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Customs and Halachot of Yom Ha-Atzmaut

[Collected from the writings of Ha-Rav Aviner]

1. Tachanun on Erev Yom Ha-Atzmaut

It is proper to recite Tachanun at Minchah of Erev Yom Ha-Atzmaut, as the Chief Rabbinate of Israel has decreed this day "Remembrance Day for the Fallen Soldiers of Tzahal," which is a day of mourning.¹

2. Standing in silence during the siren on Remembrance Day

This practice is a holy mitzvah of remembering the holy ones who fell.² There is no concern of "Chukot Ha-Goyim" (following the practices of the non-Jews) because standing to honor the fallen is a logical practice and has a clear meaning. One who is concerned about "Bitul Torah" (taking time away from learning Torah) during the siren should think about Torah related to the self-sacrifice. One also should not separate from the community.³

3. Shaving in honor of Yom Ha-Atzmaut

It is a mitzvah to shave in honor of Yom Ha-Atzmaut.⁴ Some students once asked our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain Kook, before Yom Ha-Atzmaut if it is permissible to shave for this day. Our Rabbi did not answer. Later he responded: "Tomorrow there will be an exam on your faces." On Yom Ha-Atzmaut he saw that some students had been strict with themselves and had not shaved. He said of them: "Their faces show their character" (Yeshayahu 3:9, i.e. they had not absorbed the true joy of the day). He added: When there is faith, there is joy and when there is joy there are no halachic doubts. How long will we

¹ Iturei Cohanim #97, Shut She'eilat Shlomo 3:147, Sichot Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah: Medinat Yisrael #34 p. 7, Sichot Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah: Yom Ha-Atzmaut ve-Yom Yerushalayim p. 73, Sichot Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah: Eretz Yisrael pp. 264-265

² Our Rabbi, Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, in Techumin vol. 2, p. 388

³ Shut She'eilat Shlomo 3:145

⁴ Shut She'eilat Shlomo 2:144

speaking out of both sides of our mouths (see Melachim 1 18:21)?! Do we believe in the Revealed Redemption or not?!"⁵ Furthermore, it is permissible for a son to shave for Yom Ha-Atzmaut against the will of his parents.⁶

4. Order of Davening

One should daven according to the order of the prayers that the Chief Rabbinate established for this holiday.⁷ When a Rosh Yeshiva came to get advice from our Rabbi about hiring a particular Torah scholar in his yeshiva, our Rabbi instructed him to check the order of his davening on Yom Ha-Atzmaut.⁸

5. Hallel with a blessing

One should recite Hallel with a blessing on Yom Ha-Atzmaut.⁹ There is no issue here of being disrespectful to the Chief Rabbinate.¹⁰ A Sefardic Jew should say "ligmor" in the blessing instead of "likro" as is their practice on Chanukah.¹¹ It is permissible for a son to recite Hallel on Yom Ha-Atzmaut against the will of his parents.¹²

6. Reciting Selichot for the first Monday of the Fasts Behab

(Behab is custom in which some people fast on the Monday, Thursday and Monday following Pesach and Sukkot to atone for the possibility that they sinned while eating and drinking during the holiday)

Our Rabbi had the practice to say Selichot as well as Hallel (when Yom Ha-Atzmaut coincided with the fast). He did not see them as contradictory, but as complimentary, since the fast of individuals does not impinge on the joy of the community. Additionally, the Selichot provides an ethical dimension and a more serious character to this day.¹³

7. Singing "Ha-Tikvah"

There is no prohibition against singing "Ha-Tivkah," even though it does not contain a mention of Hashem. If the entire community is singing "Hatikvah" one should join them, since through this act they demonstrate their connection to the Land

⁵ Iturei Cohanim #52, Sichot Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah: Medinat Yisrael #34 p. 4, Sefer Rabbenu p. 204

⁶ Iturei Cohanim #186

⁷ Shut She'eilat Shlomo 1:280 (first edition) and 2:144

⁸ Iturei Cohanim #102

⁹ Be-Ahava U-Be-Emunah vol. 1 #111-113

¹⁰ Be-Ahava U-Be-Emunah vol. 1, p. 312. And see Iturei Cohanim #94, Sichot Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah: Yom Ha-Atzmaut pp. 69-71 and Sichot Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah: Eretz Yisrael pp. 261-263. The practice of our Rabbi was according to the directives of the Chief Rabbinate (he did not recite Hallel with a blessing, according to their ruling, until the time of Ha-Rav Goren when they ruled that a blessing should be recited).

