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Purim Pranks



In the course of Jewish history, various kinds of **Purim** pranks were developed, but **three** were the most important. **The first prank** was the burning of **Haman** in effigy. This practice began in Babylonia and Persia during the Talmudic period.

The second prank was that of "beating" **Haman** in the synagogue. As the book of **Esther** was read, whenever the reader came to the name of **Haman**, there would be a "beating ceremony." There have been many different practices throughout Jewish history. Sometimes **Haman's** name was written on two small stones and these were beaten together until his name was destroyed. Sometimes **Haman's** name was written on the sole of the shoes, and when his name was read, everyone would stomp their feet on the floor as a symbol of "beating" him. These two symbols of "beatings" are not practiced today as much as a third one is. Today, a noisemaker known as a "grogger" is used. Whenever **Haman's** name comes up during the reading, along with the "grogger," people stomp their feet and boo. **Haman's** name is mentioned fifty-four times, so this response is repeated many times. The same response is heard with the naming of **Haman's** ten sons for a total of sixty-four times.

The third prank is masquerading and wearing masks. It is customary on this date to masquerade. It is almost a form of Jewish Halloween in Isra'el. These masks portray the various characters in the Book of **Esther**.[132]