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DAY-TO-DAY HALACHIC GUIDE

Laws & Customs for
Purim 5783
Year of Hakhel

Also:
Manual for Megillah Mess-ups

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Under the auspices of Horav Yosef Yeshaya Braun, shlita
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B"H

DAY-TO-DAY HALACHIC GUIDE

**Laws & Customs for the
Purim 5783
Year of Hakhel**

Also:

Laws of Intoxication

Laws of Hatov Vehameitiv

Manual for Megillah Mess-ups

By

Horav Yosef Yeshaya Braun, shlita
member of the Badatz of Crown Heights

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FOREWORD

We present a comprehensive guidance with laws and customs associated with Taanis Esther and Purim 5783. The details are derived from multiple sources, revised by **Rabbi M.M. Rotenberg**.

Due to a dearth of space only some references and halachic notes have been added. Primary sources include: *Shulchan Aruch* and commentaries, *Sefer HaMinhagim Chabad*, *Luach Colel Chabad*, *Sichos* and *Igros Kodesh*. Please see the footnotes in the Hebrew section for more halachic discussion of the topics mentioned.

The intention of this summary is to inform you of some of the relevant laws, not to replace each person's obligation to review the Halachos comprehensively.

Please note: Specific laws are mentioned only the first time that they become relevant, although they may apply to subsequent dates as well.

* * *

TIME TO PREPARE

In a *sichah* on the second day of Rosh Hashanah 5752, the Rebbe states:

"We need to focus on studying the laws that apply to this time of year, during which many changes are made to the standard prayers and there are numerous customs that apply. We should make certain to study these laws in the Code of Jewish Law.

"Recently, yearly calendars have begun to include many of the laws that apply to the relevant time of the year and that are necessary to know. This is particularly useful for those who, for whatever reason, do not have sefarim or do not know how to find what they are looking for in the sefarim that they own. Now, however, they can simply examine such calendars and easily find the relevant laws.

"It is therefore extremely appropriate for every single person to peruse the contents of these calendars, such as the Kollel Chabad calendar (available both in wall size and pocket size formats) in such a manner that the laws that apply to this time of year will become fixed in his memory. After all, it sometimes happens that a halachic question arises precisely at a point during which it is forbidden to interrupt and ask for someone's guidance—or when there is nobody around to ask. Furthermore [not having familiarized himself with the relevant laws beforehand], it can happen that one does not even realize that there is a problem to begin with."

* * *

YEAR OF HAKHEL

WHAT IS HAKHEL?

Once every seven years, on the second day of Sukkos that immediately follows the conclusion of a Shemitah year, the entire nation—men, women, and children—gather at the *Beis Hamikdash* and hear the king read aloud from the Torah. This

incredible setting is compared to the receiving of the Torah on Mount Sinai and inspires all present with commitment, love, and awe of Hashem. This mitzvah is known as Hakhel, “assembly” of the Jewish nation. Moshiach himself will read from the Torah in the third Beis Hamikdash each Hakhel year—may we merit his coming immediately!

THE REBBE ON HAKHEL

The Rebbe calls attention to the concept of Hakhel to an extraordinary degree and with increasing intensity, to the point that his *sichos* and letters are filled with Hakhel-related directives. Hakhel is not limited to Sukkos. It remains a timely and urgent concept throughout a Hakhel year. We are expected to raise awareness of Hakhel at every possible opportunity and in every possible way, to draw associations between all our activities and the “call of the hour”—Hakhel. Leading by example, the Rebbe went to unusual lengths to draw such associations in his many *sichos*.

During Simchas Torah 5748, the Rebbe called for a Hakhel, assembly, of literature on Hakhel, meaning that information from all relevant Torah sources on the concept of Hakhel should be published in a single volume. It was to include teachings from *Nigleh* and especially from the inner dimensions of Torah, primarily as those teachings are explained in Chassidus. The goal of the volume would be identical to the goal of an actual Hakhel experience: to inspire the people to greater fear and awe of Hashem.

On Shabbos Mishpatim 5741, the Rebbe called for studying the “laws of Hakhel.” It is an obligation to study the laws of each festival every year thirty days in advance of the actual festival. We should similarly study the spiritual laws of Hakhel as they are recorded in the Torah teachings of Mussar, Chassidus, and Kabbalah.

It is not the purpose of this publication, nor is it within its scope, to record all the relevant information on Hakhel, but we have made an effort to include snippets of relevant material wherever appropriate, culled from *sichos* that the Rebbe delivered at farbrengens in 770—or, to borrow a phrase from the laws of Hakhel, that “the king would read ... on a wooden platform in the courtyard of the *Beis Hamikdash*.” This is no substitute for the need to study the topic from the original sources. The Rebbe’s *sichos* and letters on the matter are incredibly extensive.¹

* * *

This guide incorporates several reminders about laws that will only be applicable during the Era of Redemption, with the hope that Moshiach will come speedily, allowing us to implement these laws in practice.

This year, a Hakhel year, bears a special connection to Moshiach. The Navi Yirmiyahu foretells that at the time of the Final Redemption, “A great gathering (*kahal*, akin to *hakhel*) will return here.” Hakhel is an event led by the Jewish king—a scion of *Beis*

1) For more on Hakhel, see *Kovetz Hakhel* published by Vaad Lehafatzas Sichos in 5755; *Kahal Gadol* (Otzeros Mitzvas Hakhel), republished this year by Mamash; *Encyclopedia Talmudis*, entry “Hakhel”; *Hakhel* (Kovetz leMitzvas Hakhel u’Birurei Hilchoseha), authored by Rabbi Eliyahu Dovid Rabinowitz-Teomim in Yerushalayim, published in 5706 and 5733; *Sefer Hakhel* (Mitzvas Hakhel – Asufas maamarim), published by Machon Hatorah Vecha’aretz in 5761.

Dovid, and therefore, at our Hakhels of the Future, Melech Hamoshiach himself will preside and read from the Torah to inspire the entire, rehabilitated Jewish Nation, speedily in our days.²

LAWS OF REDEMPTION

The concept of studying these halachos is based on several *sichos*, some of which are quoted below:

TO REALIZE REDEMPTION

"Hashem **begs** the Jewish people," the Rebbe passionately stated, "to occupy themselves with the study of the laws of the sacrificial orders ... which [as our Sages state] is considered as if we had actually offered the sacrifices. This study will bring about the actual offerings because it brings [to quote the Rambam] 'King Moshiach [who] will build the Beis Hamikdash ... and restore the laws of the Torah ... so that the Jewish people will again offer the sacrifices ... in accordance with all the mitzvos that are stated in the Torah,' speedily, in our time—literally! [Then, to quote the festival liturgy] 'We will offer before You there the offerings of our obligations ... in accordance with the commandments of Your will.'"³

"We must experience greater longing and yearning for the Redemption," the Rebbe demanded. "One of the ways this is accomplished is through studying more Torah on the subjects of the Redemption and the Beis Hamikdash. Studying these topics greatly hastens their actual realization, to the extent that we will go directly from studying these subjects to greet our righteous Moshiach. We will inform him, 'We have just completed studying the laws associated with your coming!' An additional motivation to study these laws is that we must expect Moshiach's arrival each and every day. In that case, these laws [concerning the Redemption and the Beis Hamikdash] are matters that every Jew—men and women alike—must know in order to put them into practical use on a daily basis, such as many of the laws of the offerings."⁴

* * *

General Note: The times listed below are for Crown Heights only. Since one can never achieve complete precision, and many factors may influence the accuracy of these times, it is recommended to begin earlier than the time listed and not wait until the last minute (e.g., for the start of Shabbos), or to wait extra time, when that is the appropriate precaution (e.g., at the close of Shabbos).

²) Many *sichos* discuss this connection more broadly and deeply. Some of them will be mentioned later in the booklet.

³) *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 18, p. 341 – Emphasis in original

⁴) from a *sichah* addressed to N'shei Ubnos Chabad – Sefer Hasichos 5750, vol. 2, p. 485

THE MONTH OF ADAR

“When Adar arrives we increase in joy,” is the saying of our Sages and an imperative in halachah. This month is also, as Chazal have noted, a time when the Jewish people have “a healthy mazal.” The joy of Adar is meant to be expressed primarily through an increase in Torah study and in performing mitzvos more assiduously.⁵

THURSDAY, 9 ADAR

The 9th of Adar is the day that the headquarters of Chassidus Chabad was relocated from what is referred to as the “top half of the globe” [Europe] to the “bottom half of the globe” [America] when the Friediker Rebbe arrived in the United States to settle permanently.⁶

FRIDAY, EREV SHABBOS, 10 ADAR

Shulchan Aruch states that although a person hears the entire Torah read in shul on Shabbos morning, he also needs to read it himself every week in the manner of *shnayim mikra ve’echad targum* (we recite twice each verse and once the commentary of Onkelos). It is customary to do this Friday after *chatzos* (midday) at 12:08pm. It is best to ensure that the reading has been completed before starting the Shabbos morning meal, and preferably even before the start of *Shacharis*.

The custom of the Chabad Rebbeim is to say all *Haftoros* relevant to this Shabbos in this recitation. The *Haftarah* of *Tetzaveh* is read at the conclusion of *shnayim mikra* on *erev Shabbos*, while the Torah portion from *shevi’i* until the conclusion is read once again (also in the manner of *shnayim mikra ve’echad targum*) on Shabbos morning, but this time it is followed by the *Haftarah* for *Shabbos Zachor*, *Ko amar Hashem pokadti*.⁷

Check your pockets on *erev Shabbos* before the onset of Shabbos.

Candle lighting at 5:31 pm.

SHABBOS ZACHOR, PARSHAS TETZAVEH, 11 ADAR

In 5742, when Purim also fell on Tuesday as this year, the Rebbe highlighted its significance as follows: The Zohar states that “Shabbos blesses the entire coming week”. It is therefore uniquely serendipitous that the Shabbos that blesses Purim is also the date—the 11th of Adar—when the first opportunity to commemorate the holiday occurs, as is expressed in the halachic ruling that (if a person is inevitably going to be without a megillah on Purim), the earliest opportunity to read the

5) See www.asktherav.com #19225 for sources, and also with regard to dancing to express joy at this time.

6) see *sichah* of 9 Adar 5750, *Sefer Hasichos* 5750 vol. 1, pg. 326

7) Shmuel 115:2-34.

megillah is on the 11th of the month. And so the week proceeds, with Sunday and Monday (the 12th and 13th of the month) which are equally opportune times for an early reading, and then leading up to the actual days of Purim on the 14th and 15th.⁸

KRIAS HATORAH

On the Shabbos before Purim, we utilize two *sifrei Torah*. The weekly *parshah* of *Tetzaveh* is read from the first *sefer Torah* for the first seven *aliyos*. The second *sefer Torah* is placed on the *bimah* before the first is removed and half-*Kaddish* is recited. The first Torah is lifted and rolled, and only then is the second is opened to be used to read *Parshas Zachor*, which can be found at the end of *Parshas Ki Seitzei*.

PARSHAS ZACHOR

Every Jewish person has a biblical obligation to hear the reading of *Parshas Zachor*, which records Amalek's attack on the Jewish people on their way out of Egypt, in order to fulfill the mitzvah of remembering Amalek and obliterating their name. *Chazal* established the rule that this *parshah* is read from a *sefer Torah* in the presence of a *minyan* on the Shabbos prior to Purim. In this way, we first hear the commandment to destroy Amalek and then hear the actual downfall of Amalek, i.e., the downfall of Haman, as recorded in the Megillah.

We are not obligated to rise for the reading of *Parshas Zachor*.

According to many opinions, women are also obligated to hear *Parshas Zachor*.

It is essential to have the intention to fulfill the biblical obligation to remember Amalek while listening to *Parshas Zachor*; the Torah reader should also have in mind to let those listening fulfill their obligation.

The listener should understand at least the general idea of the reading. If a few words of the reading were missed, the obligation is still fulfilled, provided that the general theme of the reading was heard.

The general custom is that if there are six (or more) people who have not yet heard the Torah reading it can be repeated, as long as there are a total of ten people participating. If there is a Torah, but no *minyan*, read from it with the proper incantation, but without the *brachos* preceding and following a regular reading, and then have the intention to fulfill your biblical obligation with the reading about Amalek on Purim morning (see below).⁹

Someone who is unable to come to *shul* to hear the reading should still recite the verses from a Chumash with the proper incantation. Some *poskim* maintain

⁸) *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Ki Sisa*, 5782. See there an explanation how the remaining days of the week (the 16th and the 17th) can be likewise connected with Purim.

⁹) See www.asktherav.com #19793. This is an exception to the general rule that reading directly from the Torah requires a *minyan*; see there #16220

that the mitzvah may be fulfilled with the reading of the Torah on Purim which precedes the Megillah. These two options should only be used if they are absolutely the only choices.

LAW OF REDEMPTION: REMEMBERING FOREVER

According to many authorities—and indeed it is the final halachic ruling—the biblical commandment to recall the deeds of Amalek remains in effect today, although its practical application (the eradication of Amalek’s descendants) cannot be fulfilled. Some authorities, however, consider this biblical commandment currently dormant, and that its obligation will be renewed only in the Era of Moshiach, when its implementation will become possible.¹⁰

Regarding the obligation to remember Amalek even after Amalek will be fully eradicated after the coming of Moshiach, the *Minchas Chinuch* states¹¹: “After the coming of our righteous Moshiach with the result that Amalek will be entirely eradicated, leaving no remnant behind, it is possible that the Torah’s positive commandment to remember Amalek will remain an eternal commandment—to remember and not to forget.” The Rebbe quotes this and comments,¹² “It is difficult to understand why he offers this as a possibility when it is apparently a certainty.”

POST-KRIAH

Following the Torah reading, the second Torah is lifted and rolled.

Av Harachamim is recited this week.

Megillah Practice: It is permitted to read the Megillah on Shabbos, even for the sole purpose of gaining fluency to read it on Purim.

MINCHAH

The Torah reading for *Minchah* is the first section of *Parshas Ki Sisa*.

Tzidkascha is recited.

POST-SHABBOS

Shabbos ends at **6:31**.

Vih Noam is recited on *motzoei Shabbos*.

Kiddush Levanah is recited after *Maariv* if it has not yet been recited for this month.

EARLY MEGILLAH READING

Someone who sets out on a lengthy journey must take a Megillah with him, so

¹⁰) See the relevant references in the Hebrew section of this publication.

¹¹) Mitzvah 603

¹²) In *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 14, p. 91, fn. 24. The Rebbe discusses this issue at length, along the same lines, in *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Tetzaveh* 5740. For further discussion on this topic, see the footnote in the Hebrew section of this booklet.

that he can read it on the fourteenth of Adar. If he is unable to do so, but will have access to a Megillah on the 13th and the 12th of Adar (or even on the 11th, in years that it falls on a weekday), he should read the Megillah on one of those dates. In that case, however, he may not recite the blessing before and after the Megillah. In addition, the Megillah may only be read on one of these earlier dates in the presence of a *minyan* of Jews.

If an individual cannot possibly delay his journey to accommodate these dates either, he may as a last resort read the Megillah on any earlier date in the month of Adar, from its first day and on.

When reading the Megillah before the 14th of Adar, there is a dispute about whether the obligation extends also to the night reading. In actual practice, he should read it by night as well.

