

HALOCHOSCOPE

This week's question:

If someone will not be able to hear *megillah* reading on Purim, should he try to buy something new on which he will recite *shehecheyanu*?

The issues:

A) *Annus*, one who is unable to perform *mikra megillah* on *Purim*

B) The *brocha shehecheyanu*

C) *Shehecheyanu* on *Purim*

A) *Annus* on *Purim*

If one is unable to fulfill a *mitzvah* due to circumstances beyond his control, the general rule is that he is considered *annus*, and is exempt. However, the *mitzvah* of *mikra megillah* contains various different components. Some of these might be fulfilled in other ways as well. Accordingly, he might be able to arrange for those. He might thus be obligated to make this effort. Thus, suppose a person is stranded in a place where he has no access to a *megillah* or to a place where it is being read, he might be obliged to try his best to fulfill some of the components.

We shall discuss these shortly. Our questioner actually had a different question. He felt that the *brocha shehecheyanu* is recited on *Purim* at the time the *megillah* is read. Clearly, it seems to be connected to this *mitzvah*. However, it is usually announced at that time that one should have in mind to fulfill the *brocha* on the other *mitzvos* of the day as well. This seems to mean that ideally those *mitzvos* should have their own *brocha shehecheyanu*. Accordingly, in his case, he would recite his *shehecheyanu* when eating a *seudah*. If he is able to fulfill one of the other *mitzvos*, he could do it then. Nonetheless, since he has never heard of anyone reciting *shehecheyanu* at any time other than *mikra megillah*, he assumed that one cannot recite it at the time he performs the other *mitzvos*. This must be because they do not rise to the level to merit this *brocha* in their own right. In another circumstance, he has seen that one can recite *shehecheyanu* anyhow by purchasing something new. This deserves its own *shehecheyanu*, and one has in mind the *mitzvah* as well.

The best known case of doing this is on the second day of *Rosh Hashanah*. The Torah specifies one day of *Yomtov*. Each *Yomtov* requires *kiddush* recited at which *shehecheyanu* is also recited. On the second day of a *Yomtov* *Chutz Laaretz* one recites *kiddush* with *shehecheyanu*. This is because it is considered possibly the “first” day, based on the original observance of the calendar. That was based on testimony of witnesses in *Yerushalayim*, that was later conveyed by messengers to outlying communities. Those who did not find out in time observed both days, due to the doubt. *Rosh Hashanah* was always observed for two days, even in Israel. The Talmud debates whether they are to be

considered one long day, or two “first” days. If they are one long day, the *brocha shehecheyanu* on the first day is sufficient for the whole *Yomtov*. If they are two days, one should recite it again on the second day. The conclusion is that they are quasi – both ideas apply. Nonetheless, to avoid this problem, we have something new, such as a fruit or item of clothing, on the second day. When reciting *shehecheyanu* on *Yomtov*, one has in mind the new item as well. In our case, the stranded person had the ability to buy a new item, but was unsure whether he was obliged to do so.

The actual alternatives for an *annus* on Purim are debated by the poskim. The simple case would be where no kosher *megillah* is available, but a non-kosher copy is accessible. One should read the *megillah* from this non-kosher *megillah*. The *kashrus* of a *megillah* is too complex for our discussion. The most common type of non-kosher *megillah* in the times of the debates by the early poskim was a *chumash* that had *megillah* written at the back. These *chumashim* were part of a scroll. Accordingly, since they have many of the requirements of a kosher *megillah*, some maintain that one could theoretically fulfill the *mitzvah* with them. Nonetheless, since they are not fully kosher, one should not recite the *brochos* on them. The next best example of a non-kosher *megillah* is a printed version. Some say that one should read it from the printed copy anyhow. While the actual *mitzvah* is definitely not fulfilled, the aspect of recognizing the miracle and possibly showing gratitude are fulfilled. Others maintain that while this is a good idea, one should also try one of the other suggestions.

