



14 Adar



5770

Saturday Evening, February 27, 2010

Celebrating at KCT



KEHILLAT CHOVEVEI TZION SHABBAT AND PURIM SERVICES

February - March 2010 Adar 5770

Shabbat Zachor			Services	Candles
Friday	February 26		6:00 PM	5:21 PM
Saturday	February 27		9:00 AM	

Erev Purim				
Megillah Reading				
Saturday	February 27		7:30 PM	

Shabbat Parah				
Friday	March 5		6:00 PM	5:29 PM
Saturday	March 6		9:00 AM	

Shabbat HaChodesh				
Friday	March 12		6:00 PM	5:37 PM
Saturday	March 13		9:00 AM	

<i>Rosh Chodesh Nisan</i>	<i>March 16</i>		<i>Begin Pesach Preparations</i>	
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Shabbat Vayikra				
Friday	March 19		6:00 PM	6:45 PM
Saturday	March 20		9:00 AM	

Shabbat HaGadol				
Friday	March 26		6:00 PM	6:52 PM
Saturday	March 27		9:00 AM	



Proclaiming the Holiday of Purim Megillat Esther 9:1-4

Now in the twelfth month, that is, the month Adar, on the thirteenth day of the same, when the king's commandment and his decree drew near to be put in execution, in the day that the enemies of the Jews hoped to have power over them, (though it was turned to the contrary, that the Jews had rule over them that hated them.) The Jews gathered themselves together in their cities throughout all the provinces of the king Achashuerus, to lay hand on such as sought their hurt: and no man could withstand them; for the fear of them fell upon all people. And all the rulers of the provinces, and the lieutenants, and the deputies, and officers of the king, helped the Jews; because the fear of Mordechai fell upon them. For Mordechai was great in the king's house, and his fame went out throughout all the provinces: for this man Mordecai waxed greater and greater.

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**The Holiday in Overview:
Its Meaning, Words and Practices**

(Drawn from the writings of Rabbi Stanley Asekoff, of Congregation Bnai Shalom in West Orange, NJ)

The start of the month of Adar (this year, on February 14-15) is a reminder to commence the merrymaking in anticipation of the holiday of Purim. This famous Rabbinic statement indicates the wonderfully happy overtones attributed to the entire month of Adar.

SHABBAT ZACHOR (February 27). The Shabbat immediately prior to Purim is called Shabbat Zachor (the Sabbath of Remembrance) because, on this Shabbat, it is customary to read a special section from the Torah (Deuteronomy 25:17-19) that instructs us to remember what the Nation of Amalek did to the Jewish People as they were fleeing from Egypt - they attacked them and attempted to destroy them, singling out the rear of the column of marchers where the elderly, frail, and weak were gathered. God says that He will surely wipe out the remembrance of Amalek from under the heavens. This is read prior to Purim because of the tradition that Haman was descended from Amalek, along with a special Haftorah Zachor haftorah (I Samuel 15:2-34) which discusses G-d's command to King Saul to destroy the people of Amalek.

TA'ANIT ESTHER (The Fast of Esther, Thursday, February 25). It is customary to observe a daytime fast (from sun-up to sun-down) on the day before Purim (or if it falls out on Friday, to observe the fast two days before Shabbat) in commemoration of the Fast observed by Queen Esther prior to her appearance before Achashuerus to intercede with him in behalf of her people.

MEGILLAT ESTHER (The Scroll of Esther) is the Biblical book containing the story of Purim. We actually read the story in the synagogue on Purim from a parchment scroll, being very careful to rattle the graggers whenever the name Haman is mentioned, but only then. The mitzvah is to hear all of the words of the megillah.

MACHATZIT HASHEKEL (The half-shekel . . . be sure to see the special section elsewhere in this booklet!). This refers to the half shekel that was collected in ancient days for the upkeep of the

Temple in Jerusalem. It is a reminder of the custom that developed and is mentioned in Megillat Esther of giving gifts of money to the poor on Purim. *(It is the KCT long-standing custom mid-way through the Megillah reading, that all attendees - men, women and youngsters - contribute exactly one dollar, not more, not less, as our fulfillment of this precious custom.)*

RA'ASHANIM (Graggers) are noise makers used during the reading of the Megillah every time the name of Haman is mentioned to fulfill the Biblical statement that God would wipe out the name of Amalek from under the heavens. The Hebrew word for gragger is *Ra'ashan*.

