

TORAH MUSINGS DIGEST

23 FEBRUARY, 2018 | A WINDOW INTO THE INTELLECTUAL WORLD OF ORTHODOX JUDAISM | EDITED BY: RABBI GIL STUDENT

Repenting a Coerced Forbidden Pleasure

by R. Gidon Rothstein

Let's admit that not all of us are so enveloped in Torah and *mitzvot* that we find distasteful that which the Torah prohibits. *Shu"t Chatam Sofer* 1 (*Orach Chayyim*); 202, dated 8 Adar 5599 (1839), deals with a man like us, who was forced to violate the Torah and liked it.

He had been taken captive and forced to eat non-kosher food. It tasted so good that, sometimes, he ate more than required. Now that he's been freed, he wants to know how to repent, especially since he feels unable to fast and is too poor to give enough charity to serve as absolution.

Saving One's Life by a Torah Violation

Chatam Sofer opens with a citation from *Eruvin* 44b, where the Mishnah allows those who leave home to save other Jews to return afterwards (and to ignore *techum Shabbat*, the limits one is allowed to travel on Shabbat). It's on that Gemara that *Shiltei Gibborim* writes that extinguishing fires was a cause that in his days would be included in the Gemara's permission to return.

That's new information, because the Gemara saw fire as a financial threat rather than a mortal one; *Shiltei Gibborim* was telling us that the *halachic* view of uncontrolled fires had changed, such that it was now recognized as justifiable to extinguish such fires on Shabbat, to travel outside the *techum* to do so, and then to return.

He adds that no repentance is necessary for putting out that fire, which *Chatam Sofer* takes to imply that it would be meaningful to repent if one so chose. For repentance to make any sort of sense, *Shiltei Gibborim* must have followed the view in *Yoreh De'ah* 157 that one is allowed to refuse to transgress a sin even where *halachah* permits it, and despite risk to one's life. If there was no option but transgression, there's no reason for repentance [there seems to room to suggest that he might have read too much into *Shiltei Gibborim*; *Shiltei Gibborim* might have mentioned that there was no need for repentance only to stress how confident he was that putting out a fire on Shabbat was fully acceptable, despite the Gemara's indications that it wasn't. But let's see what *Chatam Sofer* says].

Repentance That Gives the Wrong Impression

The first kind of repentance we can imagine for this freed captive, too, would be for his not choosing to die rather than eat the prohibited food [there's more to what he did, as *Chatam Sofer* will discuss]. But *Chatam Sofer* reminds us that there are downsides to repenting that which was permitted. *Yerushalmi Yoma* 8:5 speaks ill of those too *halachically* cau-

tious in saving lives; it says that one who stops to ask whether it's permissible is to be denigrated, and the person asked about such *halachot* [there are textual variations of this *Yerushalmi* which we'll leave for another time] is akin to a murderer [likely because he should have made clear ahead of time the extent we go to save lives].

That is also why the most important Jews around should involve themselves in any lifesaving situations, to be sure no one infers that this is a lesser form of conduct, that finding ways to avoid Torah violations by outsourcing the lifesaving to "lesser" people) would be preferable. Any act of repentance for saving one's life runs into the same problem, since it, too, gives the impression that the person could or should have acted differently, and might lead others to hesitate before acting in what is in fact the necessary way.

Enjoying the Prohibited

He has so far ignored the distinction that the man took pleasure in this act, where firefighters do not. The rabbi who sent the question had suggested that the repentance might focus on the pleasure taken in the act despite its having started out as coerced. That topic is a matter of dispute that we do not have the space to discuss. The key piece of it for us is that the questioner rabbi understood Avuha de-Shmuel (the father of the well-known *amora* Shemuel) to hold that taking pleasure in a coerced act makes that act a full sin, as if the person chose to do it.

Chatam Sofer firmly and sharply rejects that position (he says *yishtake'a hadavar*, the claim should be sunk into the ground, erased as if it had never been said). No one holds that a coerced act is a sin in Hashem's eyes. Avuha de-Shmuel's view depended on his understanding of a completely different (and circumscribed) issue; besides, we do not accept his view for that *halachic* circumstance, let alone as guidance for how to react to other coerced enjoyments. If there's no sin, despite the pleasure taken, there again seems no room or reason for repentance.

Regretting Our Ordinarity

Except that Tosafot to *Ketubbot* 57 notes that Sarah, Esther, and other great women of our tradition who were forced into sexual relations never enjoyed the experience. The idea of intimacy with such evil men was so distasteful that there was no way they could enjoy the act [it's again not our topic, but I cannot ignore the fact that the Gemara assumed that women could take pleasure in what we today would call rape; whether that's possible today, or was accurate then, is a discussion for another time].

Chatam Sofer brings them up because they show us what a proper spiritual attitude entails. We might then decide to repent our lower spiritual level, that we are or were able to enjoy that which the Torah told us we should not [he assumes that when the Torah prohibits a certain act, Jews should find it unenjoyable, not just prohibited, and that even when it be-

comes *halachically* permitted, such as by coercion under threat of death. Theoretically, we might have distinguished between being forced into sexual relations and other violations of Torah law, but *Chatam Sofer* takes them all as of a piece].

Yibum was another example where *Chatam Sofer* thought that our failure to reach a higher spiritual level was itself an issue. His starting point is that the Torah obligated and preferred *yibum*, a brother marrying his deceased brother's childless widow. For the Torah, only a brother churlishly unwilling to help continue his brother's name would take the other option, *chalitzah*. Here the surviving brother churlishly refuses.

According to Ashkenazic custom, *Chazal* reversed the priority. The Mishnah mentions the fear that the couple would marry out of ordinary attraction, which looked too much like marrying a brother's wife, one of the *karet*-prohibited sexual relationships [in the responsum we saw on Rosh Chodesh Sivan, R. Ovadya Yosef held that Sefardim think the upshot of the Talmudic discussion is to still prefer *yibum*].

If we're the ones stopping the *yibum*, the *chalitzah* ceremony seems unfair, in that the widow spits at the brother, as if he's the recalcitrant one. *Chatam Sofer* suggested [homiletically, I'm pretty sure] that the spitting was to remind him that he had not reached the spiritual level where *halachah* could be comfortable that he would marry the widow solely for the purest of reasons.

The Extra Food and the Nature of Repentance

In practice, *Chatam Sofer* was not willing to go that far, does not think it makes sense to ask someone to repent the pleasure taken in eating what he had to eat to save his life. This man's case differs in that he ate *more* than necessary, and *Penei Yehoshu'a* to *Ketubbot* pointed out that we see separate acts as separate (he was discussing sexual acts, but *Chatam Sofer* assumes it was true for eating as well—if he ate more than what was forced on him, for all that it's one meal, each act of eating extra food is his unjustified transgression).

