

מ"ט שערי אורה...זו תורה הלכות פורים

HILCHOS PURIM IN 49 STEPS

CHODESH ADAR

1) The Talmud (Ta'anis 29a-b) tells us "*Mishenichnas Adar Marbin B'Simcha* - when the month of Adar arrives we increase our joy" as it says in Megilas Esther (9:22) "*V'HaChodesh Asher NehePach M'Yagon L'Simcha*...The month (Adar) that was turned from sadness to happiness".

2) If one has a court case with an Aino Yehudi, it is a good idea to schedule it for the month of Adar. (Talmud Ta'anis 29a. See also Mogen Avraham Siman 686:5 and Mishna Berura Siman 686:8)

A custom exists (brought in the Rama Even HaEzer Siman 64:3, based on deep kabalistic ideas connecting a Jewish marriage to the cycle of the moon) **not to get married in the entire second half of a month, during the times when the moon is waning, or according to some sources from the 22nd day of the month and on.** (Rav Shlomo Zalmen Auerbach Zatzal was makpid on this. See Halichos Shlomo, Chodesh Adar page 327 footnote 31 at length)

However, the Poskim rule that this does not apply to the month of Adar, as the entire month, even the latter part, is referred to in the Posuk as a time of Simcha. (See Sdei Chemed Vol. 7, Choson V'Kallah 21)

In a leap year when there are two months of Adar, this applies to the second Adar, although "Mishenichnas Adar Marbim B'Simcha" applies to both months. (Halichos Shlomo, Chodesh Adar, page 328 footnote 35. See also footnote 36 that there is a well-established custom in Klal Yisroel to hang signs proclaiming "Mishenichnas Adar Marbim B'Simcha" in homes and in Shuls.)

THE 4 PARSHIYOS

3) Our holy sages, the Chazal, instituted the reading of 4 special "parashiyos" in (or near) the month of Adar, as a commemoration of 4 special Mitzvos (which we will elaborate on a bit in the next few days)

The first of the "4 Parashiyos" is Parashas Shekalim (this reading can be found in the beginning of Parashas Ki Sisa Perek 30 Pesukim 11 thru 16).

This reading is to commemorate the Mitzvah of "Machatzis Hashekel", the half Shekel coin which every Jew was obligated to give each year to the special fund from which the daily Korbanos Tomid (sacrificial lambs that were offered in the Bais HaMikdash each morning and evening) were purchased.

Although we do not have a Bais HaMikdash nowadays (an unfortunate fact which will change very shortly, with Hashem's help, with the arrival of Mashiach), **we "perform" this Mitzvah by reading about it in the Torah.**

4) There are some opinions that this reading is a biblical obligation (Elya Rabba Siman 685 in the name of the Rashba to Brachos 13a who maintains that all 4 Parshiyos are biblical obligations). **However, most Poskim maintain that the reading of this Parasha is a rabbinic obligation.**

5) The second of the "4 Parashiyos" is "Parashas Zachor" (which can be found at the end of Parshas Ki Seitzei, Devarim 25:17-19) **describes the story of how the accursed nation of Amalek rose up against Klal Yisroel, and the commandment to eradicate them.**

This "Parasha" is read the Shabbos before Purim in order to read it as close as possible to the reading of the story of the wicked Haman, who was a descendant of Amalek.

6) The reading of "Parashas Zachor" is a biblical obligation, which must be read once a year with a Minyan, from a kosher Sefer Torah. All the congregants should concentrate on hearing every word from the Ba'al Koreh (as well as the Brachos before and after the Aliyah) and have in mind to satisfy their obligation to hear this Parasha.

The Poskim debate whether this obligation is incumbent on women as well.

Though most Poskim are lenient and maintain that women have no obligation to hear it is Shul, the prevalent Minhag in many communities is for women and girls to indeed come to Shul [if possible] to hear Parshas Zachor. If a woman cannot make it to Shul, she should read the Pesukim herself from a Chumash.

7) The third of the "Four Parshiyos" is "Parashas Parah [Adumah]", (which can be found in Parashas Chukas, Bamidbar 19:1-22).

This Parsha is read on the Shabbos preceding "Parashas HaChodesh" to commemorate the burning of the Parah Adumah [for its purifying ashes] which was performed in the desert prior to Chodesh Nisan, in order to be used to purify the Jews after the Mishkan (tabernacle) was erected so they could be pure for the sacrificing of the Korban Pesach.

