

HALOCHOSCOPE

This week's question:

This year, *Purim* falls on *Erev Shabbos*. Those in *Yerushalayim*, who usually celebrate *Purim* the next day (*Shushan Purim*) will be having their *seuda* on Sunday. Someone spends the morning of *Purim* in *Yerushalayim*, then travels out of *Yerushalayim* to spend *Shabbos* somewhere else. The plan is to return to *Yerushalayim* on Sunday. Must this person now eat a *seuda* on *Purim* after leaving the vicinity of *Yerushalayim*, before *Shabbos*? Must he or she also eat a *seuda* in *Yerushalayim* when returning there on Sunday?

The issues:

- A) The different days for observing *Purim*
- B) The *mitzva* of *seudas Purim*, the festive meal
- C) *Purim Meshulash*, when *Purim* falls on *Erev Shabbos*
- D) One traveling from one location to another

A) The different days for observing *Purim*

Purim is observed on two days, depending on the town. In most of the Persian empire the Jews battled on the thirteenth of *Adar* and rested on the fourteenth. The day they rested was fixed as *Purim*. In *Shushan* the battle continued for one more day. They rested on the fifteenth. The fifteenth was fixed as *Purim* in *Shushan*. *Shushan* is walled, so the institution included all residents of walled cities in observance of the fifteenth.

Megillah is ideally read with a *minyan*. This fulfills the objective of *pirsumai nisa*, publicizing the miracle. Initially, villagers who did not have a *minyan* every day read the *megillah* on the Monday or Thursday preceding *Purim*. One reason for this is to free them supply the city dwellers. They would be coming into the city on these days anyhow. While there they would read the *megillah*. In another view they read it at home on these days, because on these days they would gather a *minyan* anyhow. This practice is no longer in effect. The Talmud debates whether it had been abolished by *Mishnaic* times. In cases where a group of travelers will be unable to read it on *Purim*, they may rely on this institution. The *mitzvos* relating to joy are observed on the correct day. The distribution of *matanos la'evyonim* takes place on the day the *megillah* is read. The poor take the *megillah* reading as the cue to go to collect it. One may not disappoint them.

The Talmud debates whether a *minyan* is always required for *megillah*, to publicize the miracle. The conclusion is that it is not required on the correct day, but if advanced, a *minyan* is required. In modern applications, this rule comes into play when *Yerushalayim* reads it on *Purim Erev Shabbos*. Is this *shelo bizmano*, a substitute day or is this considered the correct day? This depends on whether the correctness of the day is determined by when the everybody else is reading it. On the correct day, when all read it, an individual is part of the 'crowd' publicizing the miracle. On the early day, when the rest of the public is not reading it, there will be insufficient publicity by individual reading. A

minyan will provide the necessary publicity. With no-one reading it in *Yerushalayim* on *Shabbos*, an individual reading it on Friday will still be part of the public 'crowd'.

Purim is unique among holidays in the institution of two separate days for walled and unwalled cities. [The advancing of *megillah* reading for villages is also unusual.] In one view, it would only be appropriate to fix the holiday on the day it was celebrated the first year. In *Shushan* they only celebrated it a day later. Since *Shushan* was walled, they decided to include all walled cities in the same day of celebration. Only walled cities at that time, according to one Talmudic view, were included. According to the other view, that is currently followed, cities that were walled in the days of *Yehoshua* were included with *Shushan*. At the time of the miracle *Eretz Yisroel* was desolate. When rebuilt, the walled cities there would be celebrating the first day like other unwalled cities, while *Shushan* and the like would be celebrating on the second day. Therefore, to preserve the honor of *Eretz Yisroel*, the formerly walled cities were included with *Shushan*.

In a second view, at the time of the miracle *Eretz Yisroel* was repopulated in preparation for the second temple. These were fortified Jewish settlements, and the enemies did not venture there to fight. They did not feel the need to celebrate. The unfortified cities began to observe a holiday of their own accord. Later, when a source for the holiday was found in Scripture, *Mordechai* determined that the unfortified cities should celebrate earlier, because they began the *mitzvah* first. The fortified Jewish cities that never even experienced the miracle, would observe it on the later day, with *Shushan*. This view is challenged both from the historical perspective and based on Talmudic references.

