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"PULCHAN ARUCH, ORACH CHAYYIM, HILCHOT MEGILLAH:  
AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION AND A CONCLUDING CHAPTER"

by

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TO DEBBY AND DORI

## DIGEST

This thesis includes an annotated translation of "Hilchot Megillah" found in "Orach Chayim" of the Shulchan Aruch. In translating this section of Joseph Karo's work along with Moses Isserles' glosses, I have presented what is generally accepted as the authoritative guide for traditional Purim observance. Of major importance in "Hilchot Megillah" of the Shulchan Aruch are the laws and customs pertaining to reading of the Megillah and the writing of a Megillah. The "Fast of Esther," the Purim service, Purim money for the poor, the Purim meal, and accepted and forbidden practices on Purim are also covered in this work.

Three major commentaries have been utilized in compiling the notes for the translation. These works are Ture Zahav (it appears as Magen David in the text) by David ben Samuel HaLevi, Magen Avraham by Abraham Abele Gombiner and Ba'er Hetev by Judah Ashkenazi. Tiktin. These commentaries have been utilized for further explanation of the text as well as any important items of interest.

The concluding chapter of this thesis compares the laws and customs of reading the Megillah in the Shulchan Aruch with those in the Mishneh Torah by Maimonides and the Tur by Jacob ben Asher. Some of the differences between these works discussed in this chapter include

the question of the time when the Megillah should be read, the list of those required to read the Megillah, languages in which one may read the Megillah and still fulfill his obligation, permissible mistakes while reading the Megillah, and references to women regarding the reading of the Megillah. In addition, the Aruch HaShulchan by Yehiel Michal Epstein has been utilized in part of this comparison.

## PREFACE

The Shulchan Aruch, written by Rabbi Joseph Karo (Spain - Palestine, 1488-1575) is generally accepted as the authoritative guide for traditional Jewish observance. This code of Jewish law is shorter and more easily understood than Karo's Bet Yosef, a commentary on the Tur (Arba'ah Turim) by Jacob ben Asher on which it is based. Like the Tur, the Shulchan Aruch is divided into four parts: "Orach Chayim" (way of life) concerning prayers, the synagogue, the Sabbath and festivals; 2) "Yoreh Deah" (teacher of knowledge) concerning dietary laws, circumcision, conversion, mourning, burial, etc.; 3) "Even haEzer" (stone of help) concerning marriage, divorce and related family matters; 4) "Choshen Mishpat" (breastplate of judgment) concerning civil and criminal law.

The authority behind Karo's rulings and decisions in the Shulchan Aruch is generally based on a two out of three majority opinion of three earlier codes. These codes are Alfasi's Halachot (11th Century), Maimonides' Mishneh Torah (12th Century) and Jacob ben Asher's Tur (14th Century). In a case where no majority opinion existed, Karo has usually drawn his own opinion from the Talmud. Although Sephardic Jews quickly accepted the Shulchan Aruch as being authoritative, Ashkenazic Jews only accepted its authority after glosses of Rabbi Moses Isserles (Cracow, 1520-72) were inserted into the

text.

The major part of this thesis consists of an original annotated translation of "Hilchot Megillah" in the Shulchan Aruch. This presentation on the laws and customs of Purim is found in "Orach Chayim" of the Shulchan Aruch. In my translation, Isserles' glosses are preceded by the word NOTE. Brackets / / are used to indicate parenthesis as they actually occur in the text. My own additions are indicated by paranthesis ( ).

Two of the major commentaries on "Orach Chayim" of the Shulchan Aruch are Ture Zahav and Magen Avraham. David ben Samuel HaLevi (Poland, 1586-1667) wrote Ture Zahav which is actually on all four parts of the Shulchan Aruch. It appears as Magen David (shield of David) in the text. Magen Avraham (shield of Abraham) was written by Abraham Abele Gombiner (Poland, 1635-1683). Magen David and Magen Avraham as well as Ba'er Hetev by Judah Ashkenazi (Dayan of Titkin, 1700-1740) are utilized for my notes on "Hilchot Megillah."

The concluding chapter of this thesis compares the laws and customs of reading the Megillah as presented in the Shulchan Aruch with those in the Mishneh Torah and the Tur. Major differences are addressed in this chapter. In addition, the Aruch HaShulchan by Rabbi Yehiel Michal Epstein (1835-1905) is utilized in part of this comparison.

A list of untranslated Hebrew terms has been appended



to the text. This is followed by a list of Rabbinic sources and authorities cited in the translation, concluding chapter and notes.

It should be noted that while translations of passages from the Tur, Shulchan Aruch and Aruch HaShulchan in the concluding chapter are my own, for the Mishneh Torah I have used The Book of Seasons. (The Code of Maimonides, Book 3) translated by Solomon Gandz and Hyman Klein.

I wish to extend my appreciation to Rabbi Dr. Alexander Guttmann, Professor of Talmud and Rabbinics, for the time and guidance he unselfishly gave in the preparation of this work. I also wish to express my gratitude to my wife, Deborah, for proofreading this thesis and assisting in its preparation.

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## HILCHOT MEGILLAH

Chapter 686: The law of the "Fast of Esther." Herein are three paragraphs.

I. It is permissible to fast both before and after Chanukah and Purim.<sup>1</sup>

II. The fast is on the thirteenth of Adar<sup>2</sup>, but if Purim occurs on a Sunday the fast is moved back to Thursday.<sup>3</sup>

NOTE: This fast is not obligatory; therefore, one should be lenient about it at a time of necessity (urgency). For example, pregnant and nursing women or an individual who is ill, but not seriously so, or even one who only has pain in his eyes; if they are in great discomfort should not fast, but must make up for it later. However, people who are well<sup>4</sup> should not separate themselves from the public /Chidushe Agudah in the name of Machzor Vitry/. If Purim occurs on Sunday in which case the fast occurs on the preceding Thursday, upon which there is a b'rit milah, it is permissible to eat on account of the circumcision. The next day, Friday, those that ate must fast<sup>5</sup> /Hagahot Minhagim/.

III. There are those who fast three days<sup>6</sup> in remembrance of the "Fast of Esther."<sup>7</sup>

Chapter 687: The obligation of reading of the Megillah.

Herein are two paragraphs.

I. Every man must read the Megillah at night<sup>8</sup> and then read it again<sup>9</sup> during the day. The time (for reading the Megillah prescribed) for the night is the entire night<sup>10</sup> and the time (for reading the Megillah prescribed) for the day is the entire day, from sunrise until the end of the day; and if he has read it after the dawn has come, he has fulfilled his obligation.

II. Talmud Torah<sup>11</sup> is cancelled in order to hear the reading of the Megillah.<sup>12</sup> How much the more so are the rest of the mitzvot of the Torah (cancelled), for all of them are suspended (moved to another time) due to the reading of the Megillah.<sup>13</sup> There is nothing that the reading of the Megillah is suspended for except a met mitzvah for whom there is no one to bury him /according to the measure of his need/ (i.e. as it should be done),<sup>14</sup> (meaning) that one who finds him buries him first and then reads.

NOTE: All of this applies only when there is time to perform the two of them (to read and to bury). However, if it is impossible to do the two of them, no mitzvah of the Torah is suspended in favor of reading the Megillah /Rabbenu Nissim and Bet Yosef in the name of the Tosafot and Morenu HaRav Rabbi Eliyahu Mizrachi/. And the

law that a met mitzvah has priority, applies only in the case if it is possible<sup>15</sup> for him (the one burying the corpse) to read it (the Megillah) afterwards<sup>16</sup> /i.orenu MaRav Rabbi Eliyahu Mizrachi/.

Chapter 688: The law of cities surrounded by a wall since the days of Joshua the son of Nun. Herein are eight paragraphs.

I. Cities surrounded by a wall since the days of Joshua the son of Nun,<sup>17</sup> even if they are not surrounded now, read (the Megillah) on the fifteenth (of Adar); and (this applies) even if they are outside the land of Israel and even if there are not ten batlanim in them /explanation (for batlanim)-they are idle from their work and occupy themselves with the needs of the community/. (The above regarding a city in which the Megillah is read on the fifteenth of Adar applies) only if it was surrounded (by a wall) and afterwards was settled or seeing that it was settled first with the intention of surrounding it afterwards. This excludes when it is known that it was settled first with no intention of surrounding it /but generally we assume that it was first surrounded (with a wall) and later settled/ /Rabbenu Nissim/.<sup>18</sup>

II. The same applies (the Megillah is read on the fifteenth of Adar) for the villages which are seen with them (cities which read the Megillah on the fifteenth of Adar), even if they are not near, for example, they are on a mountain; or they are nearby even though they are not seen with them, for example, they are in a valley, as long as they are not farther than a mile.<sup>19</sup> In Shushan,

even though it was not surrounded by a wall since the days of Joshua, they read on the fifteenth because the miracle occurred there.

III. Villages, large towns and cities which have not been surrounded by a wall since the days of Joshua the son of Nun read (the Megillah) on the fourteenth (of Adar).

IV. If it is uncertain whether or not a city was surrounded (by a wall) in the days of Joshua,<sup>20</sup> they read (the Megillah) on the fourteenth, on the fifteenth and on the evenings of the fourteenth and fifteenth.<sup>21</sup> One should not say the blessing (over the Megillah) unless it is the fourteenth (of Adar),<sup>22</sup> in as much as this is the time when most people read (the Megillah).

V. If a town dweller went to a city, or a city dweller went to a town intending to return to his own place at the time of the reading<sup>23</sup> (of the Megillah), but was delayed and did not return, he reads as if he was in his own place.<sup>24</sup> If, however, he did not intend to return until after the time of the reading, he reads with the men of the place where he is at.

NOTE: If he is in the desert or on a ship, he reads on the fourteenth day like the majority of the world  
/Kol Bo/.



VI. If the fifteenth day happens to be on the Sabbath,<sup>25</sup> they do not read the Megillah on the Sabbath, but rather they move back the reading to Erev Shabbat (Friday). They collect money as a gift for the poor and distribute it on that day (Friday). On the Sabbath day they take out two Torah scrolls and in the second one they read "Then came Amalek . . . " (Exodus 17:8-16) and recite (the prayer) "For the Miracles." They do not make the Purim meal until Sunday.<sup>26</sup>

VII. The person who sets out for a sea voyage and the one who goes out with a caravan and is not able to take a Megillah with him, should read it (the Megillah) on the thirteenth or on the twelfth or on the eleventh (of Adar) without a blessing.<sup>27</sup> If it is impossible to wait until these days, there are those who say that he should read it even from the beginning of the month.