According to some Poskim, Parashas Parah is a biblical obligation, and according to these opinions, all the stringencies that are necessary for Parashas Zachor (as we discussed yesterday) apply to Parashas Parah as well. (See Terumas HaDeshen Siman 109 where he quotes the opinion of Tosefos Brachos 13a. See also Aruch HaShulchan Siman 685:7)

Many Poskim, however, maintain that Parashas Parah is a rabbinic obligation (Mogen Avraham Siman 685 and others).

It is not the prevalent custom for women to go to Shul to hear Parshas Parah.

8) The fourth, and final, of the "Four Parshiyos" is "Parashas HaChodesh" (found in Parshas Bo, Shmos 12:1-20) **and is read on the Shabbos immediately before Rosh Chodesh Nisan as it contains within it the Mitzvah of Korban Pesach.** (See Rashi to Megilah 29a and Aruch Hashulchan Siman 685)

Another reason is that it contains within it the sanctification of Chodesh Nisan as it says "**HaChodesh HaZeh Lachem Rosh Chadashim**, This month (Nisan) should be for you the first of the cycle of months".

There is a custom in some communities that only a married man is called up for the Maftir of all of the "Four Parshiyos".

Some explain the reason for this so as to ensure that a minor is not called up for this Aliyah, which according to many opinions is prohibited for these obligatory readings [especially Parashas Zachor and Parashas Parah]. (See Sefer Lekach Hakemach HaChadash Siman 137:135 and Mishna Berura Siman 282:23)

For Halacha L'Ma'aseh every community should follow their own accepted custom.

9) When hearing "Parashas Zachor" it is best to try and hear it in the dialect of Lashon Kodesh (biblical Hebrew) that you and your family speak. (i.e. Ashkenazim should ideally not be Yotzei with Sephardic Havara, dialect, and vice versa).

However, if one did hear it in a different dialect, he has satisfied his/her obligation B'dieved. (See Mo'Adim U'Zmanim Vol. 2 Siman 170 and MikRaei Kodesh Siman 2 where they are stringent with this. See Igros Moshe Orach Chaim Vol. 3 Siman 5 where Rav Moshe Feinstein Zatzal is lenient for Krias HaTorah)

When reading the Posuk "*Timche Es Zecher Amalek*" within the reading of Parashas Zachor, there is a dispute amongst the Poskim as to the proper enunciation of the word "Zecher".

Some opinions maintain that it is to be pronounced "Zay-Cher", while others maintain that the proper way to say it is "Zeh-Cher". The prevalent minhag is to read the Posuk twice, once saying "Zay-Cher" and the second time saying "Zeh-Cher" (See Mishna Berura Siman 685:18)

Care should be taken to understand the meaning of the words being read (Pirush HaMilim), as understanding the words, and remembering the atrocities of Amalek and that we are commanded to eradicate their memory, is an integral part of the Mitzvah.

10) Many pious Jews (including the Gaon of Vilna as well as many Chasidic Rebbes) **had the custom to read "Parashas Zachor" by themselves and not rely on simply hearing it from the Ba'al Koreh.**

The reason for this is that it is a Mitzvah on every individual to read Parashas Zachor, thus "Mitzvah Bo Yoser M'Besheluch- it is better to perform it yourself rather than relying on a messenger (The Ba'al Koreh)".

For the rest of the readings of the Torah throughout the year it isn't a Mitzvah to "read", rather the mitzvah is to "hear", so the above reasoning doesn't apply. (Sefer Mo'adei HaShana page 306)

11) In many Kehilos it is customary to say special Tefilos, known as "Yotzros", which are interjected into the Brachos of Chazaras HaShatz, the Chazzan's repetition of the Shemona Esrei, of Shacharis and/or Mussaf on each Shabbos of the "Four Parashiyos".

Some Congregations have the Minhag to say these Yotzros after the completion of the Chazaras HaShatz and not within the Brachos of the Chazaras HaShatz. (Custom of the Gaon of Vilna quoted in Ma'aseh Rav Os 127. This was also the custom of the Chasam Sofer quoted in Minhagei Chasam Sofer Perek 11:4 and other Poskim.)

12) Some congregations don't say these Yotzros at all, while others say them on some of the "Four Parashiyos" and not on others; each congregation should follow their respective custom. (See Aishel Avraham, Butchatsh, Siman 68 that as long as their intent is L'Shem Shomayim, every minhag has merit)

13) If someone's personal minhag is not to say Yotzros and he finds himself in a Shul that says them, he should not be "Poresh Min HaTzibur, deviate from the congregation" and he should say it along with them. (See Rama Siman 68 and Siman 90:10)

If for whatever reason one is not saying them, he should just wait silently while they are being recited by the congregation and not talk, even words of Torah, and certainly not make light of these extremely exalted Tefilos which contain in them great praises of Hashem as well as many wondrously holy and deep Kabbalistic concepts. (See Kav HaYashar Perek 86)

14) These Tefilos should be recited clearly, with extreme Simcha and concentration, and should not be recited as if it is a burden to say them. Many of these Tefilos were authored by holy Tanaim, Geonim and Rishonim with the input and advice of Heavenly angels.(ibid.)

