

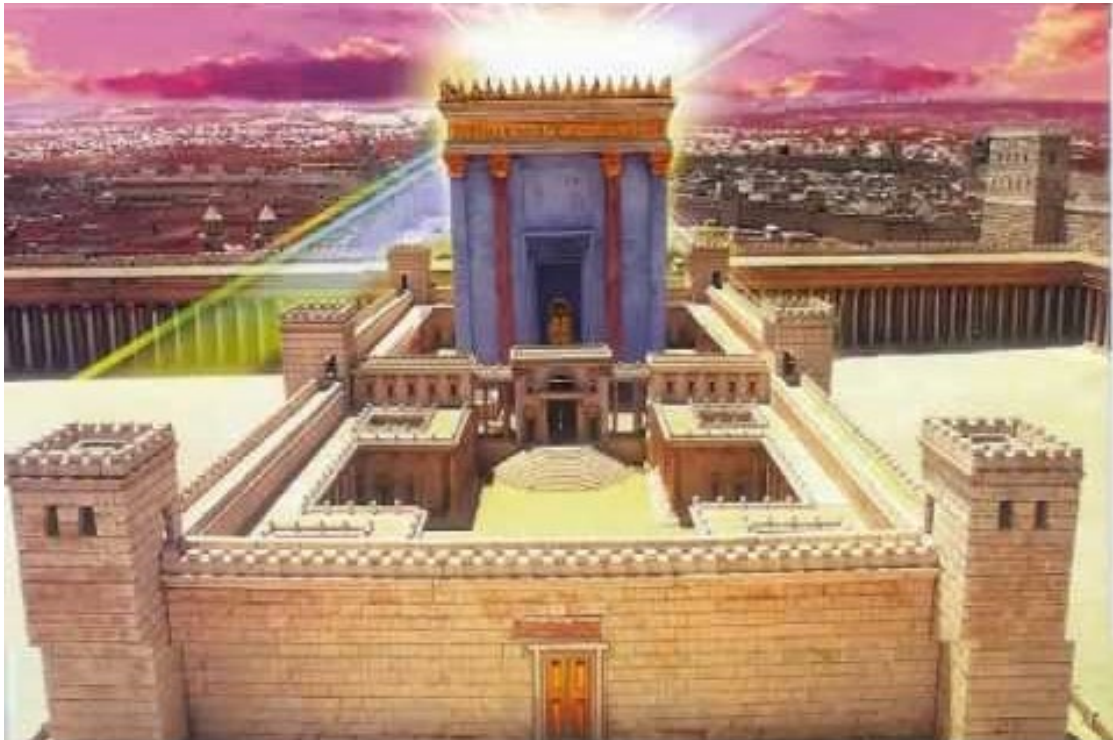
SUMMER MACHANE 5781

Bet Base: From Galut to Geula - מגלות לגאולה

K1: Galut and Geula: Jerusalem



K1: Galut and Geula: Jerusalem



Aims:

1. **Introduce** the concepts of Galut and Geula.
2. **See** Jewish History as a process.
3. **Recognise** the centrality of the Beit Hamikdash and the importance of Yerushalayim to the Jewish People.

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Summary

This Kvutza introduces the theme of Galut and Geula, looking at Jewish History as a process from which we have gained more than we have lost. By understanding the importance of the Beit HaMikdash and of having a place to focus our prayers, thoughts and efforts, we introduce the idea of a beginning and an end to the Galut (exile). The ultimate beginning and end of this process is Yerushalayim, which stands at the centre of Jewish yearning. It is therefore Yerushalayim which frames Galut and Geula.

This Kvutza will address some of the following questions:

- ❏ Why learn history?
- ❏ What is history?
- ❏ How do we learn from our mistakes?
- ❏ Why do we need to learn from our mistakes?
- ❏ What is galut?
- ❏ What was it for the Jewish People?



Why learn history?

Interest in historical studies goes beyond mere curiosity. There is always a hope that if we can understand past events and their causes, then we can apply that understanding to future experiences.