In a third view, *Purim* is associated with an overflowing of *orah*, light, that was experienced as a result of the wonders of the time. Ideally, a holiday should be fixed at a full moon, when the light of the moon is strongest. *Pesach* and *Sukos* are on the fifteenth, and *Shavuot* is only different because it follows *Pesach* by fifty days. However, since the unfortified cities experienced their *orah* one day sooner, and this was the day they rested from their battles, they keep the fourteenth as a holiday. Fortified cities observe the true full holiday on the fifteenth. Unfortified cities are open to expansion, like a moon before it is full. Fortified cities resemble a full moon, complete up to its boundaries.

The first view considers each day equal. The second considers the first day the main day. The third view considers the second day the main holiday. [See Megillah 2a-5a, Poskim. Tur Sh. Ar. OC 688, commentaries. Or Chadash Ester 9:11.]

B) Seudas Purim

A major part of the celebration of *Purim* is the festive meal, the *seuda*. The two parts to the *mitzvah* of *Purim* are referred to as the *zechira* and the *asiya*. *Zechirah* means mentioning or remembering. Remembering means remembering what *Amalek* did, and mentioning refers to the *megillah* reading. *Asiya* means doing, referring to the act of killing the *Amalekites* and other enemies at the time the miracle took place, and to the eating of a *seuda*. *Zechira* is mentioned before *asiya*. Therefore, the reading must precede the eating. Since the main reading is by day, the *seuda* is by day.

On regular *Yomim Tovim* the *seuda* is part of the festivity. On *Purim* it is an integral obligation. It is the essence of the holiday. It began with the feast of *Achashverosh*. The miracles came about through the feasts of *Esther*. One should be occupied in the *seuda* to the exclusion of everything, including Torah study. Most agree that one must eat some-

thing festive by night as well. Some eat continuously through the day. There is a practice to eat two *seudos* by day. *Yomtov* has a *sueda* by night and by day. *Purim* should also have the two *seudos*, but the night *seuda* does not count. Others attribute this practice to the concept that the main *seuda* should be during broad daylight. Since many eat their *seuda* late, by eating an earlier first *seuda* one assures proper fulfillment. There is an obligation to eat something festive on *Shushan Purim*. [See Megillah 5b 7b, Pesachim 68b, Poskim. Tur Sh. Ar. OC 695:1 2, commentaries.]

C) Purim Meshulash

In Biblical and Talmudic times, *Rosh Chodesh* was fixed by the sighting of the new moon. *Purim* could fall on any day of the week, including *Shabbos*, when *megillah* would be read. There arose a concern that people would inadvertently carry a *megillah* in a public domain. Therefore, *megillah* reading was suspended on *Shabbos*. Instead, *megillah* was read early. The Talmud debates whether it was read on Thursday, together with the villagers, or on *Erev Shabbos*. If *Purim* fell on Friday, a further debate ensued. Since fortified cities could not read on *Shabbos* and would need to read it early, would unfortified cities read on the regular day, or earlier, with the villagers?

Nowadays, *Rosh Chodesh* is determined by calculating when the old moon is no longer visible. Dates are manipulated somewhat, so that holidays fall at the right times, and that *Shabbos* will not coincide with some of them, causing certain types of hardship. Since we never allow *Rosh Chodesh Nissan* to fall on a Monday, *Purim* cannot fall on *Shabbos*. However, it does fall on *Erev Shabbos*, as in our case. We follow the view that unfortified cities follow their usual procedure. Fortified cities read *megillah* and distribute *matamos la'evyonim* on *Erev Shabbos*. On *Shabbos* they recite *al hanisim* in *tefillah* and *bircas hamazon*. On Sunday they celebrate the *seuda* and *mishloach manot*.

The reason for moving the *seuda* from *Shabbos* is debated by the Talmud and poskim. The *Yerushalmi* explains, *seudas Purim* must be a man-made institution. On *Shabbos*, there is an existing celebration 'instituted' by Hashem. The question is, why delay, rather than advance it? *Megillah* reading may not be delayed past the fifteenth, and for unfortified cities the fourteenth, based on a verse in the *megillah*. Other verses indicate that one should try to make the two *mitzvos* coincide. Some say the *Yerushalmi* does not mean to delay the *seuda*, but that one should not celebrate it on *Shabbos*, but together with the *megillah* reading. Others maintain that since the *megillah* is being displaced anyhow, the two *mitzvos* need not coincide. The verse referring to delaying it is limited to *megillah* reading, as shown in context. One could not fulfill *asiya* early. A minority view maintains that the *seuda* is eaten on *Shabbos*, despite the *Yerushalmi*.

