

The Jewish Weekly

Is it Time to Say "Goodbye Grandmother?"

By Yitta Halberstam and Judith Levental.

After sustaining a severe heart attack in 1973, my grandmother sank into a deep coma and was placed on life support systems in the hospital. Her EEG was totally flat, indicating zero brain activity. She was hooked up both to a pacemaker that made her heart beat artificially and a respirator that made her lungs breathe artificially. But technically, as the doctors told me privately, she was basically as good as dead. "She'll never come out of the coma," they said, "and she's better off this way. If she did, her life would be meaningless. She'd exist in a purely vegetative state.

Even though she was in her mid-seventies and had lived a full life, I refused to believe that my beloved grandmother could simply slip away like this. She was too feisty, too vital to just disappear into a coma. My instincts told me to start talking to her and keep chatting away. I stayed at her bedside day and night, and that's precisely what I did. I spoke to her all the time about my husband and our two small children, about other relatives, about her own life. I told her all the news that was circulating in Australia at the time. Anything and everything was grist for the mill. I also kept urging her to keep clinging to life, not to give up. "Don't you dare leave us!" I exhorted. "I need you, Mom needs you, your grandchildren need you. They're just beginning to get to know you. It's too soon for you to go!"

It was hard for me to do battle for my grandmother's life, alone as I was. During the time that she fell ill, I was her only relative in Sydney. Her daughter (my mother) was away overseas on a trip, and my only sibling — a brother — lived in Israel. My husband was home caring for our children so that I could take my post at her bedside. I stood a solitary vigil, but that was not what placed such tremendous pressure on me. What was enormously difficult was being asked to make decisions alone. The emotional burden was huge.

When four days passed with no signs of life flickering in either my grandmother's eyes or her hands, and no change recorded by the EEG, the doctors advised me to authorize the papers that would turn off the life support systems. I trembled to think that I held the power of consigning my grandmother to an early grave. "But she's really already dead," the doctors argued. "She's just being kept artificially alive by the pacemaker and the respirator. Keeping her hooked up to these machines is just a waste."

"Well, listen," I said. "It's Thursday afternoon, and in the Jewish religion we bury

people right away. My parents are overseas — practically two days away — and they would certainly want to be here for the funeral. But we don't do funerals on Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath. The earliest we could do the funeral would be on Sunday. So let me call my parents to get ready to fly home, and I'll sign the papers on Sunday." It was all very cold and calculating, but deep inside, my heart was aching.

Meanwhile, I didn't let up. I kept talking up a storm, discussing weighty matters, babbling about the mundane. "Guess what, Grandma?" I gossiped. "You won't believe who ended up being your roommate here in the hospital! Stringfellow! Your next door neighbor at home, Mrs. Stringfellow, was just brought in with a serious condition. Isn't that a coincidence? She lives next door to you in Sydney and now she's your roommate here in the hospital!"

On Saturday, I was at my usual post at my grandmother's bedside, getting ready to start a round of tearful goodbyes, when I thought I noticed her eyes blinking. I called a nurse and told her what I had seen. "It's just your imagination, dearie," the nurse said compassionately. "Why don't you go downstairs for some coffee, and I'll stay with her until you come back?"

But when I returned, the nurse was brimming over with excitement herself. "You know," she said, "I think you may be right. I've been sitting here watching your grandmother, and I could swear I saw her blinking, too."

A few hours later, my grandmother's eyelids flew open. She stared at me and then craned her neck to look at the empty bed on the other side of the room. "Hey," she yelled, "what happened to Stringfellow?"

By the time my mother arrived at the hospital the next day, my grandmother was sitting up in bed, conversing cheerfully with the hospital staff, and looking perfectly normal. My mother glared at me, annoyed, sure I had exaggerated my grandmother's condition. "For this, I had to schlep all the way home?" she asked.

Later, my grandmother told me that while she was in the "coma" she had heard every single word that was said to her and about her. She repeated all the conversations to me, and her retention was remarkable.

"I kept shouting to you," she said, "but somehow you didn't hear me. I kept on trying to tell you, 'Don't bury me yet.'"

