

K1: Why Israel?



Aims:

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.

Just a little bit of land?

What is it about the small strip of land in the Middle East that is so important to us, the Jews? This question is one that we will return to over and over and one that our chanichim should be encouraged to ask and grapple with.



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

"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)

Many years have passed since this took place and seeing as we are so many generations removed from this prophecy, it is hard for us to truly associate the Israel of today with the Israel – Eretz Canaan - from back then. But really, it's the same place and this is what is so important not to forget. 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!

Israel: the basis for a greater spiritual relationship with Hashem

Is it possible for us to connect to Israel through a Divine covenant from thousands of years ago? When Hashem makes His covenant with Avraham (the covenant between the parts – Brit Bein H'Betarim) He says:

וְהִקְמַתִּי אֶת-בְּרִיתִי בֵּינִי וּבֵינְךָ, וּבֵין זְרַעְךָ אֲחֵרִיקָ לְדֹרֹתָם לְבְרִית עוֹלָם, לְהִיּוֹת לְךָ לְאֱלֹקִים, וּלְזַרְעֶךָ אֲחֵרִיקָ: וְנָתַתִּי לְךָ וּלְזַרְעֶךָ אֲחֵרִיקָ אֶת אֶרֶץ מִגְרִיךָ, אֶת כָּל-אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן, לְאֲחֻזַּת עוֹלָם, וְהִיִּיתִי 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)*

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Rashi, quoting Bereshit Rabbah, explains why the phrase “**shall be Hashem to them**” is repeated in these two pesukim:

*“and [in the Land] I shall be **“Hashem”**. But one who dwells outside the Land [of Israel] is like one who has no Hashem.”* (Rashi to Bereshit 17:8)

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).

Rashi and Ramban hold that mitzvot performed in Chutz La'Aretz only have a BeDiavad status. The Ramban says: You are only obligated to perform specific Mitzvot that can be performed outside of Israel (Tefillin and Mezuzah) in order that when you come to Israel you will know what to do and the Mitzvot won't be new to you...' (Vayikra 18:25)

Rav Neventzal (the previous Chief Rabbi of the Old City) rules this way and takes it one step further. He says that if one were to don Tefillin in Chutz La'aretz in the morning, they still have a chiyuv to wear them later in the day when arriving in Israel. This stands true if one has the opposite journey. The reason for this is that there are two distinct mitzvot.

- 1) To wear tefillin.
- 2) To keep mitzvot in Chutz La'aretz.



Even those opinions who do not adopt the views of Rashi and Ramban, argue that keeping mitzvot in Israel is a greater thing than in Chutz La'aretz.

So, we should probably live there, but why do we need a state?

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.

Yerushalayim and the Bet Hamikdash are mentioned over 700 times in various forms in Tanach as 'Yerushalayim', 'the holy city', 'the place which Hashem chose'...



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.

The Bet Hamikdash was the centre of Jewish life. The important function of the Bet Knesset 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 – Can we relate to the Bet Hamikdash nowadays?

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 אֱלֹהֵימֹו, הִנֵּה עַם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל רַב וְעֲצוּמִים 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.

So, it's not just that they are going to live in the Land, rather they are going to get control over the land. For if they did not rule over the Land autonomously, then how could they possibly fulfil their covenantal duty to set up a national society according to the Torah? Therefore, 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. (See Kuzari and Eliezer Berkovitz in additional chomer for more on this idea).

Artzeinu

Over the course of Machane we will encounter many of the benefits of the Land of Israel, we will see that 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)

It may not be relevant to others and it may not be an argument in modern politics, but we must remember that for us 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 Chaye 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 Chaye Sarah, Rashi explains that the phrase comes to

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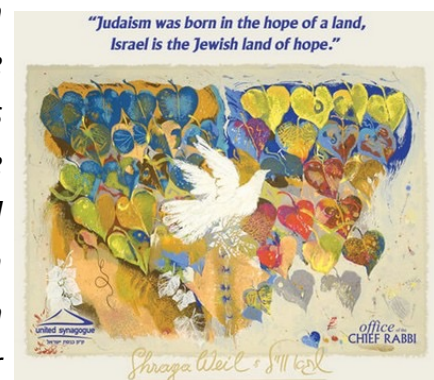
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show that Avraham paid a fair price for the Land so that we can prove ownership in the future.

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.

And to finish with words from Rabbi Sacks zt'l:

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)



K2: Jews and the Diaspora



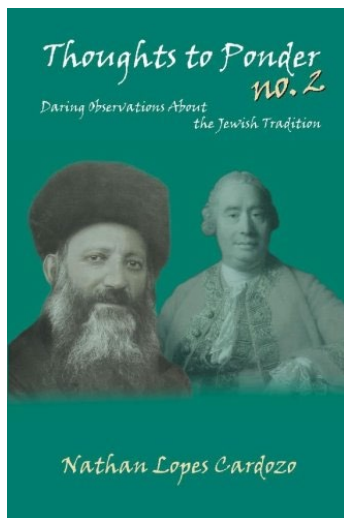
Aims:

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 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 survive **the nation needed to adapt**. It had to shift from one with a **national and cultural epicentre**, to one fully **defined by its religion**.



The Gemara in Bava Batra (60b) reports that following the Churban it was said, “by right we should issue a decree that Jews should not marry and have children so that the seed of Avraham will come to an end of its own accord”. [But] the simple Jews of this dark era of Jewish history refused to succumb to their leaders' dejection. Instead, they decided to rebuild Jewish life to the best of their abilities in spite of their adverse circumstances. This will go on to demonstrate courage of an unprecedented dimension. Without country, army, or finances, and surrounded by millions whose hatred for Jews was only too well known, these Jews found the strength to get married and raise families. Despite the total collapse of Jewish life as they knew it, they opted for the seemingly impossible.” (Rabbi Nathan Lopes Cardozo: Thoughts to Ponder II p. 111.)

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?

Three years after the first Bet Hamikdash was destroyed the King of Yehuda was tired of living under Babylonian rule. He led a rebellion against the Babylonians and lost. This led to a number of the Jewish children being captured and taken out of Israel. One of those children was Daniel, he understood that the most difficult thing about being in a different land was assimilation. Daniel therefore established some rules to prevent us from assimilating. One of these rules is Jewish people not being allowed to drink wine with non-Jews. Even though the exile after the destruction of the First Temple was only 70 years, we can see that measures were still put in place to ensure Jewish continuity in these circumstances.



We see this even more clearly when Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai instituted extreme and highly controversial changes to key Jewish practices at the destruction of the Second Temple, readying the Jews for a crushing, indefinite exile (these mainly revolved around changing the established practice from what had been done in the Temple, to things which involved the whole nation and were performed 'zecher le'mikdash' – in memory of the Temple). He understood that with the Beit Hamikdash gone things needed to change, in order for Judaism to survive.

Points to Ponder

How would these, and similar decrees help Judaism survive?

Since the Beit Hamikdash ceased to be the central point of our Judaism, have we found another physical or tangible structure around which to base our Judaism?

Is our Judaism today more or less "practical" than it used to be?

A Timeline of Persecution

As Jews, we 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!



- 70 CE – The Romans destroy the temple and much of the land.
- 135 CE – The Bar Kochba revolt is put down thus ending the final Jewish revolt against Roman rule. Most of the Jewish people is now in exile.
- Initially, many of the Jews made their way to **Babylonia** (Bavel) (where some communities were left over from the time of the destruction of the First Temple) where they lived in relative safety, gaining wealth and continuing their learning (completing the Talmud). The community went through highs and lows but continued to exist in some form until 1952 when the Iraqi government expelled the Jews.
- 1038 – With the death of Rav Achai Gaon dies the Jewish diaspora shifts its centre away from Bavel. Communities sprang up in **North Africa** and others in **France, Germany** and **Austria** – which would be the foundations of the Ashkenaz dynasty.
- Gradually Jews from North Africa made their way over to **Spain** under the rule of the Muslim ‘Moorish’ Kingdom – the ‘Golden Age’ of Spanish Jewry flourished until the 12th century.
- During this same period the 1st Crusade and the 2nd Crusade left the Jews of Ashkenaz massacred. The 3rd Crusade followed in 1190 causing more violence and bloodshed, especially in England (York Massacre) – they are followed by 2 further crusades.
- 1200s – Moorish kingdoms in Spain fall to the Christians.
- 1290 – Jews are banished from England, not to be allowed back until 1656 under Oliver Cromwell.
- 1306 – The Jews are expelled from France.
- 1348 – The Black Death brings mob violence to Jewish communities across the affected areas, as Jews become the easy scapegoats for the epidemic.

