

BRS AFTERNOON KOLEL

Sugyos on the Sedra

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The Status of an Early Megillah Reading

1. When the Megillah is Read

Gemarah, Meseches Megillah 2a

מגילה נקראת באחד עשר, בשנים עשר, בשלשה עשר, בארבעה עשר, בחמשה עשר. לא פחות, ולא יותר.

כרכין המוקפין חומה מימות יהושע בן נון – קורין בחמשה עשר, כפרים ועיריות גדולות – קורין בארבעה עשר, אלא שהכפרים מקדימין ליום הכניסה.

The Megilla is read on the eleventh, on the twelfth, on the thirteenth, on the fourteenth, or on the fifteenth of the month of Adar, **not earlier and not later.**

The mishna explains the circumstances when the Megilla is read on each of these days. **Cities [kerakin] that have been surrounded by a wall since the days of Joshua, son of Nun, read the Megilla on the fifteenth** of Adar, whereas **villages and large towns** that have not been walled since the days of Joshua, son of Nun, **read it on the fourteenth. However,** the Sages instituted **that the villages may advance their reading to the day of assembly,** i.e., Monday or Thursday, when the rabbinical courts are in session and the Torah is read publicly, and the villagers therefore come to the larger towns.

2. When the Megillah is not Read

Gemarah, Meseches Megillah 20a

אין קורין את המגלה, ולא מלין, ולא טובלין ולא מיזין, וכן שומרת יום כנגד יום לא תטבל, עד שתנץ החמה.

One may not read the Megilla, nor perform a circumcision, nor immerse himself in a ritual bath, nor sprinkle water of purification to purify people and objects that had contracted ritual impurity through contact with a corpse until after sunrise. **And also a woman who observes a clean day for each day** she experiences a discharge, i.e., a woman who experienced one or two days of non-menstrual bleeding, and must now wait until a day has passed without any discharge of blood before regaining ritual purity, she too **may not immerse herself until the sun has risen.**

A Feature of the Mitzvah Itself

3. The Reason for an Early Reading

Gemarah, Meseches Megillah 4b

מפני שמספקים מים ומזון לאחיהם שבכרכין.

The Sages were lenient with them **because** the villages **supply water and food to their brethren in the cities.** This ordinance was established for the

benefit of the villagers so that they should not have to make an extra trip to the cities to hear the reading of the Megilla.

Rashi

שכר הוא להם בשביל שהן מספקין... This is their reward, for supplying...

4. The Origin

Gemarah, Meseches Megillah 2a

כולהו אנשי כנסת הגדולה תקנינהו.

All of these days when the Megilla may be read **were enacted by the members of the Great Assembly** when they established the holiday of Purim itself.

Rashi

...בימי מרדכי ואסתר... ...In the days of Mordechai and Esther...

5. The Source

Gemarah, Meseches Megillah 2a

אמר רב שמן בר אבא אמר רבי יוחנן,

Rav Shemen bar Abba said that Rabbi Yoḥanan said:

אמר קרא:

It is alluded to when **the verse states:**

”לקיים את ימי הפורים האלה בזמניהם,”

“To confirm these days of Purim in their times” (Esther 9:31).

זמנים הרבה תקנו להם.

The phrase “in their times” indicates that **they enacted many times for them** and not only two days.

6. Contrast

Yerushalmi, Meseches Megillah 2a

רבי אילא שמעון בר בא בשם רבי יוחנן.

“The Megillah is read,” etc. Rabbi Ila, Simeon bar Abba in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan:

כתוב: לקיים את-ימי הפורים האלה בזמניהם.

“To confirm these Purim days in their times.”

מה תלמוד לומר בזמניהם...

Why does the verse say, in their times?...

רבי יונה אמר. ליתן להן זמנים אחרים.

Rebbi Jonah says, to give them other times. He would allow other days than those enumerated in the Mishnah if circumstances demand it

7. Different Forms of “Early Reading”

Yerushalmi, Meseches Megillah 2a

תני בשם רבי נתן. כלה-החודש כשר לקריאת

המגילה.

It was stated in the name of Rabbi Nathan: The entire month is qualified for reading the scroll. For example a person going on a trip who probably will not have a scroll available to him on the days enumerated in the Mishnah can discharge his obligation by reading the scroll before his departure.

מה טעם? **What is the reason?**

והחודש אשר נהפך להם מיגון לשמחה וגו'.

"The month which for them was turned from sorrow to joy" (Esth. 9:22.)

8. A Halachik Difference

Likkutei Sichos Vol. 21, pg. 200

ויש לומר נפקא מינה להלכה:

In Halachah, there is a practical difference:

מי שיש עליו חיוב לקיים עוד מצוה (מלבד קריאת המגילה) שזמנה ביום זה וכיו"ב – איזו ממצוות הללו עליו להקדים:

If a person is obligated to perform another mitzvah (aside from reading the Megillah) whose designated time is a day on which he must also read the Megillah, or the like, which of these Mitzvos should be performed first?

אם הנדון הוא בתחילת החודש, עליו להקדים את המצוה שזמנה אז, אבל אם המדובר הוא בי"א בי"ב ובי"ג, יש מקום לומר שעליו להקדים את קריאת המגילה.

If the date falls sometime during the beginning of the month, then precedence must be given to the mitzvah whose time is on that day. But if the date is the 11th, the 12th, or the 13th, then there is room to reason that the Megillah should be read first.

A Megillah Theme

9. Establishing the Megillah

Gemarah, Meseches Megillah 7a

שלחה להם אסתר לחכמים: כתבוני לדורות.

Esther sent to the Sages: Write me for future generations and canonize my book as part of the Bible.

