

A Tale of Two Cities? Shushan Purim in Modern-day Yerushalayim

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The holiday of Purim is unique inasmuch as halacha mandates that the date of its observance varies amongst different Jewish communities. The vast majority of Jews celebrate Purim on the 14th of Adar, while Jews living in cities surrounded by walls at the time of Yehoshua bin Nun observe the 15th of Adar, known as Shushan Purim. The Talmud establishes guidelines for determining when cities receive the latter designation.

In modern times, expansions of city limits have compelled Jewish legal authorities to formulate current applications of these guidelines in contemporary municipal settings. The present essay will attempt to outline the issues relevant to defining the boundaries of a walled city. The most prominent contemporary example of a region in question is modern-day Yerushalayim and its environs, as Chazal indicate that the city was surrounded by walls at the time of Yehoshua bin Nun. We will conclude by presenting Yerushalayim as a case study in understanding some of the practical applications of our discussion.

Historical Background of the Two Days of Purim

The institution of Purim and Shushan Purim as two distinct commemorations traces its roots to the narrative of Megillas Esther (Chapter 9). Haman initiated a royal proclamation calling upon subjects of Achashveirosh to attack the Jewish people on the 13th of Adar. Though Haman was executed prior to this date, the decree, issued under the auspices of the king, could not be rescinded. Instead, Achashveirosh proclaimed the right of the Jews to defend themselves, and to retaliate against their attackers.

When the 13th of Adar arrived, the Jewish people successfully defeated their enemies. The victory was decisive; in Shushan alone, five hundred anti-Jewish antagonists were killed, and Haman's ten sons were publicly hanged. Seventy-five thousand were killed throughout the rest of the kingdom on that single day of battle.

Outside of Shushan, the Jewish people observed the following day, the 14th of Adar, as a holiday of celebration after a miraculous national triumph. However, Mordechai and Esther requested of Achashveirosh that the Jews of Shushan be permitted to continue fighting their enemies on the 14th, as well. The king granted their wish, and another three hundred were killed. The Jews of Shushan rested on the following day, the 15th of Adar, rejoicing in appreciation of God's salvation.

The Megilla explains that the institution of the holidays of Purim and Shushan Purim reflects these two independent commemorations. Purim, the 14th of Adar, is designated as the day observed by most Jews around the world, as in the time of Mordechai and Esther. Shushan Purim, the 15th of Adar, is observed only by Jews living in walled cities. The purpose is to highlight the extended victory marked by the Jews of Shushan, also a walled city at the time. In practice, the date of the observance of Purim can thus vary in different localities, as it once did following the miraculous downfall of Haman almost 2,500 years ago.

Primary Definition of a Walled City

The Talmud (Megilla 2b) records a debate amongst the rabbis regarding the criterion used in defining when cities qualify as "*kerachim hamukafim choma*," cities surrounded by a wall, whose residents observe Purim on the 15th of Adar. The Mishna (2a) cites the opinion that it is based on whether it was walled at the time of Yehoshua bin Nun, while the Gemara quotes the opinion of R' Yehoshua ben Korcha who rules that the halacha requires the existence of a wall at the time of the Purim miracle.

The Talmud further explains that R' Yehoshua ben Korcha patterns the observance of Shushan Purim after the city of Shushan itself, for the primary miracle of Purim originally occurred within its boundaries. The Talmud Bavli attributes the Mishna's ruling to exegetical derivation of verses in the Torah and in Megillas Esther. However, the Talmud Yerushalmi (Megilla 1:1) offers a different rationale for associating Shushan Purim with the era of Yehoshua bin Nun:

R' Simon said in the name of R' Yehoshua ben Levi that the rabbis desired to pay respect to Eretz Yisroel, which lay in destruction during the inter-Temple era when the miracle of Purim occurred.

כרכים המוקפין חומה מימות יהושע בן נון קורין
בחמשה עשר, רבי סימון בשם רבי יהושע בן לוי,
חלקו כבוד לארץ ישראל שהיתה חריבה באותן
הימים ותלו אותה מימות יהושע בן נון.