A traveler who read the Megillah on an earlier date in Adar believing that he would not have access to a Megillah during Purim, but subsequently obtained a Megillah, should read it again on Purim. Furthermore, because his original reading took place on the incorrect date, he should now recite the blessings over his Purim reading.

The above dispensation does not extend beyond reading the Megillah; the other three *mitzvos* of Purim—*seudah*, *mishloach manos*, and *matanos l'evyonim*—may only be fulfilled on the correct date.

Practically speaking, when **unpreventable circumstances** serve as an obstacle to reading the Megillah on Purim, such as a patient forced by urgent health concerns to undergo a medical operation on Purim, then the Megillah may be read on an earlier date in accordance with the above guidelines. However, when it is a matter of will, such as a nursing home that for some reason refuses to schedule a Megillah reading on the correct date, then it is **not** appropriate to read the Megillah at the facility before Purim.

MIVTZA PURIM

HAKHEL SPECIAL

There is a unique inspiration that suffuses all our Purim outreach-related activities in a Hakhel year. See the footnote for some of those times that the Rebbe raised awareness for this.¹³

Purim is an excellent opportunity for *mitvzoim*. You can provide people in old-age homes, neighbors, and business associates with *mishloach manos* and *matanos l'evyonim* for them to give out.

"Mivtza Purim," the Rebbe says,¹⁴ "is to ensure that each Jewish person fulfills

13) See *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 11, p. 323; the public letter dated 11 Adar II, 5741 (published in *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 21, p. 488 ff.; *Likkutei Sichos Mo'adim-Purim*, vol. 2, p.172 ff.; Igros Melech, vol. 1, p. 240 ff.)

14) *Michtav Klali Yud-Alef Adar 5737*, printed in *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 16, p. 619

all the mitzvos of Purim according to halachah. We should campaign in speech and in action. In speech, we should address our fellow Jews with words that come from the heart to impress upon them the importance of observing these mitzvos. In the realm of action, we should take whatever steps needed as the location and occasion demand: Finding someone to read the Megillah (as well as *Parshas Amalek* during the day); preparing pre-packaged food gifts with which they can fulfill the mitzvah of *mishloach manos*; and setting aside coins with which they can fulfill the mitzvah of *matanos l'evyonim*. It would be best to include a publication that offers a brief overview of the laws of Purim, or at least a summary of the story that we celebrate on Purim, explaining the magnitude of the miracle.”

“[To express our Purim goals] in concrete terms,” the Rebbe writes elsewhere,¹⁵ “We should strengthen and expand our preparing for the Purim campaign, to ensure that every Jew (to quote the Megillah), “the youth and old, the infants and the women,” will celebrate Purim to the fullest extent, so that everyone participates in the mitzvos of Purim ... including children—*many* children, *all* children, the boys and the girls! It goes without saying that we must reach out to enable those Jews who find themselves in situations such as the army, senior homes, orphanages, hospitals, and prisons to observe Purim in this manner.”

PURIM PREPARATIONS

NEW MEGILLOS

A Megillah should be purchased only from a sofer with a stellar reputation in both *yiras Shamayim* and his craft; the accepted practice is to purchase *Stam* only from a sofer who has a *ksav kabbalah*. However, if you have obtained a Megillah second-hand without knowledge of its origin, it is still kosher for the mitzvah.¹⁶

If purchasing a new scroll, take care not to inscribe or attach anything additional to the parchment itself inside or outside—not the *brachos* recited before the reading, the owner’s name, nor product stickers.

The text of the Megillah should not be printed on parchment since it may cause someone to erroneously consider it a kosher Megillah to utilize to fulfill the mitzvah (in which case, the *brachos* and the reading would be null and void). If such an item exists, it should be sent to the *genizah*. However, it is permissible to use an imitation parchment design in a printed Megillah, as long as its inauthenticity is obvious.

15) *Michtav Klali Yud-Alef Adar Sheni* 5741, printed in *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 21, pp. 489 ff.

16) In an emergency, even a Megillah written on parchment prepared without proper intention may be read from, though preferably without a brachah.

TEVILAS KEILIM FOR GIFTS

GIFTING FOOD TRAYS

Utensils requiring immersion that are purchased with the intent of gifting them to someone else should receive *tevilah* only when they become the property of the giftee.

A gift-giver who wishes to immerse their gift may do so in a halachic manner with the following stipulation: they should first hand the utensil to a third party (who accepts it on the recipient's behalf), thus ensuring a transfer of ownership prior to *tevilah*. (It would then behoove the gift-giver to note the steps taken for *tevilah* on the recipient's behalf, so it is clear that the gift does not need to be immersed again.)

If multiple giftees are receiving these utensils, the symbolic transfer of ownership must be performed for each one individually by name. However, in the case of glassware (which only requires immersion by Rabbinical ordinance) there is room to be lenient and stipulate that the dish is being acquired for "whoever happens to receive it," although it is still preferable to specify the recipient for every single one.

GIFTING FILLED TRAYS

Even if the utensil is being used as a receptacle for food at the time of the giving, such as is the case on Purim with *mishloach manos*, the gift-giver is absolved from being obligated in *tevilah* from a purely halachic standpoint. This dispensation is especially applicable to glass utensils.

It should be noted that there are those who argue that the giver is required to immerse a food-filled utensil before using it for the first time. On account of this halachic doubt, the giver should avoid placing the food directly on the utensil—especially if it is constructed of metal, which requires biblical immersion. Instead, it should be presented within a separate bag. (A liner of parchment paper or cellophane does not constitute a proper *hefsek*—separation—between food and tray.) When the gift reaches the recipient, they should then immerse the utensil and make a *brachah*, if required.

The giver has the alternative of performing a workaround transfer-of-ownership procedure with a third party, as outlined above, in order to use the gift as a food receptacle without qualification. In cases where you suspect that the recipient may neglect immersing the gift, you should definitely employ it.

Another workaround for being able to perform *tevilah* on a utensil that will be gifted, is to use it personally at least once. Then you may immerse it as usual before utilizing it—with a *brachah*, if required.

RECEIVING FOOD TRAYS

Someone who receives a utensil¹⁷ immersed by the giver without a transfer of ownership should re-immerser it without a *brachah* after receipt.

If you receive a food utensil and you are not sure if it has been immersed, ask the giver regarding its status—whether it was not immersed at all (requiring *tevilah* with a *brachah*); if it was immersed, but without a gift's requisite ownership transfer (requiring *tevilah* without a *brachah*); or if it was properly immersed after the giver used a *shliach* to transfer ownership to the giftee (requiring no further steps on your part). If you are unable to ascertain the status of the utensil, you should immerse it without a *brachah*.

HAFRASHAS CHALLAH FOR GIFTS

A recipient of a large amount of cakes and baked goods as *mishloach manos* should be careful when storing them. Individual baked gifts may have derived from batches of dough that lacked the required quantity for the baker to separate *challah*. Nevertheless, if the accumulated food gifts are the kinds that require *hafrashah*, combining them in a single container will trigger the requirement post-baking. The storage of baked items all together in a fridge or freezer is permitted, as they are not considered as having been placed in a single container.¹⁸

When baking a large quantity of dough (normally sufficient for *hafrashah*) with the intention of dividing it and distributing the products to a number of individuals in fulfillment of *mishloach manos* (each baked pastry to another individual), perform *hafrashas challah* without a blessing.¹⁹ It is preferable to prepare a single batch that will not be divided in the above manner, large enough to warrant *hafrashah* with a blessing, so that the blessing can actually be recited.

TZEDAKAH

“We must work well in advance of Purim,” the Rebbe states,²⁰ “and especially from Rosh Chodesh Adar, a little over two weeks before Purim, to supply all who need with their Purim needs. We begin with those in our immediate neighborhood, and then reach wider areas, until we eventually reach across the globe. Our goal is to enable everyone to celebrate the days of Purim appropriately, in a manner of “light, joy, gladness, and glory” in the literal sense, and also in the spiritual sense in which our Sages interpret these features. They should be empowered to celebrate in a manner of *mishteh vesimchah*, “feasting and rejoicing,” even to an unlimited degree.”

17) Regardless of whether the utensil is presented with food items or not.

18) See www.halacha2go.com #503, where this issue is discussed comprehensively.

19) This is discussed at length on www.halacha2go.com #231 & #318.

20) *Sefer Hasichos* 5750

SUNDAY NIGHT, 13 ADAR, EVE OF TAANIS ESTHER

As on every fast day that begins in the morning, it is permissible to eat throughout the preceding night, up until the crack of dawn. However, if a person had a proper sleep—as opposed to momentarily nodding off or taking a power nap and the like—they may not eat or drink upon awakening, even if awakening before dawn. The exception to this rule is if someone stipulates before sleeping that should they awaken before dawn, they will continue to eat and drink. If an individual regularly rises from sleep during the night to take a drink, they may do so on the night preceding a fast, even if no specific condition was made before going to sleep.

We may not begin a formal meal within half an hour of dawn, even those who are eating close to the beginning of the fast. At this point, only snacking is permitted, such as fruits or vegetables or non-alcoholic beverages. Do not eat a large quantity of such foods, and if eating *mezonos*, limit the amount to the size of *kebeitzah*.²¹

MONDAY, 13 ADAR, TAANIS ESTHER

A YEAR, A DAY, TO GATHER

The Fast of Esther is historically a day of gathering, when the Jewish people came together to reaffirm their commitment to Hashem and their readiness to take a stand with literal self-sacrifice. See the *sichah* of *Taanis Esther* 5741, where the Rebbe discusses the connection of this day to the Hakhel year.

Taanis Esther also observes how the thirteenth of Adar, at the time of the Purim story, was the day the Jews fasted and prayed to Hashem when they defended themselves from their enemies. In addition, it commemorates the three days Esther and the people of Shushan fasted during the month of Nissan before Esther went to King Achashverosh.

THE FAST

The main purpose of observing a fast day is to awaken our hearts toward the path of *teshuvah*.²² *Poskim* write that the fast obligates a person to examine their

21) This is the quantity that would fit into two small matchboxes.

22) This fast is also deemed a "Fast of Teshuvah" as it was established as a reminder that Hashem responds to everyone in their time of affliction when they turn to Him with repentance, fasting and prayer, as occurred at the time of Esther. In the *sichah* of *Taanis Esther* 5742, the Rebbe further elucidates that the character of the *teshuvah* on this day in particular is "*teshuvah* from love" (as opposed to one predicated on fear and awe) as is also stated in *Kav Hayashar*, that *Taanis Esther* and Purim are associated with the attributes of *ratzon v'ahavah* (conviction and love).

(With regard to the other fasts, which are all associated with mourning the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash* and their *teshuvah*-focus, see the Day-to-Day Guides that include those dates. The Rebbe discusses how the 13th of Adar is thus distinguished from the other four fasts in the *sichah* of *Taanis Esther* 5746.)

deeds and rectify the negative ones—refraining from eating and drinking are but a means by which to focus ourselves inward to *teshuvah*.²³ Those who utilize the fast day as a break in their normal schedule for trips or other banal activities make the minor aspect all-important while ignoring its essential purpose.

WHEN TO FAST

From daybreak, **5:01 am**, until nightfall, **6:20 pm**.

Someone who is traveling to a different time zone while fasting breaks their fast at nightfall in the location they are presently.²⁴

WHO FASTS

All men (from age thirteen) and women (from age twelve) should refrain from eating and drinking on *Taanis Esther*.

This fast does not carry the same weight of obligation as all other fasts. Consequently, when it is genuinely necessary, an individual may be lenient and skip the fast. Healthy individuals should not break ranks with their fellow Jews by not fasting, even if they must travel and will find fasting particularly challenging—unless there is a risk of harm. After all, this fast has scriptural support and cannot be disregarded without proper grounds.²⁵ Someone who is unsure whether they are obligated to fast under a particular set of circumstances should consult a Rav.

WHO DOESN'T FAST

The following individuals are exempt from fasting: pregnant and nursing women, women who are within thirty days of birth, and people who are ill. Consult a Rav if necessary. Many are lenient also regarding a groom and bride during their seven days of *sheva brachos*.

There are also halachic opinions lenient regarding a father whose son's *bris milah* coincides with *Taanis Esther*, as well as the *mohel* and *sandek* who officiate at the *bris*. However, the custom is to be stringent and fast.

There is no obligation for a person who is exempt from fasting to deny themselves delicacies or good meat or wine. Likewise, there is no reason to practice other abstentions for those who seek higher standards as they do on other fast days.

Nevertheless, eat and drink a little less than usual in order to feel included in the experience of the community.

23) though it is not halachically acceptable to disingenuously avoid fasting with a teshuvah-focused day.

24) If exceedingly weak from thus extending the fast, there is a halachic leniency to break the fast at the time of nightfall in your original location.

25) In addition, there is an alternative halachic view that considers this fast *divrei kabbalah*, instituted upon an instruction of a prophet, which would grant it **greater** gravity than other fasts.

OTHER RESTRICTIONS

We refrain from brushing our teeth even without swallowing water. If this is particularly challenging, an individual may be lenient, provided that they incline their head forward and not backward while rinsing their mouth to prevent accidental swallowing.

On other fast days, there is a restriction enacted regarding getting a haircut. It does not apply today.²⁶

INADVERTENT EATING & TASTING

If someone mistakenly partakes of food during the fast, they should stop immediately and continue to avoid food until nightfall. There is no obligation to fast on a different date to make up, though you may do so voluntarily as a form of atonement.

In the case where someone mistakenly ate more than *koseves'* worth²⁷ of food or drank more than a *reviis*,²⁸ they change the wording of the *Aneinu* prayer at Minchah, saying instead, "*b'yom tzom taanis hazeh*." If consuming less than this amount, *Aneinu* is said with the usual *nusach*.

PURIM FOOD PREP

If it is necessary to taste the food that is being readied for Purim for the sake of accurate preparation, you may rely on those authorities that permit tasting a small quantity and then spitting it out.

It is permitted to bake dairy hamantaschen (unlike the halachah that generally precludes *milchig* breadmaking) since they are not a food generally consumed with meat.²⁹

LAW OF REDEMPTION: FAST TO FESTIVAL

Rambam states in his *Laws of the Fasts*³⁰: "All these fasts are destined to be canceled in the Era of Moshiach. In fact, they will be transformed into festivals and days of rejoicing and gladness, as it is stated: '*The fast of the fourth, the fast of the fifth, the fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth will be [days of] happiness and celebration and festivals for the House of Yehudah; and they will love truth and peace.*'"

TZEDAKAH

It is the custom to give additional *tzedakah* on a fast day. The common practice is to estimate the value of the cost of meals on that day, and give that to the needy in the evening.

²⁶) See www.asktherav.com #19897

²⁷) slightly less than what would fit in two small matchboxes

²⁸) approximately 3 ounces

²⁹) See many other details (in Hebrew) on www.asktherav.com #13100

³⁰) *Taanis Esther* is not mentioned in the above verse, nor does it commemorate destruction or exile. See the footnote in the Hebrew section for sources on the dispute concerning whether this fast will also be annulled.

SHACHARIS

Only the *chazzan* says *Aneinu* during *Chazaras Hashatz* between the *brachos* of *goel Yisroel* and *Refa'einu* (as he does during *Mincha* as well; see further).

If the *chazzan* forgot to say *Aneinu*, see the chart at the end of the booklet.

