



The Weltanschauung of Hallel

Since the establishment of the State of Israel, there have been many discussions regarding the recitation of Hallel on Yom HaAtzmaut. What follows is not meant to be a *halachic* analysis, but rather a look at *hashkafic* issues which may affect how we approach this subject.

How might one's physical location affect his or her worldview and what role might this play in how one views the question of whether to recite Hallel on Yom HaAtzmaut?



The Gemara understands that there are two types of Hallel. The first is that which is recited on *Yamim Tovim*; the other is Hallel *al haness*, Hallel recited over a miracle, like that recited on Chanukah.

The underpinning question, therefore, is what type of miracle is required for the recitation of Hallel? Is the founding of the Jewish State considered a miracle?

Neither Chief Rabbi Rav Ovadia Yosef¹ nor the Rav, Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik,² advocated reciting a *beracha* before Hallel on Yom HaAtzmaut. Rav Ovadia indicated that Hallel with a blessing is only recited on a miracle that affects the entire Jewish people. In his view, the miracle in 1948 was limited to the Jews living in Israel. Moreover, he points out that Hallel is only recited when miracles are unnatural, as in the times of *Yetziat Mitzrayim*.

The Rav, on the other hand, clearly saw miracles in the events of 1947-1948, which resulted in the establishment and early survival of the State of Israel. In his famous essay *Kol Dodi Dofek* – “My Beloved Knocks,” the Rav mentions “six knocks” that changed Jewish history forever.

The second of those knocks reverberates with the echoes of Chanukah:

Second, the knock of the Beloved was heard on the battlefield. The tiny defense forces of [the State of] Israel defeated the mighty Arab armies. The miracle of “the many delivered into the hands of the few” materialized before our eyes...

Furthermore, the Rav explains that the establishment of the State of Israel affected the entire Jewish people, even those living abroad. In his words:

A Jew escaping from an enemy's land now knows that he can find refuge in the Land of his forefathers. This is a new phenomenon in the annals of our history. Up to now, when a Jewish population

was uprooted, it wandered in the wilderness of the nations without finding shelter and habitation. The shutting of the gates in the face of the exiled caused total destruction for much of the Jewish people. Now the situation has changed. When any nation expels its Jewish minority, the exiled now direct their steps to Zion, and she, as a compassionate mother, absorbs them.

In the language of Chazal³ בעל הנס אינו מבייר בנסו, sometimes one's distance from miracles helps one recognize how miraculous events were. One ponders whether the Rav's viewing of the events of 1947-1948 from outside the Land of Israel affected his understanding of these miracles.

We have the benefit of the Rav's written words. If we who reside in the United States cannot see the miracles of the establishment of the State of Israel – and those which continue to unfold – we should take time to be re-inspired by his words:

If just anyone were to have opened the session of the United Nations, the State of Israel would not have been born. But it was the Beloved who rapped on the Chairman's lectern, and the miracle materialized. Listen! My Beloved Knocks!

1 Yabia Omer 6, Orach Chaim 41.

2 RCA Responsum 1953.

3 Niddah 31a.

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