

## 'Amplifying' the Miracle

**CAN A SYNAGOGUE USE A MICROPHONE TO READ THE MEGILLA? HOW ABOUT ANSWERING AMEN, JOINING A MINYAN OR FULFILLING THE AUDIBLE MITZVOT VIA SKYPE, TELEPHONE OR OTHER VOICE-TRANSMITTING DEVICES?**

BY RABBI ARIEL OVADIA[1]

*Hearing the Megilla properly can be a real challenge in big synagogues or Yeshivas with large crowds. You don't have to be too creative to propose the use of a microphone, which would (al-*

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## From the Editor

We are pleased to present you with the *Adar 5777* edition of the **D'var Hashem**. In this issue, we examine the topic of electronic voice-transmission in *Halacha*, answer some relevant questions pertaining to the month of *Adar*, and present a *Dayan's* perspective as to whether an intoxicated individual must pay for the damage he has done. We offer a glimpse into the life of the great sage, scholar and author Ribbi Hayim Hizkiyahu MiDini זצ"ל (1833-1905), author of *Sdei Hemed* and late rabbi of Hevron. Finally, we've included some of the inspiring words of HaRav Shmuel Pinchasi שליט"א, from his renowned work "*Imre Shefer*".

*Baruch Hashem*, we continue to publish our popular weekly E-Journal, regularly update our website: [www.theshc.org](http://www.theshc.org), and provide guidance and counseling in all areas of Halacha through our *Halacha* hotline: 732-942-0742. We rely on your support to keep educating, guiding and growing our premium resources to meet the tremendous demand for **D'var Hashem – Zu Halacha**, in Sephardic communities nationwide. To become a member of the SHC, please contact the office or email [info@theshc.org](mailto:info@theshc.org). Wishing you all a *Purim Sameah!*

B'Virkat HaTorah,  
**Rabbi Ariel Ovadia**  
The Sephardic Halacha Center



This issue is dedicated לרפואת  
**Nadine Lael bat Monica Sara**  
& **Simcha Sara bat Chayka** לרפוי"ש

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most) solve the problem (depending on how loud the usual – or unusual – background noises may be). Is hearing the Megilla via microphone considered as though one is hearing the reader's own voice? How about answering Amen to a Beracha one hears over the phone or when skyping-in to a Simha? In this article, we will deal with some of the commonplace scenarios in which these types of questions present themselves. [For practical Halachic applications, please consult with a competent Halachic authority.]

## The First Telephones

Since the advent of voice-transmitting technology, towards the end of the nineteenth century, the *Poskim* have grappled with the prospect of fulfilling *Mitzvot* using such methods.

The *Minhat Elazar*[2] (Hungary, 1871-1937) was asked about someone who celebrated a *Simha*, and phoned his friend to share a virtual "L'Hayim". Can the listener answer Amen on the *Beracha* of *Bore Peri HaGefen* that he hears over the phone?

In his answer, the *Minhat Elazar* cites the *Gemara* in *Sota*[3] which states that even an "iron wall" cannot stand as a barrier between Hashem and His people. Based on this, *Tosafot*[4] rule that one may answer *Kaddish* and *Kedusha* even if he is not in the same room as the people assembled for the *Minyan*. Here too, if we were to consider listening via telephone as if one is hearing the actual voice for the purpose of fulfilling a *Mitzva*, one would be able to answer Amen to the *Berachot* that he hears.

However, *Maran* in *Bet Yosef*[5] cites the opinion of *Mahar"i Abuhab* based on the *Yerushalmi*, that this is only true if there are no impurities or uncleanness between the one reciting the *Kaddish* and the one answering. In *Shulhan Aruch*, *Maran* cites this as an additional opinion, leading to a debate among the *Poskim* whether this indeed is the final position of *Maran*[6]. *Hacham Ovadia Yosef* זצ"ל writes that one should be concerned with this opinion, and therefore not answer Amen if there is any uncleanness between him and the one reciting the *Kaddish* or *Kedusha*.