More, the man could have avoided any full-fledged prohibition by eating very slowly. An *halachic* act of eating involves ingesting at least a minimal amount (an olive's worth) within a certain period of time (a *kedei achilat peras*, the amount of time it takes a normal person to eat six or eight olives' worth). That would have reduced the transgression involved.

Those are two failures he can and should repent. To his complaint that fasting or giving charity are too hard, *Chatam Sofer* reminds the rabbi asking him the question that repentance is about regret, tells him to tell the man that, make clear to him the exact nature of his sin, and urge him to be clear with Hashem (and his conscience) that he feels bad about that which he did wrong.

Hashem, the Compassionate One, will know his sincerity and will (as Hashem does for all of us, repeatedly) absolve him.

Berachot and Mitzvah Fulfillments

The end of the responsum briefly takes up other aspects of coerced acts. *Chatam Sofer* ratifies and explains *Magen Avraham's* view that one *would* recite a *berachah* before eating (ordinarily prohibited) foods for medical reasons, but not when others were forcing a person to do so. Where health issues necessitate a certain consumption, it is appropriate to thank Hashem (before and after) both for creating the food that will save one's life as well as carving out the exception to Torah observance that allows us to do that which we ordinarily may not.

When we are yielding to coercion, there's no meaningful sense in which to thank Hashem, since we would prefer not to be acting this way at all.

That leads to the next question, whether a coerced mitzvah observance *must* count as fulfillment of the mitzvah. *Rosh HaShanah* 28a discusses a case where non-Jews forced a Jew to observe some mitzvah, and a *sefer* called *Yom Teru'ah* wondered why the Gemara did not discuss the simpler case, where a Jewish court forced the Jew to do so.

Chatam Sofer thinks the answer is obvious. Jewish courts apply pressure until the Jew agreed to perform the act (however begrudgingly). Only in such cases does it count as a fulfillment, based on Rambam's explanation in *Laws of Divorce* 2;20. As Rambam put it, *halachah* assumes that Jews want to do what they should, deep down, regardless of how much they oppose it (or how much pressure it took to elicit that *pro forma* agreement).

Besides, the question of non-Jews' coercion applied also to Jews who *wanted* to fulfill the mitzvah, just on their own terms (such as eating matzah with the family at the Seder rather than as a separate act forced upon him by non-Jews; this is the second time in this responsum where *Chatam Sofer* chooses to read a source as applying to well-meaning Jews where the source itself did not indicate that). The question in the Gemara was whether that Jew could disregard what had happened to him to the extent that he could make the *berachah* of *al achilat matzah*, on the mitzvah of eating matzah (as if he had not yet fulfilled the mitzvah)?

Chatam Sofer notes that this question, too, depends on our view of where a coerced act also involves a physical pleasure. While there might be room for repentance in cases of prohibition, he does not think that's enough to stop the Jew from later fulfilling a mitzvah, in the way that he wanted to, in the way that meets the highest standards of *halachah*.

Our coercers cannot take away from us our aspirations to fullest performance of *mitzvot*, he is telling us. But they can lead us to sin, tempt us enough that we do more than we were allowed to do by their coercion (or do it more fully than was necessary). For that, we would need to repent.

Minhag or Mayhem – Noisemaking during the

Purim Megillah Reading

by R. Dr. Raphael Hulkower

Introduction

During the reading of Megillah Esther each year on Purim, most communities share the custom of making noise upon hearing the recitation of Haman's name. From stomping one's feet or "booing" to whirring groggers or the occasional cap gun blast, this custom has become the highlight of Purim for many children, while also remaining the bane of many synagogue-goers intent upon hearing the Megillah clearly in its entirety. Such a lively minhag may piqué one's curiosity on many aspects: What is the origin of this custom? Is it intended for adults or only children, and if so, why? As this minhag teeters between merriment and mayhem it has also produced a fair degree of controversy and opposition recorded in medieval and modern halakhic literature. This essay will explore the halakhic background, religious meaning and communal controversies surrounding this custom of *Haka'at Haman*, of smiting Haman (or his name) during Megillah reading.

Origins of the Practice

The practice of making noise during the recitation of Haman's name during Megillah reading is most commonly associated with the European communities of France and Provence, although it has roots in Biblical and Talmudic sources as well. The earliest recognizable description of this practice is recorded in the early 13th century work *Sefer Ha-Manhig*, by Rabbi Avraham ben Natan Ha-Yarhi (12th C.):

It was the custom of the children in France and Provence to take smooth stones from the river and write upon them "Haman." They would strike these stones together when the [megillah] reader would mention Haman, [because of the verse] "and the name of the wicked will rot [Mishlei 10:7]".¹

As the *Sefer HaManhig* himself notes, the notion that this verse in Mishlei mandates one to actively display disapproval when hearing about the wicked is founded upon earlier Midrashic works. The Midrash in *Bere'shit Rabbah* states that whoever hears mention of an evil person and does not curse him, has violated a positive mitzvah based upon this same verse, *v'shem resha'im yirkav*. The Midrash goes on to detail that whenever they would recite "Haman" on Purim, Rav would exclaim "cursed is Haman and cursed are his sons" in order to fulfill this verse.²

Sefer Abudarham (14th C) quotes this custom in the name of the *Sefer Ha-Manhig* nearly verbatim, but with two interesting additions. First, while he cites the verse in Mishlei, he then adds another source, "as it says in the Midrash: You shall erase the memory of Amalek, even from upon the trees and the stones."³ In citing this second verse, *Abudarham* is likely incorporating the version of our minhag cited in the writings of a slightly earlier contemporary, the *Orhot Hayyim*, Rabbi Aharon ben Yaakov Ha-Kohen (late 13-14th C.). *Orhot Hayyim* is the earliest source which cites both verses as the basis for our custom. The connection between this custom and the verse commanding one to erase the memory of Amalek is clear, as Haman is identified in the Megillah as a descendant of Agag, the king of Amalek (Esther 3:1 and I Shemuel 15:8). Furthermore, *Orhot Hayyim* is the first source which claims that our custom to jeer Haman on Purim has an early precedent from the times of the Talmud as well.⁴ In

describing the practice of the idolatry known as Molekh [Vayikrah 20:4], the Talmud Bavli in Sanhedrin 64b compares it to *mashvarta d'Purayah*, a Purim style leap or dance.⁵ Based upon this, *Orhot Hayyim* states that there used to be a practice among the "children of Bavel and Eylim to make an image of Haman and to hang it around their necks for a few days until Purim when they would hang the image over a fire while they jumped over the fire from side to side."⁶

Second, *Abudarham* adds that the children would strike the smooth stones together "in order to erase Haman's name." This addition is also likely based upon the text of the *Orhot Hayyim* (although it is not recorded in our versions), as this phrase is similarly written in the Beit Yosef's recording of the *Orhot Hayyim*.⁷ These two additions of the *Orhot Hayyim* as recorded by *Abudarham* are obviously connected. If the children are simply clanging stones to fulfill *v'shem resha'im yirkav*, then their action is merely an expression of taunting and booing Haman's name. However, if this practice is a derivation of the command to "erase" the name of Amalek, it is far more apropos that the children's stone smiting would actually erase Haman's name!