MATANOT LA'EVYONIM (Gifts for the poor). In ancient Persia, the Jews celebrated Purim by giving gifts to the poor, from which is derived the custom that we should put at least two coins of the realm into at least two different tzedakah "pushkes" at the conclusion of the reading of the Megillah.

MISHLOACH MANOT (Sending food gifts) to friends is a Purim tradition also derived from the Megillah. We read that the Jews of Persia celebrated Purim by sending such gifts to their friends. On Purim day, we send at least two plates containing at least two different kinds of foods to at least two friends. Some make this gift even more elaborate, in baskets with decorations, and several additional types of foods and drink.

PURIM GELT (Purim money) refers to the custom of giving two coins to any child who brings Mishloach Manot to our homes on Purim day. Chanukah gelt is derived from Purim gelt and in recent years, the latter seems to have been gaining in popularity.

SHUSHAN PURIM Shushan was the capital city of Persia. Because the Jews of Shushan were saved one day later than all the other Persian Jews, and consequently celebrated Purim one day later, it has become customary that all Jews living in cities that had walls surrounding them in the days of Joshua celebrate Shushan Purim. So the Jews of Jerusalem, for example, celebrate Purim one day later.

DRESSING IN COSTUME on Purim has become a venerable custom. Why costumes? As a reminder that although God's presence in the Purim story was not mentioned, He was there, in disguise, so to speak, and it was He who helped Esther and Mordechai save the Jews.

OZNAY HAMAN (Haman's Ears in Hebrew and in Yiddish HAMANTASHEN - "Pockets of Haman") are the three cornered pastries containing a variety tasty fillings, such as mon (poppy), apricot, cherry, and prunes. They remind us of the three cornered hat worn by Haman, the villain of the Purim story. The original name for this pastry was "muntashen", "mun" being the Yiddish word for poppy seeds, The Hebrew name "Oznay Haman" is taken from the older name "Haman Ohren" (Haman's ears).

SE'UDAT PURIM-THE FESTIVE PURIM MEAL is a special, celebration meal eaten late on Purim Day close to sunset and continuing through until dark. It commemorates the festive meals that took place in Shushan, the capital of Persia, on Purim Day when the Jews were saved from Haman's plot of destruction.

To Remember . . . And Not To Forget

The special Shabbat which precedes Purim, Shabbat Zachor, derives its name comes from the opening word of the special maftir reading "Zachor." Deuteronomy 25:17-19: *Remember what Amalek did to you on your journey, after you left Egypt-how, undeterred by fear of God, he surprised you on the march, when you were famished and weary, and cut down all the stragglers in your rear. Therefore, when the Lord your God grants you safety from all your enemies around you, in the land that the Lord your God is giving you as a hereditary portion, you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven. Do not forget!*

Are Jews Still Commanded to Blot Out the Memory of Amalek?

By Rabbi David Golinkin, President of the Schechter Institute in Jerusalem.

On Purim, we are rightly appalled by the fact that Haman wanted to destroy the Jewish people. Yet we seldom notice that we were commanded to do Amalek, in Exodus 17, which we read on Purim morning, and Deuteronomy 25, which we read on

In the Haftarah of *Shabbat Zachor*, the Prophet Samuel orders King Saul to "attack Amalek, spare no one, but kill alike men and women, infants and sucklings, oxen and sheep, camels and asses!" (I Samuel 15:3). In other words, we are instructed to commit genocide. This is morally problematic in and of itself; it is doubly problematic after the Holocaust.

During the biblical period, we were attacked by many peoples. What was so awful about Amalek's attack? Why blot out the memory of Amalek, as opposed to other peoples who have attacked us throughout history?

Some rabbis say that Amalek deviated from the norms of war. They attacked a defenseless bunch of slaves on the road, just for the sake of attacking them. They had nothing to gain from the attack since the Israelites had just left Egypt; it would lead neither to improving their reputation as warriors nor to significant spoils. It was an unjust war motivated by hatred.

Rabbi Avraham Shmuel Sofer (Hungary, 19th century) emphasized the words "undeterred by fear of God" (Deut. 25:18). If Amalek attacked the Israelites immediately after God redeemed them from Egypt with signs and wonders, it shows that they had no fear of God. That is why Exodus says that with Amalek from generation to generation (Exodus 17:16). It is, so to speak, a war between God and Amalek.