Saying these Tefilos are a Segulah for Arichas Yamim (long life), and those whose familial or congregational minhag it is to say them, and they don't, place themselves in danger. (See Kav HaYashar ibid., Bach Siman 68 Dibur Hamaschil UMah Shekasav Amnam and Shu"t Bais Hillel Siman 71. See also Pri Megadim;Mishbetzos Zahav, Siman 53:10 that saying these Tefilos are a Segulah to bring our as yet irreligious brethren closer to Hashem)

TAANIS ESTHER

15) The 13th day of the month of Adar is known as Ta'anis Esther, the fast of Esther. (This year, 5780, March 9, 2020).

This fast day is in commemoration of the Jews' gathering on that day [in Teshuva and prayer] in preparation for defending themselves against the imminent threat of their annihilation at the hands of their neighbors at the behest of the wicked Haman and Achashveirosh.

The fast was established as a reminder that Hashem always sees our individual [as well as our collective] suffering, and will always come to our rescue if we return to Him with all our heart, as the Jews did at the time of the story of Purim. (See Mishna Berura Siman 686:2)

16) This fast is not as stringent as other fast days, and in cases of necessity (such as pregnant or nursing women, or people with certain other hardships or non-life-threatening sicknesses) one need not fast. However, one who can fast should not simply dismiss this fast and be different than the rest of Klal Yisroel. (Rama Siman 686:1)

ZECHER L'MACHTZIS HASHEKEL

17) On Ta'anis Esther, before Mincha, It is customary to give a "Half" coin to Tzedakah to commemorate the "Machatzis Hashekel, the Half Shekel" that each Jew was obligated to give [in the times of the Bais HaMikdash] to the communal fund from which the Korbanos Tamid (sacrificial lamb that was offered each morning and evening) was purchased.

In the Parasha of "Machatzis HaShekel" (Parshas Ki Sisa) it says the word "Terumah" three times. Therefore, many have the custom to give 3 "Half coins". (Tashbatz Siman 173 based on the Mordechai in the first Perek of Maseches Megilah, also brought in Ram"a Siman 694:1)

Others, however, have the custom to only give one "half" coin. (Opinion of the Gaon of Vilna)

18) The "Half" coin that is used varies from country to country. In the United States, the accepted custom is to use a "Half Dollar coin" (which is referred to as "Half a dollar"). Each person should use the "Half" coin that is used in their respective country.

If one lives in a country that does not have a "Half" coin, he should give one coin (or 3 coins, if following the Minhag to give 3) and think in his mind that half of the coin should be for the obligation of commemorating "Machatzis HaShekel" and the other half should simply be Tzedakah. (See Biur Halacha Siman 694 Dibur HaMaschil V'yesh Liten Shlosa. See also Shu"t Minchas Elazar Vol. 1 Siman 30)

19) The obligation to give Machatzis HaShekel is for all males over the age of 20, and according to some opinions for all males over the age of 13. However, the prevalent custom is for every father to give a separate "Half" coin (or 3 coins) for each of his male children, and if his wife is pregnant, to give for the unborn child as well. (See Mishna Berura 694:5)

20) Women are exempt from giving Machatzis HaShekel (Mishna Maseches Shekalim Perek 1:3)

However, some Poskim bring the custom to indeed give Machtzis HaShekel for the women [as well as the female children] in the household. (Leket Yosher and Levush Siman 686)

21) "Machatzis HaShekel" may not be given from Ma'aser money, as Ma'aser may not be used for obligations.

22) However, the "Machatzis Hashekel" that is given on behalf of boys below the age of 13, for females or on behalf of anyone who isn't halachically obligated and is only being given based on the custom, may be taken from Ma'aser money. (See Elya Rabbah and Yosef Ometz Siman 686)

23) The money raised for "Machatzis Hashekel" (which nowadays is only a commemoration of the real Machatzis Hashekel in the times of the Bais Hamikdash, which was used for purchasing Korbanos) **should ideally be distributed to poor people, preferably for use for their Purim Seudah. (See Siddur Ya'avetz quoting the Levush Siman 686.)**

24) If no poor people are present, the money can be held until a later date when a poor person can be located [or M'ikar Hadin it can be given to any charitable cause.] (See Shulchan Aruch Siman 694:4, Shu"t Bais Dino Shel Shlomo Yoreh Deah Siman 1. See also Sefer Tzedaka U'mishpat Perek 6 footnote 37. See also Mogen Avraham Siman 694:1 in the name of the Shel"a HaKadosh)

READING MEGILAS ESTHER

25) The Megilah of Esther, containing the events that lead up to the miracle of Purim, is read on Purim twice, once on the eve of Purim and once again on Purim morning (This year, 5780, [in Chutz L'Aretz] on Monday night, March 9 and on Tuesday morning, March 10)

Every adult Jewish male and female must hear the Megilah being read, preferably in Shul.

