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*Chag
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Chag MiTzion

*A compilation of articles on
the Chagim and National Holidays
By shlichim and friends
of Torah MiTzion*



The Rothner Edition

Chag MiTzion

A compilation of articles on the Chagim and National Holidays
By shlichim and friends of Torah MiTzion

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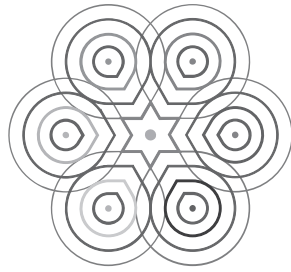
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In honor of all the Shlichim
who have provided and still
provide so much inspirational
Torah learning and such warm
feelings for Eretz Yisrael to so
many in Chutz L'Aretz.

With thanks, appreciation,
and best wishes for continued
success,

*Rickey and Gale Rothner
Chicago, USA*



Yom Hazikaron

Rabbi Michael J. Broyde

Community Rabbi and Rosh Kollel, Atlanta

מוקדש על ידי רועי אביקסיס - מזכ"ל בני עקיבא העולמית
לע"נ אליעזר יוסף (אליוס) פז ו"ל
הרוח החיה של בני עקיבא גרמניה לאורך שנים
מייסד הכשרת נריה גרמניה
איש חזון ומעש
מי שלימד אותנו מהי שליחות ומסירות נפש
למען עם ישראל

Memorial Day in America and *Yom Hazikaron* in Israel

Marking *Yom Hazikaron* changed for me when the Atlanta Torah MiTzion (ATM) Kollel came into my life and into the Atlanta community in 1999. ATM members commemorated *Yom Hazikaron* truly and passionately. It was both moving and important for me and for the community of the Young Israel of Toco Hills where they were based (and which I was the rabbi) to see. Rabbi Dr. Michael Berger, (who was the President of ATM then) and I both understood that what our community was seeing was a genuine sense of three values.

First, there was among the many members of ATM a deep sense of mourning for those who had fallen, who were not just people they read about in a paper, but friends and study partners, parents and community members. The sadness they shared was palpable and the crying shed were tears for those who they knew and remembered. They mourned for real people who they knew and not simply abstract people that we read about.

Second, members of ATM taught us about the connection between the theory of religious Zionism and the practices of the Orthodox community in Israel. Religious Zionism - the love of the land, the love of the people, and the love of *mitzvot* - all came together, watching ATM members ponder the place of sadness in this trilogy of values. Community, Nation and Torah all were visible to us in the members of the Torah MiTzion Kollel.

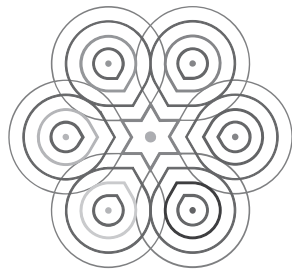
Third, watching the way they connected *Yom Hazikaron* to *Yom Ha'Atzmaut*

was important. I remember listening one year to one of the members of the ATM discussing this with me: he felt very strongly that the message was one of connection. The idea was important: independence was achieved through sacrifice and Israel continued to stand because of the willingness to sacrifice. *Yom Hazikaron* precedes *Yom Ha'Atzmaut* because they are connected.

The involvement in ATM taught me something else: It taught me what was missing from America. In the United States there also is a Memorial Day, commemorated the last Monday in May, and it - like *Yom Hazikaron* - commemorates the enormous sacrifices of American soldiers throughout history - more than 1,000,000 have perished in American wars. But yet, unlike Israel, year-after-year, another Memorial Day will go by in the United States without any real commemoration and without any real reflection on the role of military sacrifice in our American democracy. I have never seen a tear shed at an American Memorial Day event. Instead, Memorial Day in America merely begins the summer with all of its festivities and celebration - and a parade is the best form of celebration. This is true even though America has fought two wars (one in Afghanistan and one in Iraq) in the last twenty years and countless soldiers have died. Yet the sacrifice is unmentioned and decoupled from the American dream and experience.

Why? The answer is, I am sure, a complex collection of social reasons, but I want to suggest one of them that I learned from ATM members. Memorial Day in America does not seem connected in any historical or logical way to its location in the calendar to the founding of America, and it does not evoke any moral message in its location on the calendar. Instead, its position inspires no activity beyond beach openings, and the most pretentious of war memorials. This is the trend for all American holidays that have lost their historical roots: Presidents Day has lost its connection to the contributions of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, Thanksgiving is hardly connected to the sacrifices of the Pilgrims, Columbus Day has all but disappeared from celebration, and Labor Day has lost all importance. Our holidays have lost their importance to teach us lessons for public life. Not so in Israel. What I learned from watching and listening to the members of the Atlanta Torah Mitzion members is that *Yom Hazikaron* is part of the Independence Day celebration.

The celebration of *Yom HaZikaron*, and the messages delivered by the members of the Atlanta Torah Mitzion Kollel, very much reminded me how memorials are really supposed to be. We sacrifice for something of value and we remind ourselves of that value by positioning *Yom HaZikaron* is next to *Yom Ha'Atzmaut*, so as to remind us all that sacrifice has to be of purpose and we need to remember the purpose. Sacrifice towards a goal is the message of *Yom Hazikaron*.



Yom Ha'Atzmaut

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מוקדש לעילוי נשמת
צבי בן משה בונים ז"ל
קיילא בת יהודה בונים ז"ל

'One Nation Under G-d' - For Yom Ha'Atzmaut, Israel Independence Day

From the very founding of the State of Israel, the question of the significance and meaning of Israel's Day of Independence has been the topic of many books, academic papers and articles, primarily within the framework of religious discourse. Questions such as how the day is to be observed, which special prayers should be added to the daily services and how the new modern holiday fits into the Jewish calendar quickly became topics of discussion and, at times, heated debate amongst leading Rabbis and community figures.

This phenomenon, of trying to create a religious framework for a national celebration, is something that is unique amongst the nations of the world. In any other country, the day signifying national sovereignty or the nation's political independence is a day of national pride celebrated by the citizens or residents of that country, who are proud and thankful for their countries achievements to date. It seems that this is not the case with regard to the Jewish State, the State of Israel.

Any *'Torah Mitzion' shaliach*, when asked what was the busiest and most meaningful time during their tenure in a community, will most probably answer that it was the days and weeks leading up to Yom Ha'Atzmaut. The classes and discussions, the celebrations and ceremonies and finally the festive and special atmosphere during the services in the communities