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צורבא מרבנן

TZURBA M'RABANAN

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אינטרנט, או זום**

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	Tanach
	Talmud (Chazal)
	<i>Rishonim</i>
	<i>Acharonim</i>
	<i>Contemporary Poskim</i>

One of the major halachic questions that have arisen due to COVID-19 concerning Purim this year relates to the hearing of the *megilla*.¹ The halacha requires a person to either read the entire *Megillat Esther* oneself from a scroll (*kelaf*) or to fulfill one's obligation by listening to someone else read it from a scroll (see ***Shulchan Aruch, O.C. 689:2***). This year, though, some people may have difficulty fulfilling this mitzva properly due to the various COVID-19 restrictions in place. Those who are in isolation due to being ill with COVID-19 or having come in contact with a COVID-19 patient cannot attend a *minyán* with other people. In addition, many other individuals, both men and women, may not be able to attend their regular shul, or even an outdoor *minyán* nearby, due to social distancing and restrictions on the number of people attending.

If one does not know how to read the *megilla* from a kosher scroll or does not have access to one, may one fulfill the mitzva of *keriat megilla* (reading the *megilla*) through listening to a live reading either by phone or online, such as via Zoom? In addition, is it permitted for one reading the *megilla* in an outdoor *minyán* to use a loudspeaker of some sort so that others will better be able to hear him? In this *shiur*, we will briefly survey a few of the relevant sources and positions to these questions generally,² and then examine some of the recent rulings given specifically during the era of COVID-19.

SOURCES REGARDING FULFILLING A MITZVA BY PHONE, MICROPHONE, OR LIVE BROADCAST

Poskim Who Allow Fulfilling One's Obligation Electronically

One of the Talmudic sources that may be relevant to this question comes from the **Gemara** in ***Sukka*** discussing the great shul in Alexandria, Egypt. According to the Gemara, although many of the thousands in attendance could not hear the *chazzan* when he recited a *beracha*, they nevertheless responded *amen* at the proper time upon seeing a signal.



Masechet Sukka 51b

It is taught in a *baraita* that Rabbi Yehuda says: **One who did not see the great synagogue [deyofloston] of Alexandria of Egypt never saw the glory of Israel. They said that its structure was like a large basilica [basileki], with a colonnade within a colonnade.**

1. מסכת סוכה נא:

תניא רבי יהודה אומר מי שלא ראה דיפלוסטון של אלכסנדריא של מצרים לא ראה בכבודן של ישראל. אמרו כמין בסילקי גדולה היתה סטיו לפנים מסטיו,

1. This *shiur* was written by Rav Eli Ozarowski.

2. For additional sources and analysis of this question generally, see Rav Zvi Ryzman, *Ratz Katzvi* 2:10 (available at olamot.net/sites/default/files/razz_katzvi/pdf/%20%d7%99_1.pdf), and Rav Daniel Feldman, "The Virtual *Minyan*," available at www.traditiononline.org/the-virtual-minyan.

At times six hundred thousand men in it, twice the number of those who left Egypt... And there was a wooden platform at the center. The sexton of the synagogue would stand on it, with the scarves in his hand. And because the synagogue was so large and the people could not hear the communal prayer, **when** the prayer leader **reached** the conclusion of a blessing requiring the people **to answer amen**, the sexton **waved the scarf and all the people would answer amen**.

פעמים שהיו בה (ששים רבוא על ששים רבוא) כפלים כיוצאי מצרים... ובימה של עץ באמצעיתה וחזן הכנסת עומד עליה והסודרין בידו וכיון שהגיע לענות אמן הלה מניף בסודר וכל העם עונין אמן.

It seems from the Gemara that the worshipers were allowed to respond *amen* even without hearing the *beracha* since they knew based on the scarves exactly when the *beracha* was recited. This passage may potentially support fulfilling a mitzva such as *megilla* by hearing it via microphone or online.

Nevertheless, there may be two major differences between the case of the Gemara and our case of listening to *megilla* reading. The first is that in the Gemara's case, the people were not attempting to fulfill a mitzva or obligation through the *chazarat hashatz*; they were merely responding *amen* to the *beracha*. If the *chazzan* in Alexandria had been reading the *megilla*, the people would not have fulfilled their obligation without hearing the actual words.³ Thus, one cannot draw proof from here that one hearing the voice of another person through a loudspeaker or phone can fulfill an obligation in the manner of *shome'a k'oneh* (listening is equivalent to reciting oneself).

The second difference is that in the Gemara's case, all of the people were present in the same, physical location as the *chazzan*, and perhaps they were permitted to respond *amen* for that reason. However, perhaps they would not have been permitted to respond if they had been in a different location, even if they knew precisely when the *berachot* were recited, since they are not connected physically to the one reciting the *beracha*.

Based partially upon these considerations, **Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach** rules that one may not fulfill an obligation such as reading the *megilla* or reciting *havdala* through listening to a person's voice by microphone or other electronic device. In his lengthy *teshuva* on the subject, Rav Shlomo Zalman first explains how devices such as a loudspeaker or microphone work from a scientific point of view. He then writes that one must hear the actual sound of the person (or *shofar*) in order to fulfill a halachic obligation, and not the reproduced sound. Therefore, a sound transmitted via microphone or the like would only have the status of the scarves in Alexandria, which Rav Shlomo Zalman understands as allowing one to respond *amen* only if one stands nearby (the exact case in the Gemara). However, the scarves would not allow one to fulfill a specific obligation in such a manner, nor would they enable a person standing in a different location altogether to respond *amen*.



Responsa Minchat Shlomo 1:9

...Based upon the entire description given [about the mechanics of the electronic devices], it would seem that one who hears the sound of the *shofar* or the *megilla* by phone or loudspeaker has not fulfilled one's obligation at all, since only hearing

2. שו"ת מנחת שלמה | א:ט

...אחרי כל התיאור האמור לעיל נראה... שהשומע קול שופר או מקרא מגלה ע"י טלפון או רם-קול... לא יצא כלל ידי חובתו, משום דדוקא כשרושם שמיעת האוזן

3. One could also argue that our case is better than that of Alexandria, since one actually hears the words, as opposed to in Alexandria, where the people did not hear the words at all. Nevertheless, the Gemara cannot serve as proof or support to this contention that one would fulfill an obligation by listening to a person's voice through electronic means, it just would not contradict it.

the sound of the *shofar* directly via vibrations in the air created by sound waves is considered hearing the *shofar* [or hearing the *megilla*]. This is not true when the ear hears the oscillations of the membrane, even though those vibrations also create similar sound waves like the sound of the [actual] *shofar*; it is still logical that one is only hearing the sound of the vibrations from the membrane, and not the sound of the *shofar*...

