

Rosh Yeshiva & Community Rabbi:
Dayan Abraham David Shli"ta

Please Note: This Newsletter has Holy writings and should be disposed of in Geniza only.

PURIM 5781

(Thursday 25th February 2021)

On the 14th of Adar, Thursday the 25th February, we celebrate Purim. It is clear this Purim will be different to many others we have previously experienced. It is sobering that one year on, we continue to be during this terrible pandemic. Celebrations will undoubtedly be muted.

At the same time, the essence of the day and the teachings of the Megillah should resonate more than any other year. The Purim story provides us with a blueprint in dealing with the pandemic, namely turning to Hashem in prayer whilst concurrently undertaking responsible pragmatic efforts to mitigate its effects. As some members of our community struggle with isolation, Purim and the mitzvot remind us of a requirement to connect and care for one another. The Megillah also reminds us that Hashem continues to care for his children behind-the-scenes, providing salvation if we are deserving of it, in an instant. The necessary limitations caused by the pandemic should not deter our efforts to internalise these messages and complete the day's mitzvot.

We celebrate Purim, derived from the word 'Pur' which means lots. It recalls the lots Haman cast to find the most favourable day to destroy the Jews and how G-d reversed this tragedy and turned this day into one of salvation. Nothing happens to us by chance; even the 'lots' are indicated by G-d.

Our Rabbis tell us that Haman's decree came as a punishment for our taking part in the feast King Achashverosh made for his subjects in Shushan. Mordechai warned his people not to attend the festivities of the 'goyim' - we are a people apart from the nations. We are an example to the world as one nation with a message of belief in G-d, who has revealed His will to us in the Torah. We must not assimilate or dilute the Torah we were given at Sinai. Attending the festivities of the 'goyim' and fraternising socially with them only endangers our purpose and in fact makes them repel and despise us.

There were Jews who argued with Mordechai and called him 'old-fashioned' when he warned them not to attend. They argued that by not attending they would be hated and singled out by the King, the solution was to socialise etc., then everything would be alright.

We can imagine how surprised and confounded they were when Haman's decree became law with the king's approval, as it says in the Megillah, 'Ve Ha-er Shushan Navocha', they were really mixed up. Only then did they realise how they were mistaken and the 'old rabbi' knew what he was talking about. At Mordechai's suggestion, they repented, mourned and fasted; thus the decree was annulled.

According to our Rabbis, the Festivities they attended started on the 3rd of Tishri, so the 7th day was on Yom Kippur. This was the only day they stayed away and on this day the seeds of salvation were sown. Achashverosh became light-headed and commanded that Queen Vashti be brought before him dressed only with her crown. She refused and we know the result; she was dethroned and the door was opened for Esther to become queen and bring about the salvation.

As world events take place and great changes are made in the world, we see the Hand of G-d lead and protect the Jewish people through their trials and tribulations. We await the final redemption and the destruction of evil. AMEN

MI SHENICHNAS ADAR MARBIM BESIMCHA – 13th FEBRUARY 2021

Some Laws Concerning the month of ADAR and PURIM according to our Custom.

ADAR

- 1) Adar is a time for happiness. If someone has a court case with a non-Jew, this is an appropriate month to have it.

PARSHAT ZACHOR

- 2) The Shabbat before Purim, (20th February 2021) is called Shabbat Zachor. All men are obliged by the Torah to hear the Parshah about Amalek found at the end of Parshat Ki Tetze (Devarim 25 17:19), as it says in the Torah, "*Remember what Amalek did to you*" "*Zachor et Asher asah lecha amalek*". **Even though women are not obliged to hear this being read in the Synagogue, they will be rewarded if they do so and should make every effort to attend.**
- 3) B'chasdei Hashem, Od Yosef Hai remains open with services conducted in a socially distanced manner and in adherence with the recommendations of an independent Covid Health Risk Assessment. A second minyan will be run in the Nancy Reuben Hall to maintain social distancing if there is a need to do so. **We ask that everyone makes a special effort to register their interest in attending in advance on <https://odyosefhai.glideapp.io> to assist with maintaining social distancing efforts.**
- 4) **Those who are ill or must remain in isolation should not come to shul. These** individuals should read parshat zachor with a chumash at home on Shabbat morning and make a point to hear the reading at Parshat Ki Tetze.

TA'ANIT ESTHER

Ta'anit Esther this year will begin at 5:15am on Thursday 25th February and terminates at 6:24pm. It is our custom not to eat before the hearing of the megillah in the evening unless he feels weak or faint.

MACHAZIT HASHEKEL

- 5) It is customary to donate charity before or on Ta'anit Esther as a remembrance of the Shekalim which were donated to pay for the offerings in the Temple. It can be given after this as well. The correct amount is about £6:50 to cover the value of a half Shekel of silver (about 10g of silver) for each person. This Machair Hashekel should be handed in at shul or can be donated via paypal at <https://odyosefhai.glideapp.io>.

