

Halachot of Megillah

Based on the rulings of Shulchan Aruch (SA), Rema, Mishna Berura (MB)/Beur Halacha (BH)/Sha'ar Hatziyun (SH), Nitei Gavriel (NG) and Peninei Halacha (PH)

This compendium was not written with the intention of serving as a practical guide, rather, only as a summary of some opinions on laws relating to Megillah reading. As in all cases, please consult a Rabbi with any specific questions.

Please note that this was compiled prior to Purim 5780, and does not incorporate any rulings relating to COVID-19. Please note as well that in many communities, the rulings of some of the authorities cited here may not be common practice, as other authorities not mentioned here may be followed.

Please send any corrections and/or comments to ediena@torontotorah.com.

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General Introduction

1. The Megillah must be read at night and during the day.¹

Time of the Night Reading

1. One may read the night reading any time after Tzeit Hakochavim² and no later than Alot Hashachar³.
 - a. If one read part of the night reading before Tzeit Hakochavim, they should repeat the Megillah afterwards without a Beracha⁴, unless it was a case of great need.⁵
 - b. However, one may read the Megillah any time after Plag Hamincha (with a Beracha) for an ill person or woman within 7 days of giving birth.⁶
2. If one missed the night reading, there is no value to reading it an additional time during the day.⁷

Time of the Daytime Reading

1. One may read the day reading any time after Netz Hachama⁸, and no later than Shekiyat Hachama⁹.
 - a. If one read it before Netz Hachama, but after Alot Hashachar, they have still fulfilled their mitzvah.¹⁰
 - b. If there is a strong need or concern that one will be unable to hear the Megillah later, they may Lechatchila read it any time after Alot Hashachar (with a Beracha).¹¹
 - c. If one anticipates that their reading will extend past Shekiyat Hachama, they should not recite a Beracha over the reading.¹²

Hearing Megillah with the Community

1. One should hear the Megillah with the community, even if this will cause a tremendous amount of Bittul Torah.¹³
2. Even though generally the larger the crowd for Megillah reading, the better, there is no need to go to a different shul than one generally attends.¹⁴
3. If one normally has a house minyan, they must cancel it and attend their local Shul.¹⁵

Precedence of Megillah Reading

1. Megillah reading should be performed before any other Mitzvah (even a Deoraita)¹⁶, especially if the other Mitzvah can be done later.¹⁷

¹ SA OC 687:1.

² MB OC 687:1.

³ MB OC 687:3.

⁴ MB OC 692:14.

⁵ BH to SA OC 692:4.

⁶ MB OC 692:14, BH to SA OC 692:4. SA OC 692:4 seems to be more lenient.

⁷ NG Purim 31:8.

⁸ SA OC 687:1, MB OC 687:4.

⁹ MB OC 687:5.

¹⁰ SA OC 687:1, MB OC 687:4.

¹¹ MB OC 687:6.

¹² MB OC 687:5.

¹³ SA OC 687:2, MB OC 687:7.

¹⁴ MB OC 687:7.

¹⁵ SH OC 687:10.

¹⁶ MB OC 687:11, MB OC 692:15. Rema OC 687:2 disagrees,

¹⁷ MB OC 687:12.

Eating Before Megillah

1. After the time for reading Megillah has arrived¹⁸, one may not eat before hearing the Megillah.¹⁹
 - a. This applies during the day as well.²⁰
 - b. This applies even if one has already Davened.²¹
 - c. This applies even if one did not fast on Ta'anit Esther.²²
2. If one is slightly ill or not fasting well, after the fast concludes they may "taste" food or drink.²³
 - a. The definition of "tasting" is less than an egg's worth of food or drink.²⁴
3. If one is weak and needs more food than just "tasting", they may eat as much as is needed, but must ask another person to remind them to read Megillah after they eat.²⁵

Other Activities Before Megillah

1. If they have not heard Megillah yet, one may not sleep, even for a short while, after the time of Megillah reading arrives.²⁶
2. If they have not heard Megillah yet, one may not study Torah, even for a short while, after the time of Megillah reading arrives.²⁷ If they have already started, they must stop.²⁸ However, if it relates to Megillah-reading, it is permitted.²⁹
3. One should read the Megillah as soon as Ma'ariv and Shacharit are over.³⁰

Introduction/A Man's Obligation

1. Men and women must hear the Megillah being read or read the Megillah themselves.³¹
2. The reader and listener must have intent to fulfill the Mitzvah.³²
3. A man does not fulfill his obligation by hearing the Megillah from a woman.³³

A Minor's Obligation

1. Boys and girls³⁴ above the age of "Chinuch"³⁵ must hear the Megillah as well.³⁶
2. If a minor is hearing the Megillah alone being read by an adult, the minor should recite the blessing, even though they may not necessarily hear all of the words.³⁷

¹⁸ NG Purim 32:6 is stringent even 30 minutes before the time begins, and this may be the intention of MB here as well, see SH OC 672:14.

¹⁹ MB OC 692:12.

²⁰ MB OC 692:15.

²¹ MB OC 692:15.

²² NG Purim 32:6.

²³ MB OC 692:14.

