

TEFILLAH TIPS

MEGILLAH TIPS

Megillah Tips

As the children prepare to don their festive costumes this week and the final touches are being made to the *Mishloach Manot* packages, all of us are waiting with great anticipation for the reading of *Megillat Esther*. It is a moment we look forward to all year long – when else do you get to make a lot of noise in shul – and it is a **MITZVAH!** 😊

While the story of the *Megillah* is replete with wisdom, insight, nuance, and has so much to learn from, I would like to focus on the *Mitzvah* of *Megillah* reading itself. There are lessons to be learned from the actual form and structure of the *Megillah* reading.

1. Law: One must listen to every single syllable of every word in order to fulfill the *Mitzvah* of *Megillah*. This means that a person could attend *Megillah* readings all of his / her life and G-d forbid never fulfill the *Mitzvah*.

* Lesson* To succeed one must be a good listener – to really hear what another is saying – to sometimes hear the word that are not being said by paying such good attention to what is being said.

2. Law: When the name “Haman” is called out, we yell, stomp and boo to demonstrate our hatred of Haman and *Amalek*; and our wish to erase Haman and *Amalek* from the world.

Lesson **To understand that there is real evil in the world** that needs to be addressed. Left alone, Haman would have achieved the dream of all our enemies – to wipe us off the map. We must address evil spiritually by asking Hashem in heaven for assistance and physically by waging war against evil here in our world.

3. Law: It is a special *Mitzvah* to listen to the *Megillah* in a large congregational setting to publicize the miracles of Purim as much as possible.

Lesson Over the years it has been attempted by many well meaning Jews to be creative and orchestrate different types of readings and styles of readings in an attempt to make it more enjoyable and personally meaningful. The Talmud and our code of law directs us otherwise. The best way to fulfill this *Mitzvah* like all others is the way it was commanded to us – “*Berov Am Hadrat Melech*” – “The larger the crowd the more splendor for our King”.

Please accept my warmest wishes for a Happy and Joyous Purim.

Rabbi Ephraim Epstein
Congregation Sons of Israel
Cherry Hill New Jersey