By following the period of the conquest of Eretz Yisroel, the miracle of Purim was commemorated in the context of honor and tribute to Eretz Yisroel. The halacha follows the opinion of the Mishna, as codified in Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 688:1).

Once it is determined that a city was walled at the time of Yehoshua bin Nun, observance of Shushan Purim is not limited to the perimeter of the original walls. Areas adjoining the original boundaries can stretch the city's limits, as long as there is no interruption in the continuity of

residential structures. From the perspective of halacha, a gap in settlement less than approximately 141 Amos is insignificant and the residential development is still considered continuous. In this scenario, neighboring communities are annexed to the original city by virtue of their proximity, and residents will celebrate Purim on the 15th of Adar, as well.¹⁴⁰

This rule is derived from the laws of techum Shabbos that govern how far from one's city one may travel on Shabbos. For these laws, halacha first defines what constitutes the limits of a city, before calculating the extent one may travel beyond those limits. Regarding techum Shabbos, as well, bordering neighborhoods are annexed to a city when they are within 141 amos of each other. This principle is known as "*iburo shel ir*," the extension of municipal boundaries, as codified in Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 398:6).

While this is the prevailing opinion amongst poskim, there is a minority view that differentiates between the laws of Purim and those of techum Shabbos. Rav Yechiel Michel Tukachinsky¹⁴¹ refutes the comparison, asserting that the determination must not be the extent of the city, but the strict boundaries of the wall surrounding it. Therefore, *iburo shel ir* will not enlarge the actual size of a walled city as pertains to the laws of Purim.

Extended Definitions of a Walled City

There are instances in which all agree that the observance of Sushan Purim will take place outside the actual limits of a walled city. The Talmud (Megilla 2b) records a tradition that confers special status upon certain areas that surround a walled city:

R' Yehoshua ben Levi rules that any region adjacent to (samuch) or visible from (nireh) a walled city carries the status of a walled city and observes Shushan Purim. This rule is limited to the distance from Machmatan to Tiberia, which is a mil.

אמר רבי יהושע בן לוי כרך וכל
הסמוך לו וכל הנראה עמו נידון
כרך. עד כמה אמר רבי ירמיה
ואיתמא רבי חייא בר אבא כמחמתן
לטבריא מיל.

The Talmud indicates that this law is alluded to through a series of seemingly extraneous words in Megillas Esther (9:28).

Definition of Samuch

The above Talmudic passage limits the application of samuch to one mil, or 2,000 amos. Therefore, an adjacent neighborhood must be located within this proximity to a walled city for its inhabitants to observe Purim on the 15th of Adar. The aforementioned discussion of whether to include *iburo shel ir* in the classification of a walled city will have great impact on the application of samuch. According to many poskim, the mil will be calculated from the last point of residential development that is contiguous to the walled city. However, according to Rav

¹⁴⁰ See Chazon Ish, O.C. 151; Mikraei Kodesh, Purim 21.

¹⁴¹ Ir HaKodesh V'HaMikdash, vol. 3, pg. 383.

Tukachinsky, the 2,000 amos are measured from the walls of the city, or from where they once stood.¹⁴² No community beyond this point will celebrate Shushan Purim.

However, even amongst poskim who apply *iburo shel ir*, some believe that the mil is calculated from the original walls of the city, agreeing in part to Rav Tukachinsky. In their opinion, continuity extends the physical limits of the city, but does not change the point from where samuch is measured.¹⁴³ Nevertheless, according to all opinions, whatever ultimately qualifies as samuch need not be nireh, as well. A neighborhood situated in a valley or on a tall mountain adjacent to the city will follow the practice of the walled city, even if this neighborhood cannot be seen from the walled city itself.

Definition of Nireh

The concept of nireh is not clearly defined in earlier rabbinic literature. Therefore, Achronim attempt to identify what is considered visible by halachic standards.

Indeed, there are many mitzvos that require one to see an event or an object as a prerequisite to the fulfillment of these laws. For example, a Ba'al Koreh must see the text of the Torah scroll that he is reading from. A kohen who decides the impurity of tzara'as must see the blemish in question to determine its status. One who wishes to recite Kiddush Levana must see the new moon before saying the blessing. In all of these cases, poskim discuss whether one must see the item naturally, with only the naked eye, in order to perform such a mitzva. Perhaps the requirement of *re'iah*, seeing, is strictly defined according to one's natural ability to see, unassisted by external aids. If so, one who wears eyeglasses and is unable to see without them, would be unable to perform the mitzva.