This raises the question of whether the more modern practice simply to make noise during the recitation of Haman's name can still be viewed as a derivative of the command to erase the memory of Amalek. The *Shibbolei Ha-Leket*, Rabbi Tsedekiah ben Avraham Anav (13th C) quotes in the name of Rashi that there were communities who had the practice to "stomp with their feet, bang stones together, or even break plates when they heard the name of Haman or his wife Zeresh."⁸ Perhaps they viewed the act of drowning out the sound of "Haman" as an auditory blotting out of Haman's name. In any case, the practice of purely making noise in response to Haman's name, without erasing his name, appears to have been a well-established practice in many medieval European communities. Later commentators still sought homiletically to connect the custom of noising making during the recitation of "Haman" to the command to erase the memory of Amalek. For example, Rabbi Yaakov ben Asher, the *Ba'al Ha-Turim* (13th C.) and Rabbi Moshe ben Avraham of Parmisle, the *Matteh Moshe* (16th C.) note that the *gematriah*, or numerical value, of the phrase *mehah emhe* (you shall surely erase," Shemot 17:14) equals the same value as the phrase *ze Haman*.⁹ Taking this connection to extreme measures, Rabbi Tsvi Hirsch Kaidanover (17th C.) in his *Kav HaYashar* records one pious individual's practice to use his leftover ink to write out "Amalek" or "Haman" in order to erase the words in fulfillment of *Mahah emhe et zekher Amalek*.¹⁰ In contrast, some communities solely grounded their noise making custom in the verse from *Mishlei*, with some even exclaiming "*v'shem resha'im yirkav*" in response to Haman's name.¹¹

While this custom originated in the communities of France and Provence, Rabbi Moshe Isserles (*Ramah*) states that it spread to other communities. It most likely became more popularized with its inclusion in the writings of Rabbi Yosef Caro in his *Beit Yosef* and the *Ramah* in his glosses on the Shulhan Arukh.¹² It is noteworthy that although Rabbi Caro records this minhag in the *Beit Yosef*, he omits it entirely in the Shulhan Arukh, perhaps implying that he did not believe the custom was practiced outside those communities.¹³

Finding New Meaning in Simulated Smiting

Based upon the earliest sources of this minhag, it is apparent that the practice of making noise during the recitation of Haman's name was seen as a fulfillment of the Torah's mandate to erase the memory of Amalek, or to verbally protest the wicked. However, later commentators added additional meaning to this custom, focusing on the significance of vicariously smiting Haman through the act of stomping on the ground or smacking stones or hammers.

In a more mystical approach to this minhag, Rabbi Eliyahu ben Avraham Shlomo Ha-Kohen (17th C.) in his work *Midrash Eliyahu* writes:

He have received the tradition that when we recite 'cursed is Haman' or his name or his wife's or children's names and we smite, the Holy One Blessed be He arranges that Haman feels the blows to continue to suffer greatly, since everyone who comes into this world is viewed as if the miracle happened in his days, because had [Haman's] advice been fulfilled they would not have come into the world.¹⁴

This meaning became well accepted as seen in the writings of the late 18th century commentator, Rabbi Hayyim Palaggi. In his work, *Ruah Hayyim*, Rabbi Palaggi comments, "the reason that we smite Haman during the reading of the Megillah is well versed in the mouths of people – that Haman receives these blows each and every year in *Geheinom*."¹⁵ This symbolic reasoning is also alluded to in earlier works, such as the *Matteh Moshe*, who notes that the last letters of the first three words in the phrase *V'haya im ben ha-kot ha-rashah*, "if the wicked one is liable for lashes (Devarim 25:2)," spell out the word Haman.¹⁶

Others found strength in viewing the custom of smiting at Haman's name as an act of defiance against potential future enemies. Rabbi Palaggi, in another work, *Mo'ed L'khol Hai*, emphatically states "in order that the Nations will hear about our wrath in each generation so that they will not attack the Jewish people, therefore we write the name "Haman" on a hammer and smite with it."¹⁷ Similarly, the *Hida*, Rabbi Hayyim Yosef David Azulai (18th C.) records that the reason we have a custom to make a ruckus in the synagogues when we recite "Haman" is to make the non-Jews inquire about the noise. When they ask what this noise is about, they will learn about Haman and be fearful of repeating his plans. This is the allusion in Rabbi Avraham Ibn Ezra's poem when he writes, *shomei davar ben ha-Midatah, tipol aleihem eimatah* – "those who hear the matter of the son of *ha-Midata*, fear will fall upon them."¹⁸

Finally, modern commentators see a motif of repentance in the act of smiting Haman during Megillah. Rabbi Eliezer Haim Deutsch (19th C.) in his responsa work *Pri Ha-Sadeh* suggests that when we recite "cursed is Haman" or smite and make noise in response to hearing his name, Jews are not simply referring "to Haman who lived in the days of Ahashverosh – for his bones have already disintegrated!" Rather, writes Rabbi Deutsch, the meaning of one's actions is to smite and extinguish the power of the *kelipah*, the mundane physical barriers which hinder one's spiritual growth and impede service to God.¹⁹

Opposition to the Minhag: A Custom to Scorn or to be Scorned?

When the minhag of noisemaking for Haman's name is quoted in the *Beit Yosef* and the *Ramah*, both authorities conclude with a fascinating admonition. Both warn that one should not "remove or mock any minhag, because customs were not established without purpose."²⁰ Perhaps in their great wisdom they realized that such a lighthearted minhag might be taken to extremes and come to interfere with the megillah reading itself.²¹ More likely, they already were aware that various authorities or communities were opposed to this minhag.

