

The Jewish Weekly

A Life-Changing Purim

By Sara Esther Crispe

I couldn't believe it. Not again. There I was, eight weeks pregnant, and I was spotting. It was light, but it was definitely blood, and it was the last thing I wanted to see.

I called my husband and told him I needed to go to the emergency room for an ultrasound. It was late at night but I just didn't want to wait until the morning. We managed to find a babysitter and once again headed to the familiar corridor at the Bikur Cholim hospital in Jerusalem. The very same corridor where I had been told previously on two occasions that my pregnancies hadn't made it.

So there I was, again. This time however, I had two healthy children at home which gave me the strength of knowing that maybe, just maybe, there would be good news.

After what seemed like an unbearably long wait, the nurse called me in and did the routine questioning. She wrote down my dates, my history, took my weight, everything. As it was so early in the pregnancy, I hadn't yet been to my doctor, but with my history, and especially with the spotting, I knew it couldn't wait.

The nurse did an ultrasound and kept moving the instrument over and over my stomach. I saw her straining her eyes, trying to determine what it was she was seeing, or worse, maybe what she wasn't seeing. She then turned to me and explained that she couldn't find the baby on the monitor. She saw the pregnancy sac but not the baby.

Having had this happen before, I knew what this meant, but she continued to explain that the ultrasound machines in the hospital weren't the greatest resolution and since it was so early in the pregnancy that I really needed to go to my doctor and let him do an ultrasound on a better machine. I wasn't sure if she was telling me this to make me feel better or because she really believed it, but I had no choice but to return home, unsure as to whether or not I was still pregnant.

The next morning I made an immediate appointment and came in to see the doctor. Again, I answered all the questions and it was determined that I should have been seven or eight weeks pregnant. According to my dates, the baby should have been quite visible at that point, with a strong heartbeat.

Once again, we attempted the ultrasound. Once again, there was nothing to be found. I stared alongside the doctor at the empty screen. A pregnancy sac with all the pregnancy symptoms, with no baby to be found. This time I knew it wasn't the resolution of the monitor. Though, once again, the doctor suggested that if it would make me feel better, I could wait another week and try again. I asked if there was any point in this. If there was any chance that in a week anything would be different. He admitted that nothing would change, but that it might, just might, give me more time to come to terms with the situation.

I am not one to put off dealing with things, so to me, another week was even more difficult if not cruel. If my pregnancy was truly over, I wanted it over. I wanted to be able to mourn and move on. Dragging out the inevitable accomplished nothing other than stretching my pain.

The doctor gave me the form I needed to take to the hospital but warned me that most likely they wouldn't be able to admit me for a few days because of the holiday. It was then that I realized that the next day was Purim. And not only was Purim supposed to be a joyous occasion, but, at the time, my husband and I were running a program for post high-school students, and I was supposed to be cooking the celebratory meal for thirty-plus girls for our huge annual Purim party.

Although I had wanted to take care of this right away, I certainly had no interest in spending Purim in the hospital. I figured I would go home, get through the holiday, somehow put a smile on my face, and then deal with my loss afterwards.

When my husband asked me if I had any plans on dressing up as I had in the past, I told him I was dressed up. I was walking around laughing, smiling, friendly, happy. That wasn't me. That wasn't how I felt. That was my Purim mask. That upbeat attitude was masking how inside I was mourning the loss of my baby. My joy was my costume.

There is the concept that when we enter the Jewish month of Adar, we are to be marbim b'simcha, we are to increase in our joy. This is the month in which we celebrate the holiday of Purim, a time where we were witness to revealed miracles. And yet, I never knew until this incident that an obligation to be happy is not always so easy. I had always found it strange that we are commanded to be joyous. Until that year. It took all of my strength to try and find joy, it took all of my strength to try and see the positive.

I somehow made it through that Purim. My students had a blast. I busied myself with the details of the party and getting my kids dressed up. As we read the Megillah, I reminded myself that just as G-d's name doesn't appear once in the whole story of Purim, and yet clearly G-d is present in every moment, so too, even though I was suffering, it was clear that I wasn't alone. I thought of how this holiday was celebrating an unbelievable turn of events from what could have been the most devastating massacre of the Jewish people into a day of celebration and freedom.

And I thought that maybe, just maybe, this related to my situation as well. A part of me berated myself for trying to think positively when there was nothing to think about. Two ultrasounds had already said the same thing. There was no baby. My pregnancy was over. And yet, the story of Purim also seemed closed and shut and then there was a miracle.

But when Purim was over, I figured I had no other choice but to register at the hospital. And yet, they wouldn't let me. With all of the annoyances of Israeli bureaucracy, there was a time limit for the doctor's slip, and the time had expired. I was told that in order to come to the hospital, I would once again need to go back to my doctor and get another slip from him. And no, he could not fax it. And no, it couldn't be a different doctor.

I realized that by the time I could get to the doctor and then to the hospital it would be Thursday, and I absolutely didn't want to spend Shabbat in the hospital. I figured I would just go on Sunday to the doctor (Sunday is a work day in Israel) and then to the hospital that evening.

It was Saturday evening as I was arranging babysitting for the next day when I heard sirens. One after the other after the other. From all directions to all directions until their wail became deafening. I knew there had been an attack. And I knew that unfortunately there must have been many casualties.

I turned on the radio to discover that a bomber had detonated himself about ten minutes away from my

It Once Happened..

apartment, in the Beit Yisrael neighborhood, alongside a group of women who were standing with their baby carriages. I would soon learn that six young children were murdered in this attack, another four mothers were killed and over fifty women and children were seriously injured.

I sat in shock trying to comprehend this immense loss. Children, who just a day ago were running around in their Purim costumes, were now gone. How quickly the world could turn upside down.

I thought to myself that even though I had lost my baby, there was no comparison to the pain and loss that these families, their loved ones and the entire Jewish people had just experienced. There was no way I was going to try to go to the hospital. The hospitals needed all their resources to focus on the victims. Anything not critical would have to wait.

I waited another week, until the next Sunday, to finally return to the doctor for my new hospital admittance slip. I explained what I needed and he began to write and then, figuring I had nothing to lose, I asked if maybe, just maybe, since I was already in the office, he would be willing to do one more ultrasound.

He explained that my blood tests had shown that my hormone levels weren't high enough, and two ultrasounds had shown that there was no baby. Another ultrasound wasn't going to change anything.

I don't know where it came from, as I am not one to publicly show emotion, but I started to cry and cry and cry. And this doctor had no idea what to do with me. As a way of offering comfort, he asked if an ultrasound would make me feel better. And while I didn't really think it would, I was too overwhelmed to do anything other than nod my head "yes."

I didn't even bother lying down on the table as I wanted to see my sac one more time, clearly, and then move on. The doctor sighed as he began to move the instrument over my stomach. And then, within seconds, I was sure I saw something.


The doctor almost dropped the instrument as I asked in amazement, "Is that my baby? Is that a heartbeat?" To which all he could do was nod his head.

Once again he asked my dates, which indicated that I should have been almost ten weeks pregnant. And yet, I wasn't. According to the ultrasound, I was only six weeks pregnant. I was at the exact time when the baby is first able to be seen in an ultrasound. In the other two ultrasounds my baby wasn't showing, not because he wasn't there, but because he was too small to be seen.


"If you had done this ultrasound last week, we would not have been able to see the baby. What a miracle!" was all he could say. I left the office holding tightly in my hand the original form the doctor had given me for the D&C. That slip currently sits in my son's baby book.

Our baby boy was born exactly eight months later to the very day. We named him Netanel, meaning "gift from G-d."

Reprinted from an email of Chabad.org Magazine



Shabbat Times – Parshat Ki Tisa

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat	Motzei Shabbat ר"ת
 Jerusalem	5:11	6:24	7:04
Tel Aviv	5:26	6:26	7:01
Haifa	5:17	6:25	7:03
Be'er Sheva	5:28	6:26	7:04

Slice of Life

Yossi

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Based on Rabbi Shmuel Lescher's Halachah Sheets,

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🕯 MONTH OF ADAR

Some say it is a big Segula to fast on Erev Rosh Chodesh Adar and to say the whole Tehillim.