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- As a result of the Crusades and other pogroms, the Jews of Ashkenaz gradually move into **Eastern Europe** e.g. Poland, Lithuania, Hungary, and Russia.
 - 1492 – Under the viciously anti-Jewish Spanish inquisition led by *Torquemada*, Jews are expelled from Spain (last day of the expulsion is the 9th of Av). The Spanish inquisition, and subsequent expulsion, was the biggest catastrophe to strike the Jewish people since the destruction of the Temple.
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- Sephardi Jews move from the Christian West to the Muslim East – **Turkey, Greece, India, Italy, Egypt, Syria** etc. **Israel** also sees a minor revival as Jews move back and populate areas such as Tzfat, Jerusalem, Gaza and Chevron. A large Sephardi community also developed in **Holland** made up mainly of Marranos from Spain – who were immediately accepted back into Judaism. The oldest shul in England was created by the Sephardi Jews of Holland.
 - 1567 - Jews are expelled from Italy.
 - 1648 – 1653 Nearly 100,000 Jews are killed when Bogdan Chmielnicki invaded Poland to fight for Ukrainian independence – the particularly cruel Jewish killings are known as the Tach V'Tat (representing the years 5408-5409) massacres. Despite widespread Jewish protests, to this day there is still a commemorative statue of the 'heroic' Bogdan Chmielnicki standing in a public square in Kiev.
 - Ashkenazi Jews gradually move back to **Western Europe** as Enlightenment spreads through the West.

Were there any positives of Galut?

- 📖 Jewish life and culture have continued in the exile and Torah learning really took off.
- 📖 We managed to achieve the highest offices in the outside world!
- 📖 Without anti-Semitism what would the JC have to talk about?
- 📖 Unity in strife?

- External influences affected Jewish tradition. Just take a look at the massive effect that the Western Enlightenment had on the Jewish people.

DISCUSSION POINT – Are these really positives?

A Judasim for Galut – the Rav Kook approach

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

DISCUSSION POINT - What does this mean? Is this why Torah has 'taken off'?

IN THE GALUT WE ARE NOT IN OUR NATURAL (or national) SITUATION...

... 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 (sound familiar?).



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 his 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.**

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

Judaism wasn't intended for the Galut, and therefore the leaders of Jewry in the exile needed to ensure Judaism would still continue even in its current unnatural condition.

A great **RESCUE PLAN** developed to save the Jewish nation and enable it to survive in the lands of exile. A new way of life was shaped, based on an entire halachic system, designed to bring the Jew into a framework of distinct behaviour that would separate him or her from outside society by a kind of invisible wall.

The Jew was to remember at all times that he or she was not a full part of his/her neighbours' world, and that the Jew was not at home in the neighbours' land. On the contrary, the Jew had another land, which was never to be forgotten – the Jew must always remember the reality of Galut.

What do we do nowadays to remind ourselves that we are in Galut?

- **In Tefilla:** We face Yerushalayim and pray for the ending of the exile.
- **At weddings:** Place ash on the chatan's head; smash the glass.
- **Building a new house:** Leave a patch of wall undecorated.
- **On Chagim:** Prayer for rain introduced in the winter months; prayer added after the counting of the Omer.

DISCUSSION POINT – Does this idea conflict with Modern Orthodox values?

It was at this point and for this reason that the rabbinic authorities, who became the architects of Jewish national existence, built this idea into Jewish life in such a way that it would be accepted and not forgotten by Galut Jews. Acts like these connected the Jew with Eretz Yisrael. Jews could live at all four corners of the earth, but ritually they never left the land of Israel. While this may have saved Judaism as a religion, Rav Kook maintains that the concept of Judaism as a nation has been lost. It is particularly abstract to try and relate to an unknown individual, in unknown lands, speaking an unknown dialect as one's brother or sister.

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.



DISCUSSION POINT – Do we believe that the Jewish people have more influence and benefit when in one place or when spread around?

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.

Point to Ponder

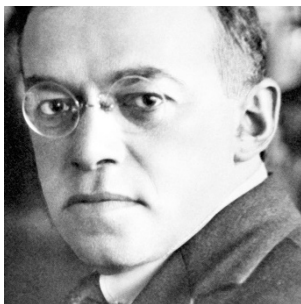
Did Judaism survive Galut or is it a product of Galut?

The Galut Mentality

"All people, Jews or gentiles, who dare not defend themselves when they know they are in the right, who submit to punishment not because of what they have done but because of who they are, are already dead by their own decision; and whether or not they survive physically depends on chance. If circumstances are not favourable, they end up in gas chambers." (Bruno Bettelheim)

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 his 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*".



"We constantly and very loudly apologize... Instead of turning our backs to the accusers, as there is nothing to apologize for, and nobody to apologize to, we swear again and again that it is not our fault... Isn't it long overdue to respond to all these and all future accusations, reproaches, suspicions, slanders and denunciations by simply folding our arms and loudly, clearly, coldly and calmly answering with the only argument that is understandable and accessible to this public: 'Go to Hell!'?"

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We do not have to apologize for anything. We are a people as all other peoples; we do not have any intentions to be better than the rest. As one of the first conditions for equality we demand the right to have our own villains, exactly as other people have them. Yes, we do have provocateurs and draft dodgers, and it is even strange that we have so few of them under current conditions. Other people have also these kinds of 'good', and, in addition, they have embezzlers, and pogrom-makers, and torturers--so what-- the neighbours live and are not ashamed... Do our neighbours blush for the Christians in Kishinyov who hammered nails into Jewish babies' eyes? Not in the least, - they walk with head raised high and look everybody in the face; they are absolutely right, and this is how it must be, as the persona of a people is royal, and not responsible and is not obliged to apologize. We do not have to account to anybody, we are not to sit for anybody's examination and nobody is old enough to call on us to answer. We came before them and will leave after them. We are what we are, we are good for ourselves, we will not change, and we do not want to." (Ze'ev Jabotinsky - 'Instead of Excessive Apology' 1911)

Points to Ponder

Does this description seem accurate?

Does building up our national account of persecution allow us to ignore our mistakes and not apologise?

K3: Religious Zionism



Aims:

1. **Discover** the beginnings of Religious Zionism.
2. **Explore** Religious Zionist leaders and their beliefs.
3. **Discuss** Reishit Semichat Geulateinu: Messianic and Rational Religious Zionism.

The 'First Flowerings' of Religious Zionism

Is it possible to pinpoint exactly where and when Religious Zionism started? Perhaps it begins with the Bar Kochva rebellion, to which the prolific tanna Rabbi Akiva attributed messianic significance. This is one of the earliest examples we have of the suggestion that the birth of the messianic age will be brought about by our own efforts.

Alternatively, we could focus in on the events leading to the building of the Second Beit HaMikdash. At the time there were several efforts made to encourage the Jews to return to Israel. The spiritual leaders Ezra and Nechemiya had limited success, and even the "Koresh declaration" was met unenthusiastically by the Jews of the time. As a result, there was only a limited spiritual revival during the Bayit Sheni period. All these events bare a worryingly similar parallel to the events associated to the more modern Shivat Tzion process. (Sources for these people and events can be seen in the additional chomer.)



The Cyrus Cylinder at the British Museum

But this, too, would not be an accurate starting point; the Torah itself is deeply Religious Zionist! Built in to the Torah's vision of Jewish life is that Am Yisrael will settle and inhabit the Land of Israel, and the very end goal of Hashem taking Bnei Yisrael out of Egypt was that they settle the Land and live there in accordance to the Torah.

Throughout time, gedolim have sought to settle the Land of Israel, such that the original Religious Zionist movement has never ceased. Thus, there continues to be an unbroken chain dating back to the original calling of:

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל אַבְרָם, לֵךְ לְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ וּמְכוֹלְדָתְךָ וּמִבֵּית אָבִיךָ, אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲרָאָךְ.

"And Hashem spoke to Avram saying 'Go for yourself, from your land and from your birthplace and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you'" (Bereshit 12:1)

We can see that establishing the starting point of the Religious Zionist movement is indeed a challenging task.

People often consider Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Kook to be the father of modern Religious Zionism. This is partially accurate. 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)

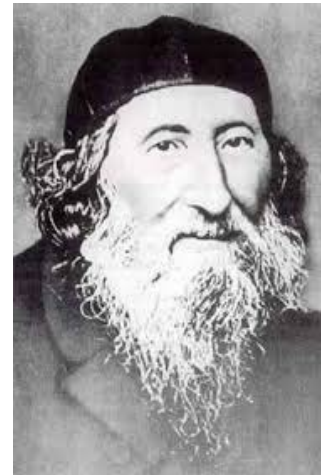
Rav Kook sees himself, and the movement he is part of, as the "second edition" of modern Religious Zionism. The advancements within the newly established Jewish settlement in Palestine were based upon the initiation of an earlier movement. Rav Kook and his fellow Zionists – from the most meticulously observant to the most vehemently anti-religious – were merely bearing the fruits of seeds planted into the collective consciousness of the Jewish People by "holy men" over a generation earlier, at a time when the Land of Israel was still desolate and barren.

Who were these "holy men", and in what way did they carve the path towards Zionism? Rav Kook refers to two "holy men" specifically as being the original champions of the Zionist idea: Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch Kalischer and Rabbi Eliyahu Gutmacher of Greiditz.

Early figures of Religious Zionism

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. He writes:

"Regarding the redemption of Israel, which we all await, one should not think that Hashem will descend suddenly from the heavens to the land to declare to His people: "Go out (from the exile)!" Nor will He send His anointed one [mashiach] in a moment to blast the 'great shofar' to the dispersed of Israel and ingather them to Jerusalem ... The promises of the prophets will most certainly be fulfilled at the end of days ... but not hastily in one day, rather the redemption of Israel shall come slowly, slowly ... For the initial phases of the redemption will be by the awakening of the spirits of the heartfelt and the will of the kingdoms to ingather few of the many dispersed of Israel to the Holy Land ..." (Shivat Tzion pg. 292)



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.



