



Divrei Torah on Jerusalem by Rabbi Yosef Bronstein Parashat Tzav / פרשת צו Purim / פורים 5779

The Eternality of Purim and Yerushalayim

Purim bears the fragrance of eternity. Rambam, in his code of Jewish law, records the following statement:¹

All the books of the Prophets and all the Holy Writings will be nullified in the Messianic era, with the exception of the Book of Esther.

While the precise meaning of this statement is shrouded in ambiguity, the general import is clear. Megilat Ester will survive forever.

Moreover, a midrash makes a similar statement about the very observance of the various holidays on the Jewish calendar:² “All of the holidays will be nullified except for Purim which will never be nullified.” From where does Purim draw this potency for eternity and immortality?

One perspective, perhaps, emerges from the subtext of the Purim story. On the surface, Megilat Ester is centered in the diaspora. The Jews are living in Shushan and are “scattered” in the 127 provinces of the Persian Empire.³ Their salvation at the end of the Megilah does not see them return triumphantly to the Land of Israel, but they remain as the servants of Achashveirosh.⁴

However, as many have pointed out,⁵ Yerushalayim and the Land of Israel play a central role in the underpinnings of the story. Mordechai is introduced to us as one who was “exiled from Yerushalayim,” presumably an important part of his identity. The Gemara relates that he kept his

¹ Rambam, Mishna Torah hilchot Megilah 2:18. Translation is from Chabad.org.

²Yalkut Shimoni Mishlei, remez 944.

³. Ester 3:8.

⁴.Megilah 14a.

⁵ See, for example, the recent essay by Rav Moshe Tzvi Wexler, available at <https://www.yba.org.il/%D7%94%D7%90%D7%9D-%D7%99%D7%A9-%D7%A7%D7%A9%D7%A8-%D7%91%D7%99%D7%9F-%D7%A4%D7%95%D7%A8%D7%99%D7%9D-%D7%9C%D7%90%D7%A8%D7%A5-%D7%99%D7%A9%D7%A8%D7%90%D7%9C-%D7%94%D7%A8%D7%91-%D7%9E%D7%A9%D7%94-%D7%A6%D7%91%D7%99-%D7%95%D7%A7%D7%A1%D7%9C%D7%A8--%D7%A8%D7%90%D7%A9>



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connection to his point of origin. For example, on the 16th of Nissan, Mordechai taught the Jewish children of Shushan about the korbbon omer that was offered in the Beit HaMikash on that date.⁶ The Gemara also tells us that the entire story occurred after the rebuilding of Yerushalayim had already commenced, but had been stopped by Achashveirosh.⁷

Accordingly, even though the Purim miracle seems to be an isolated diasporic event, a deeper and more nuanced understanding of history sees it as a link in the chain that brings the Jewish people back to their home of Yerushalayim. In fact, according to one approach this perspective actually undergirded the formal establishment of Purim as a holiday. As Rav Hershel Schachter explains based on the writings of the Netivot HaMishpat, the sages of the time realized that the Purim miracle brought them one step closer to returning to the Land of Israel and rebuilding the Beit HaMikdash in Yerushalayim. From a halachik perspective, it was this aspect of Purim that warranted the establishment of an annual holiday for all of the Jewish people.⁸

With this understanding of Purim, we can return to our original question. The Gemara tells us that Yerushalayim symbolizes eternity. As such, Purim, which represents our ability to see our history as events that are steps on the way to return to Yerushalayim, also bears that characteristic of eternity. Therefore, no matter what changes occur in the messianic era, Yerushalayim and Purim, which represents our deep and unassailable connection to Yerushalayim, will remain constants forever.

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⁶Megilah 16a.

⁷ Ezra 4:6.

⁸ Rav Hershel Schachter, *Belkvei HaTzon* siman 32, se'if 14.