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Weddings on Chol Ha'moed

The seventh *Mishnah* of the first *perek* of *Moed Katan* presents the *Halacha* that one may not marry during *Chol Ha'moed* because his bride 'is a source of *simcha* for him.' The *Gemara* in *Moed Katan* (8b) is unsatisfied with the reason mentioned in the *Mishnah*, and seeks to clarify further this seemingly peculiar *Halacha* where celebration of the festivals excludes experiencing the joy of matrimony. Five answers are provided.

The first and most prominent explanation cites the concept of 'we do not merge one *simcha* with another,' and that we have to celebrate each individually. The other explanations given are:

- a groom will put aside the celebration of the *chag*, for the celebrations of his marriage
- the scriptural source (*Devarim* 16:14) that states 'and you shall celebrate your festivals' excludes the celebration of matrimony
- the groom will be burdened in the preparations for his wedding, and such burdens are prohibited on *Chol Ha'moed*
- if marriage was allowed on *Chol Ha'moed*, all marriages would be postponed until *Chol Ha'moed* so as to avoid the need for preparing a separate wedding meal, and thus delaying the *mitzvah* of 'pru ur'vu'

The *Rishonim* evaluate the answers mentioned in the *Gemara* to establish the fundamental reason behind the prohibition of marriage during *Chol Ha'moed*.

According to the *Rif* (3b of the *Rif*), it appears that the principle reason for the prohibition is the first explanation; that 'we do not merge one *simcha* with another,' with the other explanations regarded as secondary. The *Nimukei Yosef* further explains that the reasoning behind the concept of not merging *smachot* with each other is that in the event of merged *smachot*, one would not celebrate either properly. For this reason each *simcha* is celebrated separately, to ensure that both are accompanied by the appropriate level of happiness.

The *Meiri* understands the *Gemara* in the same way as the *Rif*, that the primary explanation for the prohibition of marriage on *Chol Ha'moed* is the concept of 'we do not merge one *simcha* with another.' However, he offers a different, though subtle, reasoning. He explains that when two *smachot* are celebrated together, one is inevitably treated as inferior. Accordingly, in order to protect the integrity of each *simcha*, they are celebrated separately.

The *Rambam*, in *hilchot Yom Tov* (7:16), mentions the *Halacha* of not marrying on *Chol Ha'moed* and provides what appears *prima facie* to be a new explanation that does not appear in either the *Mishnah* or *Gemara* - a groom will forget the celebrations of the *chag* in his celebration of marriage.

This *Halacha* is mentioned a second time in *hilchot ishut* (10:14) while discussing prohibited relationships. The *Rambam* writes there that the reason for the prohibition is 'as was explained (i.e. in *hilchot Yom Tov*) that we do not merge one *simcha* with another.' From this *Halacha* we learn that the *Rambam* only accepts the first reason mentioned in the *Gemara*, and that his explanation presented in *hilchot Yom Tov* is the *Rambam's* understanding of why we do not merge *smachot*.

In the *Shulchan Aruch* (*Even HaEzer* 64) we learn of the obligation of a groom to celebrate his marriage and enjoy the company of his wife. The groom should not go to work and have festive meals. The *Ramah* adds that he should even attempt to refrain from doing *melachot*.

From here we may gain a better understanding of the *Rambam* that claimed a groom will forget the celebrations of the *chag*. Since the nature of celebrating marriage is the same as for *Chol Ha'moed* the groom is likely to forget that he is celebrating the *chag* in addition to his marriage.

Shmoiki Berkowitz

Revision Questions

מועד קטן א' א' ר' - ג' ד'

All the following questions relate to *Chol Ha'moed*:

- Can any work be performed on burial chambers? (א' ר')
- When can coffins be constructed? (Include both opinions) (א' ר')
- Are marriages allowed? (Careful) (א' ז')
- Are women allowed to apply makeup? (א' ז')
- In what manners is sewing permissible? (א' ח')
- Can one erect an oven, stove or millstone? (א' ט')
- Can one erect a rail on a balcony? (א' י')
- In what manner can one make repairs to his roof? (א' י')
- On what condition is one allowed to repair the lock on his house? (א' י')
- On what condition is one allowed to begin pickling food? (א' י')

- To what extent can a person that began preparing olives for pressing yet for reasons beyond his control, was unable to complete the pressing before *Yom Tov*, continue the process during *Chol Ha'moed*? (ב' א')
- Regarding the previous question, what were the three reasons brought that may have prevented him from completing the pressing before *Yom Tov*? (ב' א')
- What other case was brought in the *Mishnah* similar to the one mentioned in the previous questions? (ב' ב')
- Can one bring his fruit in from the orchards during *Chol Ha'moed*? (ב' ג')
- What is the law regarding a person that deliberately delayed an activity that is permitted during *Chol Ha'moed*, till *Chol Ha'moed*? (ב' ג')
- What are the two situations under which one is allowed to purchase a house during *Chol Ha'moed*? (ב' ד')
- Can one move house during *Chol Ha'moed*? (ב' ד')
- In what manner is one allowed to sell fruit during *Chol Ha'moed*? (ב' ה')
- According to *R' Yosi* which professionals were *machmir* not to work in any manner during *Chol Ha'moed*? (ב' ה')
- Which seven people are allowed to shave during *Chol Ha'moed*? (ג' א')
- What else were these people, specifically, allowed to do during *Chol Ha'moed*? (ג' ב')
- Which twelve contracts were allowed to be drawn during *Chol Ha'moed*? (ג' ג')
- In what situations can one write a contract for a loan on *Chol Ha'moed*? (ג' ד')
- Can one write *tefillin* during *Chol Ha'moed*? (ג' ד')

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
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Moed Katan 3:5-6	Moed Katan 3:7-8	Moed Katan 3:9 – Chagigah 1:1	Chagigah 1:2-3	Chagigah 1:4-5	Chagigah 1:6-7	Chagigah 1:8-2:1