NOTE: This is the practice, but if afterwards he happens to obtain a Megillah; he should read it again on the fourteenth day,<sup>28</sup> even if he read it first on the thirteenth day because he still read it when it was not the proper time /Kol Bo, Bet Yosef/.

VIII. If a town dweller that was on a ship or (one that was) on the road did not bring a Megillah and afterwards, on the fifteenth (of Adar) he happens to obtain one, he must read it on the fifteenth.<sup>29</sup>

Chapter 689: Everyone is obligated to participate in the reading of the Megillah. Herein are six paragraphs.

I. Everyone is obligated to participate in its reading (to read or be present when it is read), men, women,<sup>31</sup> proselytes and freed slaves,<sup>31</sup> The small boys should be instructed to read it.

II. Both the reader and the person who listens to the reader fulfill their obligation provided that the listener hears it from one who is obligated to read it. Therefore, if the reader is either deaf,<sup>32</sup> a minor or an imbecile, the one who hears it from them does not fulfill his obligation. There are those who say that women (reading the Megillah) do not fulfill the duty in behalf of the men.<sup>33</sup>

NOTE: There are those who say that if a woman reads it for herself, she recites the blessing "to listen to the Megillah"<sup>34</sup> since she is not obligated to read it<sup>35</sup> /Mordechai, first chapter of tractate "Megillah".

III. A hermaphrodite fulfills the duty in behalf of his own kind, but he does not fulfill the duty in behalf of one who is not his own kind. One whose genitals are concealed (hidden by skin) and one who is half a slave (having been emancipated by one of the partners) does not

fulfill the duty in behalf of even his own kind.<sup>36</sup>

NOTE: There are those who say he does not fulfill the reading of the Megillah even in his own behalf, but must listen to others<sup>37</sup> /Bet Yosef/.

IV. If one hears the Megillah from a person from whom he cannot accept any favor due to a vow, he still fulfills his obligation.

V. In a place where there is not a quorum of ten men, if one man knows (how to read the Megillah) and the others do not, the one exempts all of them. If all of them, however, know (how to read the Megillah), each one reads for himself.<sup>38</sup>

VI. It is a good custom to bring boys and girls to hear the reading of the Megillah.<sup>39</sup>

Chapter 690: Laws concerning the reading of the Megillah.  
Herein are eighteen paragraphs.

I. A man may read the Megillah either standing or sitting,<sup>40</sup> but a priori he should not read it in the congregation sitting out of respect for the congregation.

NOTE: It is forbidden for the cantor<sup>41</sup> to read the Megillah until they tell him: "Read it!" /Mordechai, chapter "HaKore"/.

II. Even two and even ten may read it simultaneously, and both they and the listeners have fulfilled their obligation.

III. It is necessary to read all of it and it must be out of a written copy. If one recites it by heart, he has not fulfilled his obligation. A priori, it is necessary that all of it should be present in written form before him; but ex post facto, if the scribe left out words<sup>42</sup> in the middle up to the half of it and the reader recites them by heart, he has fulfilled his obligation.

NOTE: However, if he left out the beginning of it or the end of it, even if just a smaller part of it, he did not fulfill his obligation /Rabbenu Nissim/. Even if (something is missing) in the middle of it, (he fulfilled his obligation) only if he did not omit a complete portion (subject) /Bet Yosef in the name of Orchos Chayim/.

But if it is more than half of it, even if they are written but smudged and their outlines (of the letters) are not discernible, it is invalid.

IV. Whoever holds a Megillah in his hand which is not fit must not read with the leader,<sup>43</sup> but rather should listen and be quiet.

NOTE: Thus no man should assist the cantor by heart and, therefore, for those verses which the congregation reads, the cantor must read them again out of a fit Megillah /Bet Yosef in the name of Shibole Leket/.

v. If one read it in intervals, that is to say that he stopped in it (the reading of the Megillah) and . paused and afterwards returned to the place where he stopped; even if he paused so long that he could have finished the entire reading, he still fulfilled his obligation.

NOTE: This is so even if he talked<sup>44</sup> in between. They nevertheless rebuke the one who talks in between as below: chapter 692, second paragraph /Rabbi Shlomo ben Adret, chapter 244/.

VI. If one reads the Megillah backwards he does not fulfill his obligation. If one reads one verse, skips the second<sup>45</sup> and then reads the third and after that goes back and reads the second, he does not fulfill his obligation because he read one verse backwards. How should

he do it? He should begin with the second verse which he forgot and continue reading according to the order.

VII. One who recites the Megillah by heart<sup>46</sup> does not fulfill his obligation.

VIII. The foreigner (knowing no Hebrew) who hears the Megillah which is written in the holy tongue and in the Hebrew Scripts fulfills his obligation, even though he does not understand what they are saying.<sup>47</sup>

IX. If it (the Megillah) was written in Aramaic or in another language from among the languages of the Gentiles, he does not fulfill his obligation by reading it except if he knows this language. However, if it was written in Hebrew and one recites it in Aramaic to one speaking Aramaic, he does not fulfill his obligation because the result is that he recites it by heart. Since the reader does not fulfill his obligation, neither can the one who listens to him fulfill his obligation.

NOTE: However, we do not have to be concerned in which script it is written<sup>48</sup> /Bet Yosef/.

X. One who knows a foreign language and knows Hebrew does not fulfill his obligation (by reading or hearing it) in a foreign language, but there are those who say he does fulfill his obligation.

NOTE: If it is written in two languages, one who understands either of them fulfills his obligation  
/Bet Yosef/.

XI. An objection should be raised with those who read the Megillah to women in a foreign language, even though it is written in a foreign language.<sup>49</sup>

XII. A person who reads it half asleep still fulfills his obligation since he was not fully asleep. However, if one hears it half asleep he does not fulfill his obligation.

XIII. If one writes it, that is, a person reads a verse in the Megillah from which he is copying and then writes it, he fulfills his obligation if he directs his heart to do so. This applies provides that the Megillah from which he is copying is complete (completely written). Likewise, if while correcting it or expounding it, he reads a verse in a complete Megillah and explains it, he fulfills his obligation if he directs his heart to do so. He should not interrupt with other matters when he is expounding, for it is forbidden to interrupt with other things.

XIV. The one who reads the Megillah must intend to fulfill the duty in behalf of the listener and the

listener<sup>50</sup> must desire to have his duty fulfilled. If the reader is a congregational reader, we assume that generally he has all the listeners in mind, even if they are behind (close-by outside) the synagogue.<sup>51</sup> We are not exacting (not very strict) about making mistakes (in reading it). There are those who say this refers to only errors where the language and the meaning are one (remain unchanged in spite of the error in reading). As in the case of two students who used to sit before Rav, one read Yehudim and the other read Yehudiyim (both mean the same though one of them made a reading mistake). He (Rav) did not make either of his two students read the passage again. If there is another type of mistake,<sup>52</sup> this is not so (the passage has to be read over again).

XV. It is necessary to pronounce the ten sons of Haman and the word "ten" (Esther 9:7-10) in one breath<sup>53</sup> to proclaim that all of them were killed and hanged simultaneously.

NOTE: This applies only a priori, however, ex post facto he still fulfills his obligation even if he pauses between them (the ten sons of Haman) /Tosafot at the end of the first chapter of tractate "Megillah" and Abudraham and Morenu HaRav Rabbi Jacob Levi/. A priori it is customary to say in one breath (the words) from ". . . five hundred men. And Parshandatha . . ." etc.



until "ten" (Esther 9:6-10) /Morenu HaRav Rabbi Jacob Levi in the name of Rokeach/.

XVI. One should say: "Cursed is Haman, blessed is Mordechai, cursed is Zeresh, blessed is Esther, cursed are all idol worshippers, blessed is all Israel;" and one should also say: "May Charvona also be remembered for the good."

XVII. It is the custom in all of Israel that the one who reads (the Megillah) reads it and spreads it out like a letter<sup>54</sup> to demonstrate the miracle. When he finishes he should roll it up completely<sup>55</sup> and then recite the blessing.<sup>56</sup>

NOTE: There are those who have written that it is the practice to say the four verses of redemption in a loud voice, namely: "There was a certain Jew . . . ." (Esther 2:5), "And Mordechai went forth . . . ." (Esther 8:15), "The Jews had light . . . ." (Esther 8:16) and "For Mordechai the Jew . . . ." (Esther 10:3). They practice it in this way in these lands /Hagahot Maimuni, first chapter, and Kol Bo and Abudraham/, and the cantor reads them (the above verses) again. Furthermore, they have written that it is the practice of the little children to draw pictures of Haman on the trees (or: pieces of wood) and stones or to write the name of Haman on them and to strike them against each other in order to blot out his name according to

"You shall utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek" (based on Deuteronomy 25:19) and ". . . , but the name of the wicked shall rot." (Proverbs 10:7). From this the custom spread that they beat Haman (they make noise) when they read the Megillah in the synagogue /Abudraham/. One must not abolish any custom or mock it because the customs have not been established without a good reason /Bet Yosef in the name of Orchot Chayim/.

XVIII. When the Megillah (is read) on the fourteenth and the fifteenth (of Adar) it is necessary to try to secure ten men. If it is impossible to assemble ten men, they read it individually (i.e. with less than ten men).

NOTE: It is doubtful if women may join in the quorum of ten /Hagahot Asheri, first chapter, Tur, chapter 684/. If they read it (i.e., If it is read) in the congregation and one person does not hear it, he is able to read it privately for himself even a priori, since they read it in that city with ten men /Bet Yosef in the name of Orchot Chayim/. And when the person reads it at its proper time, he must say the blessing over it /Bet Yosef/.

Chapter 691: Laws concerning the writing of the Megillah and its sewing. Herein are eleven paragraphs.

I. The Megillah may be written only in ink on parchment or on split parchment like the Torah scroll. If it is written with gull-nut juice or calcanthum it is a valid Megillah, but if it is written with the remaining types of dyes it is invalid. It must be written on ruled lines like the Torah (scroll) itself,<sup>57</sup> but its skin need not be properly prepared (treated) for the specific purpose (of writing the Megillah). However, there are those who say that it must be properly prepared for the specific purpose.

II. If it was written on paper or on skin that was not properly prepared, or if it was written by Gentiles or a heretic, it is invalid. Its laws are like (those of) the Torah scroll concerning the requirement of having clear parchment around every letter<sup>58</sup> and humps for the letter "Chet"<sup>59</sup> and suspension (of the left shaft) of the letter "Hey" and letter "Kof" and all bodies of the letters according to their forms and with respect to the missing elements and additional elements.