"Those who do not study history are doomed to repeat it."

Georges Santayana

The best way an individual can progress and improve themselves, is to learn from his previous actions. We learn a lot through personal experience, by realising when we have made a mistake and trying to change our ways for the future.

But this approach has its limitations. Our lives are only short and, as a result, we have only limited opportunity to learn from personal experience. We will not always experience the same thing twice - many situations we come across will happen only once, not giving us the opportunity to use this experience and learn from it for the future. Through the study of history, however, we can expose ourselves to the more general lessons of generations who have come before us.

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However, what we must understand is that this is not *his-story* but in fact it is *my-story*. Seems like the Torah thinks along the same lines...

זְכַר יָמוֹת עוֹלָם בִּינוּ שָׁנוֹת דְּרָוֶדֶר שְׂאֵל אָבִיךָ וַיְגַדֵּךְ זְקֵנֶיךָ וַיֹּאמְרוּ לְךָ:

Remember the days of old, Consider the years of ages past; Ask your father, he will inform you, your elders, they will tell you. (Devarim 32:7)

DISCUSSION POINT – Do you agree? If we learn history, will we be able to correct our mistakes?

Why should we learn from our mistakes?

יָשׁוּבוּ אִישׁ מִדַּרְכּוֹ הָרָעָה וּמִן־הַחֲמָס אֲשֶׁר בְּכַפֵּיהֶם:

Let everyone turn back from his evil ways and from the injustice of which he is guilty. (Yonah 3:8)

A fundamental teaching of the Torah and also expressed by our Rabbis, is that there is meaning in all historical events. But this *'meaning'* refers to something greater than simply learning from past events.

Judaism introduces an idea into human history which is incredibly revolutionary in all aspects, but particularly with regards to understanding history and taking moral lessons from it — the idea of a G-d who acts in history. It's a radical idea and one of the fundamental Jewish beliefs.

FUN FACT

It is for precisely this reason that Rav Kook spelt 'history' as **היסטוריה**, a combination of the words **הסתר** (hidden) and **י-ה** (a name of G-d). The 'correct' spelling in modern Ivrit is **היסטוריה**.

When we speak of *'meaning'* in history, we refer to a Divine design, a Master Plan that encompasses all of history. We see a larger purpose in the events of life, a purpose which goes beyond just ourselves. We believe in a G-d who is the Creator, Sustainer and Supervisor, which means, not a God who created the world and then left us alone, but an Infinite Being who is actively involved in creation.

Everything in the universe is under G-d's control. Therefore, history is a controlled process leading to a destination.

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"To be a Jew is to know that this cannot be the full story of who I am. A melody is more than a sequence of disconnected notes. A painting is something other than a random set of brushstrokes. The part has meaning in terms of its place within the whole, so that if history has meaning then the lives that make it up must in some way be joined to one

another as characters in a narrative, figures in an unfolding drama. Without this it would be impossible to speak about meaning; and Judaism is the insistence that history does have a meaning. Therefore each of us has significance precisely insofar as we are part of a story, an extraordinary and exemplary story of a people dedicated to certain ideas. We are not free-floating atoms in infinite space. We are letters in the scroll...I am a Jew because, knowing the story of my people, I hear their call to write the next chapter. I did not come from nowhere; I have a past, and if any past commands anyone, this past commands me. I am a Jew because only if I remain a Jew will the story of a hundred generations live on in me. I continue their journey because, having come this far, I may not let them fail. I cannot be the missing letter in the scroll. I can give no simpler answer, nor do I know of a more powerful one.

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, "Radical Then, Radical Now"

So where are we going?

It is popular amongst philosophers to think of history as a "teleological process", which, for the non-philosophers amongst us, means a process with an end point. For example, Karl Marx charted the historical evolution of all socio-economic systems from that of slavery, to feudal systems, to the industrial revolution and capitalism, to socialism and finally culminating in communism. His mentor Hegel considered history to be self-improving and would ultimately culminate in a post-historical era where society has reached perfection.

