

HALACHICALLY SPEAKING



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MENTIONING THE NAME HAMAN

Children of all ages eagerly anticipate the moment on *Purim* when the *ba'al koreh* mentions *Haman's* name. They bang on the floor and tables, shoot popguns, and indulge in all types of noise making activities. What is the source for this custom? Does anyone say this should not be done? Is it for adults as well? All these questions and many others will be addressed in this issue.

The Source

We have an obligation to “erase any semblance of *Amalek*.”¹ Furthermore, the *posuk* says,² *shem reshaim yirkav* “The name of the wicked should rot.” Based on this, the

1. Shemos 17:14.

2. Mishlei 10:7.



אין לו
להקב"ה
בעולמו
אלא ד'
אמות
של הלכה
בלבד...
(ברכות ח.)

custom evolved that children draw images of *Haman* on stones,³ or write his name on them. Then they bang the two objects together in order to erase the name of *Haman*.⁴

The Purpose

Some authorities explain that the purpose of banging the stones (see above) is to curse *Haman* the *rasha*. Since *Haman* is descended from *Amalek*, we also fulfill the precept of destroying *Amalek* by erasing *Haman's* name and image when banging the stones together.⁵ Others say that it is an expression of joy and praise that we defeated the *rasha* and his family.⁶

The Custom⁷

The custom among most of *Klal Yisroel* is to bang on the tables or floor when *Haman's* name is recited during the *megilah*.⁸ This custom should not be abolished, as it was established for good reason.⁹

Reasons

Below we will detail other reasons for banging stones together as mentioned above, and the custom of stamping feet and other sources of noise.¹⁰

The *posuk* says,¹¹ *shem reshaim yirkav* “The name of the wicked should rot.” Since young children do not know how to say this, they bang when the name *Haman* is mentioned instead.¹² Others base the custom on the *posuk*,¹³ *v'haya im ben hakos harosha*.

3. Elya Rabbah 16.

4. Avudraham Tefillas Purim “v'kosav”, Hamanhig Hilchos Megilah page 422, Bais Yosef O.C. 690, Darchei Moshe 4, Rama 690:17, Levush 17, Aruch Hashulchan 24. Refer to Ben Ish Chai Tetzaveh 1:20. See Bais Yosef O.C. 690, Rama 690:17, Siddur Yaavetz 2:page 472:14.

5. Refer to Ohr Yisroel 19:pages 99-100. Based on this some say that is why we bang with our feet which is a sign of joy, since we use our feet to dance (ibid:footnote 12).

6. Refer to Shibuley Haleket 200, see Ohr Yisroel 19:page 100:footnote 12.

7. Refer to Aruch Hashulchan 24.

8. Maharil Hilchos Purim 12, Rama O.C. 690:17, Levush 17, Match Moshe 1006:page 191, Elya Rabbah 16, Mishnah Berurah 689:19, 690:60. Refer to Ohr Yisroel 19:pages 98-110 in great depth, Minhag Yisroel Torah 690:3.

9. Darchei Moshe 4, Rama ibid, Magen Avraham 22, Levush 17, Matei Moshe 1006:page 191, Biur Halacha “v'ein”, E'ven Pinah 1:79, Rivevos Ephraim 7:347, see Pri Hasadeh 3:42, Taamei Haminhagim 876:page 376. However, this custom was not done during times of danger from the non-Jews (Siach Yitzchok 373). Refer to Yuchein U'boaz 1:118.

10. Refer to Ruach Chaim 690, Shevet Mussar 1, Machzik Beracha kuntres achron 690, Moadim L'Simcha 3:pages 300-303.

11. Mishlei 10:7.

12. Otzer Kol Minhagei Yehsurun pages 122-123, Moadim L'Simcha 3:page 301.

13. Devarim 25:2.

כל השונה
הלכות
בכל יום
מובטח
לו שהוא
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הבא...
(נדה עג)

The words *v'haya im ben* end in *hey mem nun* – *Haman*. This is followed by “*hakos harosha* – bang the *rasha*.”¹⁴ In addition, the *gematria* of *macho emcheh* is *zeh Haman*.¹⁵