NOTE: One must also write it from the written copy /Rabbenu Nissim/ and utter every letter before writing it<sup>60</sup> as in the case of the Torah scroll. /Morenu HaRav Rabbi Yosef Kolon/ and make all of its sections

closed. If they are made open it is invalid /Hagahot Maimuni, chapter two and Piske Morenu HaRav Rabbi Isserlein, chapter 93/. Ex post facto<sup>61</sup> one is not to declare a Megillah invalid because of missing elements and additional elements, for it is not worse than the scribe leaving out letters, in which case it is still fit /Hagahot Maimuni, second chapter, Or Zaruah/ explained in chapter 690, paragraph three.

It is necessary to have a blank sheet at the end and a blank space at the beginning (of the scroll) in order to wrap it. There are those who say crownlets on letters are needed and there are those who say that it is not needed.

NOTE: It is the practice to have crownlets on the letters. It is also the practice not to make any blank sheet whatsoever at the end<sup>62</sup> /Morenu HaRav Rabbi Jacob Levi/.

III. The ten sons of Haman have to be written like a song (poem), but not like the other songs (of the Bible) where the empty space is on top of written space.<sup>63</sup> Instead, he leaves the empty space between writing (on the right side) and writing (on the left side).<sup>64</sup> If this is not done, it is invalid.

IV. It is necessary to lengthen the letter "Vav" in the name of Valzatha (the tenth son of Haman, Esther 9:9) /in writing it, and there are those who say

in reading it/ /Rabbenu Nissim in the name of Rabbenu Asher and Morenu HaRav Rabbi Jacob Levi and Bet Yosef in the name of Orchot Chayim/. The name of each man (the ten sons of Haman) must be written at the right side of the column and the word "et" at the left side of the column.

V. If it is sewn with threads of flax it is invalid.

VI. If three threads of sinew were used, the Megillah is proper provided that they are threefold. Since there are different explanations for this; it is necessary to fulfill the obligation in accordance with all of them and to make three stitches at the top of it (the sheet), three at the end of it, three in the middle of it and one stitch in the fourth section of one side and one stitch in the fourth section of the other side.<sup>65</sup>

NOTE: If he does not have threads made of sinew, it is better to sew the remainder with threads of flax than to leave it without any stitches /Hagahot Maimuni, second chapter and Kol Bo/. But if he has threads made of sinew, he should sew all of it with sinew and the seam should be from the outside and not from the inside /Rabbi Yerucham, Nimuke Yosef, fourth section and Bet Yosef in the name of Orchot Chayim/.

VII. It is necessary to leave a space on the top of the sheet and at the end of it when it is sewn together and the least bit of space is sufficient.

VIII. They do not read in a congregation<sup>66</sup> from a Megillah which is written among other books of the Hagiographa (on one scroll). If one reads it (in such a scroll) he does not fulfill his obligation unless it is wider or narrower than the rest of the sheets in order that it be recognizable. However, the individual (who is not reading to the congregation) may read in it even if it is not narrower or wider and fulfill his obligation with it only when it is written on a parchment sheet like a Torah scroll.

IX. If a Megillah is vocalized (pointed) and if, likewise, blessings and liturgical hymn are written on the first page, it is not invalidated by this.

X. If a fit Megillah is unavailable, they read it in the Bible (literally Pentateuch) without a blessing.

XI. If a person reads in a stolen Megillah (literally robbed), he fulfills his obligation.

NOTE: And whether one should say the blessing over it, see above, chapter 649 concerning the invalid Tulav. The same is true in this case.

Chapter 692: Laws concerning the blessings (for reading) of the Megillah. Herein are four paragraphs.

I. The one who reads the Megillah (in the evening) says three blessings before reading it: "Concerning the reading of the Megillah," "Who has performed miracles" and "Who has kept us in life."<sup>67</sup> However, (when he reads the Megillah) during the day (i.e. in the morning), he does not repeat the blessing "Who has kept us in life."

NOTE: There are those who say that one says the blessing "Who has kept us in life" also (when reading the Megillah) during the day (i.e. in the morning)<sup>68</sup> /Tur in the name of Rabbenu Tam and Rabbenu Asher and Megid Mishneh/ /This is the practice in all these lands, and one person may say the blessing while the second person reads (the Megillah)/ /Hagahot Asheri, second chapter/. After it (the reading of the Megillah), it is the practice to say the blessing "Who does contend for us," etc. If he did not bless before it (the reading of the Megillah) or after it, he still fulfills his obligation.

NOTE: It is the custom to say "Who averted (thwarted) the counsel of the heathen" at night, but not during the day<sup>69</sup> /Kol Bo and Bet Yosef in the name of Orchot Chayim/. One is not to say the blessing after it (the reading of the Megillah) except in a congregation.

II. One is not to talk<sup>70</sup> while they are reading it<sup>71</sup> (the Megillah).

III. Even though a person has already fulfilled his obligation, he should say the blessings to fulfill the obligation in behalf of another.<sup>72</sup>

IV. Someone who, due to some compelling circumstance, is unable to go to the synagogue and has to wait until after the congregation has finished reading and it is difficult for him to fast that long; is able to listen to the reading of it while it is still daytime, after midway through the afternoon<sup>73</sup> and beyond.

NOTE: However, it is forbidden to eat before hearing the reading of the Megillah,<sup>74</sup> even if the fast is difficult for him /Terumat Hadeshen, chapter 99/.



Chapter 693: The order of the Purim service. Herein are four paragraphs.

I. After the reading of the Megillah in the evening<sup>75</sup> one says (the prayer) "But thou art holy," and if the reading of the Megillah occurs on Saturday night one says (the prayer, i.e. psalm) "And let the graciousness" before (the prayer) "But thou art holy."

NOTE: One says (the prayer) "And God give thee" and then they read the Megillah. After that they make "Havdalah" /Minhagim/.

II. One says (the prayer) "For the miracles" (in the Amidah following the prayer "We gratefully acknowledge") during both the evening and morning.

NOTE: If he did not say it ("For the miracles"), they do not make him repeat (the whole silent prayer) /Tur/. They do not say (the prayer) "For the miracles" except on the fourteenth day, but not on the fifteenth (of Adar) /Bet Yosef in the name of Orchot Chayim and Minhagim/. Even if one has not read the Megillah on the evening of the fourteenth as yet, he still says (the prayer) "For the miracles" during the evening service /Hagahot Maimuni, second chapter/.

III. They do not read the "Hallel" on it (Purim) and they do not say the "Tachanun" prayer (literally, fall

on their faces).<sup>76</sup>

NOTE: They do not say (the psalm) "To the victor" and (the prayer) "O God, slow to anger" /Minhagim and Bet Yosef in the name of Tosafot/.

IV. They take out the Torah scroll and read in the portion of "Then came Amalek" (Exodus 17:8-16). Even though there are only nine verses in it, they repeat the last verse in order to complete ten verses.

NOTE: It is not the practice to repeat the last verse of the portion.

They read the Megillah and after that, the order of the "Kedushah."

NOTE: When there is a circumcision on Purim, the circumcision of infants precedes the reading of the Megillah.

Chapter 694: The law of Purim money for the poor.

Herein are four paragraphs.

I. Every man is obligated<sup>77</sup> to give at least two gifts to two poor people.<sup>78</sup>

NOTE: There are those who say that one should give before Purim half of the coin current in that place and in that time as a remembrance of the half shekel that they used to give in Adar. Since terumah is written three times in the portion (Exodus 33:11-16), one should give three coins /Mordechai, beginning of the first chapter of tractate "Yoma"/. One should give it on the night of Purim<sup>79</sup> before they say the minchah prayer /Morenu HaRav Rabbi Jacob Levi/. This is the practice in all of these lands. One should give three large halves in these lands because there is no coin which is designated as half besides this one (i.e. the big coin). In the states of Austria one should give three half Wieners which are also called "half." Thus it is in every land, and only a person twenty (years old) or over is obligated<sup>80</sup> to give. There are those who say one should give a half shekel for charity besides the three halves, but this is not the practice.

II. One does not change Purim money to other charity.<sup>81</sup>

NOTE: (And this limitation refers to) only the

charity officials /Mordechai, the first chapter of tractate "Baba Batra"/. But a poor person is able to do anything with it that he wants.<sup>82</sup>

III. They are not scrupulous (in investigating whether a person is really poor or not) concerning Purim money, however, anyone who stretches out his hand to take, they give to him. In a place where it is the custom to give even to Gentiles, they give.<sup>83</sup>

IV. In a place where there are no poor people, one is able to keep his Purim money for himself and give it in a place that he desires.

Chapter 695: The laws of the Purim meal. Herein are four paragraphs.

NOTE: It is a mitzvah to enlarge the Purim meal /Tur/. With one meal they fulfill their obligation /Mordechai, end of the first chapter/.

I. The Purim meal that one makes at night<sup>84</sup> does not fulfill his obligation.

NOTE: In any case, he should also rejoice at night and enlarge the meal somewhat /Responses of Morenu HaRav Rabbi Jacob Levi/.

II. A man is obligated to get drunk on Purim until he does not know the difference between "Cursed is Haman" and "Blessed is Mordechai."<sup>85</sup>

NOTE: There are those who say it is not necessary to get oneself drunk that much, but rather one should drink more than he is accustomed to<sup>86</sup> /Kol Bo/ so that he would fall asleep. And while he is sleeping he does not know the difference between "Cursed is Haman" and "Blessed is Mordechai" /Morenu HaRav Rabbi Jacob Levi/. Whether somebody drinks more or less, he must direct his heart toward heaven. One should not fast on Purim except for a fast for an (ominous) dream,<sup>87</sup> see above chapter 568 and 570. Some are accustomed to dressing in Sabbath and holiday clothes on Purim, and this is appropriate /Morenu HaRav Rabbi Jacob Levi/. It is the practice to make the Purim

meal after the minchah prayer and he should say the aravit prayer at night. One says the minchah prayer first while the day is still long. Most of the meal must be during the day /Minhagim/ and not as the (usual) practice is to start close to the evening. The main part of the meal is during the night of the fifteenth (of Adar). But when Purim occurs on Friday, they make the meal in the morning because of the honor of the Sabbath<sup>88</sup> /Minhagim/. If one wants to make it always in the morning, he may do so /Terumat Hadeshen/. There are those who say that one should eat food made of seeds<sup>89</sup> on Purim in remembrance of the seeds that Daniel and his friends ate in Babylon /Kol Bo/. It is good to study a little Torah before one begins the feast and this is indicated in the verse: "The Jews had light and gladness" (Esther 8:16), and we explain it as light meaning Torah /Morenu HaRav Rabbi Jacob Baruch Landau/. One is obligated concerning feasting and rejoicing a little on both days, on the fourteenth and fifteenth (of Adar) /Minhagim/ and this is the practice. There are those who say that if one caused damage to his neighbor<sup>90</sup> by virtue of Purim rejoicing,<sup>91</sup> he is exempt from making restitution /Terumat Hadeshen, chapter 110/. See in Choshen Hamishpat about the laws of damages.