Judaism also sees history as a teleological process. The current stage began with the destruction of the second Temple in the year 70 and will come to an end with the final redemption and the foundation of the third and lasting Temple. **As Religious Zionists, we believe that the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 was the beginning of this final redemption and we are currently living in a period known as "Itchalta deGeula," the Beginnings of the Redemption.** Familiarise yourselves with this term, as you'll be hearing it a fair bit from now on in!

DISCUSSION POINT – Will learning Jewish history help us to learn from our mistakes as individuals, just as a nation, or not at all?

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Yerushalayim and the Beit haMikdash

"The right of the Jewish people to a state in the Land of Israel does not derive from the catastrophes that have plagued our people. True, for 2,000 years, the Jewish people suffered expulsions, pogroms, blood libels and massacres which culminated in a Holocaust - a suffering which has no parallel in human history. There are those who say that if the Holocaust had not occurred, the state of Israel would never have been established. But I say that if the state of Israel had been established earlier, the Holocaust would not have occurred.

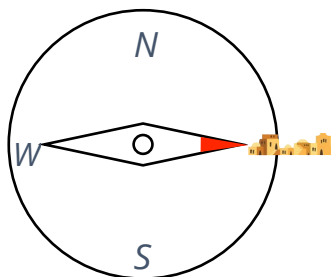
This tragic history of powerlessness explains why the Jewish people need a sovereign power of self-defence.

But our right to build our sovereign state here, in the land of Israel, arises from one simple fact:

This is the homeland of the Jewish people, this is where our identity was forged."

Benjamin Netanyahu, Bar Ilan University, June 2009

In order to understand where we are going and the ultimate process of history, we must first understand the ideal that we started from and what that meant to us. For us to realise the true significance of where we are going, we must understand where we became a people, and in turn we can understand what it meant to lose it. That place is Yerushalayim and the focus is the Beit Hamikdash.



One who was standing in chutz la'aretz should direct his heart towards Eretz Yisrael...

One who was standing in Eretz Yisrael should direct his heart towards Yerushalayim...

One who was standing in Yerushalayim should direct his heart towards the Beit HaMikdash...

One who was standing in the Beit HaMikdash should direct his heart towards the Kodshei HaKodashim...

Thus, all of Israel directs their hearts to one place.

Brachot 30a

Yerushalayim and the Bet haMikdash hold a special place at the centre of Judaism both physically and spiritually.

The Temple that King Solomon built in 946 BCE, the first Beit HaMikdash, was destroyed by the Babylonians in the year 586 BCE, 410 years later. The Jewish people were exiled but returned after just 70 years, to rebuild the second Beit HaMikdash under the leadership of Ezra and Nechemia in the year 516 BCE. In the year 37 CE, King Herod completed dramatic renovations to the dilapidated Temple, but Roman armies destroyed it in 70 CE when the current exile began.

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holidays and holiday sacrifices, personal, voluntary and obligatory sacrifices, agricultural tithes, qualifying criteria for the Kohanim and Levi'im, Temple rituals and the do's and don'ts for all of the above – this is about 180 mitzvot of the 613. Today, all of our daily tefillot are based around the sacrifices; extras are added on Shabbat and holidays to reflect the extra sacrifices in the Temple.

The Beit HaMikdash provided the most physical connection between man and G-d. It was seen as His "home":

Hashem appeared to Shlomo at night and said to him, "I have heard your prayer and have chosen this site as My House of sacrifice. ... And now I have chosen and consecrated this House that My name be there forever. My eyes and My heart shall always be there.

Divrei haYamim Bet, 7:12, 16

Religious capital of the world

Over the first 1,000 years of Jewish settlement in Eretz Yisrael, Yerushalayim had become the undisputed centre of the sacrificial worship in the Jewish world. In a belief system in which sacrifice was still the major way of making a direct personal contact with G-d as well as the major way of atonement for personal and national sin, Jerusalem was essential. During most of the period of the First Temple, other sacrificial shrines had legitimately existed but for the last six or seven hundred years, such shrines had been deemed illegitimate. Jerusalem now stood alone.