The *Chasam Sofer*¹⁶ opines that the reason for the banging is to show that we do not want to hear his name. Obviously, we do not want to miss a word of the *megilah*. Rather, we show our displeasure at the need to hear *Haman's* name.¹⁷

Another reason is that we have a *mitzvah* to eradicate *Amalek* in every generation. We are in a constant battle with them. As a sign of war,¹⁸ we bang when *Haman's* name is recited. This reminds us of our obligation and keeps us focused on the proper intentions which are needed for the *mitzvah* to eradicate *Amalek*.¹⁹

The *Sefer Matamim*²⁰ gives the following reason:

Haman's name is mentioned fifty-four times in the *megilah*. This is hinted to with the words *macho emcheh*, “I will surely erase [*Amalek*].” The *gematria* of the word *emcheh* equals fifty-four.

Children or Adults

Many *poskim* who discuss this *halacha* say that children have the custom to bang, but make no mention of an adult doing this.²¹ Nonetheless, since some *poskim* mention that an adult should bang a little,²² this should be done.²³

Although we normally discourage parents from bringing very young children to *shul*,²⁴ it is common to find this at the *megilah*.²⁵

14. Levush 17, Elya Rabbah 16, Siddur Yaavetz 2:page 472:14, Eshkol Hakofer page 96 (bottom), Matei Moshe 1006:page 191, Taamei Haminhagim 876:page 376, Lekutei Maharich 3:page 721 (new print). Refer to Kaf Hachaim 108.

15. Matei Moshe 1006:page 191.

16. On his comments to Shulchan Aruch O.C. 690.

17. Miley D'avos 3:13 page 338.

18. Refer to Divrei Yisroel 2:page 23 (comments on Shulchan Aruch O.C. 690:17).

19. For a detailed discussion on this refer to Miley D'avos 3:13:page 335.

20. Page 142:6 (new print).

21. Avudraham Tefillas Purim “v'kosav”, Hamanig Hilchos Megilah page 422, Darchei Moshe 4, Rama 17, Levush 17, Matei Moshe 1006:page 191, Maharam Shik Y.D. 216:page 74, Miley D'avos 3:13, Otzer Kol Minhagei Yeshurun page 122, Nemukei Orach Chaim 690:2, Eitim L'vina page 119, Mishnah Berurah 60, Mikadesh Yisroel Purim 119, Moadim L'simcha 3:page 320, Hakotton V'hilchosav 34:11.

22. Siddur Yaavetz 2:page 274:14, Ben Ish Chai ibid, Hanhugos Hachofetz Chaim page 181, Orchos Rabbeinu 3:page 43, Piskei Teshuvos 690:footnote 34. Refer to Shulchan Aruch Harav 3:page 1456, Sefer Haminhagim (Chabad) page 73:footnote 3. See Maharil Hilchos Purim 12.

23. Mikadesh Yisroel Purim 119, see Piskei Teshuvos 690:footnote 34.

24. Refer to Mishnah Berurah 98:3, Oz Nedberu 9:44, Asei Lecha Rav 4:18, Vayitzvar Yosef 3:28 in depth.

25. Seder Hayom page 204 (new print), Magen Avraham 689:11, Pri Megadim Eishel Avraham 21, see Mishnah



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Some explain that *Haman* wanted to destroy the *Yidden* from very young children to old men etc. After the miracle, the *megilah* says that these days of *Purim* will not pass by the *Yehudim* and their remembrance will not pass their “*zaram*”.²⁶ The *Gr’a* says that *Yehudim* refers to adults, and *zaram* refers to children.²⁷ Accordingly, children of all ages should hear the *megilah*, and the way we get them to come to *shul* is for them to bang when *Haman’s* name is said in the *megilah*.²⁸

Women

The *Mekor Chaim*²⁹ says that the custom applies to women as well.

Other Customs When to Bang

Some had the custom to bang when “*orur Haman*” is said during *asher heiney* after the *megilah*.³⁰ Some had the custom only to bang when *Haman* was said in a *posuk* with other degrading words such as *ha’agagi* and *hara*.³¹ Others only hit when the ten sons of *Haman* are read.³² There is a custom in some communities to bang and make noise when *Haman* is mentioned during *al hanissin* in *Shemonei Esrei*.³³

The *Ben Ish Chai*³⁴ had the custom to only bang for the first and last *Haman* mentioned in the *megilah*. However, the overwhelming custom is to bang at all *Hamans*.³⁵

How Many Times?