In practice, poskim generally agree that eyeglasses are acceptable.¹⁴⁴ Rav Chaim Palagi¹⁴⁵ suggests a further innovation. If we are to accept the use of eyeglasses, perhaps what is visible through a telescope or binoculars is also considered visible in halacha. This could greatly expand the possibility of which areas observe the 15th of Adar under the rubric of nireh, by increasing the visible distance from a walled city. However, this approach is questionable. The rationale for accepting eyeglasses is as follows: for one who requires vision correction, wearing eyeglasses is deemed to be that individual's normal method of sight. As such, using eyeglasses to read from the Torah is not problematic, because it is still considered the natural mode of vision for one who routinely employs this instrument. However, to introduce a new tool that allows one to see much further than any human could see naturally may overstep the bounds of halachic *re'iah*.

Even if halacha limits nireh to the strength of the naked eye, what exactly must be seen is unclear. Suppose a neighborhood is indeed visible from a walled city. Depending on the

¹⁴² The current walls of the Old City were built by Suleiman the Magnificent of the Mamluk Empire in the late 16th century. Of concern to halacha would be either the walls present at the time of Yehoshua's conquest, or the walls present at the time of the Babylonian exile. See *Ir HaKodesh V'HaMikdash*, pg. 420.

¹⁴³ Chazon Ish, O.C. 153.

¹⁴⁴ *Shu"t Halachos Ketanos*, vol. 1, 99. See *Sharei Tshuva*, O.C. 426:1, *Darkei Tshuva*, Y.D. 1:193 ; See also *Kovetz Bais Aharon V'Yisrael*, vol 55, pg. 88.

¹⁴⁵ *Ruach Chaim*, O.C. 688:1.

topography or the size of the neighborhood, only part of it may be visible from the city. This scenario is quite relevant to the communities built upon the hilly terrain surrounding Yerushalayim. A neighborhood may be located on a hill just outside the city, yet only one side of the hill, facing the city, will be in sight from Yerushalayim. Perhaps the requirement of nireh only entails that part of the neighborhood be visible, allowing all of the inhabitants to follow the walled city. Alternatively, perhaps a strict definition of nireh must be applied: only those actually in view of the walled city may observe Shushan Purim, splitting the city accordingly.

Maharil (Rav Yehoshua Leib Diskin) struggles with this quandary.¹⁴⁶ Initially, Maharil views splitting the city as untenable. As proof, he cites the Talmud (Yevomos 14a), where Chazal derive from the verse in Devarim 14:1 that it is prohibited for a single community to be divided in its practice of Jewish law; there must be a unified approach to the fulfillment of halacha amongst its members. To conclude that some residents of a single neighborhood must observe Purim on the 14th and others on the 15th would be in violation of this law. Therefore, he writes, the entire community must celebrate on the same day. The Maharil proposes that the neighborhood should follow the principle of “rov.” If the majority of the community is visible from the walled city, the minority will act accordingly, and visa-versa.

Ultimately, Maharil rejects this approach, as well, in favor of considering the entire neighborhood as nireh. However, the Meiri (Megilla 2b) indicates otherwise, as he holds that a village qualifies as nireh only when the entire region is visible from the walled city.¹⁴⁷

Limitations of Mil

Even when a neighboring area is certainly visible from a walled city, the parameters of nireh are not clearly defined. In particular, Rishonim debate whether Chazal intend the 2,000 amos limitation to apply to areas that are nireh, as well. According to Rashi, Rashba, and others, this provision pertains only to the samuch criterion, as explained above. However, a suburb that is nireh, visible from the city, will celebrate the 15th of Adar, even if it is beyond one mil. However, the Rambam appears to take a different approach.

Anything that is close to or visible from a walled city where there is less than 2,000 amos between them is considered like a walled city and reads [the megillah] on the 15th.

