

LAWS AND CUSTOMS FOR PURIM

ADAR II 5779 | MARCH 2019

by The Bostoner Rebbe, Shlita

Wednesday – March 20, 2019 - Taanis Esther - Fast of Esther

Fast starts at approximately 5:20 a.m.

This fast day commemorates the decree by *Esther* for the Jews to fast and pray. Although that day actually took place on *Pesach*, which is in the month of *Nisan*, the Rabbis have set it up on the day prior to *Purim*.

Selichot are recited during the morning services - 6:00 a.m. - 7:00 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.

This fast day is important, although not as important as the others, therefore, those, especially women under special conditions may eat, however, it is advisable to ask a '*Shaylah*'.

Wednesday-March 20, 2019 - Mincha 1:30 p.m. and 6:35 p.m. Fast Ends 7:38 p.m.

Reading of *Vayechal*. A pause is made between *Mincha* and *Maariv* so that one may give the customary *Machatzith Hashekel* money, which means half of the going coin of the country you live in. In the United States it is the half dollar coin. It is proper to give three half coins in commemoration of the original three half coins given as a donation to the Tabernacle. This money is given in place of the donation presented during this period of time for the purpose of the public offerings in the *Bais Hamikdosh*.

Wednesday Night March 20, 2019

Maariv – 7:25 P.M.

Reading of the Megillah – 7:40 P.M.

Second Megillah Reading – 9:00 P.M.

It is important that you listen to the reading so as not to miss a single word, as it is an obligation to hear the reading of the entire *Megillah*. It is, therefore, absolutely forbidden to talk during the entire reading. There are four sentences which the congregation reads before the reader. Those sentences were chosen in respect of *Mordechai* whose name appears in them. According to the *Avudraham* this was instituted to make sure people do not fall asleep.

During the reading of the *Megillah*, at the sound of the name *Haman*, there is the usual sound effects of the *Grogger* (noise makers) and the light tapping of feet. This is in association with the *Mitzvah* of *Mechiath Amolek* - blotting out the memory of *Amolek*.

At the conclusion of the reading, the proper *Brocha* is recited, followed by the saying of *Va-ata Kodesh* - a passage which according to tradition was recited by *Queen Esther* at the time of the ordeal.

For those puzzled by the fact the G-d's name does not appear in the *Megillah*, there are many varied answers. The *Mordechai* explains that, because the *Megillah* was a historic document in the archives of *Persia* and *Madai*, caution was taken, that the name of *Hashem* should not appear, so that it should not be translated to mean the idols those nations were worshipping at that time.

It is important that a holiday air be felt in the house during all of Purim. At night the meal should contain some extra dish in honor of Purim. It is also customary to light candles during the evening meal.

SECOND MEGILLAH READING IN THE EVENING – 9:00 P.M.

This will be a special reading of the Megillah for those women who could not get to Shul for the earlier service.

Thursday, March 21, 2019- PURIM

Shacharis – 6:00 A.M. - Megillah 6:45 A.M. (First Minyan)

Shacharis – 8:00 A.M. - Megillah 8:30 A.M. (Second Minyan)

THIRD MEGILLAH READING - ONLY – 10:15 A.M.

Those who have not given the Mechatzith Hashekel have the opportunity to do so prior to the reading of the Megillah.

We do not recite Hallel during Purim, as the Megillah is in itself a proclamation of the event.

The idea of adding to the festivities by the consumption of alcoholic beverages is to commemorate the fact that it was this type of festivity which Queen Esther prepared and which is a major theme in the Megillah.

It is a Mitzvah to eat the Seudah of Purim in the daytime.

It is also important to perform the other two Mitzvot:

1) Mishloach Manos - the custom of exchanging gifts among friends. Ready to eat food, such as cakes or fruits are sent. It is required that the gift contain two items of food. No Brocha is recited on the Mitzvah of Mishloach Manos. This exchange of gifts is meant to be “Ish El Re’eyhu” - from a person to his friend, with the intent of bringing peace and harmony among people.

2) Matonas Le’evyonim - the distribution of charity to the poor. This requires the presentation of charity to at least two people. For those who find it difficult to locate poor people on that particular day, the presentation can be made to someone who will receive it for people in need. This service is provided by the Shul for those who wish to make use of it.

Thursday - March 21, 2019 – PURIM DAY

Mincha at the Shul 1:30 P.M. and 6:15 P.M.

Maariv 8:15 P.M.