A concise guide to the laws of *Purim Meshulash*

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THe enactment of *Purim Meshulash*

When *Purim* falls out on *Shabbat*, the *megilla* is not read in its proper time. Today, this can happen only in Jerusalem, when the fifteenth of Adar falls out on *Shabbat*. Rabba explained that the *megilla* is not read on *Shabbat* because of a rabbinic decree, lest a person come to carry the *megilla* four cubits in the public domain. According to Rav Yosef, the *megilla* is not read on *Shabbat*, so that the poor should not lose the charity that they ordinarily receive at the time of the *megilla* reading.

*Megilla* Reading in its proper Time, or Advanced reading?

The Gemara says that the *megilla* is not read on *Shabbat* but rather on Friday. The question may be raised whether the Friday reading follows from the original enactment of the *Anshei Kenesset ha-Gedola* (which is equivalent to *divrei kabbala* [laws known through tradition]), or is it a later rabbinic enactment. This question leads to the more fundamental question whether the Friday reading is considered *megilla* reading in its proper time (for this was part of the original enactment) or is it regarded as reading in advance (because this enactment was only enacted at some later point). This question has a number of practical ramifications:

Can a jerusalemite read the *megilla* for a Tel avivi?

Can a Jerusalemite read the *megilla* for a Tel Avivi? If Friday is the proper time for *megilla* reading, as enacted by the *Anshei Kenesset ha-Gedola*, even for the Jerusalemite, it stands to reason that he can read for the Tel Avivi, because the level of obligation of each of them is the same. (In practice, a Jerusalemite should not read for a Tel Avivi*.*)

Is a Quorum of ten required?

Can the *megilla* be read with less than ten men present? According to many *Rishonim*, *megilla* reading not in its proper time is only possible for a congregation (the *Shulchan Arukh* rules that this is the way one should act *lekhatchila*). If the Friday reading for Jerusalemites is considered reading not in its proper time, then ten people are necessary. The *Mishna Berura* rules that an individual Jerusalemite who reads the *megilla* should do so without reciting a blessing. But the *Chazon Ish* and many other authorities are lenient, ruling that when a person is forced to read the *megilla* as an individual, he may do so with a blessing (they put together additional arguments in favor of leniency).

Reading for Women on *Purim Meshulash*

Is a women's *megilla* reading possible in Jerusalem in a year when there is *Purim Meshulash*? Women are not regarded as a "congregation," and therefore according to the *Mishna Berura* they must hear *megilla* reading in a synagogue (in such a year). Many other authorities, however, have ruled leniently, for it is possible, as stated above, that a quorum of ten is not needed, and it is possible that for the purpose of *megilla* reading, ten women are regarded as a "congregation," for there is *pirsumei nisa*.This leniency was accepted by the *Chazon Ish,* Rav Zvi Pesach Frank (the chief rabbi of Jerusalem), and others.

Going from Tel aviv to Jerusalem, and vice versa

If the resident of an unwalled city who already fulfilled his obligation in that unwalled city went to Jerusalem for *Shabbat*: If the obligation of *Purim* falls out on *Shabbat*, and it is only the *megilla* reading which was advanced to Friday, then since he will be in Jerusalem for *Shabbat*, he may become obligated a second time (especially if he is a Jerusalemite), at least in the other *mitzvot* aside from the *megilla* reading (which he already did on the fourteenth, and also in Jerusalem it is read on the fourteenth). The halakhic authorities disagree. It would seem that according to the basic law there is room for leniency, but in such a case a Jerusalemite should ideally observe (at least in minimal manner) the *mitzvot* of *mishlo'ach manot* and the *Purim* meal on Sunday. If a Jerusalemite was in Jerusalem on Friday, ideally he should not travel to Tel Aviv for *Shabbat*, because the whole obligation might only come into being on *Shabbat*, and he will therefore lose out on *Purim*. And if the obligation comes into being already on Friday, he does indeed become obligated in *Purim*, but he loses out on some things (for example, the *Purim* Torah reading*).* Ideally, then, he should not go away for *Shabbat*. If he went away, he should recite *Al ha-Nisim* on *Shabbat* (according to some, he should say it in *"Elokai netzor*" or in "*Ha-Rachaman*"), and on Sunday he should distribute *mishlo'ach manot* and celebrate the *Purim* meal, but he loses out on the *Purim* Torah reading.

An individual who reads along with the *Megilla* reader – is this considered *megilla* reading in a congregation?

If a person has a kosher *megilla*, and he reads along together with the *megilla* reader – according to the *Chazon Ish*, this is considered congregational reading. According to the *Griz* of Brisk, he is regarded as an individual. According to this, on *Purim Meshulash*, a person should not read along quietly to himself. It stands to reason, however, that if he reads along quietly and exactly at the same pace as the reader, and he hears the reader's reading – it is considered as congregational reading, and he may do so even on *Purim Meshulash* (even those who wish to be stringent)*.*

A minor who reaches Majority on *Purim* *Meshulash*

If a minor reaches majority on this *Shabbat* – then if the obligation comes into being only on *Shabbat,* he might have to read the *megilla* a second time on *Shabbat*, since on Friday he was still a minor! In practice, we rule that he does not read the *megilla* on *Shabbat*.