Rambam Hilchos Megilla 1:10

וכרך וכל הסמוך לו וכל הנראה עמו אם אין
ביניהם יתר על אלפים אמה הרי זה ככרך
וקוראין בחמשה עשר.
רמב"ם הלכות מגילה א:י

The Rambam mentions the one mil limitation only after he records both the example of samuch and of nireh. This suggests that both categories are bound by the requirement of the location being within 2,000 amos of a walled city, even when visible from the city. The Tur (O.C. 688) presents a similar formulation, concurring with the opinion of the Rambam.

Rav Yosef Karo codifies this ruling with one slight deviation from the language of the Tur.

¹⁴⁶ Shu"t Maharil, Kuntress Acharon 103.

¹⁴⁷ However, R' Tzvi Pesach Frank cites contextual evidence that may reveal an alternate understanding of the Meiri that does not contradict the Maharil's conclusion, see Shu"t Har Tzvi O.C. 123.

And also places visible [to the walled cities] even if they aren't adjacent, such as if they are on a mountain, or if they are adjacent even if they aren't visible, such as in a valley, as long as they aren't more than a mil apart.

Shulchan Aruch OC 688:2

וכן הכפרים הנראים עמהם אפי' אינם סמוכים כגון שהם בהר, או שסמוכים להם אפילו אינם נראים עמהם, כגון שהם בעמק, ובלבד שלא יהיו רחוקים יותר ממיל.
שלהן ערוך או"ח תשפח:ב

Indeed, the one mil stipulation is quoted last in Shulchan Aruch, possibly indicating that both samuch and nireh are subject to this additional clause. However, unlike the Tur's formulation, here nireh is mentioned first, and samuch is mentioned last. That gives rise to an alternate explanation. Perhaps the intention of the Shulchan Aruch is to allow nireh under all circumstances; any area in view of the walled city is given the status of mukaf choma. The language suggests that the requirement of mil is appended only to samuch; only areas that are nearby but not visible from the walled city are subject to this limitation of proximity. According to this interpretation, the Shulchan Aruch reverses the order of the Tur to convey this distinction.

In fact, Achronim debate the intention of Rav Yosef Karo. Magen Avraham, Biur HaGra, Birkei Yosef and others understand that the Shulchan Aruch reversed the order with the intention of challenging the ruling of the Rambam and the Tur. However, Pri Chadash, Elya Rabba and others hold that there is no divergence from the opinion of the Rambam and the Tur. Therefore, the decision of the Shulchan Aruch remains ambiguous.

Alternative Factors in Applying Samuch and Nireh

To avoid contending with the aforementioned disagreement in contemporary municipal settings, some poskim suggest alternative approaches. Kaf HaChaim¹⁴⁸ offers the possibility of evaluating the distance of mil in a revolutionary fashion. Chazal describe the ability of an average man to traverse a distance of 2,000 amos in 18 minutes. Perhaps, he suggests, we must redefine this measure by modern standards. Current methods of vehicular transportation permit the individual to travel much further. Many miles can be crossed by car during this 18 minute interval. Therefore, Kaf HaChaim suggests allowing any area within 18 minutes-travel (by modern standards) from a walled city to observe Purim on the 15th of Adar.

In support of this assertion, he marshals precedent in other areas of halacha, namely the laws of aveilus.¹⁴⁹ In some instances, the distance between members of a mourning family at the time of the loss and during the week of shiva will determine when each member begins the seven days of aveilus.¹⁵⁰ In previous generations, many poskim assumed that that this distance should be evaluated based on practical considerations. Specifically, the advent of railroad transportation increased the speed of transportation. Similarly, posits Kaf HaChaim, the distance of mil as relates to Purim may be modified in accordance with technology. Others, including Rav Ovadia Yosef, soundly disagree with this approach by drawing lines of distinction between the laws of

¹⁴⁸ O.C. 688:10

¹⁴⁹ See B'Ikvei HaTzon, pg. 123.

¹⁵⁰ See Shulchan Aruch Y.D. 375:8.

mourning and the laws of Purim.¹⁵¹ He concludes that the guidelines offered by Chazal will not change in this respect.

