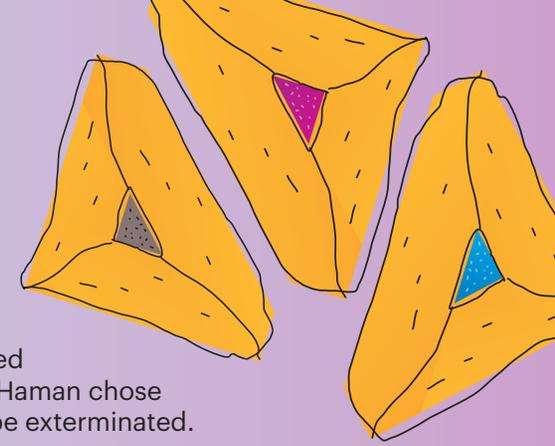


Purim

Purim commemorates the celebration of the Jews in the Persian Empire when they were saved from their aggressor Haman. In the 4th Century BCE, the Jews were ruled by Achashverosh, King of the Persian Empire. While he was no friend to the Jews, his most trusted advisor Haman, was worse. Haman sought out a decree that would allow him to kill all Jews in the land, beginning with a man named Mordechai, who was uncle to the new queen. Achashverosh had

no idea that his new wife Esther was Jewish, but at the urging of her uncle she was able to convince him to save Mordechai and the rest of the Jewish people. The holiday, instituted by Mordechai and Esther, was named Purim (Hebrew for lottery) to remember how Haman chose the day on which the Jewish people were to be exterminated.



Mishenichnas Adar marbim b'simcha משנכנס אדר מרבין בשמחה

In its simplest terms, this phrase means: those who enter the month of Adar increase in their joy. To push deeper we can understand it to mean that during the month of Adar, we rejoice in what we have.

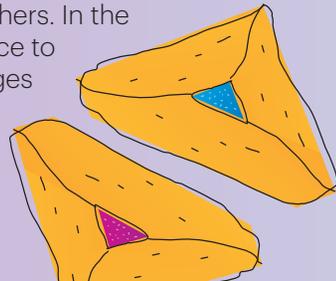
During Purim we celebrate in two ways:

Mishloach manot (sending gifts) – We are obligated to share our wealth with our friends and neighbors. As such we give gifts of food and drink that they can add to their celebrations.

Matanot l'evyonim (Aid for those in need) – We cannot rejoice unless we ensure that those less fortunate can rejoice as well. As such, we give gifts to those in need to ensure they have full celebrations.

Being an Upstander

Challenging yourself to do the right thing isn't easy. Queen Esther knew she put herself at great risk when she asked the King to save the Jewish people. Purim is the holiday that reminds us to use what we have to help others. In the case of Esther, she used her position of influence to protect her people. We are faced with challenges and choices on a daily basis. How we face them is up to us, so we must arm ourselves to be strong and ready to take action.



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- When was a time you saw someone in need of help or protection and knew you were able to help?
- Why is it sometimes hard for people to stand up for their beliefs?
- How can you push yourself to be an upstander?
- Think of a cause or issue that is important to you. How can you be a regular upstander for that cause?