III. One says (the prayer) "For the miracles" in the Grace after Meals<sup>92</sup> in the (paragraph) "Blessing of the land." If he begins his meal during the day and makes

it last until the night, he (still) says (the prayer) "For the miracles" because the beginning of the meal is decisive. There are some who say that he should not say it. /The practice is according to the first opinion/.

IV. One is obligated to send to his friend two portions of meat<sup>93</sup> or of various types of food.<sup>94</sup> For when Scripture says: "And of sending portions one to another" (Esther 9:22), it implies two portions for one person,<sup>95</sup> and anyone who sends more to his friends is praiseworthy. If he does not have anything to send to his friend, then he exchanges (meals) with his friend, i.e. the one sends his meal to his friend and his friend sends his meal to him, in order to fulfill the law "sending portions one to another."

NOTE: One must send portions during the day<sup>96</sup> and not at night /implied in the words of Rabbenu Asher, first chapter of tractate "Megillah"/. If he sends portions to his friend and he does not want to accept them or forgoes (does not want him to send any to him), he fulfills his obligation. A woman is obligated<sup>97</sup> concerning gifts to the poor and sending portions like a man. A woman should send to a woman and a man (should send) to a man, but not the other way around; for a man should not come (to the point of) sending to a widow and bring them to a state of doubtful betrothal.<sup>98</sup> But with respect to gifts for the poor, there is nothing to worry about.

Chapter 696: Laws concerning funeral eulogies, fasting and doing work on Purim. Herein are eight paragraphs.

I. One is permitted to do work on Purim; but in a place where it is not the practice to do work, one must not work. /Nowadays it is the practice in every place not to do work<sup>99</sup>/ /Kol Bo/. The one who does work will never experience<sup>100</sup> any sign of blessing<sup>101</sup> (trace of blessing) from this work except if it is a case of the erection of a building of joy such as a house of marriage for his son or a royal banquet room.

NOTE: It is permissible to do all the work pertaining to a mitzvah such as writing halachic decisions. Likewise, it is permissible to do any real work for the requirements of Purim /Terumat Hadeshen, chapter 112/.

II. Even in a place where it is the practice not to work, this custom applies only for the day of the reading of the Megillah; but to prohibit it (work) on the other day of Purim (when the Megillah is not read in this particular local) is not the custom (to abstain from work).

III. Funeral eulogies<sup>102</sup> and fasting are forbidden on the fourteenth day and the fifteenth day (of Adar) for everyman everywhere; either for residents of cities (surrounded by a wall) who read the Megillah on the



fifteenth (of Adar) only, or for residents of (unwalled) towns who read the Megillah on the fourteenth (of Adar) only. The women may wail on these days, namely, all of them raise their voices together and beat their hands together; but they should not do the most severe form of wailing, meaning that one leads in wailing and all of them chime in. After the dead is buried, they (the women) should neither do the lighter form of wailing nor the more severe form of wailing.

IV. All matters of mourning are practiced on Chanukah and Purim.

NOTE: In any case, he should go to the synagogue to hear the Megillah /Tosafot, first chapter of Moed Katan/. If he is able to assemble a quorum of ten men to his house to read the Megillah, this is far better /Morenu HaRav Rabbi Jacob Levi/. There are those who say that mourning is not practiced<sup>103</sup> on Purim on either the fourteenth or fifteenth (of Adar) /Rabbenu Asher and Minhagim/. This is the practice, and even the first day of mourning is suspended because of Purim /his own opinion/; but matters done in privacy<sup>104</sup> should be observed (i.e. refraining from intercourse or washing). Even though mourning is not the practice on Purim, Purim counts as one of the seven days of mourning<sup>105</sup> like the Sabbath /and thus decided HaRav (Isserles) himself in "Yoreh Deah," chapter 401/.

V. If Purim occurs on Saturday night and the mourner is sitting in the synagogue on the Sabbath during the minchah prayer, he should not go out from there until he says the aravit prayer and hears the reading of the Megillah. The next day he should not go out from his house.

VI. There are some who say that the mourner is obligated to send portions<sup>106</sup> (gifts to his friend).

NOTE: However, they do not send (gifts) to the mourner the entire twelve months,<sup>107</sup> /Morenu HaRav Rabbi Jacob Levi/ as it is explained in "Yoreh Deah," chapter 385, see there. If only a mourner and another Jew are in that city, the other Jew is obligated to send (gifts) to the mourner in order to fulfill "sending portions" unless the mourner forgoes on his portion /Morenu HaRav Rabbi Isaac ben Sheshet/.

VII. There are some who say that one who is an onen (a mourner before the burial) is permitted to eat meat and drink wine because the positive commandment pertaining to the individual mourning does not supercede the positive commandment of the Torah pertaining to the whole community that is Toraitic, since rejoicing on Purim are words of the Kabbalah (Hagiographa) which are like the words of the Torah.

NOTE: All the more so that he (the onen) is

obligated in the reading of the Megillah, the silent prayer and the "Keriat Shema." It seems to me that this applies only at night, even though his dead is laid out before him (i.e. not yet buried); but when he wants to bury him during the day, the burial of his dead takes precedence<sup>108</sup> as was explained above, chapter 687, second paragraph. Therefore, he reads and prays afterwards, because this is not more important than a holiday and the Sabbath<sup>109</sup> as was explained above, chapter 71. Thus it seems to me.

VIII. One is permitted to marry on Purim.

NOTE: (One may marry) on either the fourteenth or on the fifteenth (of Adar). All the more so, one is permitted to make a pidyon haben /Tosafot, first chapter of Moed Katan/. The practice to wear masks on Purim and for a man to wear a woman's clothing and for a woman to wear a man's clothing is not prohibited since their intention is only to rejoice. The same applies to wearing clothing which is rabbinically prohibited because of mixing flax with wool. Some say this is prohibited, but the practice is according to the first opinion. Likewise, men who grab things from one another in a playful way are not transgressing the prohibition of "thou shalt not rob." This is the custom, but they must not do anything that is not proper in the opinion of the leaders of the Jewish community /Teshuvat of Morenu HaRav Rabbi Judah of Mintz, chapter 17/.

Chapter 697: They do not say supplication prayers on the fourteenth and fifteenth of first Adar, and the law of fasting and funeral eulogies on them. Herein is one paragraph.

I. On the fourteenth day and fifteenth day of Adar, they do not say the tachanun prayer (literally, they do not fall on their faces) and they do not say the psalm "The Lord answer thee in the day of trouble" (Psalm 20:1). Funeral eulogies and fasting are (likewise) forbidden,<sup>110</sup> but other matters do not apply (other things are not prohibited) on them (these two days). There are those who say that even funeral eulogies and fasting are permitted.

NOTE: The custom is according to the first opinion. There are those who say that one is obligated to enlarge the feast and rejoicing on the fourteenth that is in first Adar,<sup>111</sup> /Tur in the name of Rabbi Isaac Alfasi/, but this is not the custom. In any case, he should enlarge the meal a little in order to fulfill the obligation of those who are strict /Hagahot Maimuni in the name of Sefer Mitzvot Katan/: "But he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast" (Proverbs 15:15).

## CONCLUDING CHAPTER

In comparing the laws and customs of reading the Megillah in the Shulchan Aruch to those in the Mishneh Torah, Tur and Aruch HaShulchan, one of the first differences concerns the question of authority. No reference is made in "Hilchot Megillah" of the Shulchan Aruch to the authority behind reading the Megillah at its proper time. In the Mishneh Torah, however, Maimonides states that it is "a positive commandment based on the authority of the Scribes" and that "it is well-known that this reading was instituted by the Prophets" (Mishneh Torah, "Zemanim," "Hilchot Megillah," first chapter, first paragraph). Although no mention is made of the Prophets in the Tur, Jacob ben Asher does attribute the authority behind reading the Megillah at its proper time to the words of the Scribes (Tur, "Orach Chayim," "Hilchot Megillah," chapter 687).

The Shulchan Aruch is the most specific in outlining the time when the Megillah should be read (chapter 687, first paragraph). The Tur makes no reference to the "entire night" and the "entire day" being the two prescribed times on Purim for reading the Megillah. Although the Mishneh Torah makes this reference (first chapter, third paragraph), only the Shulchan Aruch states that the entire day means "from sunrise until the end of the day; and if he has read it after the dawn has come he has fulfilled his obligation" (chapter 687, first paragraph).

In the Aruch HaShulchan, Psalm 30:13 and Psalm 22:3 are given to support the ruling that one is obligated to read the Megillah both at night and during the day. Rashi's explanation, cited in footnote #9, is given as the reason. It is further explained that the miracle that took place on Purim did not cease during the night and day. Although there are mitzvot that are only practiced during the day like tzitzit, tephilin, blowing the shofar and shaking the lulav, and there are mitzvot that are only observed at night like the first eating of matzah and counting the omer; reading the Megillah both during the day and at night can be compared to reciting the "Keriat Shema" and the silent prayer during the day and at night (Aruch HaShulchan, "Hilchot Megillah," chapter 687, first paragraph).

In the Aruch HaShulchan, however, it is stated that the main emphasis for reading the Megillah and proclaiming the miracle is for during the day. In support of this view reference is made to Psalm 22:3. Furthermore, it is quickly pointed out that the Purim meal and the sending of portions is to take place during the day. Besides, the Mishnah itself only mentions the reading of the Megillah in connection with the day. As further evidence, it is mentioned that according to some authorities including Rabbenu Asher and Jacob ben Asher in the Tur, the third blessing "Who has kept us in life" recited before the Megillah is read at night is repeated during the day. The reason given for this is because the main

emphasis of reading the Megillah is for during the day. Maimonides, however, in his Mishneh Torah states that one does not repeat the blessing "Who has kept us in life" during the day. It may seem that this blessing should be recited before the Megillah is read during the day instead of the previous night if the reading of the day is the focal point of the mitzvah. The halachah, however, is according to Maimonides. It is not necessary to say the blessing "Who has kept us in life" two times since there is only one mitzvah involved. However, one should not wait until the reading of the day, but rather should recite the blessing the previous night since one must not forego the occasion of performing a religious act (Aruch HaShulchan, "Hilchot Megillah," chapter 38/, second and third paragraphs).