Selichos are recited in the middle of davening, as on all fast days.

The order of davening for Shacharis: After *Chazaras Hashatz*, *Tachanun*, *nefilas apayim*, *Vehu Rachum* (as on all Mondays) *Selichos* (we start from *Kaveh kavinu* and omit *Ashamnu*), the long *Avinu Malkeinu*, *Va'anachnu lo neida*, half-*Kaddish*, then *Kel erech apaim*. The *sefer Torah* is taken out and three *aliyos* are read in the section of *Vayechal Moshe*.

When a *chosson* is present for the prayers, or if a *bris* will be held, or the like, the custom practiced in 770³¹ is for the congregation to proceed with *Selichos* but to omit *Viduy*, *Tachanun*, and *Avinu malkeinu* from the prayers.³²

MACHATZIS HASHEKEL

TIMING

It is customary to give three half-dollar coins to *tzedakah* on *Taanis Esther* before Minchah to commemorate the half-shekel donated annually to the Temple treasury during the month of Adar. This collection was made in Adar so that by Nissan the *korbanos tzibur* (communal sacrifices) could be purchased for the following year.

The intent behind the half-shekel offering is as *tzedakah*, a donation that commemorates the *terumah* to the *Beis Hamikdash*. This is not associated with *tzedakah* offered as atonement for wrongdoing.

Someone who did not manage to give *machatzis hashekel* before Minchah may give it after Minchah, or before the Megillah reading on Purim morning.

COINAGE

It is customary that each donation should be half the value of the country's standard currency. Some people prefer to donate silver coins. It is also preferable that the coin should be labeled "half" (e.g., half-dollars). It is customary to give three coins since the word *terumah* is mentioned three times in *Parshas Shekalim*.

A person may exchange three coins worth of their own money for the silver coins

31) Over the years, the Rebbe issued varying directives to individuals regarding this matter, which makes the topic too lengthy to analyze here. The current practice is as we have described.

32) There is no interference with the order of the *Selichos* itself; the congregation begins with *Selach Lanu*, and also recites the *viduy* part of *Selichos* (*Ashamnu*) as usual. It is only the *Tachanun*, etc., that are recited as part of Shacharis that are skipped on such an occasion—and this concession is sufficient recognition of the *chosson's* presence, or of the *bris* that will take place.

customarily made available by the *gabba'im*, using the (temporarily) acquired silver for *machatzis hashekel*. To make this acquisition, lift the coins a bit before depositing them. However, there is no need to lift them multiple times (or at all, if using your own coins).³³

If you cannot obtain half-dollar coins (or the equivalent in the local currency) you may give other coins that equal the total value of three half-dollars. It is preferable, in such a case, to actually give three full dollars with the stipulation that half of each is for *machatzis hashekel* and the remaining are a free gift.³⁴

Some authorities maintain that we should avoid referring to the coins as "*machatzis hashekel*," but rather as "*zeicher l'machatzis hashekel*" (a token half-shekel to the one used when there is a *Beis Hamikdash*), or another alternative description. Other authorities are concerned even with the terminology of *zeicher*, but the accepted custom is not to be concerned over this matter altogether.³⁵

Maaser money should not be used for *machatzis hashekel*, even for your wife and children, if you are accustomed to giving for them.

THE GIVERS

The obligation for *machatzis hashekel* begins at age twenty (and according to some opinions, thirteen). Some also give on behalf of their wives and children—this custom is mentioned in the Rebbe's *sichos* as a well-known *minhag Yisrael*. Many have the custom that a father should also give the *machatzis hashekel* on behalf of his unborn child during the mother's pregnancy.

Once a father begins giving for a child, he must give every year until the child becomes responsible to give on their own, unless he explicitly makes a condition the first time that he is not accepting it upon himself as a vow.

The Rebbe encourages training children to give *machatzis hashekel* from their own money.

MINCHAH:

Minchah should be completed before *shkiah*, **5:52 pm**, so that davening does not run into the time of *bein hashmashos* (between sunset and nightfall)—when it would create even more halachic concerns than usual on account of it being a fast day. If circumstances forced Minchah to be delayed until *bein hashmashos*, the congregation may still proceed as normal, with the Torah reading, *Haftorah* and Amidah.

33) See www.asktherav.com #3201

34) See www.asktherav.com #19844

35) In *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Shekalim* 5726, the Rebbe explains why we are not concerned that our present custom of donating *machatzis hashekel* may have the appearance of arranging to offer sacrifices outside the *Beis Hamikdash*.

The Torah reading and *Haftorah* for a fast day are read.

The order of Minchah today is as follows: *Vayedaber* (*Karbonos*), *Ashrei*, *chatzi Kaddish*, *Vayehi binso'a*, the Torah reading, *Haftorah* (with blessings before and after), *Yehallelu*, *chatzi Kaddish*, *Shemoneh Esrei* (with *Aneinu*), *Chazaras Hashatz*, *Kaddish tiskabel*, *Aleinu*, *Kaddish yasom*. *Tachanun* and *Avinu Malkeinu* are not said at Minchah as it is *erev Purim*.

Aneinu is said in *Shemoneh Esrei* in *Shema Koleinu*. If *Aneinu* was omitted, see the chart at the end of the booklet.

The *chazzan* recites *Aneinu* during *Chazaras Hashatz* after the blessing of *goel Yisrael*, before beginning the blessing of *Refa'einu*. He also recites *Birchas Kohanim* before *Sim shalom*, as he ordinarily does during *Shacharis*.

Divrei Kevushin (words of inspiration) follow Minchah.

The fast ends and the time for Maariv is at **6:20 pm**,³⁶ but it is nevertheless prohibited to eat before the Megillah reading, as will be detailed below. Work and sleep are also forbidden from half an hour before nightfall until after reading the Megillah.

MONDAY NIGHT, EVE OF PURIM, 14 ADAR

HAPPIEST HAKHEL

In 5748,³⁷ the Rebbe said: Having reached the day of Purim when “those days (of celebration) are remembered and recurring,” when we attain the status anew (as the commentaries on the Megillah state) of “fulfilling what was previously accepted” at *Matan Torah*, we need to garner added vigor and commitment to our study of Torah—the revealed aspect (*Nigleh*) and, especially, its inner dimension, as they complement each other as aspects of a single entity. This study should be prefaced by the internal work associated with prayer so that the two pillars of Torah and *avodah* unite.

(So that this new commitment be in the spirit of the day) the new, more vigorous efforts should be both in the quantity and the quality of our learning to the point of true self-sacrifice and sublimation (as in the instruction on Purim to be inebriated to the point of “not knowing”), but at the same time in a manner that it incorporates our personhood, including our physical selves—that this Torah learning causes a personal transformation in our mundane activities.

³⁶ Generally, we wait for the appearance of three small stars in the darkening sky to say Maariv, so that the *Shema* can be recited when it is indisputably nighttime. On account of the fast, we daven earlier—at the time when three intermediate stars are already visible. It is therefore appropriate to repeat the *Shema* sometime later in the evening.

³⁷ *Sichah* of *Taanis Esther* and Purim, in *Sefer Hasichos*, vol. 1, p. 301, see in full p. 292 ff. Other talks of the Rebbe related to Purim and Hakhel can be found in *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 6, p. 382; *Sichas Purim* 5727; *Michtav Klali Yud-Alef Adar Beis*, 5741, printed in *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 21, p. 488 ff. (see footnote on p. 490 beginning with the word: **Kinusim**) and other places—as cited in the previous footnote on Hakhel.

In addition to this private *avodah*, we must also make the effort to reveal the potential for *mesiras nefesh* (the revelation of the soul's essence) in every other Jew on a level of complete unity with every Jew we associate with. We thereby accomplish (as is also stated in the Megillah) "gather all the Jews" despite having been described as a people that are "scattered and disconnected among the nations". This is specially relevant right now, being in a year of Hakhel, when we are commanded to "gather the nation—men, women and children—in order that they should learn and fear Hashem your G-d and will observe all the words of this Torah **all the days** that you live on this earth."

At this point, each individual will have accomplished within their particular niche in the world the gathering and combining all the G-dly sparks that were (also) originally "scattered and disconnected among the nations" (and we will merit the Redemption).

GOOD, GOOD DAY

The Rebbe emphasizes the superior quality of the festival of Purim that occurs on a Tuesday, a day which indicates a "double portion of goodness."

PREPARING FOR MEGILLAH

We should not eat a meal before Megillah reading, even for those who find fasting difficult. If there is great need, there is room for leniency for snacking (eating fruits and vegetables and drinking non-intoxicating drinks or even *mezonos* up to the measurement of a *kebeitzah*). If an individual is weak and waiting to eat can harm them—and a snack is insufficient—eating is permissible. But it is important in such a case to appoint someone to remind them to hear the Megillah. A woman who is fasting, and is waiting to hear the Megillah reading from her husband when he returns from shul, may be lenient with snacking, as above.

The same applies to Torah learning—reading the Megillah should precede any study session.

On Purim, it is customary to greet each other with "*Ah freilichen Purim!*"—"Happy Purim!" or "*Ah gutten Purim!*"—"Have a good Purim!" On a number of occasions, the Rebbe would wish people "*Gut Yom Tov!*" on Purim.

In the *List of Novel Purim Customs* prepared by the Rebbe under the heading "Customs of the Rebbeim," it is written³⁸: "A silk *kapote* is worn as on Shabbos and Yom Tov," but also that: "these practices are of course not intended as directives for the public."³⁹

³⁸) *Sefer Haminhagim* p. 74

³⁹) For an elaboration upon this matter, see references printed in the Hebrew section of this publication.

COSTUMES

There is a custom to wear masks on Purim. The Rebbe points out⁴⁰ that this refers mainly to young children.

It is important to ensure that costumes, masks, and other Purim wear do not contain *shatnez*. Some authorities are lenient regarding the kinds of *shatnez* that are forbidden only *mid'rabanan* (rabbinically) as well as men and women wearing clothing designed for the opposite gender, in deference to the joyful celebration of Purim. However, the great majority of authorities vehemently forbid either scenario.⁴¹

It is unclear whether *tzitzis* are required on Purim costumes with four corners, such as a *me'il* worn as part of a *Kohen Gadol* costume. (As an aside, there is a debate regarding the requirement of *tzitzis* on the *me'il* that is actually worn by a *Kohen Gadol*.) Since there is a doubt in this matter, it is prudent to round off a corner.⁴²

A blessing is not recited over a *tallis gadol* (prayer shawl) that is donned only as a costume.

Body paint that merely adds color to the skin and has no actual substance is not a *chatzitzah* (interference) for *netilas yadayim*.

It is best to refrain from davening while dressed in costume, if you would not consider attending an audience with a monarch dressed that way.

MAARIV

Maariv in shul should begin as soon as possible after the fast. *V'al hanissim* is added in *Shemoneh Esrei* of Maariv. Do not interrupt between the *brachah* of *Hashkiveinu* and *Shemoneh Esrei* in order to make an announcement about *V'al hanissim*.

The laws for someone who forgets *V'al hanissim* are explained in the chart at the end of the booklet.

After *Shemoneh Esrei*, *Kaddish shalem* is recited, and the Megillah is read. After the Megillah and the subsequent *brachah*, we say *Shoshanas Yaakov*, *V'atah kadosh*, *Kaddish shalem*—without *Tiskabel*, and *Aleinu*.

For an overview of the laws and customs of reading the Megillah, see the section titled **The Major Mitzvos** in tomorrow's entry.

It is customary to eat a small *seudah* on the night of Purim. It is proper to set the table with a tablecloth and light candles to emphasize the meal's festive nature. Some do not eat meat in the evening, so as not to mistake the meal with the *Seudas*

⁴⁰) in *Sichas Taanis Esther* 5749. See also *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Vayikra* 5748 regarding wearing crowns on Purim.

⁴¹) see Hebrew section for extensive sources.

⁴²) see Hebrew section for extensive sources and reasoning.

Purim eaten on the morrow.

The latest time for reciting *Kiddush Levanah* is tonight, *l'chatchilah* (under normal circumstances),

TUESDAY, PURIM, 14 ADAR

The *mitzvos* of Purim day may be performed from sunrise (about **6:21 am**) to sunset (about **5:53 pm**).

Morning *Shema* must be recited before **9:12 am**.

EATING BEFORE MEGILLAH

It is customary to arise early for Shacharis. We avoid eating before hearing the daytime Megillah reading—in fact, the daytime reading is more stringent than nighttime—though there is some room for leniency regarding drinking. If it is truly necessary to eat, an individual may be lenient in snacking (eating fruits or vegetables, or non-alcoholic beverages, even in large quantities, or a small amount of *mezonos* products, up to the quantity of *kebeitzah*).⁴³

Some authorities maintain that a person should not eat a meal, or even taste food, before fulfilling the other *mitzvos* of Purim (in addition to hearing the Megillah). However, it is customary to be lenient in this regard.

SHACHARIS

Tachanun is not said.

After *Shemoneh Esrei*, say *chatzi Kaddish*. Hallel is not recited. The portion of *Vayavo Amalek* is read from the Torah. If anyone didn't hear *Parshas Zachor* on Shabbos, they should have the mitzvah of remembering Amalek in mind during the Torah reading.

This reading of Purim morning is one that is mandated by the Torah, so every individual should make every effort to hear it read with a *minyan*. Even though the personal obligation to remember Amalek may have been fulfilled with *Parshas Zachor*, this reading has special significance over any other time, as it is read on the day commemorating a time when this mitzvah was miraculously fulfilled and immortalized. If it is not possible to attend a *minyan*, it should be read with the proper incantation by individuals, as well.

LAW OF REDEMPTION: HALLEL-LESS

Even after Moshiach's coming, we will not recite Hallel on Purim.⁴⁴

⁴³) see Hebrew section for a detailed discussion, along with multiple sources and reasoning.

⁴⁴) See Hebrew section footnotes for a discussion on this matter.

MEGILLAH READING

After the Torah reading, the Megillah is read while still wearing *Rashi tefillin*.⁴⁵

If *machatzis hashekel* was not yet donated, it should be given before the Megillah reading.

Have the mitzvos of *mishloach manos*, *matanos l'evyonim* and the Purim *seudah* in mind when the *brachah* of *Shehecheyanu* is recited before the daytime reading of the Megillah.

After the reading of the Megillah followed by its final blessings, the congregation recites *Shoshanas Yaakov*, followed with *Ashrei*, *U'va letziyon*, and *Kaddish shalem*. The *sefer Torah* is then returned to the *aron*.

PURIM AFTERNOON

Reminder: In view of all the efforts involved in the *mitzvos* of the day, be careful to remember to daven *Minchah* and to complete personal daily Torah studies, and especially the daily Chitas and Rambam. (Today's Chumash is *Shlishi* of *Parshas Ki Sisa*.)

Minchah is recited with *V'Al Hanissim* before the Purim meal.

Someone who is so occupied with their Purim commitments (especially *mivtzoim*) may lack the time to have a sitdown full-course meal on Purim afternoon (see the parameters of the *mitzvah* below). They should nevertheless make an effort to eat a more festive meal at some point to the best of their capacity. This obligation can be fulfilled with a special, if small, meal even in the morning hours to fulfill the obligation to “dine and celebrate”.

