

Hilchos Purim

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Parsha Zachor

- There's a disagreement if women are required to hear parshas zachor. The minhag has become that women hear it. Some allow women to read it from a Chumash and this can be relied on when it's difficult for a woman to get to Shul
- The one who gets an Aliya should have in mind that he's being motzi everyone with the brachos
- Everyone listening must have in mind that they're being yotzi with the Baal Koreh
- One who didn't make it to shul can be yotzi during the summer in parshas ki setzei
- Some say you can be yotzi with Krias hatorah of Purim morning
- Try and hear parshas zachor in the pronunciation that you normally use

Machtzis Hashekel

- The minhag is to give a half shekel before Purim as a remembrance of the times of the Beis Hamikdash when everyone had to give a half shekel
- Since it says the word "Trumah (donation)" three times, therefore we give three half shekel
- We give half of whatever currency is normally used (in the U.S. it's half a dollar)
- It's preferable not to say "this money is for machtzis hashekel" or "this is a remembrance for the machtzis hashekel"
- The basic minhag is for men above the age of twenty to give machtzis hashekel
- Many say that it should be given for any male over the age of thirteen
- Many have the minhag to give on behalf of women too
- Many have a minhag to give on behalf of children and even on behalf of unborn children
- Once you start giving on behalf of all of the above then you must continue giving on subsequent years
- Since machtzis hashekel has become accepted as a requirement, therefore maaser money can't be used

Mishloach Manos

- Everyone is required to give, including women
- We're required to give two portions of food to one person
- Each portion should be something substantial (ex. not two candies)
- Candies etc. can be placed in a utensil and then it will be considered substantial
- Two portions of the same food are not allowed
- Two portions of different flavors of the same foods are allowed
- There's no requirement to have two different brachos
- Some say that it should be sent with a shliach but it's not required

- If one is giving utensils for mishloach manos, glass and ceramic won't need tevila but the recipient should be told that it wasn't toveled
- One who's baking challo/bread/cakes etc. to give away, that require separating challah, should preferably keep five pounds for themselves so that there won't be any issues with making a bracha

Matanos Levyonim

- Everyone is required to give, including women
- Children under the age of Bar/Bas mitzva are not required to give
- We give two poor people one present each
- The minimum amount to give is the amount it costs to buy a roll and a drink per poor person (approximately five dollars in total)
- Maaser money can't be used for the basic amount necessary to do the mitzva but anything more can be used
- Purim is a very auspicious day to give tzedaka
- It's better to spend more money on matanos levyonim than on mishloach manos
- On Purim we don't check into a poor person to see if he's legitimate. We just give.
- Once your money for tzedaka is depleted, you don't have to give any more tzedaka

Taanis Esther

- More lenient than other fasts
- Pregnant and nursing women don't have to fast
- Showering and listening to music is allowed even according to those that don't allow it on other fasts
- If you know that you'll be sick on Purim if you fast then you don't have to fast
- Shabbos clothing should be worn for the megila
- No food should be eaten before the megila, even though you're fasting. No sleeping either
- Those that aren't fasting must stop eating at sunset
- One who's weak can taste a little food or have something to drink (not alcohol) before Megillah
- Women can eat a small amount and drink before megila
- Anyone who eats before megila should appoint someone to make sure that they don't forget to hear the megila

Megila

- Al Hanisim should be said after Modim in Shemona Esrei. If it was forgotten it should not be repeated
- For krias hamegila, the more people listening together the better
- Private minyanim should not be made for megila
- If you don't have a set shul to daven in, try and go to the shul with the most people
- Women are required to hear the megila

- It's better for women to go to shul to hear the megila but not if it will require them to take along children that can't sit quietly
- The minhag is to bring children that can sit quietly to hear the Megillah
- The reason that we read four pesukim out loud throughout the Megillah is to make sure the children stay awake
- If a man, who already read the megila, is reading for women, the women should make the Bracha
- If there are more than ten women, one woman should make the brachos on behalf of all. If there's less than ten, each woman should make their own bracha
- Any Megillah reading of less than ten people should not say the Bracha after the Megillah reading
- Be very careful to hear every word of the megila
- If one word is missed then the entire megila must be heard/read again
- If one talked during the Megillah then hear it again from that point
- If you "space out" during megila then it's questionable if you were yotzei
- Therefore it's best to follow along with your finger as the chazzan reads the Megila
- If you missed some words then quickly read them to yourself until you catch up. You can read like this up until half of the megila
- The megila can be read either standing or sitting
- When reading the megila for the public, one should stand
- The brachos (before and after) should be said while standing. Those that are listening too. No talking until after the last bracha
- The minhag is for someone to be on either side of the one reading the megila
- It's best for each person to have their own megila
- After the megila reading at night, there should be a seuda, preferably dairy
- The table should be set and candles lit
- It's preferable not to eat or drink before megila. This applies to megilah during the day too
- Drinking before davening in order to Daven better is allowed
- When hearing the brachos of the megila during the day, have in mind the mitzvos of 1) mishloach manos, 2) matanos levyonim 3) Seudas Purim
- Tefilin should be kept on until after the Kaddish after the Megila

Drinking

- It's a mitzva to drink intoxicating beverages on Purim until you don't know the difference between Baruch Mordechai and Arur Haman (blessed is Mordechai, cursed is Haman)
- Some say that you can fulfill the mitzva by drinking more than normal and then going to sleep

- If you know that you're not going to make brachos or Daven properly then it's better not to drink
- If you possibly may offend or hurt people then better not to drink
- It's better to drink during the meal but drinking before is also acceptable
- Wine is preferred but any intoxicating drink is allowed
- One should not drink in one place and have in mind to continue drinking in another place. Rather make a bracha achrona in each place
- Three levels of drunk: 1) so drunk that he's not cognizant of anything: everything he does doesn't count including Davening etc. 2) drunk enough that he can't talk clearly: can't Daven. If he can't sober up then he can say birchas hamazon. If necessary he can be part of a minyan 3) one who drank more than three ounce of alcohol: if you feel the effects of the alcohol then no Davening otherwise Davening etc. is allowed and certainly brachos too

Seudas Purim

- Many have the minhag to eat two seudos. One in the morning and one after mincha
- Everyone is required to eat the seuda, including women
- Bread should be eaten but if it's difficult it's not required
- Meat should be eaten but chicken is also acceptable. Dairy is really not preferable
- Candles should be lit
- You're allowed to eat bread in one place and continue eating in another place as long as you eat a little bread in the final place that you say birchas hamazon and as long as 72 minutes doesn't elapse without eating
- If one vomits after eating the meal, as long as it wasn't immediately after eating the meal then it's acceptable as a meal and he doesn't have to eat again. He can also say birchas hamazon
- Al hanisim should be said during birchas hamazon
- If it was forgotten it should not be repeated. However since it's a disagreement, be careful not to forget to say it
- If you don't finish your meal until after nightfall you still say al hanisim
- If you Daven Maariv before saying birchas hamazon then don't say al hanisim. Therefore make sure to say birchas hamazon before Maariv

Work

- The minhag is to only do work that is necessary for Purim itself
- A non Jew can do work on behalf of a Jew
- It's preferable for construction not to be done, even if it's done by a non Jewish contractor