



Reading the Megillah Out of Order

The *Mishnah* (2:1) teaches that if one reads the *megillah* out of order he has not fulfilled his obligation. The *Gemara* (*Megillah* 17a) explains that the reason is based on the *pasuk* “these days shall be remembered (referring to reading the *megillah*) and performed (referring to the other *mitvot*)” (*Esther* 9:28). Just as the *asiya* (performance) is ordered, so too is the *zechira* – reading the *megillah*. The *Bartenura* explains the necessary ordering of the *asiya* to mean that those that read the *megillah* on the fifteenth are not able to read before those that read on the fourteenth. The *Gemara* continues by explaining that this same law also applies to the *mitzvah* of *keriat shema*, reciting *hallel*, and *tefillah*.

The *Mishnah Berurah* (690:6) explains that the issue of reading out of order applies to both the chapters and individual *pesukim*. In other words, if someone missed one *pasuk*, they would need to go back to that *pasuk* and continue reading from there. Interestingly with respect to *keriat shema* the *Shulchan Aruch* (64:1) rules that it is only an issue if the *pesukim* are read out of order, but not the *parshiyot*. The *Mishnah Berurah* (64:3) explains that the order of the *parshiyot* was a *takanat chachamim*, who preferred that one accepts the yoke of Heaven, as described in the first *parasha*, before accepting the yoke of *mitvot*, as described in the second. In the *Shaar HaTzion* (422:26), the *Mishnah Berurah* cites the *Olat Tamid* who explains that reading *parshiyot* out of order is not a problem since those *parshiyot* are not written in the *Torah* near one another. With respect to *hallel* however, since the chapters are one after the other in *Tehillim*, reading them out of order would be an issue. The *Mishnah Berurah* however records that this is the subject of debate.

The *Yerushalmi* however cites a different *pasuk* as the source. It says that the Jewish people accepted to keep the two days of *Purim* “as they were written”. Consequently, they must be read as they are written. Interesting, this source is first suggested by *Rava* in the *Bavli*. Yet, it is rejected since the *pasuk* refers to writing the *megillah* and not (explicitly) reading the *megillah*.¹

Rav Soloveitchik (*Harerei Kedem* 195:2) explains that the difference between the *Bavli* and *Yerushalmi* is significant. According to the *Bavli*, the issue with reading out of order is a deficiency in the *mitzvah* of reading the *megillah*. The recitation must be in order. According to *Yerushalmi* however, the issue is that it was not read as it was written down, and it is prohibited to do so. He compares this to the law that prohibits one from reciting half a *pasuk*. Put simply, if one reads out of order, according to the *Bavli* one has not fulfilled their obligation, whereas according to the *Yerushalmi* there is an *issur* (prohibition) to read it that way.

To put it differently, we can either understand that the *megillah* is considered as one unit, much like one *pasuk*, that cannot be divided (*Yerushalmi*). Alternatively, the reading, the *sipur hadevarim*, must be in order, for the reading to be valid (*Bavli*).

Perhaps these two understandings might inform on the discussion regarding *hallel*. The *Gemara* brings several *pesukim* as the source for why the order is critical. One is “from where the sun rises, to where it sets, the name of *Hashem* is praised” (113:3). *Rashi* explains that just as the path of the sun is always ordered, so too must the praises of *Hashem*. Here it would appear that the focus of the *Bavli* is that the flow of the content, the *sippur hadevarim*, is critical. One might argue, that would seem then even the order of the chapters, are equally important. The *Yerushalmi* however continues by questioning how this *pasuk* is the source for the law. *R' Chaim* explains that while we understand that the praises must be in order, how do we know that it must be ordered as written? The *Pnei Moshe* however explains that the *Yerushalmi* is asking whether we learn that the *pasukim* must be in order, or also the *parshiyot* (chapters). *R' Avun* answers that they were said in order. The *Korban Eidah* explains that since they were said in order, reading it out of order would break that *seder*. According to this understanding, the *Yerushalmi* was searching for a reason, other than *sippur devarim*, why the entirety of *hallel* is considered one textual unit that cannot be reordered.²

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¹ See the *Markevot Ha'Mishnah* (2:1) that discusses whether a *megillah* that is written out of order is invalid and the debate regarding how to understand the flow of the *Gemara*.

² The *Pnei Moshe* however understands that the *Yerushalmi* is teaching that there is an order to the *parshiyot* also in their conceptual flow. That being case, the concern could still be *sipur hadevarim*.

Revision Questions

מגילה א' ז' – ג' ג'

- What is the difference between:
 - A *zav* of two and three sightings? (א' ז')
 - A *metzarah musgar* and a *metzarah muchlat*? (א' ז')
 - A *metzarah* 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: (ב' ז')
 - 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? (ב' ז')
 - It was read with intermittent breaks?
 - One was reading it while checking the text for mistakes? (ב' ז')
- On what material and using what substance must a *megillah* be written? (ב' ז')
- If a resident of a non-walled city travelled to a walled-city, when does he read the *megillah*? (Be specific) (ב' ג')
- What are the three opinions regarding how much of the *megillah* one must hear to fulfil his obligation? (ב' ג')
- Which three groups of people are unable to read the *megillah* for someone else? (ב' ד')
- Which five things may not be performed until *netz hachama*? (ב' ד')
- (Difficult:) What are the twenty things that must be performed during the day and can be performed all day? (ב' ה')
- What two things that are performed at night, can be performed the entire night? (ב' ו')
- What must the community do with the funds raised from the sale of: (ג' א')
 - *Rechova*?
 - *Shul*?
 - *Aron Ha'Kodesh*?
 - *Chumashim*?
 - *Sefer Torah*?
- On what conditions can one sell a *Shul*? (List the three opinions) (ג' ב')
- What five things does *R' Yehuda* prohibit from engaging in inside a *shul* ruin? (ג' ג')
- Should one remove the vines that are growing over a *shul* ruin? (ג' ג')

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|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
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| Megilah 3:4-5 | Megilah 3:6-4:1 | Megilah 4:2-3 | Megilah 4:4-5 | Megilah 4:6-7 | Megilah 4:8-9 | Megilah 4:10 - Moed Katan 1:1 |

