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STORIES OF GREATNESS
TOLD OVER BY: TZVI GRUSHKO

All the Jews of Berditchev, Hired by the local duke, the along with many visitors, bandits had come to collect a streamed toward the home of new Jewish bargaining chip. Rabbi Levi Yitzchak. Baila, They weren't picky; the first an orphan adopted by Rabbi person they found would Levi Yitzchak and his wife, suffice. Amidst the panic and was marrying an exceptional confusion, nobody bothered young man who was also to check on the groom, who parentless. Well-wishers was swaying in deep prayer. kept the door swinging on its It was his wedding day, his hinges and the wooden table personal Yom Kippur, and strained under the weight of the young man wanted to the gifts. Rabbi Levi appropriately prepare for the Yitzchak and his wife strug- moment. Engrossed in medi- gled to properly thank the tation, he didn't hear the crowds. Even the renowned screams, the resultant clamor Rabbi Mendel of Vitebsk, a to escape, nor the bang of the dear friend of Rabbi Levi door as the duke's men burst Yitzchak, came to convey into the synagogue. The men his blessings of mazal tov. It grabbed the groom-to-be, was a joyous occasion for threw him onto a horse, and all. Amid the din of the cele- thundered triumphantly past bration, no one heard the shuttered homes. Their faint clapping, which slowly reward was waiting at the grew louder and more ag- estate. Afterwards, people gressive, until the shelves slowly emerged. Who was it and tables rattled and shook. this time? A nervous count A hysterical scream con- was conducted, and the firmed the worst. "Run! groom's absence discovered. Hide! Bandits are coming!" The bride sank into throes of despair. The townspeople The townspeople scattered. With an air of familiar resig- watched the wailing young nation, doors slammed, locks woman helplessly. Rabbi slid shut, and the streets Levi Yitzchak, however, emptied. No one wanted to held up a reassuring hand, be the next Jewish martyr.



Nothing Is By Chance
By Dani Sturm, 11th Grade

When Achashverosh asks Haman what Vashti's punishment should be, Haman gives him "good" advice on what to do with her. Additionally, Haman offers advice on how Achashverosh should be making decisions. Why does Haman give Achashverosh this extra advice? All he had to do was answer the question about Vashti. At that time, the king never made a decision or decree without thoroughly discussing the matter at hand with his advisers. The king always gathered his advisers even for seemingly unimportant discussions. Haman sought out to change this norm. Therefore, in addition to helping Achashverosh come to the conclusion of killing Vashti, Haman also suggested that Achashverosh make all decisions on his own, without seeking help from his advisers. (Continued on page 4)

Indestructible Jews
By Menachem Gewirtz, 11th Grade

Being dispersed over 127 provinces and lands, their own land still in ruins, the Jews undoubtedly differed from one another in minhagim, dress, and language. Yet, though there were Jews who would conceal their Jewishness, Haman, the enemy of the Jews, recognized the essential qualities and characteristics of the Jews which made all of them, into "one people." In Haman's eyes, the Jewish people as a whole were distinct in that they observed different laws and customs than their fellow Persians. Therefore, in his decree to annihilate the Jews, Haman sought to destroy "all the Jews, young and old, children and women."

Across the spectrum of Jews, from those who strictly adhered to (Continued on page 4)

Megilla Teasers

By Rabbi Moshe Erlbaum,
9th Grade Rebbe
Questions

1. What unit of measurement is applied to only one object in the entire Torah?
2. Which stone of the High Priest's breastplate is a name of a country found in the Prophets?
3. Which term is used for the first time in this parsha to distinguish segments of the Jewish people?
4. Which item described in parshas Terumah has to be "constantly present"?

Answers

1. A zeret, which measures a half-cubit, is the length and width of the breastplate of the High Priest (Exodus 28:17). This measurement is not used for any other object in the Torah.
2. The first stone on the fourth row is called tarshish (Exodus 28:20). The country of Tarshish is referenced many times in the Bible, most notably when the prophet Jonah attempts to evade prophecy by traveling on a ship headed to Tarshish (Jonah 1:3).
3. In this parsha, the word shevet ("tribe") is used for the first to describe segments of the Jewish people (Exodus 28:21).
4. The showbread is always on the golden table in the Tabernacle (Exodus 25:30).

