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SCROLL CALL:

May One Hear the Megilla by Electronic Means?

Adapted from a shiur by Rav Eliezer Gewirtzman

ANSWERING THE CALL

One Purim some years ago, I was about to begin the Megilla reading when a man approached and placed a cell phone on the *bima*. He explained that his father lived in a place with no Megilla reading; could he listen to ours by phone?

The Halachot Ketanot (2:276) discusses the case of a man reading the Megilla inside a cave while another man some distance from the cave listens to the echo. He rules that the echo is not the voice of the reader, and the listener does not fulfill the mitzva. In a parenthetical note, the publisher observes that the same logic would apply to hearing the Megilla by phone. This inference is echoed by the Maharsham in Da'at Torah (O.C. 689).

Minchat Elazar (2:72) is inclined to say that mitzvot other than shofar—where the Mishna (Rosh Hashana 3:7) specifically excludes hearing an echo because one must hear the shofar directly—can be fulfilled telephonically. Neta Sha'ashuim (4), a disciple of the Minchat Elazar, rejects the view of the Halachot Ketanot, because he maintains that a phone transmits the speaker's actual voice. He further says that his teacher, the Minchat Elazar, only prohibited hearing shofar by phone because phone audio quality in his time was very poor.

It would seem that with digital communication, like cellular phones or some landlines, these authorities would agree that what the listener hears is not the speaker's voice and no

possibility of mitzva fulfillment exists.

R' Tzvi Pesach Frank in Mikra'ay Kodesh (Megilla 11) cites a different responsum of the Halachot Ketanot (2:45) where he says the hearing impaired may listen to the Megilla with ear trumpets. Asks R' Tzvi Pesach: Doesn't this contradict the ruling of the Halachot Ketanot about the cave? Some answer that the difference lies in the distance that the sound must travel.

But R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (1:9) establishes that the sound that emerges from telephones, microphones, and hearing aids is a new one that cannot be attributed to the speaker. The Tzitz Eliezer agrees in many places, but the Igrot Moshe (O.C. 2:108) and Chazon Ish do not, although R' Moshe permits only reluctantly in case of need. (Their argument in favor would appear to pertain to digital technology as well.) Some posit that a hearing aid wearer who can hear minimally without assistance, and uses the devices only for amplification, can fulfill mitzvat with a hearing aid. If he can position himself near enough to the *ba'al koray* that he could hear at least something unassisted, he should do so to avoid the Halachic controversy.

One who is reading only for a hearing aid-dependent person should do so without a *bracha*. One who must hear the Megilla by phone should also not make a *bracha*. R' Moshe holds that a telephone is inferior to a microphone or hearing aid due to the distance the signal must traverse.

One may not taste food at night until after Megilla, unlike other mitzvot that only prohibit a full meal prior to their fulfillment. Maran rules that if one cannot hold out fasting that long, it is better that he read as early as *plag haMincha*—1.25 Halachic hours before sunset—than eat something before reading. The Pri Chadash disagrees, saying that the Megilla must not be read before *tzait hakochavim* (the emergence of the stars) under any circumstances.

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Adapted from a Parasha & Halacha Shiur by Rav Yosef Greenwald on Parashat Tzav

A Matter of Taste

The *Halacha* is that forbidden food that is absorbed in a mixture forbids the entire mixture (within a set of rules and limitations). This rule is known as "*Ta'am K'Ikar*" – a taste is like the entity itself. Maran (Y.D. 98) follows many *Rishonim* who hold that this rule is *MiD'Oraita*. Rashi (Hullin 97b) says it is generally *D'Rabanan* except for *Kodashim*. *MiD'Oraita*, it is *Battel B'Rov* (nullified in a majority).

Rashi and the Ra'avad argue that if *Ta'am K'Ikar* were to be *MiD'Oraita*, then, if less than a *KaZayit* of non-kosher meat dissolves into a soup and is not *Battel B'Shishim* (there is no sixty in the soup to nullify it) one is *Hayav* for eating a *KaZayit* of the soup on its own right, as the soup now becomes a non-kosher entity. However, most *Rishonim* maintain that non-kosher taste is not nullified because of its importance.

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GENERAL HALACHA

Matanot La'Evyonim FAQ's

By Rav Mordechai Lebhav, Posek for the SHC and Rosh Kollel LINK, Los Angeles



Q: How much do I have to give for Matanot La'Evyonim?

A: Ribbi Yaakov Haim Benaim, one of the great sages of Morocco in the 18th century, in his work *Zera Yaakov* (§11) is the common source quoted regarding this question. Following a lengthy discussion, he finds support in the commentary of the *Ran* in *Masechet Megila* (*Perek Megila Nikret*) that distinguishes between *Mishloah Manot* and *Matanot La'Evyonim*, that while we need to send two items for *Mishloah Manot*, even one gift suffices for *Matanot La'Evyonim* since to a poor person that is enough to gladden him. Therefore, reasons Rabbi Benaim, that just as for *Mishloah Manot* we give items that are fit for a meal, so too for *Matanot La'Evyonim* we should give a gift that can be used toward a meal. This amount is universally accepted by the *Poskim* as enough to buy 150 grams of bread.