משוננס אדר מרבין - When Adar Begins we increase our joy. We increase our joy throughout the month of Adar, some say to increase the joy throughout Nissan too.

Some have the custom to hang up a sign of משוננס אדר מרבין בשמחה.

🕯 7TH ADAR (באדר, ז)

7th Adar is usually the fast day for Tzadikim and most say Tachanun, however some have the custom not to. As this year 7th Adar falls on a Friday, one either fasts on Thursday or Sunday.

One should try to learn and do Mitzvot in memory of Moshe Rabeinu.

Most Chevrot Kadisha have the custom to fast and go to graves of Tzadikim and to ask forgiveness from the dead in case they didn't handle the person with respect when burying, some also say Selichot. This year most Chevrot Kadisha will do this on Thursday instead.

In some communities, the Rabbi would give a Dvar Torah in memory of Moshe Rabeinu as well as in memory of other rabbis and Tzadikim who died during the year.

A child who is born on 7th Adar should not be named Moshe after Moshe Rabeinu.

🕯 PURIM PREPARATIONS

An inspiring *Purim* is the product of diligent preparation. In the days prior to *Purim*, one should review the *Halachot of Purim*.

🕯 PARSHAT ZACHOR (PARSHAT TETZAVEH, 8/3/25)

It is a *Torah* obligation for all men and boys over the age of *Bar Mitzvah* to hear *Parshat Zachor*. [One who absolutely cannot attend a *Minyan* should read this passage from a *Sefer Torah* or *Chumash*, with the *Trop* (cantillation) if he knows it.]

Although women are ordinarily exempt from *Kriat Hatorah*, there is a dispute with regards to *Parshat Zachor*. Therefore, it is ideal for women to attend *Shul*. However, a woman who is unable to easily attend *Shul* (e.g. she is tending to her small children) may instead read this passage from the *Chumash*.

Ordinarily, a *Sefer Torah* may not be moved to another location for one time use. Nevertheless, one may be lenient if necessary to facilitate the *Kriah* of *Parshat Zachor*.

Ideally, the *Ba'al Koreh* should be old enough to have a beard. [If this is not possible, a *Bar Mitzvah* boy should serve as *Ba'al Koreh* only if puberty is established.]

The *Ba'al Koreh* should read loudly and clearly, and have in mind to be *Motzeh* everyone listening to the *Kriah*. Similarly, all the listeners should have in mind to be *Yotzei* the *Kriah* and to fulfil the *Mitzvah* of remembering to eliminate *Amalek*.

The word זכר is first read with a *Tzeirei* זָכַר -, and then repeated again with a *Segol* - זָכַר.

Some repeat just the word, some repeat the phrase זָכַר עִמָּלֶךְ אֶת זָכַר תִּמְחָה whilst others repeat the whole *Passuk*.

Av Harachamim is recited.

🕯 TAANIT ESTHER (THURSDAY 13/3/2025)

Taanit Esther is not one of the four public fasts instituted by the *Nevi'im*. Therefore, a *Chattan* and *Kallah* during the week of *Sheva Brachot* need not fast. Pregnant mothers, nursing mothers and anyone considerably weakened by illness or advanced age need not fast. [One should not be unduly strict in this regard.] Mothers who have difficulty fasting while tending to their young children should consult with a *Rav*.

When a *Brit* occurs on *Taanit Esther*, the *Baalei Habrit* (i.e. the *Mohel*, the *Sandak*, and the father of the baby) need not fast. However, all other attendees must fast. Therefore, the *Seudah* takes place at night, after the fast.

Aside from the exceptions enumerated above, all healthy adults must observe *Taanit Esther* scrupulously. If one inadvertently ate during the fast, one must immediately resume fasting.

Anyone below *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* need not fast. From the age of nine upwards, the custom is to train children to fast for several hours, as per the child's abilities. [One should not be unduly strict in this regard.]

An individual exempt from fasting should eat in private only, and avoid meat, delicacies or excessive intake. Children old enough to understand the concept of a fast should avoid delicacies and meat.

🕯 EATING PRIOR TO THE FAST

One may eat and drink the entire evening until dawn (4:39am), provided that either of these conditions are met (this does not apply to water which can be drunk anytime up to the beginning of the fast):

- One didn't go to sleep for the night. [Dozing off is not regarded as such.]
- One stipulated (preferably verbally) before going to sleep that he would eat upon waking. In this case, one recites the morning *Brachot* before eating.

🕯 LAWS OF FASTING

One shouldn't brush one's teeth nor rinse one's mouth. [If this will cause great aggravation, there is room to be lenient, provided that one leans forward to prevent any liquid from flowing down one's throat; that one uses substances unfit for consumption (e.g. Listerine); and that one rinses with less than 86 ml.]

One may take non-chewable pills for medical purposes, without water. A *Rav* should be consulted regarding other medicines.

One may shower, bathe and apply ointments and creams. [Even one who is strict on other fast days may nevertheless be lenient on *Taanit Esther*.]

One may not taste food to determine whether it requires salt/spices. However, when preparing food for a *Seudat Mitzvah* scheduled for the night following the fast, one may taste the food, provided that all these conditions are met:

- One expels it without swallowing.
- One tastes only an absolute minimum.
- One does not taste more than 86 ml in total throughout the day.

🕯 TAANIT ESTHER: SHACHARIT

During *Shacharit*, only the *Chazzan* recites *Anenu*. Therefore, a non-fasting individual shouldn't serve as *Chazzan*.

[In the unlikely event that the *Chazzan* is not fasting, or less than three congregants are fasting: Instead of reciting *Anenu* between *Goal Yisrael* and *R'faenu*, the *Chazzan* includes *Anenu* in the *Brachah* of *Sh'ma Kolenu*, and concludes the *Brachah* regularly; i.e. *Shomea Tefillah*.]

A *Chazzan* who forgot to recite *Anenu*:

- if he remembered before reciting *Hashem's* name at the conclusion of the *Brachah* of *R'faenu*, he recites *Anenu* immediately, and then repeats the *Brachah* of *R'faenu*;
- if he already concluded the *Brachah* of *R'faenu*, he recites *Anenu* in the *Brachah* of *Sh'ma Kolenu*, and concludes the *Brachah* with a double conclusion; i.e. *Ha'one B'eit Tzarah V'shomeah Tefillah*;
- if he already concluded the *Brachah* of *Sh'ma Kolenu*, he recites *Anenu* as a separate *Brachah* immediately after the *Brachah* of *Sim Shalom*.

One who is not fasting must still recite *Selichot* and *Avinu Malkeinu*.

One who *davens* without a *Minyan* omits the *Yud-Gimel Midot-Harachamim*.

Some hold that if *Tachnun* is not recited (e.g. when a *Chattan* is present), *Selichot* is still recited, whereas *Avinu Malkeinu* is not recited and some hold that *Selichot* ends after *Viduy*.

🕯 TAANIT ESTHER: KRIAH

The passage of *Vayechal* is read, provided that at least three congregants are fasting.

A non-fasting individual must still hear *Kriat Hatorah* of *Vayechal*, but is not called up for an *Aliyah*. [If he is the only *Kohen* or *Levi*, he should absent himself.] If he is called up, and refusing the *Aliyah* will cause him discomfort or minimize the honor of the *Torah*, he may accept the *Aliyah*. In any case, he may perform *Hagbah* or *Gelilah*.

A non-fasting individual shouldn't serve as the *Ba'al Koreh*, unless there is no one else who can do so.

When the congregation recites the verses aloud, the *Ba'al Koreh* waits for silence before resuming. The one receiving the *Aliyah* begins these verses with the congregation, but ends with the *Ba'al Koreh*.