²⁴ MB OC 692:14. NG Purim 32:2 permits drinking larger amounts, such as a cup of coffee. There is also special leniency for one who is reading the Megillah, and even if they are not ill, they may wash out their mouth to be able to read better.

²⁵ SH OC 692:29.

²⁶ MB OC 692:15.

²⁷ NG Purim 32:8.

²⁸ NG Purim 32:8.

²⁹ NG Purim 32:8.

³⁰ PH Zemanim 15:6

³¹ SA OC 689:1-2.

³² SA OC 690:14, MB OC 689:4.

³³ Rema OC 689:2, MB OC 689:8, against SA OC 689:2 and SH OC 689:16.

³⁴ MB OC 689:3.

³⁵ PH Zemanim 15:8 defines this as the age that they can hear the entire Megillah, around age 9. NG Purim 33:2 and 33:5 bring multiple views, ranging from 6-10 years old, but only if the parent is certain that they can stay quiet.

³⁶ SA OC 689:1, MB OC 689:3.

³⁷ NG Purim 33:3.

3. Ideally, one should not fulfill their obligation by hearing the Megillah from a minor.³⁸
 - a. Under extreme circumstances, such as if there is no one else who knows how to read the Megillah properly, an adult can fulfill their obligation by hearing the Megillah read by a child above the age of Chinuch.³⁹
4. Small children, who will confuse other listeners, should not be brought to Shul to hear Megillah.⁴⁰
 - a. In order to fulfill the requirements of Chinuch, parents must hold their children near them and make sure that they listen to the Megillah, and it is permitted for them to make noise after Haman's name in accordance with the local custom.⁴¹ However, if they come for the sole purpose of making noise after Haman's name, the parent has not fulfilled their Chinuch requirement.⁴²

A Deaf Individual's Obligation

1. Ideally, one should not fulfill their obligation by hearing the Megillah from a deaf person, but if they did, they do not need to read the Megillah again.⁴³
2. A deaf person must read the Megillah for themselves, even if they will not sing the Trop properly.⁴⁴
 - a. "Deaf" is defined as if someone cannot hear even if they are spoken to at a very high volume⁴⁵, and/or if they cannot hear even if using a hearing aid.⁴⁶

A Woman's Obligation

1. Women should not read Megillah, even for themselves, unless there is no one else to do so.⁴⁷
2. If a man reads Megillah for a group of women, either the reader or one of the women may recite the blessings.⁴⁸
3. If a woman has already heard the Megillah, others who hear from her have not fulfilled their obligation.⁴⁹
4. If there is a choice between a child above the age of Chinuch or a woman above the age of 12 going to hear the Megillah publicly, precedence is given to the woman.⁵⁰

Other Related Halachot

1. If one is hard of hearing (or simply sitting far away from where the Megillah is being read) and may miss words of the Megillah, they should read along from a Kosher Megillah.⁵¹ If they cannot do so, they should follow along in a Chumash, and read any words they might have missed.⁵²
2. Everyone who is able to should quietly read along in a Kosher Megillah, or at the very least, follow along in a Chumash and read any words that weren't heard properly from the reader.⁵³

³⁸ MB OC 689:6. SA OC 689:2 would require that the individual hear Megillah again.

³⁹ MB OC 689:6.

⁴⁰ MB OC 689:17. PH Zemanim 15:8 understands this to be below age 5 or 6, so long as they understand the basics of what is happening. MB OC 689:17 believes this also only refers to those who have reached the age of Chinuch, see above.

⁴¹ MB OC 689:18.

⁴² MB OC 689:18.

⁴³ MB OC 689:5. SA OC 689:2 disagrees, and would require that the individual hear Megillah again.

⁴⁴ BH to SA OC 689:2.

⁴⁵ MB OC 689:5.

⁴⁶ NG Purim 37:6.

⁴⁷ MB OC 689:8, against SA OC 689:2. SH OC 689:15-16 prohibits one woman reading for a large group of women, but seems to be slightly more lenient for a small group or for themselves. PH Zemanim 15:7 is lenient altogether.

⁴⁸ PH Zemanim 15:7.

⁴⁹ BH to SA OC 689:1.

⁵⁰ NG Purim 37:6.

⁵¹ MB OC 689:5.

⁵² MB OC 689:5.

⁵³ MB OC 689:19.

3. One fulfills their obligation even if they heard the Megillah from someone who reads Hebrew with a different pronunciation than them.⁵⁴
4. A blind person is required to hear the Megillah from others, but does not recite a Beracha over it.⁵⁵

Public Megillah Reading (Honouring the Public)

1. In public, one must stand while reading the Megillah.⁵⁶
 - a. It would also be permitted to lean against an object, which is considered like standing for this rule.⁵⁷
 - b. When reading for an individual, the reader may sit if they wish.⁵⁸
2. In any circumstance, the blessings should be recited standing.⁵⁹ Even if the blessing is being recited by someone else on behalf of an individual, both parties must stand.⁶⁰
3. The reader must receive verbal instruction to read before they begin to read.⁶¹
 - a. This rule does not apply if they have been appointed by the community, or are otherwise the regular Megillah readers.⁶²
4. The reader at a public reading, even at night, should wear a Tallit.⁶³

