

HALOCHOSCOPE

This week's question:

Someone is flying to Eretz Yisroel, arriving on *Purim* day at Lod airport, and going directly to Yerushalayim. Should the traveler read or hear the *megillah* on the flight during the night, and by day at the airport? Should he hear or read it when he arrives in Yerushalayim on *Shushan Purim*?

The issues:

- A) *Mikra megillah*, the *mitzvah* to read *Megilas Ester* on *Purim* and its timing
- B) *Purim* and *Shushan Purim*; Travelers reading *megillah*
- C) One who travels between the two locations

A) *Mikra megillah* by night and by day.

The *mitzvah* of *mikra megillah* must be performed with a kosher *megillah*, written on parchment in black ink made according to a special formula, with specific lettering, spelling and spacing. A printed *megillah* does not count for the *mitzvah* at all. However, so that one does not forget about the *mitzvah*, he should read it anyhow with no *brochos*.

The Talmud says that the *mitzvah* to read the *megillah* applies by night and by day. This dictum is not recorded by the *Mishna*, indicating the possibility that it was a later institution. The *Mishna* does discuss the *mitzvah* to read by day, including the earliest time and that it may be read all day. In the same *Mishna*, *mitzvos* that apply by night are listed, but *megillah* is omitted. The institution to read by day has the status of *divrei sofrim*, a Rabbinical *mitzvah* with the status of a quasi-Scriptural *mitzvah*. The reading by night, according to some, is totally Rabbinical. This would make sense if the *mitzvah* to read is compared to the *mitzvah* to read from the Torah.

On the other hand, the Talmud entertains the possibility that the main *mitzvah* of reading would be fulfilled by night. The second *mitzvah* by day could refer to teaching the *halachos* of *megillah*, or the other *mitzvos* mentioned therein. Though this is not the conclusion, the implication is that the nighttime reading fulfills the main obligation. [This leads to some discussion on how the *Mishna*, which is an earlier source, is to be understood.] Accordingly, the question is, what is the nature of the reading by night?

The simplest suggestion is that it is *pirsumei nisa*, a way to publicize the miracle again. The Jewish people cried out in their perilous situation both by night and by day, and they were saved. While regular *krias hatorah* is by day, to teach the *mitzvos* of the day, it does not involve *pirsumei nisa*. Other *pirsumei nisa* applies by night. First and foremost is the *mitzvah* of *hagadah*, which is done together with the other *mitzvos* of the *seder*. *Pesach*, *matzo* and *maror* can only be done by night. They commemorate the night of the miracle. A second suggestion compares it to *kiddush*, which is said as close as possible to the beginning of *Shabbos*. It is also possible that it is compared to *krias shema* or

tefilah. *Krias shema* must be read both at night and in the morning. [*Megillah* need not be read specifically in the morning.] The main two *tefilos* correspond to the morning and afternoon offerings. *Maariv*, which is quasi-voluntary, corresponds to the burning of the fats. A verse from *Tehillim* is cited to support the idea that the intention of the Rabbis was to fill the day with *tefilah*, evening, morning and afternoon. The same could apply to *megillah*. Another way it is understood is that there must be two readings, preferably one at night and the second by day. The main idea is the repetition. One of the verses cited as the basis for the repetition mentions night and day, but the other does not. Some say that the day of *Purim* has specific *mitzvos*. The day begins the night before. One does not fulfill his obligation by performing them at night. However, he has performed a *mitzvah* nonetheless. The rabbis then made it obligatory to perform *megillah* at night.

An interesting question arises, based in part on the aforementioned discussion. If someone misses a *tefilah*, he may make it up, known as *tashlumin*. When he says the following *tefillah*, he repeats it twice. The concept of *tashlumin* is based on one Scriptural *mitzvah*, that of *korban Pesach*. If one misses *Pesach Rishon*, he makes it up on *Pesach Sheini*. One does not wait until the coming *Pesach* and then offer two *korbanos*. Clearly, the cases are different, but the idea of making up for the loss is present in both. The poskim debate whether there is *tashlumin* for *krias shema*. The consensus seems to follow the view that there is none. Is there *tashlumin* for one who missed the nighttime *megillah*? There is a view that it should be read twice by day, but it appears that we do not follow this view. The basis of the debate is whether the main *mitzvah* is by day; whether the concept of *tashlumin* should apply to anything other than *tefilah*, which is *rachamei*, supplication; and whether the main purpose is to repeat *megillah* twice. Those who hold of *tashlumin* for *shema* could hold of it for *megillah*. [See *Megillah* 4a, (Sfas Emes) Poskim. Tur Sh Ar OC 687:1, Birkei Yosef. Moadim Uzemanim II:172.]