Work-related activity should be avoided on Purim, and our Sages warn that someone who works will not see any blessing in it. Having a non-Jew do the work is permissible. Small tasks that don't take time are permitted (like laundry in a machine), but we should take care not to be distracted from the *simchah* of the day. If it's for the sake of Purim, then even major work may be done throughout the day. Business matters are permitted because they bring joy, but care should be taken not to get distracted from the *simchah* of Purim. There are some who have the practice of being stringent with all types of work unless it's for the purpose of earning money for the Purim meal. Similarly, taking a haircut is permitted—since it's for the sake of Purim and it leads to increased *simchah*.

LAW OF REDEMPTION: BONA FIDE YOM TOV

⁴⁵ This is done in deference to the Megillah's familiar verse (recited in *Havdalah*), “*Layehudim hoisah orah vesimchah vesasson v'yekar*—The Jews had light and joy, and gladness and honor.” (Esther 8:16) Our Sages explain that *yekar*, honor, refers to the head-*tefillin*. Some are even of the opinion that someone who already completed *Shacharis* should continue wearing *tefillin* when he subsequently hears the Megillah. *Sefer Haminhagim Chabad* notes that he who reads as well as those who hear the Megillah should be wearing *Rashi tefillin*. Some have the custom of touching their head-*tefillin* when the reader reaches the word *v'yekar*, and the Rebbe was indeed observed doing so.

In the Future Era it will be prohibited to perform any work that is currently prohibited on Yom Tov on this day, for Purim will then attain the status of Yom Tov.

Our Sages teach that "all the festivals will become nullified in the future era, whereas the days of Purim will never be nullified." This concept is explained in dozens of sources, and it is addressed at length in the many teachings of Chassidus that focus on the concepts of Purim.

MAJOR MITZVOS OF PURIM:

I. LISTEN TO THE READING OF THE MEGILLAH

WHO?

The requirement is for all men and women as well as children who have reached the age of *chinuch* to hear the Megillah twice during Purim: once at night and a second time during the day.

If it will be impossible to read the Megillah twice, by night and then again by day—as is often the case when reading for Jews we meet on *mivtzaim*—do not neglect the night reading for the sake of securing the daytime reading. Rather, the listener is obligated to hear the night reading, even if it will jeopardize the opportunity to read the Megillah by day.⁴⁶

Children should be encouraged and trained to listen to the Megillah. It is customary to bring even small children to shul to hear the Megillah if they won't disturb others who need to hear the reading. Children should be taught that the main purpose of going to shul is to listen to the Megillah, and they should be supervised so that they pay attention to the Megillah without disruption.

Every attempt should be made to hear the Megillah in shul "among the multitude" rather than having it read at home. It is preferable that the Megillah be heard in a shul where there are many people. However, someone who regularly prays in a shul which does not have many people need not go to a larger shul to hear the Megillah. It is best to read the Megillah with at least a *minyan*, but it is permissible to read the Megillah even in the event that there are less than ten men.

WHEN?

The Megillah may be read at night anytime from *tzeis hakochavim*--when the stars come out--until *alos hashachar*, the break of dawn, and on the day of Purim anytime from sunrise (about **6:21 am**) to sunset (about **5:53 pm**).

If a daytime reading of the Megillah begins so late it is certain that it will extend beyond sunset, do not recite the blessings before and after reading.

⁴⁶) This is explained at length in the Adar 5764 edition of *Hatomim*.

HOW?

The *ba'al koreh* (reader) unrolls the Megillah and gently folds it into three, folio over folio, like an old-style letter. Chabad custom is that the listeners also unroll and fold their Megillos.

Megillah reading both by night and by day is preceded by three *brachos*: (1) *al mikra megillah* (2) *she'asah nissim* and (3) *Shehecheyanu*. It is proper for everyone, not only the reader, to stand when the *brachos* are recited. The *ba'al koreh* says the three *brachos* with the intention that he is saying the *brachos* and reading the Megillah on behalf of all the listeners.

The Alter Rebbe states in his *Shulchan Aruch* that “when many people observe a mitzvah together, such as listening to the Megillah, it is mitzvah for one of the participants (either the reader or one of those listening) to recite the blessings on behalf of the others.

“However, if they wish to perform the mitzvah individually, such as when there are less than ten men present and each of them will be reading from his own Megillah, then each person may recite his own blessings.

“Nevertheless, it is best (even in such circumstances) for one person to recite on behalf of them all, in fulfillment of *Berov am hadras melech* (the King’s honor is magnified when a multitude of His subjects obey His instruction together). This is not a binding obligation, however, because we cannot force a person who is obligated in a particular mitzvah to make use of a *shaliach* (such as forcing him to rely on someone else reading for him) instead of performing it himself.”

Practically speaking, someone who listens to the Megillah reading in shul, but would rather not rely on the reader’s recital of the blessings, is permitted to quietly recite them himself. However, he must have his own Megillah, and he must read the entire text at the same time as the reader, word by word, in an undertone. (This is what the Rebbe would do.)

Pay close attention to the *brachos*, and do not intercept with *Baruch Hu u’varuch Shemo*, but answer “Amen”, and have in mind to fulfill the mitzvah through the *ba'al koreh*.

Someone who arrives for the Megillah reading after the *ba'al koreh* already started saying the *brachos* should say the *brachos* on their own, making sure to complete them before the actual reading begins. If there is no time for that, an individual may quietly recite them when there is a gap in the reading—for example, while the congregation recites the verse *Ish Yehudi* aloud.

REPEAT READINGS

A *ba'al koreh* who already fulfilled the mitzvah of Megillah and is now reading for other people should not recite the *brachos*. It is preferable that one of the listeners recite the *brachos* aloud on behalf of the others. When women recite the

first *brachah*, they should say "*lishmoa megillah*". (Some opinions maintain that women should instead recite "*al mikra megillah*".) However, if the reader (who has already fulfilled his own obligation) has reason to believe that his audience may not listen to the Megillah in its entirety, he should neither recite the blessings on their behalf **nor** arrange for the audience to recite the blessings. Rather, the Megillah should be read without its blessings.

A *ba'al koreh* who is reading for others after having fulfilled his own obligation earlier may interrupt the reading if there is great need.

When reading the Megillah for less than a *minyan* of men or for an all-female audience, the *ba'al koreh* may sit during the reading.

Someone who borrows a Megillah does not have to read it himself; he is permitted to allow someone else to serve as reader—without concern that its owner may not want this third individual to read from his Megillah. However, the borrower or the third party should read alone, not both at once, for the owner lent his Megillah to an individual and not to a pair, and we should not perform an act of kindness with his property without his knowledge—however insignificant it may seem—beyond the extent to which we personally saw that he was willing to extend himself.

WOMEN READINGS

While women are equally obligated in the mitzvah of Megillah, they should not read it themselves. They are most certainly prohibited from reading for other women.⁴⁷ In an emergency situation, where no man is available to read for her, she should read it on her own from a kosher Megillah (with *brachos*). Should there later be an opportunity to hear the reading from a man, she should listen again.

ELECTRONIC READINGS

A microphone may not be used for the Megillah reading, nor can the obligation of hearing the Megillah be fulfilled via telephone or live hook-up.

Those who require hearing aids, or have cochlear implants, may not use them to listen to the Megillah. An individual should remove the hearing aids prior to the reading and either move as close to the reader as possible or have the Megillah read privately and loud enough to hear the reading without the use of hearing aids.

If it is not possible for the individual who is hard of hearing to hear the Megillah being read even with the above, they should read the Megillah, without any electronic aids, on their own. If they can hear themselves speak unassisted, they should say the brachos. If they cannot, they should not say the brachos.

⁴⁷) See [#17266](http://www.asktherav.com), and extra sources and links there.

THE BA'AL KOREH

For the nighttime Megillah reading, a boy over the age of bar mitzvah may read the Megillah on behalf of others. For the daytime reading, by contrast, it is appropriate to avoid relying on a boy from the age of bar mitzvah until he has sprouted a full beard. This is an appropriate stringency, with room for leniency if the boy is reading on behalf of a women-only audience. In extenuating circumstances—as is often the case on *mitvtzoim*, where there is no one else to read the Megillah—we may be lenient with a young reader even when there are men in the audience.

It is necessary to go out of your way to arrange for a reader who is fluent in the reading, with proper knowledge of the correct vowels and cantillation.

With regard to the cantillation (*trop*), a reader who is not fluent should have a printed Megillah open beside the real Megillah so that he can consult the printed version before each verse, and then return to the actual Megillah—reading it with the correct tune. If this verse-by-verse option is not possible, someone may stand beside the reader with a printed version and quietly prompt the reader with the correct cantillation, so that the reader can repeat it aloud while reading the words from the actual scroll. A better solution would be for someone to silently provide hand signals that the reader knows how to interpret. Although vowel, punctuation, and cantillation marks are not supposed to be recorded in the Megillah scroll, under such circumstances where none of the above solutions are feasible, the reader may pen the cantillation marks in the Megillah to guarantee that it is read correctly—although this option is less preferable than simply reading the Megillah without cantillation altogether.

The one who must assist the reader should subsequently read the Megillah again for himself from a proper scroll. For it is most likely that his intense concentration on providing the correct reading or cantillation in real time prevented him from focusing appropriately to hear well and fulfill his own obligation.

Alternatively, the *ba'al koreh* may place a clear plastic sheet over the scroll, and record the correct vowels and cantillation on it—and then use that sheet over the Megillah while reading.⁴⁸ Another alternative is to wear headphones and listen to a recording of the Megillah being read correctly—lowering the volume so that he can hear what he is actually reading. In such an instance, great care must be taken to read the Megillah from the scroll and not to simply parrot the voice playing in his headphones without properly reading from the Megillah.

The reading should not be divided among several readers, each of whom are

⁴⁸) This option appears to be superior to adding markings to the actual scroll: Some authorities are concerned that the plastic sheet may be a disqualifying intervening object (*chatzitzah*), but that does not appear to be the case. By contrast, a number of authorities are absolutely certain that writing the vowels or the like in the actual scroll disqualifies it. Therefore, although the final halachah supports the use of written markings after the fact or where there is no alternative, it is still preferable to use the plastic sheet option.

familiar with another section of the Megillah, unless this is absolutely necessary.

If there is no alternative reader, nor someone with a printed Megillah to provide assistance, or the possibility for any other possible solution and the *ba'al koreh* is unfamiliar with the vowels (or nuances such as *kri-kesiv*, whereby a word must be read differently from its written form), he may well render a Megillah reading invalid.

An addendum to this guide (see inserted pages) follows the Megillah and notes which mispronounced words do, and which do not, invalidate the reading. In the case that a *ba'al koreh* invalidates the reading, the Megillah should be read without its blessings.

The *ba'al koreh* should not interrupt in the middle of the reading, except to take a breath, even between verses, since it is meant to be read as a letter would.

HANDLING A MEGILLAH

Unless someone made a conscious effort to keep their hands from contacting any of the many things that would make them impure, it is assumed that hands did contract impurity. Therefore, it is best to be stringent and to always wash hands before touching a Megillah.

Someone who touches a Megillah (or *tefillin* or a *sefer Torah*) in the middle of the meal (for which they already washed for bread), does not need to rewash hands for the continuation of the meal.

The Megillah scroll should be respected. It should not rest directly on the reader's lap, nor should he lean on the scroll with his elbows.

If a Megillah falls to the floor, no fasting is necessary as an atonement.

HEAR EVERY WORD

We are not permitted to speak at all while the Megillah is being read, starting from the first *brachah* before the Megillah reading until the completion of the *brachah* of *harav es riveinu* after it. To fulfill the mitzvah, every word of the Megillah must be heard.

After the fact, if a *ba'al koreh* spoke to interrupt the reading, the congregation has fulfilled their obligation and the reading need not be repeated. However, if a listener speaks, they would have missed some of the words of the Megillah and they must hear it again.

Someone who is attending a repeat reading by night or by day, may leave in the middle of the reading, if necessary, as long as a *minyan* remains in the room.⁴⁹

Every word of the Megillah reading must be heard, from start to finish in the

⁴⁹) See www.asktherav.com #19705—where it mentions that it is proper to be stringent to remain, regardless.

correct order. Someone who did not hear even a single word that was read by the *ba'al koreh* has not fulfilled their obligation. If they heard every word, but failed to concentrate, they have still fulfilled their obligation—but if their attention wanders to other matters they must repeat the reading, according to many opinions. It is therefore appropriate to closely follow the reading, word by word, from a kosher Megillah, or at least from a printed text.

A listener who has a kosher Megillah may read along with the *ba'al koreh* (it should be audible to himself, but quiet enough that others can hear the *ba'al koreh*) if he is proficient in proper enunciation. It is preferable to have a kosher Megillah (i.e., handwritten on parchment) so that in case he misses a word or two (or more) he will be able to read it from his own Megillah.

MISSING WORDS

If the Megillah scroll is found to be missing words or sentences it remains valid (although not ideal *l'chatchilah*—in the first place), as long as it includes more than half of the total words it should contain. The scroll is invalid if the missing words or sentences (even if they are just a few) are absent from the scroll's beginning or conclusion, or if it is lacking an entire theme recounted in the story of Purim.

When words or sentences are missing, the reader should not recite them by heart—if he is reading on behalf of others—and should instead read those missing parts from a printed version. The only exception is a single word that is meaningless on its own without being associated with the following or preceding word; even someone who is reading on behalf of others may recite such a word by heart if it is missing.

The *ba'al koreh* should be certain to read the Megillah from the actual script. After the fact, if a minority of the Megillah was recited by heart, everyone has still fulfilled their obligation.

If you are following the reading from a printed text, it is better not to read along with the *ba'al koreh*. If you miss a few words or a *possuk*, you may then read it from the printed text and still fulfill the mitzvah. Do so quietly, but loud enough to hear your own words. Mouthing the words is insufficient and if you cannot hear your own voice due to other noise, it is not loud enough to fulfill the obligation. This can be done only for less than half of the Megillah's total words.⁵⁰

In such a case, read from printed text until catching up to the *ba'al koreh*. Do not listen to the continuation of the Megillah while catching up—even if that were possible to hear both at once, it would run afoul of the principle that the Megillah must be read or heard in its correct sequence. Even a single word read in the incorrect order prevents you from fulfilling your obligation.

⁵⁰) For a more detailed discussion regarding one who missed the beginning, ending, or an entire episode of the Megillah reading, see the sources in the Hebrew section footnotes.

You may read the entire Megillah from a printed version if you make a stipulation before starting as follows: If you happen to not hear a specific word from the *ba'al koreh*, then you will fulfill your obligation—for that word—with your own reading from the printed *sefer*.

However, the best scenario would be to read along with the reader, word for word, from a valid Megillah scroll—any word missed will have then automatically have been read from a valid scroll.

MISSING HALF WORDS

If you miss **part** of a word due to overwhelming noise or because the *ba'al koreh* swallowed part of a word, then the law depends on what letters were missed. If the missing letters changed the entire meaning of the word, you have not fulfilled their obligation. For example, if instead of reading *l'evyonim* (לְאִבְיוֹנִים), the reader dropped the final letter (*mem*) and read *la'evyoni* (לְאִבְיוֹנִי), the word no longer means, “to the poor (plural),” but rather, “to my pauper.” If the meaning has *not* changed—for example, if the *nun* of Haman is dropped, in which case, the context makes it clear that the reference is to that evil person—you have fulfilled your obligation after the fact. However, some authorities are stringent even in such a case.