26) Children who are old enough to quietly listen to the entire Megilah should also come to Shul to hear the Megilah (Shulchan Aruch Siman 689:6. See Mishna Berura S"K 18 that those who bring very young children to Shul for the express purpose of "banging" by Haman, and by doing so disturb everyone else during the rest of the Megilah, are not fulfilling the Mitzvah of Chinuch)

27) Once the time for the Megilah reading arrives, eating, sleeping or doing any work is prohibited before the Megilah is read, unless, of course, one must eat something for health reasons.

Learning Torah is permitted before the Megilah is read. (Mogen Avraham Siman 692:7)

28) It is a Mitzvah -for both men and women- to hear the Megilah as part of a large congregation (B'rov Am Hadras Melech), as this way the "Pirsumei Nisa- the broadcasting of the miracle of Hashem" will be greater. Thus, one [who doesn't belong to any one Shul] should choose the largest Shul in his/her city or neighborhood and hear the Megilah there. (See Mishna Berura Siman 687:7)

However, if one is part of a Shul, and always davens there, there is no need to find a larger Shul. (Chayei Adam quoted in Mishna Berura ibid.)

29) The obligation of Megilah for women is different than the obligation for men, in that women are only obligated to "hear" the Megilah, whereas men are obligated to "read" the Megilah.

30) In fact, according to many Poskim, when a man reads the Megilah for a woman, or if a woman reads the Megilah herself, the Bracha she recites is not "*Boruch Ata Hashem...Al Mikra Megilah* - on the reading of the Megilah" rather she says "*Boruch Ata...LiShmoa Mikra Megila* - on the hearing of the reading of Megilah" (Ram"a Siman 689:2 and Mishna Berura S"K 8. This is also the opinion of the Chayei Adam. However, the opinion of the Gaon of Vilna quoted in Ma'aseh Rav, as well as the Pri Chadash 689:2 and others is that even women recite "*Al Mikra Megila*")

31) Being that the obligation of Megilah for women is not the same as for men, a woman may not read the Megilah for men. She may, however, read the Megilah for another woman. (Mishna Berura Siman 689:7).

However, according to some Poskim, a woman may not read the Megilah for an entire group of women. (Sha'ar Hatziyun ibid. HaRav Shlomo Zalmen Auerbach Zatzal, however, allowed a woman to read for a group of women; see Halichos Shlomo page 330 in footnote 4)

L'Chatchila, however, a woman should not read the Megilah herself; rather she should hear it from a man, if at all possible.(Mogen Avraham quoted in Mishna Berura ibid. S"K 8)

32) All the Halachos of reading the Megilah (many of which we will B'Ezras Hashem learn in the near future) **that apply to men, apply to women as well. Therefore, a woman who went to Shul to hear the Megilah but could not hear clearly, and missed a few [or more] words, should hear it again when she gets home [from a man reading from a kosher Megilah].** (Though, If she says the missed words on her own from a Chumash, and catches up to the Ba'al Koreh, that is fine, and it isn't necessary to hear the Megilah again See Pri Megadim, Aishel Avraham, Siman 689:11.)

Alternatively, if the woman possesses a kosher Megilah, she should bring it to Shul and quietly read along as the Ba'al Koreh is reading, thus ensuring that she doesn't miss even one word from a Kosher Megilah.

However, one (man or woman) that does not have a kosher Megilah, and is following along in a printed Megilah, should not read along with the Ba'al Koreh. (Chayei Adam Klal 155:17)

33) When reading the Megilah on Purim eve, three Brachos are recited before the reading commences:

- 1) Baruch Ata... Al Mikra Megilah.**
- 2) Baruch Ata... She'Asah Nisim L'Avoseinu...**
- 3) Baruch Ata...SheHechiyanu V'KiYemanu...**

These three blessings are recited regardless if the Megilah is being read with a minyan in Shul or if it is being read by one individual by himself at home.

