

יום העצמאות Yom Ha'Atzmaut Israeli Independence Day



Celebrate Identify

Yom Ha'Atzmaut is the joyous occasion in the Jewish calendar when we observe the founding of the State of Israel. This day unifies the Jewish people in a time of celebration.

Yom Ha'Atzmaut can be celebrated in chapters, councils and region and among friends with reflection, discussion and programs that include the following testimonies, stories, songs and other resources.

Yom Ha'Atzmaut, Israeli Independence Day, celebrates the establishment of Israel. On May 14th of 1948, after proclaiming independence, Ben-Gurion announced the ending of the restrictions on Jewish immigration into Israel; Israel was now open to every Jew who wished to return to Israel. In keeping with the Jewish tradition of recognizing joyous occasions in times of sadness and vice versa, Yom Ha'Atzmaut begins at sundown following Yom HaZikaron, Israeli Memorial Day.

Customs & Ceremonies

Yom Ha'Atzmaut begins with a ceremony on Mt. Herzl in Jerusalem in which the Israeli flag is raised from half-mast (due to Yom HaZikaron) to the top of the pole. The ceremony includes speeches by Israeli political figures, artistic performances, and the ceremonial lighting of twelve torches, representing the twelve tribes of Israel. The honor of lighting a torch is bestowed on Israelis who have propelled forward the values of the State of Israel and made significant strides in select fields.

In Israel, in addition to official ceremonies, people celebrate Yom Ha'atzma'ut in a variety of ways. People attend public concerts, hikes and picnics and parades; they sing and dance to Israeli folk dances and singing Israeli songs. Army camps are open for civilians to visit and see the recent technological achievements of the Israeli Defense Forces. At the end of Yom Ha'atzma'ut, the "Israel Prize" is awarded to individual Israelis for their unique contribution to the country's culture, science, arts and the humanities.

Being in Israel on March of the Living during Yom Ha'Atzmaut was unlike anything I had experienced before. The pride and air of liberation surrounding the Israeli people was refreshing and inspiring. I spent the evening of Yom Ha'atzmaut on Ben Gurion Street, walking through crowds of spirited Israelis, festive music, dancing, young children spraying shaving cream everywhere, and an overwhelming sense of genuine love for Israel.

- Jessie Gordon, BBG Alumnae, Great Midwest Region

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Celebrate as One Connect

For Jews around the world, joining with Israelis to celebrate Yom Ha'Atzmaut has become a way to express solidarity and support the State of Israel. Around the world, the Jewish community comes together to celebrate Israel. Many people wear blue and white, put on large scale community events, add prayers to their service, sing Israeli songs and some read the Israeli Declaration of Independence.

Megilat Ha'Atzmut – the Scroll of Independence

“The Land of Israel was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious and political identity was shaped. Here they first attained to statehood, created cultural values of national and universal significance and gave to the world the eternal Book of Books.”

- David Ben Gurion

These are the opening lines to the Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel. They were first read by David Ben Gurion, the first Prime Minister of Israel, in Tel Aviv.

HaTikvah – The Hope

HaTikvah, Israel's National Anthem, was written by a Jewish poet, Naphtali Herz Imber, a few years prior to her immigrating to Palestine. You can feel the excitement and hope the author felt after the establishment of the first Jewish agricultural settlement.

HEBREW	TRANSLITERATION	TRANSLATION
כּל עוֹד בְּלִבֵּב פְּנִימָה נֶפֶשׁ יְהוּדֵי הוֹמִיָּה, וְלִפְאַתֵי מִזְרַח, קְדִימָה, עֵינַי לְצִיּוֹן צוֹפֵיָה, עוֹד לֹא אֲבָדָה תְּקוּתָנוּ, הַתְּקוּהָ בַת שְׁנוֹת אֲלֵפִים, לְהִיּוֹת עַם חֲפָשִׁי בְּאַרְצֵנוּ, אֶרֶץ צִיּוֹן וִירוּשָׁלַיִם.	Kol-Od Balevav p'nimah Nefesh ye'hudi holmiyah Ul'fa'atei mizrach kadimah Ayin l'tziyon tzofiyah. Od lo avdah tikvatenu Hatikvah bat sh'not alpayim Lih'yot am chafshi b'artzenu Eretz tziyon vi'rushalayim	As long as in the heart The Jewish spirit yearns With eyes turned eastward Looking towards Zion, then our hope, The hope of two thousand years, Is not lost: To be a free nation in our land ,The land of Zion and Jerusalem - From Siddur Sim Shalom

