

Sponsored by R. R. Haman and sons, backyard gallows and nooses. "We install and test with our own necks." To celebrate the yahrzeits of Parshandasa ... on the 13th of Adar



This week's question:

Is there any advantage to having the *megillah* that is read by the *korai* projected on a screen? Is there any difference between the types of projection?

The issues:

A) Reading *megillah* by heart

B) Reading via a projector

A) Reading *megillah* by heart

The *megillah* must be read from a kosher *megillah*. It may not be read by heart. If some words are missing or invalid, the *megillah* may still be used to read from. As long as most of the words were there, it is as though the entire *megillah* was read 'inside'. The *megillah* must be complete. There are opinions that the *megillah* is not read from the beginning, but from a later point. Yet, all agree that one must use a *megillah* that has the beginning. The poskim explain, as long as one is not missing major parts, the beginning or end, it is considered readable. One could consider the few words read by heart as valid.

In *shul*, often the reader is the only one with a kosher *megillah*. Others follow along in a printed version, invalid for the *mitzvah*. Those who follow along fulfill their obligation by listening to the reader, known as *shomaia ke'oneh*. There is a debate on how this works. Some say that the listener combines his hearing with the reader's reading. This way, it is as though the listener reads it from the text. The other view maintains that the reader is like an agent for the listener, so that the listener is counted as a reader. Since listening causes this agency, and one can only listen if the reader reads it, and he reads it from the text, this is not called by heart. For *megillah* particularly, there is a debate whether the main point is to read it, to hear it while reading it, or to hear it. For Torah reading, the consensus seems to be that there is no requirement to read personally, but for the congregation to hear it. A person called to the Torah may read. In practice, some say he simply recites the *brocha*, while others say that he 'reads' it by having the reader do it for him. There is debate on whether a blind man can be given an *aliyah*. Can the reader's voice count as though he 'reads' it, though he obviously can only say it by heart. Presumably, a blind man could not act as a human loudspeaker for a soft-spoken reader.

If a listener misses a word of the *megillah*, he says it himself and catches up with the reader. If he has a non-kosher *megillah*, this word will be read by heart. He should not read along all the time. His own voice will drown out the reader. With a kosher *megillah*, one reads along, some say audibly. This is the background of our question.

Any regular Torah reading must be from a kosher *sefer torah*. Even one word may not be read by heart. We derive from the Torah that the Written Torah may not be read by heart. Many poskim maintain that one fulfills his obligation if some was read by heart. They debate whether one may rely on this ideally, for a word or two, especially if the *se-*

fer torah itself is invalid. [A *sefer torah* is invalid with one letter missing or spoiled.] *Megillah* seems to be different. The source for reading it from a text is specific: the word '*sefer*'. The reason that some may be read by heart is because it is also called an *igeress*, a letter, and has both qualities; it is to be considered part Written Torah, part letter. Perhaps, since *megillah* is partly like *hallel*, it may be recited partly by heart. Nonetheless, the poskim debate whether one may read a verse from the text and read it 'outside' immediately from memory. Furthermore, since the reason to invalidate reciting it by heart is the word '*sefer*', it would seem that it is absolutely necessary to read it straight from the book. [See Yuma 70a Megillah 18a 24a-b Yerushalmi 4:5 Sukah 38b Gitin 60b, Poskim. Tur Sh Ar OC 137:3 139:3 141:2 143:4 144:1 670:2-3, commentaries. ShT RAE I:30. Kehilas Yaakov Psachim 5. Mikraei Kodesh 13. Moadim Uzmanim VI:101 VIII:25.]

B) Reading via projector

In our question, a *shul* has a way to project the image of the *megillah* that is being read by the *korai* on a screen. Regardless of the motivation for doing this, (which might simply be a publicity stunt), does it offer a *halachic* advantage. That is, for those who do not have their own kosher *megillah* to follow along, could they follow along on the screen? If they miss hearing something critical, could they catch up on the screen? Would this be considered reading it by heart? If it is considered reading from a kosher *megillah*, could one read the entire *megillah* this way? Of the various ways to project an image, by way of a magnifying lens and two mirrors, electronically or by CCTV, is there any difference between the methods? What if one listens from another room, but follows on a screen? [If one cannot hear without using an electronic device, he needs to address the separate issue of his listening. Some consider it a combination of the voice of the reader with other sounds. They maintain that unlike *shofar*, for *megillah* this is kosher. Others maintain that one cannot fulfill his obligation by hearing an 'echo'.]