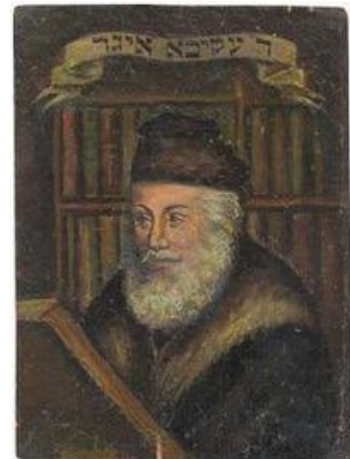
Rav Gutmacher (1796-1874) was a Polish-born German Rabbi and mystic. He was a contemporary of Rav Kalischer and they studied together under R. Akiva Eiger in Posen. Rav Gutmacher was a proponent of the Jewish agricultural settlement of the Land of Israel. Upon receiving Rav Kalischer's book, Drishat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

Thus, the trail to the sources of modern Religious Zionism leads us to Posen, to the beit midrash of "HaGaon" R. Akiva Eiger (1761-1837). R. Eiger is acclaimed as one of the outstanding Torah scholars of recent generations. His notes to the Talmud and Shulchan Aruch have become commonplace in all modern editions. His yeshiva in Posen was a centre of Torah at his time, and there he produced

some of the leading scholars of the next generation including his son-in-law, Rabbi Moshe Sofer (the "Chatam Sofer").

While it cannot be proven that R. Akiva Eiger shared the vision of his students – Rav Kalischer and Rav Gutmacher – there is a fascinating episode including them which shines light on the ideological roots of Religious Zionism, and the historical roots of Zionism in general. We will summarise in short:

In the year 1836, Rav Kalischer introduces a proposal to perform korban Pesach on the Temple Mount (Drishat Tzion, section III). On the political side he solicits Baron Rothchild to acquire the land of the Temple Mount from the Ottoman Turks (or at least to receive permission to perform the sacrifice). On the halachic side, he sends his proposal to his Rebbi – R. Akiva Eiger. R. Eiger initially rejects Rav Kalischer's suggestion that it would be halachically permissible to perform the korban, but when the latter appeals, he forwards Rav Kalischer's letters to



the Chatam Sofer to investigate (R. Eiger was already old of age and had received Rav Kalischer's first proposal only a year before his passing). The Chatam Sofer agrees with Rav Kalischer that it is would be permissible to perform the korban Pesach (albeit he concludes that only this korban would be permitted), however he stipulates his ruling with a pragmatic point, stating that he does not believe the Ottoman Turks would allow for a Jewish ritual service to be performed on the Temple Mount (Shu"t Chatam Sofer, Yoreh Deah 236). The matter is thus not pursued further.

We have traced the roots of the modern Religious Zionist movement back to the early-mid nineteenth century. This predates the birth of Theodor Herzl by nearly a decade, and the "First Aliya" by more than a generation. The movement towards settling the Land of Israel and the initiation of Jewish Nationalism did not begin in Petach Tikvah or Rishon LeTzion, and certainly not in Basel. Rather, it began in the yeshiva in Posen, where some of the greatest Rabbis of all time discussed the possibility of reinstating the Korban Pesach. It began with the notion that the Ultimate Redemption would come about slowly through a natural order brought

about by the actions of the Jewish People. These concepts set the stage for the modern Religious Zionist movement, and ignited the general Zionist movement.

(Full biographies of Rav Kalischer, Rav Gutmacher and Rav Kook can be found in the additional chomer.)

Reishit Tzmichat Geulateinu (The Beginning of our Redemption)

A belief of some religious Zionists today is that the process of redemption has begun. The events that are unfolding today are Reishit Tzmichat Geulateinu. But what does this really mean? And why do they believe this?

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. Alexandri:
אמר רבי אלכסנדר: "רבי יהושע בן לוי רמי, כתיב: (ישעיהו ס) 'בעתה', וכתיב: '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 however not contradicting positions?

If we look around at the state of our generation in terms of our Shmirat Torah uMitzvot, it doesn't seem like we have much hope of being zocheh to 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...

Is it really?

But why do people think this is it? What signs do we have that this 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:

כה אמר ה' צבאות "עד ישבו זקנים וזקנות ברחבות ירושלים 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)

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 have a go at reading an extract taken from 'Orot' (lights):

"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

הנפש של פושעי ישראל שבעקבתא דמשיחא, אותם שהם מתחברים באהבה אל ענייני כלל ישראל, לארץ ישראל ולתחיית האומה, היא יותר מתוקנת מהנפש של שלמי אמוני ישראל, שאין להם זה היתרון של ההרגשה העצמית לטובת הכלל ובנין האומה והארץ, אבל הרוח הוא מתוקן הרבה יותר אצל יראי ה' ושומרי תורה ומצוות... ותתוקן הנפש של היראים שומרי תורה ע"י שלמות הנפש שבפושעים הטובים ביחש לענייני הכלל... והרוחניות בהכרה והרגשה האנושית, והרוח של הפושעים יתוקן על ידי השפעתם של יראי ה'... והצדיקים העליונים... הם יהיו הצינורות המאחדים.

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 – 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



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K3: Religious Zionism

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.

DISCUSSION POINT – Can we claim that we have entered a Messianic period? If so, do we think that this is a messianic period?

For an understanding of the religious ideology behind Anti-Zionism, and the Religious Zionist response, see the additional chomer.

K4: Herzl and the Conference



Aims:

1. **Consider** the interplay between the persecution 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 (re)birth of Religious Zionism we will now explore how those ideas come together – the impact of Zionism on European Jewry.

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 energy 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-martialled, 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. Despite amassing significant evidence that Esterhazy was the true spy, high-ranking military officials suppressed the new evidence, acquitted Esterhazy in a sham trial and pushed Picquart to stop delving into the affair. The Army then accused Dreyfus of additional charges based on falsified documents.

Suspicion continued to grow but all those who looked into the matter were chased off the scene. Picquart refused to let the matter rest and was removed from staff

duty and sent into active duty with a French regiment in Tunisia. Not long after he was recalled, court marshalled and duly imprisoned for his efforts.

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 Anitsemitism.



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 and 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? The trial and parade of Dreyfus would have served no purpose in the furthering of the Zionist cause had it not been for a young Austro-Hungarian journalist following the details of the trial for a Viennese newspaper. His name was Theodor Herzl. (You can find more information on the Dreyfus Affair and its modern day impacts in extra chomer.)

Herzl Comes to Life

"... Wenn Ihr aber nicht wollt, so ist es und bleibt es ein Märchen, was ich Euch erzählt habe"

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

When Herzl witnessed the public humiliation of Dreyfus it stirred something inside Herzl which changed him radically. His entire outlook on the future survival of the Jewish people shifted.

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.



Roman

von

Theodor Herzl

Wenn Ihr wollt,
ist es kein MärchenLeipzig
Hermann Seemann Nachfolger.

On 17th January 1896 (less than two years after the Dreyfus affair had begun) the first extract of his book *Der Judenstaat* – 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.

Herzl had a vision of how the land of the Jews would be run: the wealthy and influential Jews would make all the decisions and form an unofficial government, and all the other Jews would adhere to any rulings decreed. However, all the influential Jews of the West, including Lord Rothschild, did not agree with this and went as far as to ridicule Herzl's suggestions. On the other hand, the much poorer Jews of Eastern Europe, the Ostjuden, raved about Herzl and treated him as a kind of Messiah.

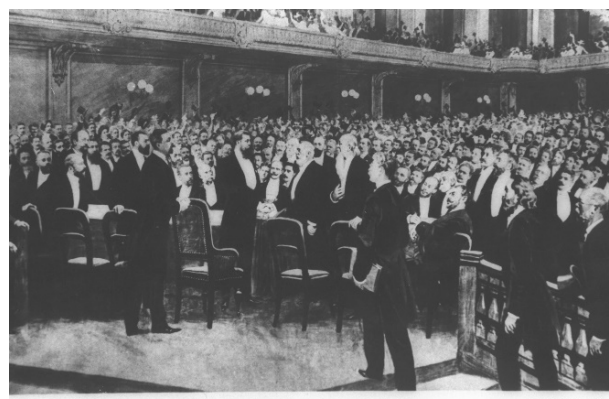
Thus, Herzl knew that he would have to form his 'army' of supporters out of the Ostjuden. The only western Jew who joined Herzl was Max Nordau. He became Herzl's righthand man and drew up much of the practical programme of early Zionism. The first meeting of these supporters was arranged by Herzl and became the First Zionist Congress.

Thus, whilst Herzl had been a Zionist visionary from early on in his life, the Dreyfus Affair certainly catalysed his formation of an organised Zionist Movement which eventually led to the birth of the State of Israel.

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 forms of Zionism that was 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. There were 17 women present at the Congress, some of them in their own capacity and others who accompanied representatives. 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.

The Basel program provided the guidelines for the work of the Zionist Organisation from its foundation at the First Zionist Congress until the establishment of the State of Israel. This included the promotion of settlement of the land, organisation of Jews living in Israel into groups and preparatory steps for attainment of government grants needed to establish the Jewish State.

After this, the Zionist Congress met every year (1897-1901) and then every second year (1903-1913, 1921-1939). 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."