Moreover, the whole system of pilgrimages, based on a thrice-yearly national meeting on the Temple Mount was the single largest and strongest element of physical national unity. Hundreds of thousands of Jews would crowd into the yards of the Beit HaMikdash. This was the nation quite literally standing before G-d.



The centre of Diaspora Jewish identity

At the time, contrary to popular belief, the Jewish Diaspora was enormous. Generations before the outbreak of the revolt against the Romans, more Jews lived in the Diaspora than in the Land of Israel. They lived in the western lands of Europe and North Africa, surrounding the Mediterranean Sea, including a huge community in Egypt. For all these millions of Jews, the symbol that was most central for them as Jews, the thing that held them together, was the vision of the Beit HaMikdash in Jerusalem.

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The idea of Jerusalem bound them together as Jews. In their prayers they mentioned Jerusalem, in their studies they learned of the Beit HaMikdash and in addition they made a yearly contribution towards its upkeep and this tax was extremely important to them.

What is Galut?

*Galut or Golus (Hebrew: **גלות**), means literally exile. Galut classically refers to the exile of the Jewish people from the Land of Israel.* - Wikipedia

Although Galut can mean any exile, and in fact there were 4 main Jewish exiles (Bavel, Media/Persia, Greece and either Rome/Yishmael), when we refer to Galut, we normally mean either the destruction of the 2nd Temple itself or the whole of the Jewish history after that until today. But to really understand what Galut is, we must understand what the point of it is.



1700 B. C.—"THE WANDERING JEW"—1939 A. D.
This "weary, despondent, blood-grimed, hoary-headed trekker of the ages" was seen on a dirty, dusty country road in Poland. Martin Munkacsí, artist-photographer, instantly recognized and grasped the opportunity of a lifetime, and got his picture! The silhouette sets forth the pathos of the bowed and aged son of sorrow, wandering on and on and on, over the face of the whole wide world, in search of a place whereon he may find rest for the soles of his feet!

Why were we specifically punished with Galut?

Punishment comes in direct consequence of sin, and with the purpose of rectifying it. How does Galut rectify the sins of the generations of the First and Second Temples?

It is possible to explain that Am Yisrael failed to fulfil its mission as the holy **nation** during the thousand years of the two Temples. Although there were prophets and nazirites (people who take upon themselves to not drink wine, cut their hair, or become impure) the State and the kings did not succeed in leading a G-dly manner of life. Thus, the punishment of Galut is saying that perhaps, at the moment, this mission is too high an ideal. Instead of achieving our potential as a **nation**, we must first work on ourselves as **individuals**. (For more on this see the Extra Chomer for this Kvtza.)

Galut comes to dismantle the national framework -- the nation and the land. It breaks the nation into individual communities and families - a nation of individuals.

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The land of Israel is not some external entity. It is not merely an external acquisition for the Jewish people. It is not merely a means of uniting the populace. It is not merely a means of strengthening our physical existence. It is not even merely a means of strengthening our spiritual existence.

Rather, the land of Israel has an intrinsic meaning. It is connected to the Jewish people with the knot of life. Its very being is suffused with extraordinary qualities.

The extraordinary qualities of the land of Israel and the extraordinary qualities of the Jewish people are two halves of a whole.

Orot 1:1

This was carried out through the destruction of land. The Land of Israel became desolate; it became impossible to live there. In addition, the **nation** was dispersed throughout the world. People no longer had the motivation to be a nation, to go to Israel. They felt, and many still feel, that it was better to remain in exile under the shelter of other nations than to establish a kingdom of their own in the Land of Israel. This is perhaps due to the change in mentality that Galut brought about: from 'we' to 'me'; from a nation to an individual.

Therefore, when we lost our Land, our Temple, the possibility to self autonomy – we lost part of the ability to be a nation. By not realising the benefits we got from living in Jerusalem and Israel – we lost them.

We experience exile and mediocrity because we do not proclaim the value and wisdom of the land of Israel.