Still, in the case of a telephone, although the sound may travel over dirty streets and the like, the *Minhat Elazar* asserts that this would not be an issue, since the telephone signal is carried through telephone wires, which, at the time of the *Minhat Elazar's* response, ran at a height greater than 10 *Tefachim* above ground. Such wires would be considered to be in a domain of their own. [This reasoning would not be applicable in the case of modern-day cellphone or internet communication which is often carried by waves through the air rather than through wires.]

With regards to hearing *Shofar* (a largely a theoretic discussion, since the obligation to hear *Shofar* would always be on *Yom Tov*), the *Minhat Elazar* writes that one cannot fulfill the *Mitzva* over the telephone. His reason is that one must hear the actual sound of a *Shofar*, not the sound of an echo. He describes the sound of a person over the telephone as a weak vibration – not entirely like the sound of the one talking. So too, the sound of the *Shofar* would not be true to the original.



Many of us attend weddings, Brit Mila celebrations or mass-prayer events where the microphone is the only way one would hear the *Berachot*...



## Understanding the Technology

This brings us to the more recent discussion around sounds transmitted over the telephone. Whereas the earlier authorities viewed it as somewhat of an echo of the original voice[7], almost all modern-day *Poskim* disavow this understanding.

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach זצ"ל writes[8] that all sound heard over a telephone – or even a microphone – is not considered to be the sound of the original speaker, but rather the sound of the loudspeaker. Rav Auerbach explains that it is like inserting a record into a player where the needle rubbing across the surface of the record is causing the sound to be emitted from the speaker. Clearly, it is not the sound of the voice which was recorded, but rather the sound of the needle's interaction with the record. Similarly, when a person reads the *Megilla* or blows a *Shofar* into an electronic voice-transmitting device, the sound heard from the speaker is not the original sound, but a new sound.

Accordingly, one cannot fulfill *Mitzvot* or *Berachot* through hearing sound over a telephone or a microphone. This too is the opinion of Hacham Ovadia Yosef[9] and Hacham Ben Tziyon Abba-Shaul 10] זצ"ל. Thus, one who is obligated to hear a specific *Beracha*, must be careful not to hear it through the microphone but rather directly from the person who is reciting it[11]. This can be relevant at a *Huppah* where the groom must hear the blessings of *Kiddushin* from the rabbi in order to fulfill his obligation, or, perhaps, when answering *Zimun* at a large *Simha*.

## Microphones

Whereas, Rav Auerbach does not distinguish between a telephone and a microphone, he adds that after he published the original article, he had the occasion to talk with the *Hazon Ish*. The *Hazon Ish* stated that in his opinion, since the sound that is heard is created through actual speech, and is heard immediately as is normal speech, it may be considered as though one is

hearing the human speech itself. Rav Auerbach concludes that he doesn't understand the position of the *Hazon Ish*[12].

A similar logic is echoed by Rav Moshe Feinstein in *Igrot Moshe*[13]. Regarding hearing the *Megilla* via microphone, he suggests that perhaps, since one hears it immediately as it is being read, one may possibly consider it as though it is the voice of the reader himself. He ultimately advises not to rely on this logic, and in a later *Teshuva*[14] he even suggests breaking up into smaller groups if necessary so that everyone can hear the *Megilla* properly without amplification. [There are various non-electronic voice-amplification methods, which merit a discussion unto their own [15].]

## Mega-Synagogue

While most *Poskim* maintain that one cannot fulfill a *Mitzvah* through a voice-transmitting device, as we have shown; answering *Amen* to such a *Beracha* is an entirely different discussion. Many of us attend weddings, *Brit Mila* celebrations or mass-prayer events where the microphone is the only way one would hear the *Berachot*. The *Shulhan Aruch* rules that one may not answer *Amen* if one doesn't hear the *Beracha* itself. This is considered to be an *Amen Yetoma* – an “orphaned” *Amen*. Why then do we answer *Amen* to the *Berachot* that we hear on these large gatherings?

The *Gemara* in *Sukka*[16] relates one of the most magnificent Jewish communities in history once existed in Alexandria, Egypt. The *Tefillot* were held in a gigantic stadium and, because the far-out members wouldn't be able to hear the *Hazan*, they would wave flags whenever a *Beracha* was recited, to notify everyone it is time to answer *Amen*.