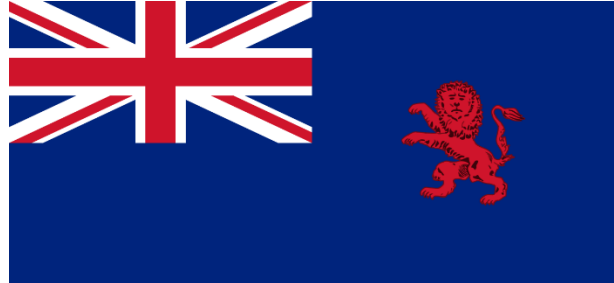
The Uganda Proposal

Around Easter 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.



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

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. The Jewish Territorialist Organisation (JTO) was formed as a result of the unification of various groups who had supported Herzl's Uganda proposals during the period 1903-1905.

DISCUSSION POINTS

Do you think a 'safe haven' would have been a good temporary solution?

What would the State have looked like?

Would it really have been able to pick up and move to the Land of Israel at a given point?

The Uganda Program was finally rejected by the Zionist movement at the Seventh Zionist Congress in 1905, but Nahum Syrkin and Israel Zangwill called an alternative conference to continue the plan of the Uganda scheme. When Uganda fell through for technical reasons, Zangwill looked for other places – Canada, Australia, Texas – to settle the Jews. However, the organisation failed as they were unable to secure a definite project.

(For more information on the Jews in Russia and their plight see additional Chomer.)



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K4: Herzl and the Conference

POINTS TO PONDER

How would you have voted at the Sixth Zionist Congress?

Are there any modern parallels to the divided opinions of, on one side, safety over the land and on the other side, land over safety?

Are Herzl's ideas still valid today for the state of Israel going forward or has his vision of a secure homeland been fulfilled?

How do we as religious Zionists relate to Herzl in the 21st century?

K5: Inception of the State

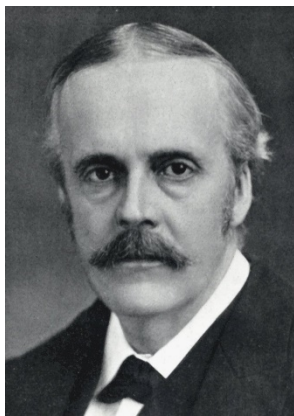
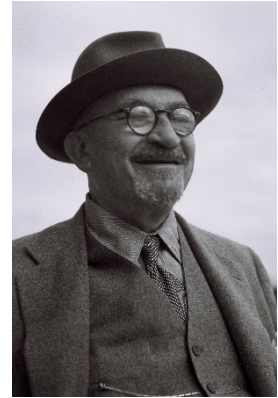


Aims:

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** about Secular Zionist leaders.
3. **Consider** the ideology of the State in relation to the ideology of its founders.

The Balfour Declaration, White Paper and what came in between

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 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, 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."

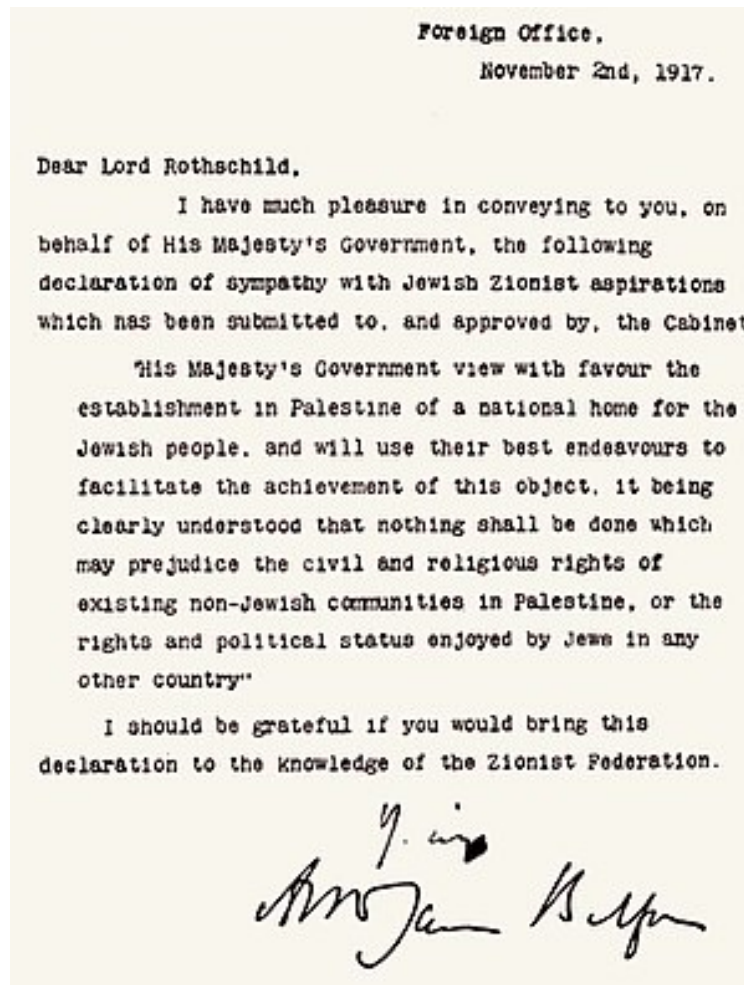
During World War I Weizmann continued to move in political circles, persuading anyone who would listen to support the Zionist cause. Throughout this time, the leadership of the Jewish community in Britain had viewed the Zionist enterprise with suspicion, even attacking it in the media. When, in June 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 31st October 1917, Arthur Balfour now the Foreign Secretary, responded with the official view of the government:

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K5: Inception of the State



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.

Is Judaism a nation or a religion?

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 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.

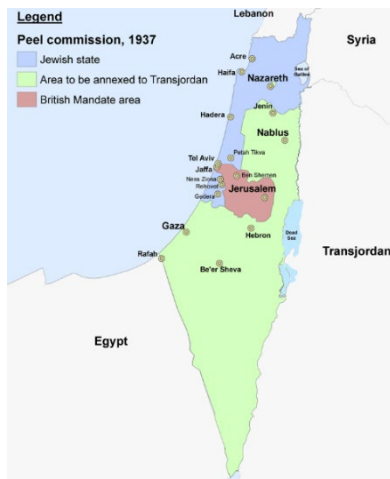


However, Rav Kook, who was in England at the time (Coincidence? Hashgacha? Besheret?), was quoted during the debate as calling Judaism a nation. The decision was made to follow Rav Kook, seeing as a Rabbi probably knows more about Judaism than Lord Montagu!

After Balfour

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.

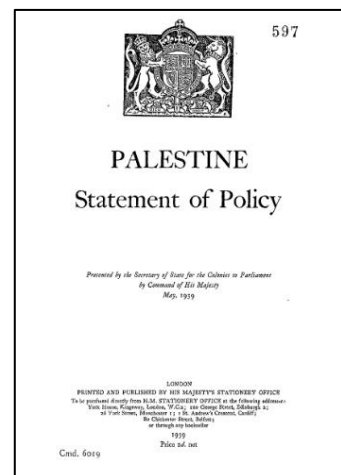


Peel Commission (1936-37)

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."

How does this change the British opinion on the Jewish homeland in Israel?

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.

Secular Zionist Leaders

Theodor Herzl (1860 – 1904)

We met him in K4.

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.

Ze'ev Jabotinsky (1880-1929)

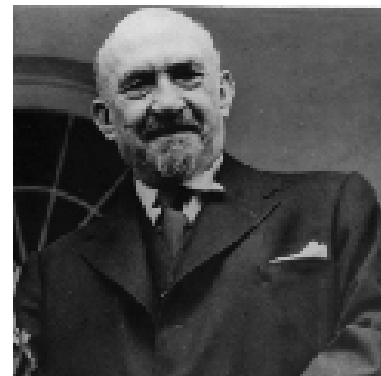
- ✦ Born Vladimir Jabotinsky in Odessa, (then part of Russia).
- ✦ Raised in Jewish middle-class home and educated in Russian schools.
- ✦ Joined the Zionist movement after the Kishinev pogrom of 1903 (see K4, p6).
- ✦ Established the Jewish Self-Defence Organisation to safeguard Jewish communities in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



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.

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 1917.
- ✦ 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



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."

He supported both grass-roots colonization efforts as well as higher-level diplomatic activity in securing a national homeland for the Jews.

"A state cannot be created by decree, but by the forces of a people and in the course of generations. Even if all the governments of the world gave us a country, it would only be a gift of words. But if the Jewish people will go build Palestine, the Jewish State will become a reality - a fact."

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



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.

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 ..."

DISCUSSION POINTS

So, how many of these great leaders that brought about Hakamat Hamedina were actually frum?? Any?

Can Israel really be so great if it was started mainly by secular leaders?

Is this type of Israel a fulfilment of our 'dream' Israel for modern times?

In light of 21st Century tolerance and acceptance, is it really right for us to see a state based on religious/halachic values as an ideal for the present?

K6: Underground Movements



Aims:

1. **Learn** about resistance movements active in the pre-State period.
2. **Understand** the King David Hotel Bombing.
3. **Explore** the concept of the 'New Jew' and what it means to be the underdog.

Introduction

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 a number of 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.