The Mishneh Torah (first chapter, first paragraph) and the Shulchan Aruch (chapter 689, first paragraph) both agree that men, women, proselytes and freed slaves are obligated to participate in the reading of the Megillah. They both mention that minors should also be instructed to read it. In the Tur (chapter 689) the list of those obligated to read the Megillah differs. The Tur includes priests, Levites, Israelites, slaves, a defiled person (i.e. son of a priest by a marriage prohibited to the priest—for example, the son of a divorcee married by a priest), a mamzer, a descendant of a Gibeonite (Temple slave), one whose genitals are concealed (hidden by skin),

a hermaphrodite, a person of illegitimate descent, a minor and women.

Like the Mishneh Torah (first chapter, second paragraph) and the Shulchan Aruch (chapter 689, second paragraph), the Tur (chapter 689) first states that a minor does not fulfill the obligation of reading the Megillah in behalf of others. The Tur then presents the opinion of Rabbi Yitzchak where he disagrees and states that a minor would fulfill the obligation of reading the Megillah for somebody else. The Tur then mentions that Hillel ben Naphtali agrees with Rabbi Yitzchak's position. This is followed, however, by the opinion of the author's father, Rabbenu Asher, who takes the Mishnah literally, in other words, children would not fulfill the obligation on behalf of others. This position of Rabbenu Asher is authoritative for the Tur.

In the Tur several views are presented concerning whether one stands or sits while reading the Megillah. The first position states: "The one who reads the Megillah either standing or sitting fulfills his obligation. This means ex post facto, however, for a priori he should not read sitting" (chapter 690). The Tur then refers to the Palestinian Talmud which states that one may read sitting even a priori. Lastly, the Tur mentions Maimonides' view in the Mishneh Torah: "... however, one should not read it a priori sitting in the



congregation out of respect for the congregation. This position taken in the Mishneh Torah (second chapter, seventh paragraph) and stated in the Tur is the view adopted by the Shulchan Aruch (chapter 690, first paragraph).

The Mishneh Torah (second chapter, third and fourth paragraphs), Tur (chapter 690) and Shulchan Aruch (chapter 690, eighth and ninth paragraphs) generally agree that if one reads from a Megillah written in a foreign language, the reader fulfills his obligation provided that he understands that language. They also state that if the Megillah is written in the holy tongue, the listener fulfills his obligation, even if he does not understand Hebrew. Only the Mishneh Torah (second chapter, third paragraph) and the Tur (chapter 690), however, make the same provision for a Megillah written and read in Greek as a Megillah written and read in Hebrew. The Shulchan Aruch makes no distinction between Greek and other foreign languages. Therefore, according to the Shulchan Aruch, one listening to a Megillah written and read in Greek would only fulfill his obligation if he understood Greek.

The Mishneh Torah (second chapter, fifth paragraph), Tur (chapter 690) and the Shulchan Aruch (chapter 690, twelfth paragraph) all state that if a person is half asleep while reading the Megillah, he still fulfills his obligation to read the Megillah. Only the Shulchan Aruch (chapter 690, twelfth paragraph) refers to the individual

who hears the Megillah while he is half asleep. In this case, the Shulchan Aruch maintains that the person does not fulfill his obligation.

The Mishneh Torah (second chapter, fifth and sixth paragraphs), Tur (chapter 690) and the Shulchan Aruch (chapter 690, thirteenth paragraph) all maintain that a person who writes a Megillah by reading the verses from a Megillah that is complete at the time of the copying, fulfills his obligation provided that it is his intention to do so. The Tur and Shulchan Aruch give no further details on this matter. The Mishneh Torah (second chapter, sixth paragraph), however, states: "If his intention is to fulfill his duty not with this reading, but with a subsequent reading from the copy that he is writing, he has not fulfilled his duty."

The Mishneh Torah gives another detail concerning the reading of the Megillah not mentioned in either the Shulchan Aruch or Tur. This deals with the proper order of reading the verses. Although all three sources give the case of verses read in the wrong order, only the Mishneh Torah (second chapter, second paragraph) gives the following halachah:

If one finds that the congregation has already read the first half of the Megillah, he should not say, "I will now read the last half with the congregation, and then go back and read the first half by myself," because that would be reading it in wrong order. Instead, he should read it all from beginning to end in the right order.

The Mishneh Torah, like the Tur and Shulchan Aruch states that even if one makes a mistake in reading the Megillah, he still fulfills his obligation since meticulous reading is not required. The Mishneh Torah (second chapter, seventh paragraph) explains that the mistake it is referring to is when a word is mispronounced. The Tur (chapter 690) and the Shulchan Aruch (chapter 690, fourteenth paragraph), however, make the stipulation that the mistake can only be one "where the language and meaning are one" (i.e. remain unchanged in spite of the error in reading). To explain this point, both sources relate the story of the two students sitting before Rav, one reading Yehudim and the other reading Yehudiyim. Only the Tur, however, mentions directly that this story is from the Palestinian Talmud and gives the names of the two students, Rav Yitzchak bar Aba and Rav Chananel.

The Tur (chapter 690) states that it is necessary to say the ten sons of Haman in one breath. It then proceeds with the halachah, attributed to the Palestinian Talmud, that it is necessary to say the word "ten" with the ten sons of Haman (Esther 9:7-10) in one breath. This second opinion is accepted as authoritative by the Tur, and it is also the view found in both the Mishneh Torah (second chapter, twelfth paragraph) and the Shulchan Aruch (chapter 690, fifteenth paragraph). No reason is given for this halachah in the Tur. Both the Mishneh Torah and the Shulchan Aruch, however, explain this practice as a way of proclaiming that the ten sons of Haman were all

killed and hanged simultaneously.

The Mishneh Torah does not relate that one should say the passage "Cursed is Haman, blessed is Mordechai . . . ." Although the Tur (chapter 690) and the Shulchan Aruch (chapter 690, sixteenth paragraph) both state that one should say this passage, there is a slight variation in passages. Whereas the Shulchan Aruch says: ". . . cursed are all idol worshippers, blessed is all Israel," the Tur renders this part as ". . . cursed are all the wicked, blessed are all the righteous." The Tur bases its version of the passage on the Palestinian Talmud.

The Mishneh Torah (second chapter, twelfth paragraph) and the Shulchan Aruch (chapter 690, sixteenth paragraph) state that the Megillah is to be spread out and read like a letter. Although the Tur mentions this custom, it attributes its practice only to Ashkenazim (chapter 690). The Mishneh Torah and Shulchan Aruch, however, specifically state that it is the custom in all Israel. The Tur attributes another practice to the Sephardim. According to this custom, one reads the Megillah as a Torah scroll, only opening the column that is being read.

Unlike the Shulchan Aruch (chapter 690, eighteenth paragraph) which states one view on the question of whether or not it is necessary to secure a quorum of ten men for the reading of the Megillah, the Tur (chapter 690) lists several opinions. The first opinion presented states that since it is of central importance that the Megillah is read at

its appropriate time (i.e. on the fourteenth of Adar), they should read it even if it is read individually. According to Rabbi Yitzchak Alfasi and Rabbenu Tam, it is not necessary to try to secure ten men for the reading, for a priori they may read it individually. In Halachot Gedolot, however, it is stated that the Megillah should only be read after a quorum of ten men is present. According to Rav Amram, however, it is necessary to try to secure ten men. If it is impossible to assemble ten men, then they may read it individually. Rav Amram's opinion is accepted by Rabbenu Asher and is authoritative for the Tur. The Shulchan Aruch also accepts this opinion, but in stating it refers to both the fourteenth and fifteenth of Adar.

An interesting paragraph is included in the Mishneh Torah (second chapter, eighteenth paragraph) which illustrates the special nature of the Megillah and Purim. Maimonides states:

In messianic times all the Prophetic Books and the Writings will cease to be used—except the Book of Esther. For this will continue to endure, just as the five books of the Law and the rules of the Oral Law will never be rescinded. And so, although all memory of ancient troubles will disappear, in accordance with the verse, "Because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hidden from mine eyes" (Is. 65:16), the days of Purim will not cease to be observed, as it is said, "And that these days of Purim should not fail from among the Jews, nor the memorial of them perish from their seed" (Esther 9:28).

An interesting difference that exists between the Mishneh Torah, Tur and Shulchan Aruch on the reading of

the Megillah is the number of references to women. The Mishneh Torah (first chapter, first paragraph) only mentions women in the list of those who are obligated to read (i.e., listen to) the Megillah. The Tur goes into greater detail concerning women and the reading of the Megillah. In explaining why women do not fulfill the obligation of reading the Megillah in behalf of men, the Tur (chapter 689) mentions that women are not obligated to fulfill a positive, time oriented commandment nor do they count in the required quorum of ten men. The Shulchan Aruch gives the greatest detail concerning women and the reading of the Megillah. References usually tend to limit their religious role. Besides women not fulfilling the obligation in behalf of men, the Shulchan Aruch mentions, for example, that "an objection should be raised to those who read the Megillah to women in a foreign language" (chapter 690, eleventh paragraph).

## NOTES

1) Although this halachah is stated in Megillat Ta'anit, an alternate view is presented in Bayit Chadash where it is stated that fasting before Chanukah is forbidden. Even so, the author of Bayit Chadash, Joel Sirkes, acknowledges that fasting before Chanukah instead of Erev Rosh Chodesh is practiced. In any case, Joel Sirkes states that fasting before Chanukah should not be initiated any place not already accustomed to the practice, (cited in Magen David).

2) The "Fast of Esther" would generally begin at dawn. However, there were those who fasted the preceding night as well, (Knesset Hagedolah cited in Magen Avraham).

3) A fast, as a rule, should not be fixed on Erev Shabbat (Friday) out of respect for the Sabbath, (Bet Yosef, Magid Mishneh cited in Magen David).

4) "People who are well" refers even to the wayfarer for whom the fast is difficult, (Bet Yosef, Shibolei Leket cited in Magen Avraham).

5) In Ture Zahav an objection is raised to Isserles' interpretation that those who ate on a Thursday in celebration of a b'rit milah, when the Thursday was also the "Fast of Esther," fast on Friday. Reference is made to

Bet Yosef in the name of Hagahot Maimuniot that when Purim is on Sunday one fasts on Thursday, but not on Friday in respect of the Sabbath. Although fasting on Erev Shabbat is supported in the Tur on the grounds that "men of good deeds" did such, Ture Zahav maintains that the argument presented in Bet Yosef against fasting on Erev Shabbat because it would diminish rejoicing in honor of the Sabbath is the position to be followed.

