

# Shoel U'Mashiv

## Maos Chitim

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**Q** - How much am I obligated to give for *Maos Chitim*?

**A** - What is *Maos Chitim*?

The *Rema O.C.* 429:1 tells us at the beginning of *Hilchos Pesach* that there is a *Minhag* to buy wheat and distribute it amongst the poor for *Pesach*. The *Mishnah Berurah* 4 says the *Minhag* in Radin was to distribute flour instead of wheat and to give enough to last each family the entire *Pesach*. Essentially, *Maos Chitim* helps ensure that every Jewish person is able to observe *Pesach* properly.

How do we fulfill the *Mitzvah* of *Maos Chitim*?

The *Piskei Teshuvos* 429:2 points out that our *Minhag* has changed. We no longer give out wheat or flour, but rather we give money to the families in need. Therefore, the *Piskei Teshuvos* says, that *Maos Chitim* is a form of *Tzedakah* and so one can use the money they have set aside for *Tzedakah* (unlike *Matanos L'Evyonim*, which we give on *Purim*, that is itself a separate *Mitzvah* and needs to be given from one's general funds). The *Shulchan Aruch Y.D.* 251:3 teaches us that when it comes to the *Mitzvah* of *Tzedakah* in general, poor people in our own families take priority over others. Also, poor people from our city take precedence over other cities. The same is true with *Maos Chitim* since it is considered to be *Tzedakah*.

How much should one give?

The *Piskei Teshuvos* (ibid.) says that since it is *Tzedakah* and not a formal obligation, there is no set amount that a person must give. That being said, it is important that one keep in mind how expensive the holiday of *Pesach* is and how stressful that can be for someone of lesser means. *B"H*, there are many programs that exist today which help assist Jewish people in need but being generous with one's *Maos Chitim* is another way to help ensure that all of *Klal Yisrael* is able to have a *Chag Kasher V'Sameach*.