Jewish Defence in Mandate Palestine

Dating back into the early 1900's, as long as there had been large groups of Jews in the Holy Land, there were groups working to defend them. During World War I, Jews had fought alongside the British to defeat the Ottoman Empire in the Zion Mule Corps and the Jewish Legion. 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 havlaga – 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 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

never deliberately attacked civilian targets, they were branded as 'terrorists' by the British and even by the Haganah themselves!

Consequently, the Haganah absolved themselves from the bombings. However, they did form new units and squads for a policy of 'aggressive defence' under the training of a fervently Zionist Christian Captain, Orde Charles Wingate who hoped one day to stand at the head of a Jewish Army. (He was eventually recalled to Britain when his supervisors realised he was a bit of a nutcase!)

The White Paper 1939

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 up the channels of immigration.

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.

The 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.

In 1920, the group was formed under British auspices. The Haganah's role was purely defensive, and it had the support of the Zionist Organisation. By 1936, a training programme had been developed in cooperation with the British armed forces and light arms were brought in from Europe. 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. The Palmach was set up in 1941 and was the Haganah's task force and formed the legendary Jewish Brigade during WW2.

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.

The Irgun was founded in 1931 as a reaction to Arab attacks - particularly the massacres of 1929. Its members believed that the purely defensive strategy of the Haganah was inadequate and that the initiative should be taken against the Arabs. In 1936, the Irgun was re-organised and when Menachem Begin became leader of the Irgun in 1943, its policy was to bring as many immigrants into Palestine as possible, but during the war it would not attack British military targets.

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.

In 1940, Avraham Stern broke off from the Irgun and formed Lechi, with the basic goal to maintain pressure on the British by continued military attacks. He was upset that the British were not responding at all to the attacks of the Irgun and so

the Lechi stepped up the attacks. The Lechi became the most extreme of the underground movements and continued their attacks against the British even in the midst of World War II.

It is important to understand that these groups disagreed considerably about what was the best method for helping the building of a state. The Haganah and the Yishuv leadership believed strongly that the Irgun were undermining their case. The Irgun and the Lechi felt that the Yishuv leadership was letting the British get away with turning back immigrants to Europe. Tensions mounted between the groups on a number of occasions.

DISCUSSION POINTS

Today many of us seriously consider joining the IDF, but 80 years ago would you have joined any of these organisations? Which one? Why?

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.



Let's see what everyone says about it...



SIR JOHN SHAW (Chief Secretary – Government of Palestine):
"At twenty minutes to one on 22nd of July 1946, there was a dull but very considerable explosion. It was a sort of terrific bump which shook the whole building, brought down a lot of the ceiling and pictures on the walls in my room, and covered the whole place with dust with an impenetrable pall of smoke or fumes and dust which brought practically total darkness."

MENACHEM BEGIN (Irgun Commander):

"We did not imagine that even one life would be lost. We did our best to ensure that everyone would be evacuated from the hotel. Everything had been coordinated between the operations officer of the Haganah and our own officer. The timing, the warning – which was given in advance. The explosion occurred – just as we had planned it – about half an hour after the telephone warning was given. There



were three warnings by telephone. Well, the matter was looked into and it became clear that we did not intend to harm even one person in the hotel because there were human beings, because of the ethics of our war. It was not the hotel which we attacked, but the wing which housed the central British government in Palestine, and British military headquarters, as well as British intelligence for the entire Middle East. This was an entirely legitimate objective. In any event, however, people were liable to be hurt in other parts of the hotel, therefore we did all we could to prevent losses. We gave them enough time to evacuate people, down to the last man. The British did not heed our warnings."

JOHN SHAW:

"No, definitely not! That is a very old story which was put out by Mr Begin and the Irgun after the event. I don't want to comment on the story, except to say that it is absolutely untrue – that no warning was made to me or any member in the building or reached us in any way whatever. And even if it had been done, even supposing I'd received it, I could not in the time available have evacuated the staff."

ADINA NISSAN (Irgun)

"He's lying! It's an outright lie! I, Adina Hai Nissan, received an order to phone the King David Hotel...I called up and said: 'This is the Irgun. We have placed explosives in the hotel. Clear out! This is a warning!' I repeated the announcement in three languages. I informed them. So help me. I warned them. I know that I informed them. I called them – and not only them. Afterwards, I also called The Palestine Post. I called the French Consulate. The French Consulate acknowledged having received my telephone message.



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.

ISRAEL LEVI (Commander-Operation King David Hotel):

"I understand that they reacted harshly because of the casualties. This is a sign of an absurd people, without pride. I would not call them proud. People with pride would say 'We did it. We didn't want to kill anyone. We are sorry for the deaths'- and that is all. Instead of saying that they were sorry for the deaths, for all that occurred, they actually feared for their own skins... With every passing day after the operation, from the time the first slanders were cast the morning after, when all the newspapers and leaders came out furiously against the operation, against the Irgun for perpetuating such action, it caused matters to worsen steadily. If you ask me if I would cooperate with such people, the answer is: No I would not!"

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.



The 'New Jew'

A large part of the ideology of Revisionist Zionism of Ze'ev Jabotinsky (one-time head of the Irgun) was the philosophical reconsideration of what it means to be a Jew. Until this point in time there had only been the 'Galut Jew' – beaten, downtrodden, oppressed and weak. The Jew of expulsions, pogroms and Holocaust.

Now there was a chance to reinvent that image. The strong Jew, the new Jew, who could take charge of their own destiny, rather than have others determine it for them.

One individual who encapsulated that idea was Mordechai Anilewicz, leader of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. In him, many saw the future of the Jewish People, and they were determined to establish a state which could stand up and protect itself.

For an interesting study in this shift have a look at the monuments at Yad VaShem. You can see them in the additional chomer.



K7: 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.

In the afternoon, Jerusalem was subjected to shelling from the northwest.

Hagana forces throughout the country continued mopping up and Jewish sources claimed most of Western Galilee safe against Nohayyan, near Jer for last night, the quarters and

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.

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, not beyond the western edge of Zone C. Arab snipers shot the Jews in Jaffa Road. The Arabs were forced back and the barracks bank area was taken.

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

Egyptian Air Force Spitfires Bomb Tel Aviv; One Shot Down

Kol Israel, 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 its 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 limited shortly before midnight, but the planes were driven off, without causing any damage.

Two settlements in the Negev had also been attacked from the air, the radio reported.

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 establishment 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

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 1939 White Paper of the late Mandatory Power, particularly the Ordinance and Orders relating to immigration and land transfer.

In the declaration of independence, Mr. Ben Gurion called on the Arabs of Palestine to a future peace, a common front, civil 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 never ceased throughout the generations of their dispersal, until the Nazi holocaust 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.

2 Columns Cross Southern Border

By WALTER COLLINS
T.P. Correspondent

CAIRO, Saturday.—A column of British troops crossed the Egyptian border with Palestine at the southern tip of the Gaza Strip, after Kfar Etzion had been captured.

Etzion Settlers Taken P.O.W.

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

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 the Six Aliyot and the driving forces behind them.
2. **Explore** the illegal immigration to Israel.
3. **Understand** the role of the United Nations in the establishment of the State of Israel.

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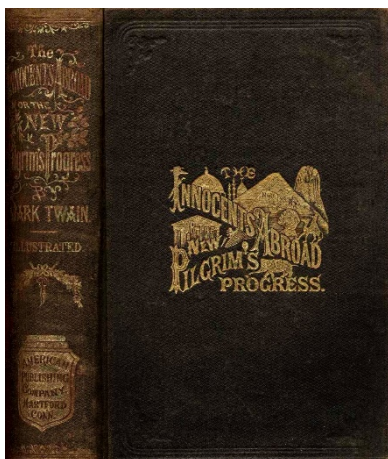
Factors leading to Hakamat Hamedina

Historically, many factors and events contributed to the establishment of the State of Israel – Hakamat Hamedina. We have already seen the birth of the Zionist movement (K's 3 and 5) and some of the foreign politics involved (K4). In this Kvutza we will be taking a closer look at:

- 📖 Jewish settlement of the land through the different aliyot,
- 📖 The impact of the Holocaust on:
 - Illegal immigration,
 - Jewish resistance.
- 📖 The United Nations.

Jewish settlement: the Aliyot

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:



"Palestine sits in sackcloth and ashes. Over it broods the spell of a curse that has withered its fields and fettered its energies. Palestine is desolate and unlovely – Palestine is no more of this workday world. It is sacred to poetry and tradition, it is dreamland." ... "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 with the pomp of life and action.

We reached Tabor safely. We never saw a human being on the whole route" ... "There is not a solitary village throughout its whole extent – not for thirty miles in either direction ... One may ride ten miles hereabouts and not see ten human beings." ... "These unpeopled deserts, these rusty mounds of barrenness..." (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.

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 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 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. In order 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. Now, before you start thinking of olim in hard hats wolf-whistling at passing women, let me explain.

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..."

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 whose aim was to bring about the political-economic, as well as spiritual-national revival of the Jewish people through settlement in Israel.

The first Aliya took place in two shifts, 1882 - 1884, and 1890 - 1891. 25,000 people went but unfortunately conditions were tough. 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. It acquired its first parcel of land (800 acres in Chadera) in the spring of 1903 and focused on greening the land through the planting of trees. The JNF got involved in tree planting for many reasons, taking its inspiration from the Torah...