We have not rectified the sin of the biblical spies who slandered the land. And so we must do the opposite of what they did: we must tell and proclaim to the entire world the land's glory and its beauty, its holiness and its honour.

Rav Kook, Orot, Eretz Yisrael 6

DISCUSSION POINT – What does Yerushalayim mean to us today?

As human beings?

As Jews? As Religious Zionists?

As people looking towards the Geula of Am Yisrael?

With regards to its importance in the Galut?

With regards to its future role in the Geula?

Summary of K1:

Jewish history is a process, moving from Galut to Geula. Based on this, the centrality of the Beit haMikdash, Yerushalayim and Eretz Yisrael to the Jewish people become a perfect starting point, and a framework through which to explore Jewish history, after all:

"In truth, all darkness is merely diminished light."

– Rav Kook, Orot haKodesh II, p.455

K2: Destruction and Reaction: Loss of the Beit haMikdash



Aims:

1. **Look** at the destruction of the Beit haMikdash and to try and understand what we have lost.
2. **Understand** the reasons for the destruction and the way they relate to us nowadays.
3. **Discuss** the different reactions to the destruction of the Beit haMikdash and consider which is more appropriate.

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Summary

This Kvutza looks at the destruction of both Batei Mikdash (plural of Beit Mikdash, Temples). We will be looking at the reasons for both of the destructions and the effect on the consequential exile. We will look at whether the reasons that the Temples were destroyed are still relevant today and whether we can take anything from them to apply to our lives. We'll also look at the different ways people reacted to the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash and how these reactions should affect our lives today.

This Kvutza will address some of the following questions:

- ❏ Why was there a destruction?
- ❏ Can we learn from our ancestors?
- ❏ How did they react to the destruction?
- ❏ What did it mean for the Jewish people?
- ❏ Why do we need to learn from our mistakes?
- ❏ How should we react today?
- ❏ Is the Beit haMikdash our problem?
- ❏ Can we rebuild the Beit haMikdash?



Why were the Batei Mikdash destroyed?

The first Beit Hamikdash was built by King Solomon. It required the labour of tens of thousands of men and took 7 years to complete. This Beit Hamikdash stood for 410 years before the punishment of destruction was decreed upon it. It was destroyed in the year 586 BCE by the Babylonians.

What were the sins that caused the destruction to be decreed upon the Beit Hamikdash?

Bayit Rishon

מקדש ראשון מפני מה חרב — מפני שלשה דברים שהיו בו: עבודה זרה, וגלוי עריות, ושפיכות דמים.

Due to what reason was the First Temple destroyed? It was destroyed due to the fact that there were three matters that existed in the First Temple: Idol worship, forbidden sexual relations, and bloodshed. (Yoma 9b)

1. **Avodah Zarah** – In the Beit haMikdash there would be both Divine worship and worship of an idol placed there by King Menashe.

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2. **Forbidden Sexual Relations** – Yishayahu prophesised in the name of Hashem: "Hashem says 'because the daughters of Zion are haughty and walk with outstretched necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go and making a tinkling with their feet ... Instead of perfume, there shall be rot; And instead of an apron, a rope; Instead of a diadem of beaten-work, A shorn head; Instead of a rich robe, A girding of sackcloth; A burn instead of beauty. Her men shall fall by the sword, Her fighting manhood in battle; And her gates shall lament and mourn, And she shall be emptied, Shall sit on the ground.'" (Yishayahu 3:16, 24-26)
3. **Bloodshed** – "Menashe shed innocent blood very much, until he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another" (Melachim Bet, 21:16).

Although many prophets came to warn the Jews of the upcoming destruction - no one paid attention and they soon paid the ultimate price with the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash, the House of G-d, by the Babylonians.

Bayit Sheni

B The second Beit Hamikdash stood for 420 years (according to Seder Olam Rabba) and when it was renovated by king Herod in 20CE, it was one of the most beautiful buildings that has ever graced the world. It was eventually destroyed by the Romans in 70CE.

