
Essential Information for Organizers and Readers

Notes for Organizers

- In order to fulfill the commandment of hearing the megillah, the megillah must be read from a parchment, called a *klaf*, and not from a printed text.
- There should be one or two *gabbaiyot* standing at the table to help the readers and correct them if necessary.
- To fulfill the commandment of hearing the megillah, every word of the megillah must be heard correctly. Thus, readers should strive to pronounce each word clearly and correctly and *gabbaiyot* should correct readers' mistakes.
- Listeners should not say "*barchu u baruch shmo*" when hearing the blessings before or after the reading; they only say "*amen*." Remind people by making an announcement before the blessings.
- Announce that everyone needs to hear every word of the megillah and there should be no talking between the first and last blessings.

Notes for Readers

- The reader should not lean her hands or elbows on the reading table.
- From careful practice, many readers know their chapters almost by heart, and the reader should be careful to read from the *klaf* of the megillah and not from memory.
- Because a word may have been drowned out by over-eager Haman shouters, it is good practice for a reader to repeat the word before and the "Haman" again after the noise subsides.
- The following verses, due to their importance, are first read out loud in their entirety by the congregation and then repeated by the reader. The reader should pause before the verse, wait for the congregation to finish reading it and then read it herself and continue.

Chapter 2, verse 5:

Chapter 8, verse 15:

Chapter 8, verse 16:

Chapter 10, verse 3:

"אִישׁ יְהוּדִי הָיָה בְּשׁוֹשַׁן הַבֵּירָה..."

"וּמְרֹדֵכִי יִצְאֵל מִלִּפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ..."

"לַיהוּדִים הָיְתָה אוֹרֵה וְשִׂמְחָה..."

"כִּי מְרֹדֵכִי הָיְהוּדִי..."

- In chapter 9, it is customary for the names of the ten sons of Haman to be read in one breath. But the reader should take care not to slur the names, to ensure that all the words will be heard properly.
- There is continuing disagreement regarding two verses in the megillah as to whether one particular word written in the verse is correct. Thus, to satisfy all the opinions, readers following the Ashkenazic tradition generally read these words both possible ways. In the Sephardic tradition, only the word written in the text is read.

The reader can simply read the phrase containing the questionable word one way, and then repeat only the phrase the other way. Alternatively, she can read the entire verse twice, each time in accordance with one of the versions. In our megillah reading, we have repeated the phrase which contains the controversial word immediately after reading it the first time.

The verses and words are:

Chapter 8, verse 11: **l'harog or v'l'harog**

אֲשֶׁר נָתַן הַמֶּלֶךְ לַיהוּדִים | כְּל־עִיר־נֹעַר
 לְהַקְהֵל וְלַעֲמֹד עַל־נַפְשָׁם לְהַשְׁמִיד וְלִהְרֹג וְלִבְדֹּד
 אֶת־כָּל־חַיַּיִל עַם וּמְדִינָה הַצָּרִים אֵת־עַם טָרַף וְנִשְׁרָפִים
 וְשָׁלַלְם לְבוֹז :

Chapter 9, verse 2: **lifneihem vs bifneihem**

נִקְהָלוּ הַיהוּדִים בְּעֵינֵיהֶם בְּכָל־מְדִינֹת הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחֲשֹׁרוּשׁ
 לְשַׁלַּח יָד בַּמִּבְקָשׁ יִרְעֵתָם וְאִישׁ לְאֶעֱמֵד לְפָנֵיהֶם
 כִּי־נִפְלַח פְּחָדָם עַל־כָּל־הָעַמִּים :

- There are certain verses for which there are alternate tunes to the traditional Esther melody.
 - A number of verses which either allude to or refer explicitly to the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple or the destruction of the Jewish people are read in the tune of Eicha (Lamentations).

The following verses or phrases can be read in the Eicha tune. Communities differ as to which phrases they choose to read in this way:

Chapter 1, verse 7: phrase:

”וְכָל־יָמֵי שׁוֹנֵי־יָם”

Chapter 2, verse 6:

”אֲשֶׁר הִגְלָה מִירוּשָׁלַיִם עַם־הַגֹּלָה אֲשֶׁר הִגְלָתָה
 עַם יְכֻנְיָה מִן־לְיְהוּדָה אֲשֶׁר הִגְלָה נְבוּכַדְנֶצַּר
 מִן־לֶךְ בְּבָלִי:”

Chapter 3, verse 15: phrase:

”וְהָעִיר שׁוֹשָׁן נְבוֹכָה:”

Chapter 4, verse 1:

”וּמֶרְדֵּכַי יָדַע אֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר נַעֲשָׂה...”

Chapter 4, verse 3:

”אֲבָל גְּדוֹל לַיהוּדִים...”

Chapter 4, verse 16:

”אֲבֹתַי אֲבֹתַי:”

Chapter 8, verse 6: entire verse;

”כִּי אֵין יָכֹחַ אוֹכֵל...”

- The name of God is not mentioned anywhere in the Megillah and some commentators suggest that each time the text of the megillah reads “*hamelech*” (the king) without the name of Ahashueros, it is an allusion to God. There is a Hasidic custom to liturgically emphasize the word “*hamelech*” in the first verse of chapter 6. This verse marks God’s awakening in the megillah, since it is the beginning of Haman’s downfall, when Ahashueros enlists Haman to honor Mordechai.

Click here to listen to a version of this verse with the alternate tune.

”בְּלִילָה הַהוּא נִדְדָה שְׁנַת הַמָּלְךְ...”

- Some sing chapter 8, verses 15-16, each of which is read first by the congregation and then repeated by the reader, in a more festive tune than the traditional Esther trop to recognize the joyousness of Mordechai’s rise to power and the salvation of the Jews. In our version we have read it with the alternate tune.
- It is traditional to read the final verse of the megillah in an alternate tune that leads into the tune of the final blessing. We have read it with this alternate tune, and not the traditional trop.