



Purim Walkthrough - 2021

Purim 2021/5781

We celebrate Purim each year on the 14th of Adar, which this year coincides with the night of Thursday, February 25 and the day of Friday, February 26.

Purim is one of our happiest and most fun, holy days. We celebrate the miracles recorded in the biblical Book of Esther, when the Jews of the Persian Empire, led by Queen Esther and Mordechai, were saved from the genocide planned by the demagogic politician, Haman.

Parashat Zachor (Devarim/Deuteronomy 25:17-19): Shabbat 20 February

A Torah portion known as 'Parashat Zachor' (Remember) is read every year on the Shabbat preceding Purim, this year on 20th February, and it is a special mitzvah to hear this portion. If one cannot hear it in shul this year, then it can be read at home and found on the following pages in the Chumash: ArtScroll p.1066 | Hertz p.856 | Soncino p.1114

Fast of Esther: Thursday 25 February

The festival is preceded by the Fast of Esther, which commemorates the fasting the Jews undertook at the time of the Purim story. The timings for the Fast of Esther in London this year are as follows:

Start time: 5:17am

End time: 6:14pm

Purim: Thursday evening, 25 February and Friday day, 26 February

1. To hear the Megillah

This mitzvah is performed twice: on Purim night and on Purim morning. Ordinarily, adults have an obligation to hear the Megillah in person both in the evening and day of Purim. If you can hear a reading in shul or from somebody else whilst complying with government and US Covid regulations, then you should do so. If owing to Covid restrictions it is not possible, then you should listen to one of the live recitals we are broadcasting on www.TheUS.tv [1], rather than a recording. The times of the readings and other online events can be found on the back of this booklet. Many local communities are also organising readings and events. Please check with your local shul for more details.

2. To send food parcels to friends (Mishloach Manot)

The delivery of Mishloach Manot is customarily done on Purim morning, which this year is Friday 26 February. The Mishloach Manot parcels are sent to at least one friend and



should contain a minimum of two food/drink items which are ready to eat.

3. To give charity to those in need (Matanot La'evyonim)

We are especially generous at Purim. The giving of charity can be in the form of money or food and is customarily given on Purim morning, to at least two people in need. If this is not possible, one can give money either to a designated individual or to their local shul's specific collection, which will then be given to those in need on Purim. You can perform the mitzvot of Mishloach Manot and Matanot Laevyonim through online orders at: www.theus.org.uk/purimbox [2]

4. To have a festive meal (Purim Seudah)

The traditional Purim Seudah takes place during the day of Purim itself usually starting midafternoon before sunset, carrying on until early evening. This year, however, as Purim falls on a Friday, it is more practicable for many people to have the Purim Seudah in the morning – our Purim in a Box meal makes for a delicious breakfast! The Purim Seudah is an opportunity to celebrate the miracles that took place.

We add a prayer of thanksgiving called 'Al Hanisim' into our Amidah prayer and into Bensching (Grace after Meals) on Purim.

It is customary to wear fancy dress on Purim to commemorate the hidden role that God played in the Purim story.

The 15th of Adar is usually Shushan Purim. In ancient walled cities, such as Jerusalem, the festival of Purim is celebrated on this day. This year however, because the 15th of Adar falls on Shabbat, Shushan Purim is primarily celebrated on Sunday.



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[1] <http://www.TheUS.tv>

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