

A message based on the teachings
of the Lubavitcher Rebbe



The Joy of Purim

All Jewish holidays share the common factor of joy, and each has its distinct flavor. The joy of Purim is special in the sense that it is extreme. What is the nature of this unusual joy, and where does it come from?

Every Jew has an intrinsic connection to G-d. In some, it's more revealed than in others, but it exists in every Jew. As we know, Mordechai pointedly refused to bow down to Haman, triggering the evil plot. Mordechai was driven by his innate connection with G-d, and could not submit to anyone besides for Him. This bond with G-d ultimately led to the miracle.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe explains that a Jew is able to defy the proverbial Haman with self-confidence by drawing on the deep connection with G-d.

It is this immeasurably strong bond which enables the Jewish people to achieve things that typically would be very difficult or even impossible. The extreme joy of Purim also comes from this vast connection to G-d.

On Purim our hidden love for to G-d is revealed through joy.

L'Chaim!

Dear Friend,

Here comes Purim, the most joyous festival on the Jewish calendar. Purim is a fantastic celebration for young and old, and we hope this guide will motivate, inspire, and enhance your merriment. It contains the story of Purim and its messages, instructions for the holiday customs, a great recipe for hamantashen, and more.

Please enjoy this pamphlet, and when you are done, share it with your family and friends and invite them to join in the festivities of Purim.

Grab your graggers and join us for the Megillah readings on Wednesday Night, March 20, 2019 at 0:00 pm, and Thursday morning, March 21, 2019 at 0:00 am.

For more information about all of our Purim activities, please call me at (000) 000-0000 or visit the website at www.yourchabad.com. We look forward to seeing you!

Happy Purim!

Sincerely,
Rabbi Chabad Lubavitcher
Director, Chabad of Yourtown

SAVE THE DATE

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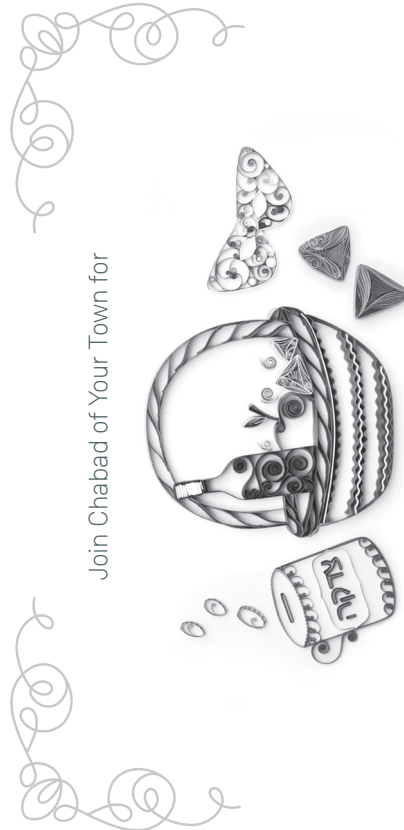
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Suggested Donation: Adults: \$36, Child: \$18
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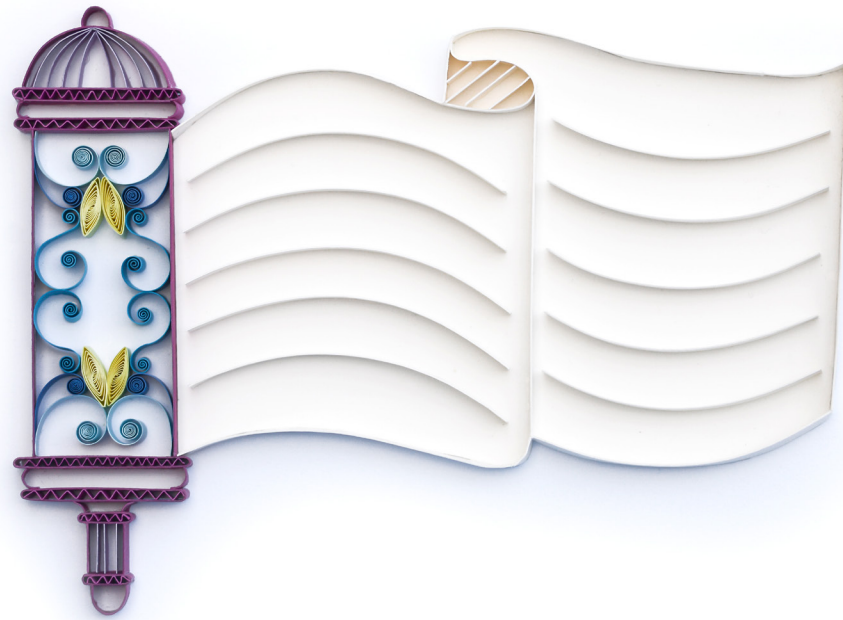
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Mordechai, Esther & me