Some say that one should hit three times when the name of *Haman* is said,³⁶ but once is definitely sufficient.

Berurah 689:17-18, Biur Halacha “minhag”, 690:59.

26. Megilas Esther 9:28.

27. On his comments to Megilas Esther 9:28.

28. Teshuvos V’hanhugos 4:175.

29. 690:page 53 8 (Mechon Yerushalayim print).

30. Refer to Shibuley Haleket 200.

31. Shulchan Aruch Harav 3:page 1456, see Aruch Hashulchan 690:24.

32. Moadim L’Simcha 3:page 318. See Bais Yosef 690, Matei Moshe 1006:page 191, Ben Ish Chai Tetzaveh 1:8.

33. Ohr Yisroel 19:page 109.

34. Ibid. See Kaf Hachaim 110. This is the opinion and custom of Harav Chaim Kanievesky Shlita (Yimey Mishtei V’simcha page 217:footnote 47).

35. Siddur Yaavetz 2:page 472:14, Eshkol Hakofer page 96 (bottom), Mekor Chaim 690:17, Eitim L’vina page 119, Hanhugos Hachofetz Chaim page 181, Orchos Rabbeinu 3:page 43:33. This is the opinion and custom of Harav Chaim Kanievesky Shlita (Yimey Mishtei V’simcha page 217:footnote 47).

36. Moed Lechol Chai 31:91. Refer to Shulchan Aruch Harav 3:page 1456, Sefer Haminhagim (Chabad) page 73, Mishnah Berurah 60 (few times).

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Hands vs. Feet

Although many people bang with their hands, many *poskim* are of the opinion that one should bang with his feet on the ground.³⁷

Saying a *Posuk* when Banging

The *Medrash Rabbah*³⁸ says that if one does not say “*zecher tzadik l'veracha*” when he mentions a *Tzaddik's* name he has transgressed a positive commandment (*asei*). In addition, if one does not say “*shem reshaim yirkav*”³⁹ (or cursed is this and this *rosha*) when he mentions the name of a *rosha*, he has transgressed a positive commandment.⁴⁰ Based on this, some *poskim* suggest that one should say *shem reshaim yirkav* “the name of wicked people should rot”⁴¹ when making noise at the recital of *Haman*.⁴² Nonetheless, the overwhelming custom does not follow this view, since doing so would constitute as a *hefsek* of talking during the *megilah* (even though the listener did not make a *beracha* on the *megilah*).⁴³ The reason why banging during the mentioning of *Haman* is not a *hefsek* is because it is done for a purpose.⁴⁴

Those Who do Not Have the Custom

There are communities that do not have the custom to bang at all when the name of *Haman* is recited in the *megilah*.⁴⁵ There are a number of reasons for this. First, it is not honor for a *shul* to have all that noise. Second, it is very common for the reader to

37. Ben Ish Chai *ibid* 10, Mishnah Berurah 59, Hanhugos Hachofetz Chaim page 181, Aruch Hashulchan 24, Kaf Hachaim 110, Nemukei Orach Chaim 690:2, Orchos Rabbeinu 3:page 43:33. Refer to Shibuley Haleket 200. Many other *poskim* quote this *halacha*.

38. Bereishis 49:1. Refer to Sefer Hamanig Hilchos Megilah page 242, Siach Yitzchok 407, Aruch Hashulchan 690:22, Yabea Omer Y.D 5:21.

39. From this *posuk* many speak about refraining from calling ones child a name which is the name of a *rasha* (Refer to Mesecthas Yoma 38b, Rashi “d’lo”, Bereishis Rabbah 49:1, Techumim 18:page 145). There is no concern of calling the name of a *rasha* as long as one does not call his child by that name (Teshuvos Rama 41). In certain situation this is also permitted (Refer to Tosfas “d’lo”, Ritvah Yoma *ibid*, Rav Akiva Eiger on Shulchan Aruch Y.D. 265:1, Divrei Yaakov 79:pages 71-71b, Yalkut Yosef Soveh Smochos 2:page 85, Keroei Shmo pages 164-172 in great depth).