After she was discharged from the hospital, my grandmother's quality of life remained excellent. She lived on her own as a self-sufficient, independent, and high-spirited lady and continued to live in this manner until her death sixteen years after I almost pulled the plug.

Reprinted from an email of Good Shabbos Everyone, originally written in the book Small Miracles for the Jewish Heart.

It Once Happened...

The Young Baal Shem of Michelstadt and the Duke

By Mendel Berlin

Rabbi Yitzchak Seckel, (the Baal Shem of Michelstadt), OBM, was a renowned child prodigy. Upon hearing of his brilliance, the local duke invited the child to visit his massive castle, full of halls, rooms, and passageways.

The nine-year-old arrived at the castle alone and began to search for the duke. He could not find anyone to direct him, as the duke had warned his many servants and attendants to make themselves scarce.

The intelligent boy, however, looked around, and realized that the windows of every room were open except for one whose curtain was drawn. This was clearly the duke's room, so he knocked on the door and entered.

During their conversation, the duke told the child that he'd sent all his attendants away in case they sent him to the wrong rooms in jest. "What would you do if all the servants tried to lead you astray, each pointing you in a different direction?" asked the duke.

The boy answered that he would follow the majority.

"It's always a good idea to follow the majority," agreed the duke. "Why, then, do you not adopt the church's way of life? If the Jews are a minority in this world, why do you remain a Jew?"

The boy answered calmly: "My master, I know without doubt that this is the room where you receive guests. Even if all the residents of the castle were to tell me otherwise, I would not listen to them.

"The principle of 'go with the majority's ruling' is only valid for debatable matters. However, facts clarified as the unadulterated truth cannot be changed by the majority's opinion. For me," declared the boy, "the religion of my forefathers is the truth! I cannot and may not abide by the majority's opinion."

Comments: We live in a world obsessed with numbers and statistics. How many views did that clip get? How much money does that person make? How many "friends" does one have on social media? As such, even the most well-intentioned of people can sometimes confuse what is right for what is popular. The reality is, however, that sometimes the majority is wrong.

Reprinted from an email of Torah Sweets Weekly.



Y-GRAPHICS

Shabbat Times – Parshat Mishpatim

Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat	Motzei Shabbat ר"ת
Jerusalem	4:48	6:01
Tel Aviv	5:02	6:03
Haifa	4:52	6:02
Be'er Sheva	5:06	6:04



A Timely Rebellion By Rabbi Yerachmiel Tilles

He was known as "Leib Sarah's" because of the extraordinary story of his mother's self-sacrifice which precede his birth. Early on, he became famous as a miracle-worker, and he was sent on many missions by the Baal Shem Tov to aid Jews.

One day, as he stood in the marketplace of Berdichev, a Jew approached him and exclaimed, "Thank G-d, I've found you!" The Jew, named Reb Benyamin, was the head of the community of Kobrin, and they had a serious problem.

The small town of Kobrin belonged to the Count Upinsky. While the old count had been friendly to the Jews, inviting them to settle on his lands rent-free, his son and successor was a bitter anti-Semite. The young count was now threatening to expel the Jews and seize all their property unless they paid him both rent and interest for all the years they had lived on his estate.

Rabbi Leib listened attentively to this tragic story, and then promised to try to intercede with the count.

The very next day Leib Sarah's travelled to Kobrin and stood before the nobleman, ready to plead the Jews' case. The count was momentarily startled by the sudden unexpected appearance of the stately old Jew, but he recovered quickly and demanded immediate payment of the 'debt.'

Reb Leib replied in measured tones: "Sir, your father never expected or demanded rent from the Jews, and I ask you in all fairness to cancel their debt, for payment had never been intended. In return they will pray for your success and well-being all the days of your life."

The Count sneered. "I do not need the prayers of the Jews, but their money I cannot do without!"

Leib Sarah's shot the count a burning, penetrating look that had the effect of calming his hostility.

The Count soon regained his composure and changed his tone: "Listen, I am going to make you an offer. If you agree, the debt will be cancelled. What I'm telling you is in the strictest confidence; take care no Jew betrays me."