This earliest source to express discontent with this minhag is the *Maharil*, Rabbi Yaakov ben Moshe Moelin (14th C.). The *Maharil* is quoted as *not* having been stringent (*makpid*) or concerned (*hoshesh*) about sustaining the minhag of smiting to make noise during the recitation of Haman's name.²² Although this *Maharil* is often cited by those opposed to the minhag, the wording itself suggests that he was not opposed to the Minhag but rather indifferent to it. As the Maharam Shik, Rabbi Moshe ben Yosef Shik (19th C.) explains, the *Maharil* himself was the *Sheliah Tzibur*. When he would lead the congregation in Megillah reading, the *Maharil's* students noticed that he was not concerned about this minhag to the point of ensuring that the children made noise during Haman's name. He did not protest the custom if children made noise on their own, but he would not actively encourage it by pausing to remind them. Had he felt that the minhag was important, he would have paused to arouse the children to participate. Therefore, although the *Maharil* did not intend to mock or remove the custom, he chose not to support it either, as he was not convinced it was a respectable practice.²³

While the *Maharil* was indifferent to the practice of making noise for Haman's name, other authorities were adamantly opposed to it. The *Pri Megadim*, Rabbi Yosef ben Meir Teomim (18th C.) writes that those who follow this custom "have lost more than they have gained, since they cause a great disturbance [during Megillah reading] and the *Sheliah Tzibur* is forced to be silent during their banging which is not proper since ideally it is forbidden to interrupt the reading for more time than to take a breath."²⁴ Thus the *Pri Megadim* was opposed to this custom on religious grounds as it prevented the community from properly fulfilling their obligation to hear the Megillah. His comments are in response to the Magen Avraham's suggestion that the *sheliah tzibur* pause in silence while the community makes noise and that each individual read a verse or two ahead in one's own *humash* during the noise to ensure one does not miss hearing any part of the reading.²⁵ In *Mekorei Ha-Minhagim*, Avraham Lewizon (19th C.) writes that one should protest this minhag which actually causes the Megillah reader to repeat Haman's wicked name extra times in order to ensure that the congregation can hear the Megillah. Others simply felt the minhag had devolved into excessive lightheadedness and disrespect in the synagogue.²⁶ In some cases, these protests developed into formal synagogue rules of decorum. The earliest reported ban against noisemaking during Megillah was enacted by the Portugese congregation in Amsterdam in 1640.²⁷ In 1783, the Mahamad of the Spanish and Portuguese Congregation of London forbade anyone from making noise during the Purim service. When a few members of the congregation refused to honor this ruling at the night time Megillah reading, the Mahamad called in the local constables the following morning to remove the offenders. The event was known as "Purim riot" among local gossip, but the offenders were simply fined or wrote apology letters.²⁸ Similarly, in 1866, the congregation of Rogasen in Posen, Poland, prohibited the use of

groggers in the synagogue on Purim.²⁹

Aside from the religious arguments, additional authorities opposed the Minhag on grounds of communal safety. In his 16th century commentary on the Ashkenazic Mahzor, *Maaglei Zedek*, Rabbi Binyamin ben Meir HaLevi quickly reviews the various practices of this minhag from making an effigy of Haman to banging with hammers in the synagogue. He then concludes:

All customs such as these are better to be nullified in our times than to be observed. Because in each generation, our enemies rise against us to destroy us and make evil claims about us. And these [customs] will lead to communal danger. Furthermore we have seen that many religious obligations were nullified when there is concern it will lead to danger... and even for a concern of mockery by the non-Jews we have seen many practices discontinued... All the more so when this practice is not an obligation or a commandment but simply a custom to arouse happiness... These practices are appropriate to be fulfilled depending upon the [conditions] of each generation and time period.³⁰

In this sad irony, while some communities found new meaning in this custom as a message of strength to their outside enemies, communities such as Binyamin Ha-Levi's had to discontinue the minhag for fear of retribution. Similarly, Yom Tov Lewinsky cites additional sources describing communities who uprooted this minhag because they were concerned that it caused *hilul HaShem*, desecration of God's Name, when non-Jews came to visit the synagogues. In one community, they stopped observing this minhag because the children of their non-Jewish neighbors would throw stones at the synagogue windows when they heard all the noise during Megillah reading.³¹

Compromise - Deciding for which Mentions of "Haman" to make Noise

In an effort to both maintain this meaningful minhag and curtail the disturbances it caused during the reading of the Megillah, some authorities sought a compromise approach. This compromise first finds mention in the 16th century writings of Rabbi Avraham ben Shabtai Horowitz, father of the famed *Shelah*. In *Emek Berakhah*, Rabbi Horowitz writes, "one should not smite [and make noise] at every mention of Haman's name, but rather only when we read of his downfall."³² Similarly, the community of Worms had the custom to make noise only after the Megillah states that "the Jews smote all their enemies" in chapter 9 - essentially the last two mentions of Haman.³³ In *Itim L'Binah*, Rabbi Yosef Ginzberg records that the custom of the communities in Lithuania and Russia was to make noise only during the times when Haman's name is recited along with his ancestry, as in "Haman ben Ha-Midata Ha-Agigi" or "Haman Ha-Agigi."³⁴ Chabad is cited as having the custom to make noise only when the name of Haman is recited with some added descriptive term, either his ancestry or "the wicked", etc.³⁵ In a more minimalist approach, the *Ben Ish Hai*, Rav Yosef Hayim of Bagdad (19th C.) writes that his personal custom was to stomp with his feet only for the first and last mention of Haman's name.³⁶

For Children Only?

Although in modern practice, many communities allow the entire congregation to make noise during the recitation of Haman's name, the vast majority of sources discussed above indicate that it was intended as a custom for children. If this minhag is truly respectable and possibly even rooted in Biblical verses and commands, why should it be limited to the youngest members of the community? Conversely, if it was viewed as a disturbance, why should this disturbance have been tolerated for a child's custom?

