

The Jewish Weekly

The Forest and the Rose

By Rabbi Yerachmiel Tilles

Shabbat had ended. Silver stars twinkled in the black sky. The Chassidim had all returned to their homes, and their Rebbe, Leib Sarah's (called such because of the extraordinary deeds of his mother and the exceptional circumstances surrounding his birth, but that's a story for another time) left his shul for home to make Havdalah for his family.

Shortly after, he returned to the shul. Agitated, he paced back and forth, muttering "Oy, Oy" over and over again. Suddenly he stood still, and after trembling slightly, stated with finality: "Whatever happens, I must do something."

Stepping outside, he summoned his driver. In a short time they were off. The Tzaddik whispered something in the driver's ear, and then switched places with him, taking over the reins while the driver went to sleep inside the carriage. When he woke, the sun had already risen on Sunday morning, and he was amazed to hear from the Tzaddik in the outside driver's seat how far they had come. Even though, being the regular driver for the Tzaddik, he had experience in these miraculous-seeming journeys, this time they had actually crossed the border and were deep into Hungary. He could barely believe the evidence of his eyes.

Little Isaac was only ten years old, but was already the man of the house. His father, Yusseleh, had recently passed away, and his mother Reizel desperately needed him to help support the family. She took whatever meager work was available to her, while little Isaac took care of their tiny gaggle of geese.

Actually, Isaac liked his job. Every morning he rose early to pray with the minyan in shul and say Kaddish for his father. He would then lead the geese to one of the fields outside of town. He loved the quiet and peacefulness there. After carefully counting his meager charges, he would sit against the trunk of a tree and enjoy the cool shade under its big, leafy branches.

Many thoughts would race through his little head - some joyous, some sad. In those moments when his young soul was bursting with a variety of different feelings, he would open his knapsack and seek the soothing comfort provided by his beloved flute. Quickly he would extract from it a medley of folk tunes, passed down from generation to generation in the Hungarian countryside, all learned from the other shepherds that he knew. Of his whole repertoire, he liked best the song whose words went:

Forest, forest, how vast you are.
Rose, oh rose, how far you are.
If the forest were but smaller,
Then the rose would be closer.
If you would take me from this forest,
Then we could be, the two of us, together.

Whenever he played the notes of this tune, he would close his eyes and allow the lyrics and the music to carry him off to a world of distant pleasurable visions.

Little Isaac was momentarily startled in the midst of his song, by the regal appearance of the bearded Jew who appeared suddenly from behind him. "What are you doing here, little boy?" the man asked gently. "Helping my mother by tending to our geese," Isaac answered. "But what about learning Torah in school like the other boys?" the man continued.

Isaac looked away. "Not so long ago, I was still a student. And I was doing pretty well too. But ever since my father died, I've had to help my poor mother support our family, so I had to drop out of school."

The Tzaddik, Leib Sarah's, immediately went to visit the poor widow, Reizel. After introducing himself, he asked her for permission to take her Isaac away with him. "Know that your son has a very lofty soul," he explained, "and he can become very great. But for that he must be brought up in the right way, and that means he has to study Torah intensively." He promised her a monthly stipend to more than make up for any loss of income that the boy's departure would entail.

It took a lot of entreating, but finally his mother agreed. Leib Sarah's took little Isaac to Nicholsberg, to the Yeshiva of the great Rabbinical Authority and Chassidic Rebbe, Reb Shmelke, a friend of Leib Sarah's and one of the inner circle of disciples of the Magid of Mezritch. He said to him: "I have brought you a special soul from the Chamber of Melody. I hope you will help it to realize its full potential in this world."

The boy remained in the yeshiva for many years, and thrived and grew great in Torah and Chassidut.

Years later, when throngs of Chassidim would crowd into the shul of the Holy Rebbe, Rabbi Yitzchak Isaac of Kaliv, he would sometimes relate to them the long path of his development from a goose-tending childhood to the present. He would also tell them about his favorite tune when he played the shepherd's flute: the Ballad of the Forest and the Rose.

On these occasions, he always mentioned his great debt to the Tzaddik Leib Sarah's, who went to such trouble to "discover" him and to redeem the holy melody which had been "held captive" for centuries.

"Now, however," he would always conclude, "the words are different." The chassidim would listen intently, for the Rebbe's musical talents were well-known.

Exile, exile, how long you are.
Divine Presence, how far you are.
If only the exile were shorter,
Then Your Presence could be closer.
If You would take us out of exile,
Then we could be, the two of us, together.

