

Halacha Newsletter

By Rabbi Yosef Shusterman

Purim 5762

Parshas Zachor

Saturday, 11th Adar
February 23

In remembrance of the evil deeds of Amalek, of whom Haman was a descendant, we take out two Sifrei Torah. In one we read Parshas HaShavua (T' Tzaveh) and in the second "Zachor Es Asher Osoh L'cho Amalek" (D' vorim 25:17). The Baal Koreh and the entire congregation should bear in mind that they are fulfilling the commandment of the Torah. If one was unable to hear this Parsha, according to some opinions he may fulfill his obligation by hearing the Kriyas HaTorah on Purim morning.

Taanis Esther

Monday, 13th Adar
March 20

All able men and women are obligated to fast. Pregnant and nursing women, and women who gave birth within the last thirty days are exempt from this obligation. The fast begins at 5:15 a.m. In order to wake up early and eat



before this time, one must declare his intention before going to sleep the night before. (It is preferable to make this declaration verbally.)

Shacharis Only the Chazan says "Aneinu" in the Shmoneh Esrei before Refoeinu. After Shmoneh Esrei we say Tachnun and Slichos followed by the long Ovinu Malkeinu. If one is davening without a minyan, he does not say "Hashem, Hashem." If there is reason not to say Tachnun, (e.g., a bris or if a choson is present) Ovinu Malkeinu is omitted.

The Sefer Torah is taken out

and we read VaY'chal. There must be at least three people fasting in the shul in order for VaY'chal to be read. One who is not fasting should not receive an Aliya.

Machatzis Hashekel On Taanis Esther before Mincha we give Machatzis HaShekel. It is customary to give three half-dollars. The money is given to the needy.

The obligation of giving Machatzis HaShekel begins from the age of twenty (according to many opinions from the age of thirteen). Some have a custom of giving for youngsters. Once one begins giving on behalf of his children, he must do so every year unless he said "B'li Neder" the first time.

One that did not give Machatzis HaShekel on Taanis Esther may give it Purim morning before the reading of the Megilla.

Mincha We recite Ashrei and half-Kaddish, after which three people are called to the Torah (the third is Maftir). In the Shmoneh Esrei all those fasting say Aneinu in the Brocho of Shma Koleinu. Should one forget to say

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Aneinu, the Shmoneh Esrei is not repeated. Neither Tachnun nor Avinu Malkeinu is recited.

Purim Night

Monday, 14th Adar
February 25

It is proper to wear Shabbos clothing on Purim.

Maariv In the Shmoneh Esrei we add Al HaNissim.

If one should forget to say Al HaNissim, but remembers before saying HaShem's name at the conclusion of the Brocho, he says Al HaNissim and continues the Shmoneh Esrei. If, however, he already said the "Shem," the Shmoneh Esrei is completed and not repeated. According to some opinions one may say it right before Yihiyu L'ratzon. After Shmoneh Esrei the Chazan says Kaddish-Tiskabel

Laws of the Megilla

1) Both men and women are obligated to hear the Megilla once at night and once during the day. It is customary to bring small children to shul (provided they will not cause a disturbance). The Megilla should preferably be heard in Shul, where the large number of people lends honor to the Mitzva.
2) Before the Brochos are said, the reader and those listeners having "kosher" Megillas fold their Megillas into three parts.

3) Everyone should stand while the three Brochos are recited. After the completion of the Brochos, however, only the Baal Koreh must remain standing when reading the Megilla in public.

4) The Baal Koreh should keep in mind that he is reciting the blessings on behalf of the entire congregation. Likewise, the congregation should also keep in mind that the reader is saying the Brochos for them.

5) Talking is not permitted from the start of the Brochos until after the Brocho at the end of the Megilla.

6) One must hear every word of the Megilla in order to fulfill one's obligation. Therefore, extra precautions should be taken (especially during the "banging" of Haman) to make certain that Everyone hears every word. If one should miss a word or phrase he may read those words from the printed text, but they must be said in proper sequence of the Megilla.

7) Anyone following the reading of the Megilla from a printed text should not read along with the Baal Koreh, but should listen quietly.

8) The following four psukim of "Geula" (redemption) are read aloud by the entire congregation and then repeated by the Baal Koreh:

a) Ish Yehudi. ..(2:5)

b) Umorechai Yotzo... (8:15)

c) Layihudim Hoyso... (8:16)

f) Ki Mordechai Hay'hudi... (10:3)

9) The same also applies to the ten sons of Haman (beginning with "Chameish Meios Ish" [9:6] through the word "Aseres" [9:10]). It is preferable that they be read in one breath, but one is yotzei even if he didn't do so.