I also saw in the *Metzudat David* of Rav Feldman who writes in the *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch, Hilchot Megilla*:⁴ “Concerning whether a person is permitted to answer *amen* after hearing another recite a *beracha* on the telephone, see the Responsa *Minchat Elazar* and other *Acharonim* that discuss this.”⁵ But according to the ideas we have suggested [earlier in the piece], it would seem that hearing in this manner has the status of waving the scarves that took place in Alexandria of Egypt, which was considered knowing which *beracha* the *chazzan* was reciting, but no more. **Accordingly, it seems that one should not recite *amen* on a *beracha* in which he is obligated to fulfill an obligation.**

And even concerning a *beracha* that the listener is not obligated to recite to fulfill an obligation, it is also possible that only one standing outside a shul or even nearby and hears the repetition of the *chazzan* [for *Shemoneh Esrei*] or other *berachot* via an amplifier should follow the congregation and respond *amen*, since it is like Alexandria in Egypt. But this is not the case when one stands far away and hears a *beracha* over the telephone, where it seems in my humble opinion that one should not answer *amen* at all on any *beracha*, and one who does answer is considered to have responded *amen* in vain, since he hears the *beracha* from a membrane and not from a person...

נעשה באופן ישר ע"י קול השופר שמזעזע את האויר ויוצר בו גלי קול אז חשיב כשומע קול שופר, משא"כ כשהאוזן שומעת רק תנודות של ממברנה אע"פ שגם אותן התנודות יוצרות באויר גלי קול ממש כדוגמת קול השופר אפילו הכי מסתבר שרק קול תנודות ממברנה הוא שומע ולא קול שופר...

גם ראיתי במצודת דוד להרב פלדמן שכתב בקצור שו"ע ה' מגילה: "וכן אם רשאי לענות אמן אחר ברכת חברו ששומע ע"י הטלפון, עיין שו"ת מנחת אליעזר ועוד אחרונים שדברו מזה". ולפי הדברים שאמרנו נראה שיש לשמיעה זו דין הנפת סודרים שהיתה באלכסנדריא של מצרים דחשיב רק כיודע באיזו ברכה השי"צ עומד ולא יותר, וכיון שכן נראה שאין לענות כלל אמן על ברכה שהוא מחויב לצאת בה.

ואף גם ברכה שאין השומע מחויב לצאת ידי חובתה ג"כ אפשר דרק אם עומד בבית הכנסת או אפי' סמוך לו ושומע חזרת הש"ץ או שאר ברכות ע"י רם קול אז שפיר נגרר אחר הצבור ועונה אמן מידי דהוי אאלכסנדריא של מצרים. משא"כ כשעומד רחוק ושומע ע"י טלפון נלענ"ד שאין לענות כלל אמן על שום ברכה ודינו כעונה אמן לבטלה, הואיל והוא שומע את הברכה רק מממברנה ולא מפי אדם...

Rav Ovadia Yosef also writes in **Responsa Yechaveh Da'at** (below) and **Responsa Yabia Omer (Vol. 1, O.C. 19:18; Vol. 5, O.C. 11)** that one does not fulfill any obligations through hearing a *beracha* or other mitzva recited through the phone or other electronic means, including a loudspeaker or microphone.



Responsa Yechaveh Da'at 3:54

Question: Does one who hears the *megilla* in shul from the *chazzan* who reads it with a loudspeaker fulfill his obligation?

3. שו"ת יחווה דעת | ג:נד

שאלה: השומע מקרא מגילה בבית הכנסת מפי שליח צבור הקורא את המגילה ברם-קול, האם יוצא ידי חובת מקרא מגילה?

4. This refers to an edition of the *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* published by Rav David Feldman (1884–1955) with commentary by him on the bottom of the page. It is available at www.hebrewbooks.org/41279.

5. The opinion of the *Minchat Elazar* will be discussed in more detail below.

...In truth, according to those experts who know the mechanics of electricity, the sound of those who hear over the telephone or loudspeaker is not the voice of the speaker itself. Rather, it is a different sound, transmitted by an electric current via a membrane (which converts the sound waves to and from a current). If so, it follows that one cannot fulfill the obligation of hearing the *shofar* or reading the *megilla* via telephone or a loudspeaker...⁶

...ובאמת שלפי דברי מומחים הבקיאיים בטכניקה של החשמל, הקול הנשמע למאזינים דרך הטלפון או הרם-קול, אינו קולו של המדבר עצמו, אלא הוא קול אחר הבא על ידי זרם חשמלי באמצעות ממברנא, ואם כן ממילא אי אפשר לצאת ידי חובת שמיעת קול שופר או מקרא מגילה דרך הטלפון או הרם-קול...

Rav Ovadia cites other *poskim* that agree with this conclusion as well, including the **Responsa Yerushat HaPeleita, Responsa Minchat Yitzchak, and the Lubavitcher Rebbe**. This is indeed the ruling of the majority of *poskim* based on the logic that the voice heard from the loudspeaker is distinct from the voice of the person speaking.⁷ If so, one would be unable to fulfill the mitzva of *keriat megilla* by hearing it through a loudspeaker, phone, online video stream, or Zoom, even if there is no other manner in which the person can properly read the *megilla* themselves. Listening to such a reading would simply remind one of the meaning of Purim, which is similar to the suggestion of the **Shulchan Aruch** to read the *megilla* from a printed text without reciting a *beracha* when no other options are available.

נ Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 691:10

4. שולחן ערוך | או"ח תרצא:י

If one does not have a kosher *megilla*, one should read [the *megilla*] from a Chumash without a *beracha*.⁸

אם אין מגילה כשרה קורים אותה בחומש בלא ברכה.

Poskim Who Do Not Allow Fulfilling One's Obligation Electronically

However, a minority of *poskim* do at least entertain the possibility that one can fulfill reading the *megilla* through an electronic device, seemingly because they consider any sound that originally emanated from a human voice to be included, even if was transformed in the interim into an electrical signal. **Rav Kook**, for instance, writes that the only time one must hear the actual sound itself is with regard to *shofar* (a position which most others agree to). However, in other contexts, such as responding *amen* to a *beracha* or a *minyana*, hearing from afar via phone or radio is considered halachically viable.

6. As opposed to Rav Shlomo Zalman, though, Rav Ovadia does allow responding *amen* to a *beracha* heard electronically. The subject of responding *amen* to a *beracha* heard electronically is discussed more fully in the second *shiur* of the *Tzurba M'Rabanan* special COVID-19 volume, pp. 70–74.

7. Other *poskim* that rule stringently include Rav Shlomo Braun (*She'arim Hametzuyananim B'halacha* 4:193), Rav Meshulam Roth (*Responsa Kol Mevasser* 2:25), Rav Benzion Uziel (*Responsa Mishpetei Uziel, Tinyana*, o.c. 34:3), Rav Moshe Sternbuch (*Moadim Uzemanim* 6:105), and Rav Yaakov Ariel (*Responsa B'ohola shel Torah* 5:47).

8. The *Mishna Berura* (691:27) clarifies that the Chumash referred to here is a scroll that also includes the *megilla*. The *Mishna Berura* explains that in this case, some hold that one may fulfill one's obligation with such a Chumash, but if one read it from a printed Chumash, it is meaningless. Nevertheless, the *Mishna Berura* concludes by citing the *Pri Megadim* who holds that even reading the *megilla* from a printed Chumash is worthwhile so that "the idea of the *megilla* should not be forgotten."