The *Rishonim* ask why there is no concern of answering *Amen* without hearing the *Beracha*. *Tosafot* cite the *Aruch* who explains in the name of Rabbenu Nissim that answering an “orphaned”

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## Wheat in the Hamin

**Q:** My synagogue serves Hamin with wheat kernels at the Kiddush on Shabbat morning. What is the appropriate Beracha on the wheat kernels?

**A:** The *Shulhan Aruch*[1] rules that when grain is eaten raw, roasted or cooked whole, one recites “*Ha'Adama*” and “*Bore Nefashot*”. In his work, *Kesef Mishne*[2], *Maran* writes that this only refers to a situation in which the kernels still had their chaff; if the chaff was removed – as is the case with the wheat kernels used in the *Hamin* – and the grains are cooked, the *Beracha* would be “*Mezonot*”. The *Mishna Berura*[3] quotes the students of *Rabbenu Yona*, who were of the opinion that even if the chaff is removed, the blessing for the wheat kernels would still be “*Ha'Adama*”. Despite this disagreement, one can follow *Maran* and recite a “*Mezonot*”, especially in light of the opinion of *Haye Adam* who says that “*Mezonot*” is a generic *Beracha* which exempts even non-grain foods.

Regarding the *Beracha Aharona* over the wheat kernels, although the *Shulhan Aruch*[4] writes that it should be “*Bore Nefashot*”, there is some debate about the matter. Therefore, ideally, wheat in *Hamin* should be eaten along with other foods which can exempt it of its initial and after-blessings.

[The above discussion applies only to grains that are cooked. If the grains are heat-puffed, *Hacham Ben-Tziyon Abba-Shaul*[5] זצ"ל writes that one should recite “*Ha'Adama*”. Regarding granola, there is disagreement as to the proper blessing since the grains are steamed – which may or may not be akin to cooking according to *Halacha*. Thus, one should ideally eat other foods to exempt the granola from its blessings. However, in the case of oatmeal, which is cooked, everyone would agree that one would recite a “*Mezonot*” and “*Al HaMihya*”.

### Sources:

[1] או"ח סי' רח ס"ד [2] פ"ג מהל' ברכות ה"ב [3] שם ס"ק טו [4] שם [5] אול"צ ח"ב פי"ד אות י"ב

# Adar Q&A

By Rav Moshe Pinchasi, Lakewood

**Q: Is one obligated to give *Mahatzit HaShekel* on behalf of his wife and children?**

**A:** The *Rama*[1] writes that males over twenty-years old should give *Mahatzit HaShekel*. The *Kaf HaHayim*[2] and others write that this is also the Sephardic *Minhag*. However, some[3] are of the opinion that even males over thirteen should give *Mahatzit HaShekel*, while others[4] even cite a *Minhag* to give for one's children, including unborn babies. Regarding women, there is a debate among the *Poskim*[5].

*L'Halacha*, Hacham Ovadia Yosef זצ"ל and the *Ohr L'Tziyon*[6] rule that one should give for anyone over twenty, including women, and that it is advisable to give for children over thirteen as well. The prevalent custom is to give for all children, including unborn babies.

**Q: Is the *Megilla* considered *Muktze* on *Shabbat*?**

**A:** The *Pri Hadash* writes[7] that a *Megilla* is considered *Muktze* as there is a general decree not to read the *Megilla* on *Shabbat*. There is a debate among the *Aharonim* whether this is always the case[8] or if it only pertains to walled cities, since the decree not to read *Megilla* on *Shabbat* only applied to those cities in which *Purim* can actually fall on *Shabbat* (the 14th of *Adar* will never fall on *Shabbat*)[9].

Still, the *Kaf HaHayim*[10], *Mishna Berura*[11] and

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*Amen* is only a problem if one is answering for a *Beracha* that he is obligated to hear (i.e. *Kiddush*, *Havdala* etc.). This too is the opinion of *Maran*[17]. However, there are those who say that the people of Alexandria kept track of each *Beracha* and knew what they were answering *Amen* to. According to this interpretation, which is also the position of the *Rama*[18], one cannot answer *Amen* to a *Beracha* unless he knows what *Beracha* is being recited.