🕯 CONDUCT ON TAANIT ESTHER

One should learn *Torah* connected to the topic of the fast.

One should give increased *Tzedakah*, especially before *davening*. It is proper to give the value of the forgone meals – especially if one is exempt from fasting.

The purpose of fasting is to arouse one to do *Teshuvah*. Idling away one's time, or partaking in joyous or entertaining activities, is not in the spirit of the fast.

One should be especially careful not to become angered.

🕯 MACHATZIT HASHEKEL

Before *Mincha*, all males over *Bar-Mitzvah* give three halves of the local currency. [In Israel, three half-shekel pieces.] Some hold to do it after *Mincha*.

One should not use *Maaser* money for his own *Machatzit Hashekel*.

In some communities it is also a custom to give *Machatzit Hashekel* on behalf of their wives and daughters, as well as for their sons under the age of *Bar Mitzvah*.

Where possible, boys below *Bar Mitzvah* should personally give *Machatzit Hashekel*.

It is preferable that the proceeds go to a *Shul* or *Beit Midrash*, just as the *Machatzit Hashekel* of old would be used for the *Beit Hamikdash*. Otherwise, the proceeds are distributed to the poor.

🕯 TAANIT ESTHER: MINCHA

Mincha is longer than usual (due to *Kriat Hatorah* and *Haftorah*); care should be taken to conclude before sunset (5:49pm).

Ideally, *Kriat Hatorah* should not begin prior to *Mincha Gedolah* (12:18pm). *The Amidah* may certainly not begin before then.

After *Haftorah*, most communities return the *Torah* to the *Aron Hakodesh* before *Kaddish* and in some communities, the *Chazzan* slowly recites *Kaddish* while the *Torah* is returned to the *Aron Hakodesh*.

If an individual forgot to recite *Anenu* in the *Brachah* of *Sh'ma Kolenu*, he may recite it in the passage *Elokai N'tzor*, before the second *Yih'yu L'ratzon*. If one didn't remember until he concluded *the Amidah*, he does not repeat it. [A non-fasting individual does not recite *Anenu*.]

The *Chazzan* recites *Anenu* between *Goal Yisrael* and *R'faenu*. [see TAANIT ESTHER: SHACHARIT] According to some, if after *plag Hamincha*, *Birchat Kohanim* with *duchening* is done. Chabad do not *Duchan*, however, the *Chazzan* does recite *Birchat Kohanim* towards the end of *the Amidah*.

Tachnun and *Avinu Malkeinu* are **not** recited, since it is *Erev Purim*.

🕯 PURIM DRESS (IN JERUSALEM PURIM STARTS ON THURSDAY NIGHT 13/3/2025 TOGETHER WITH THE REST OF THE WORLD. HOWEVER, IN JERUSALEM, PURIM CONTINUES THRU SUNDAY NIGHT 16/03/2025, PLEASE READ OUR PURIM MESHULASH SUPPLEMENT AVAILABLE AT WWW.THEJWEEKLY.ORG)

One should wear *Shabbat* clothing throughout *Purim*. However there is a custom especially for children to wear masks or costumes. One should ensure that costumes do not contain some *Shatnez*.

Cross-dressing is absolutely forbidden throughout the year. Although the *Rema* and several other early *Achronim* rule leniently with regards to *Purim*, the overwhelming majority forbid it. This prohibition applies to all adults and children who are of the age of *Chinuch*.

Some people encourage children to shy away from dressing as *Haman* or other wicked people. [When a *Purim* play requires a child to act the part of *Haman*, the Lubavitcher *Rebbe* indicated that this role be played without considerable enthusiasm.]

🕯 V'AL HANISSIM

V'al Hanissim is recited in each *Amidah* of *Purim*. One should not intentionally skip *V'al Hanissim* to recite *Kedushah* or *Modim* with the *Minyan*.

If one forgot *V'al Hanissim* at the appropriate place in *the Amidah*, he may still recite it if he did not yet say *Hashem's* name at the end of that *Brachah*. After that point, he does not recite it.

If one forgot *V'al Hanissim* at the appropriate place in *Bentching*, he may still recite it if he did not yet say *Hashem's* name at the end of that *Brachah*. After that point, he should recite it as a *Harachamon*, as per the *Nusach* printed in many *Siddurim* and *Birkonim*.

🕯 END OF FAST

The fast concludes according to R' Tukaccinsky at 6:13pm, others hold up until 6:22pm.

🕯 MAARIV (THURSDAY NIGHT 13/3/2025)

One should endeavor to hear the *Megillah* as soon as possible. [If circumstances require it to be read beforehand, a *Rav* should be consulted.] Nevertheless, the *Megillah* may be read the entire night until (4:38am).

One may not perform any activity that may distract him prior to reading the *Megillah*. Therefore, one may not eat, drink, nap or perform work from half-hour prior to *Tzeit* (5:50pm) until after hearing the *Megillah*. [Nevertheless, if one feels ill or weak, one may eat or drink between *Maariv* and the *Megillah* reading. Even so, one should not eat more than a *K'beitzah* (57 grams) of bread or *Mezonot* – unless there are health concerns, in which case he should appoint a *Shomer* (guardian) to remind him to hear the *Megillah*.]

In many communities an *Avel* (within 12 months of a parent's passing or within 30 days of a spouse, child or sibling's passing) may not serve as *Chazzan* on *Purim*, in some communities (including *Chabad*) an *Avel* does act as *Chazzan* on *Purim*.

The *Chazzan* recites *Kaddish Titkabel* immediately after *the Amidah*. The *Megillah* is read immediately afterwards.

After the *Megillah* is concluded, *V'atah Kaddosh* is recited, followed by the entire *Kaddish* but without *Titkabel*.

🕯 MEGILLAH READING

All men and women over the age of *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* must hear the *Megillah*.

Children (both boys and girls) should also attend the *Megillah* reading and quietly follow along according to their ability, unless they are too young and will create a disturbance. [An infant who cries or makes noise should be taken out of *Shul*.]

Ideally, one should attend a *Megillah* reading in a *Shul* where a large crowd has congregated. However, one can hear *Megillah* anywhere.

At the very least, one should hear the *Megillah* with a *Minyan*. [This applies even if he will be reading the *Megillah* later for individuals who could not attend a *Minyan*.] If this is also not possible, one should still endeavor to hear the *Megillah* with as many people as possible.

One does not fulfil the *Mitzvah* of *Megillah* when hearing it with the aid of a microphone, phone, radio, Zoom or any other electronic medium (A person who uses hearing aids should consult a *Rav*.)

A perfectly Kosher *Megillah* should be used. [If that is unavailable, a *Megillah* may still be used if disqualified words or altogether missing words do not occur at its beginning or end, nor do they comprise an entire section or the majority of the *Megillah*. Needless to say, the *Ba'al Koreh* must still recite every single word even when using a *Megillah* with missing words.]

One may assume that his friend consents to his *Megillah* being borrowed for the sake of performing the *Mitzvah*, as long as it remains in the vicinity at all times and it is returned to exactly the same place in the same condition.

It is preferable that the listener follows along in a proper *Megillah* and recites the words in a barely audible whisper – but only if he is sufficiently familiar with the proper pronunciation of the words.

One who follows along from a *Chumash* should **not** recite the words at all, but must rather pay especially close attention to the *Ba'al Koreh*.

The *Megillah* is unrolled before the first *Brachot* are recited. [This also applies to everyone else following along with a proper *Megillah*.]

It is permissible to touch the parchment of the *Megillah* directly, unlike a *Sefer Torah*.

The *Ba'al Koreh* in *Shul* should be flanked by at least one person on his right and another on his left.

An *Avel* (within 12 months of a parent's passing or within 30 days of a spouse, child or sibling's passing) should not serve as the *Ba'al Koreh* in *Shul*, unless this is his regular function, or there is nobody as fluent as him.

