

YESHIVAT HAR ETZION
ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH (VBM)

TALMUDIC METHODOLOGY
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Adar I and Purim Katan

A shana me'uberet represents a calendaric anomaly. First of all, the very addition of an extra month reflects the flexibility of the Jewish Calendar. What is even more intriguing is the identity of this extra month. The title "Adar Alef" suggests that we consider this month part of Adar. Does this mean that there are two Adars? The question itself has consequence if applied to any month. It carries, however, greater relevance in this case because of the particular mitzvot associated with Adar, namely: Purim and its peripherals as well as the start of the special series of keriat ha-Torah known as the Four Parashot. Which of the two Adars is assigned these mitzvot and why? This question provides the basis for this week's article.

The mishna in Megilla (6b) declares "ein bein Adar rishon le-Adar sheini ela mikra megilla u-matanot le-eyyonim bilvad" (the only difference between the first and the second Adar pertains to the performance of keriat megilla as well as the distribution of matanot le-eyyonim). The gemara correctly infers from this statement that with regard to other matters they are equivalent. The consequence, as the gemara affirms, is that the fourteenth day of each month cannot be designated as a fast day and no eulogy can occur (ve-shavin she-assur be-hesped ve-ta'anit). The ensuing gemara ascribes this position - that the 14th of Adar is assur in hesped and Ta'anit though megilla isn't read - to one of two Tanaim: Tana Kama or Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel. They both maintain that the critical "Purim-related" mitzvot are performed during the second Adar. If we adopt this stance we must then provide some logic as to why 14 Adar I is assur be-hesped ve-ta'anit. After all, if the second Adar is awarded Purim-related mitzvot, then 14 Adar I should be defined as an ordinary day and Ta'anit and hesped should be permissible! Indeed, the month might still be identified as "Adar" (for purposes of yahrzeit, Bar Mitzva, and dated contracts) but certainly doesn't appear to be considered Adar as far as Purim is concerned. How can we justify, on the one hand, invalidating 14 Adar I for Purim-related mitzvot and on the other hand prohibiting hesped ve-ta'anit on this day?

The key to this quandary lies in analyzing the source for the designation of Adar II as the month during which we read the megilla. Are we to rightfully infer from this designation that as far as Purim is concerned Adar I is not considered Adar? How do these Tanaim infer that Adar II is assigned the Purim-related mitzvot? The gemara provides two possible sources. One source is the verse at the end of the megilla (9:21) which describes that the Jews accepted to fulfill the mitzvot of Purim "ke-bekhol shana ve-shana" - as

they did every year. From this pasuk the notion develops that just as in a normal year the chag of Purim occurs during the Adar adjacent to Nissan, on this year as well the megilla should be read in the Adar which is adjacent to Nissan - namely Adar II. The gemara explores this source and ultimately provides a second reason why Adar II is assigned the reading of the megilla - in order to juxtapose the two redemptions, the redemption of Purim with that of Pesach. What is the difference between these two limudim - between these two possible sources for the selection of Adar II?

In each case Adar II is singled out and differentiated from Adar I. If we select the second limud, then we read the megilla during Adar II in order to juxtapose the two redemptive processes. We have established no fundamental definition as to which month is actually the Adar of Purim. Possibly, there are two Adars as far as Purim is concerned (and hence two Purims), but we select the more 'strategic' one for the reading of the megilla. Despite the exclusion from reading the megilla, Adar I might still be considered an Adar of Purim - just not the one selected for reading the megilla.

Alternatively, the pasuk of "kol shana ve-shana" denotes a fundamental determination as to which Adar is actually the Adar of Purim. The exclusion of Adar I according to this position is more inherent and we cannot regard Adar I as the Adar of Purim nor the fourteenth of this month as an auxiliary Purim.

SUMMARY:

We have interpreted the difference between Adar I and Adar II in two separate manners. Possibly, they are each considered the Adar of Purim yet one is selected over the other for the reading of the megilla. Alternatively, we might not relate to Adar I as the Adar of Purim and therefore we cannot read the megilla during this month.