The Talmud debates why one does not recite *hallel* on Purim. Was not *hallel* instituted to be recited whenever there was a miraculous salvation, and on the anniversary of such an event? Three answers are offered: (i) One may not recite *hallel* on a miracle that took place outside *Eretz Yisroel*, at least post-Exodus. (ii) Reading *megillah* is like *hallel*, and is good enough for Purim. (iii) The salvation is incomplete. When the Exodus took place and the Israelites crossed the *Yam Suf*, they were completely freed of the bondage to Pharaoh. When the miracle of Purim spared them from Haman's scheme, they remained 'enslaved' to Achashverosh. Therefore, *hallel* would not be instituted.

One could interpret the second reason two ways. It could mean that rather than institute *hallel*, *megillah* was instituted. Therefore, there is no opinion that one may recite *hallel* on Purim. Or it could mean that *hallel* would have been acceptable, but *megillah* reading does the same job. Thus, if one reads *megillah* he satisfies this requirement as well. If he is *annus*, he should still recite *hallel*. The poskim debate which of these reasons is definitive. Thus, some poskim maintain that we follow the second view. Accordingly, one who cannot fulfill the *mitzvah* with a kosher *megillah* is required to recite *hallel* – with a *brocha*. Others disagree. Some maintain that we do not follow the second reason. Others maintain that even according to the second reason, *hallel* was never instituted for Purim. Only *megillah* was instituted. If one cannot fulfill it, there is no substitute way to perform the *mitzvah*. In practice, some poskim maintain that one should say *hallel* without a *brocha*. [A further debate is whether the *hallel* for Purim would be a *mitzvah* applied to the day or to the miracle.] Some suggest saying it during the *seudah*.

The third option debated is whether to recite *shehecheyanu*. Part of the *mitzvah* of *megillah* is acknowledging the miracle. *Shehecheyanu* might be an integral part of that,

rather than on the performance of the *mitzvah*. Thus, the *brocha* would be a *mitzvah* in its own right, or a part of the *mitzvah* of *megillah*. Accordingly, if one is *annus*, he could still fulfill this part of the *mitzvah*. This option will be discussed in more detail in the next sections. [See Shabbos 23a Psachim 117a Megillah 14a, Poskim. Rambam, Chanukah 3:6, commentaries. Tur Sh Ar OC 600:2 676:1 692:1 693:3 (Shaarei Teshuva), commentaries. Refs in Encyclopedia Talmudis Hallel notes 112-114, Nitei Gavriel Purim, 52, notes. Mikraei Kodesh Chanukah 25 27 Purim 29, notes.]

B) Shehecheyanu

This *brocha* reflects the joy at being able to live to the moment of its recital. It is an acknowledgment of Hashem's kindness in sustaining the one reciting it, and on the opportunities at that moment. It is recited on special joyous occasions, on special days that occur infrequently or annually, and on *mitzvos* that occur only occasionally or annually, or otherwise cyclically. For example, it is recited when seeing fruit in season for the first time. Some recite when eating that fruit. It is recited when buying something new. These are joyous occasions. The new fruit is also an annual occurrence. Special days include *Yomim Tovim*. The *brocha* is recited at *kiddush* on the first night, and by women at candle-lighting. If one did not recite it then, he may recite it at any later time during *Yomtov*. A rare *mitzvah* would be a father redeeming his first-born son from a *kohain*.

Sukos has three reasons for *shehecheyanu*. It is a *Yomtov* and it has two special *mitzvos*, *sukah* and *lulav*. At *kiddush* the first night it is recited for *Yomtov* and the *sukah*. The next day it is recited for *lulav*. On *Chanukah* there seem to be two reasons to recite it. It is a *Yomtov* and there is a *mitzvah* of *ner Chanukah*. Nonetheless, it appears that the institution of the *brocha* was only meant to require reciting it on the lights. Thus, if one forgot to recite it on the first night, he may recite on a subsequent night when kindling. However, some poskim maintain that it could be recited on the occurrence of this special time in the annual cycle. Since there is also a special *mitzvah*, it was attached to the *mitzvah*. If there is no way to connect it to the *mitzvah*, one could still recite it alone.

As proof for this the distinction between *shehecheyanu* and another *brocha* *she'asa nisim*, is cited. *She'asa nisim* reflects the miracles. It is recited every night, and even if one did not kindle, he recites it when he sees the lights. *Shehecheyanu* is only recited one time. This indicates that while *she'asa nisim* was attached to the performance of the *mitzvah*, *shehecheyanu* is on the period as well as the *mitzvah*.

