

K1: Why Israel?



Objectives:

1. **Explore** the promise of the Land of Israel.
2. **Consider** living in the land vs establishing a state.
3. **Recognise** the Divine importance of the Land of Israel.

The first time Israel is mentioned in Torah is when Hashem speaks to Avraham:

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל-אַבְרָם לְדַלְתָּ מֵאַרְצְךָ וּמִמּוֹלַדְתֶּךָ וּמִבֵּית אֲבִיךָ אֶל-
הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֵרָאֶךְ:
וְאָעִשְׂךָ לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל וְאֶבְרַכְךָ וְאֶגְדַּלְהָ שְׂמֶךָ וְהָיָה בְרָכָה:
וְאֶבְרַכְהָ מִבְּרַכְיֶךָ וּמִמְקַלְלֶךָ אֶאֱרָ וְנִבְרַכְוּ בְךָ כָּל מְשֻׁפָּחַת הָאָדָמָה:
וַיִּלְךְ אַבְרָם כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר אֵלָיו ה' וַיִּלְךְ אֹתוֹ לֹט וְאַבְרָם בְּרַחֲמֵשׁ
שָׁנִים וְשִׁבְעִים שָׁנָה בְּצֵאתוֹ מִחָרָן:
וַיִּקַּח אַבְרָם אֶת-שָׂרִי אִשְׁתּוֹ וְאֶת-לוֹט בְּרֵאחִיו וְאֶת-כָּל-רְכוּשָׁם אֲשֶׁר
רָכְשׁוּ וְאֶת-הַנֶּפֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר-עָשׂוּ בְּחָרָן וַיֵּצְאוּ לְלֶכֶת אֶרְצָה כְּנָעַן וַיָּבֹאוּ
אֶרְצָה כְּנָעַן:
וַיַּעֲבֵר אַבְרָם בְּאֶרֶץ עַד מְקוֹם שְׁלָם עַד אֵלּוֹן מוֹרָה וְהַכְּנַעֲנִי אֵז
בְּאֶרֶץ:
וַיֵּרָא ה' אֶל-אַבְרָם וַיֹּאמֶר לְזָרְעֲךָ אֵתְּךָ אֶת-הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת וַיְבִן שָׁם
מִזְבֵּחַ ה' הַנְּרָאָה אֵלָיו:

"Hashem said to Avraham, "Go for yourself from your land, from your relatives, and from your father's house to the land that I will show you." After promising Avraham that He will make him into a great nation He says "...to your offspring I will give this land." (Bereshit 12:1-7)

What is it about the small strip of land in the Middle East that is so important to us, the Jews?



As we get further and further into all the kvutzot and move on in history we must still always remember to come back to this point – that this is the land promised by Hashem to His people – to us!

Discussion point 1: Do you think that your Chanichim connect the current state of Israel to the land of Canaan described in the Torah?

Israel: the basis for a greater spiritual relationship with Hashem

When Hashem makes His covenant with Avraham (the Covenant Between the Parts – Brit Bein H'Betarim) He says:

וְהִקְמַתִּי אֶת-בְּרִיתִי בֵּינִי וּבֵינְךָ, וּבֵין זָרְעֲךָ אַחֲרֶיךָ לְדוֹרֹתָם לְבְרִית עוֹלָם, לְהִיּוֹת לְךָ לְאֱלֹקִים, וְלִזְרַעְךָ אַחֲרֶיךָ: וְנָתַתִּי לְךָ וּלְזָרְעֲךָ אַחֲרֶיךָ אֶת אֶרֶץ מִגְרִיד, אֶת כָּל-אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן, לְאֶחְזַת עוֹלָם, וְהִיְיַתִּי לָהֶם אֱלֹקִים:

*"I will establish My covenant between Me and you and between your offspring after you, throughout their generations, as an everlasting covenant, **to be Hashem to you** and to your offspring after you. And I will give to you and your offspring after you the land of your sojourns – the whole of the land of Canaan – as an everlasting possession; **and I shall be Hashem to them.**" (Bereshit 17:7-8)*

Rashi explains that the phrase 'I shall be Hashem to them,' is repeated to suggest that someone who lives outside of Israel is like someone who has no G-d. (Rashi to Bereshit 17:8, quoting Bereshit Rabba)



The Gur Aryeh (Maharal of Prague, for bio see extra chomer) explains that there is a unique dimension to Israel's relationship with Hashem when they are in the Land of Israel, as that is where Hashem's Providence is most intense. One who lives outside of Israel does not receive the same degree of Divine assistance. Living in the Land of Israel is of utmost importance in Judaism and the land dominates our thoughts and prayers. Our prayers are directed towards Israel wherever we are in the world (see additional chomer: Shulchan Aruch).

Discussion point 2: How do you think your Chanichim will feel about their mitzvot arguably being less important in Chutz La'aretz? Can you think of a productive way to teach them about this?

The Bet Hamikdash:

Along with the inherent importance of Israel for the Jews, the one place that was the manifestation of Jewish self-rule and religious fervour was the Bet Hamikdash in Yerushalayim. When we pray for and concern ourselves with Israel we focus more particularly on Jerusalem. Yerushalayim was the religious and political centre of Jewish life; *"mikdash melech, ir melucha"* – "the Holy place of the king, the city of kingship." It fulfilled both roles; religious and political and it demonstrates that our relationship to Israel should be both religious and political.

It was Yerushalayim and the Bet Hamikdash which characterised Jewish chagim. Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkot were all celebrated by mass pilgrimage to Yerushalayim (even today we see remnants of that pilgrimage over Shavuot as well as the massive Birkat Kohanim that takes place on Chol HaMoed Sukkot and Pesach). Yom Kippur was the time in which the Kohen Gadol would act on behalf of ALL the Jewish people in the Holy of Holies to atone for our sins.

וְצָרִיכָה אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל לְהִיּוֹת בְּנוּיָה וְכָל יִשְׂרָאֵל יוֹשְׁבִים עָלֶיהָ מְסֻדְרִים בְּכָל סֻדְרֵיהֶם, מְקַדְּשׁ וּמְלַכּוֹת, כְּהִנֵּה וּבּוֹאָה, שׁוֹפְטִים וְשׁוֹטְרִים וְכָל תַּכְסִּיּוֹתֵיהֶם, אִזּ חַיָּה הַיָּא תּוֹרָה שְׁבַעַל פֶּה בְּכָל זֵיו תִּפְאָרְתָּהּ (אורות התורה א:ג)

"It is needed for Eretz Yisrael to be built and for all of [Am] Yisrael living in it, with every organization in order and running smoothly: Mikdash and Kingship, Priesthood and Prophecy, [Halachic] Judges and Police. Then the Oral [experiential] Torah lives in all its splendour and glory." (Orot haTorah 1:3)



Did you know?
Yerushalayim and the Bet Hamikdash are mentioned over 700 times in various forms in Tanach!

The Bet Hamikdash was the centre of Jewish life. The important function of the Bet Kneset nowadays is an attempt to retain some of the power of the Mikdash in maintaining our relationship with G-d. We say that each Shul is a "Mikdash M'at" a miniature Temple.



Discussion point 3: "Our relationship to Israel should be both to the land and to the state." Hopefully you'll see these two themes running through the BC chomer. Can you think of ways to communicate this point to chanichim in your first Kvutza?

Ha'Am ba'Aretz

Looking at the Avot, and the sources surrounding those chapters in Bereishit (see additional Chomer for some examples) we get a tiny inkling as to how holy, special, and central Eretz Yisrael is to our people. Looking simply at Bereishit, one might get the impression that living in Israel is something personal and individual. However, the Torah does not stop at Bereishit, it moves onto Sefer Shemot. It is clear from a cursory glance of the two books that Bereishit looks at the **individual founders** of the Jewish people, whereas Shemot is about the building of a **nation**. The very first perek of Shemot alludes to this. The generation of the individuals – the children of Ya'akov – passes away. Then we are introduced to a new idea:

וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-עַמּוֹ, הֲנֵה עַם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל רַב וְעֲצוּם מִמֶּנּוּ:

*"[Pharaoh] said to his people, 'Behold the **nation** of the children of Israel are many and stronger than us.'"*
(Shemot 1:9)

In Bereishit a covenant is made between G-d and Avraham. In Shemot this same covenant is made between G-d and the whole people (at Sinai).

If one looks at all the laws given in the Torah, it becomes clear that they encompass all areas of life – social laws, economic, agricultural, ethical etc. They are not laws that can be achieved by the individual alone but can only be achieved in their fullest sense by a **whole society**. The Torah makes it clear that the correct place for this society is in its promised land.

This is spelled out to the Bnei Yisrael just before they enter the land. As they stand, after 40 years of wandering, on the Eastern Bank of the River Jordan, Moshe says to them:

*"You shall observe to do as Hashem your G-d has commanded you: you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. You shall walk in the ways which Hashem your G-d has commanded you, that you may live, and that it may be well with you, and that you may prolong your days in the **Land** which you shall possess. **Now this is***

the commandment, the statutes, and the judgements, which Hashem your G-d commanded to teach you, that you might do them in the Land into which you go to possess [...] Hear O Israel, and take care to do it; that it may be well with you, and that you may increase mightily, as Hashem G-d of your fathers has promised you, in the **Land** that flows with milk and honey." (Devarim 5:29-6:3)



The setting up of this state according to the Torah is the fulfilment of the Jewish nation's covenantal duty. If they abide by all these Mitzvot and run their society accordingly in the Land, then Hashem will perform His part of the covenant and cause them to prosper and be strong and happy.

It's not just that they are going to live in the Land, rather they are going to get control over the land. The covenant can only really be fulfilled on a national level, in an autonomous Jewish state. An autonomous Jewish state in the land of Israel underpins the possibility of the fulfilment of Jewish religious duty, as it was ideally intended.

Discussion point 4: Do you think that chanichim connect to Judaism as a nation? Why?

Artzeinu-Our land

The Land of Israel has many benefits: It is a place of refuge, a free homeland and a concept which has kept us united over thousands of years. However, we must not forget that, ultimately, we relate to the Land as a Divine gift.

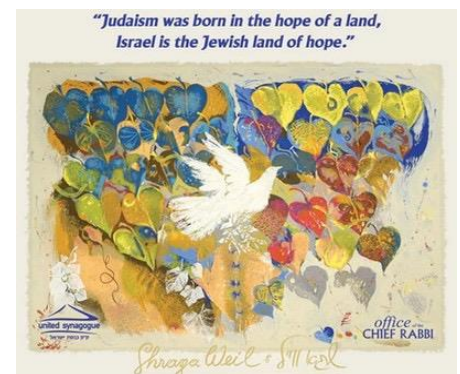
“That He has chosen us from amongst the nations and given us His Torah” (Birchat Hatorah)

The Land of Israel is much more than a refuge, much more than a nationalist enterprise. This is a paramount starting point for us at Bnei Akiva; first we must understand the historic connection with Israel and how the country is etched into our psyche. We first must love and appreciate Israel and over the next K's we will learn about the Medina.

In Parashat Chayei Sarah we read how Avraham bought the cave and field of Machpela in Chevron, *'b'kesef maleh'*, for the full amount of money. This phrase comes up again when David buys the threshing floor of Aravna, which later becomes Har Habayit. In Chayei Sarah, Rashi explains that the phrase comes to show that Avraham paid a fair price for the Land so that we can prove ownership in the future.

As we see today, no other nations look to the Torah as a proof. Rather we can never expect to prove to others from our Torah that the land belongs to us, but if we ourselves do not internalise and understand fully our connection to the land then how can we bring a claim against any other inhabitants.

There are eighty-two Christian nations, fifty-six Muslim ones but only one Jewish state. Israel is the only place on earth where in four thousand years of history, Jews have formed a majority. The only place where they have been able to rule themselves and defend themselves [...] to live as a nation shaping its own destiny. [...] Only in Israel can a Jew speak the Jewish language, see a Jewish landscape, live by the Jewish calendar, walk where our ancestors walked and continue the story they began.” (Rabbi Sacks: Home of Hope)



Concrete Concepts:

1. The **same Land of Israel** that was promised to **Avraham Avinu** is the one we have today.
2. Our relationship to Israel should be both to the **land and to the state**.
3. The land of Israel has **intrinsic spiritual significance**

Peula Ideas:

Elevator Speeches – Get your chanichim to write down their Judaism “elevator speech” (how they would describe Judaism in six sentences or so). Once they are done, get them to share their ideas. Now get them to write down Avraham’s elevator speech. What would he say? Listen to Hashem? Go to Israel? Start a nation? Sounds a lot like Am Yisrael, Eretz Yisrael and Torat Yisrael....!

Running (educational) shtick – Cut out yellow pieces of paper to look like bricks of the kotel. Each Kvutza, write down a summary/reflections of that K and then slowly build your own Bet Hamikdash. Use to trigger discussion on how places can have holiness – WOW!

K2: Jews and the Diaspora



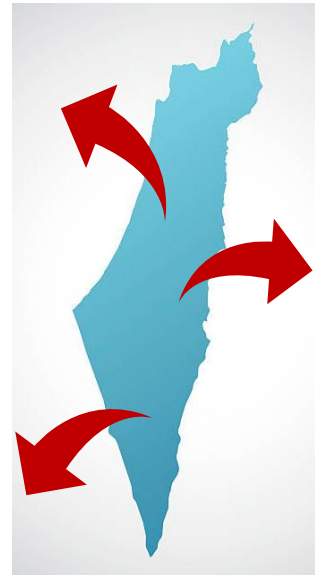
Objectives:

1. **Look** at the history of the Galut.
2. **Explore** the approaches of Rav Kook and Rav Hirsch to Galut.
3. **Learn** about the 'Galut mentality': Old Jew and New Jew.

Introduction

"How did a people survive for twenty centuries without a state, a home, a place where they could defend themselves? How did they sustain their identity when everywhere they were a minority? How did faith survive the massacres and pogroms, when Jews called, and heaven seemed silent?"
(Rabbi Sacks zt'l: Home of Hope)

Let's take a step back in time. After three Jewish wars against the Romans, vast numbers of Jews had been killed defending the land of Israel or had been taken captive. Ultimately, Am Yisrael lost its independence, Eretz Yisrael was laid bare, and the Temple was left in ruins. It was **the worst destruction** the Jews had ever known. No longer an independent nation living their own land, most Jewish people were forced to become unwelcome guests in other people's lands. It seemed to many that this time the Jews and their Torah would certainly not survive. In order to do so, **the nation needed to adapt**. It had to shift from one with a **national centre**, to one fully **defined by its religion**.



So, the Jews went around the world, from Syria to Switzerland and beyond. With this **Diaspora** came new Jewish culture, new customs, and traditions. Jews would go to a place and would either survive as a separate entity on foreign soil or try to be a part of the new society, whilst always staying true to their Jewish values.

How do you 'keep Jewish' when we are not in our own land?

Jews spiritually surviving in galut seemed impossible – to the extent that once the Beit Hamikdash was destroyed Bnei Yisrael approached Yechezkel to ask whether Judaism was 'finished now' ([Quote source here](#))! Judaism simply had to adapt for galut – and awesome people like Daniel, the Ashei Knesset HaGedola and R'Yochanan ben Zakkai helped make



בית יהודי
מקדש מעט

Discussion Point 1: The Bet Mikdash ceased to be the central point of our Judaism. Have we found another physical and tangible structure around which to base our Judaism? What games could communicate to chanichim this concept of substitution?



בית כנסת
מקדש מעט

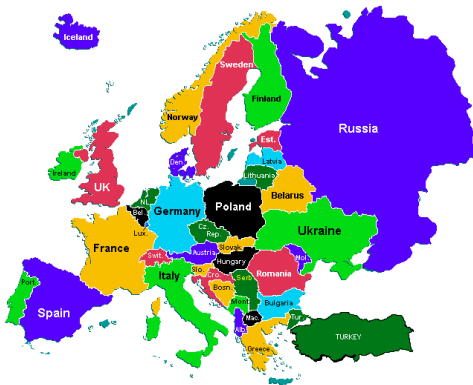
Some Galut Reminders for us:

- **Tefilla:** We now face Jerusalem in prayer and pray every day for Hashem to end the exile and return all Jews to Israel.
- **Weddings:** We now break a glass under the Chuppah at weddings to remind us of the destruction of the Temple even on the happiest of days.
- **Home:** We now leave an undecorated patch when building a new home in order to remember the destruction of the Temple.
- **Chagim:** We now pray for rain between Succot and Pesach (i.e. when Israel needs rain) and add a prayer for the rebuilding of the Temple when counting the Omer between Pesach and Shavuot.



Acts like these connect Jews with Eretz Yisrael wherever we find ourselves in the world. Physically we may have been on all four corners of the earth, but ritually we had never left our homeland.

Persecution and Expulsion



Jews, were not always welcome in our new found 'homes.' If you visit virtually any western European city you will find evidence of Jewish communities in the plural; the community before the expulsion and after the expulsion. Between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries Jews were expelled from virtually every country in Western Europe including would you believe it... England! You can look in the 'extra chomer' for a timeline of persecutions – educational game?

Discussion Point 2: Does living in exile and with antisemitism make it more difficult to remain faithful/proud of Judaism? In what realms might year 9 chanichim be struggling in this regard? How could we support them?

A Judasim for Galut – the Rav Kook approach

Throughout the long Galut, Jews were scattered all over the world. Without a land, or a state, or a government of our own, we had been stripped of our glory and our pride. Jews were reduced from being a fulfilled nation to living in dispersed communities and impoverished ghettos. We were the lowest of peoples, at the mercy of the gentiles wherever we lived. Our physical life was utterly destroyed – Judaism lost its true national character. The emphasis and understanding of Judaism became focussed around the individual and around their private service of Hashem. Out of no other choice, sanctification of Hashem became consigned to the individual – **the focus of Judaism had shifted away from the nation and towards the individual Jew and their four cubits of Halacha.**



"Since the day the Temple was destroyed, Hashem has had nothing in the world except for 4 cubits of Halacha alone" (Gemara Berachot 8a)

"There is no Torah like the Torah of Eretz Yisrael" (Bereishit Rabbah 16:7)

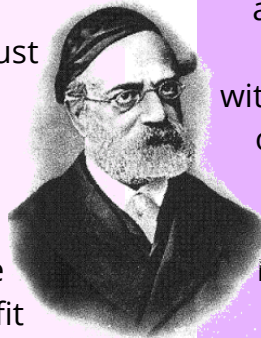
"IN THE GALUT WE ARE NOT IN OUR NATURAL (or national) SITUATION..." – Rav Kook

... You see, the Torah is effectively the story of the establishment of our nation in our land. The chosen nation has a chosen land, which it needs to dwell in for it to fulfil its mission on earth...anything else is second best! Judaism in its intended form is far more than just an individual's private performance of mitzvot – it is the national life of Am Yisrael B' Eretz Yisrael Al Pi Torat Yisrael!!