The question is whether viewing the *megillah* via a projected image qualifies as reading it from a written *megillah*. Is it by heart? Is the issue that the reader must see the *megillah*? Is seeing the projected image the same as seeing the actual scroll?

The poskim raise the issue of whether seeing something with the aid of a device is considered seeing. For example, one who witnesses a death rends his garments. What if he witnesses it from a distance, with the aid of a device? If one sees thunder on a screen, on a mirror, from a distance, or on CCTV, does he recite the *brocha*? Indirect seeing could be through a screen, lens, window or mirror. The poskim raise this issue with regard to, among others, seeing unclean things during prayers, reading the Torah, *borei meorei haeish* at *havdalah*, *kiddush levanah* on the new moon, slaughtering by lamplight and checking for *chametz*. Generally, glasses are considered an extension of the eye.

Is the item that cannot be seen without a device considered visible? This is raised with regard to micrographs, such as those printed on bank-notes. If verses or portions of holy books are printed on bank-notes, are they like *seforim*? May they be taken into an unclean room? They cannot be read without the aid of a magnifying glass.

What exactly is the requirement to read the *megillah* from a written scroll? If it is to limit reciting it by heart, or from a non-kosher scroll, does this apply here?

The Talmud discusses what qualifies as a sighting of the new moon (in order to testify before *Bais Din* and consecrate *Rosh Chodesh*). Sighting it in water or in a lamp does

not qualify, nor does sighting half in the sky and half in the water or lamp. This seems to refer to sighting a reflection. This shows that a reflection is on a lower level of *halachic* sight than the original item. The term used for a lamp, *ashashis*, is often translated as a lens. There is indeed a reference to a lens dimming the image. When one wishes to see something with the help of a lens, he will only see an altered image (Tehilim 31:10 & 6:8, Rashi). A similar source is the difference between an *ervah*, nakedness, and solid waste, in the presence of one praying. If they are seen through an *ashashis*, the *ervah* remains forbidden, because it can be 'seen', while the waste is considered covered.

The Talmud derives the principle of *chazakah*, presumption of no change, from the laws of *nigei batim*, markings on house walls. A deep red or deep green marking must be 'seen' by a *kohain*. The *kohain* then turns and stands outside the doorway to the house. From there, he declares the house contaminated. The marking will, hopefully, decrease in size, and the house will become spiritually clean. What if the marking is behind the door, out of sight of the *kohain*? How does the *kohain* know whether it has already decreased by the time he stands in the doorway? Clearly, he presumes that there was no change. One commentator shows from here that seeing it with a mirror would not constitute seeing. For matters that require seeing, mirrors would appear not to work.

A *kohain* with weak eyesight may not check a *nega*. There is some discussion on whether glasses would help. Some compare glasses to *ashashis*, and maintain that they should help. In fact, the comparison is made to seeing the moon through a window, or, for that matter, lightning. However, some contend that since this is a matter that requires close examination, it is like testimony on the new moon. Thus, we have a distinction between items that must simply be seen and those that need to be examined. How do we view the *megillah* reading? Is it necessary to see the *megillah*, in which case a lens, lamp glass or screen allows visibility? Or is reading it off the parchment similar to examining it? If a lens is acceptable, is a reflection to be considered the same as a lens? At least one source considers a mirror insufficient to constitute plain vision. The *Yerushalmi* says one should not recite *borei meorei ha'aish* when seeing a *havdalah* candle in an *aspaklaria*. Some poskim maintain that this word refers to a mirror. The problem seems to be that one does not see the actual item, but its reflection. If one must see the *megillah*, in our case, none of the suggested ways to project the image would help.

