



1. Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 21b (Soncino Translation)

מאי חנוכה? דתנו רבנן: בכ"ה בכסליו יומי דחנוכה תמניא אינון, דלא למספד בהון ודלא להתענות בהון. שכשנכנסו יוונים להיכל טמאו כל השמנים שבהיכל, וכשגברה מלכות בית חשמונאי ונצחום, בדקו ולא מצאו אלא פך אחד של שמן שהיה מונח בחותמו של כהן גדול, ולא היה בו אלא להדליק יום אחד, נעשה בו נס והדליקו ממנו שמונה ימים. לשנה אחרת קבעום ועשאו ימים טובים בהלל והודאה

What is [the reason of] Hanukkah? For our Rabbis taught: On the twenty-fifth of Kislev [commence] the days of Hanukkah, which are eight on which a lamentation for the dead and fasting are forbidden. For when the Greeks entered the Temple, they defiled all the oils therein, and when the Hasmonean dynasty prevailed against and defeated them, they made search and found only one cruse of oil which lay with the seal of the High Priest, but which contained sufficient for one day's lighting only; yet a miracle was wrought therein and they lit [the lamp] therewith for eight days. The following year these [days] were appointed a Festival with [the recital of] Hallel and thanksgiving.

2. Talmud Bavli, Megillah 14a (Soncino Translation)

מאי דרוש? אמר רבי חייא בר אבין אמר רבי יהושע בן קרחה: ומה מעבדות לחירות אמרינן שירה - ממיתה לחיים לא כל שכן?

How did they derive it [from the Torah]? — R. Hiyya b. Abin said in the name of R. Joshua b. Korha: If for being delivered from slavery to freedom we chant a hymn of praise, should we not do so all the more for being delivered from death to life?

3. Shut Chatam Sofer Yoreh Deah 233 (Translation from Koren Yom HaAtzmaut Machzor)

קביעת יום מועד ביום עשיית נס הוא ק"ו דאורייתא ולפע"ד לפ"ז יום פורים וימי חנוכה דאורייתא הם אך מה לעשות בהם אם לשלוח מנות או להדליק נרו? או לעשות זכר אחר זהו דרבנן והעובר ואינו עושה שום זכר לימי חנוכה ופורים עובר על מצות עשה דאורייתא.

Establishing a holiday on the day of a miracle is a biblical obligation, as it is an *a fortiori* argument from the Torah. In my humble opinion, the day of Purim and the days of Hanukka are from the Torah! However, what to do on them – whether to send portions of food or to light candles or to commemorate them in some other way – is of rabbinic origin. Whoever does nothing to commemorate the days of Hanukka and Purim violates a biblical positive command!

4. Shut Kol Mevasser 1:21 (Translation from above)

וממילא פשיטא בנידון דידן הנוגע לציבור של כלל ישראל, ויש כאן פדיון מעבדות לחירות שנגאלנו משיעבוד מלכות ונעשינו בני חורין והשגנו עצמאות ממלכתית, וגם הצלה ממיתה לחיים שנצלנו מידי אויבינו שעמדו עלינו לכלותנו, בודאי חובה עלינו לקבוע יום טוב. ויפה כיוונו המנהיגים שקבעו את היום הזה דוקא, אשר בו היה עיקר הנס שיצאנו מעבדות לחירות ע"י הכרזת העצמאות

[Rabbi Meshulam Rath, descendant of a noted rabbinic family, was born in 1875 in Poland. He quickly became famous as a child prodigy, and was ordained as a rabbi at age 18. Later he served as a rabbi in Rumania. Long active in the Zionist movement, Rath immigrated to Israel in 1949. Before long he became an active member of the Israeli Chief Rabbinate council, and he served as an halachic advisor to Israel's chief rabbis and to Israel's Supreme Rabbinical Court. Rath's responsa dealt with many problems of the fledgling state of Israel in its early years.]

It is obvious in our case, which is relevant to the entire community of Israel and includes deliverance from slavery to freedom (we were redeemed from the subjugation of kingdoms, and we have become free men and have achieved political independence) as well as deliverance from death to life (we were saved from the hands of our enemies who sought to exterminate us) – certainly we have an obligation to institute a holiday! And it was proper that it was established specifically on this day, which was the central miracle, that we went from slavery to freedom through the declaration of independence.

