

All about the Purims

Regular, Shushan/J'lem, and Purim M'shulash - updated for 5785

Highly recommended that you consider these pages as being informational, and not necessarily as the final word on any issue. When unsure of something you read herein, check it out with your Rav.

Taanit Esther is on 13 Adar each year, for all - no difference between walled and open cities.

When 14 Adar is Sunday, the fast is pulled back (preponed) to Thursday, 11 Adar.

Our observance this year - 5785 - is also on Thursday, but it is 13 Adar (March 13th).

The fast begins at Alot HaShachar, 4:40am and ends after Megila reading (or 6:13pm for people who really need to drink something sooner). Times are accurate for Yerushalayim. Adjust for your locale, if necessary.

Why? Some say that we fast on Taanit Esther because of the fast that Esther declared upon the Jews of Shushan before she approached the king to plead for her people. That fast was in Nisan, and it is probably not the reason for Taanit Esther - but is probably the reason the fast was named for Esther.

Some say that on days when the Jewish People wage battles, they fast and pray for Divine help and guidance. Such a day was the 13th of Adar, hence a fast day.

Some say that the fast is actually mentioned in the Megila, which speaks of DIVREI HATZOMOT V'ZA'KATAM - ...the matters of the fasts and the wailing.

And some suggest that the fast was instituted as an atonement and TIKUN (repair) for the Jews of Shushan attending the parties of Achashveirosh, at which he flaunted the plunder of the Beit HaMikdash, paraded around in the garments of the Kohein Gadol, and at which he belittled G-d. (Not to mention the kashrut issues.) The Jews had no business enjoying those parties. Therefore, abstaining from food and drink is an atonement and TIKUN.

Ironically, so is the eating and drinking of Purim day. There are two ways to atone for sins of eating and drinking. One is to abstain (fast), the other is to indulge, even to an excess... that is L'SHEIM SHAMAYIM, for the sake of Heaven and for the fulfillment of a mitzva.

Taanit Esther embodies the serious side of Purim, which we tend to ignore on Purim day itself. It helps give Purim a sober (PI) balance.

Taanit Esther is not a sad and

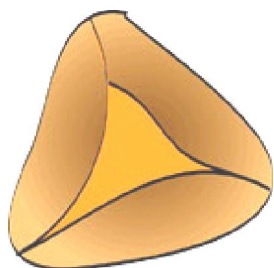
mournful day, like the four fasts for the Churban. But it is a serious day. A day of introspection. A day of T'shuva. As different as it is from "the Four Fasts", we still say Slichot, still read Vaychal, and the Dirshu HaShem haftara.

On the other hand, at Mincha, we don't say Tachanun or Avinu Malkeinu, as we do on other fast days (except when Taanit Esther is preponed to Thursday).

Zeicher L'Machatzit HaShekel

Before Megila reading, it is customary to give three half-shekel coins (or half of whatever currency is used in your country) in commemoration of the Silver Half-Shekel collected annually in the time of the Beit HaMikdash. Some suggest giving a total of the value of the original Half-Shekel, about 36.50₪ (based on 3.62₪ to the dollar and \$1.05 per gram of silver, and the Machatzit HaShekel being approx 9.6 grams).

Men are obligated to give the 3 half-shekels; for women, it is optional. If a woman decides to give Zeicher L'Machatzit HaShekel, she should say B'LI NEDER so she can decide not to in the future. So too, if a man or woman decides to give the 36.50₪, they should say B'LI NEDER so the practice won't become binding.



Maariv on Thursday night, before Megila reading

Even though we are all reading or hearing Megila on Thursday night this year, those who are observing 'regular' Purim say AL HANISIM in the Amida (and Birkat HaMazon), but those observing Shushan Purim (or Jerusalem Purim, as I like to call it, that is, Purim M'shulash), do not say AL HANISIM on Thursday night or Friday (even though we are reading the Megila), but rather on Friday night and Shabbat day (which is our Purim, even though we have to read like everyone else, this year).

