

# Purim 2021 at Golders Green Synagogue

## Background

This year, we look forward to celebrating Purim together while adhering scrupulously to government and US COVID-safety advice. With Purim falling on a Friday, this briefing provides guidance for safe and halachic observance in an unusual year. Social engagements, personal visiting, gift delivery and other activities viewed as unlawful or risky are prohibited this year.

## Safety

Safety is paramount and takes priority over specific Purim observances. Please remember that if you attend any in-person service, you *must* adhere to the following guidelines:

- Please do not attend if you have any COVID symptoms, feel unwell in any other way or are unsure.
- Please do not attend if you have tested positive for COVID or have been in contact with someone who has, and NHS guidance requires you to self-isolate.
- Please avoid gathering before, during or after the event, exit promptly and in a staggered fashion.
- We love seeing children at our Shul, but this year, in line with US guidance, under 11s may only attend Rimon or Little Goldies readings, but not those in the Shul itself. Older children must sit with a responsible adult throughout.
- Older members, especially those over 70, are reminded that risk increases with age; please be cautious when deciding whether to attend in person.
- Please use the hand-sanitiser provided when arriving and leaving.
- Please sit only in family / 'bubble' groups or 2m on all sides from others and wear a face-covering at all times.
- Please spread out as much as possible; the ladies' gallery will be open for men and women.
- Please pre-book for all in-person services.
- During the megillah reading, please do not play wind instruments or shout/sing at Haman's name.

## Megillah

If at all possible, you should read the megillah for yourself or hear it read from a kosher scroll in person. If you have access to a scroll but are not able to read it, consider reading along with a pre-recorded version available online. In this example, the reader goes slowly and points to the place throughout: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ijWkRYPepI>. It is essential to read the words correctly, even if you don't know the trop. If it is impossible to hear the megillah in any other way, you may rely on the minority view that permits listening online to a live (not pre-recorded) reading. All our in-person readings will be streamed and others will be available live on US TV. You should not say the brachot when listening to an online reading.

## Mishloach Manot (Food Packages)

It is currently only permitted to leave home for a few reasons. This excludes delivering Mishloach Manot unless the package genuinely contains essential goods for someone in need. As such, each household / individual should deliver only *one* Mishloach Manot package, if at all possible while already out of the house for a permitted activity (essential shopping, exercise and attending Shul are some examples). This should be delivered with minimal contact between donor and recipient (e.g., ring the bell and leave the package outside). No additional Mishloach Manot packages should be delivered in person, but a delivery service may be used.

## Matanot LaEvyonim (Donations of Money)

This year, to eliminate the need to handle cash and cheques, donations for distribution to the needy on Purim will only be possible via the Shul website. Please do not deliver cash or cheques to me. Further details will follow.

## Seudah (Feast)

Ideally, the Seudah should be held on Friday morning. If that is not possible, it may be held later in the day, but it should end a good while before Shabbat starts. The only participants in the Seudah should be members of one's own household and those with whom one has formed a 'bubble', as defined by government guidelines.

Wishing us all a happy, meaningful and, above all, safe Purim.

**Rabbi Dr Harvey Belovski, Senior Rabbi**