When reading the Megilah again on Purim day, most who follow Ashkenazic customs repeat all 3 Brachos. (as per the Rama Siman 692:1)

Those who follow the Sephardic customs, as well as those who follow the Gaon of Vilna, do not repeat the third Bracha of "SheHechiyanu" at the day reading. (As per the Shulchan Aruch ibid. and Gr"a in Ma'aseh Rav)

Even those who do say the "SheHechiyanu" again, should have in mind when doing so that the Bracha should also include the other Mitzvos of Purim [i.e. Mishloach Manos, Matanos L'Evyonim and the Seudas Purim] as well as on the re-reading of the Megilah.(See Kitzur Shulchan Aruch Siman 141:12)

In many Shuls, indeed, the custom is for the Rabbi or the Gabbai to announce that everyone have this intent when hearing the Bracha of SheHechiyanu.

34) Upon the completion of the reading of the Megilah, it is customary to recite the Bracha of "Baruch Ata... HaRav Es Riveinu". One who is reading the Megilah alone, and not with a Minyan does not recite this Bracha (Rama Siman 692:1).

However, an individual may recite this Bracha if he wants to, without Shem U'Malchus (Hashem's name), as there are opinions that an individual does indeed recite it (Elya Raba citing the opinion of the MaHaril and others. See Biur Halacha Siman 692 Dibur Hamaschil Ela B'tzibur)

The one reading the Megilah must have in mind to satisfy his obligation to do the Mitzvah.

Likewise, he must have in mind to exempt those listening to his reading, with the Brachos as well as with the reading. (Kitzur Shulchan Aruch Siman 141:13)

The ones listening must also have in mind to exempt themselves with the reading, and the Brachos, of the Ba'al Koreh. (ibid.)

If one came to Shul specifically in order to read or hear the Megilah even though he didn't have specific intent, we consider the fact that he came for this reason, as his Kavanah, and he has satisfied his obligation,even L'Chatchila, according to some Poskim (See Mishna Berura Siman 589:16 and Siman 690:49)

35) The entire Megilah must be read or heard. If the Ba'al Koreh missed even one word or even one letter, regardless if omitting that word or letter changes the meaning of the Posuk, he must go back to the place where the mistake was made and re-read from there again. (In certain instances, such as if the missed word changes the meaning of the Posuk, and he was Masiach Da'as from the Megilah, a new Bracha may be necessary too)

Similarly, one who is listening to the Megilah must be very careful not to miss hearing even one letter of the Megilah.

If one did miss hearing a word or letter of the Megilah (as is common when someone coughs, or is a child makes noise etc.) **the listener must read the missed words by him/herself until he/she catches up to the Ba'al Koreh.**

L'Chatchila, this should be done from a Kosher Megilah, or at least from a printed Chumash, but definitely not by heart. (See Mishna Berura Siman 689:19 and 690:19)

If a word was mispronounced, in such a way that the meaning of the Posuk was not changed, it need not be repeated L'Chatchila. If the mispronounced word does change the meaning of the Posuk, it is as if that word was skipped, and the Halachos of a skipped word apply.

The Megilah should be read with the proper "Ta'amim" (Trop, or tune used for reading Torah She'Biksav).

However, reading it without the Ta'amim does not disqualify the reading, thus if no Ba'al Koreh is available to read it with the proper tune, it should be read anyway by someone in the congregation. (Mogen Avraham Siman 691:10)

The Megilah must be read in the order in which it is written. If even one Posuk or letter was read out of order, the obligation to read the Megilah has not been satisfied, and it must be re-read starting from the Posuk that was read out of order until the end.

Likewise, if a Posuk was skipped, it must be re-read from that point until the end. (Mishna Berura Siman 690:21 and 22)

The Megilah must be read from a Kosher Megilah scroll. If part (up to half) of the Megilah was read from memory, without looking into the text, B'Dieved you have satisfied your obligation.(Mishna Berura ibid. S"K 7 and 8)

36) If one who does not understand Lashon HaKodesh (Biblical Hebrew) hears the Megilah being read in Lashon HaKodesh, even though they do not understand what is being read, they have satisfied their obligation of hearing the Megilah, as long as they hear every single word. (Mishna Berura ibid. S"K 26)

The Ba'al Koreh should recite the Brachos on the Megilah while standing.

Many have the custom that the entire congregation stands while the Brachos are being recited. (See Mogen Avraham beginning of Siman 690. Though from the Biur Halacha in Hilchos Sefiras HaOmer Siman 489 it seems that the congregation need not stand)

While reading the Megilah, the Ba'al Koreh should stand, as doing so is "Kavod HaTzibur, respectful to the congregation" (Thus one who is reading for women, or for a group of less than 10 men, may sit L'Chatchila).

The congregation may sit while listening to the Megilah

37) It is the accepted Minhag amongst all of Klal Yisroel, when reading the Megilah, that the Megilah scroll of the Ba'al Koreh is unfurled and folded like a letter before commencing the reading. The reason for this Minhag is that the Megilah is referred to in the Posuk as an "Igeres - a letter".

