



Permission to Celebrate

The Gemara (Sanhedrin 20b) cites a Beraita that describes a series of three *mitzvot* which must be accomplished in a specific sequence. First, a Jewish government must be established in *Eretz Yisrael*, which then organizes a Jewish army. Then, that army must wage war against Amalek and eradicate it. After completion of the first two introductory steps in the *Geula* process, labeled *atchalta deGeula*, there is a *mitzvah* to build a *Beit HaMikdash* and offer *korbanot*, which is synonymous with *Geula* itself.

Commenting on the *passuk* אלה המצוות – “These are the commandments” (Vayikra 27:34), *Chazal* derive the principle, אין נביא רשאי להודיש דבר מעתה – “a *Navi* is not permitted to introduce anything new from now on” (Megillah 2b). This prohibition includes the establishment and observance of additional rabbinic *Yamim Tovim* if they are meant to be celebrated by all Jews all over the world. Such a practice would be a violation of *bal tosif*, adding on to the *mitzvot* of the Torah.¹ The only exception to this rule seems to be a *Yom Tov* related to *geula*, defined as *hashra'at haShechina* in the *Beit HaMikdash*. This is based on the idea the *Ramban* develops in his commentary to the Torah (Bamidbar 7:13-17) and in his *Hasagot to Sefer HaMitzvot (shoresh shlishi, s.v. aval)*, that there is a *mitzvah* to celebrate the building of a *Beit HaMikdash*.

The Gemara (Rosh Hashanah 18b-19b) discusses *Megillat Ta'anit*, a scroll that lists many *Yom Tov* days added by the *Chachamim* of the Second *Beit HaMikdash* period, on which fasting, and on some, eulogizing, were prohibited. The Gemara explains

that the days listed all revolved about protecting or fortifying the *Beit HaMikdash*, the *avodah* therein, or its institutions, such as the *Sanhedrin* and the *Kehuna*. These days of *Yom Tov* could be established without being considered a violation of *bal tosif* because they are subsumed under the *mitzvah* the *Ramban* discussed – to celebrate the building of the *Beit HaMikdash*.

The Netivot, in his commentary to *Megillat Esther (Megillat Setarim 9:19)*, wonders how the *Chachamim* were justified in adding the *Yom Tov* of Purim, since, according to Talmudic tradition, the miracle of Purim occurred prior to the Second *Beit HaMikdash* period. It must be, the Netivot explains, that the *Chachamim* felt that the miracle of Purim would in some way serve as an *atchalta deGeula*, leading to the building of the Second *Beit HaMikdash*. He suggests (as does the *Sfat Emet*, Purim 5643) that they may have felt this way because the destruction of the descendants of Amalek, the stage immediately prior to the building of the *Beit HaMikdash*, was accomplished through the execution of Haman and his sons.

It is interesting that the Netivot assumes it was permissible for the *Rabbanim* to establish a *Yom Tov* merely because they thought it represented an *atchalta deGeula*, even though their conclusion was not reached through *ruach haKodesh*. Indeed, the Netivot argues that at a later time, the *Rabbanim* revised their original assessment, concluding it was erroneous. We see that the determination of whether a historical event is to be judged as an

atchalta deGeula does not require a *Navi* or *ruach haKodesh*, but only that the event be one that possesses a reasonable probability of bringing a future *geula*.

We may add that the Purim miracle did, in the end, enable the building of the Second *Beit HaMikdash*. From a political perspective, the Persian King, Daryavesh (Darius, son of Esther and Achashverosh), granted permission to continue the building of the *Beit HaMikdash*. Moreover, from a religious perspective, the renewed acceptance of *Torah SheBe'al Peh* engendered by the Purim miracle was a necessary prerequisite for Ezra's entry into *Eretz Yisrael* and the *geula*, the building of the Second *Beit HaMikdash* (*Sfat Emet*, Purim 5638).

Thus, in addition to the *Yamim Tovim* that appear in the Torah, we are able to institute additional *Yamim Tovim* that conform to the above-mentioned rules and regulations of *Megillat Ta'anit*. An event labeled as *atchalta deGeula* would fit within those rules because such an event is related to the future building of the *Beit HaMikdash*. If the event signifies one of the steps in the three-step process that will lead to the building of the *Beit HaMikdash*, it may be celebrated as an *atchalta deGeula*.

¹ See *Pri Chadash, Orach Chaim 496:14, Yoreh De'ah 233* and *Orach Chaim 191*.

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