In *Mekore Minhagim*, Rabbi Avraham Lewysohn (19th C.) suggests that this custom was designed for children as a substitute for saying the actual phrase, "*v'shem resha'im yirkav*." Ideally the entire community was obligated to say this phrase in response to hearing of a wicked person. Children who were too young to know this phrase were taught to voice their displeasure through hitting Haman's name or making noise.³⁷

A more eloquent explanation is offered by one of the disciples of the *Hatam Sofer*, a Rabbi Yisrael David Margulies Yaffe (19th C.). Rabbi Yaffe, in the repona work *Milei D'Avot*, explains on numerous levels why this custom is specifically designed to involve children. First, on a historical level, Haman sought to wipe out the entire Jewish people, including the children. Therefore it is essential that the entire community, including children, be involved in the act of protesting the memory of Haman and his wickedness. As such, similar to Rabbi Lewysohn's opinion, noisemaking is seen as a practical way of including children in this act of communal protest. On a more profound level, Rabbi Yaffe notes that the Sages of the Talmud made a connection between the commandments of Purim Megillah reading and those of the first night of Passover. On both occasions women are obligated in these mitzvot, despite being time based commandments, since "they too, were included in the miracle." Rabbi Yaffe argues that this time logic applies to children as well - children must also be involved in these commandments since they were also saved from Egypt and from Haman's decree. As such, just as the Sages instituted many customs and practices designed to arouse the children's interest in the Passover Seder, so, too, they arranged customs to pique the interest of children in the reading of the Purim Megillah. Children will come to the synagogue because they want to playfully make noise during Haman's name, but in the process they will also come to listen to the entire Megillah, word for word.³⁸

Support for the Minhag

Despite the previously discussed opposition to the minhag, many communities wholeheartedly accepted the custom of noisemaking during Megillah reading. Commonly, the entire congregation participated, not only children, and many Rabbinic authorities actively engaged in the minhag personally.

While the *Sefer Ha-Manhig*, *Abudarham*, *Orhot Hayyim*, and *Ramah* all supported this minhag as a practice only for children, it is noteworthy that then the *Shibbolei Ha-Leket* describes this practice in the name of Rashi's community, he makes no mention of limiting the custom to children, implying the involvement of the entire congregation.³⁹ Similarly, in the 17th century, the *Havot Ya'ir*, Rabbi Yair Hayyim Baharah, describes that he saw "multitudes of people, including women stomping with their feet on

the ground during the recitation of ‘Haman.’⁴⁰

Many rabbinic authorities themselves also were noted to respectfully participate in the noisemaking. In his siddur, Rabbi Yaakov Emden (18th C.) records seeing his father, the *Hakham Tsvi* (17th C.) “smack and stomp on the ground with his feet and slap with his sandals when they mentioned Haman.”⁴¹ Similarly, the Ben Ish Hai writes that he would personally stomp with his feet – even if only for certain mentions of Haman’s name, as described above.⁴² In the modern era, both the Hafetz Hayyim and Rabbi Yaakov Kanievsky stomped their feet at Haman’s name – in fact, Rabbi Kanievsky did so every time it was mentioned.⁴³

Conclusion:

Haka’at Haman is the minhag of noisemaking at the recital of Haman’s name during Megillah reading. This curious custom originated in the medieval European communities of France and Provence, based upon either the concept of protesting the wicked or erasing the memory of Amalek, from whom Haman descended. As the minhag spread, additional interpretations were offered for this practice. Some saw it as a sign of Jewish strength over their oppressors. Some viewed it as a symbolic act of repentance. Others used it as a way to engage children in the mitzvah of megillah reading. Despite these positive attributes, the minhag also received a fair amount of opposition, as it was seen as a disrespectful or disruptive practice. Controversy spawned a variety of compromise opinions, with some communities opting to make noise for some but not all mentions of Haman – attempting to redeem this meaningful minhag from its potential mayhem.

1. Rabbi Avraham ben Natan Ha-Yarhi, *Sefer Ha-Manhig*, (Bar-Ilan Project, Version 16), Hilkhos Megillah, pp. 242-43. ↵
2. *Bere’shit Rabbah* (Bar-Ilan Project, Version 16), 49:1. Rav’s opinion is also quoted in Masekhet Sofrim 14:3. ↵
3. Rabbi David ben Yosef Abudarham, *Sefer Abudarham*, (Bar-Ilan Project, Version 16), Seder Tefillat Purim. This midrash is not found in extant Midrashic literature, but the verse referred to is either Shemot 17:14 or Devarim 25:19. ↵
4. Rabbi Aharon ben Yaakov Ha-Kohen, *Orhot Hayyim, Hilchos Megillah U-Purim*, (Yerushalayim: Shteitsburg, 1956), section 41. ↵
5. Rashi s.v. *Rava Amar* on BT Sanhedrin 64b explains that the children used to hop over a fire from side to side during the days of the Purim celebration. ↵
6. Rabbi Aharon ben Yaakov Ha-Kohen, *Orhot Hayyim, Hilchos Megillah U-Purim*, (Yerushalayim: Shteitsburg, 1956), section 42. ↵
7. Rabbi Yosef Caro, *Beit Yosef*, (Bar-Ilan Project, Version 16), Orah Hayyim 690:17. ↵
8. Rabbi Tsedekiah ben Avraham Anav, *Shibbolei Ha-Leket*, (Bar-Ilan Project, Version 16), Chapter 200. Of note this source does not

specifically state that the noisemaking for Haman or his wife was during the actual Megillah reading. ↵

9. Rabbi Yakov ben Asher, *Ba’al Ha-Turim*, (Warsaw, 1881) Shemot 17:14; Rabbi Moshe ben Avraham Parmisle, *Matteh Moshe* (Kalner: Frankfurt, 1719), Volume 5, section 1006. ↵
10. Rabbi Tzvi Hirsh Kaidanover, *Kav Ha-Yashar*, (Yerushalayim: Hak-tav Institute, 1982), chapter 99, page 229. ↵
11. See the opinion of the Levush, cited in Magen Avraham 21 on Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim 690. See also Igrot Moshe Orah Hayyim volume 1, number 192 where he discusses whether this practice constitutes a *hefsek*, or interruption in the reading of the Megillah. ↵
12. Rabbi Yosef Caro, *Beit Yosef*, Orah Hayyim 690:17. Ramah on Shulhan Arukh Orah Hayyim 690: 17. ↵
13. See Rabbi Moshe ben Yosef Shik, *Shut Maharam Shik, Yoreh De’ah*, (New York: E. Grossman’s, 1960), number 216 who suggests this understanding of the Rabbi Yosef Caro. ↵
14. Rabbi Eliyahu ben Avraham Shlomo Ha-Kohen, *Midrash Eliyahu*, (Chernivtsi: Gzernowitz, 1864) page 89b. ↵
15. Rabbi Hayyim Palaggi, *Ruah Hayyim*, Orah Hayyim, (Ismer: Segurah, 1876), 696:9. ↵
16. *Matteh Moshe*, volume 5, section 1006. ↵
17. Rabbi Hayyim Palaggi, *Mo’ed Lkhol Hai*, (Ismi, 1862) Chapter 31, section 91. Rabbi Palaggi goes on to support this statement with the previously cited idea of the *Matteh Moshe* based upon De-varim 25:2, *V’haya im ben ha-kot ha-rashah*, but does not refer to Mishlei 10:7 or the verses about Amalek. ↵
18. Rabbi Hayyim Yosef David Azulai, *Mahzik Berakhah*, (Levorno: Kashtilu, 1785), *Kutress Aharon* section 687. ↵
19. Rabbi Eliezer Chaim Deutsch, *Shut Pri Ha-Sadeh*. (Paks: Rosenbaum, 1915), Volume 3. Number 42. ↵
20. Rabbi Yosef Caro, *Beit Yosef*, Orah Hayyim 690:17. Ramah on Shulhan Arukh Orah Hayyim 690: 17. ↵
21. In the same responsa of the *Pri Ha-Sadeh* cited above, Rabbi Deutsch claims that the Ramah knew through divine inspiration that this custom was destined to be mocked or discontinued by some people. ↵
22. Rabbi Yaakov ben Moshe Moelin, *Sefer Maharil, Hilchos Purim*. (Warsaw: Unger, 1875), p. 60 side a. See also, Magen Avraham Orah Hayyim 690:19 and Darkhei Moshe Orah Hayyim 690:4. ↵
23. Rabbi Moshe ben Yosef Shik, *Shut Maharam Shik, Yoreh De’ah*, (Munkatch: Grossman, 1884), Number 216. ↵

