

Purim Tefillos

The Al HaNisim prayer is recited during davening (Shmoneh Esrei) and bentsching. One need not repeat davening/bentsching if he left it out. One can insert it with the Harachamans at the end of bentsching, or at the end of Shmoneh Esrei. Tachanun and Lamenatzach are omitted on Purim, and a special Torah reading telling of the war with Amalek is read in Shacharis before the Megilla reading. No Hallel is recited because the miracle of Purim occurred outside Eretz Israel and because the reading of the Megilla serves the same purpose as the recitation of Hallel.


Matanos La' Evyonim

During the day of Purim, every person must give Tzedaka to at least 2 needy persons. This may be accomplished through the auspices of the Shul's Tzedaka Fund. The Rambam in Hilchos Megilla (2:7) writes, "It is better for a person to increase gifts to the poor than to expand his Purim feast and the gifts he sends to his friends. For there is no greater and glorious Simcha than to gladden the hearts of the indigent, orphans, widows and those who sojourn amongst us. For the one that gladdens the heart of the downtrodden is compared to the Shechinah, the Divine Presence of Hashem." Please give your generous contributions of Matanos La'Evyonim to the Rav, Reb Efraim Silverberg, or Reb Yehuda Gottlieb, who will distribute your gifts to the needy in town on Purim day. You may contribute until Purim morning and still be included.

Mishloach Manos

There is a Mitzvah on Purim to send gifts of food to at least one friend, through a messenger. The gift is comprised of at least two different foods that are in an edible state and require no further preparation by the recipient. The Shaloch Manos enhances the spirit of friendliness and joy that is part of the holiday. There is no maximum to the amount of Shaloch Manos that can be given. The minimum is 2 types of food to one friend. It is best to send it through a Shaliach (messenger); a child can also act as the messenger.

Those that are in the midst of year-long mourning (Rachmono Litzlon) for the loss of a



MAATANOS LA'EYONIM

מוטב לאדם להרבות במתנות אביונים מלהרבות בסעודתו
 ובשלות מנות לרעיו. שאין שם שמחה גדולה ומפוארה אלא
 לשמח לב עניים ויתומים ואלמנות וגרים שהמשמח לב
 האמללים האלו דומה לשכינה שנאמר להחיות רוח שפלים
 ולהחיות לב נדכאים. (דמ"ב הלכות מגילה ב:ו)

"It is better for a person to increase gifts to the poor than to expand his Purim Feast and the gifts he sends to friends. For there is no greater and glorious simcha than to gladden the hearts of the indigent, the orphans, the widows, and those that sojourn among us. For the one who gladdens the heart of these downtrodden is compared to the Shechina, the Divine Presence of Hashem" (Rambam: Hilchos Megillah, 2:7)

Please give your generous contributions of matanos la'evyonim to the Rav. The money collected will be distributed, IYH, to anyim in our community on Purim day. You may contribute until Purim morning and still be included.

parent, or in the month-long mourning for the loss of a spouse, sibling, or child, (R^PL) are obligated in all the Mitzvos of Purim including the Mitzvos of Shaloch Manos. There are differing Halachic opinions as to whether one should send Shaloch Manos **to** an Avel since gifts represent a form of greeting. If sent to the entire family there is no problem at all.

Halachos of Purim 5774

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Ta'anis Esther

The 13th of Adar, which is the day before Purim, is known as the Ta'anis Esther (Fast of Esther), commemorating the fast proclaimed by Esther for all Jews prior to her plea to King Achashverosh on behalf of her people. This year, since the 13th of Adar falls on Shabbos, the fast is pushed back to Thursday, the 11th of Adar. The fast begins at dawn on Thursday, March 13th, which is 6:17 AM (72 minutes before sunrise), and ends that night at 8:02 PM. If one intends to eat in the morning before the fast begins, he should make a T'nai (say out loud that he is not accepting the fast until dawn) before he goes to sleep. One who forgot to make the T'nai but did in fact intend to wake up early in order to eat may still do so. One who intends to eat a full meal should start at least one half hour before the fast begins, i.e., before 5:47 AM. A small snack may be started even later than that. Pregnant and nursing women need not fast at all on Ta'anis Esther. Even those who follow the chumra (stringent practice) not to bathe on the other fast days may bathe on Ta'anis Esther.

Special Selichos prayers are recited in the morning, and the Torah passage "Vay'chal" (in Parshas Ki Sisa) is read during Shacharis and Mincha. All those who are fasting should recite Aneinu during Shema Koleinu at Mincha. Avinu Malkeinu is said at Shacharis and Mincha.

Machatzis Hashekel

At Mincha on Thursday, Ta'anis Esther, the Minhag is for every man to contribute a half shekel to charity in remembrance of the biblical tax of one half shekel assigned to the Korbanos Tzibur, the communal offerings. Today it is customary to give 3 half-dollar coins to Tzedaka because in the Shekalim portion of the Torah the word Terumah, offering, is written 3 times. Many have the custom to give Machatzis Hashekel for women and children as well. Once one has chosen to follow this custom (of including women and children), he should continue every year (unless the only reason he did it was because he thought he *had* to). If one does not have any half dollar coins, he may give their value with

other coins (preferably with coins, not bills). One should not use Ma'aser (tithing) funds for this Minhag, but for those who are accustomed to give for their wife and children, that may be given from Ma'aser funds, since that is an extra stringency. Machatzis Hashekel can be given after Purim also, up until Rosh Chodesh Nissan.