Megila reading - once at night and once during the day. The daytime reading is considered to be DIVREI KABALA, a higher level obligation than the Rabbinic rule of reading it also at night. Obviously, everyone - man, woman, child - should hear Megila twice - night and day.

Megila is not read on Shabbat for the same reason Shofar is not blown on Shabbat and Lulav & Etrog are not taken on Shabbat. Our Sages banned these mitzvot on Shabbat lest a Jew mistakenly think that it is permissible to carry in a public domain without an Eiruv for the purpose of pursuing the mitzva. The ban is "across the board", even where there is an Eiruv and where people are knowledgeable and would not make a mistake. Aside from protecting Shabbat from inadvertent violation, this Rabbinic ban highlights the supremacy of Shabbat

among the mitzvot. On a Hashkafic level, we can say that the Shabbat-message of G-d's Creation of the world and His continuing role as Master of the Universe (Shabbat) must not be negated by an attempt to proclaim Him as King (Shofar), or acknowledge His control of nature (Four Species), or demonstrate His working behind the scenes of Jewish History (Megila).

AL HANISIM is inserted in each Amida and Birkat HaMazon of the Purim date that is yours. Omitting AL HANISIM does not require repeating either the davening or benching, but in each case there is a second place to insert AL HANISIM if you forgot to say it in its "official" place.

For the Amida, one would say AL HANISIM right before YIH-YU L'RATZON IMREI FI... Going back is not an option once you finish the bracha within which AL HANISIM is said (HATOV SHIMCHA...).

Similarly for benching. Once you conclude AL HAARETZ V'AL HAMAZON, don't go back, but say AL HANISIM as a HARACHAMAN, towards the end of the benching.

In either case, a modified intro is used. It goes something like this (texts vary):

הַרְחַמְנוּ, הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה לָנוּ נִסִּים וְנִפְלְאוֹת כְּמוֹ
שֶׁעָשָׂה לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם בְּזִמְנֵי הַזֶּה.

Then continue with

בַּיָּמִי מְרַדְּכִי וְאֶסְתֵּר...

Torah reading

Regular Purim people: After the Amida of Shacharit on Friday, before Megila reading, a 9-pasuk portion (Sh'mot 17:8-16) from the end of B'shalach is read (3 Aliyot), beginning with...

וַיָּבֹא עַמְלֵק וַיִּלָּחֶם עִם־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּרֵפְיָדָם:

Note that with a minimum requirement of 3 Aliyot and a minimum of 3 p'sukim per Aliya, this 9-pasuk reading is the shortest possible. No other reading suffices with the minimum. The plain reason is that the portion of the Amalek battle is only 9 p'sukim long. The "extra touch" reason is that Amalek and Haman receive no more Torah reading than is absolutely necessary. (S'faradim double the last pasuk to read a total of 10 p'sukim. But not when it is the Maftir on Shabbat.)

Jerusalem Purim people: No Torah reading on Friday morning; just Megila. On Shabbat, a second Torah is used for Maftir, which is the 9 p'sukim of VAYAVO AMALEK. We read the same haftara as last week's Zachor, while everyone else is reading from one Torah and reading the regular haftara for Ki Tisa.

Megila is always preferred to be fulfilled with at least a minyan, because of publicizing the miracle and showing more honor to The King (HaShem). However, Megila in private also fulfills the mitzva. Some say that this year for Purim M'shulash people, there should be extra attention paid to a reading with a

minyan, because the reading on Friday for Shabbat-Purim people might be construed as early, not in its time. Early reading needs a minyan. Women who have their own Megila reading should also try for at least 10 women, as this counts as a TZIBUR for Megila. Others say that although one should make the extra effort to here Megila with a minyan this year, if not possible (or very difficult), reading in private is okay, and brachot are said.