40. Refer to Otzer Kol Minhagei Yeshurun page 122.

41. Devarim 25:2.

42. Levush 17, Magen Avraham 21, Be'er Heitiv 14, Ohr Yisroel 14:pages 44-48 in depth. Refer to Shar Ha'tzyion 57.

43. Nemukei Orach Chaim 690:2, Kaf Hachaim 111, Shar Ha'tzyion 57, Igros Moshe O.C. 1:192.

44. Nemukei Orach Chaim 690:2.

45. Maharil Hilchos Purim 12, Darchei Moshe 4, Magen Avraham 19, Pri Megadim Eishel Avraham 21, Yufei Leleiv 690:15, Machzik Beracha 687:1 (kuntres achron), Maharam Shik Y.D. 216:page 74, Mishnah Berurah 59. Refer to Shoneh B'shoneh 5762:pages 208-210. This is the custom of Harav Ovadia Yosef Shlita (as mentioned in Toras Hamoadim Purim Page 143:footnote 10). Refer to Moadim L'simcha 3:pages 305-317 in great depth.



continue before the noise concludes, and some people are not *yotzei*.⁴⁶ Finally, all the noise at the recital of *Haman* is considered by many as too much of a *hefsek* during the *megilah*, since according to some opinions one should not be *mafsik* more than the time it takes to take one breath.⁴⁷

The opinion and custom of *Harav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach zt"l* was not to bang at all.⁴⁸

Today's Noise

Today we witness many novel noise sources during the recital of *Haman*. In most cases, mature adults make more noise than the children. The *poskim* mention that people are so busy with what kind of noise they are going to make that they lose focus of the entire *megilah* and are not *yotzei* with the recital of the *megilah*. In addition, one should avoid any dangerous items (such as firecrackers).⁴⁹

Noise which is getting out of hand during the reading of the *megilah* should be stopped.⁵⁰ It is a good idea to limit the duration of the noise,⁵¹ and one should be appointed to make sure that the congregants adhere to these guidelines.⁵²

In addition, since the point of making noise is to embarrass the wicked *Haman*, one should not make noises which give him honor such as a long melody.⁵³

Children and Dangerous Noises

Children often play with firecrackers before and during the *megilah*. This is dangerous and a lack of proper decorum for a *shul*, and this practice should be stopped.⁵⁴ Parents should not let their children play with these items.⁵⁵

Ba'al Koreh

The *ba'al koreh* should remain quiet until the noise dies down, as the congregants

46. Pri Megadim Eishel Avraham 690:21, Mishnah Berurah 690:59, Shulchan Aruch Hamekutzar 3:page 282:footnote 43, page 292:footnote 9:4, Toras Hamoadim Purim page 141. Refer to Pri Hasadeh 3:42.

47. Pri Megadim Eishel Avraham 21, Shar Ha'tzyion 57, Kaf Hachaim 109, Toras Hamoadim Purim page 142. Refer to Sdei Chemed Mareches Purim 10:page 728.

48. V'aleihu Lo Yeibol 1:page 246:429.

49. Toras Hamoadim Purim page 142. Refer to Sdei Chemed Mareches Purim 10:page 728.

50. Refer to Orchos Rabbeinu 3:page 43:34.

51. Sharei Yimey HaPurim page 58:5. Refer to Pri Hasadeh 3:42.

52. Pri Hasadeh 3:42.

53. Sharei Yimey HaPurim page 59:8.

54. Kedushas Bais Hakenesses V'Bais Medrash pages 207-208. Some *poskim* permit one to grab away firecrackers etc from children (Piskei Shmuos Purim page 175).

55. Sharei Yemey HaPurim pages 79-80. Refer to Moed Lechol Chai pages 25 (new print), Tuvecha Yabeu 2:pages 370-372.

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will not hear the *megilah*.⁵⁶ If there is a lot of noise and the *ba'al koreh* started reading the *megilah* anyways, he should go back and repeat those words to make sure all people present hear the entire *megilah*.⁵⁷ It is a good idea to read the *megilah* in case you miss a word or two.⁵⁸

Making an Early *Minyan*

In many communities there is a *minyan vasikin* on *Purim* day. The question was asked if one is allowed to forbid banging at this *minyan*. One should bang for a short period of time as opposed to the regular routine when there are children in *shul*.⁵⁹