Rav Aryeh Leib Ginzberg (Turei Even Megilla 3b) presents a fundamental perspective of great importance to our discussion. He explains that standards of samuch and nireh are significant based on practical reality. When two cities or villages are close to each other, it is only natural for inhabitants of the two to intermingle, whether for commercial, social or other reasons. The two populations will be so closely linked that Chazal deemed it necessary for them to share the same date of Purim observance. Otherwise, residents of one location would continue their normal, weekday business, while their neighbors and friends in close proximity would be performing all of the mitzvos of Purim. To prevent a situation that might appear ridiculous to people – and risk compromising the integrity of the law in their eyes – Chazal declared both areas to be one, unifying their observance. From the perspective of halacha, the two regions are integrated, and even the area outside of the walled city proper is subsumed under its municipal boundaries.

Rav Ginzberg's understanding allows for a very broad application of the principles governing samuch and nireh. The determining factor is not simply the physical closeness of the two areas, but the practical relationship of their populaces. When the inhabitants of a walled city associate and interact with those in surrounding areas – or when areas are linked by taxation, municipal services and the like – observance of Shushan Purim can extend far beyond the mil described in the Talmud.

The approach of Turei Even is reflected in the words of several Rishonim.

So long as the neighboring area is visible from the walled city, if the suburb is involved with the matters of the walled city, there is no limit to the distance between them.

Ritva Megilla 2b

The rationale behind samuch and nireh is because residents of the outlying village will flee to the fortifications of the walled city for protection at a time of war.¹⁵² Therefore, they are treated as actual residents of the walled city itself; it is as if they, too, were surrounded by a wall in the days of Yehoshua.

Rashba Megilla 3b

אבל בנראה כל שהוא נראה עמו ומשתתף עמו בעיניהם לית ליה שיעורא.
רישב"א מגילה ב:

וטעמא דכל הסמוך והנראה אליו נמי משום דכיון דמיגנו ומיכסו בכרך הסמוך מימות יהושע דכל שהוא סמוך ונראה לכרך בשעת מלחמה מתאספין ובאין אל ערי המבצר והילכך הרי הן כאנשי הכרך ממש והרי הן כמוקפין חומה מימות יהושע.
רשב"א מגילה ג:

Rav Ovadia Yosef¹⁵³ notes that although the nature of warfare has changed dramatically, the standards will remain the same as dictated by Chazal, much in the same sense that modern methods of transportation do not affect the measure of a mil, as explained above.

Finally, authorities have also discussed the possibility of viewing an area enclosed by an eruv as a single city, regardless of how far the boundaries of the eruv expand. The laws of Shabbos allow

¹⁵¹ Shu"t Yabia Omer, vol. 7 O.C. 58:4.

¹⁵² See Ibn Ezra, Tehillim 122:3

¹⁵³ Shu"t Yabia Omer, vol. 7, O.C. 58:4.

one to carry within a single reshus, or domain. An eruv can unite a locality into a single domain to permit carrying within its boundaries. Likewise, when measuring the techum of a city, the 2,000 amos-distance one may walk on Shabbos outside of his city, the count begins at the limits of the eruv; everything enclosed by the eruv is viewed as part of the city. Similarly, an eruv may unite a bordering region with a walled city, in regards to the laws of Purim. This opinion has been advanced by Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach,¹⁵⁴ Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv,¹⁵⁵ and others. According to this line of reasoning, any region surrounded by an Eruv that also encompasses a walled city would observe Purim on the 15th of Adar.

Several arguments have been made to counter this position. For example, this approach appears incongruent with the explanation of the Turei Even and the Rishonim mentioned above. Samuch and nireh are principles applied to surrounding neighborhoods when it is practically relevant for them to be integrated with a nearby walled city. An eruv, however, could theoretically join two cities many miles apart, even if their residents do not regularly associate with each other. As a result, some poskim have rejected the use of eruv vis-à-vis Purim and require true proximity for the rules of samuch and nireh.¹⁵⁶

Applications in Modern-Day Yerushalayim

Over 150 years ago, Jews attempted the first settlements outside the walls of the Old City of Yerushalayim. In subsequent decades, the New City of Yerushalayim expanded slowly, until 1967. Following victory in the Six Day War, expansion of the city exploded beyond the Green Line, as well as in areas previously under Israeli control. Among the most successful communities created in the last four decades are Har Nof, to the west of the Old City, and Ramot, a series of neighborhoods built upon the hills north of Yerushalayim proper. In the early 1980s, as these communities grew, poskim first addressed their status as samuch and nireh to determine when their inhabitants should observe Purim or Shushan Purim.