6) It is explained that three days of fasting are Monday, Thursday and the following Monday after Purim, (Bet Yosef, Chapter 429 cited in Ba'er Hetev).

7) Joy must be increased for the community when the month of Adar arrives. If a lawsuit exists between a Jew and a non-Jew, it should be settled in court during the month of Adar (Meir of Rothenburg). Furthermore, in the case of a leap year, the halachah is to observe Purim in Second Adar, (cited in Magen Avraham).

8) It is specified in Hagahot Minhagim that a convert who was converted before sunrise is exempt from reading the Megillah at night, for the main emphasis for the reading of the Megillah is for during the day, (cited in Magen Avraham).

9) Rashi explains that the repetition of the Megillah is in remembrance of later oppressed generations who day



and night would call out the miracle of Purim, (cited in Magen David).

10) Unlike the "Keriat Shema" which could only be said until midnight, the reading of the Megillah carried no such restriction, (Rabbi Shimshon cited in Sefer Mitzvot Gadol). Since the emphasis of the mitzvah to read the Megillah is for the daytime, the halachah to read it at night should not be made into an ordeal of great difficulty or a matter of the greatest concern, (cited in Magen Avraham). In understanding this reasoning, it should be kept in mind that the Mishnah sanctions reading the Megillah during the entire day ("Megillah" 2:5-6), but it makes no mention of reading it during the night.

11) According to the Gemara, work is postponed for the reading of the Megillah. If it is impossible to do both, proclaiming the miracle (i.e. reading the Megillah) takes precedence. Talmud Torah takes precedence over work, but it also is postponed for the reading of the Megillah, (cited in Magen Avraham).

12) The reading of the Megillah supercedes the "study of the Torah" in public, (Bet Yosef, Bayit Chadash cited in Magen Avraham).

13) This is based on the rabbinic concept that the study of Torah is equal in merit to all of the other mitzvot, (Mishnah "Pe'ah" 1:1).

14) A distinction is made between a met mitzvah in a field and one in a city. In the former case, it is necessary to attend to the body due to the principle of "honoring human beings." (As suggested in Magen Avraham, the body left in a field could be eaten by dogs.) In the latter case, in a town or city, where the body could be properly attended to, often by relatives; reading of the Megillah is not postponed, (cited in Magen David).

15) If it is close to nightfall, one should read the Megillah since it is possible to bury the met mitzvah at night. On the other hand, if it is impossible to perform the burial afterwards, because of the fear of robbers, then the reading of the Megillah is certainly superceded, (cited in Magen Avraham).

When a b'rit milah and the reading of the Megillah coincide and there is time for both, the reading of the Megillah takes precedence because it proclaims the miracle of Purim. However, if there is not time for both, then the b'rit milah is performed first at its appropriate time. The reason for this is that b'rit milah is a mitzvah of the Torah and therefore takes precedence over a rabbinic injunction such as the reading of the Megillah, (explan-

ation of Rabbenu Chananel cited in Ba'er Hetev). But in Terumat Hadeshen the opposite view is presented. Here it is directed that when there is time the b'rit milah should take precedence and when there is not time for both, the reading of the Megillah comes first. According to Magen Avraham the reasoning behind this latter view is that it is possible to perform a circumcision on the ninth day, thus the reading of the Megillah should take precedence.

16) In Magen David it is stated that Rabbi Moses Isserles' gloss contradicts itself. Isserles first states that if it is impossible to do both (bury a met mitzvah and read the Megillah), then one attends to a met mitzvah since the rest of the mitzvot take precedence over the reading of the Megillah. But the meaning of Isserles' last statement that a met mitzvah is first only if it is possible to read the Megillah afterwards is a contradiction to his previous statement, for it means that the reading of the Megillah precedes the rest of the mitzvot.

17) In Esther 9:18 it is explained that killing lasted an extra day in the capital city of Shushan and thus feasting and gladness took place a day later on the fifteenth of Adar. Then in the following verse it is stated: "Therefore do the Jews of the villages, that dwell in the unwallled towns, make the fourteenth day of the month Adar a day of gladness and feasting...." From this, it was possible

to infer that "walled" cities did not celebrate on the fourteenth of Adar, but on the fifteenth of Adar like in Shushan. Our sages used this logic at a time when the land of Israel was destroyed and desolate. Knowing that places in the land of Israel had at one time been walled (fortified) they felt that honor and merit could be bestowed upon the land of Israel by having its one time fortified cities observe Purim on the fifteenth of Adar. This observance would elevate these cities as places of distinction since they would be celebrating Purim on the fifteenth of Adar, the supposed date when the celebration after the fighting took place in the capital city Shushan. By referring back to the days of Joshua the son of Nun, any walled city in the land of Israel since the time of the first Israelite conquest would be included, (based in part on Magen David).

18) Although many states may have built walls around their cities before settling them for protection during a war, this was apparently not the usual case. It was more common for houses to be built and a city to be inhabited before a wall was built around it, (Rabbenu Asher cited in Magen David).

19) There is a difference of opinion on the matter of distance. Unlike the Shulchan Aruch, Bet Yosef and Magid Mishneh state that it is possible for a village to

be farther away than a mile from a city and still read the Megillah like that particular city on the fifteenth of Adar, (cited in Magen Avraham).

20) In Tiberias the Megillah is read on both the fourteenth and fifteenth of Adar since it is uncertain whether the sea (of Galilee) should be considered the equivalent to a wall, (cited in Magen Avraham).

21) It is the customary practice to rejoice and to distribute gifts to the poor on both the fourteenth and fifteenth of Adar, (Shilte (Ha)Giborim, 25 cited in Magen Avraham).

22) If the blessing over the Megillah is said on the fourteenth of Adar in places that also read the Megillah on the fifteenth of Adar, the blessing is not repeated on the fifteenth. Such a repetition of the blessing should be avoided since it would be a berachah levatalah, a vain benediction, (cited in Magen David).

23) The time of reading the Megillah referred to here is during the day, (cited in Magen Avraham).

24) If one returns to his city on the fourteenth of Adar, but after the reading of the Megillah has already begun, he must wait until the fifteenth of Adar to

participate in the reading. In fulfilling one's duty of listening to the Megillah, one must hear the reading from its beginning, (cited in Magen David).

25) If the fifteenth of Adar is on the Sabbath, on the preceeding Sabbath (the eighth of Adar) the Torah portion is "Zachor" (Deuteronomy 25:17-19) and the Haftarah reading is "Pakadeti" (I Samuel 15:2-34) (Bet Yosef). However, Bach wrote in the name of Levi ben Chaviv that the same Haftarah portion "Pakadeti" is read on the following Sabbath which would be the fifteenth of Adar, (cited in Magen Avraham).

26) Rabbi Levi the son of Chaviv maintained that the Purim meal should take place on the Sabbath rather than be postponed until Sunday. It was his practice to have the Purim meal on the Sabbath when the fifteenth of Adar occurred on the Sabbath. He also sent portions on the Sabbath since the food was from the Purim meal, (Bayit Chadash and Rabbi David the son of Zimra cited in Magen Avraham). According to Magen Avraham, however, Rabbi Levi's evidence for his position is not convincing. In addition, we do not have the authority to disagree with the position held in the Jerusalem Talmud.

27) A quorum of ten men should be present for this reading of the Megillah, (cited in Magen Avraham).

28) In this case, on the fourteenth day of Adar, one

should say the blessing over the Megillah, (cited in Ba'er Hetev).

29) In this situation, on the fifteenth of Adar, one should read the Megillah without reciting the blessing over it, (Bayit Chadash cited in Magen Avraham).

30) Women must read the Megillah at home before the maidens, (cited in Magen Avraham). The implication of this is that the women were discouraged from attending synagogue to hear the reading of the Megillah. In Ba'er Hetev, however, it is stated that in some places it is customary for the maidens to accompany the women to the synagogue to hear the reading of the Megillah.

31) Karo appears to hold that even slaves who have not been freed are obligated to participate in the reading of the Megillah. (Bet Yosef cited in Magen Avraham).

32) According to the Gemara, it is questionable whether or not a person who listens to a man who is deaf fulfills his obligation (even) ex post facto, (Bayit Chadash cited in Magen Avraham).

33) The reason for this is that a woman's reading of the Megillah before the men would be considered invalid out of respect for the congregation, (cited in Magen Avraham).

34) The actual blessing is worded "to read the Megillah." Since women, however, were not commanded to read the Megillah, the blessing was changed to "to listen to the Megillah."

35) Women are not obligated to read the Megillah since they can not fulfill the obligation in behalf of the men, (cited in Magen Avraham in the name of Mordekhai ben Hillel).

36) Even according to the one who says that women fulfill the obligation of reading the Megillah in behalf of the men, it is agreed that one whose genitals are concealed and one who is half a slave does not fulfill the obligation for even his own kind. Individuals of these two types are considered inferior to women, (cited in Magen Avraham).

37) This is according to the one who says that women can not fulfill the obligation in behalf of the men, (cited in Magen Avraham). According to this view, women must listen to the reading of the Megillah rather than read it for themselves. One whose genitals are concealed and one who is half a slave, because they do not fulfill the obligation in behalf of their own kind, must likewise listen to the reading of the Megillah.

38) Another interpretation, however, states that it



is better if one reads for the congregation that has fewer than ten men. Proverbs 14:28 ("In the multitude of the people is the king's glory") is used to support this view. Although reading for the congregation is stated as the preferable choice, each person may read for himself if he so desires, (Magen Avraham).

39) Very young children should not be taken to the synagogue lest they disturb the comprehension of those listening to the reading, (cited in Magen David).

40) In the Tur it is stated that one may read the Megillah either standing or sitting. The text continues by explaining that the meaning of this is that it is ex post facto. If it were a priori, however, one would not be permitted to read sitting. In the Jerusalem Talmud it is maintained that even if it is a priori, one may read sitting. According to Maimonides' Mishneh Torah, one may not read a priori sitting in a congregation out of respect for the congregation. Apparently, the reason for the above statement in the Jerusalem Talmud is because it is referring to the case in which one reads as an individual outside of the congregation, (cited in Magen David).

41) In Magen Avraham it is mentioned that Jews living in European states were accustomed to the cantor always reading the Megillah without being asked to do so first.

42) If the reader left out words that do not adversely affect the reading (i.e. the meaning of the text), he has fulfilled his obligation, (Shilte (Ha)Giborim, chapter 142 cited in Magen Avraham).

43) The reason he is not to read is because if he did, the listener might direct his attention to him rather than to the leader, (Bet Yosef, Orchot Chayim). The implication of this is that this individual will be able to listen to the reader even though he reads to himself from his own text, (cited in Magen Avraham).