24. Rabbi Yosef ben Meir Teomim, *Pri Megadim, Eshel Avraham* on Orah Hayyim 690 note 21. ←
25. Rabbi Avraham Gombiner, Magen Avraham, Orah Hayyim 690:19. ←
26. Cited in Yom Tov Lewinsky, *Ketsad Hiku et Haman bi-tefutsot Yisrael*, (Tel-Aviv: ha-Hevrah ha-ivrit le-Yeda-am, 1947), p 32. ←
27. Yosef Kaplan, *ha-Yehudim ha-Portugeziyim be-Amsterdam ba-me'ah ha-shevah esreh*, (Yerushalayim: Ha-Sifriyah, 1975, 7(6), p. 181. ←
28. James Picciotto. *Sketches of Anglo-Jewish History, Chapter 26: The Purim Riots*, (London: Trubner & Co, Ludgate Hill, 1875), p. 205-206. Downloaded from books.google.com; Yom Tov Lewinsky, *Ketsad Hiku et Haman bi-tefutsot Yisrael*. p. 33. ←
29. Jonathan Cohen, "London Sephardi Minhag: Purim." <https://sites.google.com/site/londonsephardiminthag/purim>. Downloaded 11÷20÷13. ←
30. Rabbi Binyamin ben Meir Ha-Levi, *Mahzor Maaglei Zedek*, Laws of Purim (Sevonto: 1878). Page 43 side a. ←
31. Yom Tov Lewinsky, *Ketsad Hiku et Haman bi-tefutsot Yisrael*. (Tel-Aviv: Ha-Hevrah ha-ivrit le-Yeda-am), 1947. pp 29-31. Lewinsky's source is cited as Minhagei No' Amon, Hilchot Purim. ←
32. Rabbi Avraham ben Shabtai Horowitz, *Sefer Emek Berakhah*, Dinei Purim, (Amsterdam: Herts, 1729), p. 65. A similar position is recorded in the 18th century work *Hemdat Yamim* chapter 3, page 77 (Istanbul: Kushtah, 1735) The exact author is unknown. ←
33. Cited in the 17th century work of Rabbi Yair Hayim Baharah, (*Havot Ya'ir*), *Makor Hayim*, volume 2, section 690. ←
34. Rabbi Yosef Ginzberg, *Itim L'Binah*. (Warsaw: Goldman, 1887), Section 15, p 119 side a (237 in English numerals). This custom would amount to half a dozen times where one makes noise during the Megillah. ←
35. Rabbi Gedalya Oberlander, *Minhag Ha-kaat 'Haman' b'keriyat ha-Megillah*, Ohr Torah Volume 19. (New York: M'chon "Ohr Yisrael", 1998), p 102. ←
36. Rabbi Yosef Hayim, *Ben Ish Hai*, Hilchot Purim (after Parshat Tet-zaveh), section 10. (Yerushalayim: Merkaz Ha-Sefer, 1985), p. 118. ←
37. Rabbi Avraham Lewysohn, *Mekore Minhagim* (Berlin: Kornegg, 1846), chapter 62, pp. 89-90. The same reasoning is offered by Rabbi Yitshak Tirna in his *Sefer Ha-Minhagim* (Warsaw: Goldman, 1869), *minhag shel Purim, ha-ga'ot*, number 55. ←
38. Rabbi Shmuel Schlesinger ed. *Shut Milei D'Avot*, Orah Hayim, Volume 3, number 13 (Bardiow: Schlesinger, 1925). Note that Rabbi Yisrael David Margulies Yaffe is only listed as the author of volume 3. ←
39. Rabbi Zedekiah ben Avraham Anaw, *Shibbolei Ha-Leket*, chapter 200. ←
40. Rabbi Yair Hayim Bacharach, *Makor Hayim*, volume 2, section 690. ←
41. Shulhan Arukh Orah Hayyim 690, Mishnah Berurah 59. ←
42. Rabbi Yosef Hayim, *Ben Ish Hai*, Hilchot Purim (after Parshat Tet-zaveh), section 10, P. 118. ←
43. Rabbi Gavriel Zinner, *Nitei Gavriel: Al Hilchot Purim*, (Brooklyn: Zinner, 1984), chapter 46, p. 267; Rabbi Avraham Horvits, *Sefer Orhot Rabenu*, (Benei B'rak: Horvits, 1990), Volume 3 p. 43. ←

Joining a Shushan Purim Seuda

by R. Daniel Mann

Question: At my Purim *seuda* this year (Friday, in Yerushalayim), I will be hosting my children from outside the city. Are there any limitations on their participation considering that it is *Erev Shabbat*?

Answer: While the main *halacha* of refraining from serious eating before a holy day is before Pesach (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 471:1), it is proper to refrain from even a moderate meal during the last quarter of Friday day (ibid. 249:2). It is also prohibited to make, anytime on Friday, an especially big meal. However, this is permitted for *seudot mitzva* that fall specifically on this day (Rama ad loc.), including a Purim *seuda* (Rama, OC 695:2).

At first glance, since the Purim *seuda* does not apply, halachically, to your visiting family, they do not have an excuse to do that which is normally forbidden. However, one can argue cogently to the contrary. One who makes a *brit* or *pidyon haben* on Friday makes a *seuda* (Rama ad loc.), and standard sources do not limit whom he can invite. It follows that whoever joins the *seuda* is properly contributing to the occasion's festiveness. Similarly, we cite for those for whom it is not intuitively obvious, that important sources (including Eliya Rabba 695:4; Aruch Hashulchan, OC 696:3) write that Purim is properly celebrated in the context of a **broad** gathering of family and friends.