5. Rambam Hilchot Chanukah 3:1

בבית שני כשמלכו יון גזרו גזרות על ישראל ובטלו דתם ולא הניחו אותם לעסוק בתורה ובמצות, ופשטו ידם בממונם ובבנותיהם ונכנסו להיכל ופרצו בו פרצות וטמאו הטהרות, וצר להם לישראל מאד מפניהם ולחצום לחץ גדול עד שריחם עליהם אלהי אבותינו והושיעם מידם והצילם וגברו בני חשמונאי הכהנים הגדולים והרגום והושיעו ישראל מידם והעמידו מלך מן הכהנים וחזרה מלכות לישראל יתר על מאתים שנה עד החורבן השני.

In [the era of] the Second Temple, the Greek kingdom issued decrees against the Jewish people, [attempting to] nullify their faith and refusing to allow them to observe the Torah and its commandments. They extended their hands against their property and their daughters; they entered the Sanctuary, wrought havoc within, and made the sacraments impure.

The Jews suffered great difficulties from them, for they oppressed them greatly until the God of our ancestors had mercy upon them, delivered them from their hand, and saved them. The sons of the Hasmoneans, the High Priests, overcame [them], slew them, and saved the Jews from their hand.

They appointed a king from the priests, and sovereignty returned to Israel for more than 200 years, until the destruction of the Second Temple.

6. Tradition Symposium: Reflections on the Six-Day War After a Quarter Century, Summer 1992, David Berger

In determining whether a particular historical process is a miracle, context is almost everything. For the non-believer, the context of faith is entirely absent, and for such a person, the Israeli capture of Jerusalem, the unraveling of Communism, and the events of the Gulf War can reasonably be attributed to "social, political, military or economic factors." Where faith is present, context takes on a broader meaning encompassing both theology and historical evaluation. Do I believe that God intervenes frequently even in everyday affairs of relatively little moment? Do I think that this is a period of *hester panim* in which natural processes almost invariably prevail? Do I consider divine intervention more likely in Jewish history than in the affairs of the nations of the world? Do I assign a positive, negative or neutral evaluation to the event under consideration? Do I regard it as a passing episode or as a critical development in human history? Although God's knowledge is unlimited and the possibility of His intervention is always present, many major authorities have maintained that miraculous intervention in the daily lives of ordinary Jews is relatively infrequent, and some degree of uncertainty extends to larger matters as well. I am inclined to believe, for example, that God had something to do with the low casualty rate following the launching of Scud missiles toward Israel, but I do not feel that my faith requires the categorical affirmation that He changed the flight path of a particular missile or caused its warhead to malfunction. Nonetheless, there are events that are so earthshaking within the context of Jewish belief that the failure to attribute them to divine intervention leaves Judaism bereft of meaningful faith in the God of Hazal and of the prophets. The establishment of the State of Israel and the capture of Jerusalem are such events. Given the most fundamental assumptions about providence, the goodness of God and His concern for the Jewish people, the position that developments of such magnitude came about wholly through the working of an impersonal historical process is inadmissible. It banishes God from history and declares in effect that "the lord has forsaken the earth" (Ezek. 8:12; 9:9). If the hand of God is not to be found in these events, where is it to be found? One of the great ironies in contemporary Jewish piety is that many deeply religious Jews have inverted the hierarchy of providential events. For many non-Zionist Orthodox Jews, the operation of micro-providence is taken for granted to the point where innumerable events in the lives of prominent Rabbis are confidently regarded as miracles. At the same time, the return of the land of Israel to the Jewish people is assigned no religious value whatever. It is true that God intervenes to protect the land: He guides Scud missiles to targets of brick and stone in large measure because of the merit generated by students studying in Israeli yeshivot. Nonetheless, He appears to have played no role in the establishment of the State. This position is so incongruous that it is rarely if ever formulated in such stark terms; nevertheless, I believe that it is a fair extrapolation from the rhetoric and behavior of many religious Jews....

7. The Religious Significance of Yom HaAtzmaut, Rabbi Chaim Druckman (Translation from Koren Machzor)

"The Many into the Hands of the Few" On the eve of the declaration of independence of the State of Israel, the Arab countries declared that within a week, they intended to wipe out the entire Yishuv (Jewish population) in the Land of Israel. The Arab armies' proclamation, "We will drive you into the sea," was not a figure of speech, but rather a serious threat to invade the Land of Israel from the north, east, and south, so that the Mediterranean Sea to the west would be the Jews' last refuge... Is there a better example of "the many into the hands of the few"? On *Hanukka*, we repeatedly recite the *Al HaNissim* prayer in which we thank God for delivering "the many into the hands of the few." The *Hanukka* miracle took place more than two thousand years ago – but this wondrous event has happened also in our time! God delivered the many into the hands of the few, and thus saved us from certain death and gave us the gift of our own lives – is it not appropriate that we thank Him for this?