¹¹ Iturei Cohanim #61 and Shut She'eilat Shlomo 3:148

¹² Iturei Cohanim #186

¹³ Iturei Cohanim #30, Tal Chermon: Moadim pp. 147-148 and Shut She'eilat Shlomo 2:145

and State of Israel. Nonetheless, this song is not part of the order of prayers of the day which was established by Torah scholars.¹⁴

8. Festive Meal

One should eat a festive meal on Yom Ha-Atzmaut; and it is a mitzvah meal.¹⁵

9. "Magdil" in Birkat Ha-Mazon

In Birkat Ha-Mazon one should recite "Magdil" as on a weekday (since there is no Musaf sacrifice).¹⁶

10. Music at a Yom Ha-Atzmaut party

It is permissible to play music at a Yom Ha-Atzmaut party; it is also permissible for child to have rehearsals in preparation for Yom Ha-Atzmaut.¹⁷

11. Tzahal Parade

One should make an effort to attend the Tzahal Parade, as our Rabbi said that anything used for the mitzvah of conquering the Land and the mitzvah of establishing our authority over the Land is holy. There is no issue of "My strength and the might of my hand" (Devarim 8:17), i.e. we performed it and not Hashem. Hashem performed all of these acts through us. This was the practice of our Rabbi¹⁸ [Today, the parade is much smaller on Mt. Herzl at the end of Remembrance Day for Fallen Soldiers of Tzahal and the beginning of Yom Ha-Atzmaut].

12. Motza'ei (Night after) Yom Ha-Atzmaut

On Motza'ei Yom Ha-Atzmaut, one is required to observe the mourning which is practiced during Sefirat Ha-Omer.¹⁹

13. Fifth of Iyar which falls on Friday or Shabbat

If the fifth of Iyar falls on a Friday, all of the festivities and holiday prayers for Yom Ha-Atzmaut are moved up to Thursday. According to all opinions, Tachanun is not recited on Friday, since the holiness remains on that day.²⁰ If the fifth of Iyar falls on Shabbat, everything is also moved up to Thursday, and some say that "Av Ha-Rachamim" and "Tzidkatcha Tzedek" are not recited on Shabbat.²¹ Our Rabbi emphasized that a year in which Yom Ha-Atzmaut falls on a Friday or Shabbat (and is therefore moved up to Thursday) is a great

¹⁴ Iturei Cohanim #44 and Am Ve-Artzo vol. 2 pp. 251-252

¹⁵ Sichot Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah: Yom Ha-Atzmaut (5732) #4 and Sefer Rabbenu p. 204

¹⁶ Personal question to Ha-Rav

¹⁷ Shut She'eilat Shlomo 1:214 #6

¹⁸ Sichot Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah: Bereshit pp. 382-383, Tal Chermon: Moadim p. 92, Sefer Rabbenu pp. 204-05 and Sichot Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah: Eretz Yisrael pp. 268-269

¹⁹ Shut She'eilat 1:169 #1 (first edition) and 1:214 #11

²⁰ Iturei Cohanim #97 and Shut She'eilat Shlomo 3:146

²¹ Talk of Ha-Rav in the yeshiva

sanctification of Hashem's Name, since this is proof that the Jewish State is preventing the desecration of Shabbat.

14. Yom Ha-Atzmaut after Explusions

One should rejoice on Yom Ha-Atzmaut for the Redemption which is already occurring, and one should cry on Tisha Be-Av for the destruction of Yamit, Gush Katif and Northern Shomron, and for all of the deficiencies which exist in the State of Israel.²² The same applies if there are difficulties in the overall state of the State of Israel.²³



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²² Tal Chermon: Moadim p. 210

²³ Iturei Cohanim #106