The *Hida* in *Mahzik Beracha* (§694) quotes the *Zera Yaakov*, and this seems to be the accepted practice. Hacham Ben Tzion Aba Shaul ztz"l in *Ohr L'Tzion* (Vol. IV Ch. 58), rules that although the minimum amount for *Matanot La'Evyonim* is a *Peruta* (the minimal *Halachic* monetary amount) as the *Ritva* (*Megila* 7) writes; nevertheless, since this amount is negligible, one should not give less than an amount that one can buy a *Se'uda*. This is the prevalent custom.

Hacham Ovadia Yosef ztz"l in *Hazon Ovadia* (*Hilchot Purim* pg. 167) also follows the *Zera Yaakov* (Hacham Ovadia was quoted as saying that the amount should be "enough to buy himself a *Falafel*").

The *Ohr L'Tzion* (*ibid*) points out that despite the fact that one can technically fulfill the *Mitzvah* with a small amount, if however, the person receiving is an important person, such as a *Talmid Hacham*, one should be careful to give a honorable sum that would not embarrass them. If one does not have this amount of money to give, he should find another poor person that would accept this small sum.

It should be noted, that if one gives a sum to the Rabbi or another messenger to give *Matanot La'Evyonim* on his behalf and he gives an amount from the collective amount collected, and this indeed is a proper sum, this concern would be avoided.

Similarly, Rav Elyashiv ztz"l has been quoted many times saying that one who wishes to fulfill the *Mitzvah* in the most proper fashion should give an amount that is sufficient to make a poor person happy, as this is the essence of the *Mitzva*. This amount is relative. If this is difficult for a person, Rav Elyashiv suggests that it is preferable to give two important donations than many small donations.

Although this is not the common practice, one who wishes to be stringent in this *Mitzva* is praiseworthy. As the Rambam writes (*Mishne Torah, Hil. Hanuka U'Megila* 2:17):

"One should rather spend more money on gifts to the poor than on his Purim banquet and presents to friends. No joy is greater and more glorious than the joy of gladdening the hearts of the poor, the orphans, the widows and the strangers. He who gladdens the hearts of these unhappy people imitates G-d, as it is written: I am...to revive the spirit of the humble, and to put heart into the crushed."

Furthermore, one who gives *Matanot La'Evyonim* to a *Talmid Hacham* fulfills another very important concept of "*Gadelehu MiShel Ehav*" – just as there is a *Mitzva* to elevate a *Kohen Gadol* by means of financial support, so too there is a *Mitzva* to elevate a *Talmid Ha-*

cham by ensuring that he is comfortable.

Q: Does the household have to know that one is giving Matanot La'Evyonim on their behalf?

A: When the head of the household gives *Matanot La'Evyonim* on behalf of his wife and children, the *Poskim* discuss whether they have to be aware that the money is given on their behalf or whether the fact that he is *Mezake* (benefiting) them with the *Mitzva*, should be enough to consider as though they have fulfilled their obligation themselves.

There are instances where one is able to give money on behalf of someone else despite the fact that they are not aware of the giver's intentions, as the *Gemara* in *Ketubot* (98) discusses regarding the giving of the *Mahatzit HaShekel* for someone that one has vowed not to derive pleasure from. However, the *Netivot HaMishpat* (cf *Teshuvot Hemdat Shelomo* 32) writes that this is only with regards to the *Mitzva* of *Shekalim*, where the *Mitzva* is that every Jew should have a *Shekel* given on his account, however, a *Mitzva* that is incumbent on a person to do with his own body (*Hovat HaGuf*) such as *Pidyon HaBen*, cannot be fulfilled through the agency of someone else.

Subsequently, with regards to the *Mitzva* of *Matanot La'Evyonim*, where the *Mitzva* has to be done by one's self, one would have to have the knowledge that the *Mitzva* is being done for them (see *Shevut Yitzhak, Purim* 8). Furthermore, Rav Elyashiv ztz"l is quoted as saying that since *Matanot La'Evyonim* are given from the person's money, one has to consent to the giving, otherwise it is not considered as they have fulfilled their obligation.

Q: Who is considered to be a poor person?

A: Maran and the commentaries on the *Shulchan Aruch* (*Yore De'a* 253) define a poor person as one who has overbearing expenses of the basics needed to support his family, and is struggling to make ends meet without a stable salary that can cover these expenses.

If a person lives in a place where there are no poor people, one can appoint a messenger who will be in a place on *Purim* where there are poor people and give him some money to be distributed on *Purim*.

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Still, it doesn't turn the kosher entity into non-kosher on its own right, and thus one is only *Hayav* if he eats a *KaZayit* of the actual non-kosher meat (although eating any amount of the soup is still forbidden).