Accordingly, when one is not fulfilling his obligation (i.e. answering *Kaddish* and the like), it should be permitted to answer *Amen* according to both *Maran* and the *Rama*. Indeed, Hacham Ovadia Yosef rules that one may answer *Amen* to a *Beracha* heard live over the radio and even join with the recital of "*Hashem, Hashem*" when hearing a live broadcast of the *Selichot*[19]. Hacham Ben-Tziyon[20] argues and says that we must be concerned about uncleanness between the listener and the reader. On the other hand, Rav Elyashiv זצ"ל is quoted as saying that hearing a *Beracha* over the telephone is similar to receiving a telegram that someone recited a *Beracha*[21].

## In Conclusion

While some *Poskim* entertain the idea of a microphone being considered as the voice of the person himself, most recent *Poskim* consider all forms of electronic voice-transmission as a mere digital rendition of the person's voice. While answering *Amen* to *Berachot* heard over a microphone would be allowed, answering *Berachot* heard over the phone, radio, skype or other live audio devices would be subject to debate, and permitted according to Hacham Ovadia Yosef.

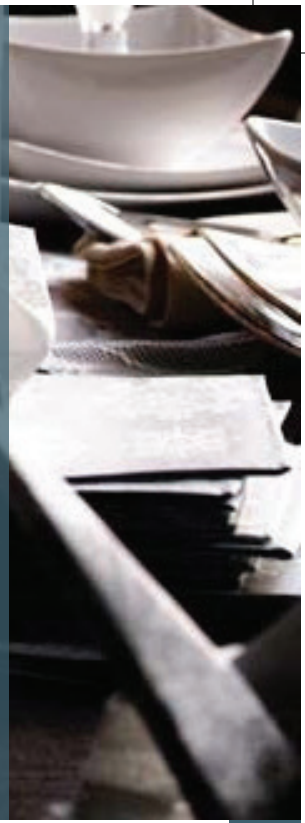
## Sources:

[1] Based in part on an article by Rav Yosef Fund shlit"a, featured in the SHC weekly E-Journal [2] ח"ב סי' ע"ב [3] ל"ח ע"ב [4] ר"ה כ"ה ע"ב [5] או"ח סי' נ"ה [6] ע' לבושי שרד שהבין שמרן סתם כדעה ראשונה, וכן הביא בשו"ת יחוה דעת (ח"ב סי' ס"ח) בשם שו"ת דברי יששכר. וע' משנ"ב (שם ס"ק ס"ב). אמנם בכה"ח (ס"ק צ"ה) סובר דמרן ס"ל כדעה שניה שרק בא לפרש. וכן הוכיח במנחת אלעזר מפמ"ג ריש יו"ד יעו"ש, אך לבסוף הסיק שיש להקל. מיהו מסקנת הגר"ע זצ"ל ביחוד"ה היא דיש להחמיר בזה. [7] ע' שערי דעה ח"א סי' ב', ויש מהדורות שהושמטה מהם תשובה זו וניתנה תשובה אחרת במקומה, ע"ע שם סי' קצ"ד [8] מנחת שלמה (קמא סי' ט' סוס"ק א') וע' בספרו מאורי אש (מהד' תש"ע, ח"ב שו"ד עמ' תקסד) שמובהר דפשוט שאין הקול הנשמע מן המכשיר קול האדם כלל אלא כח חשמלי בלבד [9] שו"ת יחוד"ה שם [10] אול"צ (ח"ד פ"א אות ד', וע' פנ"ד אות ד') [11] ע' מאורי אש עמ' 563 [12] וע"ע שו"ת הים הגדול (טולידאנו) והלכה למשה (סי' ו' ס"ק ע"ב) [13] או"ח ח"ב סי' ק"ח [14] או"ח ח"ד סי' קכ"ו [15] ע' שו"ת הלק"ט (ח"ב סי' מ"ה וסי' רע"ו) [16] נ"א ע"ב [17] או"ח סי' קכ"ד ס"ח [18] שם [19] שו"ת יחוד"ה שם [20] אול"צ שם [21] אוצר תשובות לשאלות המצוייות (סי' מ'), וכן הובא באבני ישפה ח"א סי' ט.