66CE, the Jewish Revolt against the Romans started. Four years later, Titus and his army fought strongly and seized Jerusalem again, and burnt the city,



including the Beit Hamikdash. The Arch of Titus was built in Rome to commemorate the victory. As valiant warriors, the Romans wanted to leave something to mark that they had been to Jerusalem and destroyed it. Today that mark and the Kotel Ha-Maaravi are all we have left to remember the Second Beit Hamikdash.

Sukkah 51b

He who has not seen Jerusalem in her splendour, has never seen a desirable city in his life. He who has not seen the Beit Hamikdash in its full construction has never seen a glorious building in his life. Which Beit Hamikdash? Abaye, or some say Rav Chisda said 'The reference is to the building of Herod.'

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The destruction of the Second Beit Hamikdash was such a terrible event for the Jewish world at the time as we will see in future K's. Flavius Josephus (a Jewish historian who was around at the time of the destruction writes):

"The Romans, though it was a terrible struggle to collect the timber, raised their platforms in twenty-one days, having as described before stripped the whole area in a circle round the town to a distance of ten miles. The countryside like the City was a pitiful sight; for where once there had been a lovely vista of woods and parks there was nothing but desert and stumps of trees. No one - not even a foreigner - who had seen the Old Judea and the glorious suburbs of the City, and now set eyes on her present desolation, could have helped sighing and groaning at so terrible a change; for every trace of beauty had been blotted out by war, and nobody who had known it in the past and came upon it suddenly would have recognized the place: when he was already there he would still have been looking for the City."

Flavius Josephus, The Jewish War, p. 303

Why was Bayit Sheni destroyed?

Story time:

The destruction of Jerusalem came through a Kamtza and a Bar Kamtza in this way. A certain man had a friend, Kamtza and an enemy, Bar Kamtza. He once made a party and said to his servant, "Go and bring Kamtza." The man went and brought Bar Kamtza. When the man [who gave the party] found him there he said, "See, you tell tales about me; what are you doing here? Get out."

Said the other: "Since I am here, let me stay and I will pay you for whatever I eat and drink."

He said, "I won't."

"Then let me give you half the cost of the party."

"No," said the other.

"Then let me pay for the whole party."

He still said, "No," and he took him by the hand and put him out.

Said the other, "Since the Rabbis were sitting there and did not stop him, this shows that they agreed with him. I will go and inform against them to the Government."

He went and said to the Emperor, "The Jews are rebelling against you."

He said, "How can I tell?"



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He said to him: "Send them an offering and see whether they will offer it [on the altar]." So he sent with him a fine calf. While on the way he made a blemish on its upper lip, or as some say on the white of its eye, in a place where we [Jews] count it a blemish but they do not. The Rabbis were inclined to offer it in order not to offend the Government. Said R. Zechariah b. Abkulas to them: "People will say that blemished animals are offered on the altar."

They then proposed to kill Bar Kamza so that he should not go and inform against them, but R. Zechariah b. Abkulas said to them, "Is one who makes a blemish on consecrated animals to be put to death?"

R. Yochanan thereupon remarked: "Through the sins of R. Zechariah b. Abkulas our House has been destroyed, our Beit Hamikdash burnt and we ourselves exiled from our land."

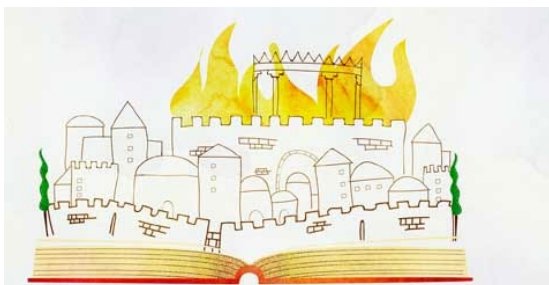
Gittin 55b.

From this story we can see that because of the way the host of the party treated Bar Kamtza it led to the whole story of the blemished offering and the eventual destruction of the Second Beit Hamikdash.

"But why was the second Sanctuary destroyed, seeing that in its time they were occupying themselves with Torah, [observance of] precepts, and the practice of charity? Because therein prevailed hatred without cause. That teaches you that Sinat Chinam (baseless hatred) is considered as of even seriousness with the three sins of idolatry, immorality, and bloodshed together."

