

# PURIM

RABBI TZVI YAAKOV STEIN

## PARSHAS ZACHOR

- ✦ There is a disagreement among the poskim whether women are required to hear Parshas Zachor. However, the minhag has become that women are careful to hear it.<sup>1</sup> Some poskim say it is sufficient for a woman to read it from a Chumash. This can be relied on when it is difficult for a woman to go to Shul<sup>2</sup>.
- ✦ Everyone listening must have in mind to be yotzei with the ba'al korei.<sup>3</sup>
- ✦ One who missed hearing Parshas Zachor can be yotzei during the summer when hearing Parshas Ki Seitzei.<sup>4</sup>
- ✦ Some poskim say one can be yotzei with Krias Hatorah of Purim morning.<sup>5</sup>
- ✦ Is it recommended to hear Parshas Zachor in the same pronunciation that one normally uses.<sup>6</sup>

## MACHATZIS HASHEKEL

- ✦ The minhag is to give a half-shekel before Purim as a remembrance of the half-shekel given in the times of the Beis Hamikdash.<sup>7</sup>
- ✦ Since the word “terumah—donation” is mentioned three times in the parshah, the minhag is to give three half-shekalim.<sup>8</sup>
- ✦ The half-shekel should be a half of whichever currency is normally used in that place. (In the U.S., half a dollar.)<sup>9</sup>
- ✦ It's preferable not to say, “This money is for Machatzis Hashekel,” or “This money is a remembrance for the Machatzis Hashekel.”<sup>10</sup>
- ✦ The common minhag is that only men age twenty and up give Machatzis Hashekel.<sup>11</sup>
- ✦ Many poskim say that any male over the age of thirteen should also give.<sup>12</sup>
- ✦ Many have the minhag to give on behalf of women as well.<sup>13</sup>
- ✦ Many have the minhag to give on behalf of children, and even on behalf of unborn children.<sup>14</sup>
- ✦ Once one started being noheg to also give on behalf of any of the above, he must continue giving on their behalf in subsequent years.<sup>15</sup>
- ✦ Since Machatzis Hashekel has become accepted as a requirement, ma'aser money may not be used.<sup>16</sup>

## MISHLOACH MANOS

- ✦ Both men and women are required to give Mishloach Manos.<sup>17</sup>
- ✦ The minimum requirement is to give two portions of food to one person.<sup>18</sup>
- ✦ Each portion should be something substantial. For example, two candies are not sufficient.<sup>19</sup>
- ✦ Many candies, or other unsubstantial items, placed together in a utensil are considered substantial.<sup>20</sup>
- ✦ The two portions should be of different foods.<sup>21</sup>
- ✦ Two portions of different flavors of the same foods are fine.<sup>22</sup>
- ✦ There's no requirement for the two portions to have different brachos.
- ✦ Some poskim say that Mishloach Manos should be preferably be sent with a shaliach but this is not required.<sup>23</sup>
- ✦ If one is giving glass or ceramic utensils along with his Mishloach Manos, they do not need tevilah beforehand. However, the recipient should be notified that the utensils were not yet toiveled.<sup>24</sup>
- ✦ One who is baking baked goods that require hafrashas challah to give for Mishloach Manos, should preferably keep five pounds of the baked goods for themselves to avoid any issue with making a brachah on the hafrashah.<sup>25</sup> If not, then a bracha is still made if it'll be given out after being baked.

## MATANOS L'EVYONIM

- ✦ Both men and woman are required to give Matanos L'evyonim.<sup>26</sup>
- ✦ Children under the age of bar or bas mitzvah are not required to give.<sup>27</sup>
- ✦ The minimum requirement is to give two poor people one present each.<sup>28</sup>
- ✦ The minimum amount to give each one is the cost of a roll and a drink (approximately five dollars total).<sup>29</sup>
- ✦ Ma'aser money may not be used for the minimum required amount (five dollars), but may be used if giving more than required.<sup>30</sup>
- ✦ Purim is a very auspicious day to give tzedakah.<sup>31</sup>
- ✦ It's better to spend more money on Matanos L'evyonim than on Mishloach Manos or the Purim seudah.<sup>32</sup>

- ✦ One should give tzedakah on Purim to everyone, without checking if the one taking is legitimate.<sup>33</sup>
- ✦ Once one's tzedakah money is finished, he need not give any more.