This song is still sung by Kaliver chassidim, in Hungarian, till this very day.

Reprinted from an email of KabbalaOnline.org.

It Once Happened...

Ultimate Justice

By Jody Eisenman

An Orthodox Jew from New Jersey was involved in a car accident in which he accidentally killed an old non-Jewish man. Although the courts found the Jewish man not guilty, he could not carry the pains of the guilt that he killed an old man. It gave him no peace and caused him to lose his appetite. He was unable to sleep for weeks.

He decided to seek counsel from the internationally known sage, Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky of Bnei Brak. He wrote him a letter asking for a tikun - plan for soul-rectification - because he had accidentally killed a non-Jew.

The Rabbi wrote back to him. His response consisted of one word: "Amalek" The Jew was disappointed. He could not understand this answer and continued suffering with sleepless nights.

At some point he decided to move away from his town to begin a new life. Maybe then he could stop thinking about the incident. He began searching for a new location and found a house in a nearby town that appealed to him. The owners told him that they were eager to get rid of this house which they inherited from their dead father who had been killed in a car accident.


Could it possibly be? After a short investigation, the Jew discovered that the residence belonged to the old man whom he had accidentally killed! Soon after that, in the basement of the house he found materials belonging to the deceased non-Jewish man. He was shocked to find a photograph of the old man from when he was a young man, proudly wearing an SS uniform, standing next to evil Hitler, may his name be eternally blotted out.

It turned out that this old man had been an SS officer in the Nazi army during the Holocaust years. After the war, he made his escape to the United States and hid his past. Other documents he had been preserving, included a list of the names of all the Jews he personally murdered, May G-d Al-Mighty avenge their blood.

When the Jew read the names of the martyrs that were murdered, he found both of his parent's names on the list!

The Al-mighty had indeed allotted to him to be the instrument to avenge his parents' blood! It was then that he understood Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky's one word answer.

Reprinted from bp0.blogger.com.



Shabbat Times - Parshat Vayakhel

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat	Motzei Shabbat ר"ת
 Jerusalem	5:07	6:20	7:00
Tel Aviv	5:22	6:22	6:57
Haifa	5:12	6:21	6:59
Be'er Sheva	5:24	6:22	7:00

A Well Kept Secret By Rabbi Shmuel Butman

Rabbi Chaim Halberstam of Sanz was deeply involved in the mitzva of tzedaka (charity). While he and his family lived most frugally, he gave with an open hand from his own meager funds and solicited from others as well. In keeping with the rabbinical dictum that charity collectors should travel in pairs, he always went on his rounds with a respected member of the community.

One time the Sanzer Rebbe set about to collect a large amount of tzedaka for a certain once-wealthy man who had gone bankrupt. He and a trusted companion were going from house to house soliciting funds when they came to the elegant home of one of the richest men in the city. They entered the elegant anteroom and were shown to a velvet sofa where they were served tea from a silver tea service while they waited for the master of the house to appear. After a few minutes, a well-dressed gentleman entered and greeted the illustrious Rabbi warmly.

The Rabbi and his companion requested that the wealthy man donate the large amount of five hundred rubles for an unspecified "worthy cause". The rich man considered their request for a few moments and then asked, "Tell me, exactly what is this cause that you are collecting for? Is it for some public institution or for a private person?"

Rabbi Chaim replied that he was collecting for a wealthy citizen who had lost all his money and gone into bankruptcy. However, this answer wasn't sufficient for the potential donor, and he began to inquire further about the identity of the person.

"I'm sorry," replied Rabbi Chaim, "but I cannot divulge the man's name, since that would cause him terrible embarrassment. You'll just have to trust me when I tell you that he's a very deserving individual."

The rich man refused to be dissuaded from his curious pursuit of the man's identity. "Of course, I trust you implicitly, and I would be only too happy to donate even several thousand rubles to help you, but I would first like to know to whom I'm giving the money."

At this point the man who was accompanying the Rabbi interjected his opinion that perhaps it wouldn't be so bad to divulge the man's identity in this case. Certainly the rich donor wouldn't allow the information to leave the room, and it was a wonderful opportunity to amass the large

amount of money needed to help a fellow Jew rebuild his life.

But Rabbi Chaim would say only that the man had up until recently been one of the pillars of the community and had himself contributed to many worthy causes before his unfortunate business collapse. Nonetheless, their wealthy host continued to insist that he wouldn't publicize the man's name.

The rich man, far from being silenced, was even more aroused in his curiosity. "If you tell me his name I will give you half of the entire amount you need."