Matanot LaEvyonim - gifts to the poor - is done by all, on Friday. Giving money to a Tzedaka fund that will not be distributing money to poor people on Purim day itself, is NOT an ideal way to fulfill this mitzva, and should be a last resort, when one has no access to poor people on Purim day. The requirement is to give to a minimum of two poor people. If one gives gifts to poor people on Purim eve, or even a couple of days before Purim, and the poor people will use the money on Purim day, there are opinions that this fulfills the mitzva of Matanot LaEvyonim. Ideally, the gifts to the poor should be given early in the morning of Purim day, so that the recipients can use the money for their Purim Seuda and Shabbat needs. This mitzva can be fulfilled with money or food. Ideally, one should give an amount equal to the value of a meal, even though a much smaller amount technically fulfills the mitzva. Some say that the gifts should be significant enough - or special enough - to bring joy to the recipients. One should

not use "Maaser money" for Matanot LaEvyonim. Since women are also obligated on this mitzva, they should do it, or if they are relying on their husbands, the husband should have in mind that he is doing his mitzva, as well as for his wife. Children should do this mitzva on their own and not rely on their father's giving. When one spends a significant amount of money for his Purim Seuda and Mishlo'ach Manot, he should not just do Matanot LaEvyonim in a token fashion, but should do it generously.

Mishlo'ach Manot - Main reason given for this mitzva is to show that Haman's statement about the Jewish people is a terrible lie. He said that we are a scattered people who don't care about each other. That we lack unity. This mitzva of giving gifts of food to fellow Jews, providing them with Purim delights, sharing with them, all point out Haman's lie. Some say that the mitzva of Mishlo'ach Manot should be done specifically through a SHALI'ACH, an agent. In other words, you give gifts of food to someone who will give them on your behalf to the intended recipient. Others do not consider a Shali'ach to be necessary. Sender and receiver should be aware of who will receive and who sent, respectively. Sounds obvious, but there are situations that this rule addresses. For example, you bring Mishlo'ach Manot to someone who isn't home. You leave it on the door handle. If you don't identify the package as coming

from you, or if the person does not get the package until after Purim, there is something lacking in this particular giving. Usually, people give to more than the minimum one recipient, so if there is something technically lacking in some of the Mishlo'ach Manot, it is most likely that the mitzva is fulfilled in some of the other Mishlochos. Some opinions hold that the sender and recipient need both be observing Purim on the day in question. This is particularly an issue for Yerushalmim sending to open-city folk and vice versa, when one is observing Purim on the 14th and the other on the 15th of Adar. Make sure that at least one person you send Mishlo'ach Manot to is observing Purim on the same day that you are, and on the same day you send the gifts.

Manot is plural, and the practice is to send at least two different food items as Mishlo'ach Manot. Some say that the two food items should have different brachot; others say that it doesn't matter - just that there are a minimum of two items. The food should be ready to eat, rather than require cooking or baking, etc. before the recipient can enjoy it. Another reason for two gifts, besides the pluralness of the word MANOT, is to commemorate the two gifts that Achashveirosh gave to Esther - Beit Haman and his royal ring. Most opinions say that drink can be counted as one (or both) of the gifts; others say that drinks - even wine - do not count for the two gifts. In "normal" situations,

people will send Mishlo'ach Manot back to those who sent them to you. It is considered preferable to send back something different from what one received. This way, one's joy is increased in the receiving and sending. Some hold that one should fulfill the mitzva of Mishlo'ach Manot before he eats breakfast. Right after davening in the morning is ideal, because Shehecheyanu before Megila goes for the other mitzvot of the day, as well.

Regular Purim people do Mishlo'ach Manot on Friday - their only day of Purim.

Jerusalem Purim people have what is called PURIM M'SHULASH, tripple Purim (yes, I know that triple isn't really spelled that way), with different practices being split among Friday, Shabbat, and Sunday. For Mishlo'ach Manot, the main day is Sunday, but some have the custom to send one MM package to one friend on Shabbat, in case MM should not have been pushed off to Sunday (which some poskim hold). Not a requirement, but not a bad idea, either. (And some will give a token MM on Friday, as well - to cover all bases.) The norm - Sunday.