Discussion Point 3 – Do you think Rav Kook views Bnei Yisrael in galut as a nation or a religion? How can you best emphasise his view to chanichim?

A Judaism for the Galut – the Rav Hirsch approach

Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch had a different perspective regarding the Jews in Galut. Whilst Rav Kook preached that the ideal form of Judaism is as a collective, that the Jews must be gathered within Israel, Rav Hirsch disagreed. Whilst he himself was not a Zionist and opposed the teachings of Rav Kalischer (see K3), he was also a believer in the benefits of Galut. He believed that the Jewish people could have more of a benefit spread out across the world than simply compacted within the borders of Israel. Is that true? Does Judaism survive galut or is it a product of galut?



This is a particularly tough question to deal with and there is no simple answer. On one hand the Jews for centuries had been wondering, without direction nor objectives. Yet on the other hand would we have had the likes of Rambam without the Muslim world? Democracy in Israel without Western values? Or Modern Orthodoxy without the Enlightenment? It would be difficult to claim that there is an absolute answer to this question.

The Galut Mentality

As persecuted guests in hostile foreign lands the Jews went from being a nation who heroically defended themselves against the mightiest army on earth, to a group of communities who were the first in line whenever a scapegoat was needed. The Galut Jew was weak and impoverished, who apologized and begged for their life in front of the gentiles.

Is this still the case nowadays? Many argue that the re-establishment of a Jewish homeland has re-invigorated the Jewish people. Rav Soloveitchik says in *Kol Dodi Dofek* that with Israel's establishment, the Jews are again able to defend themselves and, "Jewish blood is not free for taking, is not hefker."

But the Galut Mentality is not just physical. How has a galut lasting over 2000 years affected the mental and spiritual state of our nation? What have we lost?



Discussion Point 4 – How could we get chanichim to realise the unconscious effects that galut has had on our nation and on us?

Concrete Concepts:

1. Jewish Practice in Galut is instituted in such a way that we remain connected to Eretz Yisrael.
2. **Rav Kook's** view on galut prioritises Bnei Yisrael's national character over individual character. Galut is not viewed as a spiritually natural state of being.
3. **Rav Hirsch** held that Bnei Yisrael can fulfil its potential in galut.

Educational Peulot

Ask the Chanichim where their grandparents came from and use this to demonstrate how Jews have been in so many different places and moved around so much and that it is only by circumstance that we are in Britain now and that there is nothing permanent about it.

Timeline: Give each pair of chanichim a period in our history since the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash. You could use the "Medieval Mishaps" timeline below, too. Each group makes a skit, song or something similar, and presents it... making a very cool timeline!

Medieval Mishaps in Europe

- 1096 – First Crusade
- 1144 – First Ritual Murder Libel
- 1146 – Second Crusade
- 1190 – York Massacre
- 1235 – First Blood Libel
- 1290 – Expulsion from England
- 1306 – Expulsion from France
- 1348 – Black Death Accusation
- 1492 – Expulsion from Spain
- 1567 – Expulsion from Italy
- 1648 – Chmielnicki Massacre



Smashing the glass – Sit a chanich/a on a chair in the middle of room blindfolded. Surround hiim/her with plastic cups or even more difficult put the cups under the chair. Give them a scarf they can swing in the air. Other chanichim need to approach and try to "smash the glass" without being hit by the scarf. Use the game to discuss what we do at weddings to remind us that we're still in exile and why its important that we're reminded we're still in exile.

Ask chanichim pairs of questions in a quiz that show the 'Galut mentality'. For example you could ask "name the books of neviim" with "name the books of Harry Potter."

What games could you use to emphasise the difference between Rav Hirsch and Rav Kook's stances on Galut?

K3: Religious Zionism



Objectives:

1. **Discover** the origin of Religious Zionism.
2. **Explore** Religious Zionist philosophers and their beliefs.
3. **Discuss** Reishit Semichat Geulateinu: Mystical and Pragmatic Religious Zionism.

Hopefully we are all aware of the fact that Bnei Akiva is a Religious Zionist movement. However, it is likely that many of your Chanichim (and perhaps many of you) do not have a comprehensive understanding of exactly what Religious Zionism is. This Kvutza is your chance to fully solidify your knowledge and understanding of this fundamental concept, in order to give it over to your Chanichim in a way that is authentic and accessible.

What is Religious Zionism?

Religious Zionism is the belief in the G-d given right of the Jewish people to self-determination in their national homeland, Eretz Yisrael. Some Religious Zionists believe that the developing of a Jewish State in Eretz Yisrael is the beginning of the Geula.

Religious Zionism in the Tanach

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־אַבְרָם לְדַלֵּךְ מֵאֶרֶץ וּמִמְלוּכֹתֶיךָ וּמִבְּיַת אָבִיךָ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֶרְאֶנָּה:

The LORD said to Abram, "Go forth from your native land and from your father's house to the land that I will show you. (Bereishit 12:1)

וְגַם הִקְמַתִי אֶת־בְּרִיתִי אִתְּכֶם לָתֵת לָכֶם אֶת־אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן אֶת אֶרֶץ מִגְרֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר־גֵּרוּ בָּהּ

I also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they lived as sojourners. (Shemot 6:4)

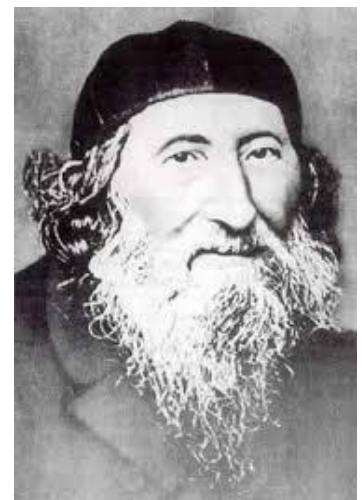
"Jews have lived in almost every country under the sun. In four thousand years, only in Israel have they been a free, self-governing people. Only in Israel are they able, if they so choose, to construct an agriculture, a medical system, an economic infrastructure in the spirit of Torah and its concern for freedom, justice and the sanctity of life. Only in Israel can Jews speak the Hebrew of the Bible as the language of everyday speech. Only there can they live Jewish time within a calendar structured according to the rhythms of the Jewish year. Only in Israel can Jews live Judaism in anything other than an edited edition. In Israel, and only there, Jews can walk where the prophets walked, climb the mountains Abraham climbed, lift their eyes to the hills that David saw, and continue the story their ancestors began." ~Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks Zt"l

Discussion Point 1: Are you able to pinpoint exactly why you are a Religious Zionist?

Early figures of Religious Zionsim

The Proactive pioneer: Rav Kalischer

Rav Kalischer (1795-1874) was a Polish Rabbi who studied under the famed R. Akiva Eiger of Posen. He introduced the notion that the Ultimate Redemption would not be the product of a miraculous cause, but rather the conclusion of a drawn-out process brought about by the actions of the Jewish people, just like the second redemption! Rav Kalisher was proactive in developing a movement for Jewish settlement and agricultural work in the Land of Israel and strongly encouraged Jewish acquisition of the Land. Rav Kalischer's philosophy was laid out in his book by the name of "Drishat Tzion" (The Seeking of Zion) first published in 1862. (Read more from Rav Kalischer in the additional chomer).





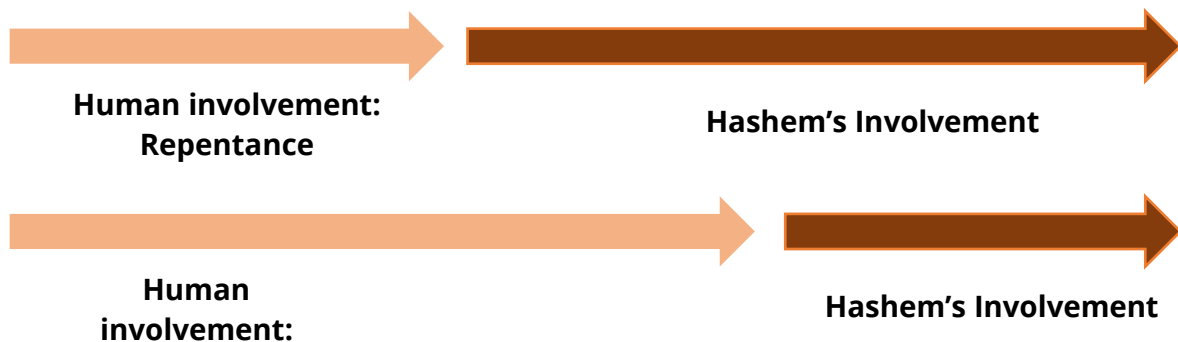
The mystical macher: Rav Gutmacher

Rav Gutmacher (1796-1874) was a Polish-born German Rabbi and mystic. He was a contemporary of Rav Kalischer and they studied together under R. Akiva Eiger in Posen. Rav Gutmacher was a proponent of the Jewish agricultural settlement of the Land of Israel. Upon receiving Rav Kalischer's book, Drishat Tzion, Rav Gutmacher was delighted to find an ideological partner, and the two worked together to advance the Jewish settlement in the Land.

The Torah V'Avodah precursor: Rabbi Yehuda Alkalai

Yehuda ben Solomon Chai Alkalai (1798 – October 1878) was a Sephardic Jewish rabbi, and one of the influential precursors of modern Zionism. It is important to notice that he, as a Sephardic Jew, played an important role in a process widely attributed to the Ashkenazi Jews.

- He believed that Am Yisrael need to take an active role in their own redemption through increased Torah observance, Tzedaka and Tefillah, as well as a return to working the Land of Israel agriculturally (sound familiar?)
- He believed it was important for everyone who moved to Israel to speak Ivrit and to refer to themselves as 'Yisraeilim', rather than 'Ashkenaz' or 'Sephard', in order to increase achdut.
- He also believed that Jews should seek permission from other nations in order to establish a state and not just move there and create settlements
- One of his key points was that he viewed 'Teshuva' as the active return to Eretz Yisrael, rather than as a passive process. This prompts an interesting conversation about what teshuva is and also about the concept of hishtadlut when it comes to Geula.



Discussion point 2: Its important to make sure your chanichim have background knowledge before teaching them all this. What do you think their misconceptions might be about concepts like "Geula" or "Moshiach"? How will your chanichim be able to relate to the idea of THEM being able to contribute to the coming of Moshiach?

Reishit Tzmichat Geulateinu (The Beginning of our Redemption)

Sounds quite frum doesn't it? But what are all these ideological Bogrim actually going on about when they use this phrase?

Some Religious Zionists today believe that the process of redemption has begun. The events that are unfolding today are Reishit Tzmichat Geulateinu. Let's look a bit more into the 'what' and the 'why.'

If we look at the sources describing the future redemption, we see that they describe two very different, almost opposite, processes by which Am Yisrael will be redeemed. Many Pessukim in Tanach and Midrashim state that the Geula will occur miraculously in a single moment, with Hashem redeeming us *b'yad chazaka uvizroa netuya* – with a strong hand and an outstretched arm – similar to the Geula from Egypt all those years ago.

However, a famous Gemara in the Yerushalmi seems to contradict this view of the redemption:
 רבי חייא רבא ורבי שמעון בן חלפתא הוו מהלכין בהדא בקעת ארבל בקריצתה, וראו איילת השחר שבקע אורה. אמר רבי חייא רבה לר' שמעון בן חלפתא "בי רבי כך היא גאולתן של ישראל: בתחילה קימאה קימאה, כל מה שהיא הולכת היא רבה והולכת.
 (תלמוד ירושלמי: ברכות פרק א)

R. Chiya the great and R. Shimon ben Chalafta were walking in the Arbel valley at dawn when they saw the glimmering of the morning star. R. chiya the Great said to R. Shimon ben Chalafta: 'My Master, so is the redemption of Israel – at first little by little, but as it progresses it grows greater and greater.' (Yerushalmi: Brachot Perek 1)

The Gemara in Sanhedrin offers an explanation, in the name of R. Alexsandri:

אמר רבי אלכסנדר: "רבי יהושע בן לוי רמי, כתיב: (ישעיהו ס') 'בעתה', וכתוב: 'אחישנה'! זכו - אחישנה, לא זכו – בעתה". (תלמוד בבלי: סנהדרין צח.)

R. Alexandri said: R. Yehoshua ben Levi pointed out a contradiction. It says 'in its time' [Yishayahu 60:22] and it also says 'I will hasten it' [ibid.]. [The solution is] if they (Am Yisrael) are worthy 'I will hasten it'. If they are unworthy [the redemption will come] 'in its time'."

(Sanhedrin 98a)

Are these not contradicting positions? If we look around at the state of our generation in terms of our observance of Torah and Mitzvot, it doesn't seem like we have much hope of meriting a speedy supernatural Geula. Never say never but it seems more likely that geula will come slowly, kima kima, through a gradual process, one stage at a time. So maybe this is the start... What signs do we have that the State of Israel is indeed Reishit Tzmichat Geulateinu?

A discussion is brought down in the Gemara in Masechet Megilla (17b) regarding the Brachot of the Shemonei Esrei, showing how each Bracha describes a different event that will (or may) occur during the process of the Geula. These include the break out of war, the blossoming of the land, the return of the exiles to Israel and more. Sounding familiar?

There is a Nevuah from Sefer Zechariah, depicting a scene from the future Geula of Am Yisrael, one you can see unfolding before our eyes!:

כה אמר ה' צבאות "עד ישבו זקנים וזקנות ברחבות ירושלם ואיש משענתו בידו מרב ימים. ורחבות העיר ימלאו ילדים וילדות משחקים ברחבתיה." (זכריה פרק ח-ד-ה)

So says Hashem: "Old men and women shall again sit in the streets of Yerushalayim, each man with his staff in his hand due to old age. And the streets of the city shall be filled with children playing in them!" (Zechariah 8:4-5)

'Mystical' Religious Zionism and Rav Kook:

It's time to introduce ourselves to one of the key players in both practical and hashkafic Religious Zionism, Rav Kook:



Rav Avraham Yitzchak

Kook Fact file:

Born: 1865, Latvia

Died: 1935, Eretz Yisrael

Occupation: Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem, Philosopher.

Rav Kook is also known for his views on vegetarianism and Torah Ummada as well as Zionism (See additional chomer for a more detailed biography)

Much of the values endorsed by the Religious Zionist movement are based on the teachings of Rav Kook, and as such he could be considered the ideological father of the movement. Yet, chronologically, Rav Kook cannot be selected as the first Religious Zionist leader of modern times. In the year 5667 (December 1906) Rav Kook writes of himself:

*Now, in the "second edition" [of the Religious Zionist movement] – with evermore intensity and strength, more depth and sanctity – we seek to renew the spirituality of chibbat tzion [Zionism] as it was at the dawn of its childhood, and as it lived in the hearts of the holy men who began to develop and tend to it; as it was treasured in the hearts of **Rabbi Tzvi Kalisher** and **Rabbi Eliyahu (Gutmacher) Greiditz** and their collaborators.*

(Igrot HaRaaya I pg. 56)

Rav Kook wrote about how a nation is a living organism both a spirit and a body. A key phrase to remember is "Eretz Yisrael Eineinah Kinyan Chitzoni – the Land is not an external acquisition". The Land is not something separate from the nation. Rav Kook saw the relationship between the Land and the People as similar to our own relationship to parts of our bodies.

In "Orot Ha-Techiya" (page 64), Rav Kook writes that the essence of (the nation of) Israel is its connection to Hashem on a national level. It is impossible to relate to Israel outside the context of Hashem. This is reflected by the fact that Judaism is ideally structured at the national level, embodying laws governing kings, taxes, the army and detailed civil laws. The commandments are addressed to the nation, not the individual. Rav Kook believed there was little significance to the Jewish nation (or Jewish nationalism) without the religious element. The relationship with God forms the character of the people and its history.

So how did Rav Kook explain the fact that non-religious Jews were the ones bringing about the Geula, whilst many Talmidei Chachamim were sitting on the side with their heads in books not doing anything??? Let's take a look at an extract from "Orot":

*"The **soul** of secular Jews at the time just before the messianic era, those that are tied lovingly to the people of Israel, the land of Israel and the rebirth of the nation, is more complete than the soul of 'faithful' Jews, who lack the appreciation for the good of the whole and building of the nation and the land. But the **spirit** is much more complete in the observant Jews. The observant will be improved by the completeness of the soul of the secular, who are good in relation to things relating to the whole...And the spirit of the secular will be completed by the influence of the observant...and the highest of the righteous...will be the uniting channels."*

So there you have it. Every Jew has a role to play in our history. Both nationalistic vigour and a passion for Torah study are admirable and necessary traits for bringing about national salvation of the Jewish people. This belief forms the basis of religious Zionism today, and it stands at the root of Bnei Akiva's ideology. Probably pretty important to know...

'Pragmatic' Religious Zionism and Rav Soloveitchik (the Rav)

This messianic position of Rav Kook was the only stream of Religious Zionist thought up until the Rav. The Rav was a rationalist philosopher who believed that when looking at History, we cannot prescribe meaning to events. Just like we cannot say why the Holocaust or other such events occurred, therefore philosophically we can't claim that the establishment of the State of Israel is a Reishit Semichat Geulateinu. In years to come, once we enter the Messianic period, perhaps we can look back and say that this was the period of Reishit Semichat Geulateinu but we cannot determine that now. For the Rav, Tzionut was a case of orlah, leket, shmittah, yovel (While his book Kol Dodi Dofek seems to bring a much more deterministic approach to the historical events surrounding hakamat hamedina, it is disputed amongst his closest disciples as to whether or not it contains the true thought of the Rav.) For his son in law, Rav Aharon Lichtenstein, an advocate of this stream of thought, he said in the Tefillot for Israel, *'Thei Reishit Semichat Geulateinu.'*



For many this position is also supported from a textual perspective. We spoke earlier about how the Messianic period will be a period of exponential positivity, that happiness and goodness will increase through these times. But is this the case? Can we really claim that only

positivity has come since 1948? Rav Amital, whilst starting as a proponent of Rav Kook, struggled with the losses of his Talmidim during the wars that have plagued Israel, and many still struggle with the 2005 disengagement. As a result, there has been a growing Religious Zionist movement in recent years that opposes the messianic philosophies of Rav Kook. For an understanding of the religious ideology behind Anti-Zionism, and the Religious Zionist response, see the additional chomer.