The singing and dancing was lively, the *Divre Torah* were uplifting, the food was exquisite, and the wine – was flowing...



## Purim-Party Aftermath

### Business Halacha / דבר המשפט

#### PAYING FOR DAMAGES CAUSED WHILE INTOXICATED / ADAPTED FROM AN ARTICLE BY DAYAN MORDECHAI LICHTENSTEIN, BET HAVA'AD, YERUSHALAYIM

*Last year, our Purim celebration was exceptionally joyful. All of us were having a great time, the singing and dancing was lively, the Divre Torah were uplifting, the food was exquisite, and the wine – was flowing. One of our guests, Yaakov, was somewhat inebriated and began dancing and jumping on the table. Because he was not in full control of his faculties, he slipped and fell on the table causing it damage. Is he obligated to pay for the damage?*

The *Mishna* in *Bava Kama*<sup>[1]</sup> states that a person is always prone to damage – “*Adam Mu'ad L'Olam*”. Therefore, even if he damages someone else's property accidentally, he would be liable to pay for damages. The *Mishna* goes on to say that therefore one is liable for damages he does while he is awake or sleeping<sup>[2]</sup>.

The *Rambam*<sup>[3]</sup> cites this *Halacha* and says that it even applies to a drunk person. Still, the *Shulhan Aruch*<sup>[4]</sup> rules that a person who is absolutely drunk (as drunk as Lot – Avraham's nephew, whose drunken state is recorded in the Torah) is not considered in control of himself, and is compared to a *Shotte* – a person with severely limited mental capacity.

However, the *Maharshal*<sup>[5]</sup> argues and says that being as drunk as Lot only releases one from obligations to *Hashem*, but not from liability for damages to people or property. Therefore, according to the *Maharshal*, even if one is absolutely drunk he must pay for damages he does.

Hence, in our case, since Yaakov wasn't completely drunk, he should be held accountable for his actions according to all opinions.

Although, generally, when one engages in doing a *Mitzvah* he carries a lesser level of liability<sup>[6]</sup> as there are many *Poskim* who maintain that one is not permitted to get as drunk as Lot<sup>[7]</sup>. This should even apply to one getting drunk on Purim,

### Purim Parties

However, there may be a different reason why Yaakov would not be responsible to pay for the damage he caused to the table. The *Mishna* in *Sukka*<sup>[8]</sup> recounts the tradition in the times of the *Bet HaMikdash*, that on *Hosha'ana Rabba*, the ecstatic crowd would grab *Etrogim* from children and eat them. *Rashi* explains that there was no issue of stealing, because, this was their tradition. *Tosafot* add that this logic would also apply to people who damage other people's property as a result of frivolous behavior that frequently takes place during weddings.

While some authorities rule that even in this situation one is liable for serious and extensive damages, the *Poskim* agree that one is not held accountable for normal damages that are expected to happen in such situations.

*Maran*, in *Bet Yosef*<sup>[9]</sup>, quotes the *Terumat HaDeshen* who writes that the *Bet Din* had a policy of not hearing any complaints regarding the stealing of food on *Purim*. The *Bet Yosef* himself, qualifies this and rules that since there is no longer a custom to grab food on *Purim*, there is no difference between *Purim* and other times. The *Rama*, however, disagrees and rules that one who causes damage to his friend on *Purim* does not have to pay. The *Magen Avraham* limits this rule to damage done while celebrating, and other authorities limit it further to include only unintentional damages.

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many others[12] do not consider a *Megilla* to be *Muktze* whatsoever, as it is just like any other *Kitve Kodesh* – holy writings and books – which were never included in the prohibition of *Muktze*[13].

**Q: This year Purim falls on Motza'e Shabbat. If there is an Eruv in place, is it permissible to carry the Megilla to the shul on Shabbat?**

**A:** Hacham Ovadia Yosef writes[14] that it is best to do so only after sunset (*Ben HaShemashot*) and via a minor, as there is a debate among the *Poskim* whether this is called a preparation from *Shabbat* to weekday[15].