We follow the view that the *seuda* is eaten on Sunday. Some add, since in the early times people would determine the beginning of *Pesach* by *Purim*, one had to make a point of showing that though the *megillah* was read early, it was not true *Purim*. This is done by delaying the *seuda* to Sunday. Others add, *asiya* refers to celebrating the rest from the battle. It does not make sense to perform this *mitzvah* on a day that the battle was still fought. If *Purim* would fall on *Shabbos*, some say that one does not read the *megillah* on Thursday, not Friday. Since it was the day of the war, one should not be reading *megillah* then. [See Megillah 2a 4b 5a (30a), Ran, Poskim. Tur Sh. Ar. 688:6, commentaries. Noda Biyehuda I:OC:42. Avnei Nezer OC:514. Moadim Uzmanim 189.]

D) Traveling from fortified cities to unfortified cities

Usually, a visitor to another town is bound to follow the practices of his home town. *Megillah* is the exception. The language of the *megillah* refers to 'unfortified Jews, who reside in unfortified cities.' This seems to include a visitor as though he is 'residing'. The Talmud considers one spending the day of the fourteenth in an unfortified city, or the fifteenth in a fortified city, a one-day resident. 'Day' means that he does not plan to return before the morning of *Purim*. Even if he does not intend to stay all day, he follows the practices of the host city. One view maintains that this refers to a fortified city resident spending time in an unfortified city. For an unfortified city resident in a fortified city, the intended return time would have to be the morning of the fifteenth. If he plans to return by night, he should read *megillah* privately on the fourteenth. Another view maintains that the Talmud refers to either type of resident. The critical factor is where he will be on the morning of *Purim*, the fourteenth. This is when the general obligation applies to the majority of Jews, who reside in unfortified cities. The poskim debate which view is followed. [See Megillah 19a, Poskim. Tur Sh Ar OC 688:5, commentaries.]

Our visitor plans to leave before the night of the fifteenth. He reads *megillah* on Friday. Is he a one-day resident of Yerushalayim, following the first view, or as an unfortified dweller who happens to be reading it on the same day as Yerushalayim residents this year, following the second view? Is his obligation of *seuda* dependent on his having read the *megillah*? Does one-day residency absolve him of *seuda* on *Purim*, despite the possibility that he will not be able to fulfill it on Sunday? Should he eat a *seuda* on Erev Shabbos privately, even before leaving Yerushalayim, and if so, should he recite *al hanisim*?

There is a question whether a visitor recites *al hanisim* with the residents. In cases of doubt whether a city qualifies as fortified (such as Teverya), *al hanisim* is inserted on both days. It is not considered an interruption in this situation. By the same token, in our case, the visitor would recite *al hanisim* at *mincha* on *Purim* outside Yerushalayim. However, if he eats a *seuda* inside Yerushalayim, this might not apply. [A minority view maintains that one should always insert it both days.] [See Mikraei Kodesh 37.]

It would seem that based on the consensus about whom we follow in the issues discussed, we judge a person as a resident for all *halachos*, based on where he is at daybreak. Accordingly, our questioner is not obliged to fulfill *seudas Purim* on Friday. By this reasoning, he is obliged to eat a *seuda* on Sunday. Even if he does not return to Yerushalayim before daybreak on Sunday, most poskim would seem to consider him a fortified resident. Since there is no *al hanisim* on Sunday, one can not go wrong by eating a proper *seuda*. In addition, some poskim suggest that in a year like this, residents of Yerushalayim should eat special *seudos* on all three days, satisfying all opinions.

On the Parsha ... A man who offers of yourself an offering to Hashem ... [1:2] voluntary offerings [Rashi] The Torah begins with voluntary offerings, rather than the compulsory communal or private offerings. An offering inspired by man's voluntary spirit is the ideal. A *korban* must be offered with full will and enthusiasm. The *Purim seuda* can not be celebrated on a Shabbos because it is not man-inspired. Why? Since the *Purim seuda* commemorates an outpouring of joy and thanksgiving, it is appropriate that it be held on a day that is man-instituted.

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