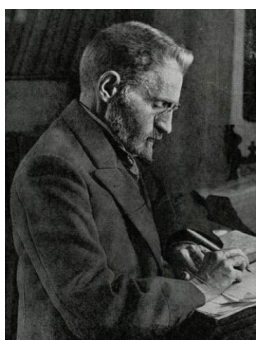
”כִּי־תִצּוֹר אֶל־עִיר יָמִים רַבִּים לְהִלָּחֵם עָלֶיהָ לְתַפְּסָהּ, לֹא־תִשְׁחִית אֶת־עֵצֶיהָ לְנִדַּח עָלֶיךָ גִּרְזֹן, כִּי מִמֶּנּוּ תֹאכַל וְאֵתוֹ לֹא תִכְרֹת, כִּי הָאָדָם עֵץ הַשָּׂדֶה לְבָא מִפְּנֵיךָ בַּמְצוֹר.”

“When you besiege a city for many days to wage war against it to seize it, do not destroy its trees by swinging an axe against them, for from it you will eat, and you shall not cut it down; is the tree of the field a man that it should enter the siege before you?”
(Devarim 20:19)

‘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 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.

"A goal without a plan is just a wish." (Antoine de Saint-Exupery)

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 aliya 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, town 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 aliya 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 rate of immigration slowed to a trickle and more people left the country in 1927 than entered it. By 1928, 500,000 Arabs and 150,000 Jews lived in Palestine. JNF had increased Jewish ownership of land to 250,000 acres of land.

The Fifth Aliyah (1929-1939)

Following an economic comeback in the area a few made aliya 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 Haifa port was completed in 1933 and by this time Jerusalem was heavily populated. A lot of the olim that came into the country already practiced academic professions such as medicine. Even more kibbutzim and moshavim emerged.

In 1936 the Arabs called general strikes to protest against the levels of Jewish immigration. Crops and trees that had been planted were destroyed. Britain restricted immigration to 80,000.

The fifth aliya was the beginning of the 'youth aliya'. 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.

At the end of 1947, 303 Jewish settlements had been created and half a million acres of land belonged to the Jews. At the end of WW2, the Jewish population stood at 475,000. By the time the state was established, there were 600,000 Jews living in Israel on a cultivated land. (For the relationship between the Holocaust, Aliyah and the establishment of the state, see the additional chomer.)

Illegal Immigration

Even during the war Britain stood by its policy and refused to let those who had escaped Europe into Mandate Palestine, so they decided to take matters into their own hands. A limited number of refugees were smuggled in during the war, and after the war the 'Illegal Immigration' was stepped up.



It was known as the *brichah* – fleeing – and was organised methodically.

What started as a trickle during the war now became a flood. The entire operation had to be carried out in secret, because the British despatched agents to seek out these vessels and inform the local authorities of the 'illegal' activities. When they discovered a boat, it was intercepted and

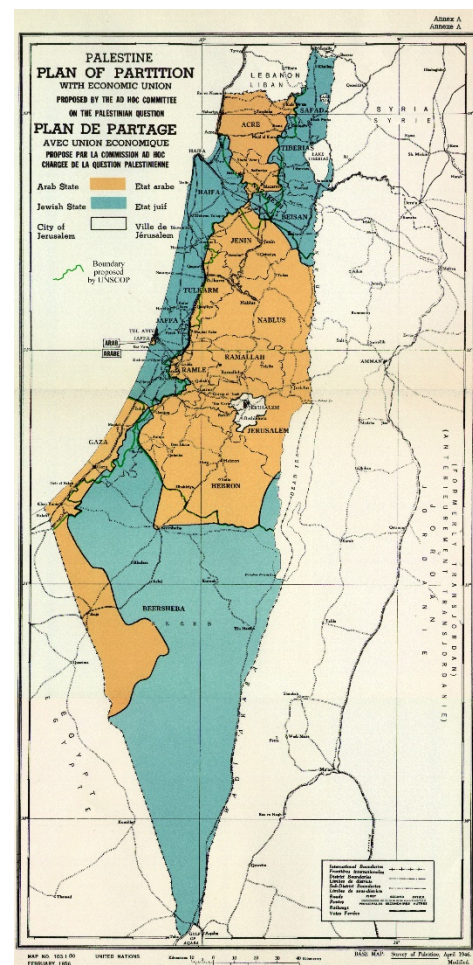
boarded, then taken to the port of Haifa where the Jewish refugees were taken off and sent to internment camps in Cyprus or the Atlit detention centre in Israel.

Perhaps the best-known case is that of the ship Exodus which brought 4,500 survivors from France in 1947. Those aboard were not allowed to disembark, and the ship was sent back to France. The survivors refused to leave the ship and the French authorities didn't want the Jews so ultimately the British sent the ship to British controlled Germany. The survivors were to be kept in their old concentration camps! This saga was followed with astonishment all round the world, there was an outcry in the press and it was very embarrassing for Britain.

The United Nations

Britain found it increasingly difficult to control their mandate. The waves of clandestine migration were only increasing, and international public support dropped in light of the Exodus affair and similar stories. The morale of the troops stationed there was being worn down by the underground movements (K6), and pressure at home in the UK rose with the deaths of British forces. **The British finally gave up, returning the Mandate for Palestine to the United Nations in 1947.**

After the British renounced the Mandate, control of Palestine was handed over temporarily to the United Nations to find a more permanent solution to the problem.



On May 15, 1947 the UN appointed a committee, UNSCOP (United Nations Special Committee on Palestine), composed of representatives from eleven states.

After spending three months conducting hearings and general survey of the situation in Palestine, UNSCOP officially released its report on August 31 and recommend the creation of two states, one Jewish and one Arab, in Palestine. The recommendation was voted on in November 1947 and adopted by the UN General Assembly as Resolution 181 – the partition of Palestine into two states, one Arab and one Jewish.

DISCUSSION POINTS

What were the factors which led to the creation of the State of Israel?

Which was the most important?

'The state was inevitably going to come about, it was just a question of when.' Is this statement true?

K8: In Defence of Israel



Aims:

1. **Learn** about Israel's wars.
2. **Explore** how they affected Israel.
3. **Discuss** modern antisemitism today.

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 left). 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)

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.

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.



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.

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.

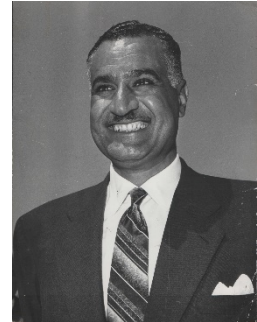


At the same time, Palestinian Arab *Fedayeen* (Arabic for Freedom fighters – non-affiliated militant groups often deployed for a cause where a government has failed) launched cross-border infiltrations and attacks on Israeli civilian centres and military outposts from Egypt, Jordan and Syria. Israel 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)

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.

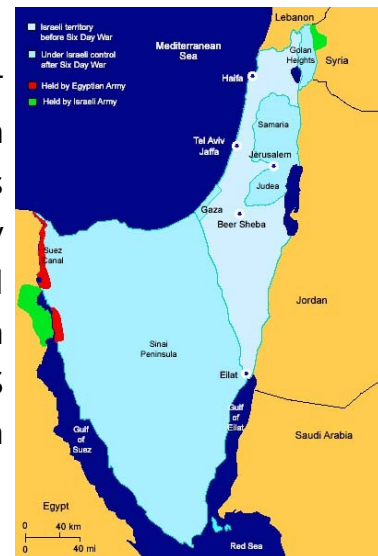


Arab mobilization compelled Israel to mobilize its troops, 80 percent of which were reserve civilians. Militarily, Israeli leaders feared the consequences of absorbing an Arab first strike against its civilian population, many of whom lived only miles from Arab-controlled territory. Against this background,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

In Egypt, Israel destroyed 416 aircraft 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.

The Yom Kippur War (October 1973)

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.



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).

Impact of the war

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 many ways, it allowed them to negotiate with the Israelis as equals.

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.

The First Lebanon War (June 1982)

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-

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.

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.

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

An interesting question arises from this war: Should we put soldiers' lives at risk in order to save other soldiers?

Operation Cast Lead (December 2008)

This significant engagement 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.





SUMMER MACHANE 5781

Bet Chalutzi: Medina Bevinyana – מדינה בבניינה -

K8: In Defence of Israel

POINT TO PONDER

Why? 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, including Iranian-made Fajr-5, Russian-made Grad rockets, Qassams, and mortars. 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 with both sides claiming victory.

Operation Protective Edge (July 2014)

Israel launched the operation on July 7, 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.

On June 12, 2014 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. On 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.

On 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.

On July 14th, 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.

On 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 uprooted Hamas terror-tunnels into Israel.

On August 1st, Ban Ki-Moon and John Kerry brokered a 72-hour ceasefire that was mutually accepted by Hamas and Israel. Shortly after the ceasefire took effect 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.

On August 3rd, 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.

After several more partially-successful ceasefires, on August 26 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 civilian) 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.



Unfortunately, for Israel to survive in the face of its enemies it needs to fight and ultimately soldiers will be killed. War is generally seen as unnecessary and barbaric, but beneath all the horrors and bloodshed, can anything good come out of war?

POINTS TO PONDER

What does Religious Zionism have to say about the different wars of Israel?