**Responsa Orach Mishpat,
Orach Chaim, Siman 48**

Concerning whether one may respond upon hearing *Kedusha* or *Barechu* over the telephone or radio: The accepted halacha is that since there is a congregation of ten in one place, there is no separation between Israel and their Father in Heaven, and even those who hear from afar may answer, as is explained in the *Shulchan Aruch* (o.c. 55:20). If we would raise the uncertainty that perhaps this is the sound of an echo and not the sound itself,⁹ [the response is that] this distinction applies only to *shofar*, concerning which the Torah is particular that the sound be that of the *shofar* and is particular in other ways as well, such as that there should be no change in the sound, it must not be covered with any other material, and the like, as is explained in *Orach Chaim* 586 and 587. This is in contrast to *tefilla*, where one may answer any time one hears.

The only other issue that remains to address concerns the opinion of the “*yesh omrim*” in the *Shulchan Aruch* (cited above) that there must not be a dirty area or idolatry... one can say that since the radio or telephone retain the sound through machines, it is considered as if the sound does not pass through anywhere else... so long as it does not materialize into a sound that can be heard.¹⁰

**5. שו"ת אורח משפט | או"ח
סימן מח**

בשומע ע"י טעליפאן או ראדיא קדושה או ברכו, אם מותר לענות אחריו, הנה אנחנו קיי"ל שמאחר שהצבור במקומו יש שם עשרה במקום אחד אין שום מחיצה מפסיקה בין ישראל לאביהם שבשמים, ויכולים לענות אפילו אלה ששומעים מרחוק, כמבואר בשו"ע או"ח סי' נ"ה ס"כ. ואם נבוא להסתפק שמא זה נקרא קול הברה ולא עצם הקול, אין לנו חלוק זה כי אם דוקא בשופר, ששם הקפידה תורה על הקול שיהי' קול שופר, ועוד כמה דרכי קפידא, שלא יהיה שינוי בקול, כמו שלא יהיה מצופה בדבר אחר וכיו"ב, כמבואר באו"ח סי' תקפ"ו ותקפ"ז, משא"כ בעניני תפילה, דכל שהוא שומע הענין אין קפידא ויכול לענות.

רק מה שיש לדון בזה הוא מצד דעת הי"א שהובא בשו"ע או"ח סי' נ"ה הנ"ל, שצריך שלא יהיה מפסיק מקום מטונף או עבודה זרה... י"ל דהרדיא או הטלפון שהם משמרים את הקול ע"י מכונות נחשב כאילו אין הקול עובר כלל במקומות אחרים... כל זמן שלא בא למציאות לשמיעה ע"י המכונה.

It is possible that since Rav Kook argues that the only time one must hear the actual sound is regarding *shofar*, he may indeed allow hearing the *megilla* by phone or other electronic means if it is live.¹¹

Other *poskim* also ruled previously that fulfilling one's obligation regarding *megilla* may be done through a microphone and the like. **Rav Chaim Elazar Spira**, the Chassidic rebbe of Munkacz, writes in the ***Minchat Elazar*** that one may indeed fulfill an obligation through hearing a person's voice on the phone. The *Minchat Elazar* first elaborates about responding *amen* to a *beracha* heard over the phone and whether one may do so if unclean objects are located in between the listener and the speaker. He then concludes (in the excerpt below) that theoretically one could even fulfill the obligation of *kiddush* on Shabbat by hearing it over the telephone (just that in practice one cannot utilize electronic devices on Shabbat) and he has no specific reasons why listening to the *megilla* in such a manner would not be effective.

9. Rav Kook here is referring to the Gemara (*Rosh Hashana* 27a–b), which discusses the status of an echo of a *shofar* blast. According to the Gemara, one has not fulfilled the mitzva of *shofar* upon hearing an echo.

10. This subject is discussed in more detail in the English *Tzurba M'Rabanan* volume on COVID-19, p. 72. Rav Kook also discusses the possibility that the halacha does not follow this opinion. In addition, he suggests that one should ideally avoid placing oneself in a situation where one hears *berachot* and *tefillot* in this manner. However, in the current situation he may very well agree that doing so is permitted *lechatchila*, similar to some of the *poskim* quoted below.

11. Although Rav Kook is quoted by some contemporary *poskim* as being lenient about our question, it is also possible that Rav Kook (when saying that only *shofar* must be the actual sound) only meant to contrast *shofar* to responding to *tefilla*, where one does not fulfill an obligation, but simply responds. In the case of *megilla*, though, where one must fulfill an obligation, it is still possible Rav Kook would not sanction listening by phone.



Responsa Minchat Elazar 2:72

But one can argue that concerning *kiddush* for Shabbat and Yom Tov, with regard to which we rule in the *Shulchan Aruch* (o.c. 273) that if one recited *kiddush* in his home and his neighbor heard him, and his neighbor's table was also set [for a meal], his neighbor fulfills the obligation as well if both the speaker and listener had intent for it. If so, then if one hears [*kiddush*] on the telephone, his friend would also fulfill his obligation if his table is set, even if he is several *parsa'ot* (a measure of distance about the length of a kilometer) away... but on Shabbat and Yom Tov, in any case it is forbidden to speak on the telephone... **Similarly, I was asked regarding *megilla* whether one who hears it from another reading on the telephone fulfills his obligation. From all of the angles that the questioner probed, I still did not find reason to forbid it. This is because in truth, the voice of the reader becoming "thicker" to one listening from afar does not disqualify the sound...**

6. שו"ת מנחת אלעזר | ב:עב

אך זה י"ל לענין קידוש שבת ויו"ט דפסקינן בש"ע סי' רע"ג דאם קידש בביתו ושמע שכינו ושלחן ערוך גם לפני שכינו יצא שכינו אם נתכוין שומע ומשמיע א"כ אם שומע ע"י הטעלעפאן ג"כ יוצא חבירו כששלחן ערוך לפניו גם אם הוא בריחוק הרבה פרסאות... אך בשבת ויו"ט ממילא אסור לדבר ע"י הטעלעפאן... וכן לענין מגילה נשאלתי אם יוצא השומע מהקורא בטעלעפאן ומכל הצדדים שחתר השואל לא מצאתי לאסור. דבאמת במגילה לא פסל אם נתעבה קול הקורא בהברה בשמיעה בריחוק מקום...

In addition to the few *poskim* who ruled that one definitely fulfills one's obligation by listening to another via electronic means, a number of other prominent *poskim* consider the possibility seriously without issuing an absolute ruling. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach writes in an afternote at the end of his responsum quoted above that he later consulted with the *Chazon Ish* about the matter, and the *Chazon Ish* was not certain that Rav Shlomo Zalman's opinion was correct.