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hitches, celebrated with utmost joy. As the festivities began to wind down, he called for Reb Gedaliah.... "Tomorrow, stop near the bridge spanning the river and wait by the bank." "I promised you a reward in this world, so follow my instructions: Tomorrow, stop near the bridge spanning the river and wait by the bank." And indeed, the next day Reb Gedaliah found some trees near the riverbank below the bridge and settled in to wait. Through the bridge's wooden slats, his eyes followed some overloaded wagons rumbling overhead. Then something caught his eye. It was the duke pressed down on his horse, racing for the bridge.

In a flurry of hooves—and it all happened so fast—the horse and its rider barely reached the bridge's center when one of the wooden slats splintered into pieces. Horse and rider plunged into turbulent river and disappeared. Reb Gedaliah stood as close as he dared, waiting for the duke to reappear. But all he saw was a small wooden box, floating on the river's currents. Reb Gedaliah opened it. Inside were his ten thousand rubles, along with jewelry—which he gifted to the newly married couple.

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turning from the merchants' fairs of Jaroslav, Poland, certainly wasn't expecting to see two of the country's most prominent rabbis standing at the edge of the road. Of course, it was his pleasure to offer them a ride in his well appointed coach. Settling into the upholstered leather seat, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak asked, "How were your affairs in Jaroslav?" "Thank G-d," said Reb Gedaliah, grinning. "I've earned ten thousand rubles. Oh wait, here's something for the poor..." He rummaged through his pockets and produced a heavy pouch. "Here's ten percent of what I made. There should be a thousand inside." "Bless you for your kindness," said Rabbi Levi Yitzchak. "However, we need ten thousand rubles to redeem a prisoner. If you're willing to provide that sum, I promise you'll have a share of my World to Come." Reb Gedaliah didn't hesitate and immediately handed over the full sum. "Now," said Rabbi Levi Yitzchak, "not only will you be rewarded in the World to Come, but you will be rewarded in this world as well. Please tell your driver to direct the coach to the duke's estate." The rabbis found the duke exactly where they'd left him, except this time he was sleeping. Rabbi Levi Yitzchak shook him awake. The duke greeted them with curses. "I have your money. Ten thousand rubles, as promised." The duke cocked a bloodshot eye at the pouch. Scarcely believing his good fortune, he reached for the money and barked at his servants to free the young man. Escorted by a guard, the groom appeared shaken but otherwise unhurt. Tearfully, he thanked G-d with a small prayer. "We still have enough time for the chuppah," said Rabbi Levi Yitzchak. And true to his word, the wedding proceeded without any further

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(Aliyah Summary- Continued from page 3)

two birds, and a pauper brought a meal offering.

7th aliyah- This aliyah concludes the laws of the Korban Oleh Viyored. We then move on to the last karban discussed in this week's parsha, the "Guilt Offering," the Asham karban. Three types of Asham karbanos are discussed: a) an Asham brought by one who inadvertently steal mishkan property. b) An Asham brought by one who falsely swears regarding money owed to another. (In addition to bringing a sacrifice, these two individuals must repay the principal amount, and pay a fine equal to one fourth of the principal.) c) An Asham brought by a person who is uncertain whether he violated a Torah issur.