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Religious Services

Many people alter or add prayers to their services to observe Yom Ha'Atzmaut. Some people will read specific sections of the Torah or Haftorah. Others will recite *Hallel*, the prayer for thanksgiving, which is read on joyous occasions. Similar to Purim and Hanukkah, which are holidays that commemorate battles fought and won, the conservative movement wrote a special *Al HaNisim* prayer for Yom Ha'Atzmaut:

HEBREW	TRANSLITERATION	TRANSLATION
<p>עַל הַנִּסִּים, וְעַל הַפְּרָקוֹן, וְעַל הַגְּבוּרוֹת, וְעַל הַתְּשׁוּעוֹת, וְעַל הַמְּלַחְמוֹת, שֶׁעָשִׂיתָ לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם בְּזַמַּן הַזֶּה.</p> <p>בַּיָּמִי קְבוּץ שְׂרֵידֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֲרָצוֹת חֹשֶׁךְ וְצַלְמוֹת לְחַמְדַּת נִחְלָתָם, קָמוּ חֲלוּצֵי אֲמָה, הִרִימוּ נֶס וַחֲבָרוּ מִגְּלָה, וַתִּבְעוּ אֶת זְכוֹת הָעַם לְעַמֵּד בְּרִשׁוֹת עַצְמוֹ, כְּמִמְלַכְהָ יְהוּדִית בְּאַרְץ מוֹלְדָתָהּ. בַּתְּפִים וּבִמְחֹלוֹת רַקְדוּ בְּחֻצוֹת, טַף וְנָשִׁים, זְקֵנִים וְנְעָרִים, בְּקוֹלוֹת שִׁמְחָה וּבְצִדְקָהּ. בְּאוֹתָהּ שָׁעָה תִּקְפּוּם בְּנֵי עוֹלָה, לְהַכְחִיד מִן הָאָרֶץ שָׁם וּשְׂאֲרֵיהָ, וְלָיִם לְזֶרֶק כָּל שׂוֹמְרֵי אֲמוּנָהּ. וְאַתָּה לִישַׁע עַמְּךָ מִהֶרֶת, יְדֵי מִגְּנִיחֵם חִזַּקְתָּ, וְכָלִי אוֹיְבֵיהֶם נִפְצַתָּ. תְּקוּמַת פָּאֵר עָשִׂיתָ וּמְדִינַת הַדָּר הִקְמַתָּ, רֵאשִׁית שְׂאִיפַת דּוֹרוֹתֶיךָ, מִחֻסָּה וּמְעוֹז לְכָל שְׂבוֹת עַמְּךָ.</p>	<p><i>Al hanisim v'al hapurkan v'al hagvurot v'al ha'tshuvot v'al hamilchamot she'asita la'avoteinu bayamim hahem bazman hazeh</i></p> <p><i>Bimei bikutz s'ridei yisrael me'artzut choshek v'tzalmavet l'chemdat nachalamat kuma chalutzei uma herimu nes v'chibru m'gilah v'tav'u et z'chut ha'am la'amod bir'shut atz'mo kemam'lacha y'hudit b'erezt moladto b'tufim uvim'cholot rakdu bachutzot taf v'nashim z'kenim un'arim b'kolot simcha uv'tzahala b'ota sha'ah t'kafum b'nei av'lah l'hach'chid min ha'arezt shem ush'erit v'layam am'cha mihar'ta y'dei m'gineihem chizkeita uchlei niptzta t'kumat p'er asita um'dinat hadar hekam'ta reshit she'ifat dorotecha machaseh uma'oz l'chol sh'vut amecha</i></p>	<p>And for the miracles, and for the salvation, and for the mighty deeds, and for the victories, and for the battles which You performed for our forefathers in those days, at this time.</p> <p>In the days of the ingathering of the remnant of Israel from the lands of darkness and the shadow of death to their beloved inheritance, pioneers of the nation arose, raised the flag, composed a declaration, and claimed the right of the nation to be established with its own consent, as a Jewish government in the land of its birth. With song and dance, women and children, the old and the young, celebrated on the streets with joy and rejoicing. At that same time, their enemies converged forthwith, to eliminate all trace of Israel from the land, and to push into the sea all the keepers of its faith. But You hurried forth to rescue your nation. You strengthened the hands of their defenders, and destroyed the weapons of their enemies. A revival of glory you made, a country of beauty you established, the beginning of the longing of the generations, a refuge and a fortress for the return of all Your people.</p>