Responsa Minchat Shlomo 1:9

After this article was printed, I had the opportunity to speak with our teacher the *Chazon Ish*, who told me that in his opinion, it is not so simple. It is possible that since the sound heard [by the listener] was produced by the one reading, and the sound is heard immediately just like one who talks normally, perhaps this is considered like actually hearing it from the reader, and the same is true for one who hears the *shofar* blasts directly from the one who blows it [even if he uses a microphone or the like]. According to this, one must say that what they said [in the Gemara, *Rosh Hashana* 27b] that if one hears the echo [of the *shofar*], one has not fulfilled one's obligation, [it is not because the sound is a different sound, but] it is because an echo is normally heard slightly later than the voice of the person, which is not true in the case of a telephone or loudspeaker.¹²

7. שו"ת מנחת שלמה | א:ט

אחר שנדפס מאמר זה נודמן לי לדבר עם מרן הגאון בעל חזון איש זצ"ל, ואמר לי, שלדעתו אין זה פשוט כל כך, ויתכן שמכיון שהקול הנשמע נוצר על ידי הקורא, וגם הקול נשמע מיד כדרך המדברים, אפשר שזה חשוב כשומע ממש מפי הקורא, וכן כשומע ממש מפי התוקע בשופר. ולפי זה צריך לומר שמה שאמרו אם קול הברה שמע לא יצא, הוא מפני שדרך קול הברה להישמע קצת זמן לאחר קול האדם, מה שאין כן בטלפון ורם-קול. אולם לדעתי הוא חידוש גדול מאוד, ואיני מבין אותו ע"כ. ונראים דבריו להחמיר.

12. This concern may be relevant, though, in the case of a Zoom meeting or other online platform, since in some cases, there is a slight delay in between the time that the person speaks and the time that others hear him. See footnote 16, where Rav Yosef Zvi Rimon is quoted as mentioning this point, as well as the excerpt from Rav Re'em HaKohen, where he also acknowledges the halachic difficulty with the delays that are somewhat common in online broadcasts.

Rav Moshe Feinstein also considers the possibility that one can fulfill one's obligation by microphone as a potentially practical one in a responsum written to a rabbi in Vancouver, Canada. His primary argument is that a voice is always heard somewhat indirectly, because its signal travels through the air. So too, when the signal is transmitted further through an electronic device, that may still be considered the actual, original voice.



Responsa Igrot Moshe, Orach Chaim

2:108

Concerning reading the *megilla* via a microphone, it is difficult to give a decisive halachic answer, since it has not been sufficiently clarified by reliable individuals how the sound is heard. Therefore, it is not appropriate to read the *megilla* using a microphone...

But that which his honor was certain that one does not fulfill one's obligation through hearing from a microphone because... they say that the sound heard is different than the sound that was produced... to me, this is a significant uncertainty. Even if we say that the experts are correct that the sound heard is not that of the person, but a different sound that emanates from his voice, since the sound is heard only when he reads, one can still consider the sound to be his actual voice, as everything one hears is based on his actual voice. And what is the case of actual hearing? Maybe it is also in this manner, that some entity is created in the air and then reaches his ear.

This is also logical based upon what scientists say that sound travels to the ear [of others], and also has a slight delay, but is nevertheless still considered to be the voice of a person. Therefore, perhaps the sound transmitted through a microphone at the time one is speaking that others hear is also considered his actual voice, and this is more logical... For this reason, perhaps one need not protest those who wish to read the *megilla* with a microphone based upon halachic grounds...

But nevertheless, since the permissibility in this case is not clear, and this is a novel issue, one should protest to prevent them from chasing after other novel phenomenon after which people in these countries are excited...

8. שו"ת אגרות משה | או"ח

ב:קח

הנה בדבר קריאת המגילה ע"י מיקראפאן קשה ליומר בזה הלכה ברורה כי לא נתברר כראוי איך נשמע ע"י זה ע"י אנשים הראוי לסמוך עליהם. ולכן אין ראוי לקרא המגילה שישמעו ע"י המיקראפאן...

אבל מה שפשיטא ליה לכתר"ה שאין יוצאין בשמיעה ע"י מיקראפאן מטעם... שאומרים שנשמע קול אחר שנברא מקולו... הנה לדידי מספקא טובא אף אם נימא שהאמת כאמירת המומחים שלא נשמע קול האדם אלא קול אחר שנעשה מקולו, מטעם שכיון שעכ"פ רק כשהוא קורא נשמע הקול יש להחשיב זה כשמיעת קולו ממש דהרי כל זה שנשמע עושה קולו ממש. ומנין לנו עצם כח השמיעה איך הוא שאולי הוא ג"כ באופן זה שנברא איזה דבר באויר ומגיע לאזנו.

וכן מסתבר לפי מה שאומרים חכמי הטבע שהקול יש לו הלוך עד האזן וגם יש קצת שיהוי זמן בהלוכו, ומ"מ נחשב שהוא קול האדם לכן אפשר שגם הקול שנעשה בהמיקראפאן בעת שמדבר ששומעין אותו הוא נחשב קולו ממש וכן הא יותר מסתבר... ומטעם זה אפשר אין למחות ביד אלו שרוצים לקרא המגילה ע"י המיקראפאן מצד ההלכה...

אך מ"מ כיון שלא ברור להיתר והוא ענין חדש, בכלל יש למחות כדי למונעם מלרדוף אחרי חדשות אחרות שלהוטים בזה במדינות אלו...

Rav Moshe Feinstein is unwilling to rule leniently in this case decisively, though he appears to give significant weight to the possibility that perhaps one does fulfill one's obligation when hearing the *megilla* by microphone. Rav Moshe repeats a similar sentiment elsewhere in the ***Igrot Moshe (O.C. 4:126)*** in response to a query by the administrator of a girls school in Israel. However, he does rule leniently as practical halacha as well in a case of listening to *havdala* over the phone where otherwise the person will be unable to hear or recite *havdala* altogether.

**Responsa Igrot Moshe, Orach Chaim**

4:91:4

Concerning hearing *havdala* on the telephone by a woman who is in the hospital, if she is unable to hear *havdala* where she is, she certainly should listen to it on the phone, since it is logical that she fulfills her obligation this way, as I wrote in o.c. 2:108 concerning reading the *megilla*, and the same is true about *havdala*... and one should likewise respond *amen* to a *beracha* heard over the telephone or microphone due to doubt.

9. שו"ת אגרות משה | או"ח

ד:צא:ד

בענין שמיעת הבדלה ע"י טעלעפאן לאשה הנמצאת בבית החולים הנה אם אי אפשר לה שתשמע הבדלה במקומה ודאי יש לה לשמוע על הטעלעפאן שיותר נוטה שיוצאה בזה כדכתבתי בתשובה חאו"ח ח"ב סימן ק"ח גבי קריאת מגילה והוא הדין גבי הבדלה... וכן צריך לענות אמן על ברכה ששומעין ע"י טעלעפאן וע"י מייקראפאן מספק.

