



## Zecher LeMachsit HaShekel

1. The minhag is to give Zecher LeMachsit HaShekel as charity as a remembrance of the half shekel which was collected in the time of the Bet HaMikdash before Nissan.<sup>1</sup>
2. Some have the minhag to give it before Mincha of Taanit Ester, while some have the minhag to give it after mincha but before reading of the Megillah.<sup>2</sup>
3. One should make sure to call the coins one is giving Zecher LeMachsit HaShekel and not Machsit HaShekel so people don't think it is hekdesch.<sup>3</sup>
4. According to Sephardim, one should give an amount worth 9 grams of pure silver. It's preferable to give it in the form of 3 coins, and if 3 coins are less than 9 grams one should supplement that amount up to the value of 9 grams.<sup>4</sup> The Ashkenazic minhag is to give three coins which are half the value of the common coin in that time and place. In America, the minhag is to give three half dollars, yet some say it's preferable to give coins which have 9 grams of silver.<sup>5</sup>

1. Maasechet Sofrim 21:3 writes that one should give the Machsit HaShekel before parshat zachor. Sh"t HaGeonim (Geonei Mizrach Umaarav 40) writes that those who have the minhag to collect Shekalim are doing improperly because those coins become hekdesch but one may collect tzedaka. Rama 694:1 writes that the minhag is to give Zecher LeMachsit HaShekel before Purim.

2. Rama 694:1 writes that the minhag is to give the Zecher Machsit HaShekel before Mincha of Tanit Ester. Mishna Brurah 694:4 affirms this minhag. Kaf HaChaim 694:25 adds that it should be given on Tanit Ester even if the Tanit is pushed off to the previous Thursday in order to combine the tzedaka with the fast. However, Chazon Ovadyah (Purim pg 101) and Piskei Teshuvot 694:3 write that the minhag is to give it before the reading of the Megillah based on Gemara Megillah that says our shekalim counteract the shekalim of Haman read about in the Megillah. Kitzur S" A 141:5 seems to agree.

3. Maasechet Sofrim 21:3 writes that one shouldn't say one is giving the Machsit HaShekel for atonement but only as a voluntary. Darkei Moshe 694:1 quotes this from the Aggudah. Therefore, Rav Ovadyah in Chazon Ovadyah (Purim pg 101) writes that one shouldn't call it Machsit HaShekel but rather Zecher LeMachsit HaShekel so that people don't think one is making it hekdesch. Rav Schachter (www.yutorah.org "Purim" 7/9/2008, min 1-3) also explained the Darkei Moshe in this way. Shalmei Todah (pg 270) agrees. This is in opposition to Sh"t Divrei Yosef 52 who says that even saying that it is Zecher LeMachsit HaShekel is an issue and against Sh"t Zecher Simcha 76 who writes that it's permitted even to call it Machsit HaShekel.

4. Kaf HaChaim 694:20 writes that the Machsit HaShekel should be evaluated according to the value of a Machsit HaShekel in the days of the Bet HaMikdash and concludes that it is 3 Durhams of silver. Rav Ovadyah in Yalkut Yosef (Zecher LeMachsit HaShekel #2-3) and Chazon Ovadyah (Purim, pg 102) rules that one should give the value of 3 Durhams which is 9 grams of pure silver. A gram of silver currently is about \$1.10 and 9 grams is about \$10. [Even though Rav Mordechai Eliyahu in Maamer

Mordechai (Moadim 63:1), Ish Matzliach 694:4-5, and Rav Ovadyah in Sh"t Yechava Daat 1:86 write that one should give the value of 10 grams, this is only according to the old measurement of the Durham.]

The Kaf HaChaim 694:23 writes that from Rashi's explanation of Chumash only one of the Trumot in the pasuk refer to the Machsit HaShekel. Thus, Gra in Maaseh Rav 233 and Rav Mordechai Eliyahu in Maamer Mordechai (Moadim 63:2) write that there is no reason to give three coins and one coin suffices. However, Chazon Ovadyah (pg 103) writes besides giving the value of 9 grams of silver, it's proper to give 3 coins in accordance of the Rama. Rabbi Mansour ([Daily Halacha 3/15/2011](#)) writes that one should give three half dollars, preferably those minted before 1964, and if those coins are less than the value of 9 grams of silver then one should supplement it so that one gives the value of 9 grams of silver.

5. The Rama 694:1 writes that one should give three coins corresponding to the three times Trumah is mentioned in the parsha. These coins should be half of the regular coin of the time and place. Almost all Ashkenazic achronim including Kitzur S" A 141:5, Aruch HaShulchan 694:8, Biur Halacha D" H VeYesh Litan, and Nitai Gavriel 26:3 accept the Rama as halacha. Halichot Shlomo (Moadim vol 2, 18:9) records Rav Shlomo Zalman's minhag to use 3 half dollars that were minted before 1964. Piskei Teshuvot 694:4 writes that one should be strict for the Kaf HaChaim. (See also Orchot Rabbenu of the Steipler vol 3 pg 51-52, Teshuvot VeHanagot 5:233, and Halichot VeHanagot pg 22 quoting Rav Elyashiv). However, Sh"t Tzitz Eliezer 13:72 argues that giving the value of the Machsit HaShekel in silver is certainly not the intention of the Rama, it's expensive when paying for all family members, and it may cause people to think the money is hekdesch; rather one should give half of the common coin even if it's less than the value of 9 grams of silver. It seems that the minhag is to give 3 half dollars because the dollar in a common currency in America (www.aish.com, www.torah.org, Rav Willig agrees with this opinion).

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