The Count paused, then continued. "Our Polish people are tired of the Russian Czar's oppression.

We are organizing a rebellion and we want Jews to join our side."

Rabbi Leib responded calmly but firmly. "No, sir, this we cannot do. Our religion commands us to support the government under which we live. We may not join you."

His reply enraged the Count. "Get out," he screamed. "You will pay dearly for this!"

Rabbi Leib returned to Benyamin with news of his failed mission. "However, Reb Benyamin, I now will send you to someone who can indeed help. But you must keep his identity and location strictly secret."

Deep in the forest was a small hut where a poor broom-maker lived with his wife. It was here Benyamin was to go with all his provisions for Shabbat. Arriving at the hut Benyamin saw an old woman sitting in a poorly-furnished room. Just then her husband arrived, his face showing no surprise at the unexpected guest.

Benyamin prayed under the fragrant fir trees, and then entered the hut to find the old man reading the 'Grace After Meals' prayer slowly, like a small child. After quickly eating, Benyamin lay down on a bench outside and fell asleep.

In the middle of the night he was awakened by the sound of a voice singing Shabbat melodies. The voice came from the hut, but a heavenly voice seemed to echo back. The hut shone with a burning light; Benyamin quickly shut his eyes, and when he opened them again, it was morning.

The night's vision convinced Benyamin that the broom-maker was no ordinary man. He could hardly wait for the end of the Shabbat to reveal his mission.

But immediately after Havdalah, before he could relay his request, the broom-maker said to him, "The Guardian of Israel has heard the prayers of the Holy congregation of Kobrin. The Count's decree is nullified. Go in peace, but never tell anyone about this Shabbat."

When Benyamin returned home the next morning, he soon heard what had occurred. On Shabbat morning a squad of Russian Cossack soldiers stormed the Count's castle, arresting him for treason. It seems the governor had suspected Upinsky of traitorous activities. One day a letter was intercepted which said that the count had been unsuccessful in enlisting the support of the Jews for the rebellion. With this evidence the castle was seized and the rebellion quashed.

In appreciation of their loyalty, the Czar awarded the Kobrin Jews the land of the Upinskys as a perpetual free hold, rent and tax-free.

Reprinted from an email of KabbalaOnline.org.

Editor's Note: Rabbi Leib Sarah's ז"ל's 225th Yahrzeit is Tuesday, 4th Adar – February 16th of this year.

An entire Shabbat devoted to the mitzvah of Tzedakah; that's Shabbat Shekalim, which will take place this coming Shabbat.

Following the conclusion of Parshat Mishpatim, we will read a special Maftir recalling a time when our nation were commanded to give a half-shekel piece towards the upkeep of the Sanctuary, and later the Temple.

For us, Shabbat Shekalim highlights the centrality and importance of giving within our tradition. Indeed, the concept of giving is so central to Judaism, that over the years, many great dilemmas have been debated.

For example, the Rambam asks: if one has a hundred silver pieces available to give, is it better to give them all to one single cause, or to give to a hundred different worthy causes, one piece each? In terms of what would most benefit those at the receiving end, the debate is endless. But in terms of the impact on the giver, the Rambam explains that it is better to give one piece each to a hundred different causes, as the more times the giver is engaged in the act of giving charity, the more they cultivate within themselves a very important attribute: a nature of giving.

For the five Shabbatot following Shabbat Shekalim we will read Parshiot from the end of the book of Shemot which address the concept of giving. We learn from the construction, furnishing and running of the Sanctuary, and the role of the people in supporting this important communal cause, and how they rose to that challenge.

The first of these Parshiot is called Terumah, which comes from the root 'רומ', which means 'elevated'. This is because when one gives, one is elevated. The Hebrew term for giving, 'נתן', is a palindrome, indicating that when you give, you receive in turn.

It is in this spirit that when Yaakov met with his twin brother Eisav in Sefer Bereishit, and gave him a present to appease him, he said, "קח נא את ברכתי" – "please take my blessing". Yaakov realized that not only are gifts blessings to those receiving them, but also to those giving them, which is why instead of calling his gift a gift, he called it a blessing.