LISTENER PARTICIPATION

There are four *pesukim* of *geulah* that the congregation reads out loud. They are:

- (1) אִישׁ יְהוּדִי הָיָה בְּשׁוֹשׁן הַבִּירָה וְשָׂמוּ מְרֹדְכִי בֶן יָאִיר בֶּן שְׁמַעֲי בֶן קִישׁ אִישׁ יְמִינִי.
- (2) וּמְרֹדְכִי יָצָא מִלִּפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ בְּלָבוֹשׁ מַלְכוּת תְּכֵלֶת וְחֹר וְעֶטְרוֹת זָהָב גְּדוּלָּה וְתַקְרִיף בּוּץ וְאֶרְגָּמָן וְהָעִיר שׁוֹשָׁן צָהָלָה וְשִׂמְחָה.
- (3) לַיְּהוּדִים הָיְתָה אוֹרָה וְשִׂמְחָה וְשִׁשָּׁן וִיקָר
- (4) כִּי מְרֹדְכִי הַיְּהוּדִי מִשְׁנָה לַמֶּלֶךְ אֶחָשְׁוֵרוּשׁ וְגָדוֹל לַיְּהוּדִים וְרָצוּי לָרֹב אֶחָיו דֶּרֶשׁ טוֹב לַעֲמוֹ וְדָבָר שְׁלוֹם לְכָל יִרְעוֹ.

The above verses are read quickly by the congregation, so that they finish reading before the *ba'al koreh* begins to read them.

The names of Haman's ten sons are also read out loud and in one breath by each member of the congregation, as follows:

חֲמֵשׁ מֵאוֹת אִישׁ. וְאֵת פֶּרֶשְׁנִדָּתָא וְאֵת דִּלְפּוֹן וְאֵת אֶסְפָּתָא. וְאֵת פּוֹרְתָא וְאֵת אֲדִלְיָא וְאֵת אֲרִידָתָא. וְאֵת פֶּרְמִשְׁתָּא וְאֵת אֲרִיסִי וְאֵת אֲרָדִי וְאֵת וִיזָתָא. גְּעִשְׁתָּ בְּנֵי הָקוֹן.

The *ba'al koreh* reads them in one breath only after the congregation has finished.

Chabad custom is to make noise only when reading Haman's name followed by a title or epithet.

The *ba'al koreh* must be sure to wait until all the noise making has stopped before continuing the reading.

Safety Alert: Dangerous games such as caps and firecrackers can cause serious damage. Do not keep them in your pockets in case of a spontaneous explosion and do not fire them near anyone's ears and eyes.

If you insert earplugs to temper the sound of the Haman-related noise making, be sure to remove them before the *ba'al koreh* continues with the reading. If you keep them in, but are able to hear the reading regardless, you have fulfilled your obligation. If it causes you to miss a word, you must repeat the reading.⁵¹

When the *ba'al koreh* reads the words “*igeres hazos*” (“this letter”) and “*igeres hapurim hazos hasheinis*” (“this second Purim letter”) he, and anyone else with a kosher Megillah, shakes the Megillah.

AFTER READING

After he finishes reading the Megillah, the *ba'al koreh* says the *brachah* “*harav es rivenu*” aloud. This *brachah* is recited with Hashem's name when there are ten or more individuals hearing the Megillah.

It is stated in *Minhagei Ha'admor* that the Rebbe's custom is to recite this blessing even when reading the Megillah privately. This is not a directive for the public to adopt.⁵²

The *Acharonim* (latter-day halachic authorities) dispute the case of someone who reads for himself but gathers a *minyan* at the end in order to recite the blessing. Nevertheless, it was the opinion of a number of *Rishonim* (earlier authorities, whose opinion carries greater weight) that this is permitted. Similarly, those who are lenient and permit the inclusion of women and children in the count to recite the blessing, have authoritative sources to rely upon. If there was a *minyan* for the reading but individuals left before the blessing could be recited, it seems that it is appropriate to err on the side of caution and not recite the blessing.

The *brachah* is recited before beginning to reroll the Megillah.⁵³

During the day reading, if a man is uncertain whether he heard a particular word of the reading, he is obligated to hear the Megillah from that word and on, until the Megillah's conclusion. (Although he has no doubt regarding the rest of the reading, he must hear it again in this case.) However, he does not recite a blessing over this second reading. If the missing word does not cause the sentence to lose any of its meaning for the sentence can be understood without it, there is room for leniency regarding the need to hear a repeat. During the night reading, he can be lenient in

51) See a related scenario on www.asktherav.com #19686

52) See *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 31, p. 279. (See also *Shabbos Parshas Toldos* 5748 regarding customs that were revealed only to specific exalted individuals, because the practice was meaningful for them at their advanced degree of spirituality.)

53) see the *sichah* of Purim 5716.

any case. Women may be lenient for both the night and day readings.

We do not throw any holy writings; it is irreverent and flippant. When passing a Megillah to someone else do it in a respectful manner.

LAW OF REDEMPTION: MEGILLAH, INDELIBLE

At the conclusion of his *Laws of Megillah*, Rambam states,⁵⁴ "All the books of the prophets and all of the scriptures are destined to be nullified in the Era of Moshiach. The exception is Megillas Esther, which will remain like the five books of the Torah and like the laws of the Oral Torah, all of which will remain forever."

II. SAY V'AL HANISSIM

V'al hanissim is added in *Shemoneh Esrei* and *Birchas Hamazon* to thank Hashem for the miracle of Purim.

In *Shemoneh Esrei*, *V'al hanissim* is said in the *brachah* of *Modim*. Someone who forgot *V'al Hanissim* should see the chart at the end of the booklet.

Do not skip *V'al hanissim* in order to catch up to the *chazzan* and respond to *Kedushah* or *Modim*.

In *Birchas Hamazon*, *V'al hanissim* is said in the second *brachah*. Someone who forgot *V'al Hanissim* should see the chart at the end of the booklet.

Some authorities are of the opinion that when reciting *Birchas Hamazon* during Purim we must pronounce the word *migdol* (*yeshu'os malko*), as is done on Shabbos and Yom Tov. However, the Rebbe pronounced⁵⁵ the word *magdil* during Chanukah (as is done during the weekdays), and it is logical to assume that this should be done during Purim as well.

III. SEND MISHLOACH MANOS

WHAT?

On Purim day, every person sends at least two different foods to at least one other person of the same gender. This is done to demonstrate friendship and brotherhood among the Jewish people. It is praiseworthy to increase the number of *mishloach manos*.

Sefer Haminhagim notes that the Rebbe's custom is to send *mishloach manos* consisting of a food and a drink to three individuals.

It is customary to reciprocate when receiving *mishloach manos*.

Send foods that can be eaten immediately without any further preparation (e.g., fruit, cooked fish or meat, cake, candy, wine or other beverage). The two foods

⁵⁴) Regarding the source of this teaching, see *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 26, p. 222. The concept is explained on pp. 226 ff.

⁵⁵) during the *farbrengen* of Zos Chanukah 5738.

must be of different types, but may have the identical *brachah*.

A dish made of separate ingredients is still considered one type of food. If giving a salad for *mishloach manos*, for example, another food or drink should be included.

Ma'aser money should not be used to purchase the goods required for *mishloach manos*.

It is proper that each gift should be substantial enough to convey a feeling of respect and not something that might insult the recipient. Each item should be at least the size of a *kezayis* (the volume that would fill a small matchbox).

It is appropriate to refrain from including non-*mevushal* wine in the *mishloach manos* sent to a Jew who does not yet observe the *mitzvos*. Nevertheless, there is halachic backing for those who are lenient in this case.

It is permitted to send *mishloach manos* if you suspect the recipient will not make a *brachah* on the foods—or even if you are sure that this is the case. However, it is preferable not to send such an individual *hamotzi* foods (that require *Birchas Hamazon*), and to ensure that the foodstuffs are *pareve*, so as not to create a situation wherein they may transgress a biblical commandment on account of your gift. It would also be proper to include the appropriate *brachos* on a card, or the like, to provide an additional *mitzvah* opportunity.

WHO?

The obligation of *mishloach manos* pertains to every man and woman, and includes children from the age of *chinuch*. All children should be encouraged to participate in this *mitzvah*, even if it is unclear whether they have reached the age of *chinuch*.

An *avel* within the period of mourning (i.e., a year for a parent, thirty days for other relatives) is obligated to send *mishloach manos*. They should send only simple foods, not “luxurious treats that are designed to bring joy,” and they should not send *mishloach manos* to many people. But a mourner should not be a recipient of *mishloach manos*; rather, send to other (non-mourning) members of their family. A mourner who is sent *mishloach manos*, however, is permitted to accept it. In that case, the mourner is also permitted to provide *mishloach manos* in return, as is customarily done.

Someone who has borrowed funds from an individual should not send that person *mishloach manos*, due to the concern of *ribis* (interest). If they regularly sent them *mishloach manos* or gifts in the past, before having borrowed funds, they may continue that routine, provided they do not now have the loan in mind as a reason for doing so. The loan should also not be repaid while providing *mishloach manos* at the same time.

Even an individual so poor as to be supported from public funds must fulfill the *mitzvah* in the minimal manner. Someone who is not able or cannot afford to send

their own *mishloach manos* can make an exchange with another and in this way they both fulfill the mitzvah.

If someone sends *mishloach manos* to another individual and the recipient is not home and does not receive it until after Purim, that gift might not be considered as *mishloach manos*.

A married woman should not rely on her husband's *mishloach manos*, but she should rather give *mishloach manos* of her own. The same is true of children; although they are dependent upon their parents, they should send their own *mishloach manos*.

WHEN & HOW?

Mishloach manos must be sent during the day of Purim, not the previous or following night.

It is customary that *mishloach manos* be sent through a third party (*shliach*), even a child, and not delivered by the donor themselves.

It has become the accepted practice to be lenient and rely on the presumption that the *shliach* delivered the *mishloach manos* as instructed. It is unnecessary to ascertain that this is the case, because a *shliach* works under the halachic presumption of fulfilling their mission. The same is true when a *shliach* is used for the distribution of *matanos l'evyonim*.⁵⁶

Although it is praiseworthy to "increase in *mishloach manos*," the intention is not that it be exaggerated or extravagant. As a principle, it is far better to increase in *matanos l'evyonim* than to increase the size of the *seudah* or the number of *mishloach manos* parcels. Our main intention in sending *mishloach manos* should be to fulfill the mitzvah, to increase friendship among our fellow Jews, or to assist the unfortunate who require food packages for Purim or otherwise. We should not give simply because it's the "thing to do" culturally, or to display wealth.

The mitzvah should be fulfilled before *shkiah* (5:53 pm). If it has arrived and *mishloach manos* has not been sent, hurry to do it before *tzeis hakochavim* (nightfall).

IV. GIVE MATANOS L'EVYONIM

WHO & WHAT?

Every person, even someone who is financially needy, is required to give gifts or money of at least a nominal sum to two poor people on Purim day (not at night). The obligation can be fulfilled through any type of gift: money, food or clothing. The gifts should be worth at least a *perutah* (approximately five cents). That is the minimum requirement; it is proper to give more. Giving to the poor further

⁵⁶ See explanation at length in the Hebrew section.

demonstrates the spirit of unity among the Jewish people.

A woman should not rely on her husband to fulfill the mitzvah for her. She should personally give *matanos l'evyonim*. Children also should not rely on their parents; they should personally fulfill this mitzvah, even if it is unclear whether they have reached the age of *chinuch*.

WHEN?

If a poor person cannot be found, the money can be designated on Purim or given to someone collecting for the needy. When doing so, it's proper to let the poor person know that funds are being held for them. If this is not practical, it is okay to place the money in a *pushka*, or to put it aside for later. However, according to many opinions, these monies do not fulfill the obligation of *matanos l'evyonim*, and it would be best to make arrangements earlier, even before Purim, so that the funds reach the poor on Purim itself.

As with *mishloach manos*, if extenuating circumstances did not allow its distribution before *shkiah*, *matanos le'evyonim* may be made up until nightfall.

HOW?

Matanos l'evyonim may be given to poor men, women or children (who have reached the age of understanding). It may also be given to a poor mourner.

Some sources state that we should be careful to give *matanos l'evyonim* to individuals who are experiencing grinding poverty and can therefore be classified as bona fide *evyonim* ("destitute people"). In actual practice, however, the halachic conclusion is that it can be given to anyone who is considered poor, meaning that they do not have enough to support themselves and their families independently.

On Purim, we do not weigh the appropriateness of the recipient of our *tzedakah*. Whoever stretches out a hand and asks should receive.

It is customary to distribute money to those who fill religious roles in the community, such as *Rabbanim*, *chazzanim*, *shamashim*, Torah teachers, as well as Torah educational institutions. Indeed, they depend on *Purim gelt* to ensure that they can continue fulfilling their duties on behalf of the community. However, *matanos l'evyonim* is not fulfilled with these contributions.

The minimum amount of *matanos l'evyonim* must be given from money that is not set aside for *ma'aser*.

It is preferable to give generously to the poor rather than to prepare a lavish Purim *seudah* or to give many *mishloach manos* to friends. "For there is no greater or more glorious joy than to gladden the hearts of paupers, orphans, widows, and strangers, and one who brings happiness to these low-spirited individuals is comparable to the *Shechinah*."⁵⁷

57) Rambam

LAW OF REDEMPTION: IF EVERYONE'S A RICH MAN

The Rebbe raises the question⁵⁸ of how we will fulfill the mitzvah of *matanos l'evyonim* during the Era of Redemption when there will not be any poor Jews, in fulfillment of the Torah's promise, "For there will not be a pauper among you".⁵⁹

V. FESTIVE MEAL

WHAT?

Purim is a time for feasting and rejoicing. We do not fast or eulogize on Purim. In fact, the joy of Purim is far greater than the joy of the festivals.

We are required to make a feast--eat at least one meal--during the day of Purim to rejoice in the Purim spirit. Invite family and friends to join in the meal in order to make it more joyous. Many have the custom to light candles for the meal. It is a mitzvah to hold the Purim meal in a lavish manner.

WHEN?

We daven Minchah early (reciting *V'al Hanissim* and omitting *Tachanun*), followed by the festive Purim meal.

Usually, the custom is to eat this meal after Minchah in the late afternoon, since we are busy with reading the Megillah, giving out *matanos l'evyonim* and *mishloach manos* in the morning. The meal should begin during the daytime and preferably continue into the night of *Shushan Purim*.

It is permitted to hold the Purim *seudah* in the morning instead of the afternoon, if preferred. The main thing is to hold the majority of the meal during daylight hours. Someone who is running late should at least make certain to sit down to a meal and eat an amount equivalent to a *kebeitzah*, or at a minimum, a *kezayis*, before *shkiah* (sunset).

If the participants did not eat at least a *kezayis* before *shkiah*, *V'al hanissim* is not recited in *Birchas Hamazon*.

A MOURNER

An *aveil*, one who is mourning a loss, G-d forbid, should not dance even during the Purim *seudah*. It is permissible to dance a little, in private, in their own home, if that is their practice each year. If refraining from dancing in the presence of others will be interpreted by them as observing the mourning restrictions in public, it is then permissible to dance.