10) We "bang" Haman only when his name is mentioned along with a descriptive title; e.g., "Haman ben Hamdasa " or "Haman Ha'Aggagah," etc.

11) We shake the Megilla when reading the words "Igeres HaZos" (9:26) and "Igeres HaPurim HaZos HaSheinis" (9:29).

12) The reading of the Megilla is followed by the Brocho "Horov Es Riveinu" and Shoshanas Yaacov. The Megilla is then folded followed by V'atoh Kodosh, Kaddish (omitting Tiskabel) and Oleinu. The Brocho "Horov Es Riveinu" is only said when the Megilla is read with a minyan.

13) The Megilla may be read the entire night (from the appearance of three stars until dawn), and the entire day (from sunrise to sunset). This year the day extends from 6:26 a.m. until 5:47 p.m.

14) Someone who has already heard or read the Megilla should recite the Brocho "Lishmoa Megilla" rather than "Al Mikra Megilla" when reading it for women. It is preferable that the women themselves recite the Brochos.

15) Since it is customary to be joyful on the night of Purim, we partake in at least a small Seuda. It is proper for the table to be covered and candles lit without a Brocho.

16) Al HaNissim is added in the second Brocho of bentching. If one forgot to say it, when he reaches "Horachaman Hu Yizakeinu" he should add: "Horachaman Hu Ya'aseh Lonu Nissim K'mo Sheosoh Laavoseinu Bayomim Hoheim Bizman Hazeh" and continue "Biyemei Mordechai." If one forgot to say it entirely, the bentching is not repeated.

Purim Day

Tuesday, 14th Adar
February 26

Shacharis Al HaNissim is added in the Shmoneh Esrei. After the Shmoneh Esrei the Chazan says half Kaddish (Tachnun is not said). We read in the Torah "Vayavo Amalek," followed by the reading of the Megilla. One who did not hear Parshas Zachor on Shabbos should have in mind to fulfill the obligation when listening to "Vayavo Amalek."

The Megilla is read and listened to while one is still wearing Rashi's Tefillin.

When listening to the Brocho of Shehechionu, keep in mind that it also refers to the Mitzvos of Mishloach Monos, Matonos Loevyonim. and Seudas Purim.

Mitzvos of Purim Day

Mishloach Monos A gift of at least two kinds of edibles (prepared food or drink) to at least one person over Bar or Bas Mitzva.

A man should send to men only; a woman should send only to women.

It is preferable to send Mishloach Monos by means of a Shliach, a messenger.

Those who are in mourning (within twelve months for parents; thirty days for other relatives) are obligated to send Mishloach Monos, but others may not send to them. However, Mishloach Monos may be sent to other members of the mourners' family.

Matonos Loevyonim At least one penny *is* given to each of two poor people. However, the more one gives, the better. If a poor person cannot be found, set aside the money on Purim and distribute it when the occasion arises.

A needy man and his wife may be considered as two poor people.

A man may give Matonos Loevyonim to a woman and vice versa.

One also fulfills the obligation by giving to a needy child under Bar or Bas Mitzva (as long as they understand).

Matonos Loevyonim may be given to an "Ovul" (mourner).

It is better to increase in Matonos Loevyonim rather than in Mishloach Monos and Seudas Purim

Neither Machatzis Hashekel, the minimum requirement of Mishloach Monos nor Matonos Loevyonim may be deducted from one's "maaser" obligation.

"Kol Haposhet Yad Nosnim Lo." Anyone who stretches out his hand should be given Tzedaka.

Note: The Mitzvos of Mishloach Monos and Matonos Loevyonim must be fulfilled during the day of Purim before 5:47 p.m.

Seudas Purim The Seuda takes place after Mincha which is davened earlier in the day. One should drink more wine than usual during this meal. The majority of the Seuda should be eaten during the day. If one wants to eat the Seuda in the morning, he may.

Even if the meal extends into the night, we say Al HaNissim in the bentsching as long as the meal began during the day.

Although it is permitted to work on Purim, the accepted custom is to avoid any unnecessary work (such as any unnecessary sewing, writing, haircuts, etc.) Business operations and other activities which would involve a loss if they are not done on Purim are also permitted. Tachnun is omitted on Purim and Shushan Purim. It is incumbent upon each person to ensure that not only he or she fulfills the obligations of Purim, but that every Jew should fulfill these obligations.