The congregation need not unfurl their personal Megilahs (for those who follow along in a Kosher Megilah), though they may do so if they wish. (See Kitzur Shulchan Aruch Siman 141:10)

There are four Pesukim in the Megilah, which are referred to as "*Pesukim Shel Geulah*"- Pesukim of redemption", and these Pesukim are customarily said aloud by the entire congregation, and afterwards read by the Ba'al Koreh. (The Mateh Moshe quotes the Tanya Rabosi that this is only if children are present, as it is done to keep them interested, thus if one is reading the Megilah for adults only, it needn't be done. According to the Gaon of Vilna though, it is done even if no children are present)

The four Pesukim are:

- 1) *Ish Yehudi Haya B'Shushan HaBirah...* (Perek 2 Posuk 5)**
- 2) *U'Mordechai Yatza M'Lifnei haMelech B'Lvush Malchus...* (Perek 8 Posuk 15)**
- 3) *LaYehudim Hoysa Ohra V'Simcha...* (Perek 8 Posuk 16)**
- 4) *Ki Mordechai HaYehudi...* (The last Posuk of the Megilah)**

If one does not have a kosher Megilah, he/she should have in mind not to be Yotzei the aforementioned Pesukim when saying them aloud, rather to be Yotzei with the Ba'al Koreh's reading as with the rest of the Megilah. (Mishna Berura Siman 690:58)

When the Ba'al Koreh reads the words "*B'Laila HaHu Nadedah Shnas HaMelech*" (Perek 6 Posuk 1) he raises his voice, as that is the beginning of the miracle. (MaHaril quoted in Mishna Berura Siman 690: 52)

38) The names of the ten sons of Haman HaRasha, until after the word "*Aseres*" after their names, must be said by the one reading the Megilah in one breath, to remember the fact that they were all hanged and died at one time (in other words, as the Talmud Megilah 16b explains, they all took their last breaths at the same instant; perhaps as Midah K'Naged Midah for their plot to kill all the Jews in one day).

L'Chatchila this should start a few words earlier, and from "*Chamesh Me'Os Ish*" until "*Aseres*" should be said in one breath.

If these words were not read in one breath, even if one took a long break between them, B'Dieved you are Yotzei. (Rama Siman 690:15)

However, L'Chatchila if they were not said in one breath, they should be repeated (Elya Rabbah Siman 690:11)

The congregation need not read these names, and they can simply listen to the Ba'al Koreh. (Chayei Adam Klal 155:22 and Kitzur Shulchan Aruch Siman 141:14)

However, the prevalent Minhag is for the congregation to indeed read these names [in one breath] before the Ba'al Koreh reads it. (Aruch HaShulchan. The reason is possibly, that since the Ba'al Koreh reads it very quickly, the congregation may not hear it properly, thus developed the minhag of everyone reading it themselves. See also Shu"t Tzafnas Pa'aneach from the Rogotchof Gaon Vol. 3 in the Hashmatos for a novel approach to this requirement: Due to "*Shomea K'Oneh*", the Ba'al Koreh can be Motzi you with the reading but he cannot be Motzi you with the "one breath" requirement, thus each individual must do this on their own)

BANGING BY HAMAN

39) It is the prevalent Minhag in Klal Yisroel to "bang" or otherwise make a noise whenever the name of "Haman" is read in the Megilah.

This Minhag should not be discontinued, nor ridiculed, as it was not instituted for naught. (Rama Siman 690:17)

However, the banging should not go on for too long, otherwise the entire reading/listening of the Megilah will become confusing.

Musical instruments or similar loud noisemakers should not be used, rather a simple gragger, banging with the feet or similar gesture of "banging" should be used. (Mishna Berura Siman 690:59. See also Sha'ar HaTziyun ibid: 57)

If the Shul in which one davens doesn't comply with the above guidelines, and the entire Megilah reading turns into a "noise fest" with people competing as to who can make the loudest, longest and most disturbing noise, it is better to read the Megilah with a small minyan in a different Shul or even at home rather than rely on this noisy and confusing Megilah reading.

This is especially true for women, who will be unable to hear the Megilah properly in the women's section with all the tumult taking place. (Based on MaHar"i Algazi in Shalmei Chagiga, quoted in Sefer Hilchos Chag B'Chag. Also the ruling of the Aruch HaShulchan)

While the congregation is "banging", the Ba'al Koreh should be quiet, and only continue once the noise has subsided totally, otherwise some in the congregation may miss a few words of the Megilah.