Everyone should stand for the *Brachot*, unless it is too difficult. During the actual *Megillah* reading in *Shul*, the *Ba'al Koreh* must stand (and may lean for support if necessary), but those listening don't need to stand. Nevertheless, most people do stand.

When the *Ba'al Koreh* recites the *Brachot*, he should have in mind to be *Motzeh* everyone who is listening to the *Brachot* and the entire *Megillah*. Similarly, everyone in attendance should have in mind to be *Yotzeh* the *Brachot* and the entire *Megillah*, and should not say "*Baruch Hu u'Varuch Shmoh*". [If one accidentally did so, he does not recite the *Brachot* again.]

If the *Ba'al Koreh* already heard the *Megillah*, the *Brachot* are recited by another man who did not yet hear the *Megillah*, and he is *Motzeh* everyone. If none of the men present are able to recite the *Brachot*, the *Ba'al Koreh* may recite it for them (or prompt them word by word).

When the *Megillah* is read for less than a minyan of men or for women only, and the *Ba'al Koreh* already heard the *Megillah*, the women recite the

Brachot themselves (standing), however some hold that the last *Brachah*, *Harav Et Riveinu* is not said. They may either recite the *Brachot* individually, or have one woman be *Motzeh* all the others. The same applies when reading the *Megillah* for children under the age of *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*.

One should not speak from the time of the *Brachot* until after the *Megillah* reading (and the last *Brachah*) is concluded, because unnecessary speech is considered an interruption, and also prevents him from hearing every word of the *Megillah*.

Whenever *Haman's* name is mentioned (according to Chabad only alongside a title), one stamps his feet vigorously. Children should be encouraged in spinning their *graggers* and stamping out *Haman's* name. The *Ba'al Koreh* should wait for absolute silence before resuming.

The following *Pesukim* are read aloud by the congregation, followed by the *Ba'al Koreh*: 2:5, 8:15, 8:16, 10:3.

The *Ba'al Koreh* raises his voice at "*Balailah Hahu*" (6:1).

The *Baal Koreh* reads "*Laharog Ul'abed; V'Laharog Ul'abed*" (8:11) and "*V'ish Lo Amad Bifenehem; V'ish Lo Omad Lifenehem*" (9:3).

The congregation reads the ten sons of *Haman* quickly in one breath, from the words "*Chamesh Meot Ish*" until "*Aseret*" (9:6-10), followed by the *Ba'al Koreh*. [Despite the speed, the *Ba'al Koreh* should ensure that he is looking at each word in the *Megillah* as he pronounces it.]

Some give the *Megillah* a light shake at the words "*Ha'igeret Hazot*" (9:26) and "*Ha'igeret Hapurim Hazot*" (9:29). [This also applies to everyone else following along with a proper *Megillah*.]

The final *Brachah* is recited by the *Ba'al Koreh* only when the *Megillah* was read with a *Minyan*. [Some would recite this *Brachah* even when they heard or read the *Megillah* without a *Minyan*.]

At the end of the *Megillah* reading, some hold it should remain unrolled until the conclusion of the *Brachah* recited afterwards and some hold it should be rolled before the concluding *Brachah*. [This also applies to everyone else following along with a proper *Megillah*.]

❧ INTERRUPTION DURING MEGILLAH

One who misses hearing even a single word is not *Yotzeh* the *Megillah* reading. Therefore, one should pay absolute attention whilst the *Ba'al Koreh* is reading the *Megillah*.

If one missed hearing a word, the best solution is to read from that word onwards, until he catches up with the *Ba'al Koreh*. [This is necessary because each word of the *Megillah* must be read/heard in the correct order.] This should be done even when one is following along in a *Chumash* and not a proper *Megillah*.

One need not recite the words with the *Trop* if this will detain or prevent him from catching up to the *Ba'al Koreh*. However, one must ensure that all the words are properly enunciated and vowelized.

If one missed a word and did not follow the guidelines above, or he left during the *Megillah* reading for even a short time, he must hear the *Megillah* again. Nevertheless, he does not need to start again from the beginning, but may instead resume hearing it from the place where he was interrupted. In such an instance, one does

not repeat the *Brachot* unless he diverted his attention from the *Mitzvah* of *Megillah*.

As mentioned above, one should not speak during the *Megillah* reading. If one said anything unrelated to the *Megillah* between the *Brachot* and the very start of *Megillah*, he needs to recite the *Brachot* again. If one spoke after this time – even matters unrelated to the *Megillah* – he does not repeat the *Brachot* again. Nevertheless, being that he could not have properly heard the words that the *Ba'al Koreh* was reading whilst he was talking or repeating the *Brachot*, he must follow the guidelines above for one who missed a word.

One should not pause unnecessarily whilst reading the *Megillah*. Nevertheless, if one paused even for an extended period of time, he may resume from the place where he paused. The exception is if he was forced to pause due to circumstances beyond his control, and the pause was for more time than it would have taken him to finish reading the *Megillah*. In such a case, one needs to start reading the *Megillah* again from the beginning.

❧ PURIM NIGHT

The table should be set with a tablecloth and candles. Even though there is no requirement to eat a festive meal, one should still rejoice and eat something special in honor of *Purim*. [One should moderate any festivities in order that they do not interfere with *Purim* morning.]

It is customary to eat seeds on *Purim*, such as poppy *Hamantashen*, to commemorate the seeds that Esther ate when keeping *Kosher* in the king's palace.

❧ SHACHARIT (FRIDAY 14/3/2025)

Ideally, *Megillah* should be read after sunrise (5:50am). *Shacharit* should be timed to read the *Megillah* as soon as possible. In extenuating circumstances, one may read the *Megillah* after dawn (4:38am).

Ideally, men should not eat before hearing the *Megillah*. If this is difficult, or there is any concern that one will be unable to concentrate during *davening*, one may snack, but should not eat a *K'beitzah* (57 grams) of *Mezonot*. Nevertheless, one should not be stringent if there are any health concerns.

V'al Hanissim is recited in the *Amidah*, and *Tachnun* is not recited.

If one did not hear *Parshat Zachor* on *Shabbat*, he should have in mind to fulfil his obligation through the *Kriat Hatorah* of *Purim*. [For this reason, the *Ba'al Koreh* should intend to be *Motzeh* anyone who did not hear *Parshat Zachor* on *Shabbat*.]

During *Kriat Hatorah*, the word זכר is first read with a *Segol* - זָכַר, then again with a *Tzeirei* - זִכַּר.

Some repeat just the word, some repeat the phrase זָכַר עִמְלֶךְ אֶת תְּמִנָּה whilst others repeat the whole *Passuk*. (the reverse of *Parshat Zachor*).

Some hold the *Sefer Torah* is returned to the *Aron Hakodesh* and some including *Chabad* hold that the *Sefer Torah* remains out during the *Megillah* reading, and is returned only after *Kaddish Titkabel*, as usual. [The one who holds the *Sefer Torah* remains seated throughout the *Megillah* reading and associated *Brachot*.]

If one did not yet give *Machatzit Hashekel*, he should do so before the *Megillah* reading.

When the *Brachah* of *Shehecheyanu* is recited, all should have in mind the other *Mitzvot* of *Purim*; i.e. *Mishloach Manot*, *Matanot La'evyonim* and *Seudat Purim*. [Preferably, the *Gabbai* or *Ba'al Koreh* should announce this.]

One should wear his *Tefillin* until after the *Megillah* reading (and *davening*).

A *Brit* performed at Shul, is conducted right before *Megillah*. A *Brit* performed at home is held after *davening*.

❧ WORKING ON PURIM

One should not perform manual labor on *Purim*, unless for the sake of *Purim* or a *Mitzvah*; or he is so poor that he is without food; or in order to prevent a real loss.

One may also do light office-work or sell goods and merchandise, but should not allow that to distract him from the joy of *Purim*.

One may instruct a non-Jew to perform manual labor on *Purim*.

