



MEDINA &

HALACHA

BY RABBI SHIMSHON HAKOHEN NADEL

Mara D'atra, Kehilat Zichron Yosef, Har Nof
OU Israel Faculty

The Controversial Creation of Yom Yerushalayim: A Day in Transition

The indelible images of those six miraculous days in June 1967, along with the echo of Motta Gur's battle cry, "הר הבית, בידנו", are forever seared into our collective consciousness: The defeat of the Syrian, Jordanian and Egyptian armies. The dramatic unification of Jerusalem and reclamation of the Temple Mount. Soldiers weeping as they touch and kiss the ancient stones of the Kotel. And the IDF's Chief Rabbi, Rav Shlomo Goren, clutching a Torah scroll, blowing the Shofar, and reciting the Beracha of Shehecheyanu.

On Thursday, the 29th of Iyyar - one day after the liberation of Jerusalem and with the war still being waged on the battlefield - Chief Rabbis Rav Isser Yehudah Unterman and Rav Yitzchak Nissim called on synagogues throughout Israel and the Diaspora to recite Hallel and offer up festive prayers on Shabbat, the 2nd of Nissan, giving thanks to Hashem for the wonders and miracles He bestowed upon them.

The *Mo'etzet Harabbanut Harashit* soon met to discuss establishing a festival to commemorate these miraculous events, and the idea was also discussed at

a conference of leading rabbis at Heichal Shlomo immediately following Shavuot. But with the initial euphoria following the Six Day War waning, and other important matters to address, the item was moved off the agenda. It wasn't until six months later, the 28th of Tishrei, that the *Mo'etzet Harabbanut Harashit* met again to discuss Yom Yerushalayim. Rav Unterman suggested commemorating the day on the 28th of Iyyar, the day Jerusalem was liberated. Rav Shaul Yisraeli, however, preferred Rosh Chodesh Sivan for the following reasons: 1. He felt that the 28th of Iyyar is too close to Yom Ha'atzmaut, and the day will not get its due. 2. As the ceasefire was declared on Rosh Chodesh, celebrating that day would be similar to how Purim was celebrated once the fighting had ceased and the people 'rested.' And 3., celebrating on Rosh Chodesh prevents any potential controversy over the recitation of Hallel, as Hallel is already recited on Rosh Chodesh! The decision was made to create a special committee and include other leading rabbis in the discussion, among them Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv

and Rav Yaakov Betzalel Zolty. On the 8th of Tevet they met again and decided by majority to establish the 28th of Iyyar as a festive day.

Following its decision, the Chief Rabbinate sent a letter to 17 additional rabbis asking them to respond with suggestions on how the day should be observed. A conference of rabbis was called for the 3rd of Adar to discuss what Tefillot should be recited, and how to mark this special day. Thirty-eight rabbis were invited to the conference - among them Poskim, Dayyanim, and Admorim from the Charedi community - but only 11 participated. Following much discussion and debate, the following decisions were made: 1. To adopt the 28th of Iyyar as a day of thanksgiving. 2. To recite Hallel without a Beracha, consistent with the ruling of the Chief Rabbinate at the

time regarding Hallel on Yom Ha'atzmaut. 3. To request that the government give a half-day vacation from work to encourage its citizens to celebrate. 4. To celebrate the day with a festive meal. 5. Further decisions to be made at a future meeting of the *Mo'etzet Harabbanut Harashit*.

After additional discussion and debate, a final decision was made on the 17th of Adar. The 28th of Iyyar, initially called *Yom Hodayah V'Simchah*, was proclaimed as a "day of great victory of Israel over her enemies and the liberation of Jerusalem, the Holy City," to be celebrated by Jews in Israel and throughout the Diaspora with : 1. The reading of Shirat HaYam responsively, 2. the recitation of Hallel with a Beracha, 3. a sermon publicizing the miracle following Hallel, 4. the recitation of Psalms 107 and 5., festive meals



GOURMET GRILL EVENTS

On-site grilling and ethnic menus available.

- Weddings
- Bar & Bat Mitzvahs
- Office Lunches

Be in touch to book your event!

054-244-8468

kinamoncaterers@gmail.com



and celebrations (*Mishte V'simchah*). Rav Unterman noted that the celebration suspends the customs of mourning for those who observe customs of mourning during this part of Sefirat Ha'omer.

In Iyyar, the decision was made public. Rav Unterman pointed out that this decision was for the first year alone and that there will be further discussions as to how the day should be observed in the future. Adding to the confusion, the decision was not well publicized and the broader community was unsure as to how the day should be observed. Mizrachi and Hapoel Mizrachi publicized special Tefillot for the night of Yom Yerushalayim, which included Psalms 136 and 122, festive meals, the lighting of candles, and the study of *Masechet Middot* and the Rambam's *Hilchot Beit Habechirah*, as a way to celebrate the day.