Despite the biblical commandment to blot out the memory of Amalek, a number of rabbinic sources express clear discomfort with this commandment, which led to allegorical interpretations of the commandment to destroy Amalek. The Zohar says that Amalek is Samael or Satan, while in Barcelona (ca. 1300) there were commentators who said that Amalek means *Yetzer Hara*, or the evil inclination. In other words, we are commanded to blot out Satan, or *Yetzer Hara*, not a physical people called Amalek.. Indeed, the commandment to blot out Amalek is omitted entirely by two of the most important codifiers of Jewish law -- Rabbi Ya'akov ben Asher in his *Tur* (Spain, ca. 1340) and Rabbi Yosef Karo in his *Shulhan Arukh* (Safed, 1556).

Nonetheless, there were many important rabbis who ruled that Amalek still exists and that we are still commanded to remember their deeds and to destroy them. This was the opinion of Maimonides in his *Sefer Hamitzvot* and *Mishneh Torah* and of Rabbi Pinhas Halevi of Barcelona in his *Sefer Hahinukh* (13th century). Indeed, many rabbis proceeded to identify Amalek with a specific people such as the Christians and the Armenians. Rabbi Joseph Dov Soloveitchik and others say that anyone who hates the Jewish people is from the seed of Amalek e.g. the Nazis, the Soviets, Nasser and the Mufti. More recently, Rabbi Jack Riemer has written that the Muslim fundamentalists are Amalek.

Personally, I identify with the discomfort expressed above regarding the commandment to destroy an entire people, despite the gravity of their original deed. I agree with the many rabbis throughout history who eliminated this mitzvah from their codices or who said that there are no longer any Amalekites in the world. We have seen above just how dangerous it is to identify your current enemy with Amalek. The identification changes from country to country and from place to place and it is even used by Christians against us!

Though it would seem that the Amalek story is entirely negative in nature, I would like to conclude with two positive, ethical lessons which we can learn from the Amalek passages in Exodus and Deuteronomy.

In *Pesikta d'rav Kahana*, Rabbi Banai explained that Amalek's attack was a *punishment* for unethical behavior. Thus, the message of the story is not hatred but *repentance*. In order to prevent another Amalek, we must behave ethically.

Finally, we shall cite Prof. Nehama Leibowitz. What was the dreadful sin of Amalek, as opposed to other peoples who fought with Israel? Because only of him is it written: "undeterred by of God". In all four biblical passages which use this expression, the litmus test for "fear of God" is the attitude to the weak and the stranger. Amalek is the archetype of the Godless, who attack the weak because they are weak, who cut down the stragglers in every generation.

In our day, this is perhaps the most important message of the Amalek story -- not hatred of Amalek but aversion to their actions. In the State of Israel, there are many strangers and stragglers – new immigrants, foreign workers, as well as innocent Arabs and Palestinians. Some Jews learn from the story of Amalek that we should hate certain groups. We must emphasize the opposite message. We must protect "the stragglers" so that we may say of the State of Israel: "surely there is fear of God in this place".

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The 60-Second Megillah

Adapted from "One Hour Purim Primer," by Rabbi Shimon Apisdorf.

CHAPTER 1 -- KING ACHASHVEROSH THROWS A PARTY

A lavish six-month celebration marks the third year in the reign of Achashverosh, king of Persia. Queen Vashti refuses the king's request to appear at the celebration and display her beauty for the assembled guests. The king's advisors counsel that Vashti be replaced with a new queen.

CHAPTER 2 -- ESTHER BECOMES THE QUEEN

Across the Persian Empire, officials are appointed to identify beautiful candidates to succeed Vashti as queen. A Jewish girl, Esther, the niece of Mordechai, is brought to the capital of Persia as one of the candidates. Mordechai tells Esther to conceal her identity. Esther is chosen to be the queen. Mordechai learns of a plot to overthrow the king. Mordechai informs Esther, Esther tells the king, and the plotters are hanged.

