

# YOM HAATZMAUT

Batnua

## 1 DEFINITION AND CONTEXT

On May 14, 1948 (5 of Iyar 5708, according to the Hebrew calendar), David Ben Gurion declared the independence of our state, ending not only the British Mandate but also the terrible exile that our people suffered through almost 2000 years of history. Years after generations and generations of Jews prayed and dreamed of returning to Israel, we had the privilege to belong to those who managed to return to our homeland, becoming once again a free and sovereign nation, in our land, "Eretz Zion, v'Yerushalayim."

## ? DID YOU KNOW?

- One of the main sources of inspiration of Hanoar Hatzioni is Binyamin Ze'ev Herzl. His unique contribution to the building of a sovereign state for the Jewish people, his perseverance and insistence at the time of carrying out one of the most important projects for the destiny of Am Israel and his leadership and legacy united by a clear vision make him a central ideological and educational figure for our chaverim. Today, 70 years after the Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel, and 120 years after Herzl had envisioned it for the first time, we understand that our beloved Israel is still young and that it is essential to keep building and strengthening it. For this reason, we renew our commitment to encourage our chaverim to return to Israel and continue making history so that our national vision, as stated by Herzl, "is no dream".



Graffiti of the "modern version" of Herzl and next to it a text that says, "If you will it, here (in Israel), we fulfill the dream."

- Currently, the state of Israel does not have a constitution, and its Declaration of Independence and set of Basic Laws serve as the moral and legal parameters of the state. In moments when the compass of many politicians does not seem to point a clear collective, national, Jewish and democratic north, we see in the Declaration of Independence, based on millenary Jewish values and legacies that have been consolidated over the generations, a highly relevant and transcendent document in regard to our vision as a society. The semel of our Tnuva is blue and white, representing the colors of the Israeli flag. It shows a Magen David, the oldest and most representative semel of the Jewish people, as well as of the independence of Israel in its homeland, located in the center of its flag. Without a doubt, on this date, these elements share a special meaning and value.
- Hanoar Hatzioni B'Mexico began its activities in 1948, and its founders were Miguel Eisenstadt, who was the shaliach of Aliyat Hanoar, along with the chaverim of Ben Gefen, Abraham Arkavi and Julio Yasinovsky. Since then, Hanoar Hatzioni B'Mexico has been one of the most significant Zionist organizations in the country, becoming one of the strongest Tnuot in Mexico. Congratulations to Hanoar Hatzioni Mexico for its first seventy years of educational, Jewish and Zionist activity. To many more years to come!



- In 1948, Hanoar Hatzioni greatly contributed to the building of the newly emerged Medinat Israel through the founding of two large centers of study: Havat Hanoar Hatzioni, in Jerusalem, and Alonei Yitzhak, located in the north of the country. These institutions housed orphaned children and youth coming from the Shoah and the different Aliyot after the Independence of the State of Israel and continue to do so now, providing education to families at risk (economic or social). Likewise, in 1948, Hanoar Hatzioni founded two Moshavim Shitufyim: Alonei Aba and Timurim.



## THE CHAG'S VALUES



## SYMBOLS AND CUSTOMS OF THE CHAG

### • YOM HAATZMAUT, A NATIONAL PARTY

In 1949, Israel's Independence Day was enacted into law as a national holiday. Therefore, flags are hung in every public institution, a custom which most Israelis follow by hanging blue and white flags in their homes and vehicles. In addition, an official ceremony is held, marking the end of Yom Hazikaron and the official opening of Yom HaAtzmaut with the presence of the Speaker of the Israeli Parliament (the Knesset), ministers, the Chief of General Staff of the Israel Defense Forces, diplomats, families of fallen soldiers in Israel's wars and victims of terrorism and other personalities of Israeli society. Two of the main events of the ceremony are the lighting of the twelve torches (symbolizing the Twelve Tribes of Israel) by twelve honorees and the Tzahal's spectacle, in which representatives of all the army's units perform a marching display, forming different shapes with flags.

### • MUSIC, ART AND AL HAESH

During the night of Yom HaAtzmaut, each city is responsible for offering its inhabitants a music concert with different popular musicians. During the day of Yom HaAtzmaut, national parks tend to be full of families celebrating with a typical "Al Haesh". Likewise, many museums are open to the public free of charge, which makes this day a celebration of art, joy and fun.