Discussion point 3: Can we claim that we have entered a Messianic period? If so, do we think that this is a messianic period?

Concrete concepts:

1. Religious Zionism is as old as the events in the Torah itself
2. All Religious Zionist thinkers believe that there is spiritual significance to both **Eretz Yisrael** and **Medinat Yisrael**
3. There is some debate as to whether the current state of Israel can be considered Reishit Tzmichat Geulateinu

Peula Idea:

Reverse Chronology Game – This game is an opportunity for your chanichim to show off their knowledge as well as understand how old RZ is! You trigger with a concept like "science" or "feminism". The aim is as a group to say "instances" of this concept existing in History. Each person can only say an instance that happened BEFORE the previous person and the aim is to keep going for as long as possible. Then do it with religious Zionism and use the game to demonstrate that religious Zionism is as old as Avraham himself!

K4: Herzl and the Conference



Aims:

1. **Consider** the interplay between the persecution of Jews in Europe and its impact on Zionism.
2. **Learn** about the Dreyfus Affair.
3. **Explore** Herzl and the Zionist Congress.
4. **Discuss** the Uganda Proposal.

Introduction

Having looked at the Jewish people in their exile and the birth of contemporary Religious Zionism, we will now explore how those ideas come together – the impact of Zionism on European Jewry. This Kvutza is slightly different from the ones we've encountered previously. It tells what is ultimately a dramatic and inspiring **story**.

Discussion Point 1: Before looking at the chomer, what creative ways can you think of for communicating STORIES in Kvutza to year 9s?

The Dreyfus Affair

The Dreyfus affair was a significant event which contributed to the development of modern Zionism. Whilst Jews in the Diaspora had been persecuted for hundreds of years, the Dreyfus affair contributed to Herzl's motivation in his attempts to fulfil his vision of a Jewish State of Israel. (Unbelievably it has also been made into a board game see extra chomer).

In 1894, Captain Alfred Dreyfus of the French Army found himself charged with selling secrets to the Germans. Papers had been found in his offices and supposedly in his handwriting. Experts were summoned. One determined that it was not Dreyfus' handwriting, while another claimed that due to the very fact that it didn't look like his handwriting, he must be guilty!



He was court-martialed, found guilty and branded a traitor to France. In a public parade before a baying crowd, after days locked up without food, he was publicly disgraced. His epaulettes were torn from his shoulders, the buttons of his uniform ripped off, and his sword taken and snapped in front of him. **Remember this scene, we're going to come back to it.**

A Colonel in the French army, Georges Picquart was convinced that the papers used to convict Dreyfus had actually been the work of an anti-Semitic major in the army, Ferdinand Esterhazy. High-ranking military officials suppressed the new evidence, acquitted Esterhazy in a sham trial and pushed Picquart to stop delving into the affair, eventually imprisoning him. The Army then accused Dreyfus of extra charges based on falsified documents.



On January 13th, 1898, Emile Zola, French journalist, writer, and supporter of Dreyfus wrote his now infamous letter "J'Accuse." Published on the front page of L'Aurore it addressed President Felix Faure accusing the government and high-ranking military officials of Antisemitism.

The sentence passed on Dreyfus was, he claimed, "a crime of high treason against humanity." For his part in supporting Dreyfus, Zola was prosecuted for libel and fled to England for over a year. To cut a long story short, after eight years of imprisonment and forced labour, Dreyfus was found not guilty in 1906, was reinstated to the army and was promoted. Zola returned home, and Picquart was reinstated, promoted, later to become the French war minister. (If you want to read a very good version of the full story, try *An Officer and a Spy* by Robber Harris.)

Remember the public disgracing of Dreyfus? The baying crowd out for Jewish blood? A young Austro-Hungarian journalist was following the details of the trial for a Viennese newspaper. His name (dramatic pause) was Theodor Herzl.

Herzl Comes to Life

"... But if you do not want it, then all this which I have told you is and remains a fairy tale"
Herzl, Altneuland

Recognise the quote? It's not quite as we know it now. But a little bit of time, translation and artistic licence and it soon becomes:

אם תרצו, אין זו אגדה. ואם לא תרצו, אגדה היא ואגדה תישאר.
"If you will it, it is no dream; and if you do not will it, a dream it is and a dream it will stay."

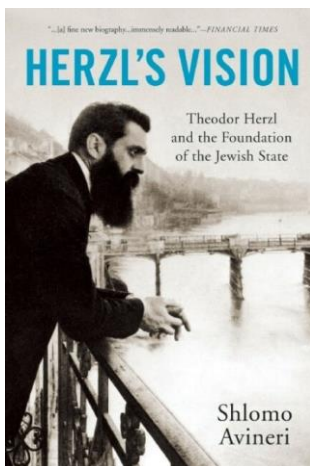


Herzl was born in 1860 in the Jewish quarter of Budapest, Hungary to a secular Jewish family. By the time he was 35 he was a well-known writer in a famous Viennese paper. He was sure the future of the Jews in Europe was to join the general mainstream of society; to become part and parcel with its culture. While he experienced some acts of Antisemitism, none were powerful enough to make him rethink his ideology. Until the Dreyfus affair, that is. It stirred something inside Herzl which changed him radically. His entire outlook on the future survival of the Jewish people shifted.

On 17th January 1896 (less than two years after the Dreyfus affair had begun) the first extract of his book *Der Judenstadt* – The Jewish State – was published in the Jewish Chronicle. The essence of the book was that **the Jews could not live anywhere except the Land of Israel**. If even in France, a country where the Jews were seemingly accepted into society, an event like the Dreyfus affair could still occur, then the Jewish people could never truly be safe without its own sovereignty. This proved to Herzl that wherever the Jews are, there will always be factions of society that have an irrational hatred for them, unless that place is Eretz Yisrael, governed by the Jews.



Discussion Point 2 – Do you think the statement underlined above applies to us today in the UK?



Herzl knew that he would have to form his 'army' of supporters out of the Ostjuden – Eastern Europe. These Jews raved about Herzl in contrast to influential Jews of the West who ridiculed Herzl's suggestions. The only western Jew who joined Herzl was Max Nordau. He became Herzl's right-hand man and drew up much of the practical programme of early Zionism. The first meeting of these supporters was arranged by Herzl and became the First Zionist Congress.

We saw various Religious Zionist pioneers in K3. What Herzl did was trigger the start of the modern Political Zionist movement which grew and grew until the year 1948, when the State of Israel was declared. This was one of the many strong forms of Zionism strong in the beginning of the 20th Century.

The First Zionist Congress

The First Zionist Congress was held in Basel, Switzerland, in 1897. There were 204 participants from 17 countries – 69 of whom were delegates from various Zionist societies and the remainder were individual invitees. In attendance were also 10 non-Jews who were expected to abstain from voting. While women participated in the First Zionist Congress, they did not have yet voting rights. Full membership rights were accorded them the following year, at the Second Zionist Congress.



Some achievements of The First Zionist Congress:

- 📖 The formulation of the Zionist platform (the Basel Program).
- 📖 The foundation of the World Zionist Organisation.
- 📖 The adoption of Hatikvah as its anthem.
- 📖 The suggestion for the establishment of a people's bank.
- 📖 The election of Herzl as President of the Zionist Organisation and Max Nordau, one of three Vice-Presidents.

After this, the Zionist Congress met every year (1897-1901) and then every second year. After the Second World War, the Congress met intermittently, approximately every four years until the present time.

Theodor Herzl wrote in his diary (September 1, 1897):

"Were I to sum up the Basel Congress in a word – which I shall guard against pronouncing publicly – it would be this: 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."

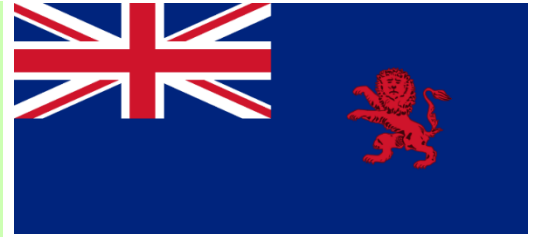
Discussion Point 3 – How can you communicate the importance of the first Zionist congress to your chanichim in kvutza?

The Uganda Proposal

In 1903, the deaths of a young boy and girl around the area of Kishinev in Russia (now southern Ukraine) lead to pogroms sparked by antisemitic newspapers publishing stories of blood libel. The deaths of around 50 Jews and the destruction of over 1,500 homes focused the world's attention on the oppression of the Jews in Eastern Europe and Russia. The need for a Jewish state had never been so desperate.

Theodor Herzl sought support from the great powers for the creation of a Jewish Homeland. In the early 1900s he turned to Great Britain and met with Joseph Chamberlain, the British colonial secretary, and others. The British agreed, in principle, to Jewish settlement in East Africa, *"on conditions which will enable members to observe their national customs."* (This text of this letter can be seen in the additional chomer.)

At the Sixth Zionist Congress at Basel on August 26th, 1903, Herzl proposed the British Uganda Program as a *temporary refuge* for Jews in Russia in immediate danger. By a vote of 295-178 they decided to send an "investigatory commission" to examine the territory proposed. While Herzl made it clear that this programme would not affect the ultimate aim of Zionism, a Jewish entity in the Land of Israel, the proposal aroused a storm at the Congress and nearly led to a split in the Zionist Movement.



Flag of British East Africa, the land proposed in the Uganda Scheme (it's actually Kenya!)

Discussion Point 4 - How should we as religious Zionists relate to Herzl in the 21st century?

Concrete Concepts:

1. The Dreyfus Affair was a catalyst for Herzl's Zionist Motivation
2. The State of Israel is a necessary refuge for the Jewish Nation, amongst other things
3. The First Zionist Congress, instigated by Herzl, was monumental to the formation of the State of Israel

Educational Peulot

54321 Play - Put on a play of the Dreyfus affair starting with 5 cast members. As the narrator narrates the story, the cast members act out the story. At the end of the play, one cast member gets voted off and another cast member is voted to 'take their role' so now that cast member has two roles. You do this over and over again (it's funny) until one cast member is playing all 5 roles in the Dreyfus Affair and your chanichim will know the story really well!

54321

A Zionist Congress - Use the 'acting out' of a congress, debate style, to explore issues that would divide Herzl as a secular Zionist and us as religious Zionists. Why do we need a state? Does it matter where the state is?

RIGHT NOW

A ball of questions - To test your chanichim on their knowledge so far cover a football with sticky labels with questions on them. Throw it around and they must answer the question wherever their index fingers land.

K5: Inception of the State



Aims:

1. **Understand** the sequence of events which occurred between the two World Wars: the Balfour Declaration, White Paper and what came in between.
2. **Learn** important values from the people involved
3. **Consider** the ideology of the State in relation to the ideology of its founders.

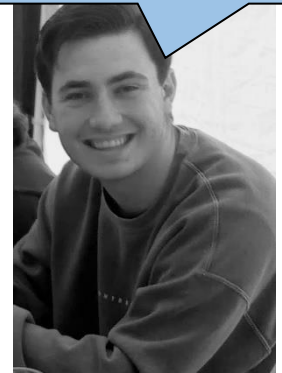
The Balfour Declaration:

Chaim Weizmann, a massive Zionist (he had been to every Zionist Congress except the first) and brilliant Chemist, had a career which took him all over Europe. In the course of his travels he met with similar minded Jews and as many politicians as he could, endeavouring to convince them of the justice of his cause. In the early 1900s he ended up in Britain as a senior Chemistry (#Madda) Lecturer at the University of Manchester (in his time in Britain he managed to register almost 100 patents!).

In 1906, **Arthur Balfour** was MP for Manchester East (#7401621ProudToBeTheNorthernScum) preparing for a general election. He met Weizmann and told him that although he backed the Zionist endeavour, he felt that he would be able to gather most support for the Uganda proposal. Weizmann is credited with changing his mind. He asked Balfour: "Would you give up London to live in Saskatchewan?" When Balfour replied that the British had always lived in London, Weizmann responded, "Yes, and we lived in Jerusalem when London was still a marsh."

Did you know I'm on the BoD?

During World War I Weizmann continued to move in political circles, persuading anyone who would listen to support the Zionist cause. Throughout this time, the leadership of the Jewish community in Britain had viewed the Zionist enterprise with suspicion, even attacking it in the media. When, in June 1917, the leadership of the Board of Deputies changed and began supporting Zionism, the Foreign Office asked Weizmann (together with Lord Rothschild) to submit a proposal for a Jewish home in Mandate Palestine.



On 31/10/1917, Arthur Balfour now the Foreign Secretary, responded with the official view of the government.

The government's statement was really an edited version of the draft written by Lord Rothchild, Weizmann and others. The original draft contained some elements which were included in the final letter. To see how the declaration changed over time from the original draft have a look in the extra chomer.

The declaration represented the first public support for Zionism by a major political power. In addition to its publication in major newspapers, leaflets were circulated throughout Jewish communities. These leaflets were also airdropped over Jewish communities in Germany and Austria, as well as the Pale of Settlement.

Exactly one month after the declaration was issued, a large-scale celebration took place at the Royal Opera House – speeches were given by leading Zionists as well as members of the British government. From 1918 until World War II, Jews in Mandatory Palestine celebrated Balfour Day as an annual national holiday on 2 November.

The White Paper:

Peel Commission (1936-37)

A Royal Commission was appointed in August 1936 by the British government to examine the Palestine problem, following the outbreak of the Arab Revolt (1936-39). The report published called for the partition of Palestine into a Jewish and Arab state with a British-controlled corridor from Jerusalem to the coast at Yafo. However, the plan was rejected by the Arabs (with the exception of King Abdullah of Transjordan) and also caused a split in the Zionist movement.

1939: The White Paper

The white paper was a policy statement issued by the British government under **Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain** in which a number of concessions were made to the Arabs in Mandate Palestine. It contained three main points: It called for the establishment of an independent Palestine, governed jointly by Arabs and Jews, thus abandoning the partition plan suggested by the (original) Balfour Declaration.

- It seriously limited Jewish immigration to Palestine to 75,000 for the first five years and would later be contingent on Arab consent.
- The sale of Arab land to Jews was to be severely restricted and controlled so that "Arab cultivators are to maintain their existing standard of life and a considerable landless Arab population is not soon to be created." (It's important to remember that Israel today is home to a diverse range of people including the '4 tribes,' a term that refers to Chareidim, Daati Leumi, Chilonim (secular) and Arabs. All of these groups are equal citizens of Israel but sometimes catering to all of their needs can be difficult and complicated).

When put in historical context, this paper had a huge impact on the Jews. At a time of heightened Jewish persecution, on the eve of what was later to be known as the Holocaust, Jews were being prevented from seeking refuge in the one place they thought they could call home. The paper also indicated a change in Britain's attitude to the establishment of Jewish homeland in Palestine and marked a considerable setback in the Zionist agenda. This paper remained the basis of British policy until 1947.

Arab riots (1929-1946):

At the end of WW1, the Yishuv – the Jewish settlement in the Land of Israel – grew rapidly. As more and more Jews began to settle in the Land of Israel, (especially with the Third Aliya after WW11 with 40,000 people) the Arabs began to feel threatened by their Jewish neighbours and Arab leaders began encouraging mobs to attack the Jews. A number of riots erupted in Chevron, Jerusalem, Tzfat, and Haifa. Hundreds of Jews were slaughtered.

Discussion point 1: As written above, the White paper was a negative turn for the prospects of a Jewish State and was particularly awful for holocaust victims that would later be denied passage to their homeland. How can you get chanichim to empathise with this experience of asylum-seekers and refugees being denied access to their 'homeland'?

Secular Zionist Leaders

ACHAD HA'AM



1856-1927

- Born Asher Hirsch Ginsburg into a Chasidic family in Skvira, near Kiev (then part of Russia).
- Founded a new movement, Bnei Moshe, in 1889, advocating his ideals.
- He split from the Zionist movement after the First Zionist Congress, feeling that Theodor Herzl's program was impractical.
- Settled in Tel Aviv in 1922 and died there in 1927.
- IDEOLOGY: Cultural Zionism

For Achad Ha'am, the importance of the Holy Land and the Hebrew language was not their religious significance, but because they were an integral part of the Jewish people's history and cultural heritage. He believed that kibbutz galuyot was a messianic ideal rather than a feasible contemporary project. He rejected Herzl's notion that the nations of the world would encourage Jews to move and establish a Jewish state, feeling that only through Jewish self-reliance and careful preparation would the Zionist enterprise succeed. Achad Ha'am pushed for the establishment in Palestine of small settlements aimed at reviving the Jewish spirit and culture in the modern world.

Jabotinsky's Revisionist Zionism was an outgrowth of Herzl's Political Zionism. The declared goals of Revisionist ideology included putting relentless pressure on Great Britain, including petitions and mass demonstrations, for Jewish statehood on both banks of the Jordan River; a Jewish majority in Palestine, a reestablishment of the Jewish regiments, and self-defence training for youth.

ZE'EV JABOTINSKY



1880-1929

- Born Vladimir Jabotinsky in Odessa, (then part of Russia).
- Raised in Jewish middle-class home and educated in Russian schools.
- Joined the Zionist movement after the Kishinev pogrom of 1903 (see K4, p6).
- Established the Jewish Self-Defence Organisation to safeguard Jewish communities in Russia.
- Founded the Zion Mule Corps in 1915, along with Joseph Trumpeldor, to fight alongside the British against the Ottomans in WW1.
- IDEOLOGY: Revisionist Zionism

Syrkin strove to achieve Jewish national and social redemption by fusing Zionism with Socialism. He was opposed the concept of the "spiritual centre" in Eretz Yisrael, but still supported making Hebrew the sole Jewish national language. It gave rise to many pioneering youth movements, such as Hashomer Hatz'air and Hehalutz and its leaders were among the most prominent in the pre-independence Palestine community and the State of Israel, for example David Ben-Gurion.

NACHMAN SYRKIN



1868-1924

- Born in Belorussia (then part of Russia).
- Leader of the Socialist Zionist faction in the First Zionist Congress.
- An early sponsor of the Jewish National Fund (JNF, founded in 1901).
- Emigrated to the US in 1907, where he joined the Zionist movement Poalei Zion.
- Died in the US in 1924 of a heart attack.
- IDEOLOGY: Socialist Zionism

Siding with neither Labour Zionism on the left nor Revisionist Zionism on the right, Weizmann was generally associated with the centrist General Zionists. In his own words:

"We [the Jewish people] have never based the Zionist movement on Jewish suffering in Russia or in any other land. These sufferings have never been the mainspring of Zionism. The foundation of Zionism was, and continues to be to this day, the yearning of the Jewish people for its homeland, for a national centre and a national life."