**Q: Can one fulfill the Mitzvah of Mishloah Manot by sending uncooked food?**

**A:** While the *Magen Avraham*[16] and others[17] write that one must send fully-prepared foods, explaining that the word "*Mana*" means a ready-to-eat portion[18], Hacham Ovadia Yosef[19] follows the *Poskim*[20] who maintain that one can fulfill the *Mitzvah* even if the food still needs to be cooked.

**Sources:**

[1] או"ח סי' תרצד ס"א [2] כה"ח (שם ס"ק יט) ועוד [3] תיו"ט (שקלים פ"א מ"ד, ד"ה כל כהן) [4] לבוש (סי' תרפו ס"ב) א"ר (שם סק"ד) [5] לדעת תיו"ט (שם) והמג"א (שם סק"ג) בשם הפוסקים חייבות, אך המג"א (שם) בשם הגהות מנהגים, ובכה"ח (שם ס"ק כז) כתבו שפטורות [6] חו"ע (עמ' קד), אול"צ (ח"ד פנ"ב ס"א) ועוד [7] סי' תרפח סק"ו [8] שו"ת חת"ס (שם) בדברי המג"א (סי' תרצו סק"ו) ועי' בשד"ח (שם) שהשיג ע"ד [9] מו"ט (סי' תרפח סק"ד ד"ה ולענין), שע"ת (סי' תרצג סק"ב), שו"ת חת"ס (או"ח ריש סי' קצה) שד"ח (אס"ד מע' פורים ס"ה), חיי אדם (כלל קנה ס"י) וכ"מ מדברי הערך השלחן (טייבא, סי' תרפח סק"ו) וכ"כ בחו"ע (שבת ח"ג עמ' ט) דאף הפר"ח יסבור להתיר לדינא בשאר שבתות השנה. ובחו"ע (פורים עמ' ריג) כ' דכל האיסור טלטול הוא למוקפים חומה, שעליהם היתה הגזירה [10] שם ס"ק מח [11] שם ס"ק כב [12] א"ר (סי' תרפח ס"ק יג), פמ"ג (סי' שח מש"ז סק"ב), מחצה"ש (שם סק"י), ועי' בא"ח (ש"ב פר' מקץ ס"ב), ובהליכות עולם (ח"ג עמ' קצה) כ' דלא התיר אלא בשאר שבתות השנה [13] או"ח סי' שח ס"ד [14] חו"ע (פורים עמ' קז) [15] היעב"ץ במור וקציעה (סי' תרצג) שערי תשובה (שם סק"ב) ועוד פוסקים רבים אסרו להביא בשבת את המגילה לבית הכנסת, משום איסור הכנה, אמנם המחצית השקל (סי' שח סק"א), חיי אדם (כלל קנה ס"י), כה"ח (סי' שח ס"ק מח) ועוד (עי' שערי תשובה (שם)) כתבו עצה להביא את המגילה בצנעא לביהכ"נ מבע"י וללמוד בה, וי"א (יפה ללב ח"ב סי' תרצג סק"א), ועי' בשד"ח אס"ד מע' פורים ס"ה) שבכל אופן מותר להביא את המגילה בביה"ש [16] סי' תרצה סק"א [17] מהר"ל (הל' פורים אות טו), שכנה"ג (שם הגה"ט סק"י) ועוד, וכ"נ דעת המשנ"ב (שם סק"ב) [18] וכדפרש"י בביצה (יד: ד"ה אלא מנות) [19] שו"ת יבי"א (ח"ח ט"ג), ובחו"ע (הל' פורים עמ' קיז ס"ב). [20] ט"ז (שם סק"ד), פרי"ח (שם סק"ד), פמ"ג (שם ע"ד ה"ז והמג"א), הנצי"ב (עמק שאלה סי' סז אות ט) ועוד אחרונים דמקיים את המצווה אפי' אם שולח בשר חי, אמנם אם שולח תרנגולת שעדיין לא נשחטה נראה שלא קיים את המצווה [וכ' האחרונים דלדבריהם מיפרשא מילי דבית שמאי בביצה (שם) דאמרי אין משלחין אלא מנות כדפי' המאירי דהיינו מנות שהם מוכנות בכך שא"צ לשוחטם, אמנם הסרים הם ביטול, וכ"נ מנגילה (ז) בהא דר"י נשיאה, ע"ש.

continued from page 5

Applying this to our story would seem to indicate that, according to the *Rama*, Yaakov should not be liable for his damages. Since the damage was neither large nor extensive, and was not done intentionally, and since it happened in the course of the *Purim* festivities. Perhaps even *Maran* would agree that he is exempt, if it was done so in a place where people conduct their *Se'udat Purim* in this manner.

