purim* day.⁶⁹

Different Time Zones

When money is distributed by people in America for poor people in *Eretz Yisroel* it is very often done when it is early morning in *Eretz Yisroel* and at night in America. It is unclear why this is permitted.⁷⁰ It could be that the permissibility of this would depend on the question if one is allowed to give *matanas l'evyonim* before *Purim*.⁷¹ If an American who observes *Purim* on the fourteenth gives money to a Jew in *Eretz Yisroel* who observes *Purim* on the fifteenth, he has fulfilled his obligation if the poor person still has the money in his possession on the fifteenth.⁷²

Forgiving a Debt

If a poor person owes money, one is not *yotzei* the *mitzvah* of *matanas l'evyonim* if he is *mochel* the debt and does not give him other money for *Purim*.⁷³

⁵⁸ *Aruch Ha'shulchan* 694:2, *B'leila Ha'hu* pages 13-14, *Mikadesh Yisroel* 210, *Natei Gavriel* page 362:9.

⁵⁹ 694:2.

⁶⁰ *Journal of Halacha and Contemporary Society* 31:page 68, *Piskei Shmuos* page 144 quoting the opinion of *Horav Korelitz Shlita*.

⁶¹ 694:4.

⁶² *Natei Gavriel* page 374:7.

⁶³ *Mikadesh Yisroel* 224.

⁶⁴ *Natei Gavriel* page 372:footnote 9.

⁶⁵ *Biur Halacha l'shnei*.

⁶⁶ Opinion of *Horav Moshe Feinstein zt"l* quoted in *B'leila Ha'hu* page 13, see *Rivevos Ephraim* 2:189:22.

⁶⁷ *Mishnah Berurah* 695:22, *Sheilas Rav* page 402:11.

⁶⁸ *Mikadesh Yisroel* 192.

⁶⁹ *Mikadesh Yisroel* 225.

⁷⁰ However, the custom is to be lenient (*Horav Yisroel Belsky Shlita*).

⁷¹ *Journal of Halacha and Contemporary Society* 31:page 69, see *Yugel Yaakov* page 331.

⁷² *Journal of Halacha and Contemporary Society* *ibid*:page 70. See *Teshuvos V'hanugos* 2:352,

⁷³ *Bais Avi* 4:62, *Be'er Sarim* 2:23:10, *Moadei Yeshurin* page 60 quoting the opinion of *Horav Moshe Feinstein zt"l*, *Shalmei Moed* page 280, *Modanei Shlomo* page 120, *Halichos Shlomo Moadim* page 342:24, *Rivevos Ephraim* 5:456, *Piskei Shmuos* page 140.

Knowing Who Gave the Money

In many cases when one give money to a poor person on *Purim* it is done through the mail. The *poskim* address the question if the poor person has to know who sent him the money.

The opinion of the *poskim* is that the poor person does not need to know who is giving the money and the giver is *yotzei* in any case.⁷⁴

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⁷⁴ Opinion of Horav Moshe Feinstein zt"l quoted in Moadei Yeshurin page 60, Mikadesh Yisroel 202, Rivevos Ephraim 4:172, Sheilas Rav page 402:14, Shevet Ha'kehusi 5:120:1, see Lev Avraham 65 who argues. Refer to Teshuvos V'hanugos 1:404.