CHAIM WEIZMANN



1874-1952

- Born in November 1874 in the village of Motol, Russia.
- Graduated with a degree in chemistry from the University of Fribourg, Switzerland
- Worked with Arthur Balfour, Foreign Secretary, to obtain the Balfour Declaration in 191
- Became president of the World Zionist Organisation in 1921 and again in 1935.
- Founded the (now called) Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot in 1934.
- Became first president of Israel in 1949.
- IDEOLOGY: Centrist Zionism

DAVID BEN-GURION



1886-1973

- Born in Plonsk, Poland.
- Aged 14 he and two friends formed a youth club, Ezra, promoting Hebrew studies and emigration to Israel.
- Made Aliyah in 1906 and immediately became involved in politics, becoming chairman of the Poalei Zion in Yaffo.
- Moved to Istanbul in 1912 to study law and changed his name to Ben Gurion.
- Became head of the World Zionist Organization in 1946 and president of the Jewish Agency Executive. As such he became the de facto leader of the Jewish community in Palestine.
- On May 14th, 1948, he proclaimed the establishment of the State of Israel and was the first to sign the declaration!
- Resigned in 1954 and served as Minister of Defence, before returning to office in 1955.
- Stepped down in 1963 and retired from political life in 1970 when he moved to Sde Boker where he lived until his death.
- Names posthumously as one of Time magazine's 100 Most Important People of the 20th Century!

"For many of us, anti-Semitic feeling had little to do with our dedication [to Zionism]. I personally never suffered anti-Semitic persecution. Plonsk was remarkably free of it ... We emigrated not for negative reasons of escape but for the positive purpose of rebuilding a homeland ..."

We can see from here that huge contributions to the establishing of the State of Israel were made by a group of secular men*. We have already talked about the involvement of Secular Zionists in previous Kvutzot and have seen Rav Kook's nuanced view on this.

However, there is more that we can learn from these characters. If you read through their biographies, you'll notice that all of these individuals were born in various European locations and were so ideological that they were willing to abandon their previous lives and move to another country, adopting a new culture, language and sometimes names!

בן זומא אומר, איזהו חכם, הלומד מכל אדם

Ben Zoma says, who is wise? Someone who learns from everyone. (Avot 4:1)

There is a lot that we can learn from these pioneering individuals about the concept of commitment to Israel and the Jewish People. As Religious Zionists, we can then extend this value to deepen our own commitment to Hashem, Torah and Mitzvot!

*It's worth noticing that the absence of women in leadership roles was prevalent in secular communities at the time and was not specifically a religious problem!

Discussion point 2: How committed do you feel you are to your own religious Zionism? What can we learn from these leaders to deepen that commitment?

Debates over the wording of Declarations:

In Parliament at the time of the Balfour declaration people were unsure as to why a religion deserved or required a country. A debate occurred in the House of Commons about whether Judaism was a **religion** or **nation**. If it was a religion, then perhaps there was no need for them to have a country. This side was argued by Lord Montagu, a Conservative politician who had previously served in Mandate Palestine before the end of British rule. (Notice that this in itself is quite problematic since the Muslim and Christian religions have a large number of countries.)

However, Rav Kook, who was in England at the time (Coincidence? Hashgacha? Besheret?), was quoted during the debate as calling Judaism a nation. The decision was made to follow Rav Kook, seeing as a Rabbi probably knows more about Judaism than Lord Montagu!

On 12 May 1948, the Minhelet HaAm (מנהלת העם, lit. People's Administration) was convened to vote on declaring independence. Three of the thirteen members were missing, with Yehuda Leib Maimon and Yitzhak Gruenbaum being blocked in besieged Jerusalem, while Yitzhak-Meir Levin was in the United States. The meeting started at 1:45 in the afternoon and ended after midnight.



- For: David Ben-Gurion, Moshe Sharett (Mapai); Peretz Bernstein (General Zionists); Haim-Moshe Shapira (Hapoel HaMizrachi); Mordechai Bentov, Aharon Zisling (Mapam).
- Against: Eliezer Kaplan, David Remez (Mapai); Pinchas Rosen (New Aliyah Party); Bechor-Shalom Sheetrit (Sephardim and Oriental Communities).

Final Wording:

One of the major issues was over the inclusion of G-d in the last section of the document, with the draft using the phrase "and placing our trust in the

Almighty". The two Rabbis, Shapira and Yehuda Leib Maimon, argued for its inclusion, saying that it could not be omitted, with Shapira supporting the wording "G-d of Israel" or "the Almighty and Redeemer of Israel".

It was strongly opposed by Zisling, a member of the secularist Mapam. In the end the phrase "Rock of Israel" was used, which could be interpreted as either referring to God, or the land of Eretz Israel, Ben-Gurion saying "Each of us, in his own way, believes in the 'Rock of Israel' as he conceives it. I should like to make one request: Don't let me put this phrase to a vote." Although its use was still opposed by Zisling, the phrase was accepted without a vote.



Signatures on the declaration of independence

Discussion point 3: Do you think these debates over the wording of the declaration of independence and the Balfour Declaration would still play out in the same way in modern Israel? How can you play out these debates in the minds of your chanichim?

Concrete Concepts:

1. The Balfour declaration represented the first public support for Zionism by a major political power.
2. The White Paper was a negative turn for Jewish immigration to Israel and the prospects of a Jewish state.
3. Secular Zionist leaders were key players in the political events that lead to the founding of the state of Israel.
4. The wordings of the documents that allowed the state to come into existence were hotly debated over, representing disagreements amongst religious and secular Zionist leaders themselves.

Peula Ideas:

Documentation Debates – Play out the debates over the wording of the Balfour declaration and the declaration of independence with your chanichim! Get each of your chanichim to learn about secular Zionist leaders by trying to think about what they would say in those debates.

Refugees – The white paper made it even more difficult to immigrate to Israel. How did that affect people at the time? How can your chanichim understand the experience of aliyah-attempters around that period? Imagine you are an asylum seeker or refugee trying to juggle all the competing pressures of life. Five balloons represent some of the issues you may face each day: Food, Accommodation, Education, Freedom, Language. Your challenge is, for 30 seconds, to keep as many balloons in the air as possible. You cannot catch a balloon. When a balloon hits the floor or falls out of the playing area then it is out of play. Start with making one chanich try to do this by themselves, then compare how many balloons they are able to keep up when they are helped by their friends. Discuss what the challenges are in each of these areas.



Historical Mechanics – K4, K5 and K6 teach your chanichim that LOTS of events went into the inception of the state of Israel. Pick a historical event like “World War 1” or “the credit crunch” and print out lots of different events that could arguably have contributed to your big historical event. Use it as a springboard to discuss how History works in this way. No one event can be said to be responsible for the inception of the state!

K6: Hakamat Hamedina

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STATE OF ISRAEL IS BORN

The first independent Jewish State in 19 centuries was born in Tel Aviv as the British Mandate over Palestine came to an end at midnight on Friday, and it was immediately subjected to the test of fire. As "Medinat Yisrael" (State of Israel) was proclaimed, the battle for Jerusalem raged, with most of the city falling to the Jews. At the

Most Crowded Hours in Palestine's History

Between Thursday night and this morning Palestine went through what by all standards must be among the most crowded hours in its history.

For the Jewish population there was the anguish over the fate of the few hundred Hagana men and women in the Kfar Etzion bloc of settlements near Hebron. Their surrender to a fully equipped superior foreign force desperately in need of a victory was a foregone conclusion. What could not be known, with no communications since Thursday morning, was whether and to what extent the Red Cross and the Truce Council would secure civilized conditions for prisoners and wounded, and proper respect for the dead. Doubts on some of these anxious questions have now been resolved.

On Friday afternoon, from Tel Aviv, came the expected announcement of the Jewish State, and its official naming as both "Medinat Yisrael"—State of Israel, with the swearing in of the first Council of Government. The proclamation of the State was made at midnight, coinciding with the sailing from Halls of Britain's first High Commissioner. Within the hour, President Truman announced in Washington that the Government of the United States had decided to give *de facto* recognition to the Jewish State, with

same time, President Truman announced that the United States would accord recognition to the new State. A few hours later, Palestine was invaded by Moslem armies from the south, east and north, and Tel Aviv was raided from the air. On Friday the United Nations Special Assembly adjourned after adopting a resolution to appoint a mediator but without taking any action on the Partition Resolution of November 29.

Yesterday the battle for the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv road was still under way, and two Arab villages were taken. In the north, Acre town was captured, and the Jewish Army consolidated its positions in Western Galilee.

U.S. RECOGNIZES JEWISH STATE

WASHINGTON, Sunday.—Ten minutes after the termination of the British Mandate on Friday, the White House released a formal statement by President Truman that the U.S. Government intended to recognize the Provisional Jewish Government as the *de facto* authority representing the Jewish State.

The U.S. is also considering lifting the arms embargo but it is not known whether to Palestine only or the entire Middle East, and the resumption of diplomatic relations with the Jewish Provisional Government.

The White House press secretary, Mr. Charles Ross, told correspondents today that reaction so far to the recognition had been overwhelmingly favourable. He said the step had been discussed with Mr. Marshall and Mr. Lovett before action was taken, and it had their complete support.

Mr. Ross said that the President had decided several days ago to grant American recognition to the Jewish State.

JEWIS TAKE OVER SECURITY ZONES

The battle for Jerusalem, which began when the British forces withdrew on Friday morning, continued all day Friday and yesterday. The crackle of small-arms fire and explosions of mortar shells were still being heard in the early hours of this morning as the battle entered its third day.

Repeated efforts on Friday evening and again on Saturday by the U.N. Truce Commission to bring about a "cease fire" were brought to naught when the Arab representatives failed to agree within the specified time limit.

On Friday morning, Jewish forces entered the Russian Compound and Zone C to reoccupy the buildings requisitioned from Jews last year. This operation was almost bloodless, but beyond the western edge of Zone C Arabs expelled the Jews to Jaffa Road. The Arabs were forced back and the barracks block area was taken.

In other parts of the city fighting flared up. Jews overran one after another the areas surrounded by the British. By last night, the quarters and

Egyptian Air Force Spiffires Bomb Tel Aviv; One Shot Down

Kfar Etzion, the Tel Aviv broadcasting station, reported at 2 o'clock yesterday afternoon that Tel Aviv had been bombed three times in the previous evening and morning, and that one plane had been shot down and the Egyptian pilot taken prisoner.

In the first raid, four planes attacked from a height of 300 feet. Two dropped bombs, while the others strafed the city. Little damage was caused. In the second attack, two hours later, the airport to the north of the city was bombed, and an Air France plane parked there was damaged. The third raid was launched shortly before midnight, but the planes were driven off, without causing any damage.

Two settlements to the north had also been reported from the air, the radio reported.

2 Columns Cross Southern Border

By WALTER COLLINS
P.P. Correspondent
CAIRO, Saturday.—A column of 200 Arab fighters crossed the Egyptian border into Palestine yesterday, according to a report from the Kfar Etzion bloc.

Etzion Settlers Taken P.O.W.

Fighting in the Kfar Etzion bloc continued throughout Friday, after Kfar Etzion had

Proclamation by Head Of Government

The creation of "Medinat Yisrael," the State of Israel, was proclaimed at midnight on Friday by Mr. David Ben-Gurion, until then Chairman of the Jewish Agency Executive and now head of the State's Provisional Council of Government.

The first act of the Council of Government, as announced by its head, was to abolish all legislation of the 1948 White Paper of the late Mandatory Power, particularly the Ordinances and Orders relating to immigration and land transfer.

In the declaration of independence, Mr. Ben-Gurion relied on the Arabs of Palestine to restore peace, acknowledging full civic rights and full representation in all governmental organs of the State.

Mr. Ben-Gurion prefaced the declaration with a review of the historic connection of the Jewish people with the Land of Israel and of their efforts to return, which covered several paragraphs of the proclamation of their dispersal, until the Mandate imposed, proved anew the urgency of the need for a Jewish State.

The Balfour Declaration of 1917, confirmed by the League of Nations, had given explicit international recognition to the Jewish people.

Special Assembly Adjourns

PLUMMING MEADOWS, Saturday.—The Special U.N. Assembly called four weeks ago to discuss the U.S. proposal

Aims:

1. **Learn** about how the resistance movements in the pre-state period led to the establishment of the state.
2. **Learn** about the Six Aliyot and the driving forces behind them.

1

Each year, when we set time aside on Yom Hazikaron to remember Israel's fighters, we generally think of those young men and women, our own age, who fell wearing the uniform of צה"ל – the IDF (We will be looking at the IDF in K8). However, we must remember that the IDF was preceded by several other movements who fought for many years before the establishment of the State. They did not have any of the resources or expertise available to modern day armies. They were underground fighters, battling to protect the Jews who were already living in the Land of Israel. When we think of olim, we also tend to think of Aliyah after the establishment of the State. Aliyah was a thing long before 1948! In this Kvutza we'll take a closer look at the **pre-state period** with your chanichim, not from the political perspective of the last kevutza, but rather, from the point of view of people moving to Israel and fighting on the ground.

Jewish Defence in Mandate Palestine:

After Arab riots in 1920 the leaders of the Yishuv – the Jewish community in Mandate Palestine – recognised the need for a nationwide defence organisation and so the **Haganah** was founded. At first poorly trained and equipped with no central leadership, the Haganah was transformed following the 1929 Arab riots. All settlements and cities enlisted their young men and women, the organisation began acquiring foreign arms and developing their own weapons. The leaders of the Yishuv instructed the Haganah to follow a policy of **havlagah** – restraint. The organisation was to defend Jewish areas and people, but never counterattack or pre-emptively strike.

In 1931, elements of the Haganah, dissatisfied with the policy of havlagah, splintered off and **formed Haganah Hatzvai Haleumi** (The National Military Organisation, also known as the Irgun or Etzel). Even so, it acted similarly to the Haganah, and the two organisations cooperated until the **Arab Revolt in 1936**, when the Arab population attempted to end all Jewish migration to Mandate Palestine.

In November 1936, the British sent the Peel Commission to discover the source of the revolt and to suggest solutions. Many in the Yishuv hoped that this would lead to the political establishment of a Jewish State and reinforced the policy of havlagah. In response the Irgun broke away from the policy and embarked on a **more aggressive campaign** against the British. The split in the underground movements was reflective of wider tensions within the Yishuv. Although the Irgun supposedly never deliberately attacked civilian targets, they were branded as 'terrorists' by the British and even by the Haganah themselves!



Arab Riots

1929

Haganah
Founded

Irgun

'splits off'

Arab

Revolt 1936

Irgun Mamash
splits off

White Paper

1939

Both Haganah
and Irgun hate it

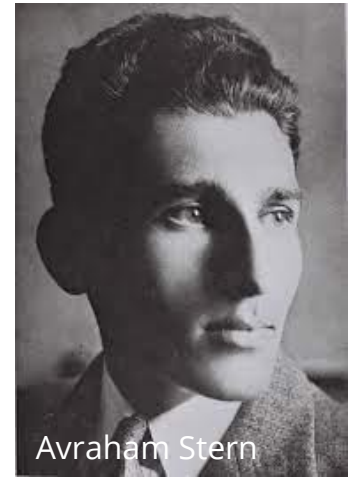
WWII Breaks out
and Lechi Forms

In reaction to the restrictive **White Paper of 1939**, the Haganah organised demonstrations and actively began to help Jews from Europe to enter Palestine illegally. They adopted a cause of "illegal immigration, illegal settlement and illegal military action" in an attempt to break restrictions placed on Jews by the British. They hoped to change British policy and to pressure the Brits to hand over the Mandate to the UN. For the Irgun, the White Paper made the British a serious target. As well as approving attacks against the Arabs, the Irgun decided to use all methods possible to get the British out and open the channels of immigration.



British Peel Commission

When **World War Two** broke out, both decided it was best to leave the British alone; an attack would a) help the Nazi's and b) galvanise the British against the Zionists. In 1940, **Avraham Stern** broke away from the Irgun to form **Lehi** (לוחמי חרות ישראל) – Fighters for the Freedom of Israel, also known as the 'Stern Gang) who would fight the British, war or no war and would use any measures against the British Empire to get them to leave; they also wanted population exchange of local Arabs, moving them to non-Jewish areas.



Avraham Stern

Summarising the Three underground Movements:

Haganah

- Originally founded to protect the Yishuv.
- Tactics were decided in accordance with political needs, aiming to open the borders to free Jewish immigrants.
- Struggle was to be conducted with the minimum amount of bloodshed: only the British army will be attacked, not civilians.
- The armed struggle was only part of the political struggle for the realisation of the Zionist ideal.



Irgun (Etzel)

- War is against the British, who have turned Eretz Yisrael into a military base.
- Decide on targets and methods of action with the intention of **causing maximum damage to the British forces whilst avoiding civilian casualties.**
- Armed struggle will be accompanied by political activity and propaganda which will weaken the British will to fight us.
- The Arabs are not our enemy and their rights will be guaranteed in the eventual Hebrew state.
- Menachem Begin became leader of the Irgun in 1943.



Lechi (Stern Gang)

- Independence will be achieved only by a concentrated war of Liberation against the occupying power.
- Use all methods in the fight against this army and all its supporters.**
- War of liberation will transform the Yishuv into an independent lobby, able to find allies who will support it against Britain (including local and neighbouring Arabs).
- Members are volunteers, selected with great care and able to withstand the great strain placed upon freedom-fighters.



Discussion Point 1: Which of these movements do you think you or Bnei Akiva would associate with?

The King David Hotel Bombing:

For a short period of time, the three underground movements worked together as the **'United Jewish Resistance Movement'** (Tnuat Hameri halvri). This cooperation ceased following the King David Hotel Bombing on **Monday 22nd June 1946**.

The King David Hotel was not just a hotel but also housed the British Military Intelligence Headquarters. Despite the fact that three separate warnings were given to evacuate the building, these were not heeded.

When the smoke cleared, the southern wing of the King David Hotel was no more. The offices of the Chief Secretary of the British Mandatory Government and Military Headquarters in Palestine had been destroyed. Rescue teams found 91 bodies, including 28 British officers, under the rubble.



Discussion Point 2:
The bombing was an extremely complex event and is a great opportunity to get your chanichim to appreciate the concept of differing perspectives when it comes to Israeli history. What's the best way to go about teaching this to year 9s in Kvutza?

The death toll shocked the Jewish community. **Haganah commanders blamed the disaster on the Irgun;** they said the explosion occurred contrary to what had been agreed upon, at a time when the building was full of people. The **Irgun commanders insisted that the operation was coordinated with the Haganah** in all its details. The dispute ended the short period of cooperation between the Haganah and the Irgun and Stern Group.