Har Nof

Har Nof was built in greater proximity to the already established New Jerusalem, but not directly adjacent to any preexisting community. The closest neighborhood at the time was Givat Shaul. In fact, Har Nof was originally named “Givat Shaul Bet,” now used to refer to the industrial zone that lies between the two. Today, it is generally accepted that residents of Har Nof celebrate Shushan Purim with the rest of Yerushalayim, as a continuous line of residential area runs from the Old City through Har Nof itself with no significant interruption. Historically, Har Nof was originally subject to the standards of samuch and nireh. However, as Givat Shaul and Har Nof expanded, the gap between them narrowed and Har Nof became essentially contiguous with Yerushalayim proper. Therefore, residents of Har Nof observe the 15th of Adar, because it is deemed annexed to a walled city, Yerushalayim, by virtue of the principle of *iburo shel ir*.

¹⁵⁴ Shu”t Minchas Shlomo vol. 2,57; Halichos Shlomo, Purim 20:10.

¹⁵⁵ Shvus Yitzchak, Purim, pg. 62.

¹⁵⁶ See Noam vol. 7, pg. 105; Shu”t Minchas Yitzchak vol. 8, Siman 62; Shu”t Yabia Omer ibid. 5.

However, even today the status of Har Nof is not universally agreed upon. In fact, the status of many of the older communities that are situated between Har Nof and the Old City hinge upon a similar issue. As explained above, poskim debate the method of calculating the mil of samuch. Rav Tukachinsky argues that samuch only includes neighborhoods within 2,000 amos of the walls, regardless of contiguous expansion of the city. Rav Tukachinsky went to great lengths to determine how far the original walls of Yerushalayim extended and which neighborhoods would be encompassed. He published detailed charts indicating how far from the walls various neighborhoods are located, in an effort to clarify the halacha within this framework. According to Rav Tukachinsky,¹⁵⁷ the western limit of the walled area is no more than 300 meters beyond Jaffa Gate. Much of the residential area in the vicinity of Machane Yehuda is already beyond this point. Therefore, residents of Har Nof and many other communities would celebrate Purim on the 14th, as any non-walled region.

To this day, many residents of the neighborhood where Rav Tukachinsky once presided still abide by his ruling. Despite the fact that his opinion was not generally accepted, his descendents continue to publish his position in the annual “Luach Eretz Yisroel,” a well-respected compendium of many practical laws associated with the Jewish calendar, originally composed by Rav Tukachinsky.¹⁵⁸

Ramot

One of the first responsum to tackle the question of Ramot was written by Rav Ovadia Yosef in 1982. Rav Yosef analyzes many of the factors discussed above, and comes to the conclusion that inhabitants of Ramot must celebrate Purim on the 14th of Adar. At the time, the closest neighborhood to Ramot was Sanhedria, with far more than 141 amos between them. Indeed, even today, Ramot is not directly contiguous to Yerushalayim, though new areas have since been developed that narrow the gap. Rav Yosef notes that Ramot is also beyond 2,000 amos from the city and therefore not samuch. Those who attempted could not see Ramot from the Old City. He adds that even if they could, in accordance with the Magen Avraham’s understanding of the Shulchan Aruch, it would not suffice as nireh, for it exceeds the distance of a mil from the walls of Yerushalayim.

He further adopts the position that the Yerushalayim eruv that includes Ramot would not change the status of adjacent neighborhoods vis-à-vis the laws of Purim. Rav Yosef adds that even if an eruv is normally an acceptable way to expand the limits of a walled city regarding the laws of Purim, it would not change the status of Ramot. A separate eruv was constructed around Ramot itself. This may be viewed as an act of cession from the connection provided by the eruv that encompasses the entire city. This point is also made by Rav Yitzchak Weiss in a separate

¹⁵⁷ Ir HaKodesh V’HaMikdash, pg. 421. See Shu”t Tshuvos V’Hanhagos, vol. 2, 347 and vol. 3, 233.