⁵⁸) See *Sefer Hasichos* 5750, vol. 1, p. 310, fn. 114. For sources on further discussion on this topic, see the Hebrew section footnotes. See *Sha'alos u'Teshuvos Mahari Asad*, O.C. 206 who notes that initially Purim was accepted as an actual day of Yom Tov, and *matanos l'evyonim* could not have been fulfilled, because it would have been forbidden to handle money due to its *muktzah* status. Accordingly, we could suggest that since, according to some, Purim will indeed attain the status of Yom Tov in the future era (see "Law of Redemption" in the previous section) money will not be exchanged as a result.

⁵⁹) *Re'eh* 15:4

It is proper to learn Torah before beginning the meal. Some begin to study the laws of Pesach on Purim day since it is thirty days before the start of the Yom Tov of Pesach.

As originally established by Moshe Rabbeinu for the Jews in the desert, the Torah discussions pertaining to any occasion included not only the halachic practices associated with that particular day but also to any miraculous events and back history. This applies to our Purim-related study today.

LAW OF REDEMPTION: PERFECTLY PREPARED

The Alter Rebbe states⁶⁰ in his *Shulchan Aruch*: “During the times of the *Beis Hamikdash*, the early Sages instituted that the laws of each festival should be explained to the public starting thirty days prior to each festival. Therefore, they would begin teaching the laws of Pesach from Purim onwards ... Each person living in Eretz Yisrael was obligated to bring three offerings (*olas re'iyah*, *shalmei chagigah*, and *shalmei simchah*) on each festival. Each sacrifice has to be free of any blemish or other disqualification. The Sages therefore instituted the practice of publicly explaining the laws of the festivals thirty days in advance, to remind the people of the festival so that they do not forget to prepare animals that are fit for offering. They then had a full thirty days to prepare.”

THIRTY DAYS

Now is also the time to begin donating, preparing, and organizing to provide *ma'os chittim*, supplies for those who cannot afford the Pesach expenses, with *shemurah matzos* for the *sedarim* and for Pesach, as well as providing their other Pesach needs.⁶¹

Matzah is not eaten from today (thirty days prior to Pesach) until the Seder on the first night of Pesach. It is customary to refrain even from *chametzdik* matzah, those that are not fit for consumption on Pesach.

Care should be taken from this day onward to prevent *chametz* substances from becoming firmly attached or entrenched in our possessions, which would frustrate our subsequent efforts to clean for Pesach. Many *poskim* refer to scenarios to avoid *chametz* throughout these thirty days—such as not using a *chametz* utensil to collect wine from a barrel that has been set aside for Pesach use; preventing *chametz* from entering a location that will be exempt from *bedikas chametz*; not laundering clothes with a *chametz* agent; not gluing paper with a *chametz* substance; care for a property that will be vacated within the thirty days and not returned to until after Pesach; storing things away in a place that will not be cleared until after Pesach, and so on.

EATING

Preferably, the *seudah* should consist of washing for bread and meat⁶² should be served.

⁶⁰) beg. *Hilchos Pesach*

⁶¹) See *Sefer Hasichos* 5750, vol. 1, p. 351, fn. 134; *Sichas Purim* 5726; *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Parah* 5740.

⁶²) Even a woman whose *mikvah* night is that evening may eat meat in honor of Purim, although she will have to take extra care when cleaning her mouth and teeth subsequently.

The *minhag* is to eat *kreplach* at the *seudah*.⁶³

The *brachah* over *kreplach* is generally *mezonos*, because the dough from which it is kneaded is *mezonos*—due to being formed predominantly with liquids other than water. If the dough is *hamotzi*, the *kreplach* will similarly be *hamotzi*, even if eaten with its meat filling in mind and not the pastry. (This is because meat is a highly satiating accompaniment to the pastry and it therefore amplifies the pastry's satiation factor.)

The *brachah* over *hamantaschen* is generally *mezonos*, because the dough used nowadays for *hamantaschen* is usually *mezonos*. If the dough is *hamotzi* but the filling is sweet, the *brachah* will remain *mezonos*—provided that the sweet nature of the filling earns primary status, whereby the pastry is demoted to a secondary facilitator role. (Unlike *kreplach*, this snack is not designed to satiate, to be used as part of a meal, but simply as a delicacy, for pleasure.)

DRINKING ON PURIM

Our Sages state that “a man⁶⁴ should drink wine until one reaches the point where he can no longer differentiate between ‘cursed is Haman and blessed is Mordechai.’” It is customary to drink at least more than usual. The main thing, however, is not the amount of drink, but the *kavanah* (intention) to do the Will of Heaven and that all actions reflect that intention. The joy must be *simchah shel mitzvah*. While it is a mitzvah to drink more than we do regularly during the meal, it is important to remember that we must *bentch* and do other mitzvos (such as *daven Maariv*) after the meal.

Someone who is weak by nature, or who knows that drinking will cause him to neglect a mitzvah, a *brachah* or a *tefillah*, or that he may act or speak inappropriately, should not drink too much—or even at all.

In many *sichos*, the Rebbe explains the significance of physically drinking wine on Purim. However, there is much debate whether this applies to wine in the broader sense of all alcoholic beverages, or whether it is strictly reserved to actual wine. Although the basic reason for drinking wine is because the main miracle of Purim transpired through Queen Esther's wine party, nevertheless, there is room to suggest that all alcoholic beverages have the same halachic status as wine.⁶⁵

In *Sichas Zos Chanukah* 5739, the Rebbe implies that specifically wine and not any other alcoholic drink should be used on Purim. Similarly, in *Sichas Purim*

63) This custom has to do with the concept, explained in numerous sources, that *Yom Hakippurim* is *Ki-Purim*, “like Purim.” On the day preceding Yom Kippur, it is customary to eat *kreplach*. See footnote to entry in *Sefer Minhagei Chabad* for Yom Kippur.

64) But not a woman, who should not drink alcohol in front of men and in general should not drink excessively. See Asktherav.com #1754, #6201.

65) See extensive sources in the Hebrew edition

5739, the Rebbe instructed those present to say “*l’chaim*” on wine specifically.⁶⁶

A blessing of *hatov vehameitiv* is recited over very fine wine under special circumstances. See the section at the end of the booklet for the parameters of the laws governing the recitation of this unique brachah.

A person who regurgitated all they ate and drank should not recite a *brachah acharonah*. Some say that the obligation to eat a festive meal on Purim is not fulfilled if the food has all been vomited. If the body failed to retain as much as the quantity of a *kezayis*, the individual should eat again. (Needless to say, if he had eaten the quantity of a *kezayis* in the course of the day, he has fulfilled his obligation. After all, according to the strict letter of the law, he is not required to wash and eat bread.)

When a father instructs his son to avoid becoming drunk on Purim, the son is obligated by halachah to obey his father, as part of the Torah’s commandment of *kibbud av va’eim*.

BRACHOS ON BEVERAGES

When drinking wine in the middle of a washing meal, a brachah of *borei pri hagafen* is recited because of its elevated status. However, a *brachah acharonah* is not recited because it is included in *Birchas Hamazon*.

In countries where it is customary to imbibe while dining, other alcoholic beverages do not require a brachah of *shehakol* in middle of a washing meal.

All other drinks are considered trivial compared to wine.⁶⁷ Therefore, no brachah is recited on any drink that a person has intention to drink (or is on the table) at the time when *borei pri hagafen* is recited.⁶⁸

The same applies to the *brachah acharonah*—no *borei nefashos* is recited after drinking both wine and other beverages. This applies even if you decided to drink the non-alcoholic beverages at a later time (and actually made a preliminary *brachah* on it), the after-brachah of *al hagefen* still covers the other drinks.

Since there is a halachic opinion that even a *kezayis* of wine requires a *brachah acharonah*, you should avoid drinking an amount that falls between a *kezayis* (the volume that would fill a small matchbox) and a *revi’is* (about 3 ounces)—which certainly needs an after-brachah.⁶⁹ Practically, if you drank a *kezayis* and do not have more wine to make up, you do not make a *brachah acharonah*.

Once you have begun drinking wine in one location, you should not move to

66) See also *Sichas Leil Beis d’Chag Hapesach* 5725.

67) See [#731](http://www.halacha2go.com) including sources and footnotes.

68) This applies practically in a case where one is drinking but not having a *seudah*—as *hamotzi* also covers all drinks (besides wine).

69) See a lengthy explanation in the publication *B’asra D’Rav*, vol. 5

another before making an after-brachah. After the fact, if you have left before *bentching*, you do not need to make a new preliminary brachah, as long as you drank at least a *revi'is* at the first location. If you are in the midst of a washing meal, even less than an initial *revi'is* suffices.

What's if, in the above situation, you drank wine and also *shehakol* beverages in the first location? There is a dispute whether you must make a new brachah of *shehakol* in the second location. Practically, in the new place you would make a *shehakol*, but if you return to the original location to drink more, then you do not.

LAWS OF INTOXICATION

Halachah differentiates between someone who is shasui (slightly intoxicated), shikur (very intoxicated) and shikruso shel Lot—an individual so completely drunk, they have lost control of what they are doing. The following laws refer to the slightly intoxicated, unless otherwise specified.

Prayer

Someone who has drunk a *revi'is*⁷⁰ of wine is not permitted to pray. They must not pray until the effect of the wine has dissipated, even if they can speak perfectly lucidly before a king while under the influence. Wine drunk in the course of a meal is, generally, not considered intoxicating. However, it all depends on each individual's nature. All authorities agree that at least as far as prayer is concerned, all other intoxicating drinks share the same law as wine. It is sufficient for the intoxicated person to wait until they feel the effect has worn off in order to *daven*.

Halachah further states that if the one who drank more than a *revi'is* but is lucid (able to speak coherently before a king) and went ahead and prayed, the prayer is valid and need not be repeated when completely sober. Someone who has become completely drunk cannot judge himself coherent enough to lucidly address a king until his sober friends inform him of this fact.

Nowadays, we do not manufacture wines of the strength commonplace in earlier periods of history. We are therefore no longer concerned with someone who has drunk wine—prayer is permitted even if **more** than a *revi'is* was imbibed. Certainly, if you are capable of holding a *siddur* and praying from it, you need not worry about being slightly intoxicated. If the only option is to recite the prayers from memory, and waiting for the effect of the wine to dissipate will result in missing the proper time of prayer, you should pray in the present state. After all, we do not concentrate that perfectly in our prayer nowadays regardless of the wine.

However, someone who is intoxicated to the point that he is unable to speak

⁷⁰) halachic measurement of fourth of a *lug* and the amount necessary for *kiddush*. This is about 3 ounces.

lucidly before a king is called a *shikar* (drunkard). Praying in such a state is an abomination and it is comparable to idol worship. A *shikar* must repeat their prayer once intoxication has worn off. This is something we must be careful to avoid nowadays as well, despite the comparative weakness of our wines.

If a *shikar* remains in the state of drunkenness as the deadline for *tefillah* approaches, he should let the time pass rather than pray, and then make up for the missed prayer at the time of the next *tefillah*—by which time intoxication will have subsided. Although this delay was avoidable, a *shikar* is nevertheless considered an *ones* (one ruled by circumstances beyond their control), because when he began drinking, he believed that he would have time to sober up somewhat before the deadline arrived; he subsequently got carried away with the feasting and drinking, losing proper awareness of time, until there was insufficient time.

Saying Shema

Some authorities maintain that the laws of reciting the *Shema* are identical to the laws of prayer, as above, if you are slightly intoxicated. Similarly, the blessings surrounding the recital of the *Shema* are treated identically to the actual paragraphs of the *Shema*. According to the final halachic consensus, however, even if you drank strong wine you should nevertheless recite the *Shema*. This is because reciting the *Shema* is *d'araisa* (a biblical obligation), and we must err on the side of fulfilling the obligation in the face of an uncertain cause for invalidation.

When reciting the *Shema* to fulfill an obligation in these circumstances, it must be recited along with its appropriate blessings, even if you are uncertain that the obligation is truly being fulfilled.

A *shikar*, by contrast, must treat the *Shema* like prayer and is forbidden to recite it or its blessings.

Birchas Hamazon

Someone who is able to address a king, even if they cannot speak as properly as usual because their speech gives away the fact that they are slightly intoxicated, nevertheless should recite *Birchas Hamazon*, as long as there are no errors or fumbling over words.

There is a disagreement among the authorities regarding a *shikar* who cannot speak lucidly before a king without making errors. Some are of the opinion that he must not recite *Birchas Hamazon* and that doing so is considered an abomination. Others maintain that a *shikar* who is entirely incapable of addressing a king should nevertheless recite *Birchas Hamazon*.

Practically speaking, all attempts should be made to end the meal and recite *Birchas Hamazon* before reaching such a state. If you have already reached a

state of *shikrus*, go ahead and recite *Birchas Hamazon* because it is a biblical obligation and we are stringent to fulfill it in the face of an uncertain disqualification.

In the above case, once the *shikar* has recited *Birchas Hamazon*—and then sobers before the meal has been fully digested—should not repeat *Birchas Hamazon*. This is because when faced with an uncertain obligation to recite blessings (it is not certain that the previous recitation was invalid), we err on the side of not reciting blessings in vain.

If any inebriated individual falls asleep at the table before *bentching*, it is not considered a *hefsek* (distracted interruption) and he may continue his meal (or just *bentch*) without making a new brachah—as long as he has not yet digested his entire meal (i.e., he is not hungry again). He should wash his hands for *netilas yadayim* (without a brachah) before eating more. If he awakes with an empty stomach, he does not say *Birchas Hamazon* at all, and he must make new brachos on any food he would like to consume.

However, if someone actually laid down for a half-hour or more, this is definitely considered interruptive—even if it happens at the same location as his meal,⁷¹ and he wants to continue eating, he must wash and make the brachos again.

If someone nods off in middle of *Birchas Hamazon*, and awakes without knowing where they are up to, should go back to the beginning of whichever brachah is after the one he is certain he recited.⁷²

Other Brachos

Even a *shikar* may recite all other blessings. Even a blurry intention is sufficient for these blessings, and even with mistakes, the blessings remain valid.

Someone who is in proximity of someone who has vomited may still recite brachos, even though they are in the presence of a repugnant substance. However, if the vomit emits a nasty smell (as is the case when someone regurgitates post-ingestion), they must move out of sight of the mess **and** at least *four amos* (about six feet) further than the stink reaches.

An Extreme *Shikur*

A drunkard who arrives at the state achieved by Lot, at which point he is utterly unaware of what he is doing, is no longer obligated in any mitzvah. He may not recite a blessing of any kind. He may not be included in the ten men required for a *minyan*, or in the *zimun* for *Birchas Hamazon*. (Some authorities are stringent and do not permit even a lesser *shikar*, as described earlier, to participate in the required number for a *minyan*.)

⁷¹ See alternate opinions in the Hebrew footnotes on this section.

⁷² See the question regarding losing focus in davening at [#1545](http://www.asktherav.com). See Hebrew footnote for more details of similarities and differences with that case.

Responsibility & Liability

A *shikar* of any level, even that achieved by Lot, is considered a rational person for all matters, and the Torah's penalties for transgressing its laws will apply in his case. In this regard, he is treated as if he had willfully intended to perform whichever actions he takes.