It is a good idea for all the congregants to read the few words after each "Haman" by themselves from a Kosher Megilah [if at all possible] or from a Chumash, to ensure that not even one word of the Megilah is missed. (Mishna Berura Siman 690:60)

MATANOS L'EVYONIM

40) It is a Mitzvah to give "Matanos L'Evyonim- gifts to the poor" on Purim day.

If the money was given to the poor person before Purim for use on Purim [for his meal], according to many Poskim, you have satisfied your obligation, B'Dieved. (See Pri Megadim based on Mogen Avraham Siman 694:1 that the whole reason not to give before Purim day is that the poor person may use it before Purim)

Every Jew- male and female- is required to give two "Matanos- gifts" to two separate "Evyonim- poor people" (i.e. one gift to each poor person). By giving both gifts to only one poor person, you do not satisfy your obligation of this Mitzvah.

Matanos L'Evyonim may not be given from Ma'aser money. However, once two gifts were given to two poor people, any additional gifts that you give to poor people on Purim may be given from Ma'aser money. (Mishna Berura Siman 694:3)

41) The more Tzedaka you give to poor people on Purim, the more praiseworthy you are!

It is better to give additional Matanos L'Evyonim than to give extra Mishloach Manos or to increase the Seudas Purim, because ... *"There is no greater or loftier Simcha than to gladden the hearts of the poor, widows, orphans and converts. One who gladdens the hearts of these downtrodden people is likened to the Shechina (!)"* (Words of the Rambam Hilchos Megilah Perek 2 Halacha 17)

You may not combine the Mitzvos of Mishloach Manos and Matanos L'Evyonim, by giving Mishloach Manos to a poor person. They each must be given independently of each other. (See Turei Even to Megilah 7b, quoted in Biur Halacha Siman 695 Dibur HaMaschil O Shel Minei Ochlin and Ksav Sofer Siman 139 that B'Dieved it is possible that you are indeed Yotzei.)

Matanos L'Evyonim does not necessarily need to be with money, as one can satisfy the obligation by giving the poor person food which he can eat on Purim.

However, giving clothing or other non-food gifts to a poor person, is not an acceptable form of Matanos L'Evyonim according to most Poskim (See Ohr SaMeach Hilchos Megilah Perek 2 Halacha 16. See Turei Even Megilah 7b. See Mishna Berura Siman 694:2)

42) When it comes to giving Matanos L'Evyonim, it is best not to be too scrupulous in determining if the poor person is truly deserving of Tzedaka, as on Purim we stick to the tradition of "Kol HaPoshet Yad Nosnim Lo- whoever stretches out their arm [asking for help] we give them". (Shulchan Aruch Siman 694:3).

The Sefarim say that Hashem, too, abides by this method on Purim and all who stretch out their hands to Him [i.e. whatever we genuinely daven for] will be answered!

Purim is an extremely opportune time to daven for things that we need. It is advisable not to squander this opportunity by focusing too much on "getting drunk" and having fun at the expense of not utilizing the spiritual powers of this holy day properly.

SEUDAS PURIM

43) It is a Mitzvah for all Jewish men, women and children to partake of a festive Seudah, meal, on Purim.

The Purim Seudah needs to be eaten on Purim day, and if it was only eaten on Purim eve, you have not satisfied your obligation. However, it is a Mitzvah to be joyous and have a small Seudah on Purim eve as well. (Rama Siman 695:1)

The meal should consist of meat (B'Dieved chicken is acceptable too) **and wine, and other delicacies as best as one can afford. It is also ideal to wash and eat bread at the Seudah, as according to some opinions you cannot satisfy the obligation of the Seudah without Pas, bread.** (See Rosh to Maseches Brachos Perek 7 Siman 23 and Shu"t MaHarshal Siman 48)

It is good to study some Torah before beginning the Seudah, as the Posuk says "Layehudim Haysa Orah V'Simcha..." and Chazal say (Talmud Megilah 16b) **Orah is referring to the light of Torah which should precede the Simcha!** (Rama Siman 695:2)

44) It is customary to daven Mincha before beginning the Seudah, as not to end up davening Mincha while drunk. The Seudah should begin when it is still daylight, and not close to sunset, so that most of the meal should be eaten during the day.

The Seudas Purim should not be eaten alone; rather it is good to join with family and friends so it will be joyous.

However, care must be taken that the Seuda should be a Simcha Shel Mitzvah and not simply a wild party, with things Chas V'Shalom happening that are in contradiction to Halacha.

The hands should be properly washed for Netilas Yadayim, Hamotzi should be recited on the bread, Birkas Hamazon should be recited after the Seudah, all Halachos of Tznius must be observed etc.