The British reacted furiously to the blowing up of the King David Hotel. Twenty-seven thousand soldiers and policemen stormed Tel Aviv. A strict curfew was imposed, and careful searches carried out to find the attackers of the King David Hotel.

Manachem Begin was at the head of the 'wanted' list and every policeman and detective had a copy of his picture. Begin however, had disguised himself and was living under the alias of Rabbi Israel Sassover.

Of course, all this freedom fighting for the state of Israel wouldn't have been possible without some very ideological people first moving to barren land of Israel pre-1948. In 1867, Mark Twain visited Palestine, then a small part of the Ottoman Empire. It was a desolate backwater of a country with only 20,000 Jews. He wrote:

"There was hardly a tree or a shrub anywhere. Even the olive and the cactus, those fast friends of a worthless soil, had almost deserted the country" ... "A desolation is here that not even imagination can grace..." (Mark Twain, Innocents Abroad, Chapters 46, 49, 52 and 56)

Before the state existed, there were certain times in which immigration picked up. These six Aliyot can be clearly distinguished from each other, and each had their own unique driving causes. Each wave of Aliyah shaped how the state developed. Bear in mind that these were the first mass migrations to Israel in nearly 2000 years.

The Six Aliyot:

When reading about the six Aliyot, think about what push and pull factors people might have been driven by. Also consider if it is fair with the gift of hindsight to think about early Aliya in these terms. Here is a contemporary Oleh (Gideon Bratt) to help you on your way:



“When you ask the average oleh/ah why they made Aliyah, they will probably answer that they made Aliyah because they are a lifelong Zionist and that they feel at home in Israel. They may add that they like the culture or even the weather. If religious, they may well also answer that the land of Israel is the homeland of the Jewish people, that it’s the land where Tanach took place, and possibly that the modern state of Israel and the ingathering of exiles

from four corners of the earth is a stage in the Jewish redemption.

All these are legitimate answers. Indeed, to varying degrees, I agree with all of them. There is, however, one overriding reason why I decided to make Aliyah. Despite what you may have heard, Aliyah is really not so hard. There are, though, some significant challenges to overcome; leaving friends and family and learning a new language to name just two. To make such challenges worthwhile, what is the thing that gets me through? What is the one overriding motivation to live in Israel? For me that can be answered simply: to be a builder.

The theme of Bet Chalutzi is 'medina bevinyana', a 'state in building'. You will teach your Chanichim about much of the pre-state history of Israel and the Jewish people in the 19th and 20th centuries. The early Zionist pioneers worked the land, developed agriculture and commerce, established the national institutions that were the precursor to the state. Post-1948, early Israeli leaders created the IDF, absorbed thousands of new immigrants and formed Israel's education system, transport networks and industry.

Their task, however, is far from over. Israel is, in global terms, still in its infant stages. There is a long way to go but it is now, in its youth, that we have the best opportunity to build Israel. And that is, essentially, why I decided to live in Israel. It may not always be easy, but having the opportunity, both on an individual level and also as part of a wider nation, to influence the state, make it what we want it to be, what our prophets envisaged it to be, is our national mission.

And that mission (without wanting to sound preachy) can only be carried out in one place...”

‘Pioneers are a special breed of people. They take the world as it exists and begin to transform it into what it could become’ (Udo Erasmus)

The First Aliyah (1882-1903):

At the end of the 19th century, small groups and individuals were the first pioneers to venture to Palestine. These individuals were mainly from movements such as **Chibat Tzion**, a movement in Russia, which encouraged Aliyah by teaching its members agriculture and settlement building. Another organisation was **BILU**, named from the initials of the pasuk in Yeshayah 2:5

"...בֵּית יַעֲקֹב לְכוּ וְנִלְכָה"

House of Ya'akov, come and let us go

Their aim was to bring about the political-economic, as well as **spiritual-national revival** of the Jewish people through settlement in Israel. Many suffered from climate related problems and illness from malarial swamps, and many died. Furthermore, there was also a lot of hostility from the Ottoman's and tough economic problems.



However, despite this hardship, rural settlements were built, 28 new

moshavim had been set up and 90,000 acres of land had been purchased for urban settlements (including Yaffo). In 1901, the Jewish National Fund (JNF) was founded. Their objective was to purchase and develop land. The JNF got involved in tree planting for many reasons, taking its inspiration from the Torah... "When you besiege a city do not destroy its trees" (Devarim 20:19)

The Second Aliyah (1904-1914):

The Uganda proposal set back the settlement of the land, as did Herzl's early death in 1904. But there were more pioneers still to come. The **Kishinev pogroms** in Russia (K4) became a symbol in Jewish history as the first notorious pogrom of the 20th century as well as being a catalyst for the second aliya.

The Hebrew language had been reintroduced in the first aliya. Eliezer Ben-Yehuda (1858-1922) had introduced the concept before that. By the second aliya, both Hebrew press and literature were in circulation. The second aliya saw all-together 40,000 people journey to Israel. It was brought to a premature end by the outbreak of WW1. 10,000 Jews died of illness and hunger, and many others left the country. The Jewish population dropped from 85,000 to 60,000. But development work and the growth of settlements still went on.

The Third Aliyah (1919-1923):

35,000 people made aliya as a direct response to two primary factors:

- The Bolshevik Revolution (Russia) 53% of immigrants
- Post war pogroms (Ukraine) – 36% of immigrants

In addition, the Balfour declaration of 1917 gave new encouragement. The displacement of many people at the end of the war, combined with strict immigration quotas to the US also led Jews to Israel. The third Aliyah expanded the map of Israel with many more kibbutzim and moshavim. The JNF purchased land in the Jezebel Valley in the lower Galil region and 26,000 Jews settled there. The olim built roads, towns and drained the marshes.



The Fourth Aliyah (1924-1928):

67,000 new olim entered the land. They included more middle-class people, primarily from Poland, with more professional occupations including shopkeepers, tailors, etc. Economic sanctions had been placed on Polish Jews and therefore this Aliyah was also known as the 'Grabinski Aliya,' after the polish finance minister.

Middle Eastern Jews also arrived from Yemen and Iraq. The new olim dwelt in towns, building up the coastal area. They invested their money in factories, small hotels, restaurants shops and most of all in construction. During the fourth Aliyah the population of Tel Aviv quadrupled to 40,000! Towards the end of this wave an economic crisis hit the region badly.



The Fifth Aliyah (1929-1939):

Following an economic comeback in the area a few made Aliyah in 1929. But numbers increased significantly following Hitler's rise to power in 1933. 164,000 migrated legally to Israel between 1933 and 1936 and thousands more entered illegally. Over a quarter were from Germany and Austria, and 80% of new settlers entered cities and towns. The fifth aliya was the beginning of the 'youth Aliyah'. 5,000 Jewish children were rescued from Eastern Europe from 1933.



The Sixth Aliyah (1940-1947):

113,000 journeyed from Poland, Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and other European countries. The White Paper (K5, p4) did not stop the new influx of olim, but a lot of them were illegal immigrants, known as the Ma'apilim. The arrival of Jews escaping Europe in contravention to the White Paper was referred to as Aliyah Bet. When these Jews were escaping the Nazis and were caught entering Israel they were interned in Cyprus by the British Mandatory authorities. They were released and allowed into Israel in 1948.

Discussion Point 3: Are some of these Aliyot more “Religious Zionist” or “Secular Zionist” than others? What can we learn from them individually?

Hakamat Hamedina:

As you've hopefully gleaned from the last three kvutzot, the pre-state period was a crazy time. "The state was always going to come about; it was just a question of when," is not such a pashut statement. The creation of the state of Israel involved a complex interaction between the birth of the Zionist ideology (K4), foreign politics (K5), Jewish settlement of the land through different Aliyot (K6), freedom fighters (K6) and of course the impact the holocaust had on illegal immigration, Jewish resistance and the United Nations. As Religious Zionists, it's easy for us to see supernatural forces at play behind these events. As we move into exploring the post-state history of Israel as we know it, seeing Hashem in our history only gets easier...

Concrete Concepts:

1. The actions of the Haganah, Irgun and Lehi were partially responsible for Hakamat Hamedina.
2. Pre-state Olim moved to Israel despite the harsh conditions and aided the establishment of the medina.

Educational Peulot

Resistance Movements – Join up with other kvutzot and play games and label yourselves after the 3 underground movements. Play games that accentuate the fighting strategies of the 3 movements e.g the song game for the Haganah, grab the shmatter for lechi and a relay race for the Irgun.

Aliyah! – Cut out big pieces of card and get your chanichim to write down some pull factors of making aliyah as well as some obstacles to doing so. Lead them to a giant pre-made obstacle course and stick their 'obstacle cards' on the various obstacles. Place their 'pull factor' cards at the end of the course and complete the obstacle course as a kvutza! If you want you can add in obstacles as you go to represent the six different Aliyot.

K7: In Defence of Israel (Part 1)



Aims:

1. **Learn** about Israel's wars.
2. **Explore** how they emotionally and politically affected Israel.

Introduction

“You know on May 13, the day before Israeli Independence Day, the TV stations in Israel screen the name of every soldier who has fallen for the country. A name flashes on the screen for a second or two, then the next name appears. You go to bed, you get up, the names are still flashing. It takes 24 hours. That’s how they observe Memorial Day” (Chief of Staff Leo McGarry – The West Wing)

The Civil War in Mandate Palestine (December 1947-May 1948)

On 29 November 1947, the UN passed the Partition Plan (see right). The Jewish Agency representing the Yishuv accepted the plan, while the representatives of the Arab communities refused it. The next day rioting broke out, growing in violence until there was a fully blown armed struggle between the two communities. The British remained neutral and began organising their withdrawal from the region.



The War of Independence (May 1948-March 1949)

History

On the evening of 14th May, Ben-Gurion declared the establishment of the State of Israel. At midnight the British Mandate terminated and simultaneously the armies of Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon invaded the new country. Initially they were significantly larger than Israel's forces and better equipped. Yet the Arab armies lacked organisation and leadership and were often at odds with each other, seeking to incorporate territory from Palestine into their own states. Despite their small numbers, the Jews were well organised, disciplined, trained and fighting for their survival.

The war was marked by long periods of fighting and temporary cease-fires. Fighting officially ended in January 1949, at which time Israel held the 5,600 square miles allotted to it by the UN partition plan, plus an additional 2,500 square miles. Transjordan held east Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria and Egypt held the Gaza strip.

Story



Esther Cailingold was a British-born BANik (or back then Bachad-nik) in 1940s Manchester. In May 1945, when WWII ended in Europe, 19-year old Esther and her brother Asher danced the night away in London’s Trafalgar square.

“When we got home in the early hours our father greeted us with a warning that dark times were ahead for the Jews,” Asher recalls. After the reality of the holocaust caught up with them Asher watched as his sister transformed “from a prim trainee schoolteacher into a frontline fighter who travelled alone to a strange land and changed into someone we never knew.”

From January to July 1949, armistice agreements were signed with Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria based on the frontlines as they were at the end of the fighting. These lines created the borders of the new state (see right) and Israel hoped that the armistice agreements would lead to official Arab-Israeli peace treaties.

Esther fought with Jewish forces during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War and died of wounds in the battle for the Old City of Jerusalem. She is commemorated by a forest in Kibbutz Lavi, by a scholarship fund at Yeshivat HaKotel. She wrote a final letter to her parents six days before her death:

The Arab states, however, refused to recognise Israel's existence and a state of war remained. They continued their boycott of the Jewish state, which was instituted by the Arab League in 1945, which prohibited all Arab peoples from conducting business both with Israel and with other companies who do business with Israel. They also embarked on a campaign to isolate the Jewish state in the international community. The Arab states provided little help to Palestinians who became refugees after the war. Only Jordan offered Palestinian Arabs citizenship. Refugee camps were set up and maintained primarily by the UN and other international relief organisations.



May 23rd 1948

Dear Mummy, Daddy and everyone,

If you do get this at all, it will be, I suppose, typical of all my hurried, messy letters. I am writing it to beg of you that, whatever might have happened to me, you will make the effort to take it in the spirit that I want and to understand that for myself I have no regrets. We have had a bitter fight, I have tasted of Gehenem - but it has been worthwhile because I am convinced that the end will see a Jewish State and the realisation of all our longings. I shall only be one of many who fell (in) sacrifice, and I was urged to write this letter because one in particular was killed today who meant a great deal to me. Because of the sorrow I felt, I want you to take it otherwise - to remember that we were soldiers and had the greatest and noblest cause to fight for. God is with us, I know, in His own Holy City, and I am proud and ready to pay the price it may cost to relieve it. Don't think that I have taken "unnecessary risks" - that does not pay when manpower is short, but I did find the excitement I always needed and have enjoyed it. I hope that you may have the chance of meeting any of my co-fighters who survive, if I do not, and that you will be pleased and not sad of how they talk of me. Please, please do not be sadder than you can help - I have lived my life fully if briefly, and I think that is the best way - "short and sweet", very sweet it has been here in our own land. I hope you will enjoy from Mimi and Asher the satisfaction you have missed in me - let it be without regrets, and then I too shall be happy. I am thinking of you all, every single one of you in the family, and am full of pleasure at the thought that you will one day, very soon I hope, come and enjoy the fruits of that for which we are fighting. Much, much love, and remember me only in happiness.

Shalom and Lehitraot, Your loving Esther

Discussion Point 1: Esther's story emotionally frames the war of independence in a certain way. What other approaches could you take in Kvutza?

The Sinai Campaign (October 1956)

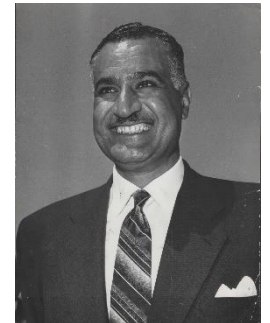
In the early 1950s, Egypt violated the terms of the Egyptian Israeli armistice agreement and blocked Israeli ships from passing through the Suez Canal and the Straits of Tiran. This rendered the port at Eilat close to useless and significantly hampered Israel's trade. Foreign ships carrying goods bound for Israel and Israeli ships carrying goods bound for the Far East had to travel a long and costly circuitous route to the Atlantic and Israel's Mediterranean ports.



At the same time, Palestinian Arab *Fedayeen* (Arabic for Freedom fighters – non-affiliated militant groups often deployed for a cause where a government has failed) launched cross-border infiltrations and attacks on Israeli civilian centres and military outposts from Egypt, Jordan and Syria. Israel hoped that its harsh reprisals would compel Arab governments to restrain infiltrators from entering Israel. In 1955 alone, 260 Israeli citizens were killed or wounded by fedayeen.

In July 1956, Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal, threatening British and French interests in oil supplies and western trade. Israel, along with Britain and France, decided to plan an attack on Egypt with three main aims:

- Destroy the 'Fedayeen' bases in the Gaza Strip and on the Sinai Border
- Prevention of an Egyptian attack on Israel by destroying their airfields in Sinai
- Opening the Gulf of Eilat to Israeli shipping



On October 29, 1956, Israel began its assault on Egyptian military positions, joined by France and Britain on October 31. They captured the whole of the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula, which remained in their hands until November 5.

Although the operation was a brilliant military success, it was a diplomatic disaster. The UN Security Council denounced the attack and Britain and France quickly withdrew their troops. The US also voiced strong opposition to the joint attack and pressured Israel to withdraw from Egyptian territory. Egypt was recognised as the legal owner of the canal and Israel was forced to withdraw her troops from the Sinai. A UN peace force would patrol the Israeli-Egyptian border to prevent fedayeen attacks, and UN troops were posted at Sharm el-Sheikh to guarantee free passage of Israeli ships through the Straits of Tiran. The Suez Canal remained closed to Israeli shipping.

The Six Day War (June 1967)

History

In May 1967, Egypt and Syria took a number of steps that led Israel to believe that an Arab attack was imminent. On May 16, Nasser ordered a withdrawal of the UN forces stationed on the Egyptian-Israeli border that had been there since 1957. On May 22, Egypt announced a blockade of all goods bound to and from Israel through the Straits of Tiran (following the Sinai campaign Prime Minister Levi Eshkol stated that a closure of the Straits would be seen as Egypt declaring war in Israel). Syria increased border clashes with Israel along the Golan Heights and mobilized its troops. Nasser and other Egyptian leaders also began to intensify their anti-Israel rhetoric and repeatedly called for a war of total destruction against Israel. From a Radio Cairo broadcast on the eve of the war: "The President declares that our aim is to gain control over Israel and we have a plan to liberate Palestine. Hah you Zionists! 100 million fighters will destroy you! Be prepared, because 100 million Arabs will dig your graves for you." From a Radio Damascus broadcast: "We will overrun you, Zionists. There will be no peace, no security and no freedom until we have thrown your gangs into the sea."

Arab mobilization compelled Israel to mobilize its troops, 80% of which were reserve civilians. Militarily, Israeli leaders feared the consequences of absorbing an Arab first strike against its civilian population, many of whom lived only miles from Arab-controlled territory. Against this background, Israel launched a pre-emptive strike against Egypt.

Story

On Yom Ha'atzmaut 1967, before the Six day war, two events bore almost prophetic significance. The first was the celebration at Mercaz HaRav Yeshiva. The head of the Yeshiva, Rav Zvi Yehuda Kook, spoke about the importance of the day. Suddenly he raised his hand and shouted with great emotion: "Where is our Chevron? Have we forgotten her? And our Jericho? And our eastern side of the Jordan?" Our holy city Yerushalayim!!" Three weeks later, the old city of Jerusalem was liberated, along with Chevron, Schem and Jericho, with dozens of Rav Kook's students among the fighters. Rav Tzvi Yehuda had the honour of being the first civilian to daven at the kotel after it was captured.



On the very same day, a few hundred meters from Merkaz HaRav, the Israeli song festival was in full swing. The most prominent song, Naomi Shemer's "Yerushalayim shel Zahav" was sung for the first time and became an instant hit. The song laments a divided Jerusalem and expresses yearnings for the old city. Three weeks later, Jerusalem was liberated. Naomi Shemer then added another verse to the song expressing our return to Yerushalayim. Song can be found in the extra chomer.



In Egypt, Israel destroyed 416 aircrafts, gaining dominance in the skies, and seven other divisions before a truce was agreed on June 8th. Sinai and Gaza were in Israeli hands. In Jordan, King Hussein ignored the advice of PM Levi Eshkol not to get drawn in. Listening to the Egyptian propaganda, Jordan attacked. Israel responded and captured Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem. In Syria, in response to heavy shelling Israel captured the Golan heights and ended the war. In six days Israel had more than tripled her size but had lost 777 soldiers with 2,586 wounded. Egypt alone had lost almost 15,000 men.

