

HALOCHOSCOPE

Someone will be travelling to *Yerushalayim* on *Purim Erev Shabbos*. Normally the *Megillah* is read on *Shushan Purim* in *Yerushalayim*. This year, however, it is read on *Purim* itself even in *Yerushalayim*. If one leaves too early to read it before setting out, but will not get a *Minyan* for reading it later on when arriving in *Yerushalayim*, should he stop on the way to read it without a *Minyan* before entering *Yerushalayim*? Or may he read it in *Yerushalayim* without a *Minyan*?

The issues:

- (A) Timing of *Mikra Megillah*, reading the *Megillah*
- (B) Travellers on *Purim*
- (C) The requirement for a *Minyan* for *Mikra Megillah*
- (A) *The timing of Mikra Megillah*

The Rabbinical Mitzvah to read the *Megillah* applies on *Purim*, both by night and by day. The Talmud derives from the terminology of *Megilas Ester* that the holiday is observed on different days by open cities and walled cities. This is based on the celebrations that the different places held at the time of the miracle. While the unwalled cities battled their enemies on the thirteenth of *Adar* and rested on the fourteenth, the Jews of *Shushan* battled them on the fourteenth as well, resting only on the fifteenth. Thereafter, the holiday was fixed on the fourteenth for open cities. For *Shushan* and other walled cities, the fifteenth was fixed as the holiday. With the exception of *Shushan*, the criterion for a walled city was that it had been walled in the days of *Yehoshua Bin Nun*.

The time of day for *Mikra Megilah* is after nightfall by night and after sunrise in the morning. In emergency situations, one may read it as early as *Plag Hamincha* on the thirteenth. *Plag Hamincha* is one and a quarter seasonal hours before night (or, according to some, before sunset). A seasonal hour is one twelfth of the daylight on a given day. It may be read all night until dawn. By day it may be read until sunset. After sunset it should be read without its *Brochos*. If it was read after dawn before sunrise, one need not repeat it later. In unavoidable situations one may purposely read it before sunrise.

Apart from reading the *Megillah*, other Mitzvos are associated with the holiday. They are to eat a festive meal including more wine than usual, to give

Mishloach Manos, food gifts, and to give gifts to the poor. These Mitzvos are observed on the same day that a city observes Mikra Megillah. Though the holidays are celebrated on Purim and Shushan Purim, the fourteenth and fifteenth of Adar, Mikra Megillah may be read earlier under certain circumstances. In earlier times, Jews who lived on farms were often not learned. They could not read the Megillah by themselves. They would have to come in to a larger settlement to hear the Megillah. The Rabbis wished to spare them added inconvenience, and built in to the institution the provision that allowed them to hear it on an earlier day. The farmers would anyhow be coming into the city on Mondays and on Thursdays. This was either to attend Shul and hear the Torah reading, or to bring their cases to *Bais Din*, Rabbinical court, which convened then. Accordingly, the villagers were allowed to hear the Megillah on the Monday or Thursday immediately preceding Purim. In addition, reading of the Megillah was restricted on Shabbos. If Purim fell on Shabbos, the unwalled cities would join the villagers in reading it on Thursday. If Shushan Purim falls on Shabbos, walled cities join unwalled cities in reading it on Purim Erev Shabbos. However, the other Mitzvos of the day are observed on the day after Shabbos. [See Megillah 2a-b 4b 20a-b, Poskim. Tur, (Bais Yosef) Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 587:1 588:1 592:4, commentaries.]

(B) Travellers and visitors on Purim

Normally, the dwellers of one type of city would all observe the holiday on the same day. How would a visitor or traveller from one type of city, who finds himself in the other type of city, observe Mikra Megilah? I.e., if a walled city dweller goes to an unwalled city, or vice-versa, what should he do? Normally, we rule that a visitor who intends to return home follows the practices of his home city, even if he is on a visit to a city with different practices. [Unless the differences are stringencies, in which case he follows the stringencies of both.] This only changes when the visitor decides to settle in the new city. Accordingly, a walled city dweller visiting an unwalled city would not read with them on the fourteenth, but by himself on the fifteenth. However, the language used in the Megillah teaches us that this practice is an exception to the rule. When discussing the residents of an unwalled city, the term used is "the unwalled Jews, who reside in unwalled cities ..." This indicates that someone besides the residents is included in the fourteenth day for Purim. This is the person visiting the unwalled city. He must also be considered "residing" in the unwalled city. How long must the visit be to deem the visitor a "resident"? The Talmud says that if the visitor spends the day of the fourteenth in the unwalled city

he is a one-day resident. The same is true of a resident of an unwalled city who spends a day in a walled city.