44) This refers only to the reader. If the listener, therefore, talks and does not listen, he does not fulfill his obligation, (Bet Yosef, chapter 692 cited in Magen Avraham).

45) If this second verse is not read until after he has finished reading the Megillah, he does not fulfill his obligation, (cited in Magen David).

46) This was previously stated in this chapter in paragraph three. It is suggested that the reason it is emphasized here is to imply that even the one listening to the individual who reads by heart does not fulfill

his obligation, (cited in Magen Avraham).

47) According to the Gemara, one who does not understand Hebrew still fulfills his obligation by listening to the Megillah read in Hebrew because he fulfills the commandments of reading of the Megillah and of making public the miracle, (cited in Magen David).

48) This applies provided that he is able to read that script, (cited in Magen Avraham).

49) Even if they read the Megillah on both the fourteenth and fifteenth of Adar, it is forbidden to read it to women in a foreign language, (cited in Magen Avraham).

50) It is explained in the Responsa of Rabbi Shlomo ben Adret that if the listener does not hear as much as one word from the Megillah, he does not fulfill his duty. However, if he hears every word but does not direct his mind to every word, he still fulfills his obligation, (cited in Ba'er Hetev).

51) The walls of the synagogue were generally quite thin and thus, if someone were outside but close-by to the synagogue, he would be within listening range of the reading within.

52) An example of a mistake which would not be overlooked would be reading "sit" rather than "sat," (Bet Yosef, Orchot Chayim cited in Magen Avraham).

53) One is to take a breath and read these verses without stopping between the verses (Match Moshe, Darche Moshe, Tur). When one reads "On that night could not the king sleep" (Esther 6:1) he should raise his voice because this was the root of the miracle, (Morenu HaRav Rabbi Jacob Levi). When one reads "this letter" (Esther 9:26) he should shake the Megillah, (Match Moshe cited in Magen Avraham).

54) The meaning of this is that one unrolls only what he has read. According to the Tur, however, it is the opposite. One unrolls it entirely and reads it like a letter meaning that one unrolls the scroll first before reading. The order in the Tur is the customary way, (cited in Magen David).

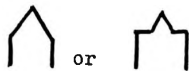
55) After rolling it up completely it is set down on its place and after that the blessing is said, (Mozne Tzedek, Match Moshe, Morenu HaRav Rabbi Jacob Levi). When the congregation makes noise at hearing Haman's name read, the cantor must be quiet and wait until the noise has ceased so that all may hear him reading the Megillah, (Morenu HaRav Rabbi Jacob Levi cited in Magen Avraham).

56) If desired, a person may recite the blessing and then roll up the Megillah, (Knesset Hagedolah, the end of Hilchot Yom Tov cited in Magen Avraham).

57) The scribes must make (draw) the first line straight across and then the scribes are able to work the other lines of the text in such a manner as to follow suit (i.e., parallel to the first line), (cited in Magen Avraham).

58) It is only necessary to have one straight line to serve as a guideline for the writing of the first line. The first line serves as a guide for the other written lines, which do not need guidelines drawn for them, (cited in Magen Avraham).

59) The "Chet" should be as follows:



or

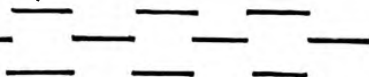
60) According to another interpretation, one must utter every letter before writing it only if one writes it by heart. This, therefore, does not apply to the Megillah since it is forbidden to write it by heart. Support for this view is given in the Tur and in Sefer Mitzvot Gadol, (cited in Magen Avraham).

61) If he does not have another Megillah or he already read in it, (cited in Magen Avraham).

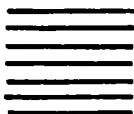
62) The reason seems to be that there was a

difference of opinion between the first great rabbis over whether to place a blank sheet at the beginning or at the end of the Megillah. In response to this controversy, it became the practice not to place a blank sheet at the end, (cited in Magen David).

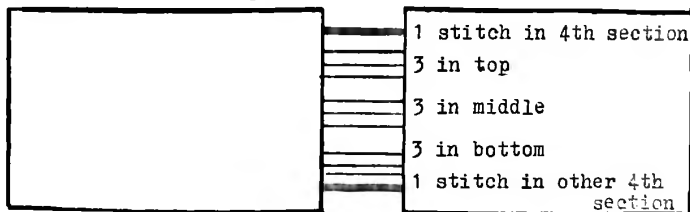
63) The following diagram may be seen in concrete form in Judges, chapter 5:



64) See Esther, chapter nine for this pattern:



65) The following diagram illustrates where the stitches are to be placed:



66) At least a quorum of ten men, (cited in Magen Avraham).

67) They should intend to refer the blessing "Who has kept us in life" also for sending portions (Purim presents) and the Purim meal since they are also mitzvot. According to Magen Avraham, the intention is to refer the blessing "Who has kept us in life" read during the day because they both take place during the day. However, if one does not have a Megillah, he should not say the blessing "Who has kept us in life" over sending portions and the Purim meal since no blessing is fixed for them, (cited in Magen Avraham).

68) The reason is because the emphasis for the mitzvah of reading the Megillah is for during the day, (cited in Magen Avraham).

69) Since they have already said liturgical poems, (Levush cited in Magen Avraham).

70) The reader himself is permitted to interrupt in a case just as at the reading of the "Keriat Shema," (in the Gemara, second chapter of tractate "Berachot" cited in Magen Avraham).

71) This refers to the blessings over the Megillah, (cited in Magen David).

72) If he says the blessing for women, he should say

"to hear the Megillah" (Bayit Chadash). But he should not repeat the blessing "Who has kept us in life," (cited in Ba'er Metev).

73) After he has completed the evening service, (cited in Ba'er Metev).

74) According to Morenu HaRav Rabbi Jacob Levi, even a person who is ill, unless it would be dangerous to his health, should not eat before the reading of the Megillah, (cited in Magen Avraham). According to Magen David, not eating before the reading of the Megillah implies that it is likewise forbidden to go to sleep before it is read.

75) The "Kaddish Shalem" is said after the Amidah but before the reading of the Megillah according to Minhagim, Morenu HaRav Rabbi Jacob Levi in Teshuvah, chapter fifty - six in the name of Rokeach, Tosafot, fourth page and Hagahot Maimoni. However, it is stated in Azudah written in the name of Rokeach and in Abudraham that the "Chatzi Kaddish" is said (instead of the "Kaddish Shalem"). In contrast to this, Magen Avraham states that in those lands where it is the practice to say the "Kaddish Shalem," they should say the "Kaddish Shalem" without "Titkabel" after the reading of the Megillah, (cited in Magen Avraham).

76) During the morning service one does not take off



his phylacteries until after the reading of the Megillah, (Mateh Moshe, Minhagin cited in Magen Avraham).

77) Even the poor person who is supported by charity is obligated to give, (cited in Magen Avraham).

78) One should not give before Purim lest they eat it before Purim, (cited in Magen David).

79) In the European states they gave during the morning service before the reading of the Megillah, (cited in Magen Avraham).

80) In Tosefot Yom Tov the Rabbinic authorities on halachic questions differ on the matter of age. Some say it should be thirteen. According to Hagahot Maimuni, both women and minors are obligated to give, (cited in Magen Avraham).

81) One is not permitted to use money that one intended to give on Purim for another purpose, (Bet Yosef in the name of Hagahot Asheri cited in Magen Avraham).

82) In the Tur it is stated that even the townspeople are not able to change. However, Mordechai states that the townspeople are able to change.

83) But a priori, the practice to give to Gentiles should not be established, (cited in Magen Avraham).

84) This applies even if it is the evening of the fourteenth of Adar, (cited in Magen Avraham).

85) There have been many different explanations about this halachah. In Magen David the view is presented that we should give excessive praise for the harsh punishment that God decreed on Haman as well as for all the Jews being saved including Mordechai, who was then blessed with greatness. Thus, just as the punishment against Haman had been excessive, the goodness that befell Mordechai and the Jews was in extreme abundance. The reason for drinking is to express praise for the downfall of Haman as well as the rise to greatness of Mordechai. By continuing to drink until one is unable to distinguish between "Cursed is Haman" and "Blessed is Mordechai" the expression of joyous praise for this shall not stop prematurely.

86) There are those who say that this would be when he does not know how to devise that "Cursed is Haman" is in gematria (use of numbers as letters) equal to "Blessed is Mordechai," (cited in Magen Avraham).

87) The intention of this is that he should fast until after the minchah prayer and after that he should eat,

(cited in Magen Avraham).

88) Otherwise, it would interfere with the honor of the Sabbath since one would not have a sufficient appetite for the Sabbath.

89) Foods made of seeds are eaten the first night. And there are those who do not eat meat at night so that they do not mistakenly say that it is the Purim meal, (Kol Bo cited in Magen Avraham).

90) This refers to monetary damage. However, if he hurts his neighbor's body; he is obligated to compensate for the injury, (cited in Magen Avraham).

91) If one intended to cause damage, normally he would be obligated to make restitution, (cited in Magen Avraham).

92) If one forgets to include the prayer "For the miracles" in the Grace after Meals, he must repeat it with "For the miracles;" for he must eat a meal and, consequently, say the grace with "For the miracles," (cited in Magen Avraham). According to Magen Avraham, however, one never needs to repeat it, for one is not obligated to eat bread on Purim, (and only a meal with bread requires the full Grace with the prayer "For the miracles.")

93) Meat which is cooked and suitable for eating,  
(Morenu HaRav Rabbi Jacob Levi cited in Magen Avraham).

94) This does not refer to clothing or other types  
of things, but rather any type of food, (Terumat Hadeshen  
cited in Magen David).

95) According to Magen Avraham, someone who eats at  
his friend's table and does not prepare anything is exempt  
from sending portions.

96) This refers to portions for the poor, (cited in  
Magen Avraham).

97) According to Magen Avraham, unless a woman is a  
widow, it is sufficient that her husband send portions  
for her to several people. Of course, there are those  
who follow the strict interpretation.

98) The gift might be considered money corresponding  
to gifts sent by the groom to the would be bride for a  
betrothal, (cited in Magen Avraham).

99) It would appear that business is permitted since  
it is the business owner's source of joy, (cited in  
Magen David).

100) According to Maimonides in his Mishneh Torah,

the meaning of this is that even in a place where it is the practice to do work; the one who does work will never experience any trace of blessing. In Bet Yosef, however, the meaning of "will never experience any trace of blessing" applies only to one who works in a place where it is the practice not to work on Purim, (cited in Magen Avraham).

101) For example, one plants a seed and it does not sprout, (Bet Yosef cited in Magen Avraham).