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Chapter Programs

Your chapter can get involved by creating your own Yom Ha'Atzmaut celebration or program or by joining your local community programming. Here are some chapter program ideas:

- Use the resources on the Speak UP for Israel page on the AZA BBG Website to create a meaningful Israel program. Check out the [BBYO Israel Program Directory](#) and the [Top Ten Ways to Infuse Israel into BBYO Programming](#) on the AZA BBG Website.
- Throw a double Birthday Party for BBYO Founders Day and Israeli Independence Day.
- Have an Israeli themed dance and blast your favorite Israeli music!
- Have a potluck dinner with your favorite Israeli foods.
- Compare and contrast Yom Ha'Atzmaut and your countries day of independence.
- Model your next induction/installation ceremony model after the Israeli Defense Force's [swearing in ceremony](#).

To learn more about Israel and Speak UP for Israel programming visit bbyo.org/azabbg/speakup

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Change the World Improve

Consider making one of the following initiatives your special BBYO Stand UP cause for May. You can raise awareness of these projects by speaking about them publicly and raising funds to bring the innovations to more people.

Celebrate the way in which Israeli innovation is improving the world! From renewable energy to agriculture to IT and more, Israel is a leader in the global innovation sector.

Innovation: Africa

In Africa, these innovations have the power to save lives. With similar climates and natural resources, Israeli solar, water and agricultural technologies are a natural fit for African villages. Innovation: Africa's mission is to share the knowledge and expertise developed in Israel with African people and communities that need it.

In its first five years, Innovation: Africa used solar energy to power 63 schools, medical clinics and water pumping systems, providing electricity to over 450,000 people.

ReWalk – Bionic Suit

The ReWalk is the very first commercially viable upright system, which enables individuals with lower limb disabilities and paraplegics to stand, walk, and even take stairs independently.

ReWalk is designed and developed by Argo Medical Technologies, a medical device company located in Haifa, Israel. Weighing approximately 44 lbs., the

ReWalk exoskeleton is a wearable, motor-driven robotic device that's worn outside the clothing. The bionic suit allows the user to walk by detecting shifts within their balance and moving the user's legs in a natural gait.

By restoring vertical mobility, ReWalk delivers benefits in overall health, social interaction and economical healthcare.



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Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Efforts in Haiti.

Within 48 hours of the massive earthquake that struck Port-au-Prince, Haiti, on January 12, 2010 the government of Israel dispatched a military task force consisting of 230 people: 109 support and rescue personnel from the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Home Front Command and 121 medical personnel from the IDF Medical Corps Field Hospital. The force's primary mission was to establish a field hospital in Haiti.



We landed in Port-au-Prince 15 hours after leaving Tel Aviv and began to deploy immediately. The first patients arrived at our gates and were admitted even before the hospital was fully built, within 8 hours after our equipment arrived. In its 10 days of operation, the field hospital treated more than 1100 patients.

(The New England Journal of Medicine, “The Israeli Field Hospital in Haiti — Ethical Dilemmas in Early Disaster Response”)

Save a Child's Heart

Save a Child's Heart (SACH) is an Israeli-based international humanitarian project, whose mission is to improve the quality of pediatric cardiac care for children from developing countries who suffer from heart disease and to create centers of competence in these countries. SACH is dedicated to the idea that every child deserves the best medical treatment available, regardless of the child's nationality, religion, color, gender or financial situation.

SACH is motivated by the age-old Jewish tradition of *tikkun olam* – repairing the world. By mending the hearts of children, regardless of their background, SACH is contributing to a better and more peaceful future for all children.