The Purim story tells of the courage of Esther, Mordechai and the Jewish people—then and now.



PURIM CUSTOMS

ZACHOR

On the Shabbat before Purim (March 16, 2019), we read the Torah portion of Parshat Zachor, which tells of how Haman's ancestors, the nation of Amalek, brazenly attacked the Jewish people after our spectacular exodus from Egypt. Though most nations were in awe of the miracles they had witnessed, Amalek poked holes in the aura of reverence and replaced it with cynicism and mockery.

The Torah instructs us to erase all memory of Amalek. Within ourselves, Amalek represents a cold rationality which inhibits awe or excitement. Destroying our inner Amalek allows us to achieve a meaningful relationship with G-d and His Torah and Mitzvot.

THE FAST OF ESTHER



As is the Jewish tradition, the people in the times of Purim prepared themselves for battle with repentance,

Act I: Trouble in Exile

The year is 365 BCE. The Holy Temple in Jerusalem is destroyed, the Jewish nation conquered and—for almost 70 years—dispersed in foreign lands. The prophesied end of exile has not yet materialized and the blight of assimilation has begun to set in.

Gradually, a series of events unfold and characters are moved into place: A king celebrating his kingship with decadent parties. A defiant queen is executed. A Jewish queen, Esther, is chosen against her will, and hides her faith. Her uncle, Mordechai, uncovers an assassination plot.

Into the scene strides Haman, a descendant from the Jew hating tribe of Amalek. He devises a scheme to annihilate every Jew in the kingdom in a single day.

Act II: Rallying the Jews

Haman's plans fall into place, but Mordechai frustrates him. A descendant of King Saul, he senses the danger and identifies it as a wakeup call from G-d. Donning sackcloth and ashes, he sits at the palace gates, crying aloud and rallying the Jews to return to G-d and His Torah. Queen Esther calls for Mordechai, but he sends a message that she must go to the king and plead for her people. Officially in disfavor, Esther fears entering the king's presence, but sees no other choice. She undertakes a three-day fast of penitence and calls upon the whole Jewish people to do the same. Then she approaches the king, and miraculously, favor is granted. Private dinner parties are thrown; the king promises Esther her heart's desire, and she exposes Haman's plot, which is dramatically superseded by the king.

Act III: Victory

This is a story of the great courage and self-sacrifice not only of Esther and Mordechai, but of the whole Jewish nation. While the terrifying decree hung over them, not a single Jew chose to convert, even to save his life. Together, the people heeded Mordechai and returned wholeheartedly to Torah and mitzvot, strengthening their faith and observance. In this merit, they were able to rise up and destroy their enemies on the 13th of Adar, the very day scheduled for Haman's massacre.

The turnaround had begun. The Jewish people would soon leave exile, return to the Holy Land and rebuild the Temple.

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Act IV: Purim—Then and Now

One of the Purim mitzvot is to read the Megillah scroll of Esther, which recounts the miracle. The Talmud tells us that "one who reads the Megillah backward does not fulfill his obligation." Reading the Megillah "backward" is not only literal. It also means reading it as ancient history. To quote the Megillah itself: when we celebrate Purim each year, the miraculous events are "remembered and reenacted" in our lives.