Once the day had been adopted by the Chief Rabbinate, the Minister of Religion, Dr. Zerach Warhaftig, urged the government of Israel to declare a national holiday. But concern over the reaction by Arabs to the celebration of the unification of Jerusalem prevented the government from making a decision. In fact, the United States sent a message to Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressing its opposition to celebrating the victory as a national holiday. Two weeks before the first Yom Yerushalayim, on the 14th of Iyyar, the Israeli government decided it best that the day be celebrated as a 'religious' holiday and not a 'legal' holiday. It wasn't until March 23, 1998 - thirty years later! - that the Knesset would pass the Jerusalem Day Law, formally proclaiming the day a national holiday.

In the years that followed the Chief Rabbinate's initial decision, Yom Yerushalayim would go through a number of incarnations. The recitation of Psalms 20, 35, and 83 on both Yom Yerushalayim and Yom Ha'atzmaut was added in 1969, and in 1972 they instituted the recitation of Yizkor for fallen IDF soldiers.

The election of Rav Shlomo Goren as Ashkenazic Chief Rabbi would mean more changes. Already while Chief Rabbi of the IDF, Rav Goren had created his own Tefillah service for Yom Ha'atzmaut, different from that of the Chief Rabbinate. Now in his role as Chief Rabbi of the State of Israel, he would institute his Tefillah Chagigit for Yom Yerushalayim as well. It included Psalm 122 and the omission of *Vehu Rachum* at Ma'ariv. In the morning, he instituted the festive *P'sukei D'zimra*, with the omission of *Nishmat Kol Chai*, similar to what is done on *Hoshanah Rabbah*, Hallel *without* a Beracha, the omission of *Tachanun* and *Lamnatze'ach*, and the addition of the prayer for the State of Israel and the *Mi Sheberach* for the IDF. In subsequent years, Rav Goren would change his mind about Hallel, and encourage its recitation *with* a Beracha, eventually instituting half-Hallel at night without a Beracha. He also instituted the recitation of Shehecheyanu.

Rav Ovadia Yosef, who served as Sephardic Chief Rabbi at the time, did not agree with the additions made by Rav Goren. While recognizing the miracles and wonders of the Six Day War, for a number of reasons Rav Ovadia believed that it is too premature to recite Hallel with a Beracha: 1. The opposition of many leading

authorities to the recitation of Hallel, 2. in light of the tragedy of many fallen and injured soldiers, 3. King David did not institute Hallel following his conquest of Jerusalem and 4., our Holy Temple is still in ruin. Instead, Rav Ovadia believed Hallel should be recited in the morning without a Beracha, at the conclusion of the Tefillah and *Tachanun* should be omitted.

In 1989, Chief Rabbis Rav Avraham Shapira and Rav Mordechai Eliyahu would encourage the broader public to celebrate this profound day, and added the recitation of Psalms 91, 98, 107, and 122 before Ma'ariv, and Psalm 126 and *L'Shanah Habah* following Ma'ariv, in addition to the Psalms and prayers already recited by many on Yom Ha'atzmaut. They affirmed the decision of Rav Ovadia and ruled that members of the Eidot Hamizrach recite Hallel without a Beracha at the conclusion of the Tefillah.

Over the decades, gatherings and celebrations at the Kotel, Yeshivat Mercaz Harav, and the *Rikudegalim* flag parade would develop, marking the day.

But due to the lack of clarity and confusion caused by the many changes and additions made by the Chief Rabbinate over the years, the Religious Zionist community - who agrees the day deserves religious expression - has not yet come to a consensus as to just how the day should be observed: Hallel with or without a Beracha, at night and in the morning, or just in the morning, etc. Special Siddurim and proclamations from rabbinic organizations have attempted to streamline the Tefillot, but even today different communities observe different customs.

In addition, the day is not celebrated by the Charedi community or the broader, secular community.

Perhaps this phenomenon is not new. Chanukah was only instituted the "the following year" (*Shabbat* 21b), and Purim too took time before it was formally accepted (See *Megillah* 7a). Perhaps Yom Ha'atzmaut and Yom Yerushalayim will take some time to coalesce and crystallize, until all of Am Yisrael can put their differences aside and celebrate together these days of profound religious significance and meaning. ■

Rabbi Shimshon HaKohen Nadel lives and teaches in Jerusalem, where he serves as Mara D'atra of Har Nof's Kehilat Zichron Yosef and Rosh Kollel of the Sinai Kollel and Chovevei Zion's Kollel Boker.

בס"ד

PRIVATE LAND FOR SALE

2.5 Acres
(10 dunams)
2 million
shekels

Or

210,000
Shekels
Per dunam

CURRENT USE: AGRICULTURAL (FULL TABU OWNERSHIP)
IN STAGES OF RE- PLANNING AS A NEW RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD
ADJACENT TO NOF KINNERET

03-5774277 / 052-2867038

"yerushat haharez" LTD
177 Derech Hachesh Street Jerusalem
mk0522867038@gmail.com

The land is not currently available for development