We would not, though, say that this is a proof that your out-of-town guests have no more restrictions than you. Consider that the nature of a *seudat brit* is that the *ba'alei simcha* invite and rely on guests who are not *ba'alei simcha*. In contrast, it is plausible that since one's whole community is celebrating Purim, participation is a *mitzva* only for such people. On the other hand, some festivity is appropriate for all Jews on both Adar 14 and

Adar 15 (Rama, OC 695:2).

It is even likely that the “prohibition” on eating a big meal in the morning is not a problem at all for your guests. The source to refrain from it is a *gemara* (Gittin 38b), which tells that a family that set a meal on “*Erev Shabbat*” was punished. Rashi (ad loc.) explains that their main Shabbat meal was Friday night, but most say it is referring to a *seuda* on Friday day. However, some say it is a problem only if it is on a regular basis (Ramban, Gittin 38b)); some say any occurrence of a big meal even in the morning can ruin one’s appetite (Shulchan Aruch, OC 249:2); others (Rashba in name of Rach; Pri Megadim, EA 249:4) say that is to not take away from Shabbat preparations (here, the *seuda* and Shabbat organizers are Shushan Purim people). Thus, only according to one approach (albeit, the Shulchan Aruch’s) should it be a real problem for the guests in the first place.

In the final analysis, based on multiple grounds, we posit that it is appropriate to include your children in the *seuda*. The question remains whether any limitations are appropriate.

In Which We Meet the Kohanim

by R. Gidon Rothstein

In *Shemot* 28:1, Hashem lays out the process for inducting Aharon and his sons to the priesthood. Ramban points out that the sons had to be in this ceremony, that Aharon’s investiture did not turn all his living descendants into priests. A baby born to a *kohen* father is a *kohen* (barring certain disqualifications), but *having* a *kohen* father does not do it.

That distinction mattered only for that first generation but some living members of that family did not become *kohanim* (such as Pinchas, for whom the priesthood is part of his reward for his zealotry in the story of Zimri, later in the Torah). Ramban does not offer a reason, so I will not speculate. But it niggles at me, why Hashem chose that way. For another time.

The Mysterious *Urim ve-Tumim*

In 28:30, Hashem tells Moshe to put the *Urim* and *Tumim* into the breastplate worn by the *Kohen Gadol*, the High Priest. Those *Urim ve-Tumim* were somehow to be contained in that breastplate, and were to be on the *Kohen Gadol*’s heart when he went before Hashem. A verse also tells us the *Kohen Gadol* will carry the people’s *misphat*, their judgement, on his heart, *tamid* before Hashem. [*Tamid* means either all the time or regularly].

Beyond that, we are not told what these *Urim ve-Tumim* were, how they worked, the role they played. Ramban agrees with Rashi that the *Shem HaMeforash*, the most explicit version of Hashem’s Name (Ramban identifies that as the four-letter Name often written in English as YHVH or Yahweh, neither of which is accurate and is why I allow myself to write them), was inserted into the folds of the breastplate. To him, that’s why

While most years, the Purim *seuda* is preferably held in the afternoon, on Friday it is preferable to start it in the morning so that one will have enough time to recover his appetite by Shabbat (ibid.). (There is an opinion that it is enough to start before the last quarter of the day (Shut Maharil 56, cited as a secondary source in Mishna Berura 695:10).) There is a serious albeit minority approach to hold the *seuda* at the end of the day and have it turn into a Shabbat meal (contact our office for guidelines). The involvement of out-of-town guests is an added reason to prefer an earlier meal, as serious eating close to Shabbat is clearly problematic, and the advantages of enhancement of Purim by eating later do not apply directly to them. Therefore, having the meal in the morning (starting is enough – Shemirat Shabbat K’hilchata 42:(96)) is significantly preferable for the guests.

If the guests want to be stringent, there is logic for them to eat less than they might have. It is not justified for them to get drunk or even drink a lot of wine. (Any year, it is hard to justify getting drunk when it is not his Purim, nor do we ever favor drunkenness on Purim.)

the Torah never tells us how the craftsmen made them, whereas verses expound at length on the making of other garments, such as the *ephod* and the *choshen*.

The Torah also refers to them as *the Urim* and *the Tumim*, with an identifying letter *hei*, where the other parts of the *Mishkan* are called “an” (e.g. *ve-asita Aron*, you shall make *an* Ark). To Ramban, that’s because *Moshe* made these, based on secret communication from Hashem, or Hashem Himself did it—as was true of *ha-keruvim* in *Bereshit*, the angels set at the entrance to the Garden of Eden after Adam and Chavah were expelled. There, too, the identifying *hei* shows that this was a special item, specifically made by Hashem.

Light, Then Understanding

Ramban thinks Moshe inserted this writing into the *choshen* once Aharon was wearing it, which implies it had to be added to an already functioning *choshen* (it also makes it a separate item from the *choshen*—were the *Urim ve-Tumim* to be lost, that significant loss would not take away from the functioning of the *choshen* itself).

Then Ramban gives us his understanding of their function. Remember that the *choshen* itself had twelve stones, engraved on which were the names of the twelve tribes plus other words to ensure all the letters of the alphabet were represented. Ramban thinks the *kohen* who wished to consult with Hashem on behalf of the king or the Jewish people would ask a question, and the power of the *Urim* would cause letters to light up [hence the name *Urim*, lights].

He gives us an example. The book of *Shofetim*, Judges, starts with the nation asking Hashem who should lead them into battle against the Canaanites. They asked the *kohen* the question while he directed his focus to the Names of the *Urim* [he does not tell us what physically distinguished the *Urim* from the *Tumim*, since both were Names of Hashem].

Ramban says the *Urim* lit up the letters *le-einav*, to his eyes, meaning this

was not a purely physical process; someone other than this *kohen* would not have seen those letters light up [which complicates the story, since a non-believer could claim it didn't happen, or the *kohen* gave the answer he, the *kohen*, wanted to give].

Another Form of Divine Inspiration

Nor is that the end of the story, since the letters lit up all at once, creating multiple options for how to read them (Ramban gives examples of other possible word combinations of the answer in *Shofetim*, which was *Yehudah ya'aleh*, Yehudah should go up. In his introduction to the Torah, Ramban also held that the *whole Torah* was given without clear distinctions between the words. We were taught the simple way to read the Torah, but there were other ways that also had meaning. This is another example of his focus on the many possibilities within language).