If a person did not read the *megilla* because of reasons beyond his control

If, for reasons beyond his control, a person failed to read the *megilla* on Friday, should he read it on *Shabbat*? If the obligation comes into being only on *Shabbat*, perhaps he should read it. Practically speaking, however, he should not read the *megilla* on *Shabbat*. (For a frightening story from the Holocaust regarding *Sukkot* which fell out on *Shabbat*, and people who wished to fulfill the *mitzva* of *lulav* – see *Responsa Mima'amakim*, IV.)

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On Friday, the *megilla* is read, but *Al ha-Nisim* is not recited.

In the morning, the *megilla* is read a second time, and *matanot la-evyonim* are distributed.

 When reciting the "*Shehecheyanu"* blessing, one should have in mind the rest of the *mitzvot* of *Purim* which will be observed over the next few days.

#### Al ha-Nisim

*Al ha-Nisim* is recited only on *Shabbat*. This seems to imply that *Purim* essentially falls out on *Shabbat*, in accordance with its original time, and that it is only the *mitzvot* of the day that are advanced or delayed. Some authorities, however, disagree with this conclusion.

The torah reading

The special Torah portion for *Purim* ("*Vayavo Amalek*") is read on *Shabbat*. There is no concern that a person will go to an expert to learn the Torah reading, because there is no such concern regarding obligations falling on the community, and because this is no different than the Torah reading every week, regarding which people remember and do not come to violate the prohibition of carrying.

The *Purim* meal

According to the *Yerushalmi*, the *Purim* meal should not take place on *Shabbat*, because *Shabbat* is a time of joy, and the *Purim* meal should be eaten on a day that is not otherwise a day of joy (this would be a diminishment of *Shabbat* or a diminishment of the *Purim* meal). The Meiri rules that the *Purim* meal should be eaten on Friday, but many authorities preferred Sunday, because only after the obligation comes into being (i.e., on *Shabbat*) is it possible to make up the *Purim* meal. This is the ruling of the *Shulchan Arukh*, and so it is the customary practice to celebrate the *Purim* meal on Sunday. (Some add a special dish on *Shabbat* in honor of *Purim*, and some also add a special dish in honor of *Purim* on Friday.)

*Mishlo'ach Manot*

There are two reasons for *mishlo'ach manot*:

1) help for the *Purim* meal;

2) increasing peaceful and friendly relations.

According to the first reason, *mishlo'ach manot* should be sent on Sunday, the day on which the *Purim* meal is observed. This is the common practice. (According to the *Chazon Ish, mishlo'ach manot* precedes *matanot la-evyonim*, and so it should be observed on Friday. Therefore, there are those who are accustomed to send *mishlo'ach manot* on Friday as well. There are also those who also send *mishlo'ach manot* on *Shabbat* – Rav Sonnenfeld in "*Purim Meshulash*.")

Does *Purim* falling out on *Shabbat* Effect residents of unwalled cities?

Owing to the honor of *Shabbat*, the *Purim* meal which non-Jerusalemites eat on Friday should take place before noon or before *mincha ketana*. (There are certain individuals who are accustomed to observe the *Purim* meal in the afternoon, and when *Shabbat* arrives, they recite *kiddush* [in the middle of the meal, without a blessing on the wine], followed by *Kabbalat Shabbat*, and the rest according to the usual order.)

 So, too, it is customary not to recite *tachanun* on Sunday, even in unwalled cities (Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach).

Brief Summary – The Laws of *Purim Meshulash*

The residents of unwalled cities celebrate *Purim* as usual on the fourteenth of Adar. The general custom is to celebrate the *Purim* meal in the morning (there are some who continue the meal into *Shabbat* – see above).

The residents of walled cities divide up the *mitzvot* of *Purim* over three days:

**Friday:**

*Megilla* reading. The *megilla* should be read in the presence of ten men (in a case of great need, there is room for leniency, e.g., for women, especially when there are ten women).

*Al ha-Nisim* is not recited. (If by mistake a person recited *Al ha-Nisim,* he need not repeat the prayer.)

In the morning: *Megilla* reading, *matanot la-evyonim* (some practice stringency and send *mishlo'ach manot* and add a special dish to their meal [to discharge their obligation according to the Meiri]). Work is permitted, though there are some who are stringent in this regard as well.

When reciting the "*Shehecheyanu"* blessing, one should also have in mind the *mitzvot* of *Purim* to be observed in the coming days.

***Shabbat*:**

Torah reading – for the *maftir*, we read "*Vayavo Amalek*;" for the *haftara ­–* the *haftara* of *Parashat Zakhor* ("*Pakadeti*" – as on the previous *Shabbat*).

Some add a special dish to the *Shabbat* meal (and some send *mishlo'ach manot*). On this *Shabbat*, a discourse is delivered relating to *Purim.*

**Sunday:**

*Al ha-Nisim* is not recited (if a person recited *Al ha-Nisim,* he is not required to repeat the prayer. According to some, *Al ha-Nisim* is recited at the *Purim* meal, but it is preferable not to say it, though it may be added in the *Ha-Rachamans*). Work is permitted (some maintain that it is customary to refrain from work from noon on – in the name of Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach).

Even the residents of unwalled cities refrain from reciting *tachanun* (Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach).

For a full treatment of the laws of Purim Meshulash, see:

<http://vbm-torah.org/archive/halak65/16halak.htm>

<http://vbm-torah.org/archive/halak65/17halak.htm>