Multiple Readers

1. If one hears a number of people reading the Megillah together, they have fulfilled their obligation.⁶⁴
 - a. However, this applies only if the voices are synchronized and one clear reading is heard.⁶⁵
2. If there is a need to do so, the Megillah may be divided among many readers, provided that they are all present for the blessings and the entire reading.⁶⁶

General Rules of “Reading” the Megillah

1. The entire Megillah must be read.⁶⁷
2. If one read more than half of the Megillah from memory, they have not fulfilled their obligation.⁶⁸
 - a. If one looked at the words before pronouncing them, and then read them while looking up, it is considered to be read from memory.⁶⁹
3. If one is reading the words with the correct Nekudot and cantillation to prompt the Ba'al Koreh, they should not read half or more of the Megillah aloud, and if they do, the listeners have not fulfilled their obligation.⁷⁰
4. Lechatchila, one should hear the Megillah read entirely from a Kosher text (see below), but in the event that the Megillah was missing words, but still kosher and the reader read them by heart, one still fulfills their obligation by hearing this reading (Bedieved).⁷¹

⁵⁴ NG Purim 37:8, such as one who reads with an Israeli pronunciation reading for another individual with a Ashkenazic pronunciation.

⁵⁵ NG Purim 33:10.

⁵⁶ SA OC 690:1.

⁵⁷ MB OC 690:2, BH to SA OC 690:1. NG Purim 38:4 adds that if the reader is not able to stand for the entire reading, if the community is willing to waive this requirement, it would be permitted to read sitting.

⁵⁸ SA OC 690:1.

⁵⁹ MB OC 690:1.

⁶⁰ Sha'ar Haztiyun OC 690:1.

⁶¹ Rema OC 690:1.

⁶² MB OC 690:3

⁶³ NG Purim 38:1.

⁶⁴ SA OC 690:2.

⁶⁵ MB OC 690:4.

⁶⁶ NG Purim 38:9.

⁶⁷ Sa OC 690:3.

⁶⁸ SA OC 690:7, SA OC 690:3.

⁶⁹ NG Purim 45:3, as the reader must be looking at the words while he reads them.

⁷⁰ NG Purim 45:4.

⁷¹ SA OC 690:3, MB OC 690:7.

- a. Therefore, the verses which the community reads aloud should be repeated by the reader from a Kosher Megillah,⁷² and one should make sure to focus on the reader's repetition of those verses.⁷³
5. If one read the first or last sections from memory out of a Kosher Megillah, one would fulfill their obligation Bedieved.⁷⁴

Defining a Kosher Megillah

1. If the Megillah is missing⁷⁵ words, even up to half of the words in it, it is considered Kosher, and if one reads from such a Megillah, they have fulfilled their obligation, but this should not be read from Lechatchila.⁷⁶
 - a. If there are no other Megillahs available, one may (and should) read from a Megillah missing some words.⁷⁷
2. If the Megillah lacked the opening or concluding sections⁷⁸, or an "entire section" in the middle of the text, it is considered non-Kosher and one does not fulfill their obligation in reading from such a Megillah, even if they read the lacking portion(s) from memory.⁷⁹

Pausing During Megillah

1. Lechatchila, one should not pause⁸⁰ during the Megillah reading, even if they don't speak.⁸¹
 - a. However, the Ba'al Koreh may wash their mouth out during the reading if they need to do so in order to continue.⁸²
2. If one paused during the Megillah, even for an extremely long length of time, but then continued to read it and concluded it, they have fulfilled their obligation.⁸³
 - a. If the pause was caused by an "ones" or unavoidable occurrence, if the pause was the length that a reader could have conceivably finished the entire Megillah from start to finish, they must repeat the entire Megillah, but without reciting the Beracha at the beginning.⁸⁴
3. If one talked during a pause in the Megillah, they should be rebuked.⁸⁵
4. If the reader suspects that it will be absolutely necessary to drink water during the Megillah reading (i.e. they will not be able to read further without it), they should announce to those present that they may be forced to do so, recite the blessing over the water prior to beginning the reading of the Megillah, and if they need to drink, they may stop and drink during the reading.⁸⁶

Reading Out of Order

1. If one read verses (or paragraphs)⁸⁷ of the Megillah out of order, they have not fulfilled their obligation.⁸⁸

⁷² Rema OC 690:4.

⁷³ MB OC 690:15.

⁷⁴ BH to SA OC 690:3.

⁷⁵ BH to SA OC 690:3 includes words which have cuts in the letters in this category, even if they may technically be readable.

⁷⁶ SA OC 690:3.

⁷⁷ MB OC 690:8.

⁷⁸ MB OC 690:11 defines this as one passuk. SH OC 690:10 adds that if the Megillah is missing some words in the first or last verse, one should not be stringent.

⁷⁹ Rema OC 690:3, MB OC 690:6.

⁸⁰ NG Purim 42:8 adds that one should not leave, even if they themselves have already fulfilled their obligation.

⁸¹ SH OC 690:18.

⁸² NG Purim 42, footnote 3.

