

# Prep Up to Purim

## Remember, Fast & Give

### Remember

This Shabbos is Shabbos Zachor, which comes before Purim. Shabbos Zachor is the Shabbat of Remembrance, when we read from a Torah scroll in the synagogue how the Amalekites attacked us out of senseless hatred. The Torah exhorts us to never forget this evil, and to “Eradicate the memory of Amalek.” Since Haman was a descendant of Amalek, we read about Amalek on the Shabbos before Purim. It might even be a *biblical* obligation to hear this portion read, so all Jewish men and women should make an extra effort to be there.

### Fast

We observe Taanis Esther, the “Fast of Esther” the day before Purim, this year on Monday, March 9. Fasting is simple. If you are healthy and over the age of bar or bat mitzvah, don’t eat or drink from dawn until dark. Fast begins at 6:20 am and ends 7:55 pm on Monday, March 9, 2020.

Technical details:

- If you’re ill, pregnant or nursing, consult with a rabbi whether you should skip this fast. Even if you are exempt from fasting, skip the snacks and treats.
- You can wake up before the fast and grab a bite—as long as you had this in mind before going to sleep.
- Try to make it to your synagogue for Shacharis and Mincha. We add specific morning and afternoon prayers for special fast-day prayers, and read from the Torah.

### Half-Shekel

On the afternoon of the Fast of Esther, or before the reading of the Megillah, we give three coins in “half” denominations—in the U.S. three half-dollar coins—to charity. They represent the half-shekel that each Jew annually contributed for the Temple.

In many synagogues, plates are set out with special, silver half-dollars, so you can purchase them to use in observance of this custom. The Chabad custom is to give three half-dollars for every family member.

# Purim

## The Fun Holiday

Here's how Purim, the jolliest, most action-packed day of the Jewish year, is celebrated.

### Listen to the Miracle

Dress in your Shabbos best and head to your shul and listen to the entire Megillah. Listen to the public reading twice: once Purim Night and again on Purim Day. Pay attention—it is vital to hear every word. When Haman's name is mentioned in the reading, children twirl graggers (noisemakers) and adults stomp their feet to eradicate his evil name.

### Give to the Needy

Purim is about caring. Give food or money to at least two needy people during the daylight hours of Purim. If you don't know any needy people, the Rav and Gabai will be collecting money for this purpose. Charity is a mitzvah the whole year round, but on Purim we give to whoever asks.

### Share Some Food

Purim is about friendship and community. Through a messenger, send a package containing at least two different ready-to-eat food items or beverages to at least one Jew during the daylight hours of Purim. Traditionally, men give to men, and women give to women.

### Feast and Rejoice!

Purim is about sharing your joy. During the daylight hours of Purim, gather friends and family for a feast with wine. Traditionally, the Purim feast must begin before sunset and often lasts well into the evening. The meal should include challah and meat. The day's special: [kreplach!](#) Don't forget the poppyseed Hamantash - to recall the seeds that Queen Esther ate while living in the Persian Palace.

### Thank G-d

Add V'al Hanissim, a short section of thanksgiving for the Purim miracle, to the daily prayers and to the Grace after Meals. If you forgot it, forget it, you don't need to repeat the prayer.

### Hide Your Face

On Purim, children traditionally masquerade—an allusion to the Purim miracle that was disguised in natural events. Make sure your children dress up as good, cheerful characters, people you want them to emulate, such as Mordechai and Esther.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe emphasized that we should see to it that our children fulfill all the mitzvot of Purim.

For more about Purim, visit our fun and informative [Purim Site](#).