## TA'ANIS ESTHER

- ✦ Ta'anis Esther is more lenient than other fasts.<sup>34</sup>
- ✦ Pregnant and nursing women are not obligated to fast.<sup>35</sup>
- ✦ Showering and listening to music are allowed even according to those poskim that don't allow them on other fast days.<sup>36</sup>
- ✦ One who will be sick on Purim if he fasts is not obligated to fast.<sup>37</sup>
- ✦ Shabbos clothing should be worn for the reading of the Megillah.<sup>38</sup>
- ✦ Eating<sup>39</sup> and sleeping<sup>40</sup> are prohibited before hearing the Megillah.
- ✦ Those who are not fasting must stop eating at sunset.
- ✦ One who is feeling weak can taste a little food or (non-alcoholic) drink before hearing the Megillah.<sup>41</sup>
- ✦ Women may eat a small amount and drink before hearing the Megillah.<sup>42</sup>
- ✦ If one is permitted to eat, he should appoint someone else to remind him to hear the Megillah.<sup>43</sup>

## MEGILLAH

- ✦ Al Hanissim should be said after Modim in Shemoneh Esrei.<sup>44</sup> If it was omitted, Shemoneh Esrei is not repeated.<sup>45</sup>
- ✦ The more people listening to the Megillah together, the better the performance of the mitzvah is.<sup>46</sup>
- ✦ Private minyanim should not be made for reading the Megillah.<sup>47</sup>
- ✦ If one does not have a shul in which he davens regularly, it is preferable to go to the shul with the most people.<sup>48</sup>
- ✦ Women are also required to hear the Megillah.<sup>49</sup>
- ✦ It is preferable for women to go to shul to hear the Megillah, but not if it will require them to take along children who will disturb.<sup>50</sup>
- ✦ The minhag is to bring children that can sit quietly to hear the Megillah.<sup>51</sup>
- ✦ The reason four pesukim of the Megillah are read by everyone out loud is to make sure that the children stay awake.<sup>52</sup>
- ✦ If a man who already read the Megillah is reading for women, the women should make the brachos themselves.<sup>53</sup>
- ✦ If there are more than ten women listening together,

one woman should make the brachos on behalf of all of them.<sup>54</sup> If there are less than ten women, each woman should make the brachos herself.

- ✦ When reading the Megilla with less than ten men in attendance, the brachah normally recited after the Megillah reading is omitted.<sup>55</sup>
- ✦ One must be very careful to hear every word of the Megillah.<sup>56</sup>
- ✦ If even one word is missed, then the entire Megillah must be heard, or read, again.<sup>57</sup>
- ✦ If one spoke during the Megillah reading, he must go back to hear it again from that point in the Megillah which he spoke and onward.<sup>58</sup>
- ✦ If one "spaced out" during the Megillah reading it is questionable if he was yotzei.<sup>59</sup>
- ✦ Therefore, it is recommended to follow along with the ba'al korei while keeping a finger on the place.
- ✦ If one realizes he missed some words he can quickly read them to himself until he catches up to the ba'al korei. This can be done for up to half of the Megillah.<sup>60</sup>
- ✦ The Megillah may be read standing or sitting.<sup>61</sup>
- ✦ When reading the Megillah for the public, the ba'al korei should stand.<sup>62</sup>
- ✦ The brachos (before and after) should be said while standing.<sup>63</sup> Those that are listening should stand as well.<sup>64</sup>
- ✦ One should not speak until after the last brachah is made.<sup>65</sup>
- ✦ The minhag is for someone to stand on either side of the one reading the Megillah.<sup>66</sup>
- ✦ It is preferable for each person listening to follow along in their own Megillah.<sup>67</sup>
- ✦ After the Megillah reading at night, one should make a seudah.<sup>68</sup> Preferably, this seudah should be dairy.<sup>69</sup>
- ✦ The table should be set, and candles should be lit.<sup>70</sup>
- ✦ It's preferable not to eat or drink before hearing the Megillah by day as well.<sup>71</sup>
- ✦ Drinking (a non-alcoholic drink) before davening to enable one to daven better is permitted.<sup>72</sup>
- ✦ When hearing the brachah of Shehecheyanu on the Megillah reading in the morning, one should have in mind to include the mitzvos of Mishloach Manos, Matanos Levyonim,<sup>73</sup> and the Purim seudah.<sup>74</sup>
- ✦ The tefillin should be kept on until after the Kaddish recited after the Megillah.<sup>75</sup>

