

YESHIVAT HAR ETZION  
ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH (VBM)

\*\*\*\*\*

**TALMUDIC METHODOLOGY**

By: Rav Moshe Taragin

[www.vbm-torah.org/archive/metho68/10metho.htm](http://www.vbm-torah.org/archive/metho68/10metho.htm)

**LECTURE #10: PURIM SEUDA WHEN PURIM FALLS ON  
SHABBAT**

Unique among *Yamim Tovim*, Purim is not fastened to one particular date. The first *mishna* in *Megilla* lists various dates for *megilla* reading, and the very basic menu of Purim *mitzvot* is often sprinkled across different days. As the *gemara* itself notes, the *Megilla's* description of Purim observance as "*be-zmaneihem*" (during their *times*) implies multiple options for the Purim experience.

One unique scenario concerns Purim which occurs on Shabbat, specifically the Purim of *mukafin*, the walled cities (15 Adar), known as Shushan Purim. Our current calendar does not allow the 14<sup>th</sup> of Adar to occur on Shabbat, but the 15<sup>th</sup> regularly does. This event yields a splintering into three, known as Purim *meshulash*. *Megilla* is read and charity delivered on Friday, Adar 14, while prayers and *keriyat ha-Torah* are adjusted for Purim on Shabbat, 15 Adar, and the *seuda* (festive meal) and *mishloach manot* are reserved for Sunday, 16 Adar. This lecture will inspect the motives behind the scheduling of the *seuda* on the 16<sup>th</sup> - literally *after* Purim has passed!

The inquiry must be conducted on two fronts. First, why isn't a *seuda* conducted on Shabbat proper - the actual day of *mukaf* Purim? If we argue that Shabbat is incompatible with a Purim *seuda*, we may question the delay to Sunday rather than pre-scheduling on Friday, along with *megilla* and *matanot le-evyonim*.

The primary source highlighting the inability to schedule the *seuda* on Shabbat is a Yerushalmi in *Megilla* 1:4, which cites a verse in the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter of *Megillat Esther* exhorting the transformation of Purim into a day of joy and

festivities (*la-asot otam yemei mishteh ve-simcha*). The Yerushalmi comments: "we should convert Purim into a festive experience; Shabbat is automatically festive as a Divine decree." Presumably, the Yerushalmi views Shabbat as pre-defined as joyful and incapable of being flavored with Purim spirit.

This is a novel and unfamiliar concept. Most *mitzvot* demand "performance," and nothing about Shabbat blocks performance of the actual *seuda*! The Yerushalmi discerns some larger "purpose" to the *seuda* experience - converting the day into a joyful and festive process. As the day is already thus infused, a Purim *seuda* on Shabbat will not have this desired impact.

The Ritva cites the Yerushalmi but offers a different and more familiar understanding. Precedent exists for segregating different festivities. For example, a marriage cannot be conducted during a holiday to avoid the merging (and obscuring) of the distinct experiences. The Ritva suggests that the Yerushalmi actually demands the isolation of the two experiences; it is particularly concerned that the Purim experience will become submerged within Shabbat.

Some Rishonim were unconvinced that the Yerushalmi - understood either way - was the ultimate basis for rescheduling the Purim *seuda* on a day other than Shabbat. Since the Bavli doesn't cite this issue and in as much as the reasoning is unusual, many asserted alternate reasoning. The Meiri - referring a well known Rambam - lists a seemingly technical reason for the rescheduling. In *Hilkhot Megilla* 2:15, the Rambam classifies *mishloach manot* as an element of the *seuda*. One element of the *mitzva* of *seuda* is sharing it - at least symbolically - with others. Based upon the Rambam's logic, the *manot* must be delivered on the actual day of the *seuda*. Despite the various permutations and combinations of Purim, the *manot* and the meal must occur on the same day.

Given this "tethering" of *manot* to the meal, since Shabbat presents complications for delivering *manot*, the meal is rescheduled for a day other than Shabbat. There is no "structural" incompatibility between Shabbat and the meal itself, but the meal has to be rescheduled to facilitate the related *mitzva* of *manot*.

In addition to the Meiri, who rejected the logic of the Yerushalmi and offered alternative reasons to remove the meal from Shabbat, several Rishonim flatly reject the Yerushalmi and conclude that the meal *should* be scheduled on Shabbat - the actual day of Purim for *mukafin*. The Ritva (*Megilla* 5a) cites opinions which claim disagreement between the Yerushalmi and the Bavli in *Megilla* (5a); The latter asserts that "*simcha* (joy) can only be conducted on the precise date of Purim" (*simcha eina noheget ela bezemana*). Though many understand this statement to discourage *pre-scheduling* the element of joy of Purim, the position which the Ritva cites infers that *simcha* will *always* occur *only* on Purim proper – even if it is Shabbat. The Ritva actually concludes that the Shabbat meals may comprise a miniature *seudat purim* (his language in his comments to *Megilla* 4a is "*seuda ketzat*"). Others who disagreed with the Yerushalmi and assigned the actual *seuda* of Purim to Shabbat include the Ra'ah, Meiri and Ri'az.

As an interesting footnote, the Magen Avraham cites the Maharal Chaviv, who disagreed with the ruling of the *Shulchan Arukh* and actually conducted a *seudat Purim* on Shabbat in Yerushalayim. Having adopted a dissenting opinion and scheduling the meal on Shabbat, the Maharal Chaviv also delivered *mishloach manot* on Shabbat to maintain the linkage between the two *mitzvot*. This association between meals and *manot* led the Meiri to reschedule the meal to Sunday, while it encouraged *manot* delivery on Shabbat proper according to some dissenting opinions.