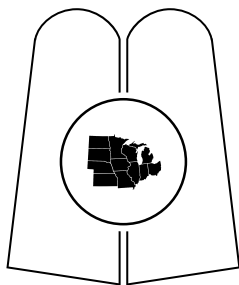


שפה ברורה

הלכות פורים

THE HALACHOS OF
THE MONTH OF ADAR
AND PURIM



AGUDATH ISRAEL OF ILLINOIS

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I. Table of Contents

I.	INTRODUCTION	1
II.	BEFORE PURIM	2
A.	Month of Adar	2
B.	Parshas Zachor	2
C.	Machatzis Hashekel	4
D.	Taanis Esther	7
III.	PURIM	8
A.	General	8
B.	Reading the Megillah	10
C.	Mishloach Manos	21
D.	Matanos L'evyonim	26
E.	Seudah	30
F.	Tefillos and Brachos on Purim	32
G.	Shushan Purim	34

THE HALACHOS OF PURIM

I. Introduction

Purim is one of the most festive and significant dates in the Jewish Calendar. In some ways, it is even greater than Yom Kippur. As the Arizal points out, the name “Yom HaKippurim” indicates that Yom Kippur is like, but not as great, as Purim.

Purim is the day that we recognize the hidden miracles that Hashem performed for our people in the times of Mordechai and Esther, and we celebrate our nation’s salvation from its seemingly impending annihilation. Megillas Esther (3:13) lists the four distinct forms of destruction that Haman Harasha plotted against Klal Yisroel- "להשמיד להרג ולאבד...ושללם לבז" ("to destroy, to murder, to exterminate...and to plunder"). Each one was to target the different parts of every Jew. *להשמיד* was to destroy their *neshamos* (souls), *להרג* was to wipe out their *ruach* (spirit), *לאבד* was to eradicate their bodies, and *שללם לבז* was to seize all their possessions.

The Vilna Gaon writes that in response to our redemption from these four threats, four categories of *mitzvos* were instituted on Purim. Our *neshamos* were saved, so we read the Megillah to enhance our *neshama*. Our *ruach* was saved, so we uplift our *ruach* with the *mitzvah* of *simcha* (joy). Our bodies were saved, so we enjoy physical pleasures with the *mitzvah* of having a *seudah*. Finally, our possessions were saved, so we elevate our money and other belongings by fulfilling the *mitzvos* of Matanos L’evyonim and Mishloach Manos.

This reversal is yet another example of ונהפוך הוא. Every attempt to remove us from Hashem and our *mitzvos*, became an impetus for more opportunities to draw us even closer to Him.

It is important, therefore, to take advantage of this auspicious day, and to use it as an opportunity for *teshuva* and further growth. This can best be done with the proper performance

THE HALACHOS OF PURIM

of all the mitzvos hayom.

The following guide will hopefully be a helpful resource to assist its readers in maximizing their Purim experience.

II. Before Purim

A. A. Month of Adar - Chazal teach us (Taanis 29a), משנכנס אדר מרבין בשמחה “When the month of Adar enters, one increases rejoicing”. Practically, the month of Adar is one of increased joy and good mazel. For example, if one needs to have a medical procedure done or one has been summoned to a court appearance, when possible, he should try to schedule it during the month of Adar.

B. Parshas Zachor

1. **Obligation** - On the Shabbos before Purim there is an obligation to hear Parshas Zachor in order to fulfill the mitzvah of *zechiras mechiyas Amalek* (to remember what Amalek did to us and our obligation to erase the existence and memory of Amalek). According to many Rishonim, this *mitzvah* is a Torah obligation.
2. **Kavana** - The following is the intent that each person needs to have during the *kriah* (reading) -
 - a. **Everyone Present** - Each person should have in mind during the reading to fulfill the *mitzvah* of *zechiras mechiyas Amalek*.
 - b. **Baal Korei** - The *baal korei* (Torah reader) should have in mind to be *motzi* the *tzibbur* with the *kriah* and the *mitzvah* of *zechiras mechiyas Amalek*.

THE HALACHOS OF PURIM

- c. **Oleh** - The individual getting the *aliyah* should have in mind to be *motzi* the *tzibbur* with the *brachos*.
 - d. **Tzibbur** - The *tzibbur* should have in mind that they are being *yotzei* with the *kriah* and *brachos* of the *baal korei* and *oleh*.
3. **Understand Translation** - It is important to understand every word of the reading, but at the very least the listener should have a basic general understanding of what is being read.
4. **Sefer Torah and Minyan**
- a. **L'chatchila** - Ideally, one should fulfill this obligation by hearing Parshas Zachor read from a *sefer torah* in shul with a *minyan* present.
 - b. **Can't Make it to Shul** - If one is unable to make it to shul to hear the *kriah*, he should read it from a *chumash* at home. Additionally, he should have in mind to fulfill this mitzvah of *zechiras mechiyas Amalek* by listening to the *krias hatorah* on Purim morning.

NOTE: On Purim day, the *baal korei* should have in mind during *krias hatorah* to be *motzi* all individuals who didn't hear Parshas Zachor and need to use that *kriah* for the *mitzvah* of *zechiras mechiyas Amalek*.
5. **Women** - There is a debate if women are obligated to hear Parshas Zachor. Practically, it is praiseworthy for a woman to make the effort to go to shul, but if she finds it difficult then she can fulfill her obligation by either reading it from a *chumash* at home or by listening to *krias hatorah* on Purim morning.
6. **Additional Halachos**
- a. **Every Word** - One should try to hear every single word of the reading. If one did miss a word, a *shaila* should be asked.