What is the effect on society of having a nation of soldiers?

Can an army ever be truly ethical and maintain a high moral standard for its soldiers?

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

Is it only an Israeli army or a Jewish army as well? (Have a look at the Raid on Entebbe in the additional chomer.)

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"

DISCUSSION POINT

Do we agree with Sharansky's three D test?



SUMMER MACHANE 5781

Bet Chalutzi: Medina Bevinyana – מדינה בבניינה –

K8: In Defence of Israel

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?

K9: Israel: Past, Present and Future



Aims:

1. **Reflect** on the First Zionist Congress and its impact on the Zionist future.
2. **Understand** the text of the Balfour Declaration and the Declaration of Independence.
3. **Consider** how the issues which plagued the Jewish state at the time of Hakamat Hamedina are still present today.

First Zionist Congress: Zionism or Zionisms?

Past to Present:

In late August 1897, some 200 Jews from 17 countries arrived in Basel, Switzerland. Many of the delegates had very different ideas of what the state should be and how to achieve it, yet they were all able to come together in the same room and discuss it.

Dressed in festive formal attire, the delegates entered the municipal casino concert hall, which was decorated with blue and white flags for the occasion. They heard three knocks of the gavel that launched the Congress and then watched Dr. Karpel Lippe, the oldest delegate, make his way up the stage. He covered his head, and to the tears of the delegates, recited the shehecheyanu blessing, thanking God for bringing the Jews to this time. With this blessing, that Sunday morning, the first day of Elul, the Jewish state began its journey.

As the days progressed, debates inside the hall and side rooms were fierce, differences of opinions abundant. After all, this was the first-time world Jews came together in such a format. Assimilated Jews from England alongside religious Yiddish-speaking Jews from small villages in Poland and intellectual Russians from Odessa.

When argument heated up, one of the older delegates, Prof. Zvi Hermann Schapira, would remind delegates that they were all there for a common cause and should suppress their personal prejudice. Delegate Nahum Sokolow described the moment: *"A dramatic scene followed. The professor called upon every delegate present to raise his right hand and they all did so and repeated after him: 'If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its skill.'"*

That pledge remained a thread of unity through Congresses to follow, a pledge that Herzl took himself.

The journey that was embarked on in the First Zionist Congress was not merely a process that would lead to the establishment of the State of Israel. It was the beginning of a Jewish transformation. Herzl famously stated: *"At Basel, I founded the Jewish state."*

He immediately clarified that such state is not simply a geographical representation, nor a collection of citizens who happen to live in a given territory. He wrote: *"The essence of a state lies in the will of the people for a state... A territory is merely the concrete basis. The state itself, when it possesses a territory, still remains something abstract."* It is that abstraction, that ideology, that Herzl founded in Basel and which continues to serve as the bedrock of the Jewish state.

Herzl outlined such a vision in his opening speech. One of the delegates, Mordecai Ben-Ami, described the reaction: *"For a few moments, the hall shook from the shouts of joy, the applause, the cheers and the feet-stomping. It felt as if the great dream of our nation, of 2,000 years, was now solved, and in front us stood Mashiach Ben-David."* Right after the speech, the intense work began, turning the will of the people into actions: deliberations on national aspects, economic aspects, analysis of the conditions in the Land of Israel, reports of the state of the Jews in various communities, discussions about the revival of the Hebrew language, of Hebrew literature.

Another delegate, Israel Zangwill, reflected on the atmosphere: *"On the rivers of Babylon, we sat and wept when we remembered Zion. On the river of Basel, we now sit and resolve: We will weep no more."*

Key themes:

- A. Zionism was hopeful, emotional and momentous.
- B. Zionism at the Congress focused on a political Zionism – trying to achieve its aims through politics, negotiation and working with other nations.
- C. The Congress brought together many different people with varied and contradicting viewpoints, but they were committed themselves to unity, if not uniformity.

Big Questions:

- 📖 What is the legacy of Herzl and the Zionist Congress – what messages can we apply from then to today?
- 📖 What can we learn from the hope and emotions from that first Congress that might be applicable today?
- 📖 How should we maintain the memory of the Congress alive today?

Future:

In Israel today, it can be useful to think about 4 key groups (President Rivlin described them as the “4-Tribes” in 2015):

1. **Ultra-Orthodox Jews or Haredim**, who observe a strict interpretation of halakha, as well as highly conservative social norms and varying degrees of reclusion from general Israeli society;
2. **Religious or “Modern Orthodox” Jews**, dati'im, who practice traditional observance such as keeping kosher and observing the Sabbath, but who are also far more integrated into Israeli society than Haredim. Unlike Haredim, dati'im, sometimes also called “Religious Zionists” or “national-religious,” also identify strongly with the state and the Zionist ideal of Jewish national self-determination. Dati men are conscripted into the military, unlike most Haredi men, and even a sizeable minority of dati women serve in the military.
3. **Secular Jews, or Chilonim**, a word commonly used in Israel to describe all Israeli Jews who observe little or no religious traditions, whether they are believers or not. This group was the old elite from where Israel’s leadership and most dominant actors have usually emerged.
4. **Arab citizens of Israel.** (Non-Jewish citizens of Israel are primarily Arab—mostly Muslims but Christians as well.) Many identify as Palestinian citizens of Israel, simultaneously balancing Palestinian, Arab, Muslim/Christian, familial or geographic, and Israeli identities.

These groups in Israel often come into conflict with each other and as we look to the future we need to find a common ground or framework that can encompass all the needs and hopes of each group. No easy task!

Big Questions:

- 🗣️ How can we maintain unity in Israel when people are becoming more and more disunified?
- 🗣️ The legacy of the first Congress might be that people with wildly different ideologies were able to work together despite their differences, unified around a common purpose. What are the stages?

Balfour Declaration and the Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel: Responsibility Towards its Citizens

Past:

The Balfour Declaration was a public statement issued by the British government during World War I, announcing support for the establishment of a “national home for the Jewish people” in Palestine, then an Ottoman region with a minority Jewish population.

The declaration represented the first public support for Zionism by a major political power – its publication galvanized Zionism, which finally had obtained an official charter. 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, which had been given to the Central Powers following the Russian withdrawal.

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 including Mark Sykes (Colonel and Conservative MP) and Robert Cecil (Lord and Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs). From 1918 until World War II, Jews in Mandatory Palestine celebrated Balfour Day as an annual national holiday on 2 November.

- 🗣️ The declaration was an important document and had a big impact on the fight for a state for the Jews, reflecting the position of the British Government (who would eventually have control of the land being discussed – the British Mandate)

- Because of this the language of the declaration, ever since its publication, underwent intense scrutiny, and criticism.

A similarly important document is the declaration of the establishment of the State of Israel.

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).

Chaim Weizmann, chairman of the World Zionist Organization and soon to be the first President of Israel, endorsed the decision, after reportedly asking "What are they waiting for, the idiots?"

Final Wording:

The draft text was submitted for approval to a meeting of Moetzet HaAm (**מועצת העם**, lit. People's Council) at the JNF building in Tel Aviv on 14 May. The meeting started at 13:50 and ended at 15:00, an hour before the declaration was due to be made, and despite ongoing disagreements, with a unanimous vote in favour of the final text. During the process, there were two major debates, centring on the issues of borders and religion.

Borders:

The borders were not specified in the Declaration. On the day of its proclamation, Eliyahu Epstein wrote to Harry S. Truman that the state had been proclaimed "within the frontiers approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations in its Resolution of November 29, 1947".

On the border issue, the original draft had declared that the borders would be that decided by the UN partition plan. While this was supported by Rosen and

Bechor-Shalom Sheetrit, it was opposed by Ben-Gurion and Zisling, with Ben-Gurion stating, "We accepted the UN Resolution, but the Arabs did not. They are preparing to make war on us. If we defeat them and capture western Galilee or territory on both sides of the road to Jerusalem, these areas will become part of the state. Why should we obligate ourselves to accept boundaries that in any case the Arabs don't accept?" The inclusion of the designation of borders in the text was dropped after the provisional government of Israel, the Minhelet HaAm, voted 5–4 against it. The Revisionists, committed to a Jewish state on both sides of the Jordan River (that is, including Transjordan), wanted the phrase "within its historic borders" included but were unsuccessful.

Religion:

The second major issue was over the inclusion of God 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 "God 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.

Big Questions:

- 📖 Take a look at both texts. What might have been some of the issues with them?

Balfour Declaration:

Clause 1: His Majesty's government view with favour the establishment in **Palestine** of a **national home** for the **Jewish people**, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object,

Sub-Clause 1a: it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the **civil and religious rights** of **existing non-Jewish communities** in Palestine,

Sub-Clause 1b: or the **rights and political status** enjoyed by Jews in any other country.

What are the implications of each bolded word/phrase?

Declaration of Independence: (extracts)

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

After being forcibly exiled from their land, the people kept faith with it throughout their Dispersion and never ceased to pray and hope for their return to it and for the restoration in it of their political freedom.

Impelled by this historic and traditional attachment, Jews strove in every successive generation to re-establish themselves in their ancient homeland. In recent decades they returned in their masses. Pioneers, defiant returnees, and defenders, they made deserts bloom, revived the Hebrew language, built villages and towns, and created a thriving community controlling its own economy and culture, loving peace but knowing how to defend itself, bringing the blessings of progress to all the country's inhabitants, and aspiring towards independent nationhood.