Seudat Purim. This is a Purim Day mitzva, and a seuda at night is not considered a fulfillment of the mitzva. Nonetheless, one should also eat something special on Purim night. Although one can fulfill the mitzva of Seudat Purim in the morning, it is the

widespread practice **(except when Purim is on Erev Shabbat)** to have the seuda after davening Mincha. Common practice in other years is to extend the seuda into the night. For 14th of Adar people, this has the advantage of also including the 15th as part of the Purim period. For 15th of Adar people, it is less clear that it is praiseworthy to extend their seuda into the night. In either case, there are differing opinions as to where in Birkat HaMazon to say AL HANISIM when one is benching at night when it is officially not Purim anymore. Some posit to say it in its normal bracha, NODEH; others hold that it should be said as a HARACHAMAN (see earlier). One should have something special to eat on the other day of Purim from the one you are observing. Seudat Purim should definitely have HaMotzi (even though some sources state that it is not a requirement). Ideally, one should have wine at his seuda (more than he usually has on other occasions). Wine is such a significant feature of the Megila, from the wine mentioned at the early parties of the king to the parties that Esther used to plead before the king. Some say that the "mitzva" of drinking applies only to wine. Others give a slightly different reason for drinking, and that can be fulfilled by other intoxicating beverages as well. **Becoming drunk is not Simchat Purim and should be avoided.** According to some opinions, meat should be on the menu, because of its being part of the traditional definition of Simcha (unless meat is not part of

your personal definition of Simcha).

Getting drowsy from drinking (a bit) more wine than you usually do, is a fulfillment of AD D'LO YADA, and allows one to stay within the boundaries of SIMCHAT MITZVA. Special foods, enjoyable guests, and Divrei Torah all add to the SIMCHA that is be part of the Seuda.

This year, with Seuda for most 'regular' Purim people being in the morning, some might not feel like having meat, even though they would usually enjoy it. Forcing your self to eat something is NOT simcha.

Some will have their Friday Purim in the afternoon as on weekday Purims. You should seek the advise and counsel of your Rav as to when is the best time for your Seuda.

Jerusalem Purim people have their Seuda on Sunday. Afternoon is preferred. Stretching it into the night is not a good idea.

Since some authorities held that the Seuda should stay on Shabbat (even though the majority agree that it should be on Sunday), it is a nice idea to add a special food - side dish, dessert, better wine - to the Shabbat day meal, as sort of like having a Seuda.

One should wear Shabbat & Yom Tov clothes on Purim, in honor of the day. (It seems reasonable to say that a costume is also in honor of the day, but not regular weekday clothing.)

Shir shel Yom

According to Minhag Yerushalayim, there is a special chapter of T'hilim to say on Purim day, instead of the "regular" Song of the Day. AYELET HASHACHAR, T'hilim 22, is the Shir Shel HaYom for Purim. This Psalm is said on Friday for those celebrating Purim then, but not on Shabbat in Yerushalayim, since the T'hilim of Shabbat (92) takes precedence as the one Psalm of the day.

Why two different Purims?

There are only two cities mentioned in the Megila: Shushan, where the action took place, and Yerushalayim, mentioned as the place from which Mordechai was exiled to Shushan. Jerusalem at the time of the Purim events was in ruin. We can even say that we were vulnerable to Haman's threats and plot BECAUSE Jerusalem was in ruin and devoid of its inhabitants. Almost as a prayer for the future Complete Geula, Jerusalem was given a special prominence in the celebration of Purim. It is today the prime celebrant of Shushan Purim. To give Jerusalem that status and honor, the focus was shifted to the time of Yehoshua, the first one to do battle against Amalek. Remember that Yehoshua was the first to fight against Amalek, but he managed only to weaken them. Shaul was commanded to finish the job, so to speak, but he fell short. (See the haftara of Zachor, and in Jerusalem, also the haftara of Shabbat-Purim, for details.) Mordechai and Esther

did a good job with Haman and his sons. But remember, Amalek's type of hatred of the Jewish people and of Israel is, sadly, 'alive and well' in the world today. Our battle against Amalek is still MIDOR DOR.