Understandably, this question greatly impacts on our initial inquiry. If indeed, each month qualifies as the Adar of Purim we might justify prohibiting hesped ve-ta'anit on 14 Adar I. After all Adar I is considered a Purim and therefore 14 Adar I must be considered, at least partially, a day of Purim. We might not relate to it as primary Purim but might instead refer to it as Purim Katan - a minor, auxiliary Purim sharing some, but not all of its attributes. If, however, Adar I is excluded from being a Purim Adar, why should we ban hesped ve-ta'anit on 14 Adar I?

Several gemarot (Ta'anit (perek 1), Rosh Hashana (18-19), and Megilla (5b)) describe the series of days known as Megillat Ta'anit. These festive dates within the Jewish calendar were selected as joyous occasions based upon historical events. During these days ta'anit and hesped were forbidden. By and large this attitude toward these dates was in force during the era of the second Beit Hamikdash. The gemara in Megilla informs us that two such days selected as joyous occasions were 14 and 15 Adar - based upon the miracle of Purim. As joyous dates it is forbidden to conduct hesped or ta'anit

on these days. Conceivably, these issurim develop a life of their own: their issur hesped ve-ta'anit exist independently of the Yom Tov of Purim. Once these days integrate themselves as part of the series known as Megillat Ta'anit, the ban upon hesped ve-ta'anit transforms into halakhot which are INDEPENDENT of Purim as a national holiday. These days take their place among similar joyous dates in the Jewish calendar all of which are forbidden in hesped and ta'anit due to the customs of Megillat Ta'anit.

Given this background we might be able to justify the issur hesped ve-ta'anit on 14 Adar I despite the fact that Adar I isn't the Adar of Purim. It might not be the Adar as far as Purim is concerned but it is an Adar of the calendar. When 14 Adar arrives on the calendar the customs of Megillat Ta'anit kick in. Purim is still a month away but the independent 'calendric-based' prohibition of hesped ve-ta'anit which applies to any 14 of Adar arrives.

SUMMARY:

We have suggested two possible reasons for the issur hesped ve-ta'anit on 14 Adar I. The issur might stem from its status as Purim Katan. Alternatively, it has nothing to do with Purim per se but still qualifies as the date on the calendar which was designated as part of the series of Megillat Ta'anit during which ta'anit and hesped are prohibited. We will now attempt to locate nafka minot to these two approaches.

If indeed 14 Adar I is Purim Katan, we would expect other vestiges of Purim to exist. Indeed, megilla and matanot le-eyyonim have already been awarded to 14 Adar II. Are there any other elements of Purim which might apply on 14 Adar I confirming its status as Purim Katan. What about the mitzva of se'udat Purim or simchat Purim. After all, if the issur hesped ve-ta'anit is based upon its status as Purim Katan there should be a chiyuv simcha. In fact the chiyuv se'uda and simcha on Purim is derived from the very same pasuk from which we infer the issur hesped ve-ta'anit (see Megilla 5b)!!!

Tosafot in Megilla (6b) quotes a custom of many who made a se'uda and a day of simcha on Purim Katan. Apparently, they engaged in simcha because they viewed the issur hesped ve-ta'anit as stemming from its status as Purim Katan. Tosafot themselves reject this minhag but the Ran (Megilla 6b) rules according to this position le-maskana.

A similar indication can be glimpsed in the Avudraham who quotes the minhag that women should not work during 14 Adar I. Without question, this minhag is based upon its status as Purim Katan. Had the issur of hesped ve-ta'anit originated from 14 Adar's inclusion within the calendric series of Megillat Ta'anit there would be no reason to forbid the performance of work. Prohibition of work is never associated with Megillat Ta'anit. Any prohibition of work on this day would have to stem from its status as Purim Katan - an auxiliary holiday.