Adapted from DRS Alumnus Moshe Strauss

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looking unruffled by the panic around him. "Please calm down," he requested. "I promise we will get him back and you will still celebrate your wedding today." His words managed to instill some quiet, and the bride sat to catch her breath. True to his word, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak immediately set out for the duke's estate, accompanied by his friend Rabbi Mendel. Wearing their silk Shabbat finery, the rabbis strolled unperturbed, as though merely out for a pleasant walk. When they arrived at the handsome, gated estate, they strode past the guards without a second glance. No one attempted to stop them. Even the guard dogs didn't bark. Through the corridors and past countless rooms the rabbis walked, until they found the duke himself, rolling on the floor of his office, drunk. Unlike his staff, the duke greeted his unexpected company with the appropriate outrage. "What are you vile Jews doing here?" he roared. "How did you even get into my house?" Rabbi Levi Yitzchak didn't flinch. "We've come to ask you to kindly return the young man you've kidnapped. Today is his wedding." "A bribe?" the duke cackled. "Is this what it is? You've come to bribe me, but I won't have it! Even if you offered five thousand rubles, I wouldn't take the money!" Rabbi Levi Yitzchak leaned close to the duke. "What if we give you ten thousand?" he whispered. "Bring this sum," said the duke, "and I'll release him. But remember! Nothing less than ten thousand or you'll be seeing the door instead of the young man." The rabbis left the estate clinging to a sliver hope, but they had no idea how to procure such an immense amount sum.

A coach suddenly appeared, seemingly out of nowhere, and came to an abrupt stop near the rabbis. The door swung opened and a richly clad man held out his hand, inviting the rabbis to join him. Reb Gedaliah, who was just re-

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Aliyah Summary

By: **Avi Kwestel**

1st aliyah- Hashem calls out to Moshe from the mishkan and teaches him the halachos of the karban Olah. This aliyah discusses the halachos of the cattle, sheep, or goat Olah.

2nd aliyah- Hashem then teaches Moshe the halachos of the bird Olah. This aliyah then continues with a description of three types of voluntary meal karbanos: unbaked flour, baked loaves, and the shallow-fried meal offering. All voluntary meal karbanos also contained olive oil and frankincense (a smell given from burnt incense).

3rd aliyah- The Torah describes the last type of voluntary meal offerings- the Omer offering, brought on the second day of pesach. Hashem instructs the Jews to add salt to every animal karban or meal karban, a symbol of our everlasting "salt bris" with Hashem. We are also commanded not to include any items with dough, or anything which contains honey in any קרבנות

4th aliyah- The "Peace Offering," the Shelamim karban, is described in this Aliyah. The Shelamim- which could be brought from cattle, sheep, or goats- was brought on the mizbeach, which consumed some of the animal's fats, and the Kohanim and the person bringing the קרבן would get the meat. The aliyah ends with the issurim against eating blood and the specific fats which were offered on the mizbeach. These issurim apply to all animals, even those not offered in the mishkan.

5th aliyah- We now begin learning about the "Sin Offering," the Chatas karban, brought by an individual who is guilty of inadvertently doing a sin. This section discusses the unique Chatas brought by a Kohen Gadol who sins, by the Sanhedrin, who issues a wrong ruling which causes the people to sin, and a king who sins.

6th aliyah- The Torah discusses the fourth and final type of Chatas, that of a common person who sins. Also discussed is the Korban Oleh Viyored, brought by an individual guilty of certain specific sins. The Korban Oleh Viyored depended on the financial position of the transgressor — a wealthy person brought a sheep or goat, a person of lesser means brought

(Aliyah Summary- Continued on page 10)

(Dani Sturm — Continued from page 1)

Furthermore, Haman told Achashverosh that every man should be "in charge" of their respective home.

Everything said in the Megillah is, in one way or another, connected to the miracle of Purim. If Haman did not make these two suggestions to Achashverosh, the whole series of events may have changed. Esther may not have become Queen and Haman himself may not have been hanged.

Just as an example as to how drastically things could have changed, I will bring you to the time when Achashverosh was looking for a new spouse. After Achashverosh decided to execute Vashti, he began a search for his new queen. When his officers arrived at Mordechai's house, they asked for Esther. If it wasn't for the rule that each man be in charge of his home, Mordechai could have told them, "I don't know where Esther is. She left without my permission and did not say when she would come back." Because of Haman's new decree, Mordechai was incapable of hiding Esther. He had to reveal her, and consequently, she was forced to come to Achashverosh and eventually become his queen.

Charvonah told Achashverosh that Haman made gallows to hang Mordechai on. After hearing this, Achashverosh said to hang Haman on these gallows. Haman then tried to reply that before you hang me, there must be a trial and meeting between the officers and decide if I am guilty. Achashverosh then told Haman, it was you who advised that 'yeitzei devar malchus milefanav', 'the King should make decisions on his own and no one can appeal them.' Eventually, Haman was hanged on his own gallows. It was only because Haman's selfish requests that Esther became queen and that he was hanged on the gallows that he made.

