

Q: Is the Minhag to make noise during the reading of the Megillah only when Haman's name is mentioned, or also when his wife and sons are mentioned?

A: According to the Shevet Musar, also for his wife and sons. Piskei Teshuvot 690:9. But in general, one should only make noise for Haman for a short amount of time and one should not disrupt the reading of the Megillah. Do not turn the essential into the unessential and the unessential into the essential (Ha-Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach did not make any noise at Haman's name, he did not even stamp his feet. Ve-Alehu Lo Yibol, Vol. 1 p. 246. See She'eilat Shlomo 1:276).

Honoring Torah Scholars on Purim

Q: Is it permissible to have a play on Purim in which are Torah scholars imitate?

A: One must be extremely cautious on Purim not to embarrass another person and all the more so not to embarrass Torah scholars (Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, scolded someone who dressed up on Purim as the Chief Rabbi, Ha-Rav Shlomo Goren. Rabbenu p. 130. And it is related that Maran Ha-Rav Kook said Divrei Torah on Purim in the same style and with the same emphasis as his Rav, the Netziv, but Rav Kook knew how to do so with respect and holiness, and did not imitate his voice. See Shut She'eilat Shlomo 1:285. 4:131).

Cross-Dressing for Purim

Q: Is it permissible for a man to dress as a woman for Purim?

A: Some authorities permit it, but most forbid it. It is therefore proper to refrain. Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim end of siman 696 and Mishnah Berurah ibid (Aruch Ha-Shulchan ibid. #12. Shut Yechaveh Da'at 2:50. Orchot Rabbenu 3:60. A close associate of the Chazon Ish entered his house on Purim with his 4-5 year old daughter wearing pants. The Chazon Ish said: This is education? Dinim Ve-Hanhagot of the Chazon Ish 22:10).

Toy Gun for Children

Q: It is permissible to buy a toy gun for children for Purim?

A: It is okay. During the course of the year, this is inappropriate, but it is not a problem on occasion.

Megillah Reading by Women

Q: Is it appropriate for women to organize a Megillah reading and read for themselves?

A: Certainly not. There are many problems with doing so. Some authorities rule that a woman should not read for herself but hear it from a man (Magen Avraham #689). There is also a doubt as to whether she can fulfill the Mitzvah for other women (Sha'ar Ha-Tziyun ibid.). There is also doubt as to the correct formula of the blessing (Shulchan Aruch ibid.). Furthermore, we should not change the established order of the prayers as they have been over the generations (Shut Rashba 1:323). Perhaps in doing so there is also an element of rebellion against the Halachah in doing so (see Shut Igrot Moshe, Orach Chaim 4:49). There is also a problem of immodesty even though they are alone (Shut Eretz Tzvi #12 of Ha-Rav Tzvi Schachter).

It is therefore preferable to act in the same manner as all of the wise and righteous women throughout the generations (Be-Ikvei Ha-Tzon, pp. 21-37 and Ha-Rav Yosef Soloveitchik in "Mi-Penini Ha-Rav", p. 68). There are many other blessings that women can recite throughout their lives without any problem, and may a blessing come upon them.

Drinking on Purim

Q: Is a person obligated to drink on Purim if it leads to stupidity?

A: No. The earlier Prophets only commanded us to rejoice in a manner that will lead us to show gratitude to Hashem, and not to behave with licentiousness and stupidity. Furthermore, we do not perform a Mitzvah through a transgression, such as missing Davening. Biur Halachah 695 in the name of the Meiri and Chayei Adam. Nimukei Yosef and Meharsha on Megillah 7b. Piskei Teshuvot 695:4. And therefore on Purim, one should merely drink a bit more than he is accustomed to (The Steipler related that one time he got drunk on Purim, and then decided to refrain from doing so again. Ashkavtei De-Rebbe Vol. 1, p. 164. See Shut She'eilat Shlomo 1:274, 286. 3:159. 4:130).

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