



BEHIND THE PICTURE

NO SIMPLE GIFT

The Rebbe's Megillos

The Rebbe's Megillah

As is true about all the Rebbe's holy *hanhogos*, Chassidim are always looking to know more about each nuance and detail of the Rebbe's performance of mitzvos.

When it comes to Purim and its four mitzvos, there is plenty to notice and be attentive to. In this article we will focus the Rebbe's *megillah*.

For the first several years of the *nesius*, the Rebbe used a very old *megillah*, its parchment yellow from age, and it was stored in a black carton box. This *megillah* was written based on the common *minhag* of every column beginning with the word *hamelech* (aside for the final three), and the list of *asseres b'nei Haman* occupying an entire column.

It wasn't until 5729 that the Rebbe began using a new *megillah*, encased in a beautiful silver container. This *megillah* was a gift from Reb Getzel Rubashkin.

Reb Getzel had commissioned a *megillah* for himself, to be written with all the *hiddurim*. Once, a *sofer* was examining it, and began showering Reb Getzel with compliments for the high quality of the *megillah*, exclaiming that it was even nicer than the Rebbe's *megillah*! Upon hearing that, Reb Getzel became concerned rather than flattered; could he own a *megillah* that was nicer than the Rebbe's? He immediately commissioned a second one to be written just as beautifully, and offered it as a gift to the Rebbe, enclosed in an exquisite silver container.

Surprisingly¹ the Rebbe accepted the gift, but offered \$50 to Reb Getzel for it, saying that it says in Mishlei² “*Soneh matonos yichye*”—one who dislikes gifts shall live.

Under the pressure of the moment Reb Getzel accepted the money, but he did not keep it; instead he immediately donated it to Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch.

This *megillah* was written in the style of the ones written by the Rebbe Maharash, who was a *sofer*³, and had written a *megillah* for each of his children. Hence, not all columns begin with the word *hamelech*, and the names of *asseres b'nei Haman* share a column with other *pesukim*.

Reading the *Megillah*

During *krias hamegillah* the Rebbe would open the *megillah* on a nearby table, which had been prepared in advance. Over the years this changed, until eventually, a second, wider *shtender* was often placed near the permanent one, upon which the Rebbe would place his *megillah* and fold it into three layers.

The Rebbe would recite the opening *brochos* to himself,⁴ as well as the actual *kriah* itself. Upon the conclusion of *krias hamegillah*, the Rebbe would begin rolling the *megillah* while saying the concluding *brochos*.⁵

Paris, 5698

Until 5737 the Rebbe personally read the *megillah* for Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka, although never in public. Decades prior however, on Purim 5698, during the Frierdiker Rebbe's visit in Paris during the months of Adar and Nissan, it was the Rebbe who read the *megillah*. We know this from a letter sent to Rabbi Yaakov Landa in 5716⁶ in which the Rebbe writes (free translation):

"[...] Incidentally, then [in 5698] I read the *megillah* for him [the Frierdiker Rebbe] and repeated those words [v'laharog and lifneihem] and he nodded in agreement..."

Presidential Gift

Another episode related to *Megillas Esther*, is that on a visit from Israeli President

Zalman Shazar in 5731, the Rebbe presented him with a *megillah* in a silver case. The words "Purim 5731" were inscribed onto the elegant encasing.

A deeply moved Shazar gladly accepted the gift, and he treasured it from thereon as a very prized possession. So touched was he by the Rebbe's gesture, that in 5733, some two years after he had

received the *megillah*, Shazar chose to hold it while being photographed with the shluchim to Australia, who had paid him a visit on a stopover in Eretz Yisroel⁷ **D**

1. The use of a silver item was something very rare by the Rebbe. Reb Zalman Jaffe recorded in his diary how, in 5742, he had once bought a silver wine decanter for the Rebbe, but the Rebbe politely refused it, explaining in a letter that "I do not wish to make a distinction between me and those surrounding me."

2. 15:27

3. Sefer Hatoldos Admur Maharash by the Rebbe, p. 21

4. See Sefer Haminhogim p. 74, that this is not a *hora'a* for all.

5. There is a halachic debate as to whether one must first recite the *brochos* and then roll the *megillah*, or vice versa.

6. Igros Kodesh, vol. 13, p. 337; see also Reshimas Hayoman, p. 395

7. The pictured is featured in "Iyey Hamelech" p. 93.

PURIM 5724. NOTE THE ASERES BNEI HOMON TAKE UP THE ENTIRE COLUMN

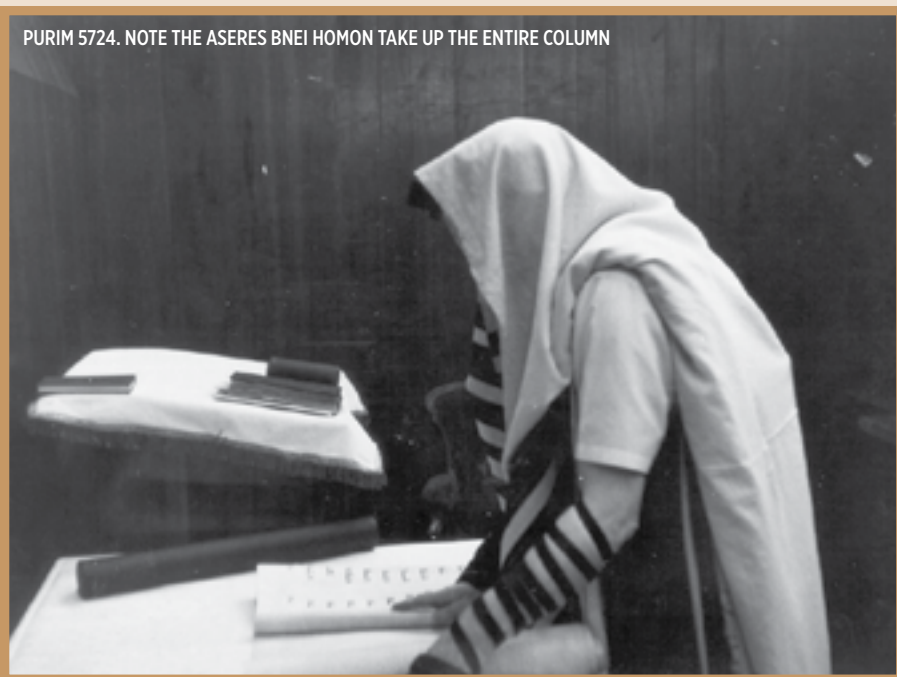


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PURIM 5751

