

HALOCHOSCOPE

This week's question:

Purim falls on Motzai Shabbos. To accommodate children, the plan is to delay Megillah reading so they can all get to shul after Shabbos. When should the shul daven maariv? They could daven the complete maariv at the usual time. Or they could daven the first parts, wait for megillah, and daven the last parts as usual after the megillah. Or they could wait for the children and daven maariv and read the megillah in the usual order. What if they are not planning on any melacha other than carrying? Should they say havdalah, or at least baruch hamavdil, before coming to shul?

The issues:

- A) The order of maariv on Purim night; Havdalah on Motzai Shabbos Purim**
- B) Bringing children to shul for megillah reading**
- C) Melacha before maariv or havdalah**

A) Maariv on Purim night

One should always try to perform a *mitzvah* at the earliest opportunity, in keeping with the dictum: *zrizin makdimin lemitzvos*, the conscientious do *mitzvos* timely. The earliest time to read *megillah* at night coincides with the earliest time for *maariv*. *Maariv* is made up of *krias shema*, its *brochos* before and after, and *tefillah*, or *shemone esrai*. The rule is *tadir vesheaino tadir – tadir kodem*, that when two *mitzvos* must be performed at the same time, first one performs the more regular *mitzvah*. In this case, this means that one first *davens maariv* and then reads the *megillah*.

However, one does not *daven maariv* all the way to the end before *megillah*. After *shemone esrai*, the main part of *maariv* is completed. This includes the *mitzvos* of *shema* and *tefillah*. *Aleinu*, the concluding prayer, is an additional *tefillah* that was instituted specifically at the conclusion of the service. This is left until after the *megillah*, which is a *mitzvah* in its own right. Additionally, immediately after the *megillah* reading, the *pesukim* of *kedusha desidra* are read. During the day, this is *uva letzion*. When it is said at night, we do not begin with the first *pesukim* that relate to *geulah*, because the main *geulah* is not at night. Rather we start with the next *passuk*. That *passuk*, *ve'ata kadosh*, comes from the chapter of *Tehilim* that Ester recited in her prayers before presenting herself to Achashveirosh. It is from a verse in that chapter that we derive the *mitzvah* to read *Megillah* by night and by day. *Ve'ata kadosh* follows that verse.

On *Motzai Shabbos*, this series of *pesukim* is always recited. It is prefaced with psalm 91 with the addition of the last *passuk* of psalm 90. This relates to the souls of the departed. They are judged during the first year after death. For the duration of *Shabbos*, they are allowed to rest from their judgment. Their return to judgment can be delayed by their relatives' and acquaintances' delaying their formal ending of *Shabbos*. This psalm is

usually recited to accompany the departed soul. It is understood that by reading this slowly on *Motzai Shabbos*, one can delay the return judgment. Ideally, one should do no *melacha* until having recited this psalm and *kedusha desidra*. On *Motzai Shabbos Purim*, this is recited after *megillah* as well. Thus, *ve'ata kadosh* is the same on *Purim* as on any other *Motzai Shabbos*, for both reasons, with the addition of *vihi noam*.

It follows that one would want to avoid *melacha* until after this time. This would mean that one would wish to read the *Megillah* without having to do any *melacha*. The poskim discuss kindling a light in order to read the *Megillah*. Furthermore, when the light is first kindled on *Motzai Shabbos*, a *brocha* is usually recited. Should this *brocha* be recited before *Megillah* reading? This would mean that it will not be recited later with *havdalah* [see below], for it is only recited once.

After *shemone esrai*, the *shliach tzibur* recites *kaddish*. Usually, this is the full *kaddish* and includes *tiskabel*, a communal prayer for the acceptance of the *tefillah*. After reading the *Megillah* and the *pessukim* that follow, *kaddish* is also recited. The poskim debate whether *tiskabel* should be inserted there as well, whether the first *kaddish* should omit it and it should only be inserted in the second, or only in the first. Each congregation should follow its *minhag*. After that series of *pessukim*, *alainu* is recited.

