

מגילה כא

ספרית העומר is said at night, although if a person forgot to make the ברכה at night, as long as he counts again the following day before שקיעה, he may continue counting with a ברכה.

פרק הקורא למפרע

מגילת אסתר can be read by a יחיד while sitting, but if it is read for the צבור, the בעל קורא must stand (the צבור may sit; the ביאור הלכה writes that the בעל קורא may lean while standing--unlike most מצות for which it is אסור to lean if the מצוה requires standing).

On Monday morning, Thursday morning, and שבת מנחה, the תורה is read with three עליות (the first עליה of upcoming week's פרשה, unless the first עליה is not ten פסוקים). On חול המועד and ראש חודש, there are four עליות.

On יום טוב there are five עליות, six יום כיפור, and שבת seven. There is also a מפטיר on these days.

The בעל קורא for קריאת התורה must read standing up. The צבור may sit, though there is a greater כבוד התורה for the צבור to stand.

Three ברכות are said before the reading of מגילה (לקרא את) and one afterwards, both by night and by day. The שלחן ערוך holds that the ברכה of שהחיינו is not said by day. The מחבר רמ"א disagrees with the מחבר, but we are

נוהג to have in mind that the שהחיינו said by day is also on the מצות היום.

ברכות are made on מצות before their performance, for example, the ברכות are made before lighting the מנורה on חנוכה, and the ברכה on תפילין is made before tightening the תפילין. Two notable exceptions are washing hands and lighting שבת candles.

Regarding the washing hands, there is a concern that perhaps the hands are not yet clean (this relates to washing hands for bread; before washing hands upon waking up, the hands are certainly not clean). Furthermore, Tosfos brings down that drying hands is part of the מצוה and the ברכה is made before drying.

Regarding lighting candles, once the woman makes the ברכה she has already accepted שבת, making it אסור for her to light candles. Therefore she lights the candles, makes the ברכה, and covers her eyes, and after she uncovers them, it is like she is first seeing the candles after the ברכה. In a case where there is no woman present (either she is away, or there is no woman of the house), then a man must light, and should first make the ברכה, and then light the candles, as men do not accept שבת upon making the ברכה.

A minimum of ten פסוקים must be read, with each עליה a minimum of three being read. The only exception is פורים morning when only nine פסוקים are read (ויבא עמלק at the end of פרשת בשלח). The תלמוד ירושלמי מסכת מגילה writes that since עמלק tried to “cut off” כלל ישראל, we degrade עמלק by not giving them the full quota of פסוקים.

The עולה to the תורה while saying the ברכה should not look directly into the תורה (lest one think that the ברכות are written in the תורה). Some have the מנהג to turn their head to the side, some leave the תורה open, some close it.