**Sources:**

[1] 2:6 [2] Under certain circumstances, see Yerushalmi 2:8, Shulhan Aruch, H.M. 421:4 [3] Hilchot Hovel U'Mazik 1:11 [4] H.M. 235:22 [5] Yam Shel Shelomo, Bava Kama 3:3 [6] C.f. Bava Kama 62b [7] C.f. Rambam, Hilchot Megilla V'Hanukah 2:15, Bet Yosef, O.H. 695, Mishna Berura, 695:5 [8] 4:6 [9] Ibid. [10]



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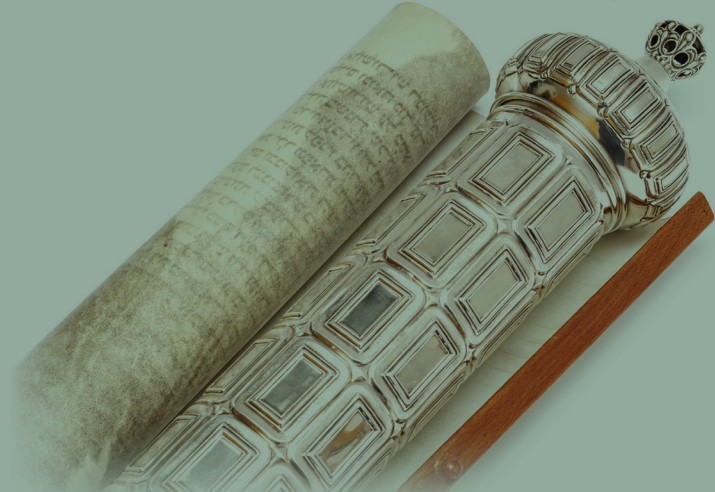
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# The “Sdei Hemed”: Ribbi Hayim Hizkiyahu MiDini

A BIT OF HISTORY / דברי הימים



Ribbi Hayim Hizkiyahu MiDini tz"l, the “Sdei Hemed”  
(Photo: Wikipedia)

One of the most prominent addresses in rabbinic literature towards the end of the nineteenth century, was in the quaint, unassuming town of Karaso-Bazar (Bilohirsk) in the Crimean Peninsula. The postman of this small town of 13,000 people – among them 3000 Jews of Krymchak (Crimean) and Ashkenazi descent – would deliver dozens of letters a day, from the most revered Halachic

classifying and codifying the rules of the Talmud and Halacha in meticulous order. Ribbi Hayim Hizkiya took this genre to an entirely new level, discussing every Sugya so comprehensively that almost no stone is left unturned.

However, it came time for Ribbi Hayim Hizkiya to fulfill his life-long dream of returning to *Eretz Yisrael*. After an emotional fare-

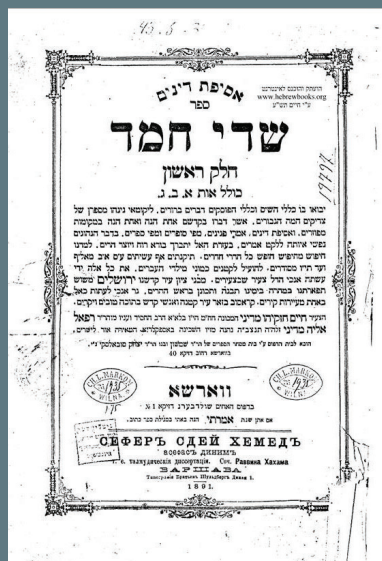
well from his community (which was decimated by the Germans in 1941, ה"ד), Ribbi Hayim Hizkiya left for the city of Hevron, to succeed Ribbi Rahamim Yosef Franco זצ"ל as the Rav. It was there that the great scholars of *Eretz Yisrael* were finally able to witness Ribbi Hayim Hizkiya in all his glory. Ribbi Hayim Hizkiya זצ"ל passed away in 1905 and is buried in the *Bet Ha'Almin* in Hevron.