Havdalah is recited in most *shuls*, for those who have no wine at home. One who has wine at home should have in mind not to fulfill his obligation in *shul*. Thus, he will be able to discharge the obligation of those at home. On *Purim Motzai Shabbos*, the poskim debate when *havdalah* in *shul* should be recited. Some say that it should come before *Megillah*. The reasoning seems to be *tadir veshe'aino tadir tadir kodem*. However, the prevailing *minhag* follows the view that *havdalah* should be recited after *Megillah*. In regard to this *mitzvah*, it is considered better to delay it. One wishes to extend *Shabbos* in its various forms, as a type of *Tosafos Shabbos*, addition to the holy day. Just as one does not apply *zrizin makdimin* here, one does also not apply *tadir kodem*. At home, the poskim seem to agree that one could, and perhaps should, say *havdalah* before *Megillah*.

Some have the practice to recite the *brocha* on fire before *Megillah*. Others rely on reciting it later together with the other *brochos* at *havdalah*. [Nowadays, it is normal to have the same lighting on after *Shabbos* that was on during *Shabbos*. One does not recite the *brocha* on this. However, some kindle extra lamps in *shul* on *Purim*.

In our question, the following issues arise: if *Megillah* reading is delayed, when should *maariv* be said? When should *Havdalah* in *shul* be said? How should one go about *kaddish tiskabel*? How should one go about *vihi noam*, *ve'ata kadosh*, and *aleinu*? Should any of this be recited twice? [See *Megillah* 4a *Zevachim* 91a, Poskim. Abudraham *Megillah*. Tur BY DM Sh Ar OC 295 687:1 693:1, commentaries.]

B) Bringing children for Megillah reading

Men women and children are all obligated to perform the *mitzvah* of *Megillah* reading. They must read or hear it in full. The obligation on children is due, in part, to the regular *mitzvah* of *chinuch*. This is the obligation to train children in the performance of *mitzvos*. The poskim debate whether this obligation is incumbent on the children as well, or only on their parents. The debate hinges on whether it is possible to create an obligation on children who are automatically exempted from *mitzvos* due to their minority. In

any event, children must fulfill the *mitzvah*, and their parents are obliged to facilitate their performance of it. *Chinuch* applies to children who are old enough to perform the *mitzvah*. For some *mitzvos* this also includes a level of understanding, as well as physical ability. In the case of *Megillah*, when a child is old enough to understand its basic meaning, he or she should perform it. There is even a view in the Talmud that an older child can read it for adults. They will be considered fulfilling their obligation through hearing it from the child, even though the child does not have the same level of obligation. If a child is old enough to be obliged, but cannot sit through the entire reading, he should hear as much as he is able to before leaving.

In addition, the Talmud mentions the concept of obliging all who were included in a miraculous event being required to commemorate it. This is one reason why women are obliged in this *mitzvah*. Generally, women are exempt from time-bound *mitzvos*. They may voluntarily adopt the obligation. In the case of *megillah*, women are obliged because they were saved, and according to some, because the salvation came about through Ester, a woman. The first idea applies to children as well. For this reason, there is a view that even younger children who have not reached the level of *chinuch* should be involved. Their involvement will not be the same. They will not necessarily know what is happening, or they will not know it fully. However, they will be able to experience the *mitzvah* in their own ways. The prevailing ruling and practice is to consider it a *minhag tov*, meritorious custom, to bring the very young to hear the *megillah*.

Megillah has an added dimension, that does not apply to other *mitzvos* of reading or verbalizing. This is *pirsumei nisa*, publicizing the miracle. Thus, for *Megillah* reading, one is required to go to a *shul* where it is read in public, with a large gathering. It would appear that this dimension applies to *chinuch* as well. Children should rather be brought to *shul*, than to hear it privately at home. However, some say that for *chinuch* one need not have the child perform all the details of the *mitzvah*. Thus, in terms of absolute obligation, the child need not be brought to *shul*, but may hear it at home. The aforementioned *minhag tov*, then, applies to children old enough for *chinuch*. While it is not obligatory, it is a *minhag tov* to bring them to *shul*. The source in the Yerushalmi refers to reading it for one's entire family, implying reading it at home, to include the very young.