❧ MISHLOACH MANOT

All men and women over *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* should send at least one *Mishloach Manot*. Children (of the age of *Chinuch*) should also do so. [The *Lubavitcher Rebbe*s would distribute three *Mishloach Manot* packages – to a *Kohen*, *Levi* and *Yisrael*.]

The *Mishloach Manot* should contain at least two types of (respectable) ready-to-eat foods and/or beverages other than water. [The *Lubavitcher Rebbe*s would include a food item as well as a beverage.]

Men should send their *Mishloach Manot* to men, and women should send their *Mishloach Manot* to women.

Some authorities hold that *Mishloach Manot* should be delivered through a *Shliach*. The *Shliach* may even be a child.

The *Mishloach Manot* should be both sent and delivered during *Purim* day (and not the night before or after).

It is praiseworthy to give *Mishloach Manot* to many people. [Technically, one doesn't need to adhere to the above-mentioned *Halachot* with regards to any additional optional *Mishloach Manot* that one sends. Nevertheless, it is commendable to do so.]

When giving *Mishloach Manot* to one who is not yet observant, one should remind him to make the appropriate *Brachot* on each food item.

Mishloach Manot may not be sent to an *Avel* (within 12 months of a parent's passing or within 30 days of a spouse, child or sibling's passing). However, the *Mishloach Manot* may be sent to an *Avel's* spouse or child. The *Avel* himself is required to send *Mishloach Manot*, but should send simple food items.

When sending *Mishloach Manot* in a new (non-disposable) utensil that requires *Tevilat Keilim*, it should be performed by the recipient and not by the sender. This is because *Tevilat Keilim* needs to be performed by the end user.

If the sender already *Toveled* the utensil, the recipient must still *Tovel* the utensil, but without a *Brachah*. The same applies if the recipient doesn't know whether the sender already *Toveled* the utensil. Therefore, the sender should inform the recipient (e.g. with a label) that the item has not yet been *Toveled*, in order that the recipient may *Tovel* it with a *Brachah*. [It is also best that

Laws and Customs: Adar, Taanit Esther/Purim Hameshulash בס"ד

for those in Jerusalem

For the year 5785

The Jewish Weekly

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🕯 MONTH OF ADAR

Some say it is a big Segula to fast on Erev Rosh Chodesh Adar and to say the whole Tehillim.

משנכנס אדר מרבין בשמחה - When Adar Begins we increase our joy. We increase our joy throughout the month of Adar, some say to increase the joy throughout Nissan too.

Some have the custom to hang up a sign of משנכנס אדר מרבין בשמחה.

🕯 7th ADAR (באדר, ז)

7th Adar is usually the fast day for Tzadikim and most say Tachanun, however some have the custom not to. As this year 7th Adar falls on a Friday, one either fasts on Thursday or Sunday.

One should try to learn and do Mitzvot in memory of Moshe Rabeinu.

Most Chevrot Kadisha have the custom to fast and go to graves of Tzadikim and to ask forgiveness from the dead in case they didn't handle the person with respect when burying, some also say Selichot. This year most Chevrot Kadisha will do this on Thursday instead.

In some communities, the Rabbi would give a Dvar Torah in memory of Moshe Rabeinu as well as in memory of other rabbis and Tzadikim who died during the year.

A child who is born on 7th Adar should not be named Moshe after Moshe Rabeinu.

🕯 PURIM PREPARATIONS

An inspiring Purim is the product of diligent preparation. In the days prior to Purim, one should review the Halachot of Purim.

🕯 PARSHAT ZACHOR (PARSHAT TETZAVEH, 8/3/25)

It is a Torah obligation for all men and boys over the age of Bar Mitzvah to hear Parshat Zachor. [One who absolutely cannot attend a Minyan should read this passage from a Sefer Torah or Chumash, with the Trop (cantillation) if he knows it.]

Although women are ordinarily exempt from Kriat Hatorah, there is a dispute with regards to Parshat Zachor. Therefore, it is ideal for women to attend Shul. However, a woman who is unable to easily attend Shul (e.g. she is tending to her small children) may instead read this passage from the Chumash.

Ordinarily, a Sefer Torah may not be moved to another location for one time use. Nevertheless, one may be lenient if necessary to facilitate the Kriah of Parshat Zachor.

Ideally, the Ba'al Koreh should be old enough to have a beard. [If this is not possible, a Bar Mitzvah boy should serve as Ba'al Koreh only if puberty is established.]

The Ba'al Koreh should read loudly and clearly, and have in mind to be Motzeh everyone listening to the Kriah. Similarly, all the listeners should have in mind to be Yotzei the Kriah and

to fulfil the Mitzvah of remembering to eliminate Amalek.

The word זָכַר is first read with a Tzeirei זָכַר - , and then repeated again with a Segol זָכַר.

Some repeat just the word, some repeat the phrase תִּזְכֹּר אֶת זָכַר עֲמָלֶק whilst others repeat the whole Passuk.

🕯 TAANIT ESTHER (THURSDAY 13/3/2025)

Taanit Esther is not one of the four public fasts instituted by the Nevi'im. Therefore, a Chatten and Kallah during the week of Sheva Brachot need not fast. Pregnant mothers, nursing mothers and anyone considerably weakened by illness or advanced age need not fast. [One should not be unduly strict in this regard.] Mothers who have difficulty fasting while tending to their young children should consult with a Rav.

When a Brit occurs on Taanit Esther, the Baalei Habrit (i.e. the Mohel, the Sandak, and the father of the baby) need not fast. However, all other attendees must fast. Therefore, the Seudah takes place at night, after the fast.

Aside from the exceptions enumerated above, all healthy adults must observe Taanit Esther scrupulously. If one inadvertently ate during the fast, one must immediately resume fasting.

Anyone below Bar/Bat Mitzvah need not fast. From the age of nine upwards, the custom is to train children to fast for several hours, as per the child's abilities. [One should not be unduly strict in this regard.]

An individual exempt from fasting should eat in private only, and avoid meat, delicacies or excessive intake. Children old enough to understand the concept of a fast should avoid delicacies and meat.

🕯 EATING PRIOR TO THE FAST

One may eat and drink the entire evening until dawn (4:39am), provided that either of these conditions are met (this does not apply to water which can be drunk anytime up to the beginning of the fast):

- One didn't go to sleep for the night. [Dozing off is not regarded as such.]
- One stipulated (preferably verbally) before going to sleep that he would eat upon waking. In this case, one recites the morning Brachot before eating.

🕯 LAWS OF FASTING

One shouldn't brush one's teeth nor rinse one's mouth. [If this will cause great aggravation, there is room to be lenient,

provided that one leans forward to prevent any liquid from flowing down one's throat; that one uses substances unfit for

consumption (e.g. Listerine); and that one rinses with less than 86 ml.]

One may take non-chewable pills for medical purposes, without water. A Rav should be consulted regarding other medicines.

One may shower, bathe and apply ointments and creams. [Even one who is strict on other fast days may nevertheless be lenient on Taanit Esther.]

One may not taste food to determine whether it requires salt/spices. However, when preparing food for a Seudat Mitzvah scheduled for the night following the fast, one may taste the food, provided that all these conditions are met:

- One expels it without swallowing.
- One tastes only an absolute minimum.
- One does not taste more than 86 ml in total throughout the day.

🕯 TAANIT ESTHER: SHACHARIT

During Shacharit, only the Chazzan recites Anenu. Therefore, a non-fasting individual shouldn't serve as Chazzan.

[In the unlikely event that the Chazzan is not fasting, or less than three congregants are fasting: Instead of reciting Anenu between Goal Yisrael and R'faenu, the Chazzan includes Anenu in the Brachah of Sh'ma Kolenu, and concludes the Brachah regularly; i.e. Shomea Tefillah.]