The Talmud also discusses another holiday when *shehecheyanu* is recited without being attached to a *mitzvah*. On *Yomtov*, one should recite *shehecheyanu* with *kiddush*. The Talmud says that the initial institution was to recite it over wine, and then drink it. The question is asked, what about *Yom Kippur*? Firstly the Talmud debates whether it is recited at all on *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*, or only on the three festivals. Assuming one recites it on *Yom Kippur*, *kiddush* on *Yom Kippur* is recited during *tefillah*, but not repeated on a cup of wine. The final conclusion of the Talmud is that *shehecheyanu* may be recited without wine. In practice it is recited right after *Kol Nidrei*, at the start of the *Yomtov*. [See refs to next section.]

C) Shehecheyanu on Purim

A similar discussion to *Chanukah* involves the *megillah* and *Purim*. *Shehecheyanu* is


recited when reading the *megillah* by night. This seems to satisfy the obligation to recite over the special quality of the day. We do not recite *kiddush* on *Purim*. The *megillah* is repeated by day. The poskim debate whether the *shehecheyanu brocha* is repeated when the *megillah* is repeated. In *Askenazic* communities nowadays it is repeated. [The poskim cite one scholar who held that it should be repeated, but did not wish to antagonize the opposition. He recited it quietly while the congregation said *amen* to his other *brochos*!] The poskim say that one should have in mind that this *brocha* by day should exempt his obligation to recite it over the *mitzvos* of *mishloach manos* and *seuda*. [*Matanos la'evyonim* is debated, but one might as well include it with the others.]

If one is unable to read *megillah* by day, the poskim debate whether he should recite *shehecheyanu* anyhow on the other *mitzvos*. They debate separately whether it should be recited on the day. Thus, there could be two reasons to recite it, the day and the cyclical *mitzvos*. There is an apparent ruling that one does not need to recite it on the specialness of the day on which the miracle took place. Others maintain that this refers to one who was able to recite it by night, who need not repeat it by day. Some say that on a day that no *mitzvah* of *kiddush* on wine was instituted, one need not recite *shehecheyanu*, except on a *mitzvah*. What about *Yom Kippur* and *Chanukah*, according to those who say one recites it any time during the holiday if he cannot do so with the *mitzvah*? Some say *Yom Kippur* could have the *mitzvah* of wine, except that one may not drink. Various solutions are suggested to the second question. Nonetheless, some maintain that one should recite it. There are even those who rule that one may recite *she'asa nisim* on *Purim* without a *megillah*, based on the *Chanukah* debate.

There is no clear consensus on how to rule. Some suggest reciting *shehecheyanu* at the *seudah* over wine. The *shehecheyanu brocha* was not connected to the *kiddush brocha*. It was connected to the *brocha* on the cup of wine. There is a requirement to have wine on *Purim*, at least as part of the *seuda*. Whenever there is an inconclusive debate about a *brocha*, one tends to leniency. One should rather not recite the *brocha*, since it involves uttering Hashem's name. If there is no reason to, this is forbidden.

The prevailing practice is not to recite *shehecheyanu*, and if one chooses to recite *hallel* to do so without a *brocha* as though one is reciting *Tehilim*. This being the case, there is no obligation to buy a new item. On the second night of *Rosh Hashanah*, in reality, one would recite *shehecheyanu* anyhow. The new item is added due to the small doubt. On *Purim*, many poskim maintain that there is not even a doubt. However, if one does indeed buy a new item and recites *shehecheyanu*, he should certainly have in mind the joy and the *mitzvos* and the day. [See Refs to section A. Brochos 59b-60a Yerushalmi 9:3 Eruvin 40b Sukah 46a, Poskim. Tur Sh Ar OC 223 225:1-7, commentaries.]

In conclusion, there is no obligation to purchase something to facilitate the *brocha*. **On the parsha and they drank. [24:11] They made a simcha and Yomtov .. [see Ramban].** It seems that the primary way to express joy and *Yomtov* is with wine. Perhaps this is why the *brocha shehecheyanu* over joy was specifically instituted to be recited with wine.

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