Others question this idea. Since *chinuch* usually applies to the full *mitzvah*, it should be an obligation here, too. Furthermore, *pirsumei nisa* can be viewed as a type of *mitzvah* in its own right. Accordingly, the older children must be brought to *shul*, and for the younger children it is a *minhag tov*. In fact, some say that this is part of the source for the noise-making *minhag* during the reading. It is to involve children who are below the age of *chinuch*. The poskim do maintain that a child who will disrupt the service should not be brought to *shul*, for obvious other reasons. [The noise also disturbs the flow. The poskim advise listeners to follow in a kosher *Megillah*. This way, they can catch up on words they might have missed during the disruptions. This applies especially to women in a *shul* with a balcony. Since they might anyhow not hear it well, they should hold a kosher *Megillah*.] The age seems to be when a child knows enough of the story to catch some of the words, beginning or end, or even the names of the principal characters.

Another reason to bring young children is to enable their mothers (or fathers) to

come to *shul*. If the children are too young and are disruptive, at least one parent will need to stay home and hear it there.

Accordingly, though it would be nice to perform the *mitzvah* at the very earliest opportunity, due to *zrizim makdimin*, this may not exclude the possibility of children joining in. Thus, the delay is indeed an enhancement of the *mitzvah*. It would appear that adults who have no children of their own are also considered to be performing the *mitzvah* better when doing it with children of *chinuch* age. They could also be included in the *minhag tov*, if they participate in enabling the children to come, by waiting to hear the *Megillah* after the delay. In addition, on *Motzai Shabbos*, some delay it to bring their *Megilos*. [See *Megillah* 4a Yerushalmi, Poskim. Tur Sh Ar OC 689:1 6 (MA MB) 690:17, commentaries. Mekadesh Yisroel Purim 74. Nitei Gavriel Purim 33:3-6, notes.]

C) *Melacha before havdalah*

Part of our question is whether to delay *maariv* as well. In addition, whether or not it is delayed, the issue of *melacha* arises. After *Shabbos* is over, one should extend it in terms of refraining from *melacha* for a while. We have mentioned that one should avoid *melacha* until after the penultimate part of *maariv* service. This is recited after the *Megillah* reading. In addition, one may not do *melacha* until reciting *havdalah*. We recite *havdalah* in *shemone esrai*. Thus, after *shemone esrai*, one could, technically do *melacha*. If one is *anuss*, victim of circumstances, he may do *melacha* before *maariv*, but must say a type of *havdalah*. This would be the words: “*Baruch hamavdil bain kodesh lechol*, blessed is [Hashem] Who separates between the holy and the mundane!”

Before *Shabbos* is over, one may not prepare for after *Shabbos*. This is called *hachanah*. However, one need not recite *havdalah* to permit *hachanah* after *Shabbos* is over, because it does not apply during *Tosafos Shabbos*. Therefore, anything that does not involve *melacha* may be done without *havdalah*. In an *eruv* bound community, one may carry things to *shul*. Where there is no *eruv*, carrying is a *melacha*. The poskim cite a lax practice with regard to this *melacha*, as well as kindling, based on kindling the *havdalah* candle even if they did not say *shemone esrai* or *hamavdil*. They struggle to reconcile this, by saying that these *melachos* are treated differently. If this were considered acceptable, one could carry and even drive to *shul* before *havdalah*. However, this practice is highly questionable. Therefore, one should at the very least say *hamavdil* before going to *shul*, if he will be doing *melacha*. [See OC 293 294 295 299:10, commentaries.]

In conclusion, *maariv* should be *davened* at the usual time to avoid *melacha* before *havdalah*. After *shemone esrai*, kaddish *tiskabel* should be said [see Mekadesh Yisroel Purim 184]. *Vihi noam* should not be said, since *ve'ata kadosh* will be said anyhow later. *Aleinu* should also not be said then, since the service is not over, but is interrupted with a *hafsakah*, delay. Some people should stay behind in *shul* all the time, to show that the service is not over. *Havdalah* in *shul* may be recited after *Megillah* reading. Those doing any *melacha* must say *hamavdil*, unless they said *havdalah* during *shemone esrai*.

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