Yoma 9b

DISCUSSION POINT – What was worse – the sins which led to the destruction of Bayit Rishon or Bayit Sheni?



What have we lost?

With the destruction, Hashem destroyed the physical Beit Hamikdash and made it a spiritual place. As there was no longer a physical place for us to worship Hashem, we had to find new ways of doing this. Instead of traveling to Jerusalem, Hashem

wanted us to find Him in our daily lives. We cannot offer physical sacrifices or attend Beit Hamikdash services three times a day, but we can pray three times a day. We cannot atone for our shortcomings by sacrificing animals, but we can sacrifice our thoughts and prayers. We cannot find Hashem in Jerusalem; we must find Him in us.

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However, this is not a real or satisfactory replacement for what we really lost. But do we really understand this and do we truly feel the lost?

DISCUSSION POINT – Does it matter that we do/don't feel a sense of loss?

Looking forwards

"Any generation in which the Temple is not built, it is as if it had been destroyed in their time." (Yerushalmi Yoma 1:1)

Therefore, the reason for the destruction is actually of massive importance to us today. Because of this quote we must work very hard to eradicate the original reasons for the destruction.

Hadracha Hot Tip

Compliment Bang-Bang is a great way to make the chanichim (and yourselves!) feel positive about themselves, and is a lovely way to start a Kvutza.

As we saw before, Sinat Chinam – hatred for no reason - destroyed the second Beit Hamikdash and therefore it is our duty to get rid of the leftover Sinat Chinam that still lingers on in our generation.

This does not mean that we must never argue with other people, after all we learn explicitly in Pirkei Avot (5:17) that some arguments will stand forever:

"Every dispute that is for the sake of Heaven, will in the end endure; But one that is not for the sake of Heaven, will not endure. Which is the controversy that is for the sake of Heaven? Such was the controversy of Hillel and Shammai. And which is the controversy that is not for the sake of Heaven? Such was the controversy of Korah and all his congregation."

Rather, we should work together to try and get rid of Sinat Chinam, and baseless arguments. If we do this we can probably turn every argument or issue in to something that is actually based on nothing and therefore stop or prevent the argument.



אם נחרבנו ונחרב העולם עימנו בגלל שנאת חנם, נשוב ונבנה, ויבנה העולם איתנו באהבת חנם

"If we were destroyed, and the world with us, due to baseless hatred, then we shall rebuild ourselves, and the world with us, with baseless love (Ahavat Chinam). - Rav Kook (Orot HaKodesh vol. III, p. 324)

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The reaction to the Churban haBayit

After the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash there were two distinct reactions taken by the Jewish people.



Passive:

After the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash, Rabban Yochanan Ben Zakai was carried out of the besieged old city in a coffin and told Vespasian (the Roman in charge of the attack) that he would soon be made emperor. After he was, Vespasian gave Rabban Yochana Ben Zakai three wishes. This can all be found in the Gemara in Gittin 56a/b.

The Gemara concludes "give me Yavneh and its sages, the family of Rabban Gamliel (as there were from the lineage of King David), and doctors to cure Rabbi Tzadok (who had fasted and prayed for 40 years to ask Hashem to protect the Jews).

Rabban Yochanan Ben Zakai clearly chooses to not to ask for too much but rather go to a place far away from the action and to keep Judaism and learning alive and slowly build it up back to its previous glory. In order to not forget the importance of the Beit Hamikdash Rabban Yochanan instituted special laws to be undertaken in memory of the Beit Hamikdash (Zecher leMikdash) These can be found in Rosh Hashana 29b-30a, as well as Sukkah 41a.

Was Rabban Yochanan being passive? Or was he being assertive in making a very difficult decision? Though the events may give off an impression of Rabban Yochanan being weak and unassertive, perhaps he was being very strong and courageous in making a risky decision.