*Grager*⁶⁰

There is a custom on *Purim* to use a *grager* to make noise at the *megilah*.⁶¹ The reason for this is the following: On *Chanukah* we play with a *dreidel* which is spun on the top because the salvation came only from *Hashem* who saved us from the Greeks and who did a miracle for us regarding the jug of oil. On *Purim*, however, we fasted and contributed to the miracle. Therefore, we turn the *grager* from the bottom to symbolize this.⁶²

Others say the reason why the *dreidel* is spun on *Chanukah* is because our enemies wanted to destroy our *nishama* which comes from above, and on *Purim* our enemies wanted to kill us (our bodies), so we turn the *grager* from the bottom.⁶³

Why is it that the *dreidel* is spun on a table and the *grager* is spun in the air?

We waged war on *Chanukah* on this physical plane, so we spin a *dreidel* on the table which is on land. However, on *Purim* there was no war, as we simply asked *Hashem* to help us. Therefore, we spin the *grager* in the air.⁶⁴

56. Magen Avraham 19, Elya Rabbah 16, Pri Megadim Eishel Avraham 21, Moed Lechol Chai 31:91, Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 141:13, Kaf Hachaim 109, Mishnah Berurah 60, Aruch Hashulchan 690:24.

57. Magen Avraham 19, see Toras Hamoadim Purim pages 182-183.

58. Magen Avraham 689:19, 690:19, Be'er Heitiv 690:14, Elya Rabbah 16, Mishnah Berurah 60, Kaf Hachaim 109, Lekutei Maharich 3:page 721 (new print). Others say this is a mistake and one has to have a *kosher "megilah"* in order for the *etzah* to work (Mekor Chaim 690:17, Eitim L'vina page 119).

59. Opinion of Harav Chaim Kanievesky Shlita quoted in Piskei Shmuos Purim page 97. Refer to Pri Hasadeh 3:42.

60. This is also called the "*ra'ashan*" (noisemaker). On the *muktzah* status of a *grager* refer to Shalmei Yehonoson 3:page 138:5.

61. Refer to http://www.ucalgary.ca/~elsegal/Shokel/080314_Graggers.html

62. Taamei Haminhagim 859:pages 368-369, Natei Gavriel Purim 46:10:footnote 24. Refer to Minhag Yisroel Torah 690:3. Refer to Shoneh B'shoneh 5762:pages 208-210

63. Ohr Yisroel 14:page 60.

64. Ohr Yisroel 14:page 60.



Other Customs

In earlier years the children used to make a picture of *Haman* and hang it on their roofs, and on *Purim* they would make a fire and throw the picture inside.⁶⁵

Mentioning *Haman*

There is a custom brought down that when one is reading the *megilah* (not during *Purim*) and he reaches the words of *Haman* he should read it *arur haman* and when he reaches *Mordechai* say *boruch Mordechai* and *berucha Esther*.⁶⁶

Afternote on Making Noise

It is imperative that one should not focus on the noise as the main point and the *megilah* as secondary. One should not plan so much on which kind of noise he is going to make; rather he should sit down with the *megilah* before *Purim* and spend time understanding the *megilah*.⁶⁷

Other Customs Relating to *Haman* and *Purim*

Hamantashin

Hamantashin are eaten by Jews worldwide on *Purim*.⁶⁸ Where did this custom come from?

Traditionally,⁶⁹ *hamantashin* were filled with poppy seeds,⁷⁰ which is called “*mon*” in *Yiddish*. It is spelled *mem hey nun*, which spells *haman* (in Hebrew). The three corners represent the three *Avos*. When *Haman* saw the three *Avos*, his power waned.⁷¹ The corners are based on the *pasuk*,⁷² “*V’chol karnei resha’im agadei’a - I will uproot the ‘corners’ of wickedness.*”⁷³ Others say that the *Yiddish* spelling is *mem alef hey nun*. *Tash* in *Yiddish* means pocket. The pastry was called *mohntashin* – poppy seed pockets, as the dough is

65. Hauruch “shor” page 178b, Avudraham Tefillas Purim “v’kosav”.

66. Sefer Hamanig Hilchos Megilah page 242, Taamei Haminhagim page 376:footnote 9.

67. Refer to Moadim L’simcha 3:page 305:footnote 4.

68. In regard to the *beracha* status on *Hamantashin* see Biur Halacha 168 “sh’kimat”.

Some say this custom may date back to at least the 16th century if not earlier (article from Rabbi . 69 Eliezer Brodt available at <http://seforim.blogspot.com/2008/03/origins-of-hamentashen-in-jewish.html>).