(skipped references to Balfour, Herzl, Congress, the Shoah)

On the 29th November, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution calling for the establishment of a Jewish State in Eretz-Israel; the General Assembly required the inhabitants of Eretz-Israel to take such steps as were necessary on their part for the implementation of that resolution. This recognition by the United Nations of the right of the Jewish people to establish their State is irrevocable.

This right is the natural right of the Jewish people to be masters of their own fate, like all other nations, in their own sovereign State.

...(More skipped)

We declare that, with effect from the moment of the termination of the Mandate being tonight, the eve of Sabbath, the 6th Iyar, 5708 (15th May, 1948), until the establishment of the elected, regular authorities of the State in accordance with the Constitution which shall be adopted by the Elected Constituent Assembly not later than the 1st October 1948, the People's Council shall act as a Provisional Council of State, and its executive organ, the People's Administration, shall be the Provisional Government of the Jewish State, to be called "Israel."

The State of Israel will be open for Jewish immigration and for the Ingathering of the Exiles; it will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its

inhabitants; it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions; and it will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The State of Israel is prepared to cooperate with the agencies and representatives of the United Nations in implementing the resolution of the General Assembly of the 29th November, 1947, and will take steps to bring about the economic union of the whole of Eretz-Israel.

We appeal to the United Nations to assist the Jewish people in the building-up of its State and to receive the State of Israel into the community of nations.

We appeal - in the very midst of the onslaught launched against us now for months - to the Arab inhabitants of the State of Israel to preserve peace and participate in the upbuilding of the State on the basis of full and equal citizenship and due representation in all its provisional and permanent institutions.

We extend our hand to all neighbouring states and their peoples in an offer of peace and good neighbourliness, and appeal to them to establish bonds of cooperation and mutual help with the sovereign Jewish people settled in its own land. The State of Israel is prepared to do its share in a common effort for the advancement of the entire Middle East.

We appeal to the Jewish people throughout the Diaspora to rally round the Jews of Eretz-Israel in the tasks of immigration and upbuilding and to stand by them in the great struggle for the realization of the age-old dream - the redemption of Israel.

Placing our trust in the Almighty, we affix our signatures to this proclamation at this session of the provisional Council of State, on the soil of the Homeland, in the city of Tel-Aviv, on this Sabbath eve, the 5th day of Iyar, 5708 (14th May, 1948).



SUMMER MACHANE 5781

Bet Chalutzi: Medina Bevinyana – מדינה בבניינה -

K9: Israel: Past, Present and Future

Future:

These last three paragraphs are key to some of the big questions facing Israel today and for the future.

Big Questions:

- 📖 What is the status and role of the Arab citizens of Israel?
- 📖 What is the relationship with the neighbouring states – peaceful or not? Is Israel a European-esque country or a Middle Eastern-esque country? (Some mixture of both really)
- 📖 What is the status and role of Jews around the world vis-à-vis Israel?

K10: Bnei Akiva: Past, Present and Future



Aims:

1. **Learn** about the founding of Bnei Akiva.
2. **Appreciate** the power of young people.
3. **Explore** BAUK.

Why Bnei Akiva?

In 1925 a young man named Yechiel Eliyash arrived in 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 and ideological erosion of religious youth could not be tolerated for any length of time and presented a severe existential 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: The Committee unanimously decided that it was not appropriate to establish a religious youth movement. They gave three main reasons:

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

POINT TO PONDER

What do you think about these reasons given?

Do they sound foreign or familiar to objections you might hear about youth movements today?

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 at 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.

So now we know how Bnei Akiva began. But why the name? Yechiel Eliyash said:



"Rabbi Akiva symbolised in our eyes, more than anyone else, the idea of 'Torah VaAvodah'. He was a worker, a shepered, 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!"

The Power of Young People

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: "Birya! We are going to take back Birya! Chaveirim, we shall go up to Birya!" You are 15 years old.

The Story of Birya

In 1946, members of Hapoel Hamizrachi in connection with the JNF went to establish a small settlement in the Galil next to Tzfat. Birya 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. There were routine raids, arms were confiscated, and members arrested and taken to the prison at Acre.



After little more than a year, the British came, deported the few residents of Birya and demolished the buildings. They claimed that shots had been fired at a local sentry and that the trail led back to Birya. This was one of the very first times that the British completely destroyed a Jewish settlement and deported its inhabitants. The residents of the Old Yishuv (the pre-state Jewish community in Mandate Palestine) were in uproar. A stand was taken, Birya could not be allowed to fall. It became a symbol of resistance against the British and their White Paper policy of severely limiting Jewish immigration during and after the Holocaust. The Yishuv would not give in.

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 Birya had stood. The morning after the British tanks had demolished the settlement at Birya, the soldiers woke to see that a whole new village had appeared. Birya II had materialised overnight.

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

Even before the dust had settled on Birya 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, Shevet Haroeh.

That night was Purim, and a group of people went from Tzfat to visit Biryá. 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 Biryá

The British could not believe that Biryá had been resurrected. Twice! Right under their noses! Through public pressure and the resilience of these young, passionate dreamers, Biryá stood. For the next two years it became a waystation for Jewish migrants fleeing the Middle East through Syria and it was from Biryá 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 Biryá. They walk in the footsteps of those youth who risked everything to protect their home and won.

The Jewish View of Responsibility & Action

In previous generations, responsibilities tended to kick in at much younger ages. Older children looked after younger children so that parents could earn enough to support the family. Education was often limited so that children could join the family workforce. There is a reason why the ages of 12 and 13 were chosen to mark a young Jew's progression into the age of responsibility.

With the development of the modern world, schools and other attitudes have slowly eroded the ability for young people to engage in an adult world. Sometimes this has been for purely beneficial purposes (in 1833 the UK's Factory Act limited the ages at which children could join the workforce, limited the hours of those permitted to do so, and sought to increase their education with compulsory hours of schooling).

But nowadays, on the whole, most teenagers think "what can I do?" or "people who know what's going on will sort this out".

This is not the Jewish view. Rambam highlights the responsibilities placed on young people:



(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)**

Once we see this responsibility, we can better understand the statement of Hillel in Pirkei Avot:

הוא הִזָּה אומר, אין בור ירא חטא, ולא עם הארץ חסיד, ולא הבישן למד, ולא הקפדן 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)

Hillel is giving us clear instructions to better ourselves, to improve ourselves. To his mind, fully rounded, responsible individuals must fear sin, be pious, be able to learn etc. And in a place where no one has these character traits, one must strive to take on those character traits. And if there is no one to teach those character traits, the Rambam is clear that we must learn them ourselves.

Young people are also more idealistic, as Rav Kook writes:

*"A child's sense develops before his understanding so that he can develop a true world view without the interference of subjective influences. This sense of the world, which is developed without explanation, now gives a person a clean base to understand the world and life ahead of him. He sees the world as plain as it is. **Every elevated ideal that he pursues or is inspired by in his later life, originated from this untainted period of development.** This pure youth must be given the freedom to flourish as necessary to drive him for the rest of his life." (Arfalei Tohar, 80)*

Rav Kook is explaining here the special qualities that develop during youth and how this period differs to that of adulthood. We can see this description of Rav Kook very clearly nowadays. At a young age, a person looks at the world from a

very idealistic point of view. They have not yet been tainted by the hardships of life and therefore have a very positive outlook on the world.

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.



To summarise so far, the story of the Chaverim at Biryá 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.

Going forwards

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

The concepts of responsibility, and of being able to take action despite being young, shouldn't be too much for your Bet Chalutzi Machane chanichim. Making it personal to them and getting them to think about what they can do will cement this point.

BAUK: the early days

Groups of religious boys and girls were meeting in various parts of London under the name Bnei Akiva in 1939. The movement grew out of the Torah Va'Avodah group as well as the German Bachad movement, led by Israeli Shaliach ArieH Handler, who entered this country at the outbreak of the war. 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 (actually, quite near Denbigh in a place called St. Asaph!) 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.

In 1942 the first summer camps 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 achievements of the movement itself increased each year.

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.



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**.

Organisations are static, whereas a movement moves. We change with the times. This is mainly due to the fact that young people run the movement. 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 26! 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.

More than just a social club

Now, we all know that Bnei Akiva looks good on our CV, 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 5781/2021!
- 📖 More specifically, **Torah**. In Bnei Akiva, Chanichim learn tefilla, unashamedly done three 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 at Sviva, then at Machane, being a Sgan 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, a building in France. 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 Sgan to Rosh etc, would take years in a business – but takes months in BA – truly a fast-track in leadership!

- 📖 **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.

Making Judaism Fun! Only on Machane can you have an amazing supper quiz tochnit, lein, 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.



Informal Education: By using the method of informal education, which has proven to be so successful, Bnei Akiva has produced so 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.

Group Identity: Whatever we say in public, everyone loves their many BA t-shirts, mugs, pencils, teddy bears, naff presents after Shabbatot Ha'Irgun, glasses, pillowcases, and movement shirts. It's part of our group identity. And we all love Mifkad, Yad Achim, Veida, singing Atah Echad and Baruch Hagever, don't we?!

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 as a whole.

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



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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!