⁸³ SA OC 690:5.

⁸⁴ MB OC 690:18

⁸⁵ Rema OC 690:5.

⁸⁶ Rabbi Eliezer Melamed, author of Peninei Halacha, at <https://www.yeshiva.org.il/ask/18132>.

⁸⁷ MB OC 690:21.

⁸⁸ SA OC 690:6.

2. In order to do so, they must restart from the point that they first went out of order.⁸⁹

Not Understanding

1. Even if one does not understand what the words of the Megillah mean, they still fulfill their obligation by hearing the Megillah in “Lashon Hakodesh”.⁹⁰

Missing Words of the Megillah

1. If a listener missed even one word of the Megillah, they did not fulfill their obligation.⁹¹
 - a. A reader should be especially careful to reread words that may have been missed due to loud banging around Haman’s name (especially the word “Haman”).⁹²
2. If after the reading finished and one had “Hesech Hada’at”, and then they realized that they had missed a word, they must repeat the reading of the full Megillah with the blessings.⁹³
3. If one is unsure if they heard a particular word, if it is the daytime reading, they must read the Megillah again, but if it is the nighttime reading, they do not need to repeat it.⁹⁴
4. If one was not paying specific attention, but still heard the word, they have fulfilled their obligation, but if they were so focused on something else that they don’t even know if they heard the words altogether, they have not fulfilled their obligation.⁹⁵
5. If one can hear the Megillah reader properly, and there is no concern that they will miss words, they should not read along with the reader if they do not have a Kosher Megillah.⁹⁶
 - a. If they have a Kosher Megillah, they should read along quietly.⁹⁷
 - i. They should also make sure not to disturb others, and if they are reading loud enough that another individual may hear, they should have in mind to be Motzi anyone who hears the Megillah from them.⁹⁸
 - b. If one misses hearing certain words from the reader, they should read it quickly from a Chumash or non-Kosher Megillah.⁹⁹
6. The reader should take care at the beginning of the Megillah, as well as upon resumption after the banging for Haman, to wait until it is silent or to read particularly loudly.¹⁰⁰

Cantillation of the Megillah

1. Lechatchila, one must read the Megillah with the proper cantillation, but if there is no one present who is able to read it in that fashion, it may be read without the cantillation.¹⁰¹
 - a. The reader must prepare the Megillah reading beforehand.¹⁰²

⁸⁹ SA OC 690:6.

⁹⁰ SA OC 690:8.

⁹¹ MB OC 690:5, 690:19, NG Purim 44:1-2.

⁹² NG Purim 44:1-2.

⁹³ NG Purim 44:13.

⁹⁴ NG Purim 44:14. In NG Purim 44:15, he notes that if the listener is unsure if the reader made a mistake, they need not reread the Megillah.

⁹⁵ NG Purim 44:10-11, 13, who recommends following along from a text.

⁹⁶ SA OC 690:4, MB OC 690:13

⁹⁷ MB OC 690:26.

⁹⁸ SH OC 690:11.

⁹⁹ MB OC 690:19, 26, 60. It seems from MB there that one may even do this if they suspect that they will miss words coming up; therefore, he suggests that during the banging at Haman’s name, people read a few words or verses ahead from their chumash.

¹⁰⁰ NG Purim 38:6.

¹⁰¹ PH Zemanim 15:11.

¹⁰² NG Purim 38:2.

Miscellaneous Laws of Hearing the Megillah

1. If one read the Megillah for themselves, it is better for them to read it loud enough that they themselves hear it, but if not, they have still fulfilled their obligation Bedieved.¹⁰³
2. If there is absolutely no other option to hear Megillah, one may fulfill their obligation to hear Megillah by hearing it on a live broadcast, telephone, microphone¹⁰⁴, or similar.¹⁰⁵
3. If one is hard of hearing, but is certain that they would be able to hear properly without hearing aids by standing near the reader, then they should endeavour to do so; otherwise, they may listen through a hearing aid.¹⁰⁶

Pauses and Disruptions During the Megillah

1. The reader is permitted to talk during a pause in the Megillah reading, provided it is Purim-related.¹⁰⁷
2. If one read the Megillah while dozing off (but still read every word) they have fulfilled their obligation.¹⁰⁸
 - a. One who heard such a Megillah reading has also fulfilled their obligation, provided they heard every word.¹⁰⁹
 - b. If one heard the Megillah while dozing off, they have not fulfilled their obligation.¹¹⁰
3. One should pause between each paragraph.¹¹¹
4. Between each verse in the Megillah, one should not stop more than a breath.¹¹²

Focus on Exempting Others

1. The individual reading the Megillah must have in mind that the others listening to them are fulfilling their obligation to read Megillah, and the listener must have in mind that they are fulfilling their obligation through this reading.¹¹³
 - a. However, if the reader is appointed by the community to read the Megillah (in Shul), we can assume that they automatically have everyone in the room in mind.¹¹⁴
 - b. If a listener is present in the room where a public reading is taking place, they are considered to automatically focus on fulfilling their obligation, and do not need to expressly focus on that.¹¹⁵
2. They must have this in mind at the beginning of the reading, but do not need to focus on this beyond that point.¹¹⁶
 - a. If one did not have this in mind at the beginning of the reading (i.e. during the reading of the first verse), even if they subsequently have this in mind, the listeners have not fulfilled their obligations.¹¹⁷
 - b. If one forgot to focus on this, they should reread the Megillah from the start, but not repeat the blessings.¹¹⁸

¹⁰³ NG Purim 41:1.