At the start of the war, some estimated the Israeli death toll to be 100,000. Israeli army chaplains were sent to public parks to prepare funeral grounds for the expected burials. Somehow Israel ended up with less than 800 casualties. Ezer Weizman, who had built the Israeli air force and was head of operations during the war, was asked to explain the astounding success of the airforce on the first day. All he could think of was the pasuk “אצבעת אלוהים היא” – it is the finger of God (Shemot 8:15). Similarly the then chief of staff, Yitzchak Rabin summed up the war with a pasuk from Hallel: “This is the day that Hashem made – we shall exalt and rejoice in it” (Tehillim 118:24).

For more stuff on the six-day war, check out “the Six-Day War scroll” on your sefarim shelf.

Discussion Point 2: “There are two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle” – Einstein. How do you want to frame the Six-day war for your chanichim in Kvutza?

The Yom Kippur War (October 1973)

History

In an effort to force Israel to unilaterally surrender captured lands, Egypt and Syria jointly attacked Israel on **October 6, 1973, Yom Kippur**. Other Arab states contributed troops and financial support. Caught by surprise, Israel suffered severe losses in human life and equipment. Following an Egyptian refusal to accept a cease-fire and a Soviet airlift to the Arab states, the US sent an airlift to Israel enabling her to recover from earlier setbacks.

Story

Moshe Dayan handed Golda his binoculars the better to view the distant valley floor strewn with the hideous debris of war: pulverized howitzers, burned-out tanks punched through with bull’s eyes, some still smoldering – and the dead. The stench of death, cordite, diesel, and exhaust, was overwhelming. As she scanned this cadaverous landscape through the binoculars the creases in her face sharpened, and she fumbled for a pack of cigarettes from her black leather handbag. “Come, I want to talk to the men at the sukka. I want to hear what they have to say.” She moved off in the direction of an armored personnel carrier which was canopied by a sukka – a booth – in honor of the festival.



Following a **cease-fire**, the war officially ended on October 22, 1973 but fighting continued on the Egyptian-Israeli front and when hostilities finally ended, Israel held an additional 165 square miles of territory from Syria and had encircled the Egyptian Third Army on the west bank of the Suez Canal. Egyptian forces held two areas of Israeli territory along the east bank of the canal. Israel, Egypt and Syria all held prisoners of war.

In late December, at the request of the Soviet Union, a Middle East peace conference opened in Geneva. Insisting that Israel first **evacuate from territory gained during the war**, Syria refused to attend. The conference quickly adjourned in failure. US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger then successfully coordinated troop disengagement agreements (not peace treaties) between Israel and Egypt in January 1974 and between Israel and Syria in May 1974. Israel withdrew from all the area it had acquired from Syria during the 1973 war in addition to some areas gained in 1967. The Egyptian-Israeli agreement called for Israeli withdrawal from parts of the Sinai. Prisoners of war were exchanged, and the Arab world ended its oil embargo (started during the war).



Inside, about fifteen soldiers were chanting a prayer, their backs toward Golda and her companions. Each was draped in a tallis, and each clutched a lulav and etrog, hadassim and aravot. Only when they had completed their ritual did they notice who was silently gazing at them. "Chag sameach!" called Golda, and the soldiers returned the festive greeting with wide-eyed astonishment. They were reservists, plucked from their synagogues on Yom Kippur to reinforce the desperately stretched line that was holding back the Syrians. While their tanks were being hastily refueled, rearmed, and serviced, they had taken the time to pray and recite the blessings over the Four Species.

Straightening her skirt, Golda Meir asked the men about their families, her countenance that of a concerned grandmother, and learned by-the-by that she was talking to lawyers, bakers, teachers, falafel vendors, accountants, shopkeepers, and hi-tech executives.

Other soldiers were drawn into the circle, and the prime minister asked them many questions.



Then she wrapped the session up with, "Now, is there anyone who would like to ask me something?"

One tank crew member – he seemed to be in his mid-twenties – raised his hand. He was caked with black basalt dust from head to toe, and his only contrasting feature were the whites of his eyes. "I have a question," he said, in a voice throaty with exhaustion. "My father was killed in the war of forty-eight, and we won. My uncle was killed in the war of fifty-six, and we won. My brother lost an arm in the sixty-seven war, and we won. Last week I lost my best friend over there," – he was pointing to the Vale of Tears – "and we're going to win. But is all our sacrifice worthwhile, Golda? What's the use of our sacrifice if we can't win the peace?"

On a tactical level, the end of the war saw Israel with territorial gains in the Golan Heights and the encirclement of the Egyptian third army. However, the Arab side had succeeded in surprising Israeli both strategically and tactically. The Israeli intelligence gathering networks had a lot to answer for, and the Israeli public were forced to wake up to the idea that their military was not indestructible. For the Arab states (and Egypt in particular), the psychological trauma of their defeat in the Six-Day War had been healed. In some ways, it allowed them to negotiate with the Israelis as equals.

The prime minister returned the young soldier a long and sad look, and there was a strange reserve in her eyes, a remote stare, as though she was looking way inside herself. She answered, in a deeply compassionate tone, saying, "I weep for your loss, just as I grieve for all our dead. I lie awake at night thinking of them. And I must tell you in all honesty, were our sacrifices for ourselves alone, then perhaps you would be right; I'm not at all sure they would be worthwhile. But if our sacrifices are for the sake of the whole Jewish people, then I believe with all my heart that any price is worthwhile."

A commission was launched into the Israeli failings before and during the war. The preliminary findings and placed the onus of responsibility on Chief of Staff David Elazar, the Chief of Military Intelligence General Eli Zeira, and the Chief of the Southern Command General Shmuel Gonen. However, rather than quieting public discontent, the report inflamed it and although it had cleared both Prime Minister Golda Meir and Dayan of all responsibility, public calls for their resignation became more vociferous. On April 11th, 1974 Golda Meir resigned. Her cabinet, including Dayan, followed suit.

A faintly bemused smile tipped the corners of her mouth, and though her face was gnarled with age, a girl looked out of her eyes as she said, "Let me tell you a story. In nineteen forty-eight, in this season of the year, I arrived in Moscow as Israel's first ambassador to the Soviet Union. The State of Israel was brand new. Stalinism was at its height. Jews as Jews had no rights. Hebrew was banned. Torah study was banned. One was sent to the gulag or to Siberia for far less.

"The first Shabbat after I had presented my credentials, my embassy staff joined me for services at the Moscow Great Synagogue. It was practically empty. But the news of our arrival in Moscow spread quickly so that when we went a second time the street in front of the synagogue was jam-packed. Close to fifty thousand people were waiting for us – old people and teenagers, babies in parents' arms, even men in officer uniforms of the Red Army. Despite all the risks, despite all the official threats to stay away from us, these Jews had come to demonstrate their kinship with us."

"Inside the synagogue," she went on, "the demonstration was the same. Without speeches or parades, these Jews were showing their love for Israel and the Jewish people, and I was their symbol. I prayed together with them on that festival. Oh, how I prayed. I was caught up in a torrent of love so strong it literally took my breath away. People surged around me, stretching out their hands, and crying, 'Sholem aleychem Goldele' [Yiddish for, 'Welcome Golda']. And all I could say over and over again was, 'A dank eych vos ir zayt gebliben Yidn' [I thank you for remaining Jews]. And some cried back to me, 'Mir danken Medinas Yisroel' [We thank the State of Israel]. And that was when I knew for sure that our sacrifices are not in vain."

Discussion Point 3: Was Golda Meir right in retrospect? What other emotional questions/provocations does the YK war present us with?

Concrete Concepts:

1. "It has been worthwhile because I am convinced that the end will see a Jewish State and the realisation of all our longings." (War of Independence – Esther Cailingold)
2. "In Israel to be a realist, you have to believe in Miracles" (Six Day war- David Ben Gurion)
3. "If our sacrifices are for the sake of the whole Jewish people, then I believe with all my heart that any price is worthwhile." (Yom Kippur War-Golda meir).

Educational Peulot:

Tisch – This is obviously an extremely information-heavy and emotionally-heavy Kvutza. One way to strike the perfect balance between shtick and shtark could be to have a spontaneous Kvutza tisch. If your chanichim are into tisching it provides the perfect opportunity to give them the opportunity to read some of the stories from the wars presented in this Kvutza.



Miracles – Hold up pictures of various situations (e.g the splitting of the sea, the giving of the Torah, the Purim story, a plant growing, a heart operation, the founding of the state of Israel, the six-day war...etc) and ask your chanichim to go to one side of the room if they think the situation represents a miracle and the other side if they don't. Use the activity to discuss the definition of a miracle.

The Biggest Gamble – Design a game in which the chanichim each start out with objects and there are stakes such that if they lose the games, they lose the objects. Begin playing with poker chips or sweets. Hopefully the chanichim will play the game, someone will win the sweets and no one will take it too seriously. Slowly up the stakes of the game. Make the chanichim actually believe that if they lose, the winner will get to keep their shoes. Maybe play with tuck money? (not sure about that one...). Use the game to transition into a discussion about whether they would play the game with human lives. Hopefully they will agree that this is not something worth sacrificing human life for. This begs the question – why do we consider these wars worth sacrificing human life for?

K8: In Defence of Israel (Part 2)



Aims:

1. **Learn** about Israel's struggles from the 1980s until today.
2. **Appreciate** the complexity of these events.
3. **Discuss** modern antisemitism today.

The First Lebanon War (June 1982)

Into the 1980s. The attempted assassination of the Israeli ambassador in London on June 3rd, 1982, prompted Israel to attack Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) targets in Lebanon. Defence minister Ariel Sharon devised "*Operation Peace for Galilee*" a plan for a limited invasion of 25 miles into Lebanon to wipe out PLO positions in southern Lebanon and thus safeguard Israel's population in northern Israel. Broader aims of the operation included the complete eradication of the PLO's military, political and economic hold over Lebanon, evicting Syrian forces from Lebanon, and facilitating the creation of a Christian-dominated Lebanon, able to form a peace treaty with Israel.

On June 6, Israeli ground troops began their advance into Lebanon and quickly overran PLO positions in the south. Israel went on to lay siege to the PLO in West Beirut leading to a PLO surrender and agreement to evacuate Lebanon. On August 23rd, Bashir Gemayel, a Maronite Christian, was elected the President of Lebanon and the PLO headquarters were transferred to Tunisia. However, Syria remained in 35% of Lebanon and the Christian-dominated Lebanese government was not strong enough either to conclude a peace treaty with Israel or to bring stability to a divided and conflict-ridden country.

Brief History of Lebanon

Part of the Ottoman Empire until 1918, when it became part of the French Mandate of Syria. It was largely Christian, with a few Druze and Muslims.

It gained independence in 1943 and took part in the War of Independence in 1948.

Civil war broke out in 1975, whose roots lay in the complicated and diverse sectors within the country. The influx of Palestinian refugees between 1948 and 1970 coupled with the existence of three main societal factions, the Maronite Christians, Shiite Muslims and Sunni Muslims, led to the outbreak of a conflict. The Syrian Government has a strong influence over Lebanon.

After the events of Black September (1970), which resulted in the expulsion of the PLO from Jordan, it established itself in Southern Lebanon.

In Lebanon, the fragile state of no-war/no-peace, in place since 1973, began to break down as the PLO strengthened its mini-state in Lebanon, established PLO military training centres, and escalated artillery attacks on civilians in northern Israel. Israelis were forced to spend long periods of time in bomb shelters.



In June 1985, Israel withdrew from Lebanon, except for forces stationed in a 3 to 5-mile security zone along the border. Over the years, the zone shielded Israeli civilian settlements in Northern Israel from cross-border attacks and prevented terrorist infiltrating the country, however it also cost Israel the lives of many of its soldiers. In 1999 Ehud Barak pulled troops out of the security zone.

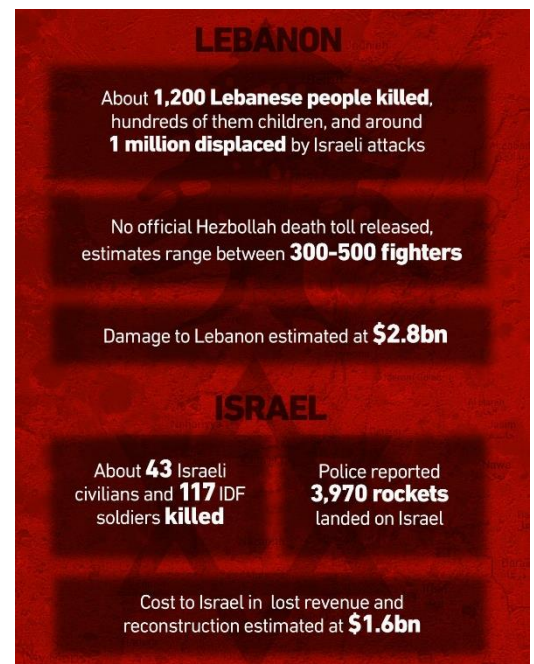
The Second Lebanon war (June 2006)

This war was a military conflict in Lebanon and Northern Israel, primarily between Hezbollah paramilitary forces and the Israeli military. It started on July 12th, 2006, and continued until a UN brokered ceasefire went into effect on August 14th, 2006, though it formally ended on September 8th, 2006 when Israel lifted their naval blockade of Lebanon.

The conflict began when Hezbollah fired Katyusha rockets and mortars at Israeli military positions and border villages, diverting attention from another Hezbollah unit that crossed the border and kidnapped two Israeli soldiers (Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev) and killed three others. Israeli troops attempted unsuccessfully to rescue the abducted soldiers, losing five more in the attempt. Israel responded with massive air strikes and artillery fire on Lebanese civilian infrastructure, including Rafik Hariri International Airport, which Israel said Hezbollah used to import weapons, an air and naval blockade, and a ground invasion of southern Lebanon. Hezbollah in turn launched rockets into northern Israel and engaged the IDF in guerrilla warfare from hidden positions.

The conflict killed over 1,400 people, most of whom were Lebanese civilians, severely damaged Lebanese infrastructure, displaced about 900,000 Lebanese and 300,000 Israelis and disrupted normal life across all of Lebanon and northern Israel. Even after the ceasefire 256,000 Lebanese remained internally displaced and much of Southern Lebanon remained uninhabitable due to unexploded cluster bombs.

On 11th August 2006 the UN Security Council unanimously approved UN Resolution 1701 in an effort to end the hostilities. The resolution, which was approved by both Lebanon and Israel, called for the disarming of Hezbollah for Israel to withdraw and the deployment of the Lebanese soldiers and an enlarged UN force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). The Lebanese army began deploying in Southern Lebanon on 17th August 2006. The blockade was lifted on 8th September 2006. On October 1st Israel withdrew most of its troops from Lebanon through the last of the troops continued to occupy the border straddling the village of Ghajar until December 3rd. On July 16th, 2008, the final chapter in the second Lebanon war was written, with the prisoner exchange that took place (see extra chomer).



Discussion Point 1: Should we put soldiers lives at risk in order to save other soldiers?

Operation Cast Lead (December 2008)

This significant military conflict is not considered to be a war. Militarily its success is questionable, Israel succeeded in reducing the high levels of rocket fire from Gaza (for a time). However, around the Middle East and much of the world it is considered as a failure.



Discussion Point 2: How have the conceptual frameworks shifted in today's world to make a war more than just what happens on the field of battle? What is the significance of pictures like this?

Operation Pillar of Defence (November 2012)

As with most wars, both parties blame the other side for the commencement. Israel blames the start on a requirement to retaliate following over 100 missiles aimed at the south of Israel, the attack on an Israel Jeep inside Israeli borders, an IED explosion and tunnelling. Hamas claim that these actions on their part were themselves a reaction to blockades and the continued occupation. Across the 8-day operation, Israel hit over 1,500 sites in air strikes including rocket launch pads, government depots, weapon caches and apartment blocks. Whilst there were many Palestinian casualties during the war, some of them were caused by misfiring Palestinian rockets and for "collaboration" with Israel.

Nearly 1500 projectiles (of which 142 landed in Gaza) were fired into Israel. Cities across in Israel were targeted including Jerusalem and for the first time since 1991, the Tel-Aviv region was hit. Furthermore, there was a bus bombing in Tel-Aviv injuring 28 which was linked to the war. This was the time period where the Iron Dome really came into effect as it intercepted 421 rockets. Canada, Germany, the United Kingdom, the United States, and other Western countries either expressed support for what they considered Israel's right to defend itself or condemned the Hamas rocket attacks on Israel whereas China, Iran, Russia, Egypt, Turkey, and several other Arab and Muslim countries condemned the Israeli operation. After days of negotiations between Hamas and Israel, a ceasefire mediated by Egypt was announced on 21st November.

Discussion Point 3: Given that Bnei Akiva UK is a non-partisan movement, how should you present this Kvutza to your chanichim? How are you going to cater the information in this Kvutza to the age of your chanichim?

Operation Protective Edge (July 2014)

JUNE 12 - three Israeli teenagers – Naftali Frankel, Gilad Shaer, and Eyal Yiftach were kidnapped. Israel blamed Hamas and claimed they had unequivocal evidence to prove it. While Hamas applauded the kidnapping, they neither assumed nor denied responsibility for the kidnapping.



JUNE 13 - Israel opened Operation Brother's Keeper – a large scale crackdown on Hamas infrastructure in the West Bank – in order to track down the missing boys, whose wellbeing was unknown. Included in this operation were attacks against Hamas targets in Gaza. On June 30, the bodies of the three boys were found near Chevron.



JULY 1 - the boys were buried in Modiin. That day, IAF struck 34 Hamas targets in the Gaza strip in response to over 20 rockets fired onto Southern Israel. That night (between July 1-2), 16-year-old Arab boy, Mohammed Abu Khadir was kidnapped and according to autopsy was beaten and burned alive – by a group of Israeli men. These events contributed to the escalation of violence leading to Operation Protective Edge.

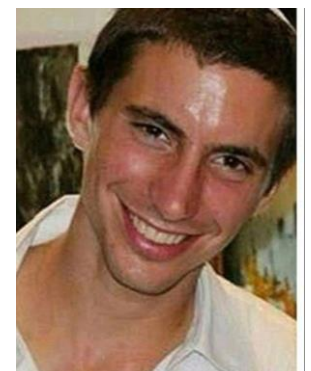


JULY 7 - Israel launched the operation after an escalation of rocket fire upon Israeli towns and cities. According to the IDF, 450 rockets were fired from Gaza onto the South of Israel from the beginning of 2014 until the beginning of the operation.