THE HALACHOS OF PURIM

- b. **Reading Along** - Some *poskim* suggest that the *tzibbur* should read along in a whisper, but the prevalent minhag is to not do so. This ensures that every word was heard from the *baal korei* and not from oneself or others.
- c. **Zaicher vs. Zecher**
 - i. There is a discussion if the proper pronunciation of the word זָכַר is זֵכֶר (“zaicher” with a tzairi) or זָכָר (“zecher” with a segole). To cover both opinions, most shuls have a custom to read the word both ways. Practically, the primary pronunciation is זֵכֶר (zaicher), and if one is in a shul that only read it that way he has fulfilled his obligation.
 - ii. There are various customs how to repeat the word זָכַר. Some shuls repeat the entire *pasuk*, others repeat just the phrase “*timchech es zeicher Amalek*” and others just repeat the word itself. Each shul should follow its *minhag*.
- d. **Different Pronunciation** - Ideally, one should hear Parshas Zachor from a *baal korei* who pronounces the words in the same way that he does. For example, ideally an Ashkenazi should hear the *kriah* from an Ashkenazi and a Sefardi should hear it from a Sefardi. If, however, one did hear the *kriah* with a different pronunciation, he still fulfilled his obligation.
- e. **Baal Korei** - The shul should only use a *baal korei* who has certainly reached the age and physical maturity to count as a *bar mitzvah*.

C. Machatzis Hashekel

- 1. **Background** - In the times of the beis hamikdash, the funds for the sacrifices were collected in the month of Nissan by each person giving a *machatzis hashekel* (half-shekel coin).

THE HALACHOS OF PURIM

During the preceding month of Adar, announcements were made to warn everyone to prepare for the upcoming *mitzvah*. To commemorate this practice, we have the *mitzvah* of contributing *tzedakah* as a remembrance of the original *machatzis hashekel*.

2. **Who is Obligated** - Every male above the age of 13 is obligated in this *mitzvah*. There are different customs regarding women and children, but it is a common minhag for the husband to contribute for himself, his wife and all his younger children. One should follow his family minhag.
 - a. **Pregnant Women** - Even among families who have a custom to contribute a *Machatzis Hashekel* for the women and children, there is a difference of opinion if a pregnant woman should contribute on behalf of the child she is carrying. Each family should follow its *minhag* or consult with its Rav.
 - b. **Changing Custom** - If one did have the custom to contribute on behalf of all the family members and he would like to discontinue this minhag, he would need to do a *hataras nedarim* to be released from his previous *minhag*.
3. **When**
 - a. **Acceptable Time** - The *Machatzis Hashekel* can be given any time in the month of Adar. If Adar already passed and one did not fulfill this *mitzvah*, he cannot fulfill it any longer.
 - b. **Common Practice** - The most common practice is to perform this *mitzvah* on Taanis Esther before *mincha*.
4. **How Much**
 - a. **Three Coins** - The word “*terumah*” is mentioned three times in the *pesukim* about the *Machatzis Hashekel*. Corresponding to this, we contribute three coins for this *mitzvah*.

THE HALACHOS OF PURIM

b. Which Coins

- i. The *minhag* is to give coins that are one half of the local currency. For example, a half-Dollar in the United States, a half-Shekel in *Eretz Yisroel*, or a half-Euro in most European countries. Most shuls make these coins available.
 - ii. Even though it is preferable to use half-coins of the local currency, when necessary, one may use half-coins of another country's currency as long as they have value in the location that they are being given in. For example, giving three half-dollar coins in *Eretz Yisroel*.
- c. **No “Half” Coins Available** - If there are no half coins available, one should just give 1.5 times the value of the local currency. For example, in the United States, it would be \$1.50.

5. Procedure

- a. Place \$1.50 in the bowl.
- b. Take 3 half-Dollar coins with the intention to acquire them.
- c. Say the words “*zaicher l'machatzis hashekel*” (“this a remembrance of the *machatzis hashekel*”). (One should not say, “this is a *machatzis hashekel*”. If one did, a *shaila* should be asked.)
- d. Lift up the coins and then put them back with the intent to give them to *tzedakah*.

6. Miscellaneous

- a. **Matanos L'evyonim** - If the *Machatzis Hashekel* money will be distributed on Purim itself, one can also fulfill the *mitzvah* of *Matanos L'evyonim* with his *Machatzis Hashekel* contribution.
- b. **Maaser Funds** - As with all other obligations, one may

THE HALACHOS OF PURIM

not use *maaser* money to perform the *mitzvah* of *Machatzis Hashekel*. Even if one has the *minhag* to do *Machatzis Hashekel* on behalf of his entire family, he may not use *maaser* money for their portion. If *tzedakah* money is added above the \$1.50 per person, the extra funds may be from *maaser*.

D. Taanis Esther

1. **Halachos of Fast Days** - For the general *halachos* of fast days, please see our publication dedicated to that topic. The following are the *halachos* specific to Taanis Esther.
2. **Reasons for the Fast of Taanis Esther**
 - a. To commemorate the three days of fasting that *Klal Yisroel* did during the month of Nissan when Esther went to speak to Achashveirosh. Being that fasting is not allowed in the month of Nissan, it was moved to Purim time in the month of Adar.
 - b. To commemorate the fasting that *Klal Yisroel* did in the month of Adar to prepare for the war that was going to be waged against them.
3. **Leniencies** - Being that there is no source in *Tanach* for this fast, it is treated more leniently than other fast days.
 - a. **Fasting** - Although all healthy people should observe the fast, there is more room to be lenient about fasting on Taanis Esther. For example, a chosson and kallah during sheva berachos do not need to fast. A Rav should be consulted.
 - b. **Other Inuyim** - Some individuals are *machmir* (stringent) not to shower or listen to music on other Fast Days. On Taanis Esther, being that it has no connection to the *churban habayis* (destruction of the *beis hamikdash*), there is no need to keep this *chumra*.

THE HALACHOS OF PURIM

4. **Stringencies** - Being that there is no exact date attached to this fast, if one did break this fast, he would need to make it up on a later date. If one was exempt from fasting, there is no need to make it up later.

III. Purim

Purim in Eretz Yisroel

Please note that this *kuntris* will not discuss the *halachos* specific to individuals keeping Purim in Eretz Yisroel. For example, it will not cover the *halachos* of which cities need to keep Purim on the 14th of Adar and which on the 15th, and it will also not discuss the *halachos* of individuals with one *minhag* visiting a city with the other *minhag*.

A. General

1. **Introduction** - The day of Purim is a Yom Tov and this special status expresses itself in the following ways-
2. **Proper Dress**
 - a. **Yom Tov Clothing** - One should wear nicer clothing on Purim than on an average weekday.
 - b. **Costumes** - It is customary for children and some adults to wear costumes on Purim.
 - i. One may wear a costume even if this means not dressing in Yom Tov clothing. When not in costume, though, nicer clothes should be worn.
 - ii. One should avoid having boys dress like girls and vice versa.

THE HALACHOS OF PURIM

- iii. One should be careful about the *halachos* of *shaatnez* (forbidden mixture of wool and linen) when buying or renting Purim costumes.
- iv. It is preferable to wear proper davening attire during the tefillos, but, technically, it is permissible to *daven* while wearing a costume if it is an appropriate one.

3. Torah and Teshuva

- a. **Torah** - It is appropriate to dedicate time on Purim to learning *torah*.
- b. **Teshuva** - One should take advantage of the *kedusha* of the day and use it as an opportunity to make a stronger connection to Hashem and to other people.

4. Melacha

- a. **Background** - Our *minhag* is to not do any time-consuming *melacha* that takes place on Purim day. For example, lawn mowing, house painting and hand laundry should not be done on Purim.
- b. **Permissible Melacha** - The following categories of activities (with examples in parentheses) may be done on Purim-
 - i. For the sake of a mitzvah. (Cooking for the *seudah* or sewing part of a costume)
 - ii. To avoid financial loss. (Fixing a hole in the roof or a broken pipe)
 - iii. Any melacha that is not time-consuming and does not take a lot of effort to perform. (Driving a car, writing, doing laundry in a machine, or shaving)
- c. **Going to Work** - When possible, one should avoid going to work on Purim. If there will be financial loss or there is another pressing need, one may go to work even on Purim.

THE HALACHOS OF PURIM

- d. **Siman Bracha** - The Shulchan Aruch states that one who does *melacha* on Purim (when he was not supposed to), won't see a *siman bracha* (signs of blessing) from that work.
- 5. **Restrictions** - Due to the festive nature of the day, the following two restrictions apply-
 - a. **No Fasting** - One should not fast on Purim.
 - b. **No Eulogies** - If there is a *levaya* (funeral) on Purim, regular *hespedim* (eulogies) should not be said. A Rav should be consulted for guidance.

B. Reading the Megillah

- 1. **Obligation** - There is an obligation to read Megillas Esther twice on Purim, once at night and again during the day. Every individual must either read the Megillah themselves or fulfill the *mitzvah* by hearing it from another person.
 - a. **Can Only Go to Shul Once** - If one is only able to hear the Megillah once on Purim, the daytime reading takes precedence.
 - b. **Missed at Night** - If one did not hear the Megillah at night, there is no need to make it up by hearing the Megillah twice during the day.
- 2. **When May it Be Read**
 - a. **Night Reading** - The acceptable time frame for reading the Megillah at night is from *tzeis hakochavim* (nightfall) until *alos hashachar* (dawn).
 - b. **Day Reading**
 - i. **Acceptable Time Frame** - The Megillah should ideally be read between *neitz hachama* (sunrise) and *shkiah*.

THE HALACHOS OF PURIM

- ii. **Ideal Time** - As with all mitzvos though, we say “*zrizim makdimin l'mitzvos*” (“the alacritous do mitzvos as early as possible”) and the earlier it can be fulfilled, the better.
- iii. **Before Neitz** - If one read the Megillah before *neitz hachama* he still fulfilled his obligation as long as it was after *alos hashachar*. In certain cases, one may even intentionally choose to read the Megillah at that time.

3. Activities Prohibited Before the Megillah

a. Eating

- i. **Halacha** - Like with any other *mitzvah*, one should not eat within 30 minutes of the time to fulfill the *mitzvah*. This helps eliminate the concern that he will become absorbed in his meal and forget to hear the Megillah. Women are also included in this restriction.
- ii. **How Much Food**
 - In most cases, it is permissible to have a small snack before performing a mitzvah. (A snack is eating less than a *k'beitzah* of bread or bread-like products or having fruits and vegetables even more than that amount.) Before Megillah reading, however, there are those who are more stringent and don't allow even a snack.
 - Case of Need - In a case of need, one may eat a snack before hearing the Megillah. In fact, even more can be eaten if a *shomer* (guardian) is arranged. Common examples of those who can be lenient are individuals who are very weak from fasting on Taanis Esther and women who will only be hearing the Megillah later at night when their husbands get home.

THE HALACHOS OF PURIM

4. Who is Obligated to Hear the Megillah

- a. **Men** - Obligated
- b. **Women** - Obligated. Even though this is a time-bound positive *mitzvah*, which women are usually exempt from, women do have an obligation to fulfill this mitzvah. This is because of a concept called “*af hein hayu b’oso haneis*” (they were also saved by and involved in bringing about the miraculous salvation of Purim).
- c. **Children of Chinuch Age** - Obligated
- d. **Small Children** - There is no obligation to bring small children to hear the Megillah. It is common and commendable, though, for parents to bring young children as long as they won’t disturb others during the reading.
- e. **Sick/Elderly** - Individuals who are unable to go to shul to hear the Megillah, a reading should be arranged for them in their homes. If this is not possible, it is better to hear it over the telephone than to not hear it at all, but no *bracha* should be said on this reading.

5. Hearing Every Word

- a. **Obligation** - One must hear every word of the Megillah. If even one word was missed, the mitzvah was not fulfilled.
- b. **Proper Listening** - One should listen intently to every word of the Megillah, it is advisable to follow along inside while listening.
 - i. **Reading Along**
 - **Kosher Megillah** - It is advisable to read along in a whisper, but he should be cautious that he is not audible enough for others to hear him.
 - **Chumash** - It is better to just listen to the *baal korei* and not read along audibly.
 - ii. **Talking** - Talking is not allowed while the Megillah is being read.

THE HALACHOS OF PURIM

- iii. **Other Activities** - One should not engage in other activities while listening to the Megillah. If one did, and still feels like he heard every word, a Rav should be consulted to determine if he was *yotzei*.
 - iv. **Not Focused** - If one was not focused on the reading (i.e.- “spaced out”), he cannot assume that he fulfilled his obligation unless he was following along with his finger the whole time and he was still in the right place. One who knows that he was not focused and lost the place, did not fulfill his obligation.
 - v. **Unsure if Missed a Word** - One should not be overly nervous that he missed a word. If he felt like he focused on the reading and he followed along, it is safe to assume that he fulfilled the *mitzvah* properly.
- c. **Making Up Missed Words** -
- i. **Making it Up During the Reading** -
 - **Have Own Megillah Scroll** - If one missed hearing one or more words and he has his own kosher scroll, he should quickly fill in the missing words while reading from the scroll and then catch up.
 - **Don't Have Own Megillah Scroll** - If one does not have his own kosher scroll, although it is *b'dieved*, he may still fill in the missing words and then catch up (up to half of the Megillah) on his own from a Chumash.
 - ii. **Making it Up After the Reading** - If one did not manage to fill in the missing words while hearing the Megillah being read, the following *halachos* apply-
 - **Realize Right After the Initial Reading** - Without a new *bracha*, he should hear or read it himself from the word that he missed until the

THE HALACHOS OF PURIM

end of the Megillah. It would not be sufficient to just say the missing word or sentence out of order. If the part that was missed was in the first half of the Megillah, it must be read or heard from a kosher Megillah.

- **Realize the Mistake Only Later** - If there was a break (*hesech ha'daas*) after the Megillah reading before realizing a word or more was missed, it may be too late at this point to just read from the missing word(s). A *shaila* should be asked.

6. Baal Korei Made a Mistake

a. Mistake in Pronunciation

- Did Not Change Meaning** - If the *baal korei* mispronounced a word in a way that it does not change the meaning at all (for example - יהודיים instead of ייִהודים), he does not need to go back to correct it.
- Changed the Meaning** - If the mistake actually changes the meaning of the word (for example - נפל instead of נופל), he should ideally go back and read again, but if he didn't, the *tzibbur* still fulfilled their obligation.

b. Left Out a Word

- Changed the Meaning** - If an entire word or words were left out and the absence of those words changes the meaning of the story, the Megillah should be read again with a *bracha*.
- Did Not Change Meaning** - If the absence of the words does not affect the meaning of the story, the Megillah should be read again without a *bracha*.

THE HALACHOS OF PURIM

- c. **Think Baal Korei Made a Mistake** - If one thinks that the *baal korei* made a mistake and everyone else thought it was read properly, he can assume that it was in fact read properly.

7. Customs During Reading

a. Banging During Haman

- i. There is a common minhag to bang loudly each time Haman's name is mentioned in the Megillah. Like all real *minhagim*, this minhag has deep roots and should be treated seriously.
- ii. Individuals who bang should only do so appropriately and at the correct times in order to avoid being a distraction during the reading.
- iii. This *minhag* is not an obligation, and therefore a group may choose not to bang in order to speed up the pace of the Megillah reading.
- iv. The *baal korei* should not continue until all of the banging is done.

- b. **Pesukim of Geulah** - There are four *pesukim* in the Megillah that are central to the *geulah* (redemption) of the Purim story. Our minhag is for the entire *tzibbur* to read these *pesukim* out loud before the *baal korei* himself reads them out loud.

- c. **Ten Sons of Haman** - In the ninth *perek* (chapter) of the Megillah, it relates the story of the hanging of the ten sons of Haman. The accepted minhag is for each person to read all of these names in one breath, and then the *baal korei* does the same thing out loud. If a member of the *tzibbur* has difficulty doing this, he has still fulfilled his obligation of hearing the Megillah.

- 8. **Reading with a Minyan** - Whenever possible, the Megillah should be read in the presence of a *minyan*.

THE HALACHOS OF PURIM

- a. **First Minyan in Town** - The first Megillah reading in town must have a *minyan* present.
- b. **Pirsumei Nissa** - In order to publicize the miracle in a greater way, it is praiseworthy to go to the largest gathering possible.
 - i. **Regular Shul** - If one has a regular shul, he should daven there even if there is another shul in the neighborhood that will have more people present.
 - ii. **Large Shul is Noisy** - If one will find it difficult to listen to the Megillah in the bigger shul due to the amount of people and the commotion, he may choose to daven with a smaller *minyan*.
- c. **Can't Join a Minyan** - If for whatever reason, one is unable to join a minyan, he should just read the Megillah himself from a kosher scroll or hear it from someone else. If there will not be a minyan, there is no need to gather a group smaller than ten people to read the Megillah together.

9. Who Can be a Baal Korei

- a. **Adult Men Over Bar Mitzvah** - Any adult male may read the Megillah for others, even if he has already fulfilled the mitzvah himself.
- b. **Male Children Under Bar Mitzvah** - May only read for adults if there is no one else who knows how to read it.
- c. **Women** - A woman may read the Megillah for herself, but not for a gathering. In extenuating circumstances, where no one else is available, a Rav should be consulted.

10. Halachos and Qualifications for the Baal Korei -

- a. **Qualifications** - The *baal korei* should know the reading very well and have a loud enough voice for everyone present to be able to hear him.

THE HALACHOS OF PURIM

NOTE: If the regular *baal korei* is no longer able to read loud enough, the Rav should be consulted to decide how to deal with the situation in the most appropriate and sensitive way possible. The decision will be based on the wishes of the *baal korei*, his level of sensitivity, how well he in fact can read and the desire of the *tzibbur* to specifically have him as the *baal korei*.

- b. **Prepare** - Every year the *baal korei* should prepare well in order to avoid making any mistakes and to ensure that the individuals who he is representing actually fulfill their obligation. (See 6. above for what to do when mistakes happen)
- c. **Standing** - Technically, the *baal korei* may read the Megillah either standing or sitting, but out of respect to the *tzibbur* the *baal korei* should read the Megillah while standing. For small additional readings, that have less than a minyan of men, the *baal korei* may sit down. The *tzibbur*, however, may always sit during the reading.
- d. **Kosher Scroll** - The *baal korei* must read from a kosher megillah scroll. (See 12. below for select *halachos* of a Kosher Scroll)
- e. **Reading from Inside** - The *baal korei* should read every word from inside the Megillah and not say it by heart. If he did say part of it by heart, *b'dieved* the *tzibbur* still fulfilled its obligation, as long as more than half of the Megillah was read from inside.
- f. **Kavana** - The *baal korei* should have in mind to be *motzi* the *tzibbur* with the *brachos* and the *kriah*. (See 11. below for the *halachos* of the *brachos*)
- g. **Unrolling Megillah** - Before reading the Megillah for a public reading, the *baal korei* should unroll the entire Megillah "like a letter" and fold it underneath.

THE HALACHOS OF PURIM

h. Minhagim During the Megillah Reading

- i. **Balayla Hahu** - In many shuls, the *baal korei* reads the words “בלילה ההוא נדדה שנת המלך” in a louder voice.
- ii. **Ha’igeres Hazos** - In many shuls, at the words “האיגרת הזאת” the *baal korei* lightly shakes the Megillah he is reading from.
- iii. **Ten Sons of Haman** - As mentioned above, the *pasuk* that relates to the hanging of Haman’s sons, should be read in one breath by both the *baal korei* and the *tzibbur*.
- iv. **Pesukim of Geulah** - As mentioned above, after the *tzibbur* reads the four *pesukim* of *geulah* out loud, the *baal korei* should still read them out loud as well.

11. Brachos

- a. **Brachos Before Reading** - There are three *brachos* recited before reading the Megillah. All three are said even if there is no *minyan* -
 - i. על מקרא מגילה
 - ii. שעשה ניסים
 - iii. שהחיינו
- b. **She’hechyanu During Day** - When the *she’hechyanu bracha* is said before the daytime reading, it is customary to also have in mind all of the other *mitzvos* that will be performed that day (*matanos l’evyonim*, *mishloach manos*, and *seudah*). It is appropriate for the Rav or Gabbai to announce for the *tzibbur* to have this in mind.
- c. **Who Says the Bracha**
 - i. **First Readings** - If the Megillah is being read by a *baal korei* who has not fulfilled his own obligation yet, the *baal korei* should recite the *brachos* himself.

THE HALACHOS OF PURIM

- ii. **Additional Reading** - If the *baal korei* has already fulfilled his personal obligation and is just reading for others, the halacha is as follows-
 - **Reading for Men** - The most common minhag is for the *baal korei* to say the *brachos* himself. Others are of the opinion that the men themselves should make their own *brachos*.
 - **Reading for Women** - The women themselves say the *brachos*. For the first *bracha*, they change the wording to “*Lishmoa (Mikrah) Megillah*”, and then they say “*She’asah Nissim*” and “*She’hechiyanu*”. In many women’s gatherings, one woman says the *bracha* for the entire group.
- d. **Bracha After Reading** - There is one *bracha* recited after the Megillah is read, it starts with the words “הרב את ריבנו”.
 - i. This *bracha* is only said in the presence of a *minyan*.
 - ii. In some kehillos only the *baal korei* says this *bracha*, in others the entire *tzibbur* says it. Each shul should follow its *minhag*.
 - iii. If there are ten men present, even if some of the men have already fulfilled their obligation, the *bracha* should be said.
- e. **After the Reading** - After the *bracha* of “*Harav es riveinu*”, the *tzibbur* says “אשר הניא” (only at night) and “שושנת יעקב”.
- f. **Standing** - The *baal korei* and the *tzibbur* should stand during the *brachos*, even if they will be sitting during the reading.
- g. **Baruch Hu U’varuch Shmo** - The individuals who are being *yotzei* with the *brachos* and the *kriah* should not say the words “*Baruch Hu U’Varuch Shmo*” in middle of the *brachos*. If someone does say it accidentally, he still fulfilled his obligation to hear the Megillah with *brachos*.

THE HALACHOS OF PURIM

- h. **Unrolling and Rolling** - Before the *brachos* are said before reading the Megillah, the entire *megillah* should be unrolled and folded underneath, and the *megillah* should be fully rolled back up before saying the *bracha* after the reading. Individuals in the *tzibbur* who have their own *megillah* do not need to be particular to do this.
- 12. **Kosher Megillah Scroll** - One can only fulfill the *mitzvah* by reading from a kosher *megillah*. A comprehensive review of these *halachos* is beyond the scope of this work, but a few brief *halachos* to keep in mind are as follows-
 - a. **Handwritten** - The megillah must be handwritten on a *klaf* (parchment). Printed *megillos* are not kosher even if they are on a *klaf*.
 - b. **Decorated** - A *megillah* that has pictures and other images drawn on it, is technically kosher but it is preferable to use one without any drawings.
 - c. **Missing Words** - If the megillah is missing a few words, it may still be kosher. As a general guideline -
 - i. **Missing from Beginning or End** - Not Kosher
 - ii. **Missing from Middle** - It is not kosher if the missing words change the meaning of the story. If the missing words do not change the meaning of the story, then it may still be kosher as long as less than half of the words are missing.
 - d. **No Kosher Megillah Available** - If there is no kosher megillah available, it is proper to read the Megillah to oneself from a *chumash* without a *bracha*.
- 13. **Telephone, Microphone and Hearing Aids**
 - a. **Microphone** - The consensus of the *poskim* is that one cannot fulfill a *mitzvah* with sounds emitted electronically. Therefore, a shul should not use a microphone for Megillah reading.

THE HALACHOS OF PURIM

- b. **Telephone** - One should never choose to hear the Megillah over a telephone in place of hearing it in person. Even the sick and elderly who cannot go to shul should arrange to have a private reading. If no other option is available, then as a last resort one may listen to the Megillah over the phone, but no *bracha* should be said. If afterwards the opportunity to hear a Megillah reading in person becomes available, he should hear it read again.
- c. **Hearing Aids** - One should ideally try to hear the Megillah without using hearing aids, even if this means switching to a different seat in shul to be closer to the *baal korei*. If this is not possible or one simply cannot hear without the use of a hearing aid, one may be lenient and listen using a hearing aid.

C. Mishloach Manos

- 1. **Obligation** - There is a mitzvah to give gifts to each other on Purim. The minimum obligation is to give two items to one person.
- 2. **Time of Obligation** - One can only fulfill this *mitzvah* by giving the items during Purim day. One cannot fulfill the mitzvah by giving Mishloach Manos at night. If one sends the items at night or even before Purim and they arrive on Purim day, he has fulfilled his obligation.
- 3. **Reason for Mitzvah** - There is a debate if the primary reason for the mitzvah is to foster friendship and goodwill between Jews or to provide food for the recipient's *seudah*. Practically, we conduct ourselves to follow the stringencies of both opinions. Therefore -
 - a. **Non-Food Items** - If one sends non-food items he has not fulfilled his obligation, this is because these items do not provide food for the *seudah*.

THE HALACHOS OF PURIM

- b. **Giving Anonymously** - If one sends his Mishloach Manos anonymously he has not fulfilled his obligation, because it does not function to bring a closer relationship.
 - c. **Not Home** - If the recipient is not home and won't be home until after Purim, one does not fulfill his obligation by leaving a package by the door. If the package was given to family members, the giver did fulfill his obligation even if the recipient never actually found out about it.
4. **Who is Obligated to Send**
- a. **Men** - Obligated
 - b. **Women** - Obligated.

NOTE: It is important to note that married women have to give Mishloach Manos and cannot dispense their obligation with their husband's giving unless it is clear that it is from both of them.
 - c. **Children Who are Reliant Upon Parental Support** - Children above *bar* and *bas mitzvah* who are still being supported by their parents are obligated in this *mitzvah* if they have any of their own money. In the rare case that they do not have their own money, they would technically be exempt. In this case, the parents should give the child money or food items anyways in order to fulfill the *mitzvah*.
 - d. **Children of Chinuch Age** - Children at around the age of 6-7 are obligated because of the *mitzvah* of *chinuch*. Their parents should provide them with something to give.
 - e. **Poor** - If someone cannot afford to give Mishloach Manos, he may fulfill his obligation by trading food items with another person.

5. **To Whom to Send**

- a. **Financial Standing** - One can fulfill this *mitzvah* by

THE HALACHOS OF PURIM

giving to any Jew regardless of his or her financial standing.

- b. **Same Gender** - In general, men should only send Mishloach Manos to other men, and women should send to women. Families, however, may certainly give to other families. Accepted Exceptions-
 - i. **Rebbitzen** - A *talmid* (student) may give Mishloach Manos to his Rebbi's widow and members of a shul may give to the widow of their previous Rav.
 - ii. **Chosson and Kallah** - A *chosson* and *kallah* may exchange Mishloach Manos with each other.
- c. **Child** - According to most *poskim*, one can fulfill this *mitzvah* by giving a package to a child old enough to appreciate the gift.
- d. **Aveil** - It is customary not to send Mishloach Manos to an *aveil* (an individual within a year of the passing of a parent or within thirty days of the passing of other immediate relatives).
 - i. **Extenuating Circumstances** - In extenuating circumstances there is room to be lenient as long as it has been at least thirty days since the death. For example -
 - There is an accepted custom to send Mishloach Manos to the Rav of a shul even when he is within the year of *aveilus*.
 - If the only potential recipient in the area is an *aveil*, the Mishloach Manos may be given to that person.
 - ii. **Give to the Family** - One may give Mishloach Manos to the entire family as long as it is not specifically to the *aveil*.

THE HALACHOS OF PURIM

6. What to Send

- a. **Food vs. Drink** - One can fulfill this mitzvah by giving the combination of any two items; Two foods, two drinks or a food and a drink. Some *poskim* are of the opinion that sending two food items is the most preferable of these options.

b. What counts as two items

- i. **Different** - The two items should be considered “different” from one another. They are considered different if they have very different tastes and are called by different names. For example, the following are different enough to be considered two *manos* (items): red apple and green apple, dark meat and white meat of chicken, or red and white wine.

NOTE: Contrary to a widespread misconception, the two items may have the same *bracha*.

- ii. **Tafeil Item (Secondary Food)** - A food item that is only *tafeil* (secondary) to the main food, is not considered a separate food. Therefore, a piece of gefilte fish with a carrot on top or a salad with multiple vegetables, would only count as one food item for this *mitzvah*.

- c. **Edible** - The items should be edible ‘as is’ upon arrival. Therefore, one does not fulfill this obligation by giving the following-

- i. **Not Cooked** - One does not fulfill his obligation if the items given need further cooking or preparation. (Examples- raw chicken and raw pasta)
- ii. **Condiments** - Items that are technically edible, but are only used as condiments and therefore need further preparation, cannot count as one of the food items. (Examples- oil or garlic powder)

THE HALACHOS OF PURIM

- d. **Value of Items** - The items given should be of some value in the eyes of the recipient, otherwise it would not work to promote friendship by giving them. Therefore, one of the items cannot be water (even expensive brands or sparkling water). Many *poskim* are also of the opinion that a lollipop or sucking candy cannot be used as the second item for this reason.
- e. **Extra Items and Extra Packages**
 - i. **Extra Items** - As long as two of the items in the package follow the basic requirements of Mishloach Manos, the extra items that are added can be anything (non-food items, inexpensive, etc).
 - ii. **Extra Packages** - Technically, after one package has been delivered according to halacha, subsequent packages given to additional people don't have to be with the above guidelines. That being said, it is certainly appropriate to arrange for all the packages to follow the requirements in order to further enhance the mitzvah of Mishloach Manos on Purim.

7. How to Send

- a. **Messenger** - There are some *poskim* who understand the word "*mishloach*" to instruct us to fulfill this mitzvah specifically with a messenger, they also argue that sending with a messenger is more significant and it engenders stronger feelings of friendship. It is proper to give at least one package using a messenger, but if this is not possible one can fulfill his obligation by giving all the packages directly.
- b. **Type of Messenger** - If one does choose to use a messenger, even a non-Jew or a child can act as the messenger.

THE HALACHOS OF PURIM

8. Miscellaneous

- a. **Tevillas Keilim** - If one will be delivering Mishloach Manos on a dish or tray that is made of a material that is obligated in *tevillas keilim*, he should be aware that there is a discussion as to who can or should do the *tevilla*. A dish that is purchased to give away is not obligated in *tevilla* until it is acquired by the recipient. Therefore, by Mishloach Manos there are two options available. Either,
 - i. Don't *tovel* the container, and warn the recipient that after the contents have been removed that a *tevilla* would be needed before further use.
 - ii. Give the container to a different person (not a household member) to acquire on behalf of the intended recipient. Once this is done, it technically belongs to the recipient and then the giver can be *tovel* on the recipient's behalf before filling it with its contents.
- b. **Hafrashas Challah** - If one makes a batch of baked items in the amount that would normally be obligated in *hafrashas challah*, but it was baked with intention to distribute in a way that no one person will have a full *shiur* (amount of dough that is obligated in this mitzvah), there is a discussion if the piece of challah should be removed with a *bracha* or not. A Rav should be consulted.

D. Matanos L'evyonim

1. **Obligation** - There is an obligation to give *tzedakah* to poor people on Purim. The minimum obligation is to give a contribution to at least two different poor people.
 - a. **Increasing Giving** - Even though one fulfills his obligation by giving *tzedakah* to two people, it is a big *mitzvah* to give beyond the minimal obligation.

THE HALACHOS OF PURIM

- b. **Importance of Mitzvah** - The Rambam states clearly that one should put more emphasis on this mitzvah than on any other *mitzvos* of the day. Bringing happiness to poor people is the true joy of Purim. Therefore, increasing one's *tzedakah* contributions on Purim takes precedence over giving more Mishloach Manos or having a more lavish *seudah*.
- c. **Big Sums or Small Sums** - If one has to choose between giving larger sums of money to less people or smaller sums to more people, it is preferable to give smaller sums to more people.

2. Who is Obligated

- a. **Men** - Obligated
- b. **Women** - Obligated. A married woman can fulfill her obligation with the *tzedakah* that her husband gives, but it is appropriate that she be aware that he is doing it on her behalf.
- c. **Children above Bar/Bas Mitzvah** - They are obligated if they have any of their own money. If they have no money of their own they are technically exempt, but nowadays they often do have their own money or their parents give them money to fulfill the *mitzvah*.
- d. **Children of Chinuch Age** - The *mitzvah* of *chinuch* should technically apply if they have any of their own money. If they have no money of their own they are technically exempt, but nowadays they often do have their own money or their parents give them money to fulfill the mitzvah.
- e. **Poor Person** - He should exchange *tzedakah* with other *aniim* (poor people).

- 3. **Minimum Amount of Each Gift** - The minimal amount is to give the monetary value of a small meal to each poor

THE HALACHOS OF PURIM

person. Rav Moshe Feinstein, for example, says this would be the value of a roll and a cup of coffee.

4. **Giving to a Rav or a Fund** - One may perform this mitzvah by giving money to his Rav or to other reliable collectors, and assume that the money will be distributed on his behalf in a way that he will fulfill the *mitzvah*.

5. Recipient

- a. **How Poor** - One can fulfill this mitzvah by giving the money to any individual who is considered poor, even if the individual is not considered destitute (*evyon*).
- b. **“Kol Haposheit”** - The Gemara instructs us, “*kol haposheit yad nosnim lo*” (“anyone that sticks out his hand, give to him”). This teaches us that on Purim:
 - i. It is praiseworthy to try to give at least a small sum of money to every individual who requests a contribution. This halacha does not apply to individuals collecting on behalf of Yeshivos and institutions, but of course it is praiseworthy to give *tzedakah* to these causes anyways.
 - ii. One should not scrutinize the worthiness of potential recipients as much as he may have done during the rest of the year.
- c. **Child** - One can fulfill his obligation by giving *tzedakah* to a child.
- d. **Different Time Zone** - If the recipient is in a different time zone than the giver, the giver only fulfills his obligation if the money is given at a time that is Purim for both the giver and the recipient. Therefore, for example, if it is Motzei Purim for the recipient when he receives the funds, the giver did not fulfill his obligation even though he is further west and it is still Purim.

THE HALACHOS OF PURIM

6. Using Maaser Funds

- a. As a general rule, one may not use *maaser* funds to fulfill an obligation. Therefore, one cannot use *maaser* money for the basic fulfillment of Matanos L'evyonim.
- b. If one already fulfilled the basic obligation and would like to give more money on Purim, those funds may be from his *maaser* account.

7. Miscellaneous

a. Using a Check

- i. It is questionable if one can fulfill his obligation by giving a check that cannot be cashed that day. If he gave it on a day that it can be cashed or the check has cash value in that location, then he has fulfilled his obligation.
 - ii. In many cases, the Rav or *tzedakah* collector either actually cashed the checks they received in order to distribute the *tzedakah* as cash or they already have cash to distribute based on what they expect to collect on Purim. If this is the case, the giver has certainly fulfilled his obligation.
 - iii. **Postdated Checks** - All *poskim* agree that one cannot fulfill his obligation by giving postdated checks with a date after Purim.
- b. **Matanos L'evyonim and Mishloach Manos** - One may fulfill both of his obligations of Mishloach Manos and Matanos L'evyonim by giving one package of two items to a poor person.
- c. **No Poor People** - If there are no Jewish poor people to give the money to on Purim, one should send money before Purim to a different city that does have *aniim*. If that option was not available or it is too late, he should

THE HALACHOS OF PURIM

put aside the required amount of money on Purim to distribute at his next opportunity.

E. Seudah

1. **Obligation** - There is an obligation for all men, women and children of *chinuch* age to have a festive meal on the day of Purim.
2. **Time of Seudah** -
 - a. The *seudah* can be any time during Purim day.
 - b. Most commonly, people start the *seudah* later in the day after Mincha. This is completely acceptable, but they should be careful to have most of the *seudah* on Purim itself and not on Motzei Purim.
 - c. When Purim occurs on Erev Shabbos, the *seudah* should ideally start before *chatzos*. Otherwise, it should start as early as possible and at least start before the beginning of the tenth halachic hour of the day. If one did not start before the tenth hour, the *seudah* may still proceed but one should minimize how much is eaten in order to have an appetite for the Shabbos *seudah*. It is not advisable to start the *seudah* close to Shabbos and stop in middle to make kiddush (“poreis mapah u’mikadeish”). If one would like to utilize this method, it should be discussed with a Rav.
3. **What to Eat**
 - a. **Bread** - There is no official obligation to wash and have bread at this *seudah*, but it is the proper thing to do.
 - b. **Meat** - There is a discussion if there is an obligation to serve meat at this *seudah*. When possible, it is advisable to have meat at this *seudah*.
4. **Drinking Wine** - There is a *mitzvah* for male adults to drink wine on Purim until they reach a state of “עד דלא דע”

THE HALACHOS OF PURIM

בין ארור המן לברוך מרדכי". There is significant discussion how to define "*ad d'lo yada*". The Rama writes that this simply means to drink more than usual and go to sleep. Although the consensus of the *poskim* seems to be like the Rama, there are many people who follow other opinions and drink more than this *shiur*. They have many sources to rely on.