¹⁰⁴ NG Purim 41:4 writes that if the individual is close enough to the reader that they would be able to hear the reading without the reader using a microphone, they will have fulfilled their obligation, although it is inappropriate to do so.

¹⁰⁵ PH Zemanim 15:11. NG Purim 41:3-4 writes that not only does one not fulfill their obligation by hearing such a reading, but that they should not answer Amen to the blessings.

¹⁰⁶ PH Zemanim 15:11.

¹⁰⁷ SA OC 690:13, MB OC 690:47. SH OC 690:43 writes explicitly that this is permitted and not considered a break or disruption in any way.

¹⁰⁸ SA OC 690:12.

¹⁰⁹ MB OC 690:40.

¹¹⁰ SA OC 690:12, MB OC 690:41.

¹¹¹ NG Purim 46:8.

¹¹² MB OC 690:52, SH OC 690:57.

¹¹³ SA OC 690:14.

¹¹⁴ SA OC 690:14.

¹¹⁵ MB OC 690:49.

¹¹⁶ MB OC 690:40. MB OC 690:48 and SH OC 690:39 write that one should have in mind before they begin reading.

¹¹⁷ MB OC 690:42.

¹¹⁸ NG Purim 43:4.

Errors in the Text and Reading

1. If the reader did not read a single word, or if the listener missed a word, they have not fulfilled their obligations.¹¹⁹
 - a. If the Megillah itself had a mistaken word in it, it is still considered kosher, in line with the laws clarified earlier.¹²⁰
2. If the Megillah has any of the Nekudot, Trop, or Berachot written inside it, it is only Kosher Bedieved, but if it is the only one available, it may be used with a Beracha Lechatchila.¹²¹
3. If the reader made a reading mistake that did not change the meaning of the word, one still fulfills their obligation (and the reader does not need to be corrected).¹²²
4. If the reader made a mistake that does change the meaning of a word, they must return to that error and read from there until the end.¹²³

Megillah Reading Customs – Ten Sons of Haman

1. Lechatchila, one should read the ten sons of Haman and the following word “Aseret” in one breath.¹²⁴
 - a. Others prefer that one begin from the preceding words “Chamesh Meot Ish”, and read until “Aseret”.¹²⁵
 - b. If one estimates that they will be able to hold their breath to follow the more lenient opinion (the 10 sons of Haman and the word “Aseret”), but not long enough to fulfill the stringent opinion, they should fulfill the more lenient opinion.¹²⁶
2. However, Bedieved, if one did not read all of the sons of Haman in one breath (even if they paused for the length of time in which they could read the entire Megillah)¹²⁷, they have still fulfilled their obligation.¹²⁸
3. The community should not recite the ten sons of Haman aloud.¹²⁹
4. The reader should be careful to read each “Ve’et” from the proper line.¹³⁰
 - a. If one believes that if he reads the 10 sons (as above) in one breath, they will read words by heart, they should not attempt to read it all in one breath.¹³¹

Megillah Reading Customs – Folding Like a Letter

1. The reader should spread their Megillah out like a letter.¹³²
 - a. This means that they should unroll it entirely, and fold it over itself so that it does not droop down off a surface.¹³³
 - b. One should fold it over before beginning to recite the blessings.¹³⁴
 - c. The folding should include the portions that have not yet been read.¹³⁵
 - d. Some have the custom to fold it into three sections.¹³⁶

¹¹⁹ MB OC 690:48.

¹²⁰ PH Zemanim 15, footnote 11.

¹²¹ PH Zemanim 15, footnote 11, NG Purim 38:5 seems to allow writing in the Trop if the reader does not know them.

¹²² SA OC 690:14, BH to OC 690:14.

¹²³ SA OC 690:14, MB OC 690:51, BH to OC 690:14.

¹²⁴ SA OC 690:15.

¹²⁵ Rema OC 690:15. MB OC 690:54.

¹²⁶ MB OC 690:54.

¹²⁷ MB OC 690:53.

¹²⁸ Rema OC 690:15.

¹²⁹ MB OC 690:52.

¹³⁰ NG Purim 38:7, 46:13.

¹³¹ NG Purim 46:5.

¹³² SA OC 690:17.

¹³³ MB OC 690:56.

¹³⁴ MB OC 690:56.

¹³⁵ SH OC 690:51.

¹³⁶ NG Purim 40:1.