102) In a place where it is the practice to visit the cemetery on the seventh day to wail, it is forbidden on Purim except for the mourner himself to go there with one cantor to say for him the hashkavah prayer, (the prayer for the repose of the dead). This applies even on Erev Purim, so that the world would not think that mourning stops because of Purim, (cited in Magen Avraham).

103) According to Magen Avraham, however, mourning practices should be observed except for taking off one's shoes and sitting on the floor, and even more so, it is forbidden to experience any type of rejoicing, (cited in Magen Avraham).

104) He should pray in his home and afterwards go to the synagogue to hear the reading of the Megillah, (Tur).

The implication of Tur's words, however, is that he should go to the entire morning service rather than just for the reading of the Megillah as in the evening, (cited in Magen Avraham).

105) This applies even if the death occurred on Purim itself, (cited in Magen Avraham).

106) According to Morenu HaRav Rabbi Jacob Levi and Sefer Chasidim, the mourner should not send anything joyous to others nor should they send the like to him, (cited in Magen Avraham).

107) It is permissible to send gifts to the mourner in a place where it is the custom to greet him, (cited in Magen Avraham).

108) Contrary to other opinions, Magen Avraham states that the onen is exempt from the silent prayer and the "Keriat Shema." Likewise, it is stated that even though an onen heard the Megillah in a congregation; he should read it again after the burial since it is clear that an onen is exempt from all mitzvot, i.e., when he heard the Megillah as an onen, he was not obligated to listen to it.

109) As it is said on the second day of a holiday

when he buries him and on the Sabbath when he waits for nightfall on the Sabbath limit (bounds), he is exempt from all of them. Then how much the more so in the case just mentioned on Purim, (cited in Magen Avraham).

110) Whether it is the fourteenth and fifteenth of first Adar or second Adar, funeral eulogies and fastings are forbidden. There are others who say, however, that funeral eulogies and fastings fall into the same category as reading the Megillah and sending gifts to the poor. When there is both first and second Adar, funeral eulogies and fasting are permitted in first Adar. Therefore, the practice not to have funeral eulogies and fasting, according to this second opinion, would only be on second Adar on Purim when the Megillah is read and gifts are sent to the poor, (cited in Magen David).

111) They do not say the prayer "For the miracles" since they do not read the Megillah, (cited in Magen Avraham).

## A LIST OF UNTRANSLATED HEBREW TERMS

- AMIDAH. The silent prayer which is a central portion of each daily service. Literally: standing; and it is traditionally recited standing and in silence.
- ARAVIT PRAYER. The traditional evening service.
- B'RIT MILAH. The circumcision ceremony. Literally: the covenant of circumcision.
- CHATZI KADDISH. The half kaddish recited by a reader between sections of a service.
- GEMATRIA. A form of interpretation used in Talmudic, Midrashic and kabbalistic writings where the hidden meaning of a Biblical or other text is revealed by determining and interpreting the numerical equivalents of the Hebrew letters.
- HALACHIC. Referring to Jewish legal tradition.
- HALLEL. The Psalms of praise (Psalms 113-118) recited on festive days but they are not recited on an ordinary Sabbath or on the High holidays.
- HASHKAVAH PRAYER. The prayer for the repose of the dead.
- HAVDALAH. A prayer which marks the end of the Sabbath and festivals. Literally: distinction.
- KADDISH SHALEM. (OR TITKABEL) Full kaddish recited at the end of major sections of a service.
- MAMZER. The child born out of a union which is prohibited under penalty of death or karet; also the child of a mamzer.
- MET MITZVAH. An unattended, unidentified assumed Jewish corpse for whom burial is obligatory on everybody.
- MINCHAH PRAYER. The traditional afternoon service.
- ONEN. A mourner before the burial.
- PIDYON HABEN. Redemption of the first born male child by a Kohen.
- ROSH CHODESH. New Moon; the beginning of each month in the Hebrew calendar, and also the thirtieth day of the month which has thirty days.



TACHANUN PRAYER. A petition which follows the Amidah on most weekdays.

TALMUD TORAH. The study of Torah.

TERUMAH. "Heave-offering" A contribution, a sacred offering which is separated as a gift for the priests.

TITKABEL. See Kaddish Shalem.

YEHUDIM, YEHUDIYIM. Two different ways of rendering the word "Jews" in Hebrew.

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Bet Yosef. Commentary on the Tur by Joseph Karo. 1488-1575. Palestine.

ChananeI ben Chushiel. 11th century. North Africa.

Chidushe Agudah. Alexander HaCohen Süsslein. 14th century. Frankfort.

Darche Moshe. Commentary on the Tur by Moses Isserles. 1520-1572. Cracow.

David the son of Zimra. 1479-1589. Born in Spain, went to Egypt, died in Safed.

Eliyahu Mizrahi. 1455-1525. Chief Rabbi of Ottoman Empire after Capsalil. His works include Responsa, Commentary on Sefer Mitzvot Gadol and Super-commentary on Rashi.

Hagahot Asheri. Anonymous. According to the conjecture of Rabbi Israel of Kramzir of Austria, 14th-15th centuries, the notes on Rabbenu Asher were mostly taken from Or Zarua by Rabbi Isaac of Vienna.

Hagahot Maimuni(ot). Anonymous. According to Maimonides, it may possibly be attributed to Rabbi Meir HaCohen, 13th century.

Hagahot Minhagim. Anonymous

Halachot Gedolot. Simon Keyyara. 9th century.

Hillel ben Naphtali. Bet Hillel. 1615-1690.

Isaac ben Jacob Alfasi. 1013-1103. N. Africa and Spain. Author of Halachot, Responsa.

- Isaac ben Sheshet Barfat. 1326-1408. Spain, Algeria.
- Israel ben Petahiah Isserlein. 15th century. Marburg and Neustadt. Author of Terumat HaDeshen: Pesakim u-Ketabim and Responsa.
- Jacob Baruch Landau. Agur. 15-16th centuries. Poland.
- Jacob ben Asher. 14th century. Spain. Author of the Tur (Arba'ah Turim) as well as Kitzur Piske haRosh (summarizing his father's work). He was the son of Asher ben Jehiel.
- Jacob ben Meir. 1100-1171. Troyes. Tosafist, grandson of Rashi.
- Jacob ben Moses Halevi Moelln. 1365-1427. Mayence. His Sefer MaMaril deals with ritual observance of German Jews.
- Joel Sirkes. 1561-1640. Poland. Author of Bayit Chadash.
- Joseph ben Ephraim Caro. 1488-1575. Spain-Palestine. Author of Bet Yosef, the Shulchan Aruch and Kesef Mishneh on the Mishneh Torah.
- Judah ben Eliezer Minz. 1408-1500. Italy.
- Kneset Hagedolah. Written by Haim Benveniste. 1603-1673. Constantinople.
- Kol Bo. 1490. Anonymous.
- Levi the son of Chaviv. 1480-1545. Saloniki, Greece.
- Levush(or Levushim). Mordechai Jaffee. 1530-1612. Poland.
- Machzor Vitry. Written by Rabben Simchah son of Samuel of Vitry. first half of the 12th century.
- Magen Avraham. Commentary on "Orach Chayim" of the Shulchan Aruch by Abraham Gombiner. 1635-1683. Poland.
- Magen David. Commentary on the Shulchan Aruch more commonly called Ture Zahav by David ben Samuel HaLevi. 1586-1667. Poland.
- Magid Mishneh. Commentary on the Mishneh Torah by Yomtov Vidal. 14th century. Catalonia.
- Mathe Moshe. Moses son of Abraham Mat. second half of 16th century.

Megillat Ta'anit. Ancient text which lists joyous days for Jews during Hellenistic and Roman times when fasting was not to occur. See Megillat Ta'anit with Introduction and Notes, Lurie, B.Z., Jerusalem, 1964 (see also HUCA VIII-IX 1931-32, H. Lichtenstein.)

Meir of Rothenburg. 1215-1293. Rothenburg (Germany). Author of Tosafot on several tractates, Responsa and Hilchot Berachot.

Minhagim. Anonymous work on local customs.

Mishneh Torah. See Moses ben Maimon.

Mordechai. Short for Sefer Ha-Mordechai. Written by Mordechai ben Hillel. 13th century. Germany.

Moses ben Maimon (Maimonides). 1135-1204. Born in Cordova, Spain, died in Cairo, Egypt. Author of Commentary on the Mishna, Mishneh Torah and Responsa Sefer Ha-Mitzvot.

Moses Isserles. 1520-1572. Cracow. Wrote Darcho Moshe on the Tur and "Mappah" (commentary and notes on the Shulchan Aruch.)

Nimuke Yosef. Joseph ibn Chabiba. 14th century. Spain.

Nissim ben Reuben Gerondi (Rabbenu Nissim). 1340-1380. Barcelona. Commentary on Alfasi, responsa.

Orchot Chayim. Code of ritual law by Aaron Ha-Cohen. 14th century. Lunel, France.

Or Zaruah. A ritual code by Isaac ben Moses. 1200-1270. Vienna.

Rabbenu Asher. See Asher ben Yehiel.

Rabbenu Nissim. See Nissim ben Reuben Gerondi.

Rabbenu Tam. See Jacob ben Meir.

Rashi. See Solomon ben Isaac.

Rokeah. Eliezer ben Judah. 1176-1258. Worms.

Sefer Chasidim. Rabbi Judah ben Shmuel HeChasid. 12th century. Regensburg.

Sefer Mitzvot Gadol. Moses of Coucy. first half of 13th century. Germany.

Sefer Mitzvot Katan. Isaac of Corbeil. second half of 13th century. France.

Shibole Leket. Zedekiah son of Abraham the physician wrote this work on liturgy. 13th century.

Shilte (Ha) Giborim. Joshua Boaz Baruch. on Alfasi. 16th century.

Shlomo ben Adret. 1235-1310. Spain. Responsa, Torat haBayit haAruch, Abodath hakodesh.

Shulchan Aruch. See Joseph ben Ephraim Caro.

Solomon ben Isaac. 1040-1105. Troyes. Commentary on Talmud, Bible.

Terumat Hadeshen. See Israel ben Petahiah Isserlein.

Tosafot Yom Tov. Yom Tov Lipmann Heller (Halevi). 1579-1654. Austria, Poland and Russia.

Tur. See Jacob ben Asher

Ture Zahav. See Magen David

Yerucham ben Meshulam. 14th century. Provence.

Yitzchak bar Aba. Amora.

Yosef Kolon. 1420-1480. Italy. Foremost Talmudist in Italy during the 15th century.

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