CHAPTER 3 -- THE RISE OF HAMAN

Achashverosh appoints Haman to be his prime minister. All bow in homage to Haman. Mordechai consistently refuses to bow to Haman. An enraged Haman vows to kill all the Jews of Persia. Haman prevails upon Achashverosh to destroy the Jews. A royal edict is disseminated throughout Persia. The 13th of Adar is designated as the date to exterminate all the Jews and plunder their possessions.

CHAPTER 4 -- ESTHER'S MISSION BECOMES CLEAR

Mordechai tears his clothes and puts on sackcloth and ashes as a sign of public mourning. Mordechai sends a copy of the decree to Esther and asks her to intercede with the king. Esther replies that to approach the king without being summoned is to risk death. Mordechai tells her that she has no choice. Esther tells Mordechai to ask the Jews to fast and pray for three days before she will approach the king.

CHAPTER 5 -- ESTHER'S STRATEGY, HAMAN'S FURY

King Achashverosh receives Esther and grants her virtually any request. Esther's request: that the king and Haman join her at a banquet. After the banquet, Haman sees Mordechai who once again refuses to bow. When Zeresh, Haman's wife, suggests that Mordechai be hung, the gallows are prepared.

CHAPTER 6 -- THE REVERSAL BEGINS

The king can't sleep and asks to hear the royal chronicles. For the first time, the king learns of the assassination plot that Mordechai had revealed. That same night, Haman comes to see the king about hanging Mordechai. Before Haman can speak, the king tells Haman to honor Mordechai by dressing him in royal garments, to place him on a royal stallion and to personally lead him through the streets of Shushan, capital of Persia.

CHAPTER 7 -- REVERSAL OF FORTUNE

At the second banquet, Esther reveals her identity and announces that she and her people are about to be murdered. Esther identifies Haman as her arch enemy. The king has Haman hung on the gallows that had been prepared for Mordechai.

CHAPTER 8 -- THE REVERSAL IS COMPLETE

Mordechai is named prime minister to replace Haman. A second royal edict is promulgated empowering the Jews to fight and kill anyone who would try to harm them.

CHAPTER 9 -- THE HOLIDAY OF PURIM IS ESTABLISHED

On the 13th of Adar, a day that had been designated for Jewish destruction, the Jews are victorious over their enemies. The 10 sons of Haman are hung. The 14th and 15th of Adar are designated to celebrate the salvation. These are the days of Purim. Mordechai initiates the Purim practices -- consisting of a festive meal, the exchange of gifts of food, and the giving of monetary gifts to the poor.

CHAPTER 10 -- MORDECHAI AND PERSIA

Persia, with Mordechai as prime minister, flourishes. The role of Mordechai in the history of the Persian empire is recorded in the king's chronicles.

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Anti-Semitism, Renewal and Purim

Excerpted from an essay by Dr. Joshua Kulp, Director of the Conservative Yeshiva in Jerusalem

At the end of the Book of Esther, after the Jews have been saved from Haman's evil decree, Esther and Mordecai request that the 14th and 15th of Adar be established as eternal holidays to be observed in every generation.

The response to this request is not recorded in the Bible, but the Rabbis preserved several traditions which expressed the hesitation felt towards the holiday of Purim. Read the following two passages and ask why they felt such hesitation.

Babylonian Talmud Tractate Megillah 7a

* Rav Shmuel the son of Yehudah said: Esther sent to the Sages, "Establish me (my holiday) for the generations! They sent back to her, "You will arouse the jealousy of the other nations." She sent back to him, "I (my holiday) is already written in the chronicles of the Medean and Persian kings.

Jerusalem Talmud Tractate Megillah 1:7, 70d

* Eighty five elders, amongst them 30 prophets, were distressed over the following matter. They said, "It is written (in the Torah) 'These are the commandments which God commanded Moses' (Leviticus 27:34), i.e., these are the commandments which we were commanded by Moses. Thus Moses said that no prophet is permitted to institute anything new. Nevertheless, Mordecai and Esther wish to institute the new holiday of Purim.

According to the first passage, the Sages feared that by celebrating the incredible fortunes of the Jews, they would arouse the anti-Semitism of the rest of the world.

How has this fear been an ever present emotion in Jewish history? Can Jews celebrate their religion and uniqueness without causing jealousy and hatred amongst others? Can we claim that God "chose" the Jewish people and at times during our history brought salvation to the Jews without becoming prejudiced against other people?