His responses, many of which are included in the many volumes of the “*Sdei Hemed*”, are a masterful tapestry of breadth-of-knowledge, methodological thinking and Torah scholarship of unparalleled scope. Ribbi Hayim Hizkia (born as Hizkia in Yerushalayim in 1833, the name Hayim was added as a result of an illness) hailed from a respected family and studied Torah under the great scholars of his generation – Ribbi Yitzhak Kobo זצ"ל (the *Rishon L'Tziyon* in that time), and Ribbi Yosef Hayim Burla זצ"ל.

He was ordained at the tender age of 13 and married his wife, Rivka, when he was 18 years old in the presence of all of the *Gedole HaDor*. As life in Yerushalayim became increasingly difficult, he tried finding a source of *Parnassah* with his relatives in Izmir, which proved to be an unviable option. He was then offered the rabbinate of Karaso-Bazar, a position which he held for 33 years.

The relative peace and quiet the position afforded him allowed him to compile his magnum opus – “*Sdei Hemed*” along with other volumes of responsa such as “*Ohr Li*” (dedicated to the memory of his son, who passed away during his lifetime) and “*Michtav M'Hizkiyahu*”. His encyclopedic style draws on the style of the Sephardic Hachamim of yore,

One of the most prominent addresses in rabbinic literature towards the end of the nineteenth century, was in the quaint, unassuming town of Karaso-Bazar (Bilohirsk) in the Crimean Peninsula...



The “*Sdei Hemed*” blessing his community in Karasu-Bazar as he departs to Eretz Yisrael  
(Photo: Wikipedia)



The “*Sdei Hemed*” blessing his community in Karasu-Bazar as he departs to Eretz Yisrael  
(Photo: Wikipedia)



# A Good Eye

## A Final Word / סוף דבר

ADAPTED FROM SEFER "IMREI SHEFER"

BY HARAV SHMUEL PINCHASI שליט"א

*Hachamim* explain that great evil of *Amalek* was their willingness to be the first to attack *Am Yisrael*, immediately after they have witnessed so many miracles. With this, they have, in effect, "cooled the waters" – inviting other nations to wage war against *Am Yisrael* as well. We must understand what drove them to launch this assault. Weren't they afraid of the Almighty and His protection of *Am Yisrael*? One can explain, that the utter hatred *Amalek* had towards *Am Yisrael*, and their inability to handle the success of the Jews, drove them to such reckless behavior, waging a lost battle against this miraculous nation.

It seems that *Haman*, a member of the nation of *Amalek* and descendent of its royal lineage, had a similar problem. Despite being appointed to the position of prime minister, and enjoying the greatest degree of honor and power one could possibly imagine, he exclaimed: "V'Chol Ze Einenu Shove Li" – "None of this is of

any worth to me" – all because a Jewish man, Mordechai, didn't subjugate himself to him.

When *Bil'am* concluded blessing *Am Yisrael*, he turned to the nations of *Amalek* and the *Keni* (nation of *Yitro*) to prophesize about their destiny. Why are these two nations mentioned together? The *Ba'ale Tosafot* explain that this is because they were complete opposites: while one was a nation of blind hatred, the other was a nation of selfless lovingkindness.

The *Shela* explains that this was precisely the power of *Haman* over the Jewish people prior to their miraculous salvation. *Haman* highlighted the fact that the Jews were "*Mefozar U'Meforad*" – dispersed (geographically) and divided (in spirit). To this, Esther's response was: "*Lech Kenos Et Kol HaYehudim*" – "gather all the Jews" – unite them, and thus, I will most appropriately beseech King *Ahashverosh*, and more importantly, the King of Kings, to absolve this terrible decree.

We must take this lesson to heart, and utilize the joyous spirit of *Purim* as a unifying tool, to bring Jews closer together, rejoice with one another, and *Be'Ezrat Hashem*, merit to bring *Mashiah Tzidkenu* speedily in our day, Amen.



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