MEGILLAT ESTHER

- 6) Both men and women are obliged to hear the reading of the Megillah at night and again during the day. It is a mistake to think that it is enough to hear the one reading only at night. Children must also be trained in the Mitzvah. But one should make sure that young children brought to the synagogue do not disrupt the services.
- 7) B'chasdei Hashem, Od Yosef Hai remains open with services conducted in a socially distanced manner and in adherence with the recommendations of an independent Covid Health Risk Assessment. **Both men and women should attend readings of the Megillah if they are able to do so.** Multiple readings will be offered both in the night and day at the synagogue. **We ask that everyone makes a special effort to register their interest in attending in advance on <https://odyosefhai.glideapp.io> to assist with maintaining social distancing efforts.**
- 8) **Those who are ill or must remain in isolation should not come to synagogue. Listening to a livestream reading will not satisfy the fulfilment of the mitzva but is encouraged for those who are unable to attend.** Such individuals should read from a kosher Megillah if possible. This can be read either by oneself (even without the correct cantillations); or by being assisted by a reading of another person; an online recording; or a livestream. In this case all the berachot should be recited. If reading from a kosher Megillah is not practical one should read from a Chumash without reciting berachot. **If you are required to isolate on Purim please notify office@odyosefhai.com and we will do our best to ensure you are able to fulfil this important mitzva.**
- 9) The person who reads the Megillah for women after he himself has already heard it, does not make a Beracha on their behalf and nor do the women themselves. But, if he or another man has not heard the reading of the Megillah, then the Beracha before and after the reading should be said even if there is no minyan according to the Ben ish Hai.
- 10) The Megilla is unrolled completely and folded like a letter before it is read. This only applies to the reader and not the congregation.
- 11) The one who reads the Megillah must have in mind to include all those who listen and the listeners should intend to fulfil their obligation. They must pay complete attention and must not miss out one word. If one of the congregation dozes off during the reading of the Megillah, he has to hear it again from where he missed. Every congregant should have a Megillah to follow even if it is only printed, so that if he missed hearing a word, or some words, he can read it from the printed book itself and catch up to where the Chazan is, thus he fulfils his obligation.
- 12) The congregants do not need to stand while the Megillah is read but it is customary to stand up while hearing the Beracha before and after the reading.
- 13) We only need to make the Beracha Sheheheyenu on the Megillah at night and we have in mind to include all the Mitzvoth of the following day, i.e. the 2nd reading of the Megillah, the Matanot Le Evyonim the Shelach Manot and the Seuda. But if for some reason the Beracha Sheheheyenu was not said at night, it can be said for the reading of the morning.
- 14) At the end of the reading of the Megillah, we all say Arur Haman, Baruch Mordechai, Arura Zeresh, Berucha Esther, Arurim Kol Hareshaim, Beruchim Kol Yisrael, Ve Gam Harbona Zachor Letov as it is written in the Siddur.

SHELACH MANOT

- 15) Both men and women are obliged in the Mitzvah of Shelach Manot, i.e. to send no less than two kinds of food which can be eaten without further preparation to one person (two kinds should be in separate containers or packed separately). Shelach Manot must be sent to an adult but Matanot La-eyyonim may be given to a katan (under bar mitzvah) if he is a poor person in need.
- 16) Given government guidelines, we should consider carefully how we deliver Shelach Manot this year.
- 17) A mourner, within the year for his parent and within a month for other family, should not be sent Shelach Manot (gifts) for Purim but he is obliged to send Shelach Manot to one person and to give Matanot to the poor. But Shelach Manot can be sent to his wife and children.

MATANOT LA-EVYONIM

- 18) Matanot La-eyyonim must also be given by both men and women. The obligation is to give at least £1:50p each to two poor people this must be distributed on the same day. The Yeshiva will facilitate this and plates will be placed on the Teva for this purpose. Since our seuda and shelach manot expenses are likely to be lower than usual, one should consider contributing extra for Matanot La-eyyonim. **Donations can also be provided online via <https://odyosefhai.glideapp.io>. Such donations should be made before 9:45am on Purim day so that they can be distributed at the correct time.**

- 19) Donations can also be made before Purim by handing it in at synagogue or donated online but should be marked as Matanot La-eyyonim to be sure that they are distributed on Purim day in accordance with the mitzva.

SEUDAT PURIM

- 20) It is a Mitzvah to make a special Seuda on Purim and to drink wine on the day. One does not fulfil this mitzva if done at night. **Because Purim this year falls on Friday the Seuda should start before 12:13pm (Halachic noon).** Someone who has been delayed or has no choice should at the very least aim to have the seuda by 2:55pm (the end of the ninth hour of the day). For reasons of safety, the seuda should only include those within one's own bubble.
- 21) Al Hanissim is recited in the Prayers and in Berchat Hamazon on Purim but not on Shushan Purim, the following day. But on both days, we omit the Anah and Tachanunim.
- 22) One should dress with Shabbat clothing or other fine clothes on Purim.

PARASHAT ZACHOR will be read on Shabbat Terumah on 20th February 2021. This is an obligation from the Torah to hear this Parasha.

BETH KENESSETH TIMINGS FOR PURIM 5781

Thursday 25th February 2021

Ta'anit begins
 Shacharit
 Mincha (Birchat Cohanim)
 Ta'anit ends
 Purim Arbit followed by Megillah
 Second Megillah reading
 Third Reading to be announced if required

Fast of Esther

5:15 am (according to some Poskim it starts at 5:41 am)
 7:00 am
 5:30 pm
 6:24 pm
 6.30 pm
 9:15 pm

Friday 26th February 2021


Shacharit followed by Megillah
 Second Reading
 Third reading to be announced if required
 Seuda should start before
 Mincha followed by Kaballat Shabbat
 Shabbat commences

7:00am
 10:00am
 12:13pm
 5:05 pm
 5:20 pm

Saturday 27th February 2021

Shacharit followed by
 Hamotsei lunchboxes and shiur
 Mincha
 Seuda Shelishit at home
 Shabbat Terminates
 Arvit

8:30am
 12:45pm
 6:27 pm
 6:40pm



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