The second passage expresses a different fear about Judaism, the fear of renewal. The Rabbis were not convinced that it was in their power to create new holidays. Why would they be afraid of new institutions or holidays? Does a new holiday in some way impinge upon the sanctity and uniqueness of the older traditions?

With these two passages in mind, we might want to consider Purim in a new light. Purim is a holiday of Jewish renewal and Jewish pride, one in which our ancient relationship to God gave human beings the strength to save the Jewish people despite the inherent dangers involved. Mordecai, Esther and the leaders of the time then had the courage and healthy pride to create a new holiday, fostering a sense of Jewish renewal, which would invigorate the Jewish people in every generation to come.

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The Half-Shekel Half-Section . . . More Than You Ever Wanted To Know About the Purim-Related Practices Surrounding the Half Shekel



What is the Meaning of the Machatzit HaShekel (Half-Shekel)?

Excerpted by Rabbi Elozor Barclay of Aish HaTorah, in turn drawn from "Guidelines" (published by Targum/Feldheim).

On erev Purim, there is a custom to give three coins to charity, to recall the half-shekel that was donated annually to the Temple treasury in the month of Adar. Each coin should be the denomination of half the standard currency in that country (e.g. half a shekel, half a dollar, half a pound).

Why are three coins given? . . .

In the portion of the Torah dealing with the half-shekel (Exodus 30:11-16) the word "terumah" -- donation -- appears three times.

Must one give precisely these three half-coins? . . .

Yes. One should not give one whole coin and one half-coin, nor give more than the correct amount and take change. If a person does not have the correct coins he should obtain them from another person or from the charity box. If one cannot obtain the exact coins anywhere (or if there is no half-coin in the local currency), then he should give three whole coins and have in mind that half of each coin is to fulfill the mitzvah, and the other halves are a gift to charity. Alternatively, two people could jointly give three whole coins.

Must the half coins have a minimum value? . . .

Strictly speaking, there is no minimum requirement and one may even use half coins of low value. However, in this situation it is praiseworthy to give a sum of money equal to the value of the original half-shekel, in addition to the three coins. This is approximately two dollars (9.6 grams of silver). If a person gives several sets of half-coins for family members and the total value reaches this figure, he is not required to give more.

Should the money be given to a specific cause? . . .

The money should be given to the poor. It should not be used for synagogue upkeep, communal needs, or a similar cause.

On which day is the mitzvah to be done? . . .

On the fast of Esther. In Jerusalem, some have the custom to perform it on the 14th of Adar. The mitzvah should be performed at Mincha. Some perform the mitzvah before Mincha and some perform it afterwards. If one forgot to perform the mitzvah, then he should give the money on Purim morning, before the Megillah is read. If he forgot then also, he may give it until the end of Adar.

Should anything be said when giving the money? . . .

Nothing needs to be said, but if one wishes one may say that this is to commemorate the giving of the half-shekel (*zecher l'mach'tzit hashekel*). One must be careful not to say, "this is the half-shekel," since according to some opinions, this would sanctify the money and prohibit its use.

Rare First Century Half Shekel Coin Found in Temple Mount Dirt

By Nadav Shragai, Correspondent for Ha'Aretz

A rare half shekel coin (shown in the photo in the graphic masthead of this section), first minted in 66 or 67 C.E., was discovered by 14 year-old Omri Ya'ari as volunteers sifted through mounds of dirt from the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. The coin is the first one found to originate from the Temple Mount.

For the fourth year, archaeologists and volunteers have been sifting through dirt dug by the Waqf, the Muslim authority in charge of the Temple Mount compound, in an unauthorized project in 1999. The dig caused extensive and irreversible archaeological damage to the ancient layers of the mountain. The Waqf transported the dug up dirt in trucks to another location, where it was taken to Emek Tzurim. 40,000 volunteers have so far participated in the sifting project, in search of archaeological artifacts, under the guidance of Dr. Gabriel Barkay and Yitzhak Zweig.

The half shekel coin was first minted during the Great Revolt against the Romans. The face of the coin is decorated with a branch of three pomegranates and ancient Hebrew letters reading "holy Jerusalem." On the flip side, the letters say "half shekel".

The coin that was found in the sifting project, though it was well preserved, showed some damage from a fire. Experts believe it was the same fire that destroyed the Second Temple in 70 C.E. Dr. Gabriel Barkay explained that "the half shekel coin was used to pay the temple taxes... The coins were apparently minted at Temple Mount itself by the Temple authorities."