Shabbos Erev Purim

One must bring his Megilla (and anything else he may need for the reading of the Megilla, such as groggers) to Shul *before* Shabbos. Bringing it to Shul on Shabbos would be Hachana (preparing on Shabbos for something not needed until after Shabbos), which is prohibited. The Ba'al Koreh, though, is permitted to prepare the laining on Shabbos. The Megilla is not Muktzah on Shabbos and may be used to study from.

Even if Shalosh Seudos ends late, we do not mention Al Hanisim in bentching. Therefore, there is no problem of Tarti D'sasri (having a conflict by saying R'tzei for Shabbos and Al Hanisim for Sunday in the same bentching). [This is in contrast with when Rosh Chodesh falls on a Sunday, in which case we are careful to eat the majority of Shalosh Seudos before sunset to avoid the conflict of having to mention both Shabbos and Ya'aleh V'yavo for Rosh Chodesh together in the bentching.]

Parshas Zachor

The Shabbos before Purim is known as Shabbos Zachor, or the Shabbos of Remembrance. This year the Torah reading of Parshas Zachor takes place on the 13th of Adar, Parshas Tzav, March 15th. A special Maftir portion of the Torah at the end of Ki Seitzei (Devorim 25:17-19) is read instructing us to remember what the people of Amalek did to our ancestors when they left Egypt. Since Haman was a descendant of Amalek, it is most fitting to read this Torah portion right before Purim. In addition, a special Haftorah is read that tells of the defeat of the kingdom of Amalek by Shaul HaMelech. It is a Torah commandment to remember the incident in the desert with Amalek, and we fulfill this through the reading of the Zachor portion. It is best for one to review these three verses and understand their meaning prior to the actual Torah reading in Shul. Even if he didn't, though, as long as he understands the concept of what is being read it is OK. One should make sure to hear each word of the reading clearly, but if he missed one word (as long as it wouldn't change the meaning) it is OK. One must have in mind to be Yotze (fulfill his obligation) with the Ba'al Koreh, and the Ba'al Koreh should have in mind to be Motzi himself and everyone else. There is no need to have in mind to be Yotze with the Brachos, since the obligation is *not* to actually read the Pesukim, but rather to remember Amalek *through* the reading. The Brachos only pertain to the one who receives the Aliyah.

Women don't have an obligation to come hear the reading of Zachor. (This is why we don't have a separate reading for the women.) Some reasons offered are: 1) Women do not wage war. 2) Hearing the reading is a Zman Grama (time-dependent) Mitzva from which women are exempt. The custom is, though, that they try to come. The Kaf Hachaim says the actual Mitzva to remember is not Zman Grama; just the reading of Zachor is; therefore, if they do not hear the reading in Shul, women should read it from a Chumash at home.

Megillas Esther

The most prominent feature of the observance of Purim is listening to the reading of the Megilla twice, once in the evening at the start of the holiday and again in the morning. Chazal enacted this Mitzva for Pirsumei Nissa, to publicize the miracle that Hashem did for us. It therefore should be read B'rov Am, with a big crowd, and one should not make a private minyan for the Megilla if he can come to Shul. Since Purim marks the salvation of all Jews -- men women, and children -- everyone has an obligation to hear this reading both times. Those who can't be present for the public reading should read or hear it at home. You must hear every word of the Megilla; therefore during the reading there is no talking. If you miss one word, read to yourself until you catch up to the Ba'al Koreh. Even if you are in doubt about a missed word, you must hear the Megilla again. To ensure that every word is heard, it is best to read along (quietly) from a kosher Megilla, or at least follow along in a Chumash. One must have in mind to be Yotze, *including* the Brachos. When everyone reads the ten sons of Haman aloud, they should try to do it in one breath. If a man is reading for a woman, the Bracha to recite is Lishmoa Megilla, and the woman should say the Bracha. If there are other women listening, one can say it for all of them. There is no Bracha at the end of the women's reading.

Groggers

During the reading of the Megilla, we use groggers (noisemakers) each time Haman's name is mentioned to express our happiness at the frustration of Haman's plans and to "eradicate the name of Amalek." Parents should caution their children before Purim and (silently) during the Megilla reading not to make excessively long noise that disturbs others or interferes with their hearing every word.

Purim Eve

The house should be Shabbosdik, with a Shabbos tablecloth and candles lit. There is an Inyan to have a bit of a seuda. The Steipeler would have some wine, too.

Purim Day

Purim is a one-day celebration observed on the 14th day of Adar. This year, it begins Motzo'ei Shabbos, March 15th and continues until Sunday evening. It commemorates the saving of the Jews living under Persian rule from Haman's plans to exterminate them. The name Purim comes from the word Pur, which means lottery. This is the method by which Haman selected the date for the massacre of the Jews. Haman's designs have had their unfortunate parallels throughout the centuries, as many of the rulers in whose lands the Jews have lived have followed his example. The precariousness of Jewish survival in many countries of the Diaspora has had the fate of the Jews often subject to the whims of the local ruler and is epitomized by the story of Purim. The sudden twists and turns of events in the Purim story created a turn-about, which enabled the Jewish community to defend itself from its enemies. This story has provided hope and encouragement to oppressed and victimized Jewish communities throughout the centuries.

Magen Avraham says one should have in mind that the Bracha of Shehecheyanu at the morning Megilla reading should also cover the other Mitzvos of the day (Shalach Manos, Seuda and according to some Matanos La'evyonim).