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A: The Mikor Chaim on Shulchan Aruch (*siman 694 sief 3*) says there are two types of poor people: the *ani* and the *evyon*. The *ani* is embarrassed to ask for money, but the *evyon* is so poor that he is not even embarrassed to ask. So, since *matanos l'evyonim* uses the word *evyon*, the poor person should be an *evyon* who is so poor that he is not embarrassed to ask for money.

A2: The Aruch HaShulchan (*siman 694 sief 3*) says even though there is normally a difference between an *ani* and an *evyon*, the reason why the mitzvah is called *matanos l'evyonim* is to teach that even if a person does not initiate giving *tzedakah* but someone else comes to that person to ask for money, a person still fulfills his obligation because it says *matanos l'evyonim* who are people who are not embarrassed to ask for money. So, the *mitzvah* really includes both the *ani* and the *evyon*.

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(Menachem Gewirtz — Continued from page 1)

the Torah, to those who sought to assimilate themselves, none could escape the classification of belonging to that "one people," under Haman's cruel

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is brought down in the Sefer Or Hara'ayon that our sages established here a powerful and remarkable principle: the point is not that one should drink until he becomes confused and says, "Cursed be Mordechai," G-d Forbid. Rather, he should understand that there is no difference between blessing Mordechai and cursing Haman, between blessing the righteous man and cursing the evil one. Both are mitzvot. It is a mitzvah to fight and curse the evildoer precisely the same way it is a mitzvah to bless the righteous man. On Purim, one should not hesitate to curse and hate Haman, because this mitzvah is exactly like blessing a righteous man. The two are equal.

In Megillah 28a, "Rebbe asked R. Yehoshua ben Karcha, 'How have you lived so long?' and the latter replied, 'I never gazed at an evil man's face for R. Yochanan said it is forbidden.'" Following are the words of Rabbenu Bachaye in the Kad HaKemach (Ga'avah): "The fear of the L-rd is to hate evil, pride and arrogance and the evil way" (Prov. 8:13): In this verse, Wisdom is speaking, teaching that whoever possesses the fear of G-d will hate the evildoer. "Hating evil" means hating "the man of evil," just as "va'ani tefillah" (Ps. 109:4), literally, "I am prayer," really means, "I am a man of prayer."

If someone is an evildoer, it is a mitzvah to hate him. As King David said, "Do I not hate them, O L-rd, who hate You?" (ps. 139:21) and King Solomon said, "They that forsake the law praise the wicked, but such as keep the law contend with them" (Prov. 28:4). The righteous man and the evildoer are opposites, one hating the other. Every type loves its own kind and hates its opposite. As King Solomon said, "The men of blood hate him that is sincere" (Ibid., 29:10), and, "He that is upright is an abomination to the wicked" (Ibid., v. 27).

Rabbenu Bachaye brought part of the verse, "An unjust man is an abomination to the righteous, and he that is upright is an abomination to the wicked. " Just as the evildoer abhors the righteous man, so must the righteous man abhor the evildoer.

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fills his obligation because it says *matanos l'evyonim* who are people who are not embarrassed to ask for money. So, the *mitzvah* really includes both the *ani* and the *evyon*.

Q: Can one use money used for his obligation to give *tzedakah* to fulfill the *mitzvah* of *matanos l'evyonim*?

A: The Aruch HaShulchan (*siman 694 sief 4*) says the *mitzvah* of *matanos l'evyonim* is a totally different obligation than giving *tzedakah* and one cannot fulfill his obligation with *tzedakah* money or *maasar kasefim* (a tenth to a twentieth of one's money that goes to *tzedakah*).

Moshe's Humility

Avi Ash, 10th Grade

One of the more puzzling things found in this week's parsha is the fact that the word vayikra is written with a small aleph. This begs the obvious question: why is the word Vayikra written with a small aleph? Is there any significance to the different size of the letter?

