

Purim Laws and Customs: A Quick Review

TAANIT ESTHER

is the same day whether you celebrate Purim on the 14th or the 15th of Adar. Taanit Esther is Monday, March 6th. The fast begins in Jerusalem at 4:49am and concludes at 6:07pm.

ZEICHER L'MACHATZIT HASHEKEL

can be given at Mincha of Taanit Esther or before Megillah reading. Common amount is 3 half-shekel coins. Some give the value of the original silver half shekel, which at today's price of silver and the current exchange rate is around 20NIS. Remember - we don't give Machatzit HaShekel without a Beit HaMikdash, we give ZEICHER - commemorative of it.

PURIM

AL HANISIM said in the Amida in the B'RACHA of MODIM and in Birkat HaMazon in the B'RACHA of NODEH L'CHA. If you forget AL HANISIM in the Amida, do NOT repeat it. If you catch your omission before HaShem's name in HATOV SHIMCHA... go back and say it. If you already said HaShem's name, finish the Amida and before you say YIHYU L'RATZON... and take your steps back, say Al HaNisim with a modified opening sentence:

הרחמן הוא יעשה לנו ניסים ונפלאות כאשר עשה
לאבותינו בימים ההם בזמן הזה. בימי מרדכי ואסתר

Similar for Birkat HaMazon. Before HaShem's name in AL HAARETZ V'AL HAMAZON, go back and say it. After HaShem's name, continue until right before HARACHAMAN HU Y'ZAKEINU and say it with the modified opener, as above.

FROM HERE TO THERE

Jerusalemites who go outside for 14 Adar and outsiders who come to Jerusalem for Purim should ask a Rav what is and is not required of you on the other day.

TORAH READING

Is taken from the end of B'shalach - VAYAVO AMALEK... If you missed ZACHOR, you should ask the Baal Korei to have the Mitzvah of ZACHOR in mind, and you should have KAVANA likewise.

MEGILLAH READING

Required TWICE, at night and in the day. KAVANA should include the Mitzvah of Megillah and the publicizing of HaShem's miracles. The b'racha of SHE-HECHEYANU in the morning covers the other mitzvot of the day. (Have them in mind.) MATANOT LA'EYONIM are gifts to the poor (be generous, more than you spend on Mishlo'ach Manot). Best to give on Purim day. Giving it earlier to someone who will distribute it on Purim day is also acceptable.



MISHLO'ACH MANOT

are gifts of foods (min. two kinds) to friends (or just other Jews) - who are observing Purim the same day you are. One Mishloach Manot is sufficient, but most people give multiple times.

*Special thanks to
Shlomo Gherman for
this photo*



SEUDAT PURIM

is a festive meal in the afternoon of your Purim day

DRINKING

The proper custom on Purim is to drink more wine than you usually do. A bit more is sufficient. In most cases, excessive drinking turns out not to be in line with SIMCHAT PURIM. Be careful. And watch out for your family members.