A Chazzan who forgot to recite Anenu:

- if he remembered before reciting Hashem's name at the conclusion of the the Brachah of R'faenu, he recites Aneinu immediately, and then repeats the Brachah of R'faenu;
- if he already concluded the Brachah of R'faenu, he recites Anenu in the Brachah of Sh'ma Kolenu, and concludes the Brachah with a double conclusion; i.e. Ha'one B'eit Tzarah V'shameah Tefillah;
- if he already concluded the Brachah of Sh'ma Kolenu, he recites Anenu as a separate Brachah immediately after the Brachah of Sim Shalom.

One who is not fasting must still recite Selichot and Avinu Malkeinu.

One who davens without a Minyan omits the Yud-Gimel Midot-Harachamim.

Some hold that if Tachnun is not recited (e.g. when a Chatten is present), Selichot is still recited, whereas Avinu Malkeinu is not recited and some hold that Selichot ends after Viduy.

🕯 TAANIT ESTHER: KRIAH

The passage of Vayechal is read, provided that at least three congregants are fasting.

A non-fasting individual must still hear Kriat Hatorah of Vayechal, but is not called up for an

Aliyah. [If he is the only *Kohen* or *Levi*, he should absent himself.] If he is called up, and refusing the *Aliyah* will cause him discomfort or minimize the honor of the *Torah*, he may accept the *Aliyah*. In any case, he may perform *Hagbah* or *Gelilah*.

A non-fasting individual shouldn't serve as the *Ba'al Koreh*, unless there is no one else who can do so.

When the congregation recites the verses aloud, the *Ba'al Koreh* waits for silence before resuming. The one receiving the *Aliyah* begins these verses with the congregation, but ends with the *Ba'al Koreh*.

🕎 CONDUCT ON TAANIT ESTHER

One should learn *Torah* connected to the topic of the fast.

One should give increased *Tzedakah*, especially before *davening*. It is proper to give the value of the forgone meals – especially if one is exempt from fasting.

The purpose of fasting is to arouse one to do *Teshuvah*. Idling away one's time, or partaking in joyous or entertaining activities, is not in the spirit of the fast.

One should be especially careful not to become angered.

🕎 MACHATZIT HASHEKEL

Before *Mincha*, all males over *Bar-Mitzvah* give three halves of the local currency. [In Israel, three half-shekel pieces.] Some hold to do it after *Mincha*.

One should not use *Maaser* money for his own *Machatzit Hashekel*.

In some communities it is also a custom to give *Machatzit Hashekel* on behalf of their wives and daughters, as well as for their sons under the age of *Bar Mitzvah*.

Where possible, boys below *Bar Mitzvah* should personally give *Machatzit Hashekel*.

It is preferable that the proceeds go to a *Shul* or *Beit Midrash*, just as the *Machatzit Hashekel* of old would be used for the *Beit Hamikdash*. Otherwise, the proceeds are distributed to the poor.

🕎 TAANIT ESTHER: MINCHA

Mincha is longer than usual (due to *Kriat Hatorah* and *Haftorah*); care should be taken to conclude before sunset (5:49pm).

Ideally, *Kriat Hatorah* should not begin prior to *Mincha Gedolah* (12:18pm). *The Amidah* may certainly not begin before then.

After *Haftorah*, most communities return the *Torah* to the *Aron Hakodesh* before *Kaddish* and in some communities, the *Chazzan* slowly recites *Kaddish* while the *Torah* is returned to the *Aron Hakodesh*.

If an individual forgot to recite *Anenu* in the *Brachah* of *Sh'ma Kolenu*, he may recite it in the passage *Elokai N'tzor*, before the second *Yih'yu L'ratzon*. If one didn't remember until he concluded *the Amidah*, he does not repeat it. [A non-fasting individual does not recite *Anenu*.]

The *Chazzan* recites *Anenu* between *Goal Yisrael* and *R'faenu*. [see TAANIT ESTHER: SHACHARIT] According to some, if after *plag Hamincha*, *Birchat Kohanim* with *duchening* is done. Chabad do not *Duchan*, however, the *Chazzan* does recite *Birchat Kohanim* towards the end of *the Amidah*.

Tachnun and *Avinu Malkeinu* are **not** recited, since it is *Erev Purim*.

🕎 V'AL HANISSIM

V'al Hanissim is **NOT** recited tonight or tomorrow but only on Shabbat.

🕎 END OF FAST

The fast concludes according to R' Tukacinsky at 6:13pm, others hold up until 6:22pm.

🕎 PURIM DRESS (IN JERUSALEM PURIM STARTS ON THURSDAY NIGHT 13/3/2025 TOGETHER WITH THE REST OF ISRAEL, IN JERUSALEM, PURIM CONTINUES THRU SUNDAY NIGHT 16/03/2025)

One should wear *Shabbat* clothing throughout *Purim*. However there is a custom especially for children to wear masks or costumes. One should ensure that costumes do not contain *Shatnez*.

Cross-dressing is absolutely forbidden throughout the year. Although the *Rema* and several other early *Achronim* rule leniently with regards to *Purim*, the overwhelming majority forbid it. This prohibition applies to all adults and children who are of the age of *Chinuch*.

Some people encourage children to shy away from dressing as *Haman* or other wicked people. [When a *Purim* play requires a child to act the part of *Haman*, the Lubavitcher *Rebbe* indicated that this role be played without considerable enthusiasm.]

🕎 MAARIV (THURSDAY NIGHT 13/3/2025)

Because we hear megillah this year on a day that is not *Purim* for us, one must hear megillah with a *Minyan*. A woman who cannot hear megillah reading in shul should strive to hear megillah in a place where there are ten women.

One should endeavor to hear the *Megillah* as soon as possible. [If circumstances require it to be read beforehand, a *Rav* should be consulted.] Nevertheless, the *Megillah* may be read the entire night until (4:38am).

One may not perform any activity that may distract him prior to reading the *Megillah*. Therefore, one may not eat, drink, nap or perform work from half-hour prior to *Tzeit* (6:21pm) until after hearing the *Megillah*. [Nevertheless, if one feels ill or weak, one may eat or drink between *Maariv* and the *Megillah* reading. Even so, one should not eat more than a *K'beitzah* (57 grams) of bread or *Mezonot* – unless there are health concerns, in which case he should appoint a *Shomer* (guardian) to remind him to hear the *Megillah*.]

In many communities an *Avel* (within 12 months of a parent's passing or within 30 days of a spouse, child or sibling's passing) may not serve as *Chazzan* on *Purim*, in some communities (including *Chabad*) an *Avel* does act as *Chazzan* on *Purim*.

The *Chazzan* recites *Kaddish Titkabel* immediately after *the Amidah*. The *Megillah* is read immediately afterwards.

After the *Megillah* is concluded, *V'atah Kaddosh* is recited, followed by the entire *Kaddish* but without *Titkabel*.

🕎 MEGILLAH READING

All men and women over the age of *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* must hear the *Megillah*.

Children (both boys and girls) should also attend the *Megillah* reading and quietly follow along according to their ability, unless they are too young and will create a disturbance. [An infant who cries or makes noise should be taken out of *Shul*.]

Ideally, one should attend a *Megillah* reading in a *Shul* where a large crowd has congregated. However, one can hear *Megillah* anywhere.

At the very least, one should hear the *Megillah* with a *Minyan* especially as this year we do not read it on *Purim*. [This applies even if he will be reading the *Megillah* later for individuals who could not attend a *Minyan*.] If this is also not possible, one should still endeavor to hear the *Megillah* with as many people as possible.

One does not fulfil the *Mitzvah* of *Megillah* when hearing it with the aid of a microphone, or over the phone or radio.

A perfectly Kosher *Megillah* should be used. [If that is unavailable, a *Megillah* may still be used if disqualified words or altogether missing words do not occur at its beginning or end, nor do they comprise an entire section or the majority of the *Megillah*. Needless to say, the *Ba'al Koreh* must still recite every single word even when using a *Megillah* with missing words.]

One may assume that his friend consents to his *Megillah* being borrowed for the sake of performing the *Mitzvah*, as long as it remains in the vicinity at all times and it is returned to exactly the same place in the same condition.