In addition to Rav Moshe, **Rav Tzvi Pesach Frank** (*Mikra'ei Kodesh, Purim, siman 10*) and **Rav Eliezer Waldenberg** (**Responsa Tzitz Eliezer 8:11**) also discuss at length the possibility of listening over the phone to fulfill a mitzva. Both appear to seriously consider that perhaps one fulfills an obligation this way, at least when no other options are available.

Based on these sources, it seems that although the majority of recent *poskim* have not sanctioned listening to the *megilla* over the phone or other electronic means, including microphone, loudspeaker, or online platform like Zoom, there is a significant minority of *poskim* who may possibly allow it in cases of great need (not simply where it is inconvenient).¹³

Rav Ovadia Yosef also adds another consideration that relates to the question of using loudspeakers and microphones specifically (as opposed to listening by phone, livestream, or Zoom). He writes that if one can hear the actual voice of the reader (e.g., he is sitting close by), then one still fulfills one's obligation, even if the reader is also using a microphone.¹⁴

**Responsa Yechaveh Da'at 3:54**

It seems that with regard to those who sit close to the *chazzan* and would have been able to hear the *megilla* reading well [directly] from his mouth even without the loudspeaker, it is logical that they fulfill their obligation... And even if the voice of the *chazzan* sounds deeper or stronger because of the loudspeaker, it is not a problem, since ultimately, those in the congregation sitting nearby hear the *megilla* from one who is obligated, and all sounds are valid...

10. שו"ת יחווה דעת | גנד

נראה שאלה היושבים סמוך לשליח צבור, והיו יכולים לשמוע היטב את קריאת המגילה מפיו, גם בלעדי הרם-קול, מסתברא ודאי שיוצאים ידי חובה... ואפילו אם על ידי הרם-קול נשמע קולו של השליח צבור עבה יותר, או גבוה יותר, אין בכך כלום, שסוף סוף הצבור היושבים סמוך לו, שומעים את המגילה מפיו אדם בר-חיובא, וכל הקולות כשרים...

13. This dispute among *poskim* regarding fulfilling a mitzva such as *megilla* via electronic means would seem to apply as well to whether one who wears a hearing aid can fulfill his obligation while it is on (though a few *poskim* distinguish between hearing aids, which are considered a natural method of hearing for those that wear them, and microphone, which is not considered a natural method of hearing). For discussion in English of this question, see www.yutorah.org/lectures/lecture.cfm/722821/rabbi-josh-flug/use-of-an-amplification-system-for-reading-the-megillah, www.zomet.org.il/eng/?CategoryID=160&ArticleID=7349, and www.koltorah.org/halachah/tekiat-shofar-microphones-and-hearing-aids-by-rabbi-howard-jachter.

14. See, though, Rav Moshe Sternbuch (*Moadim Uzemanim* 6:105) who is unsure whether one fulfills one's obligation even if he could hear the *ba'al korei* had there been no microphone.

In summary, those who hear the *megilla* reading from a loudspeaker or the radio do not fulfill their obligation, but those who sit close to the *chazzan* who reads the *megilla* using the loudspeaker fulfill their obligation, since they can hear the *megilla* reading from the *chazzan* even without the loudspeaker.

בסיכום: השומעים מקרא מגילה דרך הרם-קול, וכן דרך הרדיו (בשידור ישיר), אינם יוצאים ידי חובת מצות מקרא מגילה, אולם היושבים סמוך אל השליח צבור הקורא את המגילה דרך הרם-קול, שאף בלעדי הרם-קול היו שומעים היטב את קריאת המגילה מפי השליח צבור, יוצאים ידי חובתם.

MEGILLA READINGS HEARD ONLINE, BY PHONE, OR LOUDSPEAKER DURING COVID-19

How have the current *poskim* ruled concerning fulfilling the obligation of hearing the *megilla* via microphone, phone or Zoom in cases where one cannot read or hear a *megilla* reading normally due to COVID-19? Have they been willing to be lenient based upon the opinions of those earlier *poskim* who consider allowing a microphone, loudspeaker, or radio to be used?

Rav Yosef Zvi Rimon cites many of the *poskim* discussed above and acknowledges that in cases of great need where no other options exist, there is basis for leniency, both because of the halachic opinions that allow it as well as the value in reading *Megillat Esther* on Purim in any format.



Rav Yosef Zvi Rimon, "Megilla Reading and Zachor During Corona"¹⁵

Poskim disagree as to whether hearing a loudspeaker (or listening by Zoom) is considered to be the same as hearing a human voice, despite the fact that this is not the person's true voice. HaGaon Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (and other *poskim*) holds that this is not his voice, and one cannot fulfill a halachic obligation in this manner (and the same conclusion is reached in *Yechaveh Da'at*, which deals with a microphone and telephone, and it would seem that the same applies to a broadcast via the internet). However, some hold that this is considered to have the status of a human voice (*Orach Mishpat, Igrot Moshe, Tzitz Eliezer*, among others).

Even if we say that one does not fulfill one's obligation when hearing the *megilla* reading via the internet, it is logical that there is still an advantage to doing so with regard to the idea of reading it in public and publicizing the miracle [*pirsumei nisa*], since the more that one is connected to the prayer of the congregation, there is an advantage (based upon *Berachot 7b*; see my responsum concerning porch and backyard *minyanim*)...

11. הרב יוסף צבי רימון | קריאת המגילה וקריאת זכור בקורונה

נחלקו הפוסקים האם שמיעת רמקול (או זום) נחשבת כשמיעה אנושית, למרות שאין זה הקול האמיתי של האדם. הגרשז"א (מנחת שלמה ח"א ט' ועוד פוסקים) סבר שאין זה קולו, ואי אפשר לצאת בכך ידי חובה (וכך למסקנה בשו"ת יחיה דעת ח"ג סימן נ"ד, שדנו לגבי מיקרופון וטלפון, ובפשוטות הוא הדין לשידור באינטרנט). אולם, יש שסברו שדבר זה נחשב כקולו של האדם (אורח משפט מ"ח; אגרות משה חיים או"ח ח"ד צ"א, ד; או"ח ח"ב ק"ח; ציץ אליעזר ח"ח סימן י"א ועוד).

גם אם נאמר שלא יוצאים ידי חובה כאשר שומעים את קריאת המגילה דרך האינטרנט, מסתבר שיש בכך מעלה ביחס לחובת הקריאה בציבור ופרסומי ניסא, כי ככל שמחוברים יותר לתפילת הציבור, יש בכך מעלה (על פי ברכות ז'; ועיין בהרבה בתשובה שלי על תפילת מרפסות וחצרות)...

15. Rav Rimon's complete, lengthy responsum on the subject is not available online at the time of this writing, but can be obtained by contacting the English editors of the *Tzurba M'Rabanan*. A shortened version in English can be found at images.shulcloud.com/626/uploads/Mizrachi-RavRimon-Purim.pdf.