- e. Those listening to the Megillah, even if they have their own Megillot, do not need to do this.¹³⁷
2. One should roll up their Megillah before reciting the blessing after the Megillah.¹³⁸
 - a. Even if one started the blessing, so long as they did not recite Hashem's name, they should stop and roll up their Megillah if that was not done previously.¹³⁹

Assorted Megillah Reading Customs

1. When the reader reads the words "Balaila Hahu", they should raise their voice.¹⁴⁰
2. Some have the custom to read the "four verses of redemption" (Esther 2:5, 8:15, 8:16, 10:3) aloud, before the reader rereads them.¹⁴¹
3. Some have the custom to make noise when Haman's name¹⁴² is read, and one should not cancel this custom.¹⁴³
 - a. However, one should not recite the words "Shem Reshaim Yirkav" (or, seemingly, any other words) during this pause.¹⁴⁴

Related Purim Customs

1. Some have the custom to write the name of Haman or draw an image of him on materials and to hit them against each other to erase his name.¹⁴⁵
2. One is required to recite "cursed is Haman", "blessed is Mordechai", "cursed is Zeresh", "blessed is Esther", "cursed are the Goyim", "blessed are the Jews", and "and also Charvonah is remembered for good".¹⁴⁶

The Importance of Reading with a Minyan

1. One needs to search for a minyan to read Megillah in order to read it (even on its correct day, such as the 14th of Adar for unwalled cities), but if they cannot find one, they may read it without.¹⁴⁷
 - a. This reading is with a Beracha.¹⁴⁸
 - b. It is not necessary to leave one's city to assemble a minyan for Megillah reading.¹⁴⁹
 - c. If this individual simply missed the public reading, they do not need to search for a minyan.¹⁵⁰
2. If one cannot assemble a minyan, it is preferable to at least assemble five people.¹⁵¹
3. As mentioned elsewhere, there is still a requirement to hear the Megillah in as large a group as possible.¹⁵²
4. If the 15th of Adar coincided with Shabbat, and residents of a walled city are reading the Megillah beforehand, they must gather a minyan, and if not, they may not recite the blessing.¹⁵³

¹³⁷ MB OC 690:55, see also SH OC 690:50. In regards to one reading it for another individual, NG Purim 40:3 cites both views.

¹³⁸ SA OC 690:17, MB OC 690:57.

¹³⁹ MB OC 690:57.

¹⁴⁰ MB OC 690:52.

¹⁴¹ Rema OC 690:17.

¹⁴² Some have this custom only during certain mentions of Haman, see NG Purim 56:9.

¹⁴³ Rema OC 690:17. However, various sources in Mishnah Berurah seem to indicate disapproval of this custom, and opening of the possibility to cancel it; see MB OC 690:59, 60, SH OC 690:57, BH to SA OC 690:17.

¹⁴⁴ SH OC 690:57.

¹⁴⁵ Rema OC 690:17.

¹⁴⁶ SA OC 690:16.

¹⁴⁷ SA OC 690:18.

¹⁴⁸ Rema OC 690:18, and MB OC 690:65.

¹⁴⁹ NG Purim 36:3, who suggests at the very least, assembling a minyan of women and children if possible.

¹⁵⁰ Rema OC 690:18, However, MB OC 690:64 disagrees.

¹⁵¹ NG Purim 36:4.

¹⁵² MB OC 690:62, BH to SA OC 690:18.

¹⁵³ MB OC 690:61, SA OC 688:6.

Who Counts Towards a Minyan for Megillah Reading

1. It is questionable if women count towards a minyan for Megillah reading.¹⁵⁴
2. Children under Bar and Bat Mitzvah do not count towards a minyan for Megillah reading.¹⁵⁵

Reading Megillah in Other Languages

1. Despite earlier sources discussing this, we do not read the Megillah in languages other than Hebrew.¹⁵⁶

Blessings on Megillah – General Rules

1. One who reads the Megillah should recite the following three blessings before reading the Megillah: “Al Mikra Megillah”, “She’asa Nissim” and “Shehecheyanu”.¹⁵⁷
 - a. A woman (or a man reading the Megillah for a woman) should recite the blessing of “Lishmoa Megillah”.¹⁵⁸
2. Listeners should not respond “Baruch Hu Uvaruch Shemo”, however, if they did, the Beracha is still valid.¹⁵⁹
3. One should stand during the recitation of the Berachot, even if they are just listening.¹⁶⁰
4. Even if one recited no blessings, they have still fulfilled their obligation to read the Megillah.¹⁶¹

Blessings on Megillah – Shehecheyanu

1. Sephardic Jews tend to recite “Shehecheyanu” only at night, whereas Ashkenazic Jews tend to repeat it during the day.¹⁶²
2. When (and if) one recites “Shehecheyanu” during the day, they should intend it to also cover the other mitzvot of the day (Mishloach Manot, Matanot Laevyonim and Seudat Purim).¹⁶³

Blessings on Megillah – Special Cases

1. If one arrived late to the reading, and the reader had already begun to recite the blessings, if the individual can quickly recite them all before the actual reading starts, that is preferable, but if they cannot, they should have in mind that they are fulfilling their obligation even without the Berachot, and wait until a pause later in the Megillah (“Bein Haperakim”, see below) when they can recite the Berachot. Alternatively, if they have a Kosher Megillah and are comfortable reading by themselves to catch up, they may recite the blessings and then read quickly to catch up.¹⁶⁴
2. If an Ashkenazi is praying in a Sephardic synagogue on Purim morning (when the Sephardic communities do not recite “Shehecheyanu”), the Ashkenazi should recite all three blessings quietly to themselves before the reading begins.¹⁶⁵

¹⁵⁴ Rema OC 690:18, MB OC 690:63.