B) The different days for observing Purim

In most of the Persian empire the Jews battled on the 13th of *Adar* and rested on the 14th. The day they rested was fixed as *Purim*. In *Shushan* the battle continued for one more day. They rested on the 15th. The 15th was fixed as *Purim* in *Shushan*. *Shushan* is walled, so the institution included all residents of walled cities in observance of the 15th.

Megillah is ideally read with a *minyan*. This fulfills the objective of *pirsunai 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. In addition, there is a source that indicates that if absolutely necessary, one could read the *megillah* from *Rosh Chodesh*, since the *megillah* describes *Adar* as the month that was turned from sadness to joy. When it is read early, a *minyan* is required. The poskim ponder whether the country Jews were obliged to read the *megillah* by night as well, even without a *minyan*, and the next day with a *minyan*. [One could ask, why could they not read it at night on the correct day? This seems to show that the early day would be considered *Purim* for them.]

This allowance only applied when another institution was observed, to convene *Bais*

Din in towns each Monday and Thursday. This brought customers to town on these days, and the farmers would also come to serve them. The Talmud debates whether both institutions had been discontinued by *Mishnaic* times.

In accordance with these additional dates, the poskim discuss travelers, who will be unable to read *megillah* on their trips. They should read it early, preferably on the 11th, 12th or 13th, but if necessary, any time from *Rosh Chodesh Adar*, and with a *minyan*. However, in this case there is no *brocha*.

An interesting ruling parallels this. In one view, those who will be unable to read by night may read the preceding day. One way to explain it is that they gain a *mitzvah*, though not a fulfillment of the obligation. This is why the country Jews were able to actually fulfill their obligations then. Accordingly, it would be beneficial to read *megillah* without a *brocha* on *Taanis Ester*, before leaving on the trip. 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 essential 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 separate days for walled and unwalled cities. 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 view that is currently followed, cities 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. 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 with fortified Jewish settlements. 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. When a source for the holiday was later 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 15th and *Shavuot* is only different because it follows *Pesach* by 50 days. Since the unfortified cities experienced their *orah* one day sooner, and this was the day they rested from their battles, they keep the 14th as a holiday. Fortified cities observe the true full holiday on the 15th. 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 considers the second day the main holiday. [See Megillah 2a-5a, Poskim. Tur Sh Ar OC 688, commentaries. Or Chadash Ester 9:11. Moadim Uzmanim II:172.]

C) *Traveling on Purim*

What if a walled city dweller visits an unwalled city or vice-versa? Normally, a visitor planning to return home follows his home-town practices. [If there are stringencies in either town he must follow both stringencies.] However, the language in the Megillah says: "the unwalled Jews, who reside in the unwalled cities." This indicates that someone other than a resident is included in the reading on the 14th – a visitor from a walled city. If one spends a day in the other type of city, he is considered a one-day resident.

The Talmud says one who intends to go to a walled city later on the night of the 14th is considered a visitor, even if he was eventually delayed until morning. He waits to read on the 15th. If he only intends to go in the morning, he is a resident [in one view, even if he happened to leave before morning]. This applies whether or not he stays all day, and whether or not he managed to read it before leaving. In one view, this refers to a walled city resident visiting an unwalled city. For an unwalled city resident the time of intended return would be the morning of the 15th. If he intends to return by night on the 15th, he should read on the 14th by himself, night and morning. If he plans to wait until the morning, he should read with the walled city dwellers on the 15th. Another view maintains that the Talmud refers to either type of visitor. The main factor is whether at daybreak on the 14th he will be included in the obligation on the majority of Jews. Even for a walled city resident, the issue is where he is on the morning of the 14th. The poskim debate which view to follow. [See Megillah 19a, Poskim. Tur Sh Ar OC 666:5 etc., commentaries.]

In conclusion, if a *megillah* is available, it should be read on the plane on the 14th. If not, it should be read after landing. If necessary, it may be read in Yerushalayim by these travelers on the 14th. [Incidentally, Lod, where the airport is located, is possibly a walled city. They read on the 14th with a *brocha*, and again on the 15th without the *brocha*. [See Minchas Yitzchok VIII:61.] However, the traveler was not in Lod at daybreak.] The traveler fulfills *mishloach manos*, *matanos la'evyonim* and *seuda* on the 14th.

Sponsored in honor of the birth and *bris* of Zev Silver on the 10th and 17th of *Shevat*, respectively, and in memory of Rav Avraham Menachem ben Yosef zt"l, whose *yahrzeit* was the 16th of *Shevat*. ם

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