The table at the Purim Seudah (both by day and night) should have candles on it, to make it a Yom Tov Seudah (Kitzur Shulchan Aruch Siman 142:5)

DRINKING ON PURIM

45) Chazal instituted that on Purim one should drink more than his usual share of wine. According to some opinions it is a Mitzvah to actually get intoxicated on Purim.

Others maintain that actual intoxication is not mandatory; rather one should drink until he gets tired, and falls asleep.

This is based on the words of the Talmud (Megilah 7b) "*Chayav Inish L'Besumei B'Puraya Ad D'Lo Yada Bein Arur Haman L'Baruch Mordechai*- one is obligated to drink on Purim until he cannot distinguish between "cursed is Haman" and "Blessed is Mordechai".

There are various ways to interpret the above Gemara, according to Halacha and Hashkafa as well as Kaballah, and covering all of them is beyond the scope of this forum. (For those who are interested in delving deeper into this, please start with the following sources: Shulchan Aruch, Rama and Mishna Berura Siman 695, Aruch HaShulchan Siman 695:2-5, Yad Ephraim to Shulchan Aruch ibid., MaHarsha Megilah 7b and Chochmas Manoach to Megila 7b)

If by getting drunk, one will come to be lax in Mitzvah observance, or will Chas V'Shalom transgress sins (as is unfortunately the case sometimes, as intoxication in a non Torah environment often leads to promiscuity), **he is forbidden from getting drunk.** (Meiri Maseches Megilah 7b, quoted in the Biur Halacha, Ran ibid., Shl"i ibid., Bais Yosef Siman 695 and Chayei Adam)

The point of drinking on Purim is to help us reach a higher level of Ahavas Hashem, loving our Father in Heaven. If one drinks in a manner that will bring disgrace to Hashem's name, not only has he not fulfilled the Mitzvah, he will also bear a very grave sin. May Hashem give us all the strength to fulfill the Mitzvos of Purim in the path of the Torah and not allow the Yetzer Hara to intervene.

WORKING ON PURIM

46) Although Purim is a Yom Tov on which work is permitted, the prevalent custom is not to work on Purim [day]. One who works on Purim will never see any blessing from the money he/she earns that day. (Some are lenient on Purim eve, in cases of great necessity) (Shulchan Aruch and Rama Siman 696:1. See also Shu"t Chasam Sofer Orach Siman 195)

COSTUMES

47) Although it is customary to dress up in costumes on Purim, care must be taken that men do not don women's clothing, and women do not wear men's clothing as doing so, according to many Poskim, will be a biblical transgression of "Lo Tilbash" as well as being a problem of Pritzus.

This applies to children as well, and G-d fearing people should not treat this lightly. (See Mishna Berura Siman 696:30 and Be'er Heitev Os 13. See also Aruch HaShulchan and Siddur Ya'avetz who are very stringent with this.)

Care should also be taken to ensure that the costumes do not contain Sha'atnez (materials containing wool and linen together) as that is also a biblical transgression, and may not be transgressed even on Purim. (ibid.)

SHUSHAN PURIM

48) The 15th of Adar, the day on which the Jews of Shushan as well as the Jews of Yerushalayim [and a few other walled cities] celebrate Purim, is referred to by those in the diaspora who already celebrated Purim on the 14th of Adar as "Shushan Purim".

Some people are stringent and also refrain from work on Shushan Purim. Others maintain that this is only a stringency for women. (Abudreham quoted in the Darchei Moshe Siman 696:1).

Shushan Purim is also a day of Simcha, and one should try and celebrate with a small Seudah containing meat and wine. (Rama Siman 695:2. See also Yosaef Ometz Siman 1106)

49) Tachanun, Keil Erech Apayim and Lamenatzeiach...Ya'ancha Hashem B'Yom Tzarah are not recited on Shushan Purim.

Al Hanisim is not recited [by those who already celebrated Purim on the 14th of Adar] on Shushan Purim; however, if it was inadvertently recited it is not considered a hefsek.

Let us end our study of Hilchos Purim with the words of the Posuk (Mishlei 15:15), the concluding words of the Rama in Hilchos Purim, and indeed the very last words in Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim: "V'Tov Lev Mishteh Tamid", as Rashi explains "Tov Lev", one who is satisfied with his lot in life, "Mishteh Tamid", will live all his as if he is at a joyous celebration, i.e. Sameach B'Chelko!

May we be zoche very soon to the day when we will all be residents of a rebuilt Yerushalayim with a rebuilt Bais Hamikdash and live an existence of true Simcha of "Mishteh Tamid" with "Korbanos Tamid" on the Mizbayach with the "Aish Tamid" !