Active:

Even though the Romans had the most powerful army in the world at the time, the Jews could stick up for their rights and their beliefs. This is what Bar Kochba and his men decided to do in what is now called the Bar Kochba Revolt.



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מגלות לגאולה – From Galut to Geula

K2: Destruction and Reaction: Loss of the Beit haMikdash

Bar Kochba was very widely believed (including by people like Rabbi Akiva) to be Mashiach (Messiah). He managed to get together 250 strong men. To be drafted into his army you needed to be able to uproot a tree whilst riding a horse, which he could do. After some time, Bar Kochba managed to build an army of 350,000 men which was bigger than the Roman army. They began by conquering the Galil (north of Israel) and Bar Kochba started building a new independent Jewish state. When Hadrian (the new Roman Emperor) came to Israel he started to allow the building of the new Beit Hamikdash but soon when back on his word.

The Jews built caves in the mountain sides in the north of Israel and hid away until Hadrian left the country and they started to rebel again, but this time Bar Kochba turned away from G-d and used to enter battle and say to Hashem: "Ribono Shel Olam!! Do not help us and do not hinder us!" In essence he started to think nature would run its course and not Hashem. The Jews no longer won every battle.

Even at the actual time of Rabban Yochanan, in the besieged Jerusalem, there were groups known as the 'Kena'im' – Zealots who opposed making any deal or submission to the Romans. Some of them went so far as to burn down some of the city's grain storehouses in order to force the rest of the Jews to fight the Romans. They, no doubt, had a very different approach of dealing with the situation than Rabban Yochanan.

Which was right?

With hindsight, we can see that Rabban Yochanan ben Zakai made a decision which would save Judaism as a religion and allow Judaism to live and flourish after the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash and of Jerusalem. However, there is no doubt that Rabban Yochanan's actions at the time were deemed by many others to be controversial and incorrect.



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Bet Base: From Galut to Geula – מגלות לגאולה

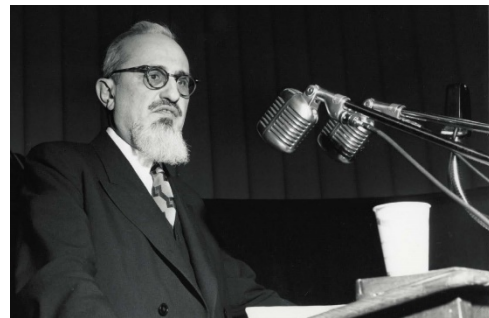
K2: Destruction and Reaction: Loss of the Beit haMikdash

What about us?

We have discussed how we are in a similar position to Rabban Yochanan ben Zakai and Bar Kochba – after all, the Temple hasn't been rebuilt in our generation. Therefore, which approach should we take in our response to this lack? Active or passive?

Rav Soloveitchik, in 1956, writes (Kol Dodi Dofek) with regards to the State of Israel:

"If we want to courageously defend our continued national and historical existence, we must from time to time, interpret the verse of "an eye for an eye" (Exodus 21:24) literally. So many eyes were lost in the course of our bitter exile because we did not repay hurt for hurt. The time has come for us to fulfil the simple meaning of "an eye for an eye."



Of course, I am sure everyone recognises that I am an adherent of the Oral Law, and from my perspective there is no doubt that the verse refers to monetary restitution, as defined by Halacha. However, with respect to the Mufti (Haj Amin al-Husseini, Grand mufti of Jerusalem who collaborated with Hitler and led the armed opposition to the Yishuv and State of Israel) and Nasser (Gammal Abdel Nasser, PM and president of Egypt who led the Suez Campaign and Six day war), I would demand that we interpret the verse with its literal meaning- the taking of and actual eye and pay no attention to the saccharine suggestions of known assimilationists and of some Jewish socialists who stand pat in their rebelliousness and think they are still living in Bialystok, Bret-Litovsk and Minsk of the year 1905, and openly declare that revenge is forbidden to the Jewish people in any place, at any time and under all circumstances. "Vanity of vanities!" (Ecclesiastes 1:2)

Revenge is forbidden when it is pointless, but if one is aroused thