

# THE HALACHAH SHEET

Compiled by Aryeh Leib Shapiro

Reviewed by Rav Ami Merzel

## Purim

### Introduction

- The miracle of Purim, the reversal from genocide to celebration, occurred in a uniquely hidden manner. The natural flow of events, spanning the course of years, was in hindsight revealed to be precisely orchestrated by Hashem. This realization by the Jews spurred them to reaccept the Torah from אהבה. On Purim, we too are meant to connect the fragments of our lives and come to notice the guiding Force underneath the surface.
- **Four Mitzvos.** Chazal instituted four mitzvos on Purim: 1) reading the megillah, 2) *matanos l'evyonim*, 3) *mishloach manos*, and 4) feasting and rejoicing.
- **Women.** Women are obligated in all of the mitzvos of the day, as they were also beneficiaries of the miracle.<sup>1</sup>
- **14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup>.** The miraculous victory of the Jewish people in the days of Achashverosh was celebrated the day after the fighting had stopped. Outside of Shushan this was on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Adar, and in Shushan itself it was a day later, on the 15<sup>th</sup>. Chazal instituted that any city that was walled from the days of Yehoshua, like Shushan, should observe Purim on the 15<sup>th</sup>. Any other place should celebrate Purim on the 14<sup>th</sup>.<sup>2</sup>

### Megillah Reading

#### The Mitzvah

- **Source.** We are obligated to read the megillah, as the *pasuk* says, "These days [of Purim] should be remembered [by reading the megillah] and observed in every generation..." (*Esther* 9:28).
- **Obligation.** One is obligated to read the megillah and recite the berachos, both on Purim night and Purim morning.<sup>3</sup> The reading must be done from a kosher megillah.<sup>4</sup>

#### How

- **Listening.** We use the halachic tool called "שומע כעונה" (listening plus intention to be *yotzei* is considered as if you read it yourself) by listening to the *baal korei* read from a kosher megillah. This fulfills our obligation.<sup>5</sup>  
Accordingly:
  - You should not read along with the *baal korei*, as you want to be *yotzei* with his reading from a kosher megillah.<sup>6</sup>
  - There is a minhag for the *tzibbur* to recite specific *pesukim* aloud during the megillah reading.<sup>7</sup> When reading these *pesukim*, you should have in mind to be *yotzei* with the *baal korei's* reading of those *pesukim* and not your own.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, if the *baal korei* continued reading further before you finished saying those *pesukim*, you must stop your recitation and resume listening to the *baal korei*.
- **Dress.** One should wear Shabbos clothing to the megillah reading.<sup>9</sup>

- **Berachos.** During the recitation of the berachah of *shehecheyanu* at the morning reading, you should have in mind the other mitzvos of the day (*mishloach manos*, *matanos l'evyonim*, and *seudas Purim*).<sup>10</sup>

### Hearing Every Word

- **Missed a word.** If you didn't hear a word (or even a letter) of the *baal korei's* recitation, you must fill in that word by reading it yourself. If not, your obligation to "read the megillah" has not been fulfilled.<sup>11</sup>
- **Making up words.** If you miss a word, you should read it and then continue reading until you get a little ahead of the *baal korei* (in order to avoid reading and listening simultaneously), and then resume listening.
- Important points about "filling in" words:
  1. It can be done from a Chumash or whatever else you're using to follow along with the *baal korei's* reading.<sup>12</sup> If you know how to pronounce the words correctly with the *trap*, a kosher megillah is preferable.<sup>13</sup>
  2. You can "fill in" only up to half of the megillah if you're not using a kosher megillah.<sup>14</sup>
  3. The megillah must be read in order.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, you cannot make up missed words at a later, random time.
  4. Ideally, filling in words should be done in a way that you can hear yourself (though without disturbing others).<sup>16</sup>

### Distractions

- **External noise.** If you heard the *baal korei* along with other noise, you are *yotzei*.<sup>17</sup>
- **Talking.** Talking is prohibited during the megillah reading.<sup>18</sup> This applies from the beginning of the berachos before the megillah until the end of the berachos after the megillah.
- **Losing focus.** There is a certain level of focus that is required to be *yotzei* megillah reading. If you completely didn't pay attention to what the *baal korei* just read, you are not *yotzei*.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, it is highly recommended to follow along with your finger throughout the reading of the megillah. If you do so and your finger is consistently in the right spot, it means that even if your mind wandered, you were focused enough to be considered as though you heard the megillah.<sup>20</sup>

### Making Noise at Haman's Name

- **Reason.** Customarily, we make noise when Haman's name is mentioned in the megillah as a demonstration of "erasing the name of Amalek."<sup>21</sup>
- **Don't disturb.** You should stop making noise at the appropriate time in order to allow the chazzan to continue and not disturb those who are trying to listen.

1. שו"ע (תרפ"ט:א) 2. מ"ב (תרפ"ט:א) 3. שו"ע (תרצ"ד:ד) 4. שו"ע (תרצ"ג:ג) 5. שו"ע (תרפ"ט:ב) 6. שו"ע (תרצ"ד:ד) 7. רמ"א (תרצ"ז:ז) 8. מ"ב (שם: סקנ"ח) 9. רמ"א (תרצ"ה:ב) 10. מ"ב (תרצ"ב:א) 11. מ"ב (תרפ"ט:א) 12. (שם) 13. מ"ב (תרפ"ט:סקי"ט) 14. שו"ע (תרצ"ג:ג) 15. שו"ע (תרצ"ו:ו) 16. שעה"צ (תרפ"ט:סקי"ז) 17. מ"ב (תרצ"ד:ד) 18. שו"ע (תרצ"ב:ב) 19. ביה"ל (נט"ד) ד"ה עם הש"ץ 20. שו"ת ארץ צבי (חלק א' סימן מה) 21. רמ"א (תרצ"ז)

## Mishloach Manos

### The Mitzvah

- **Source.** The obligation to send *mishloach manos* comes from the *pasuk*, " ...and sending portions, each man to his friend" (*Esther 9:22*)
- **Obligation.** You are required to send **two** foods to **one** person on Purim. (Ideally, the sender and recipient should be observing the same day of Purim). It is praiseworthy to send to many people, and every additional *mishloach manos* you give is a fulfillment of the mitzvah.<sup>22</sup>
- **Reasons.** There are two main reasons for *mishloach manos*:
  1. To ensure everyone has sufficient food for the *seudah*.<sup>23</sup>
  2. To increase love and friendship between Jews.<sup>24</sup>

### Contents

- **Two types.** The two portions must consist of two different foods. They do **not** need to have different berachos.<sup>25</sup>
  - **Examples.** Two different types of cake or cookies; an apple and an orange; a soda and a chocolate bar are all acceptable examples of *mishloach manos*.
- **Drinks.** One or both of the portions can be a beverage,<sup>26</sup> excluding water or seltzer.<sup>27</sup>
- **Meal-type foods.** Foods that would be eaten at the Purim *seudah* are the best choice to include in *mishlach manos*. This is because it would be a fulfillment of one of the reasons behind *mishloach manos*: to provide food for the *seudah*.
- **Ready-to-eat.** The foods that you send in *mishloach manos* should be ready to consume.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, one of the two items shouldn't be instant coffee or tea bags.
- **Amount.** Ideally, the size of each portion should be a respectable quantity according to the standards of the giver and the recipient.<sup>29</sup> For example, one jelly bean shouldn't be one of your portions, but many jelly beans can be.

### How

- **Anonymous.** Since one of the reasons given for *mishloach manos* is to increase friendship, it is necessary for the recipient to know who they got a package from.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, you shouldn't send anonymously, and if you leave it by somebody's door, leave a note with it.
- **On Purim.** You should make sure that at least one of your *mishloach manos* are sent and received on Purim itself.<sup>31</sup>

## Matanos L'evyonim

### The Mitzvah

- **Source.** "...and gifts to the poor" (*Esther 9:22*).
- **Obligation.** One must give two gifts (money or food) to two poor people, **one gift per person**.<sup>32</sup> It's praiseworthy to send more gifts beyond this.<sup>33</sup> It is preferable to spend generously on *matanos l'evyonim* rather than on the *seudah* and *mishloach manos*, because there is no greater joy than bringing *simchah* to the hearts of the needy.<sup>34</sup>

### How

- **Amount.** One can be *yotzei* his mitzvah by giving an amount that a poor person can buy a small meal with. However, it's

recommended to give an amount that he can buy a nicer meal with.<sup>35</sup>

- **Maaser.** You can't use *maaser* for your two gifts; however, you can for any additional ones that you give.<sup>36</sup>
- **Poor people.** *Matanos l'evyonim* can only be fulfilled by giving to poor people, and not by giving to any other charity or cause.
- **On Purim.** The money given for *matanos l'evyonim* has to be distributed on Purim. You are not *yotzei* if it's given earlier.<sup>37</sup>

## Purim Seudah

### The Mitzvah

- **Source.** "...make them days of feasting and rejoicing..." (*Esther 9:22*)
- **Obligation.** There is a mitzvah to have a festive *seudah* in honor of the miracles that took place on Purim.<sup>38</sup> One should eat bread at this meal.<sup>39</sup>

### When

- **Daytime.** Most of the *seudah* should take place during the daytime hours of Purim, and it may continue into the night.<sup>40</sup>
  - **Minchah.** Ideally one should daven *minchah* before, or at least toward the beginning of one's *seudah*.<sup>41</sup>
- **Leil Purim.** After the megillah on Purim night, there is an *inyan* to add something to your meal in honor of Purim, but you cannot be *yotzei* your Purim *seudah* then.<sup>42</sup>
- **Learning.** You should take some time out to learn before beginning your Purim *seudah*, as the *pasuk* says "ליהודים" "היתה אורה ושמחה" — and Chazal *darshan* that "אורה" refers to Torah.<sup>43</sup> There is a mitzvah to begin learning *hilchos Pesach* on Purim, as it is thirty days before the upcoming yom tov.
- **על הניסים.** Al Hanisim is added into benching, even if one finishes his *seudah* into the night.<sup>44</sup> It is questionable if one is *yotzei* the mitzvah of *seudas Purim* if one forgot to say Al Hanisim in benching at the *seudah*.<sup>45</sup>

### עד דלא ידע

- **Drinking.** There is a mitzvah for men to drink wine on Purim, until one can no longer distinguish between "cursed Haman" and "blessed Mordechai."<sup>46</sup>
  - **Practically.** There are many opinions of how to fulfill this requirement. The *Rama* holds that one should drink more wine than he usually would, and then take a nap (because in a state of sleep one cannot differentiate between Haman and Mordechai).<sup>47</sup>
- **When.** The mitzvah of drinking is during the daytime hours of Purim. HaRav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach holds that one does not have to fulfill his requirement specifically during the Purim *seudah*.

22. שו"ע (תרצה:ד) 23. תרו"ה ד סימן קיא 24. מנות הלוי 25. ערו"ה ש ס' יד 26. (תרצה: סק"כ) 27. רב אלישב (אשרי איש מזה) 28. מ"ב (תרצה: סק"כ) 29. ביה"ל ד"ה חייב לשלוח 30. מוע"ז ח"ב קפו 31. רמ"א (תרצה: סק"ד) 32. שו"ע (תרצה: א) 33. קיצור שו"ע 34. מ"ב (תרצה: סק"ג) 35. שערי תשובה (תרצה: סק"א) 36. מ"ב (תרצה: סק"ג) 37. מ"ב (תרצה: סק"כ) 38. רמ"א (תרצה: א) 39. ע' מוע"ז ח"ב קצ 40. רמ"א (תרצה: ב) 41. מ"ב (תרצה: סק"ז) 42. רמ"א (תרצה: א) 43. (שם: ב) 44. שו"ע (תרצה: ג) 45. ט"ז (תרצה: ב) 46. שו"ע (תרצה: ב) 47. רמ"א (שם)