- a. **Warnings** - If one does plan on becoming inebriated on Purim, the following unanimously accepted *halachos* should be kept in mind -
 - i. One should not drink if it will significantly interfere with his ability to properly perform *mitzvos* such as *bentching* and *davening maariv*.
 - ii. One should not drink if it will lead to inappropriate behaviors that constitute a *chilul Hashem* (r"l).
 - iii. One should not drink if it will lead to the endangerment of his own or other people's lives.
- b. **Wine** - Ideally, one should fulfill this mitzvah by drinking wine, but many *poskim* are of the opinion that one can fulfill this mitzvah with other intoxicating beverages.
- c. **Maariv** - If one is only mildly drunk, he may daven Maariv. If he is drunk to the point that he is not fit to be "*omeid lifnei HaMelech*" (stand in front of The King), he should delay davening until the drunkenness wears off even if this possibly means missing *davening* Maariv altogether. In this case, he may daven an extra Shemoneh Esrei the following morning as *tashlumin* to make up the Maariv that he missed.

5. Miscellaneous

a. Learning Torah

- i. It is appropriate to start the *seudah* with *torah* and to have *divrei torah* during the *seudah*.

THE HALACHOS OF PURIM

- ii. Some have a minhag to learn some Hilchos Pesach during the Purim *seudah*. This is done to fulfill the concept of learning the *halachos* of Pesach “*shloshim yom kodem hachag*” (thirty days before the holiday).
- b. **Night Time Seudah** - There is no obligation to have a *seudah* during the night of Purim, but is recommended to set the table and have a small meal in honor of the occasion.
- c. **Aveil** - An individual in *aveilus* should ask a *shaila* as to which Purim *seudos* may be attended.
- 6. **Bentching** - One should *bentch* before *davening* Maariv. Otherwise, there will be a *shaila* if he can still say “Al Hanissim” in *bentching*.

E. Tefillos and Brachos on Purim

1. Changes in the Seder HaTefilla

- a. **Maariv** - After Shemoneh Esrei of Maariv, the order of the rest of davening is as follows
 - i. Kaddish Shaleim
 - ii. Read the Megillah with its brachos before and after
 - iii. Say Asher Heini and Shoshanas Yaakov
 - iv. Say “V’atah Kadosh” (similar to Motzei Shabbos)
 - v. Kaddish Shaleim without “tiskabeil”
 - vi. Aleinu
 - vii. Kaddish Yasom
- b. **Shacharis**
 - i. **Krovetz** - Some shuls have a minhag to say the “Krovetz” on Purim morning.
 - ii. **Tefilla Omissions** - The following parts of davening are omitted on Purim -

THE HALACHOS OF PURIM

- Tachanun
- Keil erech apayim (said while the sefer torah is taken out)
- Yehi Ratzon (said after Krias Hatorah)
- Lamnatzeiyach

2. Al Hanissim

- a. **Obligation** - “Al Hanissim” is added to the *hodaah* (thanksgiving) part of both Shemoneh Esrei and Birkas Hamazon.
- b. **Forgot During Shemoneh Esrei** - If one forgot to say “Al Hanissim” during Shemoneh Esrei, it depends when he realized his mistake -

- i. **Before Bracha** - Go back, insert, and continue from there.
- ii. **After Bracha** - Say it in the middle of “Elokei Netzor” as follows:

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְפָּנֶיךָ שֶׁתַּעֲשֶׂה לָנוּ נִסִּים וּנְפִלָאוֹת כְּשֶׁמְעִשִׂית
לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם בְּזֶמֶן הַזֶּה. בַּיָּמִי מְרַדְּכִי וְאַסְתֵּר...

- iii. **Finished Shemoneh Esrei** - Do not repeat Shemoneh Esrei.

- c. **Forgot During Bentsching** - If one forgot to say “Al Hanissim” during *bentsching*, it depends when he realized his mistake -

- i. **Before Bracha** - Go back, insert, and continue from there.
- ii. **After Bracha** - Say it as one of the “Harachamans” at the end of bentsching as follows:

הֶרַחֲמֵן הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה לָנוּ נִסִּים וּנְפִלָאוֹת כְּשֶׁמְעִשִׂית
לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם בְּזֶמֶן הַזֶּה. בַּיָּמִי מְרַדְּכִי וְאַסְתֵּר...

THE HALACHOS OF PURIM

- iii. **Finished Bentching** - Do not repeat bentching.
- d. **In “Al Hamichya”** - “Al Hanissim” is not inserted into the “Bracha m’ein shalosh”.
- e. **Skipping “Al Hanissim”** - One should not skip “Al Hanissim” in order to catch Kedusha with the *tzibbur*.
- f. **Said “B’yimei Mattisyahu”** - If one said “B’yimei Mattisyahu” instead of “B’yimei Mordechai v’Esther” and he already finished the *bracha*, he does not need to go back or repeat Shemoneh Esrei because of this mistake.
- 3. **Hallel** - Hallel is not said on Purim. Chazal teach us that the Megilla counts as our recital of a Hallel. If one will be in a place where he won’t be able to hear the Megillah on Purim, he should say Hallel without a *bracha*.
- 4. **Migdol vs Magdil** - There is a debate among the poskim if one should say “מְגִדֹּל” at the end of bentching in the line “magdil yeshuos malko” like a normal weekday, or switch to “מְגִדֹּל” which is the version that is used on Shabbos and Yom Tov. Practically, the common minhag is to say “magdil”.

G. Shushan Purim

- 1. **The following parts of davening are omitted on Shushan Purim** -
 - a. Tachanun
 - b. Lamnatzeyyach
- 2. **“Al Hanissim”** - If one accidentally said “Al Hanissim” after Purim is over, he does not need to repeat Shemoneh Esrei.

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Yomim Noraim



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