What about possible limitations to the Purim Katan based issur? Would the issur apply to both the 14th and the 15th of Adar I? The Me'iri (Megilla 6b) discusses this issue. From the statement of the Shiltei Giborim to this gemara (a commentary to the Rif found on the margin of the Rif) it appears that both days are prohibited. Alternatively, the Shibalei Ha-leket in chapter 203 quotes the Rabenu Yeshaya who maintains that only one day is assur - either the 14 for those living in unprotected cities or the 15th for those in walled cities. In terms of our original question: If 14 Adar I were a miniature Purim the scope of its issur cannot exceed that of regular Purim. Just like in the case of Purim itself the day selected to celebrate is contingent upon location, similarly with regard to this miniature Purim, one day and not two should be selected! In order to accept the position of the Shiltei Giborim we must view the issur during Adar I as emanating from the calendaric series of Megillat Ta'anit which was originally established on both days regardless of location. This dual assignment is established by the gemara in Megilla (5b). Purim per se and its full menu of mitzvot apply only one day depending upon location. Megillat Ta'anit - assigned days of celebration - apply to both days since on each day a miracle was performed for the Jewish nation as a whole. In short the nature of the issur hesped ve-ta'anit might determine its scope.

We will consider one final question: What might occur to 14 Adar I in the present era when, by and large, the series known as Megillat Ta'anit has been suspended? If its issurim are based upon its being Purim we would expect them to persist. If the issurim on 14 Adar I are based upon the network of Megillat Ta'anit they should be suspended in our time just as Megillat Ta'anit has fallen into disuse.

To answer this question we must first understand a gemara in Rosh Hashana (19b) which asserts that in present times the entirety of Megillat Ta'anit has been suspended - save for Chanuka and Purim. This gemara can mean one of two things. It could depict an absolute suspension of Megillat Ta'anit. Chanuka and Purim, however, remain forbidden in hesped ve-ta'anit because of their independent status as chagim. Even had Megillat Ta'anit never been instituted these days would have become chagim which would be banned for hesped ve-ta'anit. If we read the gemara this way 14 Adar I cannot be assur in our day because of Megillat Ta'anit since no such institution exists today. 14 Adar I has to be viewed as miniature Purim to justify the issur hesped ve-ta'anit in our day.

We can, however, understand that MOST of Megillat Ta'anit has been suspended but Chanuka and Purim remain in effect as DAYS OF MEGILLAT TA'ANIT. The conclusion would be that Chanuka and Purim, retain their dual status - as independent chagim, and as the last remaining vestige of the series of Megillat Ta'anit. If this were true, if Megillat Ta'anit still remains in effect vis-a-vis Chanuka and Purim, we can define the issur of 14 Adar I as stemming from Megillat Ta'anit which is still valid when it comes to 14 Adar.

SUMMARY:

We have analyzed the origin of the ISSUR hesped ve-ta'anit on 14 Adar I. It might emerge from this day's status as a miniature Purim. Alternatively, it might derive from non-Purim related sources. The fourteenth (and possibly fifteenth) of Adar were established as dates belonging to the series of Megillat Ta'anit and these 'calendaric-based' issurim apply to any 14 Adar even though 14 Adar I has been excluded from Purim. Megillat Ta'anit is an issur which is independent of Purim.

METHODOLOGICAL POINTS:

1. The nature of a halakha might best be glimpsed by studying the source of the halakha. By inspecting the source for the difference between Adar I and Adar II we are better able to discern the degree to which they are different. Is Adar I still Adar as far as Purim is concerned enabling 14 Adar I to be Purim Katan? Or has Adar I been excluded entirely from Purim making it impossible for the 14th to be considered Purim Katan? If so, we would be forced to locate another source for the ISSUR hesped ve-ta'anit on 14 Adar I.
2. Test the nature of a halakha by its scope and application. If 14 Adar I is Purim Katan how broadly does it apply? Are there other dimensions of Purim which also apply?

AFTERWORD:

In a recent issue of Massora an idea was published in the name of the Rav zt"l. He believed that both 14 and 15 Adar I would be assur even though the root of the issur was Purim-based. The Rav determined that even though the actual mitzvot of Purim are only performed once, depending upon location, everyone, regardless of location, celebrates a two-day chag of Purim. Hence even if 14 is considered Purim Katan - so is 15 Adar I.

FURTHER RESEARCH:

Was the year in which the miracle was performed a shana peshuta or a shana me'uberet? See the Chatam Sofer chapter 163.

Purim Katan Sameach (according to the Ran), Moshe Taragin