Even on Purim, someone who inflicts damage or injury while intoxicated is fully liable. (This applies even to damage caused by the rejoicing of Purim, as is customary in some places, and not simply due to sheer drunkenness.⁷³)

LAW OF REDEMPTION: SOBER IN THE BEIS HAMIKDASH

Firstly, even nowadays, a Kohen who is aware of the precise *beis av* (family lineage) and the precise *mishmar* (rotation of service) his family belonged to is prohibited from drinking wine on the day that he would have served in the *Beis Hamikdash*. In *Likkutei Sichos*, the Rebbe points⁷⁴ to this law as proof that it is entirely possible for the *Beis Hamikdash* to appear instantly, quicker than it takes the average person to walk a *mil*—the time required for a slightly intoxicated Kohen to sober enough to perform his service, which is why he must avoid wine that entire day.

A Kohen who drank wine but is otherwise deemed fit for service in the *Beis Hamikdash* according to the requirements of halachah must not proceed deeper into the Courtyard beyond the place of the *mizbe'ach*. If he performs the duties of the Kohanim while in this state, he is liable to death by the hand of Heaven.

The above applies only to a Kohen who drank at least a *revi'is* of wine. He may, however, drink less than this amount without concern.

The law of the disqualifying *revi'is* applies only to a Kohen who drank that quantity of raw wine that has fermented for at least forty days, and when he drinks it in one shot. If he diluted the wine, or if he drank it in stages, he would be spared the above penalty.

A Kohen who is intoxicated from beverages other than wine may not enter the *Beis Hamikdash*. According to *Minchas Chinuch*⁷⁵—and it appears that the Alter Rebbe shares this view—there is no limit to the quantity of liquors other than wine, and a Kohen intoxicated from even a lesser amount than a *revi'is* of liquor is prohibited from entering the *Beis Hamikdash*.

If a Kohen intoxicated from beverages other than wine performs the service in the *Beis Hamikdash*, the duties he performed remain valid, but he receives the penalty of lashes. However, some authorities consider him equal to someone intoxicated with wine, in which case, the duties he performed are invalid, and he is liable to death at the hands of Heaven.

Every person, whether he is a Kohen, a Levi or a Yisrael, is forbidden to enter any part of the *Beis Hamikdash* if he is a *shikar*, or even if he is slightly intoxicated. This applies from the start of the section in the *Beis Hamikdash* called *Ezras Yisrael*, for it is

⁷³) See *Magen Avraham*, 695: 7-8; *Aruch Hashulchan*, 10; *Mishnah Berurah*, 13. See also *Eliyahu Rabbah* 696, quoting the *Shelah*.

⁷⁴) vol. 2, p. 618

⁷⁵) *Mitzvah* 152

considered disrespectful for one in a disgraceful state to enter into the great and holy House of Hashem.

Safety Alert: Excessive alcohol consumption can cause poisoning and even worse, Heaven forbid. There is also a serious danger of driving under the influence of alcohol. Parents should be aware about the incidence of drinking alcohol among young people and explain to them the dangers involved.

A Chassid's Limits

As is well known, the Rebbe enacted a strict limit on drinking alcohol. This enactment remains in force on Purim.

A PURIM CO-OP

In 5749, the Rebbe called⁷⁶ for collective performances of the Purim *mitzvos*: "We should vigorously publicize this call in every location, outside the Holy Land and certainly within its borders: Put every effort into arranging that all matters associated with Purim be conducted in a manner of *berov am hadras melech*—Hashem's honor is magnified specifically when many people gather together to serve Him. This means holding large gatherings to hear the Megillah—but that is stating the obvious; certainly all efforts are already being made to achieve that. Rather, the novelty of this drive extends primarily to the remaining Purim observances: *mishloach manos*, *matanos l'evyonim*, and *mishteh v'simchah*.

"We do not find precedence of a particular emphasis on performing these *mitzvos* as part of a large collective; these *mitzvos* are routinely practiced by individuals acting alone to fulfill their private obligations. However, because we desire and need to end the exile and the dispersion of the Jews among the nations, which is achieved through an increase in Jewish unity, it is extremely fitting and correct to put every possible effort into observing all of the Purim *mitzvos* in large groups. If there is a lone Jew in some far-flung corner of the globe, we should try—if it is not possible to bring him to a location where there is a community—to bring nine Jews to him, so that he can also take part in this effort to observe all the Purim *mitzvos* with the Jewish collective of a complete *minyan*.

"More specifically, regarding the Purim meal: it is common for individuals to celebrate the Purim *seudah* in their private homes, with their own family and the like. Nevertheless, it has long been customarily in numerous communities for people to go from house to house to participate in and increase their fellow Jews' joy of Purim and their *seudah*. This is in addition to the possibility of increasing the joy with large gatherings in private homes, following the conclusion of the family *seudah*.

"Now, when it comes to *matanos l'evyonim*, observing this mitzvah in large groups must be done with utmost sensitivity for the needy recipients: instead of converging on a needy individual, the crowd can converge on the local *gabbai tzedakah* and rely on him to distribute it privately to the recipient; alternatively,

⁷⁶) Sichas Shabbos Parshas Vayikra 5749

the congregation can gather to place their donations in a *tzedakah* box whose funds will later be donated to the needy.”

COMMUNAL FARBRENGEN

On Purim 5748, the Rebbe suggested⁷⁷ that following the Purim *seudah*, “it would be highly appropriate to organize the largest possible *farbrengen*, in the spirit of [Esther’s call to] ‘gather all the Jews,’ with the participation of ‘youth and seniors, children and women.’ Needless to say, the men must gather in the men’s section and the women in the women’s section, with the children present in both locations. The *farbrengen* will enable the joy and unity of Purim to continue into Shushan Purim.”

Purim Appeals: During the *farbrengens* of Purim, the *Rebbeim* would make an appeal for the *Kupas Rabbeinu tzedakah* fund.

COLLECTION TIME

On Purim 5713, the Rebbe stated⁷⁸: “We try to hold onto and reestablish the customs of earlier times. If we would have “broad shoulders” (i.e., if we were able to rely on our own strengths), if we had “eyes to see and ears to hear,” a perceptive heart and an understanding intellect, then we would not be forced to specifically use the well-paved paths. We would be able to forge new paths in order to reach the same goal, to “ascend to the House of Hashem.” Since, however, these things remain lacking, we must tread the paths that have been already worn down for us. We rely on the responsibility of those who indicated and paved these paths, which they did relying on their own strengths. We therefore seek to implement these customs, even if, for a number of reasons, these practices were interrupted for some time:

“The Rebbe Rashab would collect funds or direct people to donate funds during a *farbrengen* three times a year: On *Simchas Torah*, *Yud-Tes Kislev*, and *Purim*. On *Purim*, he would collect for his own affairs—Torah institutions, the support of private individuals, and so on...Similarly, if we will collect for those same things that the Rebbe has collected, and on the same occasions as the Rebbe, occasions which are *eis ratzon* and a *segulah* (auspicious times) for these collections, it will bring additional blessing and success. We can then approach the Rebbe and demand that he elicit all the promises in actuality.”

EXTENDED MEAL

Anyone who began their meal before sunset (*shkiah*) and it has extended until nightfall, or even several hours into the night, should recite *V'al Hanissim* during *Birchas Hamazon*.⁷⁹ That is, only if at least a *kezayis* of food was eaten before *shkiah*,

⁷⁷) *Sefer Hasichos* 5748 vol. 1, p. 303

⁷⁸) See *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 2, pp 537-8

⁷⁹) In general, one's obligations depend on the circumstances at the start of the meal. In this case, the meal began during Purim, and therefore, the obligation to mention Purim during *Birchas Hamazon* does not expire even if Purim has already ended.

and also, if the nighttime Shema and Maariv have not been recited during the meal. If a *kezayis* has not been eaten before *shkiah*, *V'al hanissim* is not said.

Poskim state that in such a situation, recite *Birchas Hamazon* with *V'al Hanissim* first, and then go to shul for Maariv, and then return home to eat, drink, and rejoice further, for the mitzvah to rejoice extends over both days of Purim and Shushan Purim.

MAARIV

The meal should not extend so late that it delays Maariv (and the nighttime Shema) beyond its appropriate time, which is before midnight. "The purpose of establishing this (*Purim seudah*)," states the sefer *Seder Hayom*, "is not to spoil another. Seek and you will accomplish both, with Hashem's help."

It is therefore best to recite it immediately at nightfall. *Sof zman* (latest time) is midnight, **12:08 am**.

In a number of *sichos*, the Rebbe mentions⁸⁰ that after the conclusion of the Rema's Purim meal, he would make his way reminding others of their obligation to recite Maariv in its correct time.

If the recital of Shema (as part of the Maariv service) was delayed beyond midnight, even unintentionally, it may be recited any time before dawn at **4:58 am**. Someone who was a victim of circumstances beyond his control, or he was drunk or ill, and failed to recite Shema by dawn, may recite it after dawn but prior to sunrise at **6:19 am**. In the latter scenario, he should not recite *Hashkiveinu* ("Let us lie down in peace..."), because after dawn it is no longer considered the time for retiring. Nevertheless, he may recite the rest of the blessings—the two blessings before Shema, and the blessing (*Emes ve'emunah*) that follows it, until *Hashkiveinu*. As far as reciting the *Amidah* is concerned, some authorities allow someone who has not recited it before dawn to recite it before sunrise.

If someone forgot (or were forced by circumstances) and did not daven Maariv before sunrise he should recite the Shacharis *Amidah* twice.

THURSDAY, 15 ADAR, SHUSHAN PURIM

No *Tachanun* nor *Tachanun*-related sections of *davening* are recited.

Someone who was on a sea voyage or other such journey and did not have access to a kosher Megillah on the 14th of Adar (Purim), but is able to obtain a Megillah on the 15th (Shushan Purim), should read the Megillah on that day. However, he

⁸⁰) See *Sichas Purim* 5727. *Sichas Chof Kislev*, *Yud Shevat*, and *Yud Alef Nisan* 5737; *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 39, p. 282.

"It was the Rema's custom each Purim to wear a mask and disguise himself in different clothing and to go around the houses shouting that Maariv would be prayed at its proper time."

should not recite the blessings over it.

A person should add slightly to their joy and celebration during the meals of this day.

It is forbidden to fast or eulogize today.

We do not recite *Al Hanissim* today.

The Rebbe encourages us to utilize the day of Shushan Purim to “make up” for anything that may have been missed out on Purim.

LAW OF REDEMPTION: IN THE BEIS HAMIKDASH TODAY...

In the *Beis Hamikdash* everyone must stop what they are doing—Kohanim interrupt the service of the *Beis Hamikdash*, Levi'im descend from their platform, and Yisraelim turn from observing the sacrifices—to attend the reading of the Megillah on the 15th of Adar (when Purim is celebrated in the walled city of Yerushalayim).

On the 15th of Adar the Beis Din sends emissaries throughout the Land of Israel to repair the roads and pathways (for the sake of the Jews ascending to Yerushalayim for the festivals or for the sake of those fleeing to a City of Refuge), and to repair the *mikvaos*. They turn their attention to the needs of the public, to investigate and take whatever action is needed for the public benefit and for matters concerning consecrated property. The emissaries also check for compliance with the laws of *kila'im* (prohibited mixing of plant species).⁸¹

On this day, the money-changers would take up positions in every city and gently encourage the people to donate their obligatory half-shekalim to the *Beis Hamikdash*. Donations that were given voluntarily were accepted, but no-one was forced to give at this point.⁸² Interestingly, *Sefer Ma'aseh Rokeach* explains⁸³ that in the Future Era, each person will donate a **complete** shekel to the third *Beis Hamikdash*, instead of a half-shekel.

The half-shekalim collected from all Jews were used to fund the communal sacrifices. Regarding offering the communal sacrifices from a new collection this year with the immediate coming of Moshiach, when “the *mikdash* will be speedily built,” despite the fact that there was not an opportunity to collect the required donations from all Jews—see the discussion in *Sichas Yud Gimmel Nisan 5738* and *Leil Daled d'Chag Hasukkos 5751*.⁸⁴

In the Future Era, Yerushalayim will extend all the way to Damascus.⁸⁵ We can wonder how this will impact the required date for reading the Megillah in the future city of Yerushalayim. On one hand, its extended areas cannot be considered having been encompassed by a wall in the times of Yehoshua.⁸⁶ On the other hand, the extended

81) For further clarification of this topic, see the sources in the Hebrew section footnotes. See *Shaalos u'Teshuvos Binyan Shlomo*, 55, regarding why the Beis Din saw fit to dispatch emissaries specifically on Shushan Purim. However, Rambam's wording in *Hilchos Arachin* (and other sources) seem to negate his explanation.

82) See Rambam, *Hilchos Shekalim*, 1:9, based on *Mishnah, Shekalim*, 1:3

83) beg. of *Shekalim*. See *Midrash Hagadol, Naso*, 6

84) *Hisva'aduyos 5751*, vol. 1, p. 118

85) See *Sifrei, Devarim*, 1; *Rashi to Zechariah 9:1*. See also *Rashi to 14:8*.

86) although other laws of a walled city will indeed apply to its extended areas. See *Maharsha, Megillah*

area will be considered visibly close to Yerushalayim to the point that they share the same halachic obligations; there will not be the required measure (approx. 70 *amos*) of empty land between Yerushalayim's original areas and its extended areas due to the "abundance of people" living there in the future.⁸⁷

MORE JOY TODAY

The Rebbe states⁸⁸: "Although regarding the reading of the Megillah, the latest date on which it can be read is the fifteenth of Adar,⁸⁹ nevertheless, the instruction to increase in joy is associated with the entire month of Adar, as our Sages state, 'From when we enter the month of Adar, we increase in joy',⁹⁰ and as stated in the Megillah, Adar is 'the month that was transformed for them'.⁹¹ If that is the case, we should increase in joy on each day of the month of Adar, adding each day to the previous day's level of joy. After all, if the joy was to remain at a constant throughout, without augmentation or amplification, it cannot be considered a perfect state of joy—it has grown old and repetitive.

"...The meaning of the phrase 'From when we enter the month of Adar, we increase in joy' is that from the start of the month we must continuously increase in joy with each passing day. It is clear from this that on the fifteenth of Adar, we must experience a happiness that is even greater than that of Purim. And then an even greater joy on the sixteenth, and so on. By the time we reach the final day of Adar, our joy should be truly wondrous."

The Rebbe explains⁹² that, "it is specifically the joy experienced after Purim, in the latter half of the month of Adar, that carries the quality of Redemption. As our Sages state, 'We draw [one] redemption close to [another] redemption,' so that from the redemption of Purim, an incomplete redemption because 'we are still subject to Achashveirosh,' we reach the redemption of Pesach—a complete redemption, and a redemption that is not followed by exile, for it is the true and complete Redemption."

6.2. Also see the conclusion of the *ma'amor* entitled *Megillah Nikreis* 5739, regarding reading the Megillah in Yerushalayim in the Future Era, when the city will be surrounded by a "wall of fire."

87) See *Zechariah* 2:8. See Hebrew section for sources.

88) *Sichas Shabbos Mevarchim Nissan* 5717, printed in *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 4, p. 1274. See also *Sefer Hasichos* 5752, p. 391

89) *Megillah* 2a

90) *Taanis* 29a

91) *Esther* 9:22

92) *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Vayakhel-Pekudei/Parah* 5731

הטוב והמטיב

THE LAWS OF THE EXTRA BRACHAH ON WINE

Wine is a drink that “pleases G-d and people”; therefore the Sages instituted the unique blessing of “hatov vehameitiv” when a second type of wine is added to the first for the joy that imbibing brings.