It is preferable that the listener follows along in a proper *Megillah* and recites the words in a barely audible whisper – but only if he is sufficiently familiar with the proper pronunciation of the words.

One who follows along from a *Chumash* should **not** recite the words at all, but must rather pay especially close attention to the *Ba'al Koreh*.

The *Megillah* is unrolled before the first *Brachot* are recited. [This also applies to everyone else following along with a proper *Megillah*.]

It is permissible to touch the parchment of the *Megillah* directly, unlike a *Sefer Torah*.

The *Ba'al Koreh* in *Shul* should be flanked by at least one person on his right and another on his left.

An *Avel* (within 12 months of a parent's passing or within 30 days of a spouse, child or sibling's passing) should not serve as the *Ba'al Koreh* in *Shul*, unless this is his regular function, or there is nobody as fluent as him.

Everyone should stand for the *Brachot*, unless it is too difficult. During the actual *Megillah*

reading in *Shul*, the *Ba'al Koreh* must stand (and may lean for support if necessary), but those listening don't need to stand. Nevertheless, most people do stand.

When the *Ba'al Koreh* recites the *Brachot*, he should have in mind to be *Motzeh* everyone who is listening to the *Brachot* and the entire *Megillah*. Similarly, everyone in attendance should have in mind to be *Yotzeh* the *Brachot* and the entire *Megillah*, and should not say "*Baruch Hu u'Varuch Shmoh*". [If one accidentally did so, he does not recite the *Brachot* again.]

If the *Ba'al Koreh* already heard the *Megillah*, the *Brachot* are recited by another man who did not yet hear the *Megillah*, and he is *Motzeh* everyone. If none of the men present are able to recite the *Brachot*, the *Ba'al Koreh* may recite it for them (or prompt them word by word).

When the *Megillah* is read for less than a minyan of men or for women only, and the *Ba'al Koreh* already heard the *Megillah*, the women recite the *Brachot* themselves (standing), however some hold that the last *Brachah*, *Harav Et Riveinu* is not said. They may either recite the *Brachot* individually, or have one woman be *Motzeh* all the others. The same applies when reading the *Megillah* for children under the age of *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*.

One should not speak from the time of the *Brachot* until after the *Megillah* reading (and the last *Brachah*) is concluded, because unnecessary speech is considered an interruption, and also prevents him from hearing every word of the *Megillah*.

Whenever *Haman's* name is mentioned (according to Chabad only alongside a title), one stamps his feet vigorously. Children should be encouraged in spinning their *graggers* and stamping out *Haman's* name. The *Ba'al Koreh* should wait for absolute silence before resuming.

The following *Pesukim* are read aloud by the congregation, followed by the *Ba'al Koreh*: 2:5, 8:15, 8:16, 10:3.

The *Ba'al Koreh* raises his voice at "*Balailah Hahu*" (6:1).

The *Baal Koreh* reads "*Laharog Ul'abed; v'Laharog Ul'abed*" (8:11) and "*V'ish Lo Amad Bifenehem; V'ish Lo Omad Lifenehem*" (9:3).

The congregation reads the ten sons of *Haman* quickly in one breath, from the words "*Chamesh Meot Ish*" until "*Aseret*" (9:6-10), followed by the *Ba'al Koreh*. [Despite the speed, the *Ba'al Koreh* should ensure that he is looking at each word in the *Megillah* as he pronounces it.]

Some give the *Megillah* a light shake at the words "*Ha'igeret Hazot*" (9:26) and "*Ha'igeret Hapurim Hazot*" (9:29). [This also applies to everyone else following along with a proper *Megillah*.]

The final *Brachah* is recited by the *Ba'al Koreh* only when the *Megillah* was read with a *Minyan*. [Some would recite this *Brachah* even when they heard or read the *Megillah* without a *Minyan*.]

At the end of the *Megillah* reading, some hold it should remain unrolled until the conclusion of the *Brachah* recited afterwards and some hold it should be rolled before the concluding *Brachah*. [This also applies to everyone else following along with a proper *Megillah*.]

❧ INTERRUPTION DURING MEGILLAH

One who misses hearing even a single word is not *Yotzeh* the *Megillah* reading. Therefore, one should pay absolute attention whilst the *Ba'al Koreh* is reading the *Megillah*.

If one missed hearing a word, the best solution is to read from that word onwards, until he catches up with the *Ba'al Koreh*. [This is necessary because each word of the *Megillah* must be read/heard in the correct order.] This should be done even when one is following along in a *Chumash* and not a proper *Megillah*.

One need not recite the words with the *Trop* if this will detain or prevent him from catching up to the *Ba'al Koreh*. However, one must ensure that all the words are properly enunciated and vowelized.

If one missed a word and did not follow the guidelines above, or he left during the *Megillah* reading for even a short time, he must hear the *Megillah* again. Nevertheless, he does not need to start again from the beginning, but may instead resume hearing it from the place where he was interrupted. In such an instance, one does not repeat the *Brachot* unless he diverted his attention from the *Mitzvah* of *Megillah*.

As mentioned above, one should not speak during the *Megillah* reading. If one said anything unrelated to the *Megillah* between the *Brachot* and the very **start** of *Megillah*, he needs to recite the *Brachot* again. If one spoke after this time – even matters unrelated to the *Megillah* – he does not repeat the *Brachot* again. Nevertheless, being that he could not have properly heard the words that the *Ba'al Koreh* was reading whilst he was talking or repeating the *Brachot*, he must follow the guidelines above for one who missed a word.

One should not pause unnecessarily whilst reading the *Megillah*. Nevertheless, if one paused even for an extended period of time, he may resume from the place where he paused. The exception is if he was forced to pause due to circumstances beyond his control, and the pause was for more time than it would have taken him to finish reading the *Megillah*. In such a case, one needs to start reading the *Megillah* again from the beginning.

❧ TAANIT ESTHER NIGHT

The table should be set with a tablecloth and candles. Even though there is no requirement to eat a festive meal, one should still rejoice and eat something special in honor of *Purim*. [One should moderate any festivities in order that they do not interfere with the morning.]

❧ SHACHARIT (FRIDAY 14/3/2025)

Ideally, *Megillah* should be read after sunrise (5:50am). *Shacharit* should be timed to read the *Megillah* as soon as possible. In extenuating circumstances, one may read the *Megillah* after dawn (4:38am).

Ideally, men should not eat before hearing the *Megillah*. If this is difficult, or there is any concern that one will be unable to concentrate during *davening*, one may snack, but should not eat a *K'beitzah* (57 grams) of *Mezonot*. Nevertheless, one should not be stringent if there are any health concerns.

Al Hanissim is **not** recited in the *Amidah*, and *Tachnun* is not recited.

If one did not yet give *Machatzit Hashekel*, he should do so before the *Megillah* reading.

When the *Brachah* of *Shehecheyanu* is recited, all should have in mind the other *Mitzvot* of *Purim*; i.e. *Mishloach Manot*, *Matanot Lo'evyonim* and *Seudat Purim*, even though we will not perform *Mishloach Manot* and the *Seudat Purim* until Sunday. [Preferably, the *Gabbai* or *Ba'al Koreh* should announce this.]

One should wear his *Tefillin* until after the *Megillah* reading (and *davening*).

❧ MATANOT LO'EYONIM

All men and women over *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* should give *Matanot Lo'evyonim* to at least two needy people. Children (of the age of *Chinuch*) should also do so.

One should use the local currency, and not use *Maaser* money. [This does not apply to any additional optional *Matanot Lo'evyonim* that one gives.]

Matanot Lo'evyonim must go specifically to needy people (or *Tzedakah* organizations devoted to that purpose), and not to other *Tzedakah* causes.

One need not assess the financial circumstances of a poor person before giving him *Matanot Lo'evyonim*. Rather, "we give to whomever extends a hand."

Matanot Lo'evyonim should be delivered during the Friday (and not the night before).

