



## A Katan Reading Megillah

The *Mishnah* (2:4) teaches that everyone may read the *megillah* for others except for a *cheresh* (deaf-mute), *shoteh* (fool) and *katan* (minor). As these three people are usually grouped together as those that do not have *halachic da'at*, the *Mishnah* should not be surprised. *R' Yehuda* however argues that a *katan* can read the *megillah* for others. We shall try to understand this debate regarding the *katan*.

The first question is what *katan* are discussing? The *Tosfot* (*Megillah* 19a) explains that we must be dealing with a *katan* that has reached the age of *chinuch* and is obligated in *mitzvot* on a *rabbinic* level. Prior to that, the *katan* would not be obligated in *mitzvot* at all and we have a principle that one has to be obligated in a *mitzvah* for others to fulfill the *mitzvah* through him (*motzi*).

That being the case, why do the *Rabbanan* maintain that a *katan* cannot read the *megillah* for a *gadol* (adult)? The obligation for reading the *megillah* is *rabbinic*, which would make a *katan* and *gadol* both obligated to read the *megillah* on a *rabbinic* level. Being obligated on the same level, a *katan* should be able to read for a *gadol*. Support for this idea is found in *Berachot* (20b) which teaches that *nashim* and *ketanim* can *motzi* an adult male for *birkat ha'mazon*, provided that he has not eaten enough to obligate him to *bench* on a biblical level, even though they are only obligated to *bench* on a *rabbinic* level.

The second question raised by the *Ritva* is that the later *Mishnah* (4:6) teaches that a *katan* cannot *pores al shema* (see 4:3 for full meaning) for an adult. Likewise in *Sukkah* (38a) it teaches that a *katan* cannot lead *hallel*. Both of these obligations are *rabbinic* yet *R' Yehuda* does not argue.

The *Tosfot* answers that in our case, even though the obligation is *rabbinic*, since a *katan* is only obligated in all *mitzvot* on a *rabbinic* level, it is as if in these cases his obligation is a combination of two *rabbinic* ones. How then

do we explain the case of *birkat hamazon* where the *gemara* suggested that a *katan* can *motzi* a *gadol* that was only obligated *rabbinically*? The *Tosfot* answers that there, the *katan* was satisfied from eating which would ordinarily obligate a *gadol* on a biblical level; meaning that the *katan* would have one *rabbinic* obligation like the *gadol* and be able to recite *birkat hamazon* for him.

The being the case how do we explain the position of *R' Yehuda*? The *Tosfot* (24b) explain that ordinarily *R' Yehuda* would agree that one how is obligated via two *rabbinic* laws cannot *motzi* someone obligated by one. Nevertheless, the case of *megillah* is different. Since minors were also included in the decree of extermination, *R' Yehuda* considers their obligation to read *megillah* like that of a *gadol*.

The *Ritva* however understands that when a *katan* reaches the age of *chinuch*, everyone agrees that he has no obligation in *mitzvot*; instead it is us that is obligated to educate him. The *gemara* cited above from *Berachot*, that suggested that a *katan* can recite *birkat hamazon* for a *gadol*, is not dealing with a *minor*.<sup>1</sup> The *beraita* uses the term "ben" and not "katan" and is discussing one's adult son reciting for him. The necessity of mentioning an adult son is because of the curse mentioned in the *beraita* for one that relies on his son to do so.

If there is no obligation, how do we then understand the position of *R' Yehuda*? The *Ritva* explains that *R' Yehuda* allows him to read for a *gadol* because, as explained above, they were included in the miracle.

Even though we started by trying to understand the debate in our *Mishnah* we have discovered two very different views on the obligation of a *katan* in *mitzvot* in general. Either the *katan* is obligated on a *rabbinic* level or he has no obligation and the obligation lies with us.

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<sup>1</sup> See the *R' Akiva Eiger* and the *Tifferet Yisrael* that discuss this question at length.

### Revision Questions

מגילה א' ה' ג' א'

- What is the difference between:
  - *Shabbat* and *Yom Tov* with respect to the prohibition of performing *melacha*? (א' ה')
  - *Shabbat* and *Yom Kippur* with respect to the prohibition of performing *melacha*? (א' ה')
  - A person that vows against gaining any benefit from his friend and a person that vows against gaining any food-related benefit from his friend? (א' ו')
  - A *neder* and *nedava*? (א' ו')
  - A *zav* of two and three sightings? (א' ז')
  - A *metzora musgar* and a *metzora muchlat*? (א' ז')
  - A *metzora* that becomes *tahor* from being a *musgar* and *muchlat*? (א' ז')
  - *Sefarim (Tanach)* and *tefillin* and *mezuzot*? (א' ח')
  - A *kohen gadol* anointed with the anointing oil and a *kohen gadol* inaugurated by wearing the required clothing? (א' ט')
  - A *kohen gadol* and a 'past' *kohen gadol* that served having been a deputy? (א' ט')
  - *Bamah gedolah* and a *bamah ketanah*? (א' י')
- What is the difference between *Shilo* (when the *Mishkan* was there) and *Yerushalaim* (at the time of the *Beit Ha'Mikdash*)? (א' י"א)
- Has one fulfilled their obligation of reading *Megillah* if: (א' ב')
  - It was read out of order?
  - They recited it by-heart?
  - They read it in a foreign language? (Be specific)
  - It was read in Hebrew and one does not understand Hebrew? (א' ב')
  - It was read with intermittent breaks?
  - One was reading it while checking the text for mistakes? (א' ב')
- On what material and using what substance must a *megillah* be written? (א' ב')
- If a resident of a non-walled city travelled to a walled-city, when does he read the *megillah*? (Be specific) (א' ב')
- What are the three opinions regarding how much of the *megillah* one must hear to fulfil his obligation? (א' ב')
- Which three groups of people are unable to read the *megillah* for someone else? (א' ב')
- Which five things may not be performed until *netz hachama*? (א' ב')
- (Difficult:) What are the twenty things that must be performed during the day and can be performed all day? (א' ב')
- What two things that are performed at night, can be performed the entire night? (א' ב')
- What must the community do with the funds raised from the sale of: (א' ג')
  - *Rechova*?
  - *Shul*?
  - *Aron Ha'Kodesh*?
  - *Chumashim*?
  - *Sefer Torah*?

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*Rabbi E. Kornfeld*  
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#### SHIUR ON KOL HALOSHON

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### Next Week's Mishnayot...

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
1 <sup>st</sup> April ט' ניסן	2 <sup>nd</sup> April י' ניסן	3 <sup>rd</sup> April י"א ניסן	4 <sup>th</sup> April י"ב ניסן	5 <sup>th</sup> April י"ג ניסן	6 <sup>th</sup> April י"ד אדר	7 <sup>th</sup> April ט"ו ניסן
Megillah 3:2-3	Megillah 3:4-5	Megillah 3:6-4:1	Megillah 4:2-3	Megillah 4:4-5	Megillah 4:6-7	Megillah 4:8-9

