

63^o Yom Haatzmaut

63 AÑOS DE LA INDEPENDENCIA DEL ESTADO DE ISRAEL

The Masorti Movement, represented by Noam, Marom, Mercaz & Masorti AmLat, accompanies the celebrations for the 63 years of our Medina.
¡ Hag Ha'Atzmaut Sameach !

The creation of the State of Israel is obviously a turning point in our nation's history. After the Shoah the Jewish people needed a country in which they could always find a safe haven, in which Jews from all over the world could come together, have political independence and sovereignty. The State could become a cultural and spiritual center as in ancient times.

There is a religious dimension to this historical event. The Jewish people prayed for two thousand years for the return to this land in general and to Jerusalem in particular. Some examples in the Amidah prayer (which is recited three times a day) are:

"And to Jerusalem, thy city, return in mercy, and dwell therein as though hast spoken... and speedily set up the throne of David"

"And let our eyes behold thy return in mercy to Zion".

This yearning is also expressed in the Passover seder's "next year in Jerusalem". The Bible includes many verses, in particular in prophetic texts, in which these feelings and the centrality of Jerusalem are expressed as well. See for example: "For out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isaiah 2:3 and Micah 4:2); "Your sons come from afar and your daughters are borne on the side" (prophecy on Jerusalem, Isaiah 60:4); "For Zion's sake I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until her triumph go forth as brightness, and her salvation as torch that burns" (ibid. 62:1).

The creation of the State of Israel is, in the opinion of many, the fulfillment of a vision. The prayer for the well-being of the State of Israel calls it the "beginning of the blossoming of our redemption". Many people see it as a major miracle in our day.

Israel's Chief Rabbinate (Orthodox) established that on Yom Haatzmaut the Hallel should be recited (with or without the accompanying blessing) as on other holidays and a special Haftarah (reading from the Prophets) should be read. These special addi-

tions are included in Orthodox prayer books printed in Israel such as Siddur Rinat Israel and in some Orthodox prayer books printed abroad (Art Scroll, Chief Rabbi Sacks).

The Kibbutz Hadati (Modern Orthodox Kibbutz Movement) also introduced a special version of Al Hanissim. Neither the Chief Rabbinate nor the Kibbutz Hadati added a special Torah reading.

Conservative rabbis dealt in the 1960's with the need to celebrate Independence Day in our congregations, though they didn't decide on a definite pattern for the celebration.

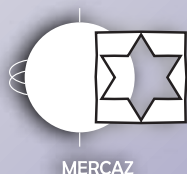
Sim Shalom, the Conservative prayer book, does not include a separate section for Yom Ha'atzmaut, but it indicates in the appropriate sections that Al Hanissim and Torah and Haftarah readings are to be included on this occasion.

In Va'Ani Tefilati, the Israeli Conservative prayer book, you will see relevant prayers and texts for study, based on a special booklet published by the Masorti Movement and the Israeli Rabbinical Assembly "Services for Memorial Day and Independence Day". It indicates that on Independence Day evening, after a festive service, Hallel is prayed, as well as other liturgical texts such as the Shehecheyanu blessing, the blowing of the shofar, and saying "Next year in rebuilt Jerusalem". In the morning, Hallel is said, and Torah and Haftarah portions are included. A festive meal is also recommended. A version of Al Hanissim for this holiday is indicated in the Amidah and Grace after meals as well.

Hag Ha'atzmaut Sameach !

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*This article was published in Monique Susskind Goldberg and Diana Villa, "Ask the Rabbi. Women Rabbis Respond to Modern Halakhic Questions", Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, 2010. P. 229-232, citing the relevant literature.



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