Therefore, ideally one should hear the *megilla* directly. If that is not possible, one can hear it via Zoom, but the listener should hold a [kosher] *megilla* and read along quietly with the reader (such that he can hear his own voice). If there are no other options, one can fulfill one's obligation via Zoom even when one does not have a [kosher] *megilla*, and certainly in the current reality of the coronavirus.¹⁶

לכן, לכתחילה יש לשמוע מגילה בצורה ישירה. אם אין אפשרות לשמוע בצורה ישירה, ניתן לשמוע מגילה באמצעות הזום, אבל השומע יחזיק מגילה ויקרא בלחש עם הקורא (אך ישמיע לאוזנו). אם אין כל אפשרות אחרת, ניתן לצאת ידי חובת מגילה על ידי הזום, גם כאשר לשומע אין כלל מגילה, ובוודאי במציאות שלנו של הקורונה.

Rav Re'em HaKohen also addresses this issue. After citing many of the sources brought above (as well as summarizing the logic of the two sides), he argues as well that during a pandemic, one may certainly be lenient (with the possible exception of reciting by Zoom, if there is a delay), and that even Rav Shlomo Zalman would support such a practice.



Rav Re'em HaKohen, "Listening to the Megilla Via Phone, Radio, or Loudspeaker While in Isolation Due to the Corona Pandemic"¹⁷

...In summary, we see that the primary dispute is how to define listening in halacha. Is the act of listening defined only by hearing soundwaves directly from the speaker, or also by hearing sounds produced by the speaker [even if not heard directly from him]? According to Rav Auerbach and those that agree with him, it is defined as the person producing a sound [heard by others] directly from his mouth. Therefore, hearing any sound via loudspeaker is invalid. In contrast, according to Rav Kook, the *Chazon Ish*, and those that agree with them, it is defined as producing sound by a person's mouth. Therefore, nothing is lacking when hearing from a loudspeaker. It is clear that although they wrote this [that one fulfills an obligation when hearing through a microphone], they did not err in understanding the science behind it.¹⁸

12. הרב רא"ם הכהן | שמיעת מגילה דרך פלאפון רדיו ורמקול בזמן בידוד מחשש למגפת הקורונה

...לסיכום אנו רואים שיעקר המחלוקת היא מהי הגדרת השמיעה בהלכה. האם פעולה השמיעה מוגדרת רק על ידי שמיעת גלי הקול הישירים של המשמיע, או גם על ידי שמיעת קול שנוצר מכוח המשמיע. לדעת הרב אורבך וסיעתו המדד הוא גלי הקול הישירים ולכן כל שמיעה ברמקול פסולה; ואילו לדעת הרב קוק, החזון אי"ש וסיעתם המדד הוא יצירת הקול על ידי האדם מכוח פיו ולכן אין פגם בשמיעה דרך רמקול. ומוכח שעל אף שיש שכתבו כך הם לא טעו בהבנת המציאות.

16. Rav Rimon notes that if there is a delay of more than a few seconds (the amount of time it takes to say *shalom alecha rebbi umori*), one listening to the reading may not fulfill his obligation according to any opinions (which Rav Re'em HaKohen also mentions in the next source). He also writes that it is preferable not to recite the *berachot* of *she'asa nissim* and *shehechiyanu* when hearing the *megilla* read remotely due to the halachic uncertainties involved.

17. The complete article can be read on the Yeshivat Otniel website at bit.ly/tzpsf17a or on the Kipa website at bit.ly/tzpsf17b.

18. Rav Re'em here is referring to an earlier section of his article, where he cites the opinion of Rav Asher Weiss that *poskim* who held that one fulfills an obligation via phone or microphone misunderstood the science upon which the technology was based. In Rav Weiss' opinion, those *poskim*, and specifically Rav Tzvi Pesach Frank, believed that the sound the listener hears is the very same sound that was emitted initially by the speaker. Rav Weiss then argues that had Rav Frank understood the correct scientific mechanisms as they are known today (that the sound is reproduced, but is not identical to the original), he would have agreed that one does not fulfill an obligation in this manner. Rav Re'em HaKohen, on the other hand, argues that most of those *poskim* with lenient positions did correctly understand the science behind the technology (which he notes is evident from the continuation of the responsum of Rav Kook quoted above; it is also evident from the arguments of Rav Moshe

Aside from this, according to Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, it should also be taken into consideration that we are dealing here with an uncertainty at the level of *kabbala* [i.e., instituted by the prophets], which is treated as an uncertainty on a rabbinic level. In addition, even Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach himself cites the testimony of the *Chazon Ish*, and it seems from here that he too accepted that there is room to consider his logic. In light of all this, during the time of the pandemic, which is a major time of need concerning a *safek derabanan*, it seems that even he would rule to rely on those great Torah scholars who are lenient to fulfill one's obligation of *megilla* via loudspeaker, provided that there is no delay between the reading and the hearing. I discussed this with one of Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach's students, and he told me that Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach would certainly have ruled this way during a pandemic for these considerations, as was his method of ruling concerning life-threatening situations to the wider public.

In practice, one may fulfill one's obligation of reading [the *megilla*] via loudspeaker, phone, or cellphone, where even if there is a delay, it is not usually noticeable. But one should not listen to a recording or a loudspeaker where there is a noticeable delay (as sometimes happens with online broadcasts).¹⁹

מעבר לכך גם לדעת הגרש"ז אוירבך יש לצרף אנחנו עוסקים כאן בספק בדברי קבלה, שהוא ספק דרבנן. מעבר לכך, גם הגרש"ז אוירבך עצמו הביא את העדות של החזון איש ומכאן שהוא קיבל שיש מקום לסברא זאת לאור כל זאת, בזמן חשש ממגפה שהיא שעת הדחק גדולה בספק דרבנן נראה שגם הגרש"ז היה מורה שיש לסמוך על דעות גדולי העולם המקילים, לצאת ידי חובה משמיעת המגילה דרך רמקול בתנאי שאין שיהיו בין הקריאה לשמיעה. שוחחתי על כך עם אחד מתלמידי הגרש"ז אוירבך זצ"ל, והוא אמר לי שוודאי שכך היה פוסק הגרש"ז אוירבך במקום מגפה משיקולים אלו וכדרכו בפסיקה בפיקוח נפש ציבורי. למעשה, אפשר לצאת ידי קריאה ברמקול בטלפון או בפלאפון שגם אם יש שיהיו השיהיו איננו מוחש באופן רגיל, אך אין לשמוע הקלטה או רמקול שיש לו שיהיו מוחש (כפי שקורא לפעמים בשידור און ליין דרך הרשת).

Rav Hershel Schachter addresses a slightly different angle to this question. He discusses the proper practice for reading the *megilla* if restrictions exist upon the number of people permitted to enter the shul or participate in the *minyan* together. If the shul must organize numerous smaller *minyanim*, and there is not sufficient time for all to hear the *megilla*, Rav Schachter rules that one may begin the night readings during *bein hashemashot* or perhaps even earlier. If even that does not suffice for all to hear the *megilla*, then he permits hearing it this year by phone, Zoom, or another online platform.