There are certain *stringencies* unique to *Hametz* on *Pessah* beyond the regular rules.

Hametz is *Assur B'Mashehu* (forbidden in any amount, even 1:60) if it is mixed on *Pessah* with non-*Hametz*.

Yavesh B'Yavesh (a mixture of two dry items) – Even if it got mixed before *Pesach*, is *Assur B'Mashehu*.

Two pots, usually do not transfer taste from one to the other, but on *Pessah* we are strict.

Noten Ta'am LiFgam (when the non-kosher taste is not beneficial to the food) – if food was cooked in a pot more than 24 hours after it was used for non-kosher, we usually permit it. This is true even on *Pessah*, according to *Maran*. However, the *Rama* forbids it

MATTERS OF INTEREST

AVISSAR FAMILY RIBBIT AWARENESS INITIATIVE

A Ride to a Wedding

A few friends are seeking a ride to a wedding. If the driver happens to owe money to any of them, may he offer the lender a ride?

May he give the lender preference over other people if there isn't enough room for everyone?

The driver is allowed to give the lender a ride, since he probably would have done so regardless of the loan. If he is not friends with the



lender, he would not be allowed to do so.

It is quoted in the name of Rav Elyashiv z"l that if he is friends with the lender, he may even give him preference over the others if there is not enough room for everyone, provided he is not doing it because of the loan rather out of friendship.

HALACHOT OF DAILY LIVING

Topics From The Gerald & Karin Feldhamer Ou Kosher Halacha Yomis

Laws related to Berachot

Are women obligated to recite one hundred Berachot daily?

Many *Poskim* write that women are exempt from this *Mitzvah*. As evidence, the *Shevet HaLevi* (5:23) points out that the *Rishonim* who list the hundred *Berachot* recited each day include the *Berachos* that are recited on *Tallit* and *Tefillin*. Since women do not recite these *Berachos*, this would indicate that these *Rishonim* did not consider this obligation to apply to women. *Teshuvot V'Hanhagot* (2:129) adds that since the one hundred *Berachot* must be recited each day, according to some opinions this qualifies the *Mitzvah* as a time-bound obligation, which women are not required.

Is there a Beracha that should be recited on a hurricane?

Maran in *Shulhan Aruch* (OH 227:1) writes one may recite either *Oseh Ma'ase Bereshit* or *Shekoho U'Gvurato Male Olam* for thunder, lightning or "great winds that blow with rage". Common practice is to recite *Oseh Ma'ase Bereshit* for lightning (this *Beracha* speaks



of the wonders of creation), and *Shekoho U'Gvurato Male Olam* for thunder (this *Beracha* refers to the awesome power of *Hashem*) [Some Sepharadim have the custom not to recite these *Berachot* with a *Shem U'Malchut*.]

The *Mishna Berura* also writes that the blessing of *Shekoho U'Gvurato Male Olam* - "That His power and strength fills the world" is only said on a wind that howls with such intensity that it can be heard across the world (until the horizon), similar to thunder. Since we are not proficient in delineating what exactly is a "wind that blows with rage", we do not recite this blessing. Instead, we recite the blessing of *Oseh Ma'ase Bereshit*. Although a hurricane would seemingly qualify as "a wind that blows with rage" the custom is to avoid the issue by always reciting *Oseh Ma'ase Bereshit* which can be recited on any dangerous gust of wind.

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What if a doctor will be in surgery until late at night and will have great difficulty fasting until after a very late Megilla reading? According to the Magen Avraham, rather than hearing Megilla early, he should eat a snack to tide him over, even though he hasn't yet heard the Megilla. Because, as we have seen, hearing the Megilla from the hospital by phone would be problematic, this would be a better option.

Nursing home residents who won't be awake after *tzait* should hear Megilla after *plag haMincha*.

A Happy Purim to all.

EVENTS & HAPPENINGS

AT THE BAIS HAVAAD



Bet HaVaad Medical Halacha Center Hosts Well-Attended Symposium For Rabbanim

On Monday, March 11, Close to 70 local *Rabbanim* attended a seminar at the Bet HaVaad Medical Halacha Center. The program began with a shiur from Rav Shmuel Felder, *shlita*, senior *Posek* in Bais Medrash Govoha, followed by esteemed local periodontist, R' Manis Berger, who spoke about modern dental procedures and oral applications, and the related *Halachic* issues. Then, after an introduction by Rav Yosef Fund *shlita*, *Posek* in BMG and one of the Medical Halacha Center's leading *Halachic* authorities, to the topic of "General Medical Devices: Practical Presentation & Implications of Assorted Medical Devices" an extremely informative PowerPoint was presented by Rabbi Daniel Roth MD, member of the Medical Halacha Center and Co-author of *Sefer Refuat Yisrael*.

When the Plaintiff is in Cleveland, the Defendant is in Florida.

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