Rabbi Chaim's fellow collector again tried to convince him to reveal the man's name due to the tremendous sum of money involved, but to no avail.

"You must understand," the Rabbi replied, "that even though the sum you are offering is more than generous, the honor of this Jew is more important and valuable to me than any amount of money! If you were to give me the total sum that I require, I would still refuse to reveal the identity of the recipient!"

The rich man's countenance changed suddenly and he became very still. After a moment, he softly asked Reb Chaim to step into an adjacent room, for he wished to speak with him privately.

Standing alone with the Rabbi, the rich man broke down into bitter sobbing. "Rebbe," he began, "I, too, have lost my entire fortune and am about to enter into bankruptcy. I was too embarrassed to tell this to anyone, but when I saw how scrupulously you guarded the other man's privacy I knew I could trust you. Please forgive me for testing you in such an outrageous manner, but I am a desperate man. I needed to know for sure that under no circumstances would you tell anyone about my terrible situation. I am in debt for such a huge sum, and I have no hope at all of repaying it. I am afraid that I will have no choice but to leave my family and go begging from door to door!"

The Sanzer Rebbe left the home of the rich man and, needless to say, not a soul ever heard a word of their conversation. Less than a week later he returned to the same man's house with a large sum of money. He had been able to raise enough money to rescue not only the original intended recipient, but this one as well. They were both able to pay off their debts and resume their businesses successfully.

The role of the saintly Sanzer Rebbe in this affair became known only many years later after he had gone to his eternal reward.

Reprinted from an email of www.lchaimweekly.org.



When talking about the building of the Mishkan, the Torah tells us "every man whose heart inspired him" would donate to the Mishkan. The Ramban tells us that there were many things that they had to sew and build for the Mishkan, crafted in very specific ways, yet none of these people were professionally trained in any of this work. They just found the ability in themselves to do it. Every single Jew has endless potential to do great things. With just a little inspiration to do something for the sake of Hashem, all of a sudden they get the Divine Help from Hashem to unlock this greatness, that others never imagined they could attain.

Rabbi Yaakov Bender, who besides for being the Rosh Yeshiva at Darchei Torah in Far Rockaway, was also one of the founders of the Flatbush division of Hatzalah. He would often say "I heard a few times about a man named R' Hershel Webber, who once witnessed a Jew collapse on the street in Williamsburg and die waiting for the slow response of the city ambulances. R' Hershel was so alarmed by this, it inspired him to take a CPR course, and convinced his friends to do the same. Next they bought some oxygen tanks, and that is how Hatzalah, today an internationally recognized organization, was formed.

Friends, we need to seize the moment and commit to wonderful things, when we have a little strength we will be amazed at what that commitment can lead to. All it takes is a little inspiration to give us the fuel we need to accomplish our dreams. Let us dream great things, and be inspired to accomplish our dreams, with great fire like never before.

So let's commit to pray with all our hearts, for the healing of all those injured, for the safe return of those taken as hostages, as well as Divine Protection for our brave IDF soldiers, police officers, medical professionals, firefighters, ZAKA members, security personnel and all those citizens protecting us in Israel as well as around the world, and for those who need healing, shidduchim, children or parnassah and may we be blessed to have the most awesome, gorgeous, beautiful, peaceful, healthy, amazing, relaxed, spiritual, safe, quiet and sweet Shabbat and Chodesh Tov.

The Jewish Weekly's PARSHA FACTS

NUMBER OF MITZVOT: 1
MITZVOT ASEH: 0
MITZVOT LO TAASEH: 1

NUMBER OF PESUKIM: 122
NUMBER OF WORDS: 1558
NUMBER OF LETTERS: 6181

This year, Parshat Vayakel is a special Shabbat. The Shabbat preceding Rosh Chodesh Adar (II) is Shabbat Parshat Shekalim.

We take out two Sifrei Torah; Seven Aliyot in the first Sefer Torah from the weekly Parshah - Vayakhel; Half Kaddish;

The Maftir, reads from Shemot, Parshat Ki Tisa, (30:11-16), which describes the census or counting of every Jew and the obligation to give a Half-Shekel Terumah during the month of Adar to pay for the public Korbanot in the Beit Hamikdash.