Rav Hershel Schachter, "Halachic Issues Related to Purim"²⁰

In a number of places, the authorities have imposed restrictions on gatherings of more than ten people in shul at one time due to the danger of the pandemic. This requires organizing multiple *minyanim* for *megilla* reading. In extenuating circumstances, it is explained in the *Shulchan Aruch* (end of 692) and the *Mishna Berura* that one may be lenient and read the *megilla* the day before Purim in the late afternoon after

13. הרב צבי שכטר | עניני פורים

ככמה עיירות הממשלה רק מרשה שיהיו עשרה בבית הכנסת בבת אחת, מפני סכנת המגפה, ולא יותר, ויצטרכו לסדר קריאת המגילה כמה וכמה פעמים במנינים שונים. בשעת הדחק גדול מבואר בשו"ע (סוס"י תרצ"ב) ובמשנ"ב שאפשר לסמוך ולהקל לקרוא המגילה בערב פורים מבעו"י לאחר

Feinstein cited above), and they nevertheless argued there was room for a lenient ruling.

19. Rav Re'em writes in footnote 1 of his article as well that due to concern for a delay, it is preferable to listen by phone than by Zoom.

20. The full ruling of Rav Schachter concerning multiple halachic issues this year (5781/2021) with regard to Purim on Friday as well as concerning COVID-19 can be found at bit.ly/tzpsf16. The English translation provided is a word for word translation of

pelag hamincha, even with a *minyan*. If the need is not that great that the first reading must begin at *pelag hamincha*, then there is room to be lenient to read during *bein hashemashot* (twilight, after sunset), which is considered possibly day and possibly night. This is the case according to those opinions that the *megilla* reading is not obligated as *divrei kabbala*, but rather as a rabbinic obligation... But if the need is not that great, it is not appropriate to be lenient in cases of uncertainty, and ideally one should not begin until nightfall (*Mishna Berura* 692).

If there is absolutely no other choice, one may be lenient and rely upon the possibility suggested by Rav Moshe Feinstein in his responsum [of being lenient], where he is uncertain about the nature of the halacha of not fulfilling one's obligation when hearing the sound of an echo [*Rosh Hashana* 27a], if it is because it is not the original sound, or because [the sound] is not so clear. [The practical difference between the two is when hearing] via phone (or microphone), as it is not the original sound, but the sound is clear. (The *Chazon Ish* and our teacher, Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, were also uncertain about this). Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach held that there is no uncertainty here at all, and one certainly does not fulfill one's obligation.

This leniency to hear via a microphone is based upon what appears in the Gemara that Rabbi X [i.e., a Sage with a minority opinion] may be relied upon in a pressing situation. Most of the *Acharonim* explain that this principle was only stated with regard to rabbinic rules (see *Nekudat HaKesef* to Y.D. 293). [The minority opinion] is normally not considered a legitimate uncertainty (based upon which the principle of "one may be lenient about an uncertainty of a rabbinic rule" applies), as that applies only to a balanced uncertainty. But in a pressing case, one may be lenient that even an individual opinion is considered an uncertainty to apply the rule of "one may be lenient about an uncertainty of a rabbinic rule." If these are the only two possibilities – either listening [to the *megilla*] via a microphone (or Zoom), or listening to it during *bein hashemashot*, it would seem preferable to listen to it during *bein hashemashot*.

פג המנחה, ואפילו בצבור. ואם אין כ"כ שעת הדחק (שמוכרחים להתחיל הקריאה הראשונה בפג המנחה), לענין לקרוא בין השמשות אשר הוא ספק יום וספק לילה (עמש"כ בזה בס' גינת אגוז סי' ז'), בשעת הדחק יש מקום להקל, לדעת הסוברים שמקרא מגילה איננה מדברי קבלה אלא רק מדרבנן... אבל שלא בשעת הדחק גדול אינו נכון להקל בספק... ומן הנכון (היכא דאפשר) שלא להתחיל מקרא מגילה עד צאת הכוכבים (משנ"ב סוף סי' תרצ"ב).

ובדלית ברירה ממש, יש להקל ולסמוך על הצד שהציע הגאון רב משה פיינשטיין בתשובה, להסתפק בדין שמע קול הברה לא יצא, אי ר"ל מפני שאיננו הקול הראשון, או מפני שאיננו כל כך ברור, דעל ידי הטלפון (או ע"י המיקרופון) איננו הקול הראשון אבל הקול ברור. (וכזה נסתפקו גם החזון איש וגם רבנו הגאון רב יוסף דוב סולוביצ'יק), והגאון רב שלמה זלמן אוירבעך היה סבור שאין כאן מקום ספק כלל, ובודאי לא יצא.

וקולא זו לשמוע דרך מיקרופון יסודה בכלל המופיע בגמ' דכדאי הוא ר' פלוני לסמוך עליו בשעת הדחק, וביארו רוב האחרונים שכלל זה לא נאמר אלא בדינים דרבנן (ע"י נקודת הכסף לשו"ע יו"ד סי' רצ"ג), אשר בדרך כלל לא נקרא ספק (לומר ספק דרבנן לקולא) אלא בספק השקול, ובשעת הדחק יש להקל ולומר שאף שיטת היחיד ג"כ חשוב כספק לומר בה דספיקא דרבנן לקולא. ואם אין שם אלא שתי אפשרויות אלו, או לשמוע דרך מיקרופון (או זום) או לשמוע בין השמשות, היה נראה דטפי עדיף לשמוע בין השמשות.

Rav Yitzchak Yosef, current Sephardic Chief Rabbi of Israel, takes a position similar to that of his father quoted above and rules that *megilla* reading cannot be fulfilled by listening to it via Zoom or live broadcast.



Rav Yitzchak Yosef, “Guidelines for Purim 5781 from the Rishon L'tzion, Rav Yitzchak Yosef”²¹

One is obligated to hear the *megilla* reading from a scroll, and hearing it on the radio or through Zoom is not effective. In order for all to fulfill their obligation, additional *minyanim* should be organized in order to reduce as much as possible the size of gatherings on the night and day of Purim. Likewise, special *megilla* readings for women should be organized based upon these guidelines.

14. הרב יצחק יוסף | הנחיות לפורים תשפ”א מהראשון לציון מרן הגאון הרב יצחק יוסף

מקרא מגילה – חובה לשמוע קריאת המגילה מתוך קלף ואין מועיל שמיעת קריאת המגילה על ידי רדיו תכנת Zoom וכדו'. וכדי להוציא את כולם ידי חובה יארגנו מנינים נוספים, כדי לצמצם ככל האפשר את ההתקהלויות בליל פורים ולמחרתו ביום הפורים. וכן הקוראים את המגילה לנשים, יארגנו קריאה מיוחדת לנשים על פי הכללים וכמפורט לעיל.

Other *poskim*, such as **Rav Noam Dvir Maisels**, also write that listening to the *megilla* via Zoom is not effective in fulfilling one's obligation,²² though Rav Maisels suggests that perhaps reading with a loudspeaker or amplifier can be sanctioned in specific cases.