70. Others say this is because Esther ate poppy seeds (Meseches Megilah 13a, Bais Yosef 695, Rama 695:2, Levush 2, Pri Chadash 2, Pri Megadim Eishel Avraham 1, Ben Ish Chai Tetzaveh 19, Mishnah Berurah 12, Aruch Hashulchan 9, see Daniel 1:16) Some say eating these poppy seeds should only be done on the night of *Purim* (Mishnah Berurah 12). However, the custom is not like this (Aruch Hashulchan 9, Avnei Yushfei 6:106:1, see *ibid* 6:106:2).

Sefer Matamim page 142:3 (new print). .71

72. Tehilim 75:11.

Sefer Matamim page 142:2 (new print). .73

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wrapped around the filling like a pocket.⁷⁴ Over time, the word changed, and people started calling it *hamantashin*.⁷⁵ Others explain the name *hamantash* is a reference to *Haman's* downfall. His strength was weakened (*tash kocho* – in Hebrew) and he did not destroy the *Yiddin*.⁷⁶

Today they are made with many different flavors, including prunes, nut, poppy, date, fruit preserves, chocolate, or even caramel or cheese.

*Harav Yaakov Kamenetsky zt"l*⁷⁷ said the reason for eating *hamantashin* on *Purim* is that the consumed item is destroyed. When one eats a *hamantash* he is in essence fulfilling the obligation of erasing *Amalek* since we are getting rid of *Haman (Amalek)* by eating a *hamantash*.⁷⁸

Some call it “*asneihaman*” (ears of *haman*) instead of *hamantash*.⁷⁹

Some *poskim* say that the reason why we eat *kreplach* (see next paragraph) applies to *hamantashin* as well.⁸⁰

Others have reservations about using *Haman* in a food that goes into our mouths and would rather call it “*Purim* cookies.”⁸¹

Kreplach

The reason for eating *kreplach* on *Purim* is because it is a *Yom Tov*, but one is permitted to do *melacha*. Therefore the *Yom Tov* is in a sense hidden. *Simchas Yom Tov* is accomplished with meat. Therefore, we hide the meat in a pocket to represent this idea.⁸² This is why *kreplach* are eaten on *Erev Yom Kippur* and *Hoshanah Rabbah* as well.⁸³

Sharei Yemey HaPurim page 73:footnote 13. .74

Sharei Yemey HaPurim page 73:footnote 13. .75

Otzer Kol Minhagei Yeshurun page 126:11. Refer to article from Rabbi Eliezer Brodt who .76 quotes many other sources for this custom. This article is available by visiting the following link: <http://seforim.blogspot.com/2008/03/origins-of-hamentashen-in-jewish.html> .

B'mechitzas Rabbeinu page 142. .77

78. Refer to Minhag Yisroel Torah 695:5.

Refer to Refer to B'Shvili Ha'minhag 3:page 149, Sharei Yemey Purim page 73:footnote 13. .79 Some say this name came first and later it switched to be called *hamantashin* (article from Eliezer Brodt available at <http://seforim.blogspot.com/2008/03/origins-of-hamentashen-in-jewish.html>).

Avnei Yushpei 6:106:7. .80

Shulchan Aruch Hamekutzar Purim page 292:footnote 9:8. .81

82. Matamim page 81 (new), Taamei Haminhagim 895, Lekutei Maharich (seder dini minhagei erev Yom Kippur) 3:page 649 (new), Minhag Yisroel Torah 695:7:page 258, Natei Gavriel Purim 71:10. Refer to Avnei Yushpei 6:106:7.

83. Minhag Yisroel Torah 608. In addition all three days have in common that fact that there is hitting on *Erev Yom Kippur (al cheits)*, Hitting the *Hoshanos* on *Hoshanah Rabbah*, and hitting when *haman* is recited at the *megilah* (www.biu.ac.il).



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