## DRINKING

- ✦ It is a mitzvah to drink intoxicating beverages on Purim

until unable to distinguish between baruch Mordechai and arur Haman (Blessed be Mordechai and cursed be Haman).<sup>76</sup>

- ✦ Some poskim say that the mitzvah can be fulfilled by drinking more than one normally drinks and then falling sleep.<sup>77</sup>
- ✦ If one knows that drinking will cause him to be unable to make brachos or daven properly, it is better that he should not drink.<sup>78</sup>
- ✦ If there is a possibility someone may get offended or hurt, it is better not to drink.<sup>79</sup>
- ✦ It is recommended to drink during the meal, but drinking beforehand is also acceptable.<sup>80</sup>
- ✦ Wine is preferred,<sup>81</sup> but any intoxicating drink is fine.<sup>82</sup>
- ✦ One should not drink in one place and have in mind to continue drinking in another place to avoid making separate brachos acharonos. Rather, he should make a brachah achronah in each place.<sup>83</sup>
- ✦ There are three levels of drunkenness: 1) Not being aware of anything. In this case one cannot daven or make brachos etc., 2) Aware but unable to talk clearly. One may not daven in such a state.<sup>84</sup> However, he can say Birchah Hamazon,<sup>85</sup> and if necessary he can be part of a minyan.<sup>86</sup> 3) One who drank more than three ounces of alcohol. If the effects of the alcohol are being felt then davening is prohibited. Otherwise, even davening is permitted.<sup>87</sup>

## SEUDAS PURIM

- ✦ Many have the minhag to eat two seudos, one in the morning and one after Minchah.
- ✦ Both men and women are obligated to eat the seudah.<sup>88</sup>

- ✦ Preferably, bread should be eaten, but in a case of difficulty it is not required.<sup>89</sup>
- ✦ Preferably, meat should be eaten, but chicken is also acceptable. Dairy is not recommended but acceptable.<sup>90</sup>
- ✦ Candles should be lit.<sup>91</sup>
- ✦ It is permitted to eat bread in one place and continue eating in another place as long as a little bit bread is eaten where Birchah Hamazon is said, and as long as 72 minutes have not elapsed without any eating.<sup>92</sup>
- ✦ If one vomits after eating the meal, as long as it was not immediately after eating the meal, he is not required to eat again. He can also say Birchah Hamazon.<sup>93</sup>
- ✦ Al Hanissim should be said during Birchah Hamazon.<sup>94</sup>
- ✦ If Al Hanissim was omitted Birchah Hamazon is not repeated. However, since there is a disagreement among the poskim about this, one should be careful not to forget to say it.<sup>95</sup>
- ✦ Al Hanissim is recited even if the meal concludes after nightfall.<sup>96</sup>
- ✦ If one davened Ma'ariv before saying Birchah Hamazon then Al Hanissim is not said. Therefore, one should make sure to say Birchah Hamazon before Ma'ariv.<sup>97</sup>

## WORK

- ✦ The minhag is to refrain from work unless it is necessary for Purim itself.<sup>98</sup>
- ✦ A non-Jew can do work on behalf of a Jew.<sup>99</sup>
- ✦ It's preferable for construction not to be done on Purim, even if it is being done by a non-Jewish contractor.<sup>100</sup>