שלחו לה: "הלא כתבתי לך שלישים", שלישים ולא רבעים,

They sent to her that it is written: **"Have I not written for you three times"** (Proverbs 22:20), indicating that Israel's battle with Amalek is to be mentioned **three times** in the Bible **and not four times?** Since it is already mentioned three times (Exodus 17:8–16; Deuteronomy 25:17–19; I Samuel 15), there is no need to add a fourth source.

עד שמצאו לו מקרא כתוב בתורה:

The Sages did not accede to Esther's request **until they found a verse written in the Torah:**

"כתב זאת זכרון בספר".

"Write this for a memorial in the book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: That I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under the heavens" (Exodus 17:14).

"כתב זאת" – מה שכתוב כאן ובמשנה תורה. "זכרון" – מה שכתוב בנביאים, "בספר" – מה שכתוב במגלה.

The Sages interpreted the verse: **"Write this," that which is written** in the Torah **here** in Exodus, **and in Deuteronomy; "a memorial," that which is written in the Prophets,** i.e., in I Samuel, on this matter; **"in the book," that which is written in the Megilla.** The Megilla is the third mention of Amalek and not the fourth, as both mentions in the Torah pertaining to Amalek are considered one; therefore, Esther would be the third, not the fourth source.

10. Establishing Purim

Gemarah, Meseches Megillah 7a

אמר רב שמואל בר יהודה:

שלחה להם אסתר לחכמים: קבעוני לדורות!

שלחו לה: קנאה את מעוררת עלינו לבין האומות.

שלחה להם: כבר כתובה אני על דברי הימים למלכי מדי ופרס.

Rav Shmuel bar Yehuda said: Esther sent to the Sages:

Establish me for future generations. Esther requested that the observance of Purim and the reading of the Megilla be instituted as an ordinance for all generations.

They sent to her: You will thereby **arouse the wrath of the nations upon us**, as the Megilla recounts the victory of the Jews over the gentiles, and it is best not to publicize that victory.

She sent back to them: I am already written in the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia, and so the Megilla will not publicize anything that is not already known worldwide.

11. Eternal

Rambam, Hilchos Megillah 2:18

כל ספרי הנביאים וכל הכתובים עתידין לבטל לימות המשיח חוץ ממגלת אסתר והרי היא קיימת כחמשה חמשי תורה וכהלכות של תורה שבעל פה שאינן בטלין לעולם.

ואף על פי שכל זכרון הצרות יבטל שנאמר (ישעיה סה טז) "כי נשכחו הצרות הראשונות וכי נסתרו מעיני". ימי הפורים לא יבטלו שנאמר (אסתר ט כח) "וימי הפורים האלה לא יעברו מתוך היהודים וזכרם לא יסוף מזרעם".

All the books of the Prophets and all the Holy Writings will be nullified in the Messianic era, with the exception of the Book of Esther. It will continue to exist, as will the five books of the Torah and the *halachot* of the Oral Law, which will never be nullified.

Although all memories of the difficulties endured by our people will be nullified, as Isaiah 65:16 states: "For the former difficulties will be forgotten and for they will be hidden from My eye," the celebration of the days of Purim will not be nullified, as Esther 9:28 states: "And these days of Purim will not pass from among the Jews, nor will their remembrance cease from their seed."

12. Read Forever

Raavad, Hilchos Megillah 2:18

אפילו יבטלו שאר ספרים מלקרות בהם מגילה לא תבטל מלקרותה בצבור.

Even if the public readings of the other books of scripture will cease, the Megillah will never cease to be read publicly.

13. Missing G-d's Name

Ibn Ezra, Megillas Esther, Introduction

והנה אין במגילה הזאת זכר השם והיא מספר הקדש

...והנכון בעיני מזאת המגילה חברה מרדכי וזה טעם וישלח ספרים וכולם משנה ספר אחד שהוא המגילה כטעם פתשגן.

This biblical book does not mention of God. It also doesn't say that it was God who saved the Judeans from Haman's plots.

In my opinion, the proper [explanation] is that this megillah was authored by Mordechai. This is the meaning of 'And he sent forth books.' All [these books] were copies of a single text – that is the Megillah....

והעתיקוה הפרסיים ונכתבה בדברי הימים של מלכיהם והם היו עובדי עבודה זרה והיו כותבין תחת השם הנכבד והנורא שם תועבתם... והנה כבוד השם שלא יזכרנו מרדכי במגילה.

The Persians copied it and wrote it into the history of their kings. They were idolaters. They [would have] written the name of their abominations in the place of the Exalted and Awe-inspiring Name... [Therefore,] it was an honor for the name of Hashem for Mordechai to not mention it in the Megillah."

14. Beyond G-d's Names

Likkutei Sichos Vol. 21, pg. 202

מה שבמגילה אין השמות הקדושים נזכרים, הרי זה רמז שענינה שייך למדרגת האלקות דלא אתפס בשם, דרגא שלמעלה מן השמות הקדושים, ויתירה מזה (בלשון הידוע) דרגא דלא אתרמיז בשום אות וקוצא כלל "אנכי מי שאנכי".

The absence of Divine names in the Megillah indicates that the Megillah evinces a level of Divinity that is not grasped by a name, a level that transcends the level of Divine names. And what's more (using the known wording), the Megillah evinces a level of G-dliness that is not alluded to by any letter or serif at all; I am who I am.

15. "I Will Hide"

Gemarah, Meseches Chullin 139b

אסתר מן התורה מגיין?

(דברים לא, יח) ואנכי הסתר אסתיר.

From where in the Torah can one find an allusion to the events involving **Esther?**

"Then My anger shall be kindled against them on that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide My face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall come upon them; so that they will say in that day: Have not these evils come upon us because our God is not among us? **And I will hide [haster astir]** My face on that day for all the evil which they shall have wrought, in that they are turned to other gods" (Deuteronomy 31:17-18).