However, many detailed circumstances must abide in order to make this special brachah. Those laws are outlined below.

DO OUR CIRCUMSTANCES QUALIFY?

The brachah of *hatov vehameitiv* is only said when drinking in company—for example, a host and their guest, or a man with a member of his family. They do ^{in company} not have to be sharing a meal, but they are drinking wine together in the same room. The brachah is said when they decide that they would now like to drink more.⁹³ Before they partake of a second, unique-tasting bottle of wine, they recite this brachah: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם הַטּוֹב וְהַמְּטִיב and then taste the second wine.⁹⁴ They should preferably drink a *revi's* (approximately 3 ounces) of both wines, but even if they tasted less a *revi's*, *hatov vehameitiv* is recited.

This situation can also take place if there are more than two people celebrating together. But at least two of them must partake of the first wine and wish to ^{both of you} imbibe in the second in order to be able to make this unique brachah. If others wish to drink from the second wine as well, they must also have partaken of the first with the other members of the group.

If you would like to partake of the second wine under the above circumstances, ^{a second} but had already decided not to continue drinking, it is necessary to say *borei Hagafen* *pri hagafen* again.⁹⁵ But the brachah of *hatov vehameitiv* should be recited first. If you inadvertently made a *Hagafen* first, you should say *hatov vehameitiv* immediately before drinking. If you forgot to say *hatov vehameitiv* and started drinking, you may still make the brachah as long as you still want more of the second wine.

The above applies even if the wines are *mevushal* or have added sugar—and ^{grape juice?} even grape juice.

DOES THE WINE QUALIFY?

In order for the second wine to qualify for the brachah of *hatov vehameitiv*, your ^{not} motive for drinking it must be because it has a taste that is unique from the first, ^{thirsty}

⁹³) It does not necessarily have to be at the same time; they may drink one after the other. But both had to have drunk from the first wine to recite *hatov vehameitiv* on the second wine.

⁹⁴) Do not make an interruption between the brachah and drinking. If you inadvertently did so, the brachah is not repeated.

⁹⁵) There could be other reasons when one would be required to make a new *borei pri hagafen* on the second bottle of wine, such as if the wine is served unexpectedly (though this caveat does not apply to guests, since their original brachah covered anything the host may yet serve). The full details of these halachos are beyond the scope of this guide.

not because the first bottle is finished. In fact, some wine must remain in the first bottle when the second is tasted.

better wine The second wine must be either of higher quality than the first, or of an unknown caliber. But if you know that the second wine is a lower quality, even a little bit, you do not recite *hatov vehameitiv*. The exception to this rule is if you are upgrading from a red wine to a white, in which case, *hatov vehameitiv* should be said, even if the second tastes worse than the first (as long as it is not of such inferior quality that you would only drink it under duress.)

red, then white On the other hand, if you drank white wine and now want to drink red, *hatov vehameitiv* is not recited, unless the red wine is of notably finer taste than the white.

new, then old Similarly, if you drank first an old wine and then a new wine, *hatov vehameitiv* is not recited, unless the new wine is known to taste as good as the vintage. If you drank the new wine first, and then the old, *hatov vehameitiv* is recited over the old wine, even if it is of the same variety. However, it must still be considered of higher caliber—or its relative quality is unknown (as above).

DON'T SAVE THE BEST FOR LAST!

Your preference? If you are acquainted with the relative quality of the wines in front of you, you may not make the brachah of *Hagafen* on the inferior wine⁹⁶ in order to save the second bottle for the distinctive brachah of *hatov vehameitiv*. However, if the second, better wine is brought to the table after the first was drunk, or if they were both available at once, but their ranking wasn't known beforehand, *hatov vehameitiv* is recited before imbibing from the second bottle.

If you inadvertently made *Hagafen* on the lesser quality wine (even if the status of each is known), *hatov vehameitiv* is recited when drinking the second, finer wine.

if red is better If there are two (or a selection of more) wines on the table at once, including a subpar white wine and a finer red wine, *Hagafen* is recited on the red wine, and *hatov vehameitiv* on the white, as described above.

CAN WE SAY THE BRACHAH MORE THAN ONCE?

surprise third round If the conditions of drinking were met to say *hatov vehameitiv* on a second bottle of wine, but then the opportunity arrives with a third, improved variety to the table, *hatov vehameitiv* is recited again, as long as you (and your drinking partner) did not have this wine in mind when reciting *hatov vehameitiv* on the second wine.

when we bench If a *mezuman* is made on the second wine, *hatov vehameitiv* is not said by the one who drinks the wine after *bentching*, for he already recited *hatov vehameitiv* in *Birchas Hamazon*.

⁹⁶ A brachah should always be recited on the preferred item over its lesser counterpart. If it is difficult to drink the better wine first (say, it is too strong to drink on an empty stomach), the brachah of *Hagafen* may be recited on the subpar weak wine, and the finer strong wine saved for a second round on which *hatov vehameitiv* is said.

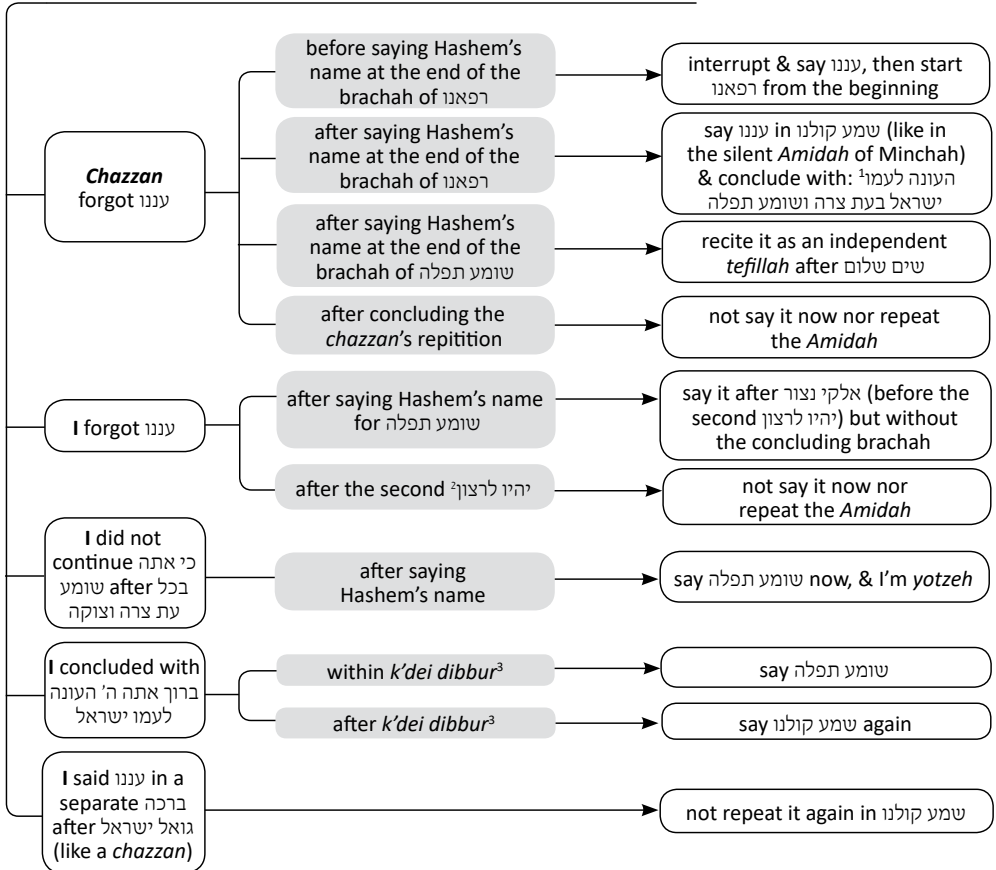
"Oops! I made a mistake..."

What did I do?

When did I remember?

Now I should...

Amidah Shacharis & Minchah • on Taanis Esther



Notes

1. If you concluded with שומע תפילה, you are *yotzeh*.

2. and you also made the decision not to lengthen your

tefillah with extra requests and supplications.

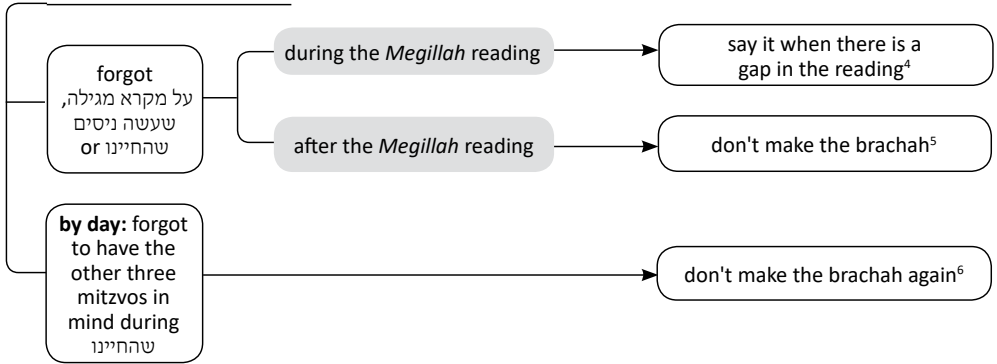
3. a short span of uninterrupted time it would take to say the words, "Shalom alecha, Mori v'Rabbi"

What did I do?

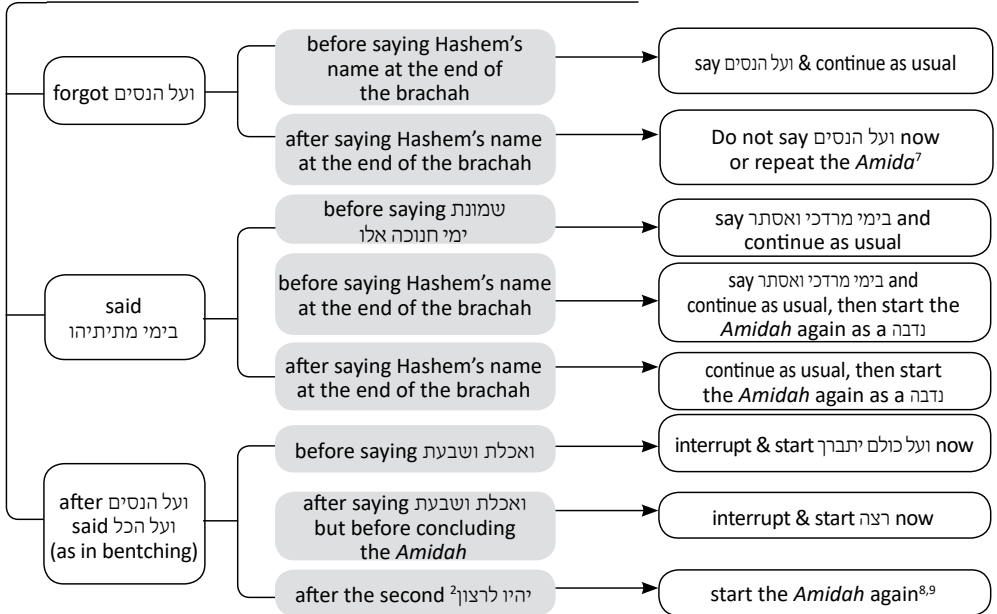
When did I remember?

Now I should...

Megillah Reading



Purim Amidah • Maariv, Shacharis & Minchah



Notes

4. for example, while the congregation recites the verse *Ish Yehudi* aloud.

5. The brachos of *she'asah nissim* and *Shehecheyanu* cannot be recited on any of the other mitzvos, or on the day itself (as is possible on Yom Tov). In this situation, it is advisable to answer "Amen" to another reading or to make *Shehecheyanu* on a new fruit or garment.

6. You may make a *Shehecheyanu* on a new fruit or garment and have the mitzvos in mind as well.
7. According to some opinions, you should say the following before the second יהיו לרצון:
הרחמן הוא יעשה לנו נסים, כמו שעשה לאבותינו בימים ההם בזמן הזה.
בימי מרדכי ואסתר...

8. You must first wait *k'dei hiluch daled amos* (the time it takes to walk six feet) before restarting the *Amidah*.

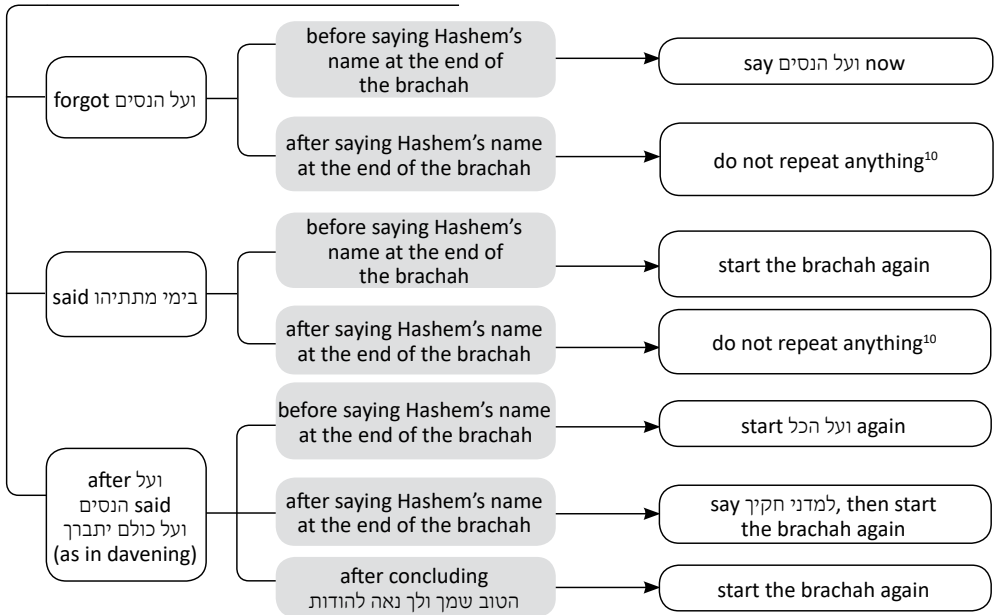
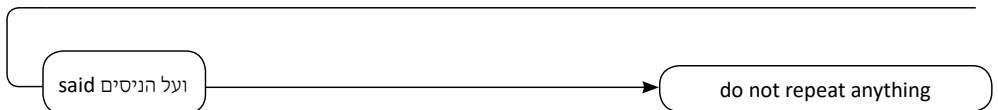
9. There is no need to repeat הנסים ועל.

If you remembered after the time has arrived for the next *tefillah*, say the *Amidah*, and then repeat it to make up for the earlier one.

What did I do?

When did I remember?

Now I should...

Birchas Hamazon • Purim**Shushan Purim - outside of Yerushalayim • Amida & Birchas Hamazon****Notes**

The earlier *tefillah* can only be compensated as long as you are occupied with the following one. Once you have finished davening, you are no longer able to make it up. See details (in Hebrew) on [#25750](http://www.asktherav.com)

10. When you get up to יזכנו הוא ירחמן, say:

הרחמן הוא יעשה לנו נסים כמו שעשה לאבותינו בימים ההם בזמן הזה.
...בימי מרדכי ואסתר

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