The half shekel tax is mentioned in the book of Exodus (Portion Ki Tisa), commanding every Jew to contribute half a shekel to the Temple every year for the purpose of purchasing public sacrifices.

Dr. Barkay added that "this is the first time a coin minted at the Temple Mount itself has been found, and therein lies its immense importance, because similar coins have been found in the past in the Jerusalem area and in the Old City's Jewish quarter, as well as Masada, but they are extremely rare in Jerusalem."

So far, some 3,500 ancient coins have been discovered in the Temple Mount dirt sifting, ranging from earliest minting of coins during the Persian era all the way up to the Ottoman era.

An additional important archaeological discovery in the sifting project was another well preserved coin, minted between 175 and 163 B.C.E. by Antiochus IV Epiphanes, against whom the Hasmoneans revolted. This revolt brought about the re-dedication of the Temple after Antiochus seized the Temple's treasures and conducted idol worship in it. The coin depicts a portrait of Antiochus the Seleucid King.

What is the Value of the Biblical Half Shekel Today?

Based on the writings of Rabbi Eliezer Posner of Chabad

In terms of today's money, what would be the value of the biblical half shekel?

Maimonides writes (*Laws of Shekalim 1:5*) that the half shekel mentioned in the Torah – the annual tithe every Jew was required to give to the Temple coffers – is equal to 160 grains of barley, which, in modern measurements, would be approximately eight grams of silver. It is impossible to know silver's value in biblical times. At today's rate of approximately 18.50 US dollars per ounce, eight grams of silver (approximately .28 of an ounce) is just over five dollars, making the historic Purim gift of three half shekels valued at just over \$15 today.

Half-Shekel Cufflinks - Sterling Silver From The Jewish Museum



In 66 CE, the Jews rebelled against Roman rule and began to mint their own coins, called shekels, as a sign of their independence. The coins in this jewelry collection were cast from a half-shekel in the Jewish Museum collection that dates to the first year of the revolt. The imagery and inscriptions are Jewish in nature: a chalice with an ancient Hebrew inscription denoting the date and denomination; and a branch with Pomegranates, one of the Seven Species of Israel, surrounded by the inscription, "Holy Jerusalem"

As this booklet was being prepared, the international currency exchange rate was approximately 3.7 shekels to the dollar, so if one were to interpret this mitzvah literally in terms of the "new" Israeli shekel, that three half-shekels might exchange to around 41 cents, reinforcing the universality of people's ability to fulfill the mitzvah at all stations of life.

MEGILLAH READING AT KCT SATURDAY EVENING FEBRUARY 27TH 7:30 PM

Purim and its Four Mitzvot: The Sending of Gifts(Mishloach Manot)

The four mitzvot associated with Purim are:

- The Reading of the Megillah (Mikra Megillah)
- The Festive Purim Meal (Seudat Purim)
- Sending Gifts (Mishloach Manot)
- Gifts to the poor (Matanot l'Evyonim)

This explanation is extracted from The Book of Our Heritage by Rabbi Eliyahu Kitov

Mishloach Manot:

It is obligatory to send a gift which consists of at least two 'portions' to another person. Both men and women are included in this Mitzvah.

Only what is edible or drinkable without further cooking or preparation, is considered a 'portion.' One may therefore send cooked meats or fish, pastry goods, fruit, sweets, wine and other beverages. And it is the more praiseworthy to send portions to as many friends as possible. Even better, however, is to give more gifts to the poor than to friends.

One of the most popular food items that has been used for this Mitzvah is the Hamentash, a calorific (fattening) concoction consisting of dough shaped into the form of a triangle [with just two possibilities allowed - exactly sixty degrees in each angle or an isosceles right triangle - just kidding!], with filling of various kinds.

Even a poor person is required to fulfill the Mitzvah of 'Mishloach Manot.' If one is unable to do so directly, he may exchange his own food for that of his friend; both of whom would thus fulfill their obligations.

The Mitzvah of Mishloach Manot may not be fulfilled with money, clothing and the like, but only with foods or beverages.

It is proper to send portions sufficient to convey regard for the recipient. One should not send an item so minute as to be worthless in the eyes of the poor.