Shabbat Shekalim highlights how crucial giving is, not just for those on the receiving end, but indeed, for the givers as well.

So let's give as much as we can and join together to pray with all our hearts, for the recovery of all the sick from this crazy pandemic, as well as praying for our soldiers and healthcare professionals, and Chevra Kadisha members worldwide, and for those who need healing, shidduchim, children and parnassah and may we be blessed to have the most awesome, gorgeous, beautiful, peaceful, healthy, amazing, relaxed, spiritual, sweet, happy Shabbat and Chodesh Tov.

Yossi

The Jewish Weekly's PARSHA FACTS

NUMBER OF MITZVOT: 53
MITZVOT ASEH: 23
MITZVOT LO TAASEH: 30

NUMBER OF PESUKIM: 118
NUMBER OF WORDS: 1462
NUMBER OF LETTERS: 5313

This Shabbat is a special Shabbat. It is Shabbat Rosh Chodesh Adar, as well as Shabbat Parshat Shekalim.

We take out three Sifrei Torah; six Aliyot in the first Sefer Torah from the weekly Parshah - Mishpatim; The second Sefer Torah is read, with the Aliyah in Parshat Pinchas (Bamidbar 28:9-15), the two paragraphs "ביום ההשבת" and "ובראשי חדשיכם"; Half Kaddish; The Maftir, reads from Parshat Ki Tisa, Parshat Shekalim, (Shemot 30:11-16), which describes the census or counting of every Jew and the obligation to give a Half-Shekel Terumah (contribution) during the month of Adar to pay for the public Korbanot (sacrifices) in the Beit Hamikdash.

HAFTORA
Ashkenazim: Melachim II 12:1-17
Chabad & Sephardim: Melachim II 11:17-12-17

משפטים - שקלים

This week has
not been sponsored



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to help continue our weekly publication.

🕊 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 (ז, באדר)

7th Adar is the fast day for Tzadikim and most say Tachanun, however some have the custom not to.

There are those who are particular if possible not to make a wedding on the 7th Adar, due to it being the fast day for the Tzadikim as well as being the Yahrzeit of Moshe Rabeinu.

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

Most Chevra Kadishot 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.

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 TERUMAH, 20/2/21)

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 זְכָר* - , and then repeated again with a *Segol זָכַר* - .

Some repeat just the word, some repeat the phrase זְכָר עִמָּלֶק אֶת זְכָר תִּמְחָה whilst others repeat the whole Passuk.

🕊 TAANIT ESTHER (THURSDAY 25/2/2021)

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 (4:58am), 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 *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 (5:38pm).

Ideally, *Kriat Hatorah* should not begin prior to *Mincha Gedolah* (12:22pm). *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*.

☞ END OF FAST

The fast concludes according to R' Tukaccinsky at 6:01pm, others hold up until 6:11pm.

☞ PURIM DRESS (IN JERUSALEM PURIM STARTS ON THURSDAY NIGHT 25/2/2021 TOGETHER WITH THE REST OF ISRAEL, IN JERUSALEM, PURIM CONTINUES THRU SUNDAY NIGHT 28/02/2021)

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 25/2/2021)

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 (4:57am).

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* (6:10pm) 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 Bifenyhem; V'ish Lo Omad Lifyenyhem*" (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 the morning.]

🕯️ SHACHARIT (FRIDAY 26/2/2021)

Ideally, *Megillah* should be read after sunrise (6:09am). *Shacharit* should be timed to read the *Megillah* as soon as possible. In extenuating circumstances, one may read the *Megillah* after dawn (4:57am).

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 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* - זָכַר.

Some repeat just the word, some repeat the phrase *תְּמַחֵה אֶת זְכַר עֲמִלֶּךָ* 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 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'EVYONIM

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 27/2/2021)

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.

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).

🌀 PURIM (SUNDAY 28/2/2021)

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 Birchat 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 *Halachah* 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 *Kezayis* before sunset (5:49pm).

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.

🌀 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 fulfil 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.