JULY 14 - Egypt announced a ceasefire that was supported by PA president Mahmoud Abbas and accepted by Israel but rejected by Hamas who continued the rocket bombardment. On July 17th, at approximately 4:30am, IDF intercepted a cell of thirteen terrorists invading Israel through tunnels from the Gaza strip. Between 10:00am-3:00pm a UN brokered Humanitarian Ceasefire was initiated. During this time, Hamas fired at least three mortars into Israel and at least four rockets were fired at Beer Sheva; as the ceasefire expired the rocket-fire escalated. The IDF opened a ground offence within the Gaza Strip.

JULY 26 - another Humanitarian Ceasefire was brokered by the UN; this one for twelve hours. Israel extended this unilaterally for an additional four hours and was met by Hamas rocket-fire in this time. Despite this, Israel announced it would extend the ceasefire by an additional 24 hours, during which time it continued to uproot Hamas terror-tunnels into Israel.

AUGUST 1 - Ban Ki-Moon and John Kerry brokered a 72-hour ceasefire that was mutually accepted by Hamas and Israel. Shortly after the ceasefire took affect at 8:00am, Hamas fired rockets into Israel and attacked an Israeli position involved in uprooting Hamas tunnels, killing two soldiers and taking one – Hadar Goldin – hostage. Eitan Fund chased after Goldin and was able to determine his death but was unsuccessful in retrieving him. Hamas claims that attack occurred before the ceasefire was in effect. Goldin's body remains in Hamas custody until today.



AUGUST 3 - the IDF pulled most of its ground troops out of Gaza. Despite this, Hamas rocket-fire on Southern Israel and IAF fire on Gaza continued. On August 5th, remaining ground troops were withdrawn from Gaza, and the IDF claimed that it had succeeded in dismantling Hamas' tunnel network. A 72-hour ceasefire began.

AUGUST 26 - After several more partially successful ceasefires, Hamas and the Islamic Jihad accepted the Egyptian brokered ceasefire which was to last for one month and signified the end of the operation. Both Israel and Hamas declared victory.

According to the IDF, over 4,500 rockets were fired at Israel from Gaza during the operation, killing 7 civilians (including 1 Thai citizen) with over 1,000 injured or treated for shock. 64 IDF soldiers were killed and 1,620 were injured. 735 rockets were intercepted by Israel's Iron Dome and an addition 188 failed to reach Israeli territory (some landed in Gaza causing damage or casualties). 32 Hamas tunnels were destroyed, including 14 which were open on the Israeli side.

Israel's defences are not without their costs, on Yom Hazikaron 2018 Israel commemorated 23,928 victims; soldiers killed since in the line of duty for the independence, preservation and protection of the nation, and 3,743 civilian terror victims.



The Israel Defence Forces

Mission Statement

"To defend the existence, territorial integrity and sovereignty of the state of Israel. To protect the inhabitants of Israel and to combat all forms of terrorism which threaten the daily life."

Basic Values

- Defence of the State, its Citizens and its Residents
- Love of the Homeland and Loyalty to the Country
- Human Dignity

Main Doctrine

- Israel cannot afford to lose a single war
- Desire to avoid war by political means and a credible deterrent posture
- Defensive on the strategic level, no territorial ambitions
- Preventing escalation
- Determine the outcome of war quickly and decisively
- Combating terrorism
- Very low casualty ratio



Our Fight – Modern Antisemitism

Over the past few years, the Labour party has dipped into turmoil regarding Antisemitic tendencies, which has led to a full-blown investigation which Labour have not come out of positively. The investigation has faced many criticisms, one being that criticising Israel is not antisemitism. In fact, the ability to criticise Israel is entirely in the spirit of a democracy. To be a Zionist doesn't mean to support Israel unequivocally, no matter what. We should and must, discuss Israel with integrity and honesty and to critique and to praise in rightful measures.

That being said, is there a point where this could cross over into antisemitism? As head of the Jewish Agency, Natan Sharansky claimed that criticising Israel becomes Antisemitism when any of these three conditions – 3 D's are seen:



Demonization: When the Jewish state is being demonized; when Israel's actions are blown out of all sensible proportion; when comparisons are made between Israelis and Nazis and between Palestinian refugee camps and Auschwitz – this is Antisemitism, not legitimate criticism of Israel. (See Jeremy Corbyn in extra Chomer)

Double standards: When criticism of Israel is applied selectively; when Israel is singled out by the United Nations for human rights abuses while the behaviour of known and major abusers, such as China, Iran, Cuba, and Syria, is ignored; when Israel's Magen David Adom, alone among the world's ambulance services, is denied admission to the International Red Cross – this is Antisemitism.

Delegitimization: when Israel's fundamental right to exist is denied – alone among all peoples in the world - this too is Antisemitism”

Anti-Zionism – this is a point within demonization but deserves some focus. If Zionism simply means the belief in the right of Jewish self-determination, then being 'anti-Zionist' does not mean criticising Israeli policy, it means denying the simple right of Jewish self-determination in their national and historic homeland. So, this brings us to the fundamental question, what are we to do? How do we fight this battle of words, a battle which has become sadly important once again, do we study it academically or do we take a stand? If we do take a stand, how do we take a stand?

Concrete Concepts:

1. Israel has experienced a series of wars and conflicts from the 1980s until today.
2. The IDF has strong moral principles
3. These wars are complex and a lack of open-mindedness and understanding of nuance has led to a lot of the antisemitism we see today.

Educational Peulot

Antisemitism and Antizionism – Play (or even better make up (or even better get your chanichim to make up)) a game of your choice. The best games for this will have vaguely defined rules. A good (but risky) example could be back-handed compliment bang-bang. Play the game and then have one of the madrichim say something to their co-madrich that is more of an insult than a back-handed compliment. Once your chanichim start feeling uncomfortable, use the game to discuss whether there is a line between antisemitism and antizionism or whether they are the same thing. You could hold up different incidents and statements and ask the chanichim where they think they fall.




The Statistics Game – Make a number of cards illustrating statistics from the stuff in this kevutza (Lebanon wars, pillar of defense...etc). If you can find contradicting statistics from both sides – great, include them! One card might look something like this. Divide your kevutza into two teams which take turns to guess the “blanks” on the card. This is done by the madrich counting up in the order of magnitude on the card. So for this card the madrich would say “1000, 2000, 3000, 4000, 5000...etc” and the chanichim have to stop you as close as they dare. If you go over the true number they get zero points. If they stopped at 6000 they would get 6 points.



K9: Israel Today



Objectives:

-  **Learn** about the different groups of people who make up Israeli Society
-  **Appreciate** the extent of Torah learning that takes place in Israel
-  **Explore** the contributions of Israel to science, technology, the arts and human rights

Phew! Kvutzot 1-8 have definitely infused us with large volumes of information about the Hashkafot, Halachot and history behind Eretz Yisrael and Medinat Yisrael. Now we have finally got to this point, we are ready to explore Israel as we know it today, with a renewed appreciation of its significance. This Kvutza is also a great opportunity to use your own experiences in Israel to add a personal flair. Enjoy!

Who is Israel?

Israel is home to a widely diverse population of over 8 million citizens from many ethnic, religious, cultural, and social backgrounds – a mosaic of people living together and contributing to its vibrant democracy.

In BA, we talk about the fact that we stand for Am Yisrael, B'erezt Yisrael Al Pi Torat Yisrael. Let's start off by looking at the composition of Am Yisrael B'Eretz Yisrael.

77.6% of Israelis are "Sabras", the nickname given to persons born in Israel. The other 22.4% of Israelis immigrated from all regions of the world. Hebrew and Arabic are the two official languages in Israel. Additionally, over 80% of the Israeli population is proficient in English, which is the common business language. Israel is essentially a melting-pot culture and many Israelis are also proficient in Russian, French, Spanish, Amharic and other languages. As a result, most visitors will find themselves able to communicate comfortably.

Chareidim

Chareidim make up 11.7% of the Israeli population with a 5% growth rate (Israel Central Bureau of statistics, 2014). They live their lives strictly according to Halacha and tend to live in isolated communities. Chareidim do not usually view the State of Israel as 'Reishit Semichat Geulateniu' ('first flowerings of our redemption') but view living in the Land of Israel as a fulfillment of a positive Mitzvah.



Chilonim

Secular Jews (Chilonim) make up the largest sector of Israeli society. Besides Yerushalayim, most major cities have a secular majority, made up mainly of Mizrachi Jews. It is important to note that whilst most of these people would consider themselves secular, the majority of Israelis (72%) say they light Shabbat candles and over 90% have mezuzot on their doors. It seems that whilst people are not necessarily religiously observant, they have a strong connection to their Judaism and see an inherent value in traditional customs. Even in Israeli popular culture, for example the music industry, it is not uncommon to hear songs with verses from Tehillim and various other passukim making up the lyrics.

Dati le'umi

Religious Zionists (dati le'umi), like the Chareidim, also live according to Halacha. They believe that we have a G-d-given right to the Land of Israel, and it is one of the most important Mitzvot to settle and build the land. They also believe that the building of the State of Israel is the beginning of the redemption (Reishit Tzemichat Geulateinu). So even though the Medina is not perfect from a religious perspective, they point out that after 2000 years of exile there is a Jewish government and Jewish country in the land. If Hashem has chosen to bring about the Geula this way, they argue, then the State should be viewed as holy, and an important part of the modern religious Jewish story.

It is also worth noting that attitude towards Israel is not the only one in which different groups of Jews differ in their mentality. There are significant differences in opinion about topics such as the nature of halacha, education, gender roles and inclusivity. Even within a given group, there are usually a plethora of differing opinions held by its members.

Discussion Point 1: To what extent do these different groups in Israeli society interact with each other from your experience?



Israeli Arabs

Israeli Arabs make up 20.7% of Israel's population (2014 census). They are mainly Muslim but there are also many Christian Arabs. Israeli Arabs living on the Israeli side of the Green Line are offered full Israeli citizenship. Arabic culture has worked its way into society with Arabic phrases and foods popular with Israelis. There are also many Israeli Arab MKs.

Christians

Christianity in Israel is practiced by more than 161,000 Israeli citizens and 127,000 of them are Arab Citizens and live mainly in urban areas, including Nazereth, Shefarim and Haifa. Although many denominations are nominally represented, the majority are affiliated with the Greek Catholic, Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches.

Druze

These are 129,800 Arabic-speaking **Druze** living in approximately villages in northern Israel (2011 census). They constitute a separate cultural, social, and religious community. While the Druze religion is not accessible to outsiders, one known aspect of its philosophy is the concept of taqiyya which calls for complete loyalty by its adherents to the government of the country in which they reside. Druze actively participate in the army, as well as many other state institutions and Majalli Wahabi, a Druze politician was in 2007 Acting President of the State of Israel

Bedouin Arabs

Bedouin Arabs are also Muslim (estimated at 170,000 though this growing quickly), and belong to some 30 tribes, a majority scattered over a wide area in the south. Formerly nomadic shepherds, the Bedouin are currently in transition from a tribal social framework to a permanently settled society and are gradually entering into Israel's labour force.

Discussion point 2: What do you think the role of Non-Jewish people is in building up a Jewish State? How do non-Jews living in Israel relate to Zionism from your experience?

Israel – The Torah Centre of the World

There are many aspects of the current state of Israel that make it unique and valuable. One that is perhaps taken for granted is the fact that Israel is full of institutions where people of all ages sit and engage in Torah Study!



So far, we have mentioned the principles of Am Yisrael and Eretz Yisrael. However, these two entities are supposed to exist within the context of the third part of Bnei Akiva's motto which is, 'Al Pi Torat Yisrael.'

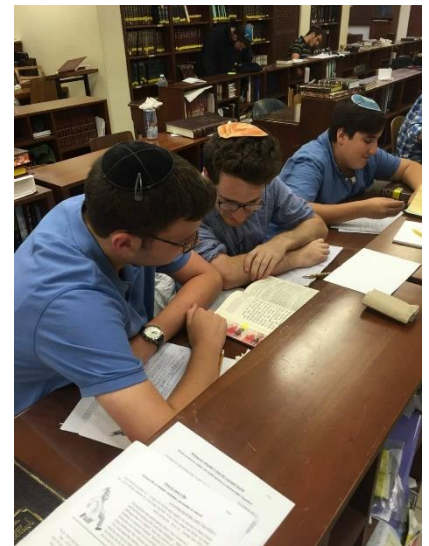
What this means is that Religious Zionism is not just about uniting the *people* of Israel in the *land* of Israel, but also that the Jewish State should be one that is based on Torah and Halachic values which seep into people's lives. A central component of this is the actual learning of Torah.

Every morning during Shacharit we recite the Mishnah of Eilu Devarim (Pe'ah 1:1):

אֵלו דְּבָרִים שֶׁאֵין לָהֶם שְׁעוֹר. הַפָּאָה, וְהַבְּכוּרִים, וְהָרְאִיוֹן, וְגַמְלֵיּוֹת חֲסָדִים, וְתַלְמוּד תּוֹרָה. אֵלו דְּבָרִים שֶׁאָדָם אוֹכֵל פְּרוּתֵיהֶן בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה וְהִקְרָן קִיּוּמָהּ לוֹ לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא. כְּבוֹד אָב וְאִם, וְגַמְלֵיּוֹת חֲסָדִים, וְהַבְּאָת שְׁלוֹם בֵּין אָדָם לְחֵבְרוֹ, וְתַלְמוּד תּוֹרָה כְּנֶגֶד כָּלֵם:

*These are the things that have no definite quantity: The corners [of the field]. First-fruits; [The offerings brought] on appearing [at the Temple on the three pilgrimage festivals]. The performance of righteous deeds; And the study of the Torah. The following are the things for which a person enjoys the fruits in this world while the principal remains for them in the world to come: Honoring one's father and mother; The performance of righteous deeds; And the making of peace between a person and their friend; And the study of the **Torah is equal to them all.***

What does this mean? We see here the focus on Torah study as the foundation for all other Mitzvah observance!



One of the most powerful contemporary Torah learning initiatives is the concept of Yeshivot and Midrashot. Many young people from all over the world at the age of 18 decide to spend a year or more learning Torah in Israel. This can take many forms, but the general idea is to grow spiritually through textual study.

Hesder

Hesder Yeshivot are programmes where young men spend some time in Yeshiva and some time in the IDF, for a total of 5 years. They exemplify Religious Zionist values, allowing men to learn Torah on a very high level whilst also contributing to the safety and security of Medinat Yisrael.

So we've seen a few examples of amazing Torah learning opportunities in Eretz Yisrael. With Torat Yisrael becoming increasingly accessible and mainstream, these really are exciting times to be living in!

Discussion Point 3: Why do you think people are so bothered about going to learn Torah in Israel? Why don't we all just save ourselves some money and go to Gateshead?

Israel's worldwide contributions

When trying to understand Israel's role in the World today, it's also worth having a look at all of the scientific and technological advances that have taken place there!

ReWalk Exoskeleton

This is a device that can be worn by patients with paralysis of their legs, often due to stroke or spinal injuries, allowing them to stand up and even walk.

<https://rewalk.com/>

PillCam

Often when people have symptoms that suggest there might be something wrong with their digestive system, it's important to look at what is happening inside. The PillCam is a swallowable device that produces high quality images of the digestive tract.

Drip Irrigation

Netafilm is an innovative drip irrigation system that was developed by Israeli inventor and engineer Simcha Blass in the 1960s. He thought about the idea when observing adjacent trees whereby one was noticeably larger than the other.

On investigation, he discovered that the larger tree was sited next to a damaged water pipe. He was astonished to realize that just a small amount of regularly dripping water could make a huge difference to plant growth. Netafilm was soon developed and by 1967 had increased crop yields by 70% in Israel. The technology soon spread around the world.



Waze

Waze is a GPS system on steroids. Rather than just guiding a user from A to B it actually helps you avoid roadblocks and traffic.

It was first developed by Israeli Ehud Shabati after he first used, and was quickly disappointed by existing GPS systems. Waze, once built, was an instant hit and has since been sold to Google for over 1 Billion dollars in 2013.

Today it provides real-time traffic information for millions of users around the world.

Yoatzot Halacha

A huge development in term of Torah Study in Israel has been the move to invest in Women as learners and teachers of Torah. One such initiative is the Nishmat Yoetzet Halacha Programme where women become qualified to advise other women on halachic practise.

Chidon Tanach

Every year, Israel hosts an international Tanach Quiz, where young people from all over the world go to Israel to compete. This initiative is another example of a drive for high level Torah learning in Israel

These are just a few fun examples of ways that Israel has developed technology that has improved lives all over the world. We can see from here that Israel exemplifies the concept of 'Torah Umadda,' meaning the combination of Torah with other worldly pursuits and contributions.

Concrete concepts:

1. There are many different people, both Jewish and Non-Jewish who live in Israel and contribute towards its growth and development
2. Israel is the Torah Learning centre of the World
3. Israel has made many contributions to the rest of the world in many different areas

Peula Ideas:

Pie chart making – Give your chanichim paper plates and various things to fill it in with “sequins, pasta, paper....etc). Ask them to guess proportion of people in Israel. E.g Jewish = sequins, Non-Jewish = pasts. Religious = sequins, secular = pasta. Whoever makes the most accurate pie chart wins!



Statistics Game – Use this game to get your chanichim to appreciate the proportions of various groups in Israel. On one side of each card there is a question with a numerical answer e.g “what proportion of Israel do you think are chareidi?” On the back of the card is the answer. Make a grid of such cards and divide your Kvtza into two teams. The teams take turn in picking a question they think they can answer. Once they pick a question start counting up in 10s until they say “stop!” If they stop you at 10 they get 1 point, 20= 2 points, 30 = 3 points....etc. They need to get as close to the answer as possible. If the answer is 72% and they stop you at 70, they get 7 points. If they stop you at 80 they get ZERO POINTS!






Wikipedia Racing – Grab two laptops/ipads for this game that should hopefully communicate the role that Israel has played in worldwide contribution to technology. Get two chanichim to start on a Wikipedia page for a piece of technology e.g “Samsung” or “folding chair”. Then the two chanichim have to eventually land on the Wikipedia page for “Israel” using only hyperlinks. First one there wins!

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The Free Encyclopedia

K10: Bnei Akiva: Past, Present and Future



Objectives:

-  **Learn** about the founding of Bnei Akiva.
-  **Appreciate** the power of young people.
-  **Explore** the value of being part of Bnei Akiva.