To get to the correct reading, the *kohen* would turn his focus to the *Tumim*, whose power made the *kohen's* heart whole (*Tumim* from *tamim*, whole) in the understanding of the message. He would immediately know in his heart (again, for Ramban this is not a physical matter) what Hashem was saying.

It is, he summarizes, a level of access to the Divine Spirit, lower than prophecy but greater than a *bat kol* (a Divine Voice), which was the way that Jews of the Second Temple era received communication from Hashem, after prophecy and the *Urim ve-Tumim* were lost (a reminder that a *bat kol* was also not a purely physical experience, it was a quasi-prophetic one).

An Anticipatory Chatat

In 29:14, the Torah tells us that any parts of the *par*, bull, not put on the altar should be burnt outside the camp. This *par* was offered as a *chatat*, a sin-offering, on behalf of the new priests; as Rashi noted, this is the only example of a *chatat chitzonah*, a sin-offering whose blood is not sprinkled inside the *Mishkan/Mikash*, that is burnt.

The reason Ramban gives for *why* this was true yields a bit to Rashi, who thought the *Mishkan's* origins lay in the need to find a vehicle to atone for

the Golden Calf. Ramban had disagreed, as we saw last time. But he concedes that this sacrifice was to atone for the Golden Calf.

That raises interesting questions about freewill that Ramban does not pause to address [if Hashem was so sure Aharon would sin such that this sacrifice was already in place, could Aharon have not? What would this sacrifice have meant in the alternative universe where Aharon resisted long enough for Moshe to come down from Sinai before the Calf was worshipped?]. So neither will we.

The Definition of Destruction

Once the *chatat* responds to the Golden Calf, why would Aharon's sons need *semicha*, placing their hands and weight on the sacrifice as symbolic investiture of their persons? The answer starts with *Devarim* 9:20, which says that in reaction to the Golden Calf, the Divine wrath was kindled against Aharon *le-hashmido*, enough to destroy him

Ramban defines that destruction as *kilui banim*, killing his children, so they needed the protection/atonement of this sacrifice as much as their father. [Ramban ignores the other descendants, the ones who were not yet *kohanim* but should have been implicated in a threat of *kilui banim*].

This reminds me of an assumption common to many Jewish sources that our individualistic world often forgets. Ramban here, and many other sources, such as when the verse describes Hashem as visiting the sins of forefathers on generations of descendants who continue those ways, sees the sons as parts of Aharon himself. If the sons died, that would be destruction of Aharon, not just a personal tragedy.

We are all links in a chain, and what happens down the chain matters back to us as well. Cutting off the chain destroys us, even if we live a long time after that.

The priesthood started with five individuals, not a whole clan. Some of those *kohanim* would access answers from the *Urim ve-Tumim*, a step below prophecy. For them and for us, our ability to continue our chain of generations is a part of not being destroyed. Some of the lessons of *Parshat Tetzaveh* for Ramban.

Breakfast on Purim

by R. Gil Student

I. Premature Breakfast

On Purim morning, are we allowed to eat breakfast? The answer is not so much a matter of food but of priorities. On Purim, we observe a number of commandments. Among them are reading the *megillah*, giving charity to the poor, sending gifts of food to a friend and eating a festive meal.

The Torah forbids eating on blood (Lev. 19:26), which the Talmud explains has multiple meanings. Among them is not eating before you pray for your life (*Berakhos* 10b). While commentaries debate whether this prohibition is biblical or rabbinic, either way it prevents us from eating before morn-

ing prayers any day of the week.

However, on Purim we face an additional concern. Whenever we have a mitzvah to do, we have to do it as soon as possible. For this reason, we are not allowed to eat until we do the mitzvah. For example, *Shulchan Arukh* (*Orach Chaim* 652:2) says that on Sukkos, you may not eat before shaking a lulav. Similarly, we are not allowed to eat on the night before Pesach prior to checking for *chametz* (*Shulchan Arukh*, *Orach Chaim* 431:2).

II. Priorities

From one perspective, this serves as a sensible safeguard to prevent people from getting distracted. Since eating is forbidden, we are forced to fulfill the mitzvah in a reasonable time. However, another perspective sees this as a matter of priorities. We love God and His commandments m so

much that we set aside our bodily needs temporarily in order to fulfill His will, as represented in both biblical and rabbinic commandments (see Rav Elchanan Wasserman, *Kovetz Shi'urim*, vol. 2, *Kuntres Divrei Soferim* 1:22).

I'm reminded of the Seinfeld episode "The Opposite" (5:22). Elaine goes to a movie theater to meet her boyfriend but is immediately told by the manager that her boyfriend had been hit by a car and taken to the hospital. She goes in to buy Jujyfruits candy and only then rushes to the hospital. Her boyfriend realizes that she stopped to buy candy and breaks up with her due to the offense. If we really care about someone or something, we don't take a break to eat before attending to them.

II. Purim Breakfast

Rav Moshe Sternbuch (*Mo'adim U-Zemanim*, vol. 2 no. 186) suggests that this should also apply to the commandments to give money to the poor and gifts to your friends. This would mean that after the Purim morning prayers, including reading the megillah, you still may not eat until you give money to the poor and gifts to a friend. Similarly, Rav Binyamin Yehoshua Zilber (*Responsa Az Nidberu* 6:65) follows Rav Sternbuch in forbidding eating before fulfilling the commandments of the day. Rav Dr.

Avraham Sofer (*Nishmas Avraham, Orach Chaim* 692:1) writes that Rav Yehoshua Neuwirth was unsure whether you may eat before fulfilling the obligation to give to the poor.

Rav Eliezer Waldenburg (*Tzitz Eliezer* 15:32:15) quotes Rav Ovadiah Yosef as disagreeing. He says that eating on Purim is also a mitzvah of the day. Therefore, you may eat before fulfilling the other Purim commandments. Rav Yosef also points out that the feast is mentioned before the poor and gifts in the verse: "That they should make them days of feasting and gladness, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor" (Esther 9:22).

Rav Shmuel Kamenetsky (*Kovetz Halakhos*, Purim 14:1) suggests that the reason people seem to act leniently on this issue is the rule that if someone agrees to remind us to fulfill the mitzvah, we may eat before fulfilling it. Since poor people come to our doors all day and friends arrive to deliver gifts, they will serve as reminder and we may eat early.

We find two opinions whether we may eat on Purim before fulfilling the other commandments of the day. Regardless of which we follow, we should remember to focus on fulfilling the commandments with joy and alacrity.