If there are no poor people present, one must physically set aside *Matanot Lo'evyonim* – a verbal pledge is insufficient – and distribute it at the earliest opportunity.

It is preferable to allocate more of one's funds to *Matanot Lo'evyonim* than to *Mishloach Manot* and *Seudat Purim*.

❧ PURIM (SHABBAT 15/3/2025)

V'al Hanissim is recited in each *Amidah* of Shabbat.

If one forgot *V'al Hanissim* at the appropriate place in the *Amidah*, he may still recite it if he did not yet say *Hashem's* name at the end of that *Brachah*. After that point, he does not recite it.

If one forgot *V'al Hanissim* at the appropriate place in *Birchat Hamazon*, he may still recite it if he did not yet say *Hashem's* name at the end of that *Brachah*. After that point, he should recite it as a *Harachamon*, as per the *Nusach* printed in many *Siddurim* and *Birkonim*.

During *Shacharit*, we take out two *Sifrei Torah*.

[If a *Minyan*, by accident, read *Kriat Hatorah* for *Purim* on Friday, they should only take out one *Sefer Torah* and read the regular *Kriat Hatorah* and *Haftorah* for *Parshat Tatzaveh*.]

We read Parshat Tetzaveh from the first Torah and from the second Torah, the reading for Purim as Maftir.

The Haftorah is the same as last week, for Parshat Zachor.

Some hold that the mitzvot of Seudat Purim and Mishloach Manot are observed on Shabbat. Although this opinion is not generally accepted, the custom is to serve an extra side course and some extra wine at the Shabbat meal in honor of Purim and to have guests at the table to fulfill Mishloach Manot. (Alternatively, one shares some of one's Shabbat meal with a neighbor).

It is customary to eat seeds on Shabbat and Sunday of Purim, such as poppy *Hamantashen*, to commemorate the seeds that Esther ate when keeping *Kosher* in the king's palace.

🕯️ PURIM (SUNDAY 16/3/2025)

This is when we fulfill the mitzvot of the seudah and *Mishloach Manot*, and the general simcha of Purim, costumes and all. Nevertheless, we do not say *Al Hanissim* in either davening or Birkat Hamazon. We also do not say Tachanun, nor do we read from the Torah. One should wear Shabbat clothes (unless one chooses to wear a costume).

🕯️ MISHLOACH MANOT

All men and women over *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* should send at least one *Mishloach Manot*. Children (of the age of *Chinuch*) should also do so. [The Lubavitcher *Rebbs* would distribute three *Mishloach Manot* packages – to a *Kohen*, *Levi* and *Yisrael*.]

The *Mishloach Manot* should contain at least two types of (respectable) ready-to-eat foods and/or beverages other than water. [The Lubavitcher *Rebbs* would include a food item as well as a beverage.]

Men should send their *Mishloach Manot* to men, and women should send their *Mishloach Manot* to women.

Some authorities hold that *Mishloach Manot* should be delivered through a *Shliach*. The *Shliach* may even be a child.

According to the Chazon Ish and some other poskim, one should distribute *Mishloach Manot* on Friday. (As mentioned above, most poskim contend that we give *Mishloach Manot* on Sunday.) According to the Chazon Ish, it is a *hidur* (stringency) to give one person *Mishloach Manot* on Friday to fulfill the minimal requirement of the mitzvah.

It is praiseworthy to give *Mishloach Manot* to many people. [Technically, one doesn't need to adhere to the above-mentioned *Halachot* with regards to any additional optional *Mishloach Manot* that one sends. Nevertheless, it is commendable to do so.]

When giving *Mishloach Manot* to one who is not yet observant, one should remind him to make the appropriate *Brachot* on each food item.

Mishloach Manot may not be sent to an *Avel* (within 12 months of a parent's passing or within 30 days of a spouse, child or sibling's passing). However, the *Mishloach Manot* may

be sent to an *Avel's* spouse or child. The *Avel* himself is required to send *Mishloach Manot*, but should send simple food items.

When sending *Mishloach Manot* in a new (non-disposable) utensil that requires *Tevilat Keilim*, it should be performed by the recipient and not by the sender. This is because *Tevilat Keilim* needs to be performed by the end user.

If the sender already *Toveled* the utensil, the recipient must still *Tovel* the utensil, but without a *Brachah*. The same applies if the recipient doesn't know whether the sender already *Toveled* the utensil. Therefore, the sender should inform the recipient (e.g. with a label) that the item has not yet been *Toveled*, in order that the recipient may *Tovel* it with a *Brachah*. [It is also best that the *Mishloach Manot* food not directly touch a non-*Toveled* utensil.]

🕯️ SEUDAT PURIM

One must feast and rejoice on *Purim*. In fact, the joy of *Purim* is even greater than the joy of a regular *Chag*.

The feast is conducted in the late afternoon. Hence, Mincha is davened earlier than usual, prior to the Seudah.

Despite the hustle-and-bustle of *Purim*, one should make a point of learning *Torah* prior to the *Seudah*, for a short period of time. Since *Purim* is thirty days before *Pesach*, one should begin reviewing the laws of *Pesach*.

A fair part of the meal should take place during the daylight hours. At the very least, one should eat a *Kezayit* before sunset (5:52pm).

If circumstances do not allow one to conduct his *Seudah* in the late afternoon, he may eat this meal anytime during the daylight hours.

One should feast among family and friends, because a larger crowd increases the joy. One should also invite guests to the *Seudah*.

The table should be set with a tablecloth. Some have the custom of lighting candles.

The prevalent custom is to wash, and eat meat and other delicacies. It is also customary to eat *Kreplach*.

If one wishes to begin the *Seudah* in one place and continue it and *bentch* elsewhere, he must have this in mind when reciting the *Brachah* of *Hamotzie*. [If he did not have this in mind, he should not relocate during the meal. However, if he already did so, he may *bentch* in the place where he concluded eating.]

One should share words of *Torah* at the meal, especially words of *Torah* that are connected with the *Purim* story.

It is customary to share a *Purim Torah*. The intention is not to use *Torah* to make a joke or mockery, G-d forbid. Rather one should share a *Dvar Torah* of the sort that brings joy to those who hear it.

*** Please note: remember to daven Maariv after the Seudah is finished.**

🕯️ WINE AND ALCOHOL

Chazal instituted that one should drink wine on *Purim* "until he doesn't know the difference between *Arur Haman* and *Baruch Mordechai*". Many *Poskim* understand this to mean that one must drink to the point of intoxication.

At the same time, the *Poskim* caution against becoming inebriated when there is even the slightest chance of negative consequences. This especially applies to anyone with a medical issue or a weak constitution; to young teenagers; to anyone whose behavior may not completely conform with *Halachah* when inebriated (such as forgetting to make a *Brachah* properly, *bentch* or *daven Maariv*); to anyone who may cause damage or injury to himself or others; or to anyone who may cause a *Chillul Hashem* when inebriated. Anyone in this category should discharge their obligation by drinking only slightly more wine or alcohol than usual.

It goes without saying that drinking and driving can be deadly and is a severe violation of *Halachah*. It is also dangerous for an intoxicated person to cross the road himself, and he should therefore be escorted home safely.

The *Mitzvah* of drinking wine or alcohol does not apply to women and children.

The Lubavitcher *Rebbe* established a year-round ban against people under the age of forty drinking more than four *Kelitchlach* (shot cups) of alcohol. Some years, the *Rebbe* made an exception for *Purim*. However, on many other occasions, the *Rebbe* stated explicitly that this ban extends even to *Purim*. The *Rebbe* would especially caution the *Bochurim* about this, and suggested that they fulfill their obligation by increased involvement in "*Yeyna shel Torah*" (the wine of Torah).

🕯️ INTERCITY ISSUES

Due to reasons too detailed to discuss here, someone who intends to spend either Thursday or Friday night out-of-town should ask a Rav how these trips impact halachically. Also, someone from out of town who intends to be in Jerusalem for one of the megillah readings should also ask a Rav.