¹⁵⁸ Even at the time of Rav Tukachinsky’s ruling, halachic precedent was not in line with his opinion. Shu”t Tzitz HaKodesh (52) cites the ruling of the author of Chesed L’Avraham of Lublin instructing residents of a home for the elderly at the outskirts of Yerushalayim to celebrate Purim on the 15th of Adar. The home was located approximately where Yerushalayim’s Central Bus Station is located today; not contiguous to residential area, but within 2,000 amos of the last house. This location is well-beyond Rav Tukachinsky’s boundaries.

responsum.¹⁵⁹ Rav Yosef concludes that residents of Ramot must observe Purim on the 14th. He adds that it would be Middas Chassidus, a pious act, to perform the mitzvos of Purim on the 15th, as well, without reciting the brachos on the reading of the Megilla. The basis for this stringency is to satisfy the opinions of those who might argue Ramot should follow Yerushalayim. The Beis Din of the Eidah HaChareidis of Yerushalayim, under the leadership of Rav Weiss, issued a similar ruling, instructing residents of Ramot to observe Purim on both days, reciting brachos only on the 14th, out of doubt.¹⁶⁰ This was also the initial decision of Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv.¹⁶¹

Rav Auerbach, as above, accepted the eruv as a means of viewing Ramot as part of Yerushalayim and ruled accordingly. Furthermore, even in the fledgling years of Ramot, he saw basis for this ruling in the rationale of Turei Even. Ramot was integrated with the Yerushalayim municipality in many regards, such as taxation. Furthermore, they shared many municipal services, such as postal administration, public transportation systems, and the like. In this respect, Yerushalayim and Ramot were joined by common interests, much as Ritva and Rashba describe the underpinning of the rules of samuch and nireh. Rav Yitzchak Kolitz and Rav Shalom Masas, former Ashkenazic and Sephardic Chief Rabbis of Yerushalayim, respectively, also favored Ramot following the practice of Yerushalayim.¹⁶²

Over time, many of the Poskim who originally viewed Ramot as separate from Yerushalayim have since revised their positions. Further integration of Ramot with Yerushalayim as well as modifications to the eruv have allowed these northern suburbs to identify completely with Yerushalayim for the purposes of Purim. Most notably, Rav Elyashiv (as of Purim 5757) is among those who now believe residents of Ramot are to celebrate Purim on the 15th of Adar.¹⁶³

Rav Yosef and others, however, continue to maintain the opposing position today. Accordingly, there are many communities in the neighborhoods of Ramot that continue to observe both days of Purim, as above. However, in a fascinating development, recent years have brought new initiatives with the goal of permitting all residents to celebrate Shushan Purim, according to all opinions. City Councilman Eli Simchayof, a member of the Shas party, has suggested building a row of caravans stretching between Yerushalayim proper and Ramot.¹⁶⁴ The plan utilizes the principle of burgenin, a dispensation using temporary dwellings to expand the residential boundaries of the city by closing gaps in residential development.¹⁶⁵ However, this plan has met opposition from secular environmentalist groups because building must traverse forest area that lies near Ramot.¹⁶⁶

¹⁵⁹ Minchas Yitzchak ibid.

¹⁶⁰ ibid.

¹⁶¹ Halichos Shlomo Purim, 20:24.

¹⁶² Shu"t Shemesh U'Magen Siman 51, 52; cited in Shu"t Yabia Omer ibid., Siman 59.

¹⁶³ Shvus Yitzchak Purim, pg. 77.

¹⁶⁴ See <http://www.moreshet.co.il/web/shut/shut2.asp?id=99659> and <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/making-purim-twice-as-happy-1.1873>

¹⁶⁵ Shulchan Aruch O.C. 398:6

¹⁶⁶ Personal communication with Rav Avrohom Yosef (son of Rav Ovadia Yosef)