There may not be an obstruction between the reader and a *sefer torah*. The poskim discuss wax covering a letter (common when wax candles were used). On *Shabbos*, this may not be removed, and it is tantamount to writing the letter. If the letter is clearly visible through the wax, one may continue reading. However, it is preferable to remove the wax at the earliest opportunity. The poskim discuss the permissibility of using a plastic protective coating on the *sefer torah*. Another discussion is about using an overlay with the vowels and cantillation notes. These may not be written into the *sefer*, according to *Ashkenazic* custom. An overlay of glass would help an inexperienced reader. The issue raised is that this obstructs the words. In our case, certainly, the same issue arises.

As for being unreadable without a device, our *megillah* is clearly readable. Only those too far away cannot read it without the device. Nonetheless, the device is being used to create the image. Three ideas are raised with regard to this issue. The poskim discuss an electronically transmitted sound, such as a microphone or radio signal. The sound

is indeed caused by the person speaking, and is a direct result of the voice. In the same way, the image is a direct result of the real item. If the need for a sound or a visible item is dependent on a real source, this is present. Secondly, the suggestion is made that all sound and sight is a result of intangible waves and particles. Perhaps, the changes caused electronically are not really different. Third, originally Adam had the ability to see and hear at much greater distances (similar to the ability present in some animals). This was diminished as a punishment, but if enhanced electronically, it might qualify as regular vision. However, the vast majority of poskim maintain that for sound, none of this qualifies. By the same reasoning, it should not qualify for vision.

The third issue is whether the *megillah* must be physically seen. Reading by heart might mean reading from memory, having seen it previously in a kosher *megillah*. Reading from a non-kosher *megillah* is the same as reading by heart. If one sees the text of a kosher *megillah* as he reads, even indirectly, he is not reading from memory. On the other hand, the requirement might be to read directly from the text. If so, it must be seen directly at the time of reading. From our discussion in section A, it would appear that *megillah* requires a physical text, seen at the time of reading. Given that these projected images cannot be considered directly seen, reading them off these images would be considered reading it by heart. [See Brochos 24a-25b 53a-b Yerushalmi 8:6 Rosh Hashanah 24a Megillah 18a Chulin 10b (Tzafnas Panaiach) Negaim 2:3 (Boaz 4), Poskim. Tur Sh Ar OC 75:5 76:1 139:3 142:(Piskei Teshuvos 8) 143:4 426:4 433:1-2 YD 1:(Daas Torah 50) 11:1, commentaries (Kaf Hachaim). Kalkless Shabbos 33. Yabia Omer I:7 17-19 IV:40:4 VI:12. Piskei Teshuva (R Pietrokovsky) 167. Igros Moshe OC II:108 IV:126 YD II:133. Mikraei Kodesh 11. Moadim Uzmanim VI:105. Tzitz Eliezer VIII:11.]

In conclusion, reading off the projected images do not count as reading it from the text itself. Therefore, there is no advantage to having them, other than a nice gimmick.

On the Parsha ... *A golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell ... And it shall be upon Aharon to serve, and its/his sound/voice will be heard when he comes in to the Sanctuary and when he exits, and he will not die. [28:34-35]* The commentaries debate whether the pomegranates separated between the bells or surrounded them. In either case, they would mute the sound! Why is there a need for the sound/voice in the first place? Various explanations are offered by the Midrashim and commentators. There also seems to be a connection to the service of Aharon. In what way is this service? Perhaps the usage of '*lesharais*' is to serve by being present, in the sense of to attend, rather than to actively serve. Aharon's presence in the *Mishkan* was part of the service of the *kohain gadol*. He would need to appear in full glorious dress. Indeed, the sound of the bells draws attention to the beautiful pomegranates. The vestments of the *kohain gadol* were all meant as a public announcement of the glory of Hashem, *lechavod uletifaress*. Something associated with true *pirsum*, such as the *pirsumei nisa*, publicizing of the miracle of *Purim*, requires a sound, if muted, along with the visual effect. This is another reason that the *megillah* must be both seen and heard.



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