The Baal Haturim quotes a Medrash which explains that Moshe wanted the word to read 'vayikar' - Hashem chanced upon Moshe - rather than it read 'vayikra', which would profess Hashem's great love for Moshe. As a means of compromise, we write the whole word with a small aleph. While this does further prove how humble Moshe Rabbeinu was, there are many other times in the Torah where it is evident that Hashem held a great love for Moshe, such as in Parshat Shemot Perek 33:11, where we read that Hashem spoke with Moshe "face to face like someone speaking to their friend".

This seemingly brings about a contradiction. why specifically in our Parsha does Moshe request to downplay his close relationship with Hashem while staying silent in the incident in Parshat Shemot?

One answer given is that this 'vayikra' is different from the previous ones in the Torah. Preceding this 'vayikra', Moshe was spoken to by Hashem as the leader of Bnei Israel, and therefore it seemed normal that he would be specifically called on by Hashem. However, once the Mishkan was built, the Shechina now rested with the entire nation, not just Moshe, and Hashem still called out to only Moshe. For that reason, this 'vayikra' is more revealing than the others, in that it truly shows Hashem's love for Moshe. Moshe, out of humility, did not want his special relationship to be publicized. May we all emulate the humility of Moshe Rabeinu.

Loving God Includes Hating Evil



By Shmuel Klahr, 12th Grade

Whoever mentions an evildoer without cursing him misses out on a Torah commandment - "The name of the wicked shall rot" (Prov. 10:17). Whenever Rav mentioned Haman on Purim he would say, "Cursed be Haman and cursed be his sons," to fulfill the verse from Proverbs. (Bereshit Rabbah 49:1)

In relation to this, it would be fitting to interpret our sages' words from Megillah 7b: "A man is required to become so intoxicated on Purim that he does not know the difference between 'Cursed be Haman' and 'Blessed be Mordechai,'" brought down as law in Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 695:2. However, many have difficulty understanding this utterance. It

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(Menachem Gewirtz - Continued from page 4)

decree. If Haman's sole purpose for seeking to annihilate the Jews was because they were different than their fellow Persians, then why did he pursue a Jewish destruction closer to the Holocaust (that didn't care whether the Jews were assimilated or not) rather than a Spanish Inquisition styled destruction (that left the assimilated Jews alone)?

To answer this question, we must look at the history of the Jews as a nation. Over the course of many centuries and throughout numerous places we have called home, our people have lived under extremely varied conditions. How have we survived? Clearly, it is the one item that has remained unchanged throughout the millennia, the Torah and our observance of Mitzvot. This essential element has united our "dispersed and scattered people" and made us "one people" despite our dispersion and regardless of time.

The Jewish way of life has remained basically the same throughout the ages and in all places. Ahad Ha'am, poet and Zionist ideologue, is quoted as saying, "More than Jews have kept Shabbat, Shabbat has kept the Jews." It has been our stubbornness as a "stiff-necked people" that Moshe highlights as a positive characteristic, that has kept us separate from the other nations, despite their desire to assimilate us. Haman reached the same conclusion; the Jews remained indestructible because the harder the nations tried to separate us from our Torah and the observance of Mitzvot, the stronger the magnetic pull became. The only path to Persian victory was not to try and change the Jews, but to rid Achashverosh's kingdom of "all the Jews, young and old, children and women."

10-Minute Halacha Shiur

Given by
Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz
on yutorah.org

Transcribed by

Matanos L'Evyonim

Q: How important is *matanos l'evyonim*?

A: In Mishneh Torah (Hil. Purim perek 2 halacha 17), Rambam writes that it is better to give more money for *matanos l'evyonim* than spend on *mishloach manot* and *seudah*.

He explains that the greatest expression of *simchas Purim* is by making happy those who need *simcha*. One who does this is comparable to Hashem because Hashem takes it upon Himself to take care of those who need the most help.

Q: Who is obligated in *matanos l'evyonim*?

A: The Mishnah Berurah says that everyone is obligated. However what does everyone mean?

Q: Is a poor person obligated?

A1: The Bach and Taz (*siman* 694) say yes.

A2: The Pri Chadash does not think they are obligated because why should he give *matanos l'evyonim* if he is going to receive them.