Origins of Bnei Akiva

In 1925 a young man named **Yechiel Eliyash** arrived in what was then Palestine. Brought up in a small Polish community, he was fulfilling a lifelong dream to live in the Holy land. Yechiel worked for Hapoel Hamizrachi and studied at Yeshivat Mercaz Harav in Jerusalem. The town was very different back then: A fledgling community with only basic amenities and under the British Military administration granted by the League of Nations. Jewish pioneers were struggling, engaged in a formidable effort to succeed economically and to build their homeland. However, there was another concern as well: the need to **redefine the spiritual-cultural identity of the Jewish nation**. At a time of great economic hardship, strong ideological socialist groupings emerged. The general direction was to create a new Jewish society, to see the development of a 'new Jew'. To do so, these immigrants felt they must abandon the 'old' and 'binding' Jewish tradition, together with its culture and laws.



One of the primary groups involved in this process was the Histadrut Klalit (national labour movement) and **many religious young people joined secular social groups**. They were drawn to socialist workers' youth groups such as Hano'ar Ha'oved, Hatzofim, Maccabee and Beitar. This **social & ideological erosion of religious youth** could not be tolerated for any length of time and presented a threat to the new religious movement (Hapoel Hamizrachi).

In 1928, **nineteen-year-old** Yechiel Eliyash approached the leadership of Hapoel Hamizrachi to ask for their help founding a youth movement based on the ideal of Torah Va'Avodah with the purpose of strengthening young people's spirit and organising them within a proud social framework. Hapoel Hamizrachi deferred this to an agreement of their 'Committee of Experts on Religious Education'.

Now here is the surprise (or not?): The Committee unanimously decided that it was not appropriate to establish a religious youth movement. They gave three main reasons:

- 📌 There would be a conflict between a modern youth movement and religious education.
- 📌 A youth movement would damage the religious education in schools.
- 📌 There would be no appropriate (adult) educational figurehead, who could lead such a movement.

Yechiel's response is best recounted in his own words:

*"After I read the debate of this meeting, I knew that one **could not rely on encouragement from these people**, and I decided that it lay on me to establish the movement of Bnei Akiva based on a religious revolt. This movement was to **enhance dynamic religiousness, improve Torah and glorify it**... At that time, there was a need to rebel. The Histadrut ruled mightily. Any Hapoel Mizrachi member who sought work in construction was banished in disgrace. Anti-religious sentiment was rife... We believed that a **youth movement would have to engender faith in its own strength** and in our power to create a religious Judaism with great accomplishments. Not individual creative Jews, but organised religious Judaism... The opponents, including leaders of Hapoel Hamizrachi feared rebellion and contended that a religious movement, intrinsically, cannot be oppositional and must be traditional. Some worried that the conduct of study in school would be impaired; others **disparaged young people's ability to stand that the head of a youth movement. Impressive educators, they argued, must hold this position**. However, despite all this opposition, I decided to found the youth movement..."*

The first few months were not easy. In 1929, on 24th Adar 5689 (6th March 1929), about thirty chaverim convened to found this new religious youth movement. It was hard for them to get used to working with a madrich and not a teacher and the discipline of school. But they chose for themselves an 'Overseeing Committee' and they went to work. There was still no electricity in Jerusalem, and every evening activity had to start by cleaning and filling an old oil lamp. Once the group took shape, they decided to fix Lag BaOmer as the 'Foundation Day' of the movement. They started off by arranging a festive Mifkad, and they declared on it the establishment of the movement of Bnei Akiva in Israel. The date was fixed for Lag BaOmer in light of their connection to Rabbi Akiva, in whose name they were called, and whose pupils they wanted to be.

Why **Bnei Akiva**?

Yechiel Eliyash said:

"Rabbi Akiva symbolised in our eyes, more than anyone else, the idea of 'Torah VaAvodah'. He was a worker, a sheperd, a national warrior and a Talmid Chacham (rabbinic scholar) and he immersed himself in the world of Torah and Halacha.

Rabbi Akiva truly symbolised the national religiousness that joins Torah to pioneering actions, building and creation. Rabbi Akiva saw the humanity of every person, and this was also our perception: not to be distant, rather to draw near. We are students of Rabbi Akiva! We are Bnei Akiva!"

Discussion point 1: Have you ever felt dismissed on the grounds of being a youth?

Biry-a-the power of the youth

You are cold. It's wet and dark. The rain is falling in sheets and you can barely see the pale shape of your friends backpack five paces in front of you. Your back aches from the weight of your own pack. Your knees are torn and your hands bloody from the uncountable times you have slipped and stopped yourself falling from the path and plummeting into oblivion.

But the rain is good, it means you don't have to worry as much about being quiet, even so you can't call out. You twist your ankle and stifle a cry. If the British sentries hear you, they'll find you. If they find you, they'll find the gun hidden at the bottom of your bag. If they find the gun hidden at the bottom of your bag they'll arrest you. You've heard stories about people arrested by the British; public beatings, deportation back to Europe, and worse.

It's the second time you've done this in as many months. And the night doesn't end when the climb is over. You have to build a whole village before the sun rises.

As well as the tools on your back you are carrying the dreams of a nation-in-waiting. You are carrying their life along with your own, their dream of not having to give up a single village, even a single house. Their dream of having a place to call home. You still hear their cries and shouts ringing in your ears from when you set off all those long hours ago: "Biry-a! We are going to take back Biry-a! Chaveirim, we shall go up to Biry-a!" You are 15 years old.

In 1946, members of Hapoel Hamizrachi in connection with the JNF went to establish a small settlement in the Galil next to Tzfat. **Biry-a** was to be a new village, a place to base reservist Palmach soldiers to protect Tzfat and the surrounding area. At this point the Palmach was still viewed by the British as an underground militia. Members were often arrested and taken to the prison at Acre.

After little more than a year, the British came, deported the few residents of Biry-a and demolished the buildings. A stand was taken, Biry-a could not be allowed to fall. That night, people young and old made

the climb from the surrounding villages. With tools and timber on their backs they reached the site just across the fields from where Biryah had stood. The morning after the British tanks had demolished the settlement at Biryah, the soldiers woke to see that a whole new village had appeared. Biryah II had materialised overnight.

A few hours later, Biryah II was also demolished, and her builders arrested. As they were being driven away the bystanders heard their cry: *"Biryah must not fall! Chaverim, go up to Biryah!"*

Even before the dust had settled on Biryah II, a group of **young Chaverim of Bnei Akiva** made their preparations. They led a group of **1,200 people** back to the site, and only hours after the camp had been destroyed a new wall surrounded it, new buildings stood inside, and the Magen David flew proudly at its centre. More Chaverim came to relieve the old and exhausted. They were 14 and 15 years old.

That night was Purim, and a group of people went from Tzfat to visit Biryah. One of the elders of the city walked at the head, carrying a megillah that would be read at the camp. As he entered the gates, he said the blessing *"shehechyanu"* for this hill in the Galil which had been resettled by Jews. That morning they sang Hatikvah, and the phrase *"od lo avda tikvateinu – our hope is still not lost,"* took on a new meaning for everyone there.



A Bnei Akiva Semel monument at Biryah

The British could not believe that Biryah had been resurrected. Twice! Right under their noses! Through **public pressure and the resilience of these young, passionate dreamers**, Biryah stood. For the next two years it became a waystation for Jewish migrants fleeing the Middle East through Syria and it was from Biryah that, in 1948, Operation Yiftach was launched which protected the Holy City of Tzfat and ensured the inclusion of the Galil region in the State of Israel.

Every year in Israel, around Purim time, Bnei Akiva takes all the Chaverim of Shevet Haroeh on a tiyul to Biryah. They walk in the footsteps of those youth who risked everything to protect their home and won.

Discussion point 2: Do you think your Chanichim feel empowered and supported through Bnei Akiva? How can you ensure that this is the case?

The Jewish View of Responsibility & Action

Today, in the developed world, young people are spending longer in full time education than ever before. For many, this equips them the speak out and become active contributors to the rest of the world. However, for others it is easy to become complacent and lose the sense of empowerment that we hold so important in Bnei Akiva.

א) קטן אביו חייב ללמדו תורה, שנאמר "ולמדתם אותם את בניכם לדבר בם" [...] ג) [...] מי שלא למדו אביו חייב ללמד את עצמו כשיכיר שנאמר "ולמדתם אותם ושמרתם לעשותם" ...

1) A parent is obligated to teach their child Torah, as it says "And you shall teach them to your children, to speak about them" ... 3) ... **One who had not been taught by their parent is obligated to teach themselves when they as soon as they recognise (the importance of learning), as it says: "And you shall study them and take care to perform them" ...** (Rambam Hilchot Talmud Torah, Chapter 1)

הוא היה אומר, אין בור ירא חטא, ולא עם הארץ חסיד, ולא הביטון למד, ולא הקפדון מלמד, ולא כל המרבה בסחורה מחכים. ובמקום שאין אנשים, השתדל להיות איש:

He used to say: A boor cannot fear sin. An ignorant person cannot be pious. A person prone to being ashamed cannot learn. An impatient person cannot teach. Not all who engage in a lot of business become wise. In a place where there are no people, strive to be a person. (Avot 2:5)

We can see from both of these sources that Hashem expects us to equip ourselves with knowledge in order to empower ourselves to take action.

Rav Kook says that the best time for a person to develop their values and ideology is when they are young. This idealism, however, is often lost as they get older and see the world in a different light. Rav Kook explains that we are specifically created this way so that our original understanding of the world will be pure. We need this in order that our ultimate goals, dreams, hopes and efforts come from this pure, idealistic place, not from the subsequent, less idealistic view that we have of the world now. According to Rav Kook, our thought processes and goals we have when we are young are what should gear us though our lives.



Abi Laderman

In his sefer, Halachic Man, Rav Soloveitchik talks about how the ideal person, the Ish Hahalacha views the world not as it is but how it should be. He talks about a 'bedieved' vs 'l'chatchila' outlook on life, or if you want the posh Latin, a priori vs a posteriori. This is what Bnei Akiva Chaverim pride themselves on. We look at people and situations and see huge poitential for greatness. We don't accept things as they are, but instead work hard to achieve as much as we possibly can.

To summarise so far, the story of the Chaverim at Biryra and the attitudes of the sages clearly show that there is no lower age limit on getting involved with a good cause. And more than that, it is an obligation to do so once its values are understood.

Discussion point 3: Can you think of ways that your 13-14 year old chanichim can take responsibility and display leadership?

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has. – Margaret Mead

BAUK: the early days

Bnei Akiva UK began in 1939. led by Israeli Shaliach **Aryeh Handler**. Bachad, an acronym for Brit Chalutzim Dati'im (Covenant of Religious Pioneers), consisted of those chaverim who were on Hachsharah on the continent and did not receive certificates for Aliyah in 1939 and therefore came to the UK as a temporary alternative and set up training centres, first in North Wales and later in other places too.

In July 1941, the movement became official when representatives of these two groups met in Woburn House, the then centre of Anglo-Jewish life in London and decided to form a nationwide movement called Bnei Akiva. They saw the **urgency of creating a Religious Zionist youth movement** which would spur young Jews towards the ideals of Torah Va'Avodah and religious chalutzit. The subsequent years saw the growth and expansion of Bnei Akiva to **all major Jewish communities in the country.**

Development of programming

In 1942 the **first summer Machanot** were held, and these were to become the outstanding annual event of the movement. Soon afterwards courses for madrichim were organised, publications began to appear, and a nationwide movement took shape. In those early days our resources were small, our budget pitiful and yet the message of Bnei Akiva quickly spread and inspired the youth of that generation. All this work could not have been possible without the constant help and guidance given by the Bachad Fellowship. Through the active work of the various committees set up by the Bachad Fellowship, the practical



Throughout the decades, Bnei Akiva has changed to meet the needs of the times. Whereas Hachshara, Bnei Akiva's gap year scheme, was primarily a year spent on a farm in places such as Thaxted, Essex or Bromsgrove, near Birmingham, learning agricultural techniques in preparation for working the Land of Israel, nowadays Hachshara takes place in Israel, giving unique experiences of Israel's land, people, culture and Torah. Bachad has also changed, as it is now the parent body of Bnei Akiva, supporting Bnei Akiva financially in all its activities.

Discussion point 4: Why do we run Machanot? Do you think this has a different answer to 'why do Chanichim come on machane?'

Movement or Organisation?

Every living organism on the planet has its time: In Judaism we consider a full life as 120 years. Organisations and world movements also have a time-span – I have heard it said that the average life-span for a Shul in the UK is 75 years: communities spring up, flourish and then people leave for pastures anew. What is it about Bnei Akiva that has ensured it is as dynamic and as popular as ever?

The **key** is that we are not an organisation; we are a **movement** – a **tnua**.

Did you know that movements move? The root of the word Tnua, תנוע means momentum. As a Youth Movement we are constantly gaining momentum and moving with the times. This is mainly **because young people run the movement** (think back to Yechiel Eliyash's original statement). The Mazkirut changes each year, allowing for fresh people to come in, with new ideas. There is nobody on the Mazkirut in Bnei Akiva UK over the age of 24! But, if the leadership of the movement changes every year then how can anything possibly get done!? How can there be any amount of continuity?!

But that's almost exactly the point. Yes, there are problems to overcome. Yes, each Mazkirut only has a year to make an impact. But yes, this ensures the movement is always fresh and doing something new! The same can be said for the Hanhalla, madrichim and chanichim as well, everyone must reapply.

Discussion point 4: If you were on the Mazkirut, what would be your priorities be for the Tnua?

So what is the actual value of BA?

Now, we all know that Bnei Akiva looks good on our CV (seriously, it's all about those transferable skills), but what 'added value' do Chanichim and Madrichim actually get?

Ideals by which to live: Possibly the most obvious, but needs to be said. Bnei Akiva gives us direction, aims and goals. We might leave Bnei Akiva in our early 20's, but the ideals should stay with us forever. And it's not just any old ideology we are given, and give over – we believe that Religious Zionism is the ideal way to live as an observant Jew in the year 5782/2022

More specifically, **Torah**. In Bnei Akiva, Chanichim learn how to daven 3 times a day as part of machane. They learn how to bentsch, sing zemirot, and more fundamentally keep and enjoy Shabbat! In addition, one can learn how to daven, how to be a gabbai, how to cook for Shabbat, and many other areas of Halacha from spending time in a BA environment.

A chevra. The concept of having shevatim means that you build close relationships with like-minded people from across the UK that you would otherwise never have met. Shared experiences on camps, Shabbatot Ha'Irgun and adventures in Israel drive friendships for life. There are still BAUK shevet reunions in Israel today!



Leadership: There is no better way of improving leadership skills than in Bnei Akiva. Being a Madrich/a at Sviv/a, then at Machane, being a Sganit and Rosh Sviva and a Sgan and Rosh Machane – these are all unparalleled opportunities to learn how to lead, educate and inspire others; how to organise a team and work with others – life skills that can all be traced back to a tent in Wales and now in Staffordshire! The fact that a 23-year-old has the responsibility of being a Mazkir, running everything BA does, is literally unheard of in any other context in the UK – and that works for every other position as well. Each step up in responsibility, from Sganit to Rosh etc, would take years in a business – but takes months in BA – truly a fast-track in leadership!

Making Judaism Fun! Only on Machane can you have an amazing supper quiz tochnit, have a talent show, hear a Shiur, make bracelets or humus (or any kind of Chug), daven three times a day, stand on chairs singing passukim, learn in a Beit Midrash and build a chanukiah out of chocolate! On a Sviva level, the two hours spent with BA on a Shabbat afternoon can make Shabbat fun for chanichim and ultimately something worth keeping. BA allows young people to enjoy their Judaism in a fun yet committed environment

Mental Health: Bnei Akiva can be a great support system for Chanichim, Madrichim and Bogrim. It creates a community of people who identify similarly and creates safe spaces for people to explore their identity. The feeling of being part of something bigger than oneself and being empowered to help others has also been shown to have a positive affect on mental health.

Connections: Bogrim who represent Bnei Akiva, especially those on the Mazkirut, have a great opportunity to meet important and interesting people within the community, from the Chief Rabbi to Israeli politicians and from UK educators to business people. Members of Bnei Akiva are privileged to meet some of the most unique and inspirational people who have a major impact on the Jewish community and the world that we live in.

Caring about causes: A few years ago, FZY ran a Gilad Shalit information vigil outside Downing Street and Bnei Akiva was asked to fill some time. Around 40 people, possibly more than needed, turned up throughout the day and informed the public about Gilad Shalit. The Mazkir of FZY said how every time there is a cause to take up, Bnei Akiva are always the first there and bring the most people. Why is this? Because our ideology and our Madrichim have taught us to care about everything – from Talmud Torah to social action, from Aliyah to Israel advocacy, from helping children with disabilities to helping Ethiopian immigrants, from Chinuch to Tzedaka, and so much more.



Informal Education: By using the method of informal education, which has proven to be so successful, Bnei Akiva has produced many great Madrichim and teachers of Am Yisrael on so many levels. Look around the schools and shuls today, how many educators made the journey through Bnei Akiva.

Pioneers of opportunity: Bnei Akiva is leading the way when it comes to gender equality, accessibility, diversity education and LGBT inclusivity in Orthodox spaces. This is something that we should be immensely proud of.

Discussion point 5: What have you personally gained from being part of Bnei Akiva?

Bnei Akiva has done so much for Am Yisrael, primarily in helping to build a Jewish country with many other organisations and movements. There are over 150,000 people around the world currently involved in Bnei Akiva – this means that hundreds of thousands of people have been affected by Bnei Akiva at some stage or another throughout the years of its existence. Bnei Akiva has had a massive impact on Israeli society, building kibbutzim – some of them started by people from BAUK – and this was even commemorated by a special session in the Knesset.

In this Kvutza, we want to show this to the Chanichim, and help them to appreciate why it is so important to stay involved in our movement – for them as individuals, for Bnei Akiva as a collective, and for Am Yisrael as a whole.

Aloh Na'aleh!

Concrete concepts:

- 📖 Bnei Akiva has a history of youth empowerment and standing up for what is right
- 📖 Bnei Akiva is the epicentre of Religious Zionism for Jewish Youths worldwide
- 📖 Bnei Akiva has many different benefits

Peula Ideas:

Song Game - Play the song game with round 1 being Ruach songs and round 2 being tisch songs. A great way to generate pride in the Tnua and also educate your chanichim about all of the songs and their origins! You could also write a new ruach song as a kvutza!

Bnei Akiva Bookmarks:

- How has Machane and Bnei Akiva as a whole affected your personality
- How have Machane and Bnei Akiva affected your goals for the future
- How has Bnei Akiva affected your individual friendships/friendship groups
- What about machane and Bnei Akiva are you grateful for?

Get your chanichim to write the answers to these questions on bookmarks or on something else they can keep forever!

HADRACH ALAN K10 VESELIKA LAH MASECHET BET CHALUTZI