

Hilchos Purim

Taanis Esther

Taanis Esther *Mukdam* is observed this year on Thursday, March 21st. The fast begins at 5:34 AM and concludes at 7:50 PM.

1. Pregnant women and women who have given birth within 30 days do not have to fast on Taanis Esther.
2. A Chassan during Sheva Berachos, as well as a father of a newborn on the day of the Bris, is obligated to fast on Taanis Esther.
3. Even those who are exempt from fasting should just eat basic food items and not indulge in delicacies.
4. According to numerous Poskim, you are permitted to brush your teeth or use mouthwash on Taanis Esther - exercising caution not to swallow any of the liquid.
5. On Taanis Esther it is permissible to bathe and to listen to music.
6. This fast is not as stringent as other fast days. Thus, if one is ill or has a severe headache and would suffer from fasting that day, he may refrain from fasting. In case of any doubt, a shaila should be asked.

Machatzi Hashekel

1. The custom of Machatzis Hashekel is for every male over age of 20 (some assume this obligation at age 13), to donate three half-dollars in commemoration of the half-shekels that were donated this time of year in the days of the Bais Hamikdash.
2. Although the preferable time to give a Machatzis Hashekel is prior to Mincha on Taanis Esther, you may, however, give it even after Purim up until Rosh Chodesh Nissan.
3. If possible, it is best to actually give coins for Machatzis Hashekel as opposed to bills.
4. Although women are not obligated in Machatzis Hashekel, there are some men who are accustomed to giving on behalf of their wives.
5. Machatzis Hashekel should not be taken from Maaser money.

Megillah Reading

The Megillah will be read Motzei Shabbos, March 23rd at 8:35 PM in the Main Shul and again at 9:45 PM, and on Sunday morning, March 24th at each minyan (which begin respectively at 6:25, 7:30 & 8:30 AM) and at 10:45 AM.

1. The *mitzvah* of reading the Megillah on Purim, both at night and by day, is incumbent upon every Jew - men, women, and children who have reached an educable age. It is preferable to read the Megillah in a Shul, even if one has a *minyan* in his house, to fulfill the *posuk* "b'rov am hadras melech" – "The King's glory is in a multitude of people."
2. There is an obligation to hear **every** word read from a kosher Megillah. If, however, you are using a printed text, it is best not to read along but to simply listen to the Baal Koreh. In the event, however, that one fails to hear certain words, he should read them aloud – even from a printed text.
3. If you possess a kosher Megillah, it is best to read along in an undertone with the Baal Koreh.

Purim

1. Although it is customary not to do Melacha on Purim day, it is permissible to wash clothing in a washing machine, to take a haircut and cut nails.
2. There are some who are accustomed to drink some wine on the night of Purim as well as during the day and/or at the seuda.

Matanos L'Evyonim

1. On the day of Purim, every Jewish man and woman is obligated to give money or food to at least two poor people in the equivalent of approximately \$3 per poor person. *Halachah* is clear in urging us to distribute as much *tzedakah* as possible on Purim day rather than sending Mishloach Manos to a large number of friends.
2. Although the minimal shiur, i.e., 2 aniyim, cannot come from Maaser money, you may give additional money from Maaser money.
3. A married woman can fulfill her obligation through her husband's gift. It is proper for the husband to let her know that he is giving on her behalf as well.
4. One can give a check for Matanos L'Evyonim even if the bank is closed on Purim.
5. Women are also obligated in Matanos L'Evyonim.

Mishloach Manos

1. It is incumbent upon every Jewish man and woman to send at least two items of food or beverage which require no further preparation, so as to fulfill the *mitzvah* of Mishloach Manos. The two items can be of the same bracha.
2. The 2 items that are given for Mishloach Manos must be 2 different types but may be the same bracha. Hence, 2 types of meat can be given to fulfill this obligation.
3. There is a preference to send the Mishloach Manos through a Shaliach. However, you are most definitely Yotzai if you give it on your own.
4. You fulfill your obligation of Mishloach Manos if you sent it before Purim as long as the recipient receives it on Purim.
5. Similarly, if you leave the Mishloach Manos at someone's door late at night so that he or she will find it Purim morning when the door is opened, you fulfill the mitzvah.
6. Although we generally do not send Mishloach Manos to an Avel, it may be sent l'chatchila to the other family members.

Seudas Purim

1. It is customary to daven Mincha before starting the Seudah.
2. The Purim Seudah should be eaten toward late afternoon with the major part of it partaken of before nightfall - although one may continue the Seudah past dark.
3. One should eat bread at the Seudas Purim.
4. It is proper to engage in Torah learning at the outset of the Seudah.
5. Women are obligated in the Seudah as well.
6. Many Poskim maintain that women are also obligated to drink a Rviis of wine at the Seudah. It can also be fulfilled with grape juice.
7. If you daven Maariv during the Seuda, prior to Bentching, you cannot say Al Hanissim subsequently in Birchas Hamazon.