The question of the Pri Chadash does not seem to make sense since the Shulchan Aruch says by the mitzvah of *tzedakah* that a poor person is obligated.

A reason for this can be because the mitzvah of *tzedakah* is not just to support people but also to develop the *middah* of being a giver and a poor person is obligated with regards to becoming a person who is a giver. (This is like what Rambam says that a person should give 100 people \$1 each rather than \$100 to 1 person because the more times one gives the more the *middah* of giving becomes ingrained in him.)

Q: Are women obligated?

A1: The Shulchan Aruch (*siman* 695 sief 4) says that women are obligated.

A2: The Mishnah Berurah says that nowadays the *minhag* is that women don't normally give and is exempt with the money given by her husband, and the Shulchan Aruch was talking about a woman that is a widow or divorced who is obligated.

R: The Aruch HaShulchan says that this relates to the concept of *ishto k'gufo* (one's wife is like himself) which explains that a husband can do the *mitzvah* for his wife because it is like he is doing it himself.

Q: Are children that are supported by their parents obligated in *matanos l'evyonim*?

A1: The Aruch HaShulchan (*siman* 694 sief 2) says that a child has a separate obligation of *matanos l'evyonim* from parent.

A2: The Teshuvos Kinyan Torah quotes the Pischay Teshuvos who says that if the child has no source of income besides his parents, the child is not obligated. However, if the child has a source of income besides his parents, he is obligated.

The Pri Megadim says that children under the age of *bar/bas* mitzvah

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10-Minute Halacha Cont'

should be trained to do *matanos l'evyonim* if they have a separate source of income.

Q: How much *matanos l'evyonim* should one give?

A: The Gemara (Megillah 7a) says a person is obligated to give 2 gifts to two different poor people which would be one gift per person.

Q: What amount of money should the *matanos l'evyonim* be?

A1: The Mishnah Berurah (*siman* 694 sief katan 2) quotes Ritvah who says in Megillah (7) that even a small amount to each is enough.

In Chazon Ovadia, R' Ovadia Yosef says that the small amount can be the smallest amount of working currency in a country. So, on an academic level, a penny or a nickel can suffice.

A2: The Maharsha (Megillah 7b) says that a person has to give a significant portion which would be more than a penny or a nickel.

A3: The Shaarei Teshuva quotes the Teshuvos Zereh Yaakov who says that a person has to give to the person an amount of money that can buy food which is equivalent to 3 *beitzim* of bread.

In Tzitz Eliezer, R' Woldenberg says that there were *Poskim* who thought that the *halacha* was like the Teshuvos Zereh Yaakov until they saw the Ritvah quoted by the Mishnah Berurah.

It is important to keep in mind that all of this is academic. Really one should give as much as he is able to and it should be, as stated earlier in the Mishneh Torah, more than the amount spent on *mishloach manos* and *seudah*.

Q: Can someone give to the poor person a non cash gift?

A1: The Teshuvos Kinyan Torah says the gift should only be cash.

A2: In Chazon Ovadia, R' Ovadia Yosef quotes *Poskim* who say that giving anything that can help the poor person is considered *matanos l'evyonim*.

Q: What is considered the best way to give *tzedakah*?

A1: The best way is to give the money in a way that the poor person feels no embarrassment. This can be done by anonymously giving money or gifts.

According to this, the best way to give *matanos l'evyonim* is to do it anonymously.

A2: In Gilyonei Hashas (Gemara Shabbos 10), R' Yosef Engel has a novel *chiddush* where he explains that since the mitzvah is called *matanos l'evyonim* and not *tzedakah l'evyonim* it has to be a *matanah* (present) to the poor person.

There is a *halacha* by a *matanah* that the one receiving it has to know who gave it to him. (For example, if someone gave candy to a child as a *matanah*, he should make sure the child is messy so if his parents ask, "why are you messy," the child will respond so and so gave me a candy and I got sticky because of it.)

According to this, one should give *matanos l'evyonim* where the poor person knows about it.

However, most *Poskim* do not agree with this and the best way to give is when the poor person is not embarrassed.

Q: How poor does the poor person have to be?

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