As joyous as Purim is, it is sorely lacking rebuilt Jerusalem - may we see it soon.



The Hamantash is the perfect symbol for Tripple Purim - wouldn't you agree?



מרדכי היהודי ואסתר המלכה
add up to 1081, as does תפארת



in honor of Purim M'shulash

Let's take a look at English and Hebrew terms for TRIANGLES.

Triangle(s) = **M'SHULASH, M'SHULASHIM**

When the lengths of the three sides of the triangle are all different, the triangle is **SCALENE**. In Hebrew, **M'SHULASH SHONEH TZ'LA'OT**.

An **ISOSCELES** triangle has two sides of equal length.

In Hebrew, **M'SHULASH SH'VEI SHOKAYIM**.

If all three sides are equal, the triangle is **EQUILATERAL** (or equiangular).

In Hebrew, **SH'VEI TZ'LA'OT**.

A right triangle has one right angle (90°) is called a **RIGHT TRIANGLE, M'SHULASH YASHAR**.

ACUTE triangles have all acute angles ($<90^\circ$), **M'SHULASH CHAD-ZAVIT**.

OBTUSE triangles have one obtuse angle ($>90^\circ$), **M'SHULASH K'HEI-ZAVIT**.

The **PERIMETER** of a triangle is $p=a+b+c$ - In Hebrew, **HEKEIF**

The **AREA** of a triangle is $a=(b \cdot h)/2$ - In Hebrew, **SHETACH**

PYTHAGOREAN THEOREM $\leftrightarrow a^2 + b^2 = c^2 \leftrightarrow$ **MISHPAT PITAGORAS**



AD D'LO YADA - BY THE NUMBERS

Rava said: A person is obligated to become intoxicated with wine on Purim until he is so intoxicated AD D'LO YADA - that he does not know how to distinguish between ARUR HAMAN L'VARUCH MORDECHAI - cursed is Haman and blessed is Mordecai. (Masechet MEGILA 7b)

Shulchan Aruch Orach Chayim 695:2 quotes this statement of the Gemara.

The RAMA says: One need not get so drunk; rather he should drink wine a little more than his usual amount, take a nap - and by sleeping he will not know to distinguish between ARUR HAMAN and BARUCH MORDECHAI.

And now for the numbers!

The gimatriya of HAMAN is $5+40+50 = 95$. MORDECHAI is $40+200+4+20+10 = 274$. Not close. Reminding us that there is a great difference between HAMAN and MORDECHAI. But that's not what the Gemara is referring to. It speaks of the difference between ARUR HAMAN and BARUCH MORDECHAI.

ARUR HAMAN = $1+200+6+200$ (407) + 95 = 502.

BARUCH MORDECHAI = $2+200+6+20$ (228) + 274 = 502.

The same! No difference between Cursed in Haman and Blessed is Mordechai. Can't be. Let's try a different gimatriya calculation. In the spirit of Purim, in the spirit of V'NAHAFOCH HU (it turned upside down, referring to the month of Adar, that looked very bad for the Jews of the kingdom and reversed to joy, we will use the AT-BASH gimatriya.

ARUR HAMAN = $400+3+80+3$ (486) + $90+10+9$ (109) = 595.

BARUCH MORDECHAI = $300+3+80+30$ (413) + $10+3+100+30+40$ (183) = 596.

Very slight difference.

If you have drunk a bit more wine than you are used to, you might not be able to add up a column of figures correctly, thereby numerically fulfilling AD D'LO YADA.