## CHAG RELATED QUOTES

*"Exactly at four o'clock in the afternoon, the ceremony began. Ben Gurion, dressed in a dark suit and tie, rapped with his mallet. According to the plan, this should have been the signal for the orchestra, waiting at the gallery on the second floor, to perform the national anthem Hatikva. But something went wrong and there was no music. Spontaneously, we all stood up and sang our national anthem. Then, Ben Gurion cleared his throat and said slowly, 'I will read the parchment of Independence.' It took him only a quarter of an hour to read the entire proclamation. He read it slowly and with a clear voice, which, as I recall, rose slightly as he reached the eleventh paragraph:*

*"Accordingly we, members of the people's council, representatives of the Jewish community of Eretz-Israel and of the Zionist movement, are here assembled on the day of the termination of the British Mandate over Eretz-Israel and, by virtue of our natural and historic right and on the strength of the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly, hereby declare the establishment of a Jewish state in Eretz-Israel, to be known as the state of Israel."*



*"The State of Israel! My eyes filled with tears and my hands shook. We had achieved it. We had made the Jewish state a reality, and I, Golda Mabovitch Meyerson, had lived to see it. Whatever happened next, whatever the price any of us would have to pay for it, we had recreated the Jewish national home. The long exile was over. From that moment, we would no longer live depending on the mercy of others in the land of our ancestors. We were a nation like any other, owners – for the first time in twenty centuries – of our own destiny. The dream has become a reality... too late for those who had perished in the Holocaust, but not for the future generations. Exactly fifty years ago, at the end of the First Zionist Congress in Basel, Theodore Herzl had written in his diary: "At Basel I founded the Jewish State. If I said this out loud today, I would be greeted by universal laughter. In five years perhaps, and certainly in fifty years, everyone will perceive it." And so it had been."*  
**My Life, Golda Meir (1975)**



## CHAG RELATED ARTICLES

### MARTIN KOHAN, ROSH CHINUCH HANOAR HATZIONI B'ARGENTINA

Seven decades ago, in 1948, the words expressed by David Ben Gurion formalized the return of our people to our historic homeland as a sovereign state. Judaism began that day, what we know as the Israelocentric stage: Israel became the material, national, spiritual and cultural center of the Jewish people. Yom Ha'atzmaut is an incredible opportunity in the Tnua, to rethink aspects of the past, relate and face them with the present and set new challenges for the future as a Jewish and Zionist youth movement. Let us make the most of it! Yom Huledet Sameach Medinat Israel! L'chaim to these seventy years and those to come!

### ALEX BITTERMAN, MAZKIRUT OLAMIT OF HANOAR HATZIONI

Israel's seventieth anniversary is not only an occasion to celebrate for our great conquests as a nation, but it is also an opportunity to profoundly reflect on our path as a people and a nation in Israel. Similarly to the way the Jewish calendar grants us the platform of "Cheshbon Nefesh Ishi" (personal reflection) in Yom Kippur, we also have the platform of "Cheshbon Nefesh Leumi" (national reflection) in Yom Ha'atzmaut. For us in Hanoar Hatzioni, this day is an opportunity to raise questions that allow us to clarify our path, analyze our past achievements, be proud and criticize the present and always have a clear vision, a "compass" of the values which helps us to maintain our essence as a Jewish nation and an exemplary nation (Or Lagoyim).

### CHAIM WEIZMANN (MAY 15, 1948), OUR SOURCES OF INSPIRATION

"On this memorable day, when the Jewish state emerges again after two thousand years, I send my expressions of love and admiration to all sectors of the Yeshuv, and the warmest congratulations to its government, which is now facing a serious and encouraging responsibility. I am strongly convinced that all who are and will be citizens of the Jewish State will do their utmost to turn the opportunity that history has granted them into reality. Our purpose will be to create the institutions and values of a free community, within the spirit of the great traditions that have contributed so much to the thought and spirit of humanity."

## SPECIAL EDITION!!!

### "NEKUDA.IL" PROJECT

To celebrate Israel's Seventieth anniversary, the Mazkirut Olamit of Hanoar Hatzioni together with Cynthia Witemberg and Sharon Bakas (chaverot of Hanoar Hatzioni B'Mexico within the framework of Shnat Hachshara Tnuati) have produced educational material which aims to display the different points of view of our beloved Medinat Israel through the eyes of the Tnua. We hope you enjoy it and that it will be a useful tool for learning and reflection!



## ZMAN LE PEILUT

### HOW DO YOU CELEBRATE YOM HAATZMAUT IN YOUR KEN?

Take a picture and share it with the rest of the chaverim of hanoar hatzioni across the world

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR THE COMPLETE  
VERSIONS OF THE ARTICLES:  
[www.hholamit.org.il](http://www.hholamit.org.il)