One who reads the Megillah strictly as a historical retrospective has missed the point. The Purim story is directly relevant to our contemporary world. By fulfilling the special mitzvot of Purim (see right), we reaffirm our commitment to the eternal values of the Torah. We share in the very merit that redeemed the Jewish people in the days of Mordechai and Esther. May we merit to see our redemption revealed today!

prayer and fasting. To commemorate this, we fast on the day before Purim (Wednesday, March 20, 2019), from approximately two hours before sunrise until 40 minutes after sunset.

HALFA SHEKEL



To commemorate the half-shekel contributed by each Jew during the month of Adar in the time of the Holy Temple, it is a tradition to give three silver half-dollar coins to charity. This is usually performed

in the synagogue on the day we observe the Fast of Esther.

SPECIAL PRAYERS



On Purim, the Al HaNissim liturgy is recited in the Amidah for evening, morning and afternoon prayers, as well as in the grace after meals. In addition, during the morning prayer service in the synagogue there is a special reading from the Torah.

The Purim Mitzvot

Purim is one of the most festive days on the Jewish calendar. Here are the four ways we show it, getting the whole family involved!

1. LISTEN TO THE MEGILLAH

Megillat Esther is Esther's and Mordechai's firsthand narrative of Haman's plot and how he was miraculously vanquished. We listen to the *Megillah* twice: once on Wednesday Night, March 20, 2019 and again on March 21, 2019. Try not to miss a word! It's an interactive event: when Haman's name is mentioned, twirl *graggers* (noisemakers) and stamp your feet to drown out the sound of his evil name.

2. EAT A FESTIVE MEAL

During the daytime of Thursday, March 21, 2019, celebrate with a festive and joyous meal. Traditional foods include soup with *kreplach* (stuffed dumplings) and fruit or nut-filled *hamantashen* cookies. The hidden fillings in both foods remind us of G-d's hidden, yet everpresent involvement in the Purim episode. (In fact, the name of G-d is not mentioned even once in *Megillat Esther*!)

3. SEND GIFTS OF FOOD

Purim is a time to celebrate Jewish unity and friendship. We send packages containing at least two different kinds of ready-to-eat food (e.g. *hamantashen* and fruit) to at least one friend. Men give to men and women give to women. These gifts, *Mishloach Manot*, are often delivered by a child or friend, expanding the circle of joy.

4. GIVE TO THE POOR

Giving *tzedakah* (charity), a year-round obligation, is a particularly special *mitzvah* on Purim. Give charity to at least two needy individuals on Purim day, ideally by giving directly to the person. If this is not possible, place at least two coins into two different charity boxes.



TRADITIONAL RECIPE

Hamantashen

INGREDIENTS:

1 cup margarine or coconut oil
1 cup sugar
2 eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 teaspoons baking powder
5 cups flour

FILLINGS:

1 teaspoon salt
3/4 cup of orange juice
Raspberry or apricot preserves
Cinnamon sugar

INSTRUCTIONS:

Preheat oven to 350°. Grease cookie sheets. In a large bowl, cream margarine and sugar until fluffy. Add eggs one at a time, and the vanilla. In a separate bowl, combined dry ingredients, then add to margarine/sugar mixture and then beat in the juice.

On a lightly floured surface, roll the dough out to 1/8 inch thickness. Using a 2 inch cookie-cutter or glass, cut circles in the dough and place onto the prepared cookie sheets.

Put a dollop of the preserves in the center of the circle and sprinkle with cinnamon sugar. Pinch the edges into a triangle shape, so that only a little filling is visible. You can wet the edges to help it stick better.

Bake for approximately 20 minutes or until lightly golden. Allow cookies to cool for 1 minute on the cookie sheets before removing to wire racks to cool completely.

YIELDS 2 DOZEN HAMANTASHEN

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