¹⁵⁵ MB OC 690:63, MB OC 690:65, SH OC 690:61.

¹⁵⁶ PH Zemanim 15:9.

¹⁵⁷ SA OC 692:1.

¹⁵⁸ Rema OC 689:2, MB OC 692:11. MB OC 689:8 has the text “Lishmoa Mikra Megillah”, and SA OC 689:2 would imply that the regular blessing “Al Mikra Megillah” is recited, as would SH OC 689:16. PH Zemanim 15:7 also rules that she recites “Al Mikra Megillah”.

¹⁵⁹ NG Purim 39:6.

¹⁶⁰ NG Purim 39:8.

¹⁶¹ SA OC 692:1, MB OC 692:6.

¹⁶² PH Zemanim 15:12. SA OC 692:1 rules that it should not be recited, Rema OC 692:1 disagrees, and MB OC 692:2 explains the disagreement.

¹⁶³ PH Zemanim 15:12, MB OC 692:1. He adds that one should let the reader (and presumably listeners) know this in advance so that they can all focus on it.

¹⁶⁴ NG Purim 39:13-14.

¹⁶⁵ NG Purim 39:15.

3. If one does not have a Megillah to read from at all, there is a great discussion as to which of these Berachot may be recited and when (see footnote).¹⁶⁶
4. If during the reading of the Megillah, one remembered that they forgot (any of) the opening blessings, they should be recited “Bein Haperakim”.¹⁶⁷
 - a. The definition of “Bein Haperakim” is the source of a debate; however, one may certainly pause to recite the blessings before reading Esther 2:5 or 6:1.¹⁶⁸

Blessings on the Megillah – Who Recites Them?

1. It is permitted for one individual to recite (any of) the blessings for all present, and for another person to read the Megillah.¹⁶⁹
2. Even an individual reading the Megillah recites these blessings.¹⁷⁰

Blessings on the Megillah – The Concluding Blessing

1. Following the Megillah reading, one should recite the blessing of “Harav Et Riveinu” (see footnote).¹⁷¹
 - a. The correct text of the final blessing does not include the word “HaE-l” in it.¹⁷²

Customs Following Megillah Reading

1. Some have the custom to recite “Asher Heini” after the nighttime reading.¹⁷³
2. One must recite “Shoshanat Yaakov” after the Megillah reading, even without a minyan.¹⁷⁴

Pauses and Interruptions During Megillah Reading

1. One should not talk during the Megillah reading.¹⁷⁵
 - a. It is even prohibited to speak about Torah.¹⁷⁶
2. If the reader talked, the Megillah reading is still valid, but if the listener talked and didn’t hear at least one of the words of the Megillah, they have not fulfilled their obligation.¹⁷⁷
3. It is also prohibited to speak between the Megillah and the blessings (both before and after).¹⁷⁸

¹⁶⁶ See MB OC 692:1 and BH to SA OC 692:1, who discuss the issue and don’t offer a conclusive halachic decision, although they seem to lean towards reciting a Shehecheyanu (and possibly She’asah Nissim) if the individual heard no reading whatsoever. However, they write clearly that it should not be recited if the individual heard one at the night reading, but is only unable to hear the day reading.

¹⁶⁷ MB OC 692:6, see NG Purim 39:2 as well.

¹⁶⁸ Based on SH OC 692:11.

¹⁶⁹ Rema OC 692:1, MB OC 692:3, but see SH OC 692:6 and NG Purim 39:12 who prefer that the reader recite the Berachot before the reading. NG Purim 39:11 adds that if the reader has already fulfilled their own personal obligation, and they are reading for a group of less than 10 individuals, it is preferable that each individual recites the blessings, and if there are more than 10, one person should recite the blessings on behalf of all of the others.

¹⁷⁰ MB OC 692:8.

¹⁷¹ SA OC 692:1 and MB OC 692:4, but Rema OC 692:1 notes that this blessing is only recited with G-d’s name when there is a minyan present. BH to SA OC 692:1 cites sources supporting both opinions, but rules in accordance with Rema. PH Zemanim 15:2 writes that a minyan of women may also recite this blessing. NG Purim 47:5 suggests that without a minyan, it be recited without reading G-d’s name, and thinking of it. NG Purim 47:6 adds that those who have already heard the Megillah do not count for a minyan for this purpose.

¹⁷² MB OC 692:5.

¹⁷³ Rema OC 692:1.

¹⁷⁴ NG Purim 47:8.

¹⁷⁵ SA OC 692:2, MB OC 692:9 adds that there are certain circumstances under which it would be permitted for one to interrupt, akin to during the reading of Shema in SA OC 66.

¹⁷⁶ MB OC 692:9.

¹⁷⁷ MB OC 692:9.

¹⁷⁸ MB OC 692:9.