If at all possible, these 'portions' should be sent by messengers, rather than to be delivered personally. And though it is said of all other mitzvot: 'It is more of a Mitzvah if done personally, than if done through a messenger,' this Mitzvah is different. Since the term, 'Mishloach Manot' (the sending of portions), is the term used in the 'Megillah' the proper procedure for fulfilling the Mitzvah, is to do so by messenger. Nevertheless, if one delivers his Mishloach Manot personally, he still fulfills his obligation.

The Mitzvah of Mishloach Manot should be performed by day.

A mourner is free of the obligation, but some hold that it rests even upon him, except that one in mourning should not send gifts which would be a source of rejoicing.

The Mitzvah of Mishloach Manot and the giving of gifts to the poor, during the days of Purim, are prescribed in order to recall the brotherly love which Mordechai and Esther awoke among all Jews. When there is inner unity among Jews, even the wrongdoers among them become righteous.

Shoshanat Yaakov (The Rose of Jacob)

In Shir HaShirim (Song of Songs), the Jewish nation is compared to a rose. Shoshanah (rose) is seen as a reference to Shushan, recalling the verse "The city of Shushan celebrated and rejoiced" (Esther 8:15).

It is a custom to recite the Shoshanat Yaakov hymn immediately after the Megillah reading. The words are also used as a basis for traditional Purim songs.

Translation:

The Rose of Jacob thrilled with joy and exulted when they beheld Mordechai garbed in royal blue.

You have always been their salvation, their hope in every generation, to make known that all who place hope in You shall not be put to shame, nor shall all those who trust in You be disgraced forever.

Cursed be Haman who sought to destroy me; blessed be Mordechai the Jew. Cursed be Zeresh the wife of [Haman] who terrified me; blessed be Esther who [interceded] on my behalf. Cursed be all the wicked; blessed be all the righteous; and may Charvonah also be remembered favorably.

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The Top Ten Reasons for Celebrating This Unique Holiday

Written by the late Kenneth Goldrich, z"l

- 10 . . . Making noise in shul is a mitzvah.
 - 9 . . . Levity is not reserved for the Levites.
 - 8 . . . If you're having a bad-hair day, you can always wear a mask and no-one will know who you are.
 - 7 . . . Purim is easier to spell than the Hebrew name for the Festival of Lights.
 - 6 . . . You don't have to *kasher* your home and change all the pots and dishes.
 - 5 . . . You don't have to build a *sukkah* and eat outside.
 - 4 . . . You get to drink wine and you don't have to stand for *kiddush*.
 - 3 . . . You won't get hit in the eye by a *lulav*.
 - 2 . . . Mordechai - 1; Haman - 0.
- And 1 . . . You can't eat *hamentaschen* on Yom Kippur!

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Purim Songs . . . For The Young of All Ages!

A Wicked, Wicked Man . . .

O once there was a wicked, wicked man, and Haman was his name, sir
He would have murdered all the Jews, though they were not to blame, sir.

Oh, today we'll merry, merry be,
Oh, today we'll merry, merry be,
Oh, today we'll merry, merry be,
And nosh some hamentaschen.

And Esther was the lovely queen, of king Achashverosh.
When Haman said he'd kill us all, Oh my, how he did scare us.

Oh, today . . .

But Mordechai her cousin bold, said: "what a dreadful chutzpa!
If guns were but invented now, this Haman I would shoot, sir."

Oh, today . . .

The guest of honor he shall be, this clever Mr. Smarty,
And high above us he shall swing, at a little hanging party.

Oh, today . . .

Of all his cruel and unkind ways, this little joke did cure him,
And don't forget we owe him thanks, for this jolly feast of Purim.

Oh, today . . .

*Editors' note: You may wish to seek out the lyrics and music for other "Purim standards" like **Ani Purim, Chag Purim, Ze Hayom Purim, Shoshanat Ya'akov** (described elsewhere in this booklet), **HaRa'ashan** (the Noisemaker), or **Utzu Eitza** (Make Your Plans!) . . . OR perhaps, have your family write your own!*

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Reflections: Purim 2010

This area has been set aside for your personal use as you proceed through your own preparations

. . .

individually, as a family, in the community, in the Kehillah . . .
for notes, for reminders, for study, for questions, for reflection,
to begin to celebrate and rejoice!

Chag Purim Sameach!