The Talmud refers to one who intends to return home on the night of the fourteenth as one who is still considered a visitor (even if he did not carry out his intention and was delayed). One who does not intend to return until the next morning is considered a one-day resident. [There is a view that if he intended to stay until morning but ended up leaving by night, the intention still makes him a resident of the town he visited.] He should read the Megillah with the members of the city he is visiting, both by night and by day. This applies even if he does not intend to stay all day, and even if he did not read it with the dwellers of the city he is visiting, but returns home before reading it. The day-time reading of the Megillah is more important than the night-time reading. In one view this refers to a walled city resident spending time in an unwalled city. For an unwalled city resident the time for return would have to be the morning of the fifteenth. Thus, if he intends to return by night on the fifteenth, he should not read with the walled city that night, but should read by himself the night of the fourteenth and the following day. If he intends to stay until morning of the fifteenth, he should not read on the fourteenth, but should join the walled city dwellers when they read it on the fifteenth.

Another view maintains that the Talmud refers to either type of visitor. The main factor is whether at daybreak on the fourteenth he will be included in the general obligation applying to the majority of Jews. Thus even if he is a walled city dweller, the main issue is where he will be on the morning of the fourteenth. The Poskim debate which view to follow. [See Megillah 19a, Rashi, Rosh, Tur Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 688:especially 5, commentaries.]

(C) The requirement for a Minyan

In our case there would seem to be no difference where the person considers himself a resident. In either place the Megillah is read on the same day. Thus, though he might be leaving his unwalled city before daybreak, even according to this opinion, he could read it when he arrives in Yerushalayim. However, an important issue does arise. Ideally, Mikra Megillah requires a crowded shul, to publicize the miracle. At the minimum one is obliged to assemble a Minyan, quorum of ten, even if the other nine have already fulfilled their obligation. Based on a Talmudic debate, the Poskim conclude that if this is not possible, an individual reading it alone or with less than ten participants may recite the Brochos. However, this only applies when it is read on the correct day. If it is read early, the Talmud indicates

that a Minyan is an absolute requirement. The Poskim debate whether this is so essential that one does not fulfill his obligation without a Minyan, or whether it is just more of an obligation. Thus, if Shushan Purim falls on Shabbos and walled cities read it on Purim, the Poskim maintain that if a walled city dweller reads it without a Minyan, he does not recite the Brochos.

In our case, should the traveller read it before he enters Yerushalayim, even if he does not have a Minyan? This way he will avoid the problem of reading inside Yerushalayim without a Minyan. Or, since he leaves his home town before daybreak time, though he is in transit when the time arrives, should we really consider him a Yerushalayim dweller?

For a resident of Yerushalayim the *Zman Mikra Megillah*, true time for reading, is on Shabbos but pushed back. For a resident of an unwalled city the true time is on Erev Shabbos. As he sets out on his trip, our questioner is considered a resident of an unwalled city. It appears that to be considered a temporary resident of Yerushalayim, he would have to arrive before the beginning of the time of reading the Megillah. Thus, he will have left the area where the Zman was Erev Shabbos in time to lose his resident status. Since he intends to stay for Shabbos he becomes a temporary resident in Yerushalayim. However, in our case, he does not arrive that early. Therefore, he is considered a resident of unwalled cities. Therefore, his Zman is truly on Friday, and he may read it without a Minyan even in Yerushalayim, and may recite the Brochos.

However, there is an opinion that a non-resident in Yerushalayim on the fourteenth in a regular year may not read it without a Minyan. This is because the reason a Minyan is not as much of a necessity on the right day, is that since it is being read by everyone else, there is enough publicity. When it is read early this is untrue. Therefore, the villagers need a Minyan to publicize it. The same reasoning would apply to a non-resident of Yerushalayim reading it on the fourteenth. However, if the residents of Yerushalayim also read it on the fourteenth, there is enough publicity. For this very reason there is an opinion that allows them to read it without a Minyan. Though we follow the view that they may not read it without a Minyan because it is not the right day for them, the non-resident may certainly rely on this. [See Megillah 5a, Poskim. Tur Sh. Ar. O.C. 590:18, commentaries. Mikraei Kodesh 17, 50.]