- a. If one spoke between the initial Berachot and the Megillah, they have “lost the Beracha”.¹⁷⁹ If one spoke after the Megillah before the final Berachot, it seems that they may still recite the Beracha.¹⁸⁰

Reading After one has Already Fulfilled Their Obligation

1. Even after one has already fulfilled their obligation, they may still read the Megillah for and exempt others.¹⁸¹
2. Either person may recite the blessings, although some are stringent to prefer that the individual fulfilling their obligation with this reading recite them.¹⁸²
3. One who reads for others should themselves fulfill their obligation with a public reading, even if that means that when they read for other individuals, they should have in mind not to fulfill their own obligation.¹⁸³

Other Miscellaneous Laws

1. If the reader was unable to continue reading, another reader may begin from the point at which the first reader stopped.¹⁸⁴
2. If there is no Kosher Megillah, it is still appropriate to read from a non-Kosher one or a printed Megillah, but without a Beracha.¹⁸⁵
3. One should fold their Megillah before the initial blessings are recited to avoid an unnecessary pause before/during the reading.¹⁸⁶
4. If one suspects that an ill person will not be able to listen to the entire Megillah, they should not recite a Beracha just for them.¹⁸⁷

Laws Relating to the Actual Megillah Scroll

1. A Megillah is not Muktzah.¹⁸⁸
2. One should wash their hands before handling a Megillah directly.¹⁸⁹
 - a. One need not be stringent to avoid touching a Megillah during a meal.¹⁹⁰
3. One must dispose of a Megillat Esther properly by burying it.¹⁹¹
4. If one printed a Megillat Esther on Klaf (or if it otherwise looks real), one must bury it and make sure that others do not accidentally use it.¹⁹²
5. If one accidentally dropped a Megillah on the floor, they need not fast.¹⁹³
6. If a Megillah was burnt due to negligence by its owner, they owner should fast.¹⁹⁴
7. One should not engage in marital relations in a room in which a Megillah is currently situated.¹⁹⁵

¹⁷⁹ MB OC 692:9.

¹⁸⁰ SH OC 692:12, NG Purim 47:3 suggests to hear it from another individual who did not speak.

¹⁸¹ SA OC 692:3.

¹⁸² MB OC 692:10.

¹⁸³ MB OC 692:11.

¹⁸⁴ MB OC 692:2.

¹⁸⁵ PH Zemanim 15, footnote 11, SA OC 691:10 and MB OC 691:27.

¹⁸⁶ NG Purim 39:9.

¹⁸⁷ NG Purim 39:10.

¹⁸⁸ SA OC 308:4, MB OC 308:22, MB OC 688:18.

¹⁸⁹ Rema OC 147:1, MB OC 147:4.

¹⁹⁰ NG Purim 30:5.

¹⁹¹ MB OC 154:22.

¹⁹² NG Purim 30:10.

¹⁹³ NG Purim 30:6.

¹⁹⁴ NG Purim 30:7.

¹⁹⁵ NG Purim 30:8, however, if it is necessary, he adds that one may make a 10-tefach tall partition in front of the Megillah, which will make it considered to be in another room.

Borrowing/Stealing a Megillah

1. If a Megillah is owned by a group, and one member takes it for themselves and is not returning it, they may recite the blessings over the reading, which fulfills their obligation (although it is obviously inappropriate to do so).¹⁹⁶
2. If one read from a stolen Megillah, they have fulfilled their obligation, but it is inappropriate to recite the blessings over it.¹⁹⁷
3. One may not borrow another individual's Megillah without permission unless they are certain that the person will not mind, and that they use it in the same building.¹⁹⁸

Customs and FAQ Relating to the Daytime Reading

1. One should keep their tefillin on during the daytime Megillah reading.¹⁹⁹
2. If one arrives at shul in time for Megillah reading, but if they listen to the Megillah at that point, will miss the time to recite Shema, they should recite Shema even if it means they will have to hear the Megillah later without a minyan.²⁰⁰
3. If one arrived at shul in time for Megillah reading, and has not yet recited Birchot Hatorah, if there is not enough time to recite the Birchot Hatorah before hearing Megillah, they should hear Megillah and recite them afterwards.²⁰¹

If There is no Kosher Megillah

1. If one does not have a Kosher Megillah available for reading, they should:
 - recite Shehecheyanu without G-d's name²⁰²
 - recite Hallel without a blessing²⁰³
 - read from the non-Kosher Megillah without reciting Berachot.²⁰⁴
2. Additionally, if a Kosher Megillah becomes available on the 15th of Adar, they should read it then without reciting the Berachot.²⁰⁵

¹⁹⁶ NG Purim 30:11.

¹⁹⁷ NG Purim 30:11.

¹⁹⁸ NG Purim 30:12.

¹⁹⁹ NG Purim 51:1. NG Purim 51:4 adds that some have the custom to touch their tefillin when the word "viykar" is recited.

²⁰⁰ NG Purim 51:7.

²⁰¹ NG Purim 51:6.

²⁰² NG Purim 52:1.

²⁰³ NG Purim 52:2, he adds that this should be done both at night and during the day.

²⁰⁴ NG Purim 52:3.

²⁰⁵ NG Purim 52:4.