Rav Noam Dvir Maisels, “Can One Listen to the Megilla on Zoom or the Radio”²³

Question: May someone who is ill and unable to leave his home fulfill his obligation for reading the *megilla* through Zoom or the radio?...

Answer: One does not fulfill one's obligation to read the *megilla* via Zoom, the radio, or by phone, since this is not the actual voice of the *ba'al korei*, and the rule of *shome'a k'oneh* (one who listens is as if he recited it himself) does not apply. In pressing cases, such as hospitals where the *megilla* cannot be read in every room, one need not protest against one who is lenient to read it with a loudspeaker and the like (based upon the *Tzitz Eliezer*), specifically if one could hear the *ba'al korei* without the loudspeaker.

15. הרב נועם דביר מייזלס | האם ניתן לשמוע קריאת מגילה בזום או ברדיו

שאלה: האם אדם חולה שאינו יכול לצאת מביתו, יכול לצאת ידי חובת קריאת מגילה דרך הזום או הרדיו?...

תשובה: אין יוצאים ידי חובת קריאת מגילה דרך זום או רדיו, והוא הדין בטלפון, כיון שאין זה קולו הישיר של הבעל קורא ואין בזה דין “שומע כעונה”. בשעת הדחק (כגון בתי חולים ואין אפשרות לקרוא את המגילה בחדרים), אין לערער במי שמקל לקוראה דרך רמקול וכדומה (ציץ אליעזר), בפרט אם היה ניתן לשמוע את הבעל קורא ללא הרמקול.

Rav Daniel Mann writes in the **Ask the Rabbi** column that it is strongly preferred to try to obtain a kosher *megilla* and read it oneself with help from an online recording. If this is impossible, then he allows hearing it electronically based upon the lenient opinions plus the importance of connecting oneself to the *megilla* on Purim even in a non-halachic manner.

21. Rav Yosef's complete ruling concerning various aspects of Purim and COVID-19 can be found on the Moreshet-Maran website at bit.ly/tzpsf17.

22. See, for example, Rav Yerucham Orlinger on the Din.org.il website at bit.ly/tzpsf18a and Rav Shmuel Eliyahu at www.yeshiva.org.il/midrash/46521 who are stringent in our situation (though Rav Eliyahu agrees that it is better to listen to the *megilla* on the computer than not to read it at all).

23. The complete question and answer can be found at www.yeshiva.org.il/ask/126881.



16. Rav Daniel Mann, “Hearing The Megilla For Those Who Cannot Go to Shul”²⁴

Question: If one who is not a *ba'al koreh* cannot make it to *shul* to hear *Megillat Esther* (e.g., if the pandemic will preclude one from coming), how else can he fulfill the *mitzva* of hearing it?

Answer: (For those who can hear from a distance, not being in *shul* is not a problem; if they miss a few words, they can make them up.) Almost all *poskim* agree that one cannot fulfill the *mitzva* of hearing *shofar* via microphone, telephone or radio (besides *chillul Yom Tov* issues), because one must hear the authentic sound of a *shofar* (*Rosh Hashana* 27b). The ruling regarding a live *megilla* reading via microphone is less clear. Although one does not hear the actual voice of a valid *ba'al koreh*, but a device-generated reproduction, it is better than a recording in two ways. First, the sound waves that the *ba'al koreh* produces directly cause the almost identical sounds heard. Secondly, the reproduction is heard at essentially the same time and place the *ba'al koreh* reads. Therefore, while most *poskim* posit one cannot fulfill the *mitzva* via microphone (see *Yechaveh Da'at* 3:54; *Minchat Shlomo* 1:9), the lenient position is marginally tenable (see *Tzitz Eliezer* 8:11; *Igrot Moshe, Orach Chayim* 2:108)...

If one is unable to hear the *megilla* normally, it is worthwhile to hear it electronically. This is not only due to the lenient opinions. Exposure to *Megillat Esther's* content has value (*Mishna Berura* 692:27), like reading the *parasha* from a *chumash* when one cannot go to *shul* (*ibid.* 143:9), and it enables one to remember Hashem's kindness (*Aruch Hashulchan*, o.c. 691:14). In present difficult times, in many communities, the feeling of comradery is also important, especially on a holiday as communal as Purim. Hopefully, people will not incorrectly learn from this, that if away or infirmed for Purim, they do not need to make an effort to fulfill the *mitzva* properly. The halachically simple way to fulfill the *mitzva* is for the people to read it themselves from a *kosher klaf* they own or can borrow. (One who *lains* without a *minyán* does not make the *beracha* of *Harav Et Riveinu* at the end of the *Megilla* – Rama, o.c. 692:1). A non-proficient *ba'al korei* will need help, not only because of difficult *trop*, which is not crucial, but because of hard words and *kri u'k'tivs* (words that are written differently than they are pronounced). One who is precise in his reading can help the makeshift reader and correct as needed. It is possible to read along with a live or recorded reading. This is not very practical, especially if reading for others, as they need to hear the person rather than the electronic sound. One can use a recording and start and stop it as necessary. For those who prefer, I have made a (1 hour 8 minutes) video of the *laining* with pauses every few words, so that one can read along at a comfortable pace. It is available upon request at: info@eretzhemdah.org.

Let us conclude this brief *shiur* by citing the words of **Rav Rimon** that this year specifically, it is important to experience the joy of Purim and allow it to infuse us with special strength to continue to deal with the difficulties of COVID-19.



Rav Yosef Zvi Rimon, “Megilla Reading and Zachor During Corona”

The Jewish people have celebrated Purim in harder times [than now], and despite the mixing of crying and joy, the ability of the Jewish people to rejoice on Purim has given it the special ability to feel Hashem's love toward it everywhere and anytime.

17. הרב יוסף צבי רימון | קריאת המגילה וקריאת זכור בקורונה

עם ישראל חגג את פורים בזמנים קשים ביותר, ולמרות הערבוב שבין בכי ושמחה, היכולת של עם ישראל לשמוח בפורים, נתנה בו את הכוח המיוחד לחוש את אהבת ה' אליו בכל מקום ובכל מצב.

24. This ruling is available online at www.eretzhemdah.org/qna.asp?PageId=3.

God willing, we will all rejoice greatly on Purim this year, we will feel Hashem's love for us [that He has shown] throughout the generations, and in particular, within our generation. From the power of our rejoicing, we will hopefully receive the strength to grapple with corona as well in the best possible manner, which will, God willing, pass in the near future.

בע"ה בפורים השנה נשמח בשמחה גדולה, נחוש את אהבת ה' אלינו בכל הדורות ובמיוחד בדורנו, ומכוח השמחה, נקבל כוחות להתמודד בצורה טובה יותר גם עם הקרונה, שבע"ה תחלוף מאיתנו בקרוב.

Although our rejoicing this year will be minimized in the external, public sphere, we can view this as an opportunity to hone and develop our sense of internal, spiritual joy. If we succeed in our task this year, hopefully Hashem will reciprocate and allow us to celebrate fully next year without restrictions and limitations. *Purim sameach* (Happy Purim)!