



When Seudat Purim Falls on a Friday

Halakhah Supplement

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R. Ethan Tucker, Rosh Yeshiva

When Purim falls on a Friday, is it possible to schedule the *seudah* (festive meal) such that it is eaten very close to Shabbat, thus making it easier for people who work on Purim to fulfill the obligation of the *seudah*?

The earliest Rabbinic sources feature a debate over whether one can, on any week of the year, eat in the hours leading up to Shabbat, though formal legal consensus quickly forms around the lenient view.¹ There is also general consensus that one may begin eating before Shabbat and continue through the onset of Shabbat, provided that, by sunset, one pauses to make *kiddush* and only then continues with one's meal.² However, other sources frown on scheduling even an occasional major meal for Friday afternoon, for several possible reasons:

1. This deprives one of a proper appetite on Shabbat (possibly only a concern for a Friday afternoon meal that ends *before* Shabbat, as opposed to one that carried over into Shabbat);

¹ There is a debate in Tosefta Berakhot 5:1; Talmud Bavli Pesachim 100a shows that Amoraim in the end rejected the stringent opinion.

² This is Shmuel's middle-ground position on Pesachim 100a.



2. This deprives one of time to prepare adequately for Shabbat.³

These concerns led most Ashkenazi authorities to hold that the Purim *seudah* should be held in the morning when Purim fell on Friday.⁴ But many hold that the above concerns do not apply in the context of a *seudat mitzvah*, where the meal has its own religious value (as in the case of a Purim *seudah*). Indeed, many Jewish communities throughout history and until today had a regular practice, whenever Purim fell on Friday, to begin the meal in the late afternoon and have it continue into Shabbat.⁵

Therefore, it is a well-attested and perfectly legitimate practice to begin the Purim *seudah* late in the afternoon and have it continue into Shabbat. Even those who normally have the practice to have the *seudah* in the morning in these situations would be justified in changing their practice in order to accommodate people who would otherwise not fulfill this *mitzvah*.

One should make sure to have made all necessary preparations for Shabbat in advance and to be sure to remember to pray Minḥah before the meal.

The meal should be begun early enough so that a significant portion of it can be eaten before sunset.

Once sunset arrives, one should temporarily stop eating and drinking. The two loaves to be used for Shabbat should be brought out if they are not already on the table and be covered. *Kiddush* should then be made over a full cup of wine. If wine was already consumed earlier in the meal, בורא פרי הגפן should *not* be said as part of *kiddush* and one begins directly with אשר קדשנו במצוותיו ורצה בנו. Assuming bread was eaten earlier, hands

³ This emerges from the discussion on Gittin 38b and the split in the Rishonim as to how to interpret it. Rashi and Rambam follow option #1; Rabbeinu Hananel follows option #2.

⁴ This is the position of the Rema, based on Sefer Ha-Minhagim of R. Yitzḥak Tirna (15th century, Austria).

⁵ E.g. the Meiri cites a longstanding Provençal custom to this effect in Beit Ha-Beḥirah Ketubot 57b.



need not be washed again. The bread should be uncovered and then distributed to those present *without* saying המוציא.⁶ People can then resume eating. At the conclusion of the meal, ברכת המזון is recited *without* על הנסים and *with* רצה.⁷ Kabbalat Shabbat and Arvit then follow.

However, since this practice is today often advanced to aid those who work on Purim, it should be noted that it is preferable not to work on Purim, if at all possible. The Megillah itself describes Purim as a Yom Tov and several early sources actually speak of a ban on doing work. Over time, this more stringent take on Purim was stamped out by rabbinic leaders and popular practice, but voices still persisted frowning on those who treated Purim like a normal work day except for the practice of its distinctive *mitzvot*. This tension has persisted until the modern day; pressure to work only increased with the advent of the industrial revolution and its rigid work hours. One can fairly say that the equilibrium point for most Poskim is tolerance for those who work on Purim, combined with a strong preference for a religious culture that devotes the entire day towards its distinctive *mitzvot* and joyfulness more generally.

⁶ If bread was not eaten during the earlier meal, then hands should be washed and המוציא said.

⁷ Some advocate the inclusion of על הנסים as well.