HAFTORA
Ashkenazim: Melachim II 12:1-17
Chabad & Sephardim: Melachim II 11:17-12-17
Some add first and last Passuk of Machar Chodesh

Rosh Chodesh - Sunday & Monday, March 10 & 11

ויקהל - שקלים

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Laws and Customs: Adar, Taanit Esther & Purim (for Jerusalem) בס"ד

The Jewish Weekly

For the year 5784

According to Shulchan Aruch Harav, Mishna Berurah and Nittei Gavriel

All times listed are for Jerusalem only as per www.myzmanim.com

Based on Rabbi Shmuel Lescher's Halachah Sheets

Reviewed by Reb Elimelech Rabinowicz שליט"א, Rav of Tzeirei Kehal Chassidim, Shaarei Chesed

Compiled by Yossi Fraenkel in memory of his grandparents

ר' ראובן בן הרב משה אליעזר הלוי ע"ה וחיה ברכה בת ר' נפתלי משה ע"ה רבינוביץ

ר' יוסף בן ר' אורי ע"ה ומלכה בת ר' יצחק צבי הלוי ע"ה פרנקל

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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.

משכנס 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 משכנס אדר מרבין בשמחה.

🌀 7TH ADAR - ז' באדר (SUNDAY 17/3/24)

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 7th Adar, due to it being the fast day for the Tzadikim as well as being the Yahrzeit of Moshe Rabeinu.

Some have the custom to fast as well as to 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 other rabbis and Tzadikim who died during the year.

Some have the custom that 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.

🌀 TAANIT ESTHER (THURSDAY 21/3/2024)

Taanit Esther is not one of the four public fasts instituted by the *Nevi'im*, and is generally more lenient. This year, Taanit Esther is even more lenient, for it is observed two days early (being that the 13th of Adar falls on Shabbat). One should not presume that the leniencies outlined below automatically apply to other fasts. 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 (4:29am), 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.

🌀 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.

🌀 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*.

🌀 MACHATZIT HASHEKEL

Before *Mincha*, most hold that males over *Bar-Mitzvah* give three halves of the local currency. [In Israel, three half-shekel pieces.]

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 (5:55pm).

Ideally, *Kriat Hatorah* should not begin prior to *Mincha Gedolah* (12:16pm). *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 recited, since it is not *Erev Purim*.

The fast concludes with the emergence of three medium stars (6:19pm).

🕊️ PARSHAT ZACHOR

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*.

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

Some repeat just the word, some repeat the phrase *זְכַר תְּמִחָה אֶת עַמְלֵק* whilst others repeat the whole *Passuk*.

Av Harachamim is recited before *Musaf*.

🕊️ CONCLUSION OF SHABBAT

As it is a normal *Motzei Shabbat* in Jerusalem, unlike the rest of the world, the normal *Motzei Shabbat* rituals are observed.

🕊️ **PURIM DRESS** (IN JERUSALEM PURIM STARTS ON SUNDAY NIGHT 24/3/2024 WHILST FOR THE REST OF ISRAEL PURIM STARTS ON MOTZEI SHABBAT 23/3/2024)

Israel's Education Ministry is warning of "panic-inducing costumes" ahead of Purim as the country continues to grapple with the Hamas war that began on October 7. In the shadow of the war and in accordance with the security reality and the characteristics of the current period, care must be taken to avoid dressing up in costumes that may cause fear, panic, or injury to another.

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.]

🕊️ V'AL HANISSIM

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

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*.

🕊️ MAARIV (SUNDAY NIGHT 24/3/2024)

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 (4:23am).

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* (6:29pm) 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, 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 U'abed; v'Laharog U'abed*" (8:11) and "*V'ish Lo Amad Bifenyhem; V'ish Lo Omad Lifenyhem*" (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 (MONDAY 25/3/2024)

Ideally, *Megillah* should be read after sunrise (5:36am). *Shacharit* should be timed to read the *Megillah* as soon as possible. In extenuating circumstances, one may read the *Megillah* after dawn (4:23am).

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 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 *תִּמְחָה אֶת זְכָר עֲמֻלָּק* 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*. [Preferably, the *Gabbai* or *Ba'al Koreh* should announce this.]

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

MATANOT LO'EVYONIM

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

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

Matanot L'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 L'evyonim*. Rather, "we give to whomever extends a hand."

Matanot L'evyonim should be delivered during *Purim* day (and not the night before or after).

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*.

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 (5:46pm).

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).

MOTZOEI PURIM

V'al Hanissim is recited even when *bentching* after dark, as long as the meal began before nightfall and one has not yet *davened Maariv*. [For this reason, it is preferable to *bentch* before *davening Maariv*.]

On the night following *Purim*, one must not forget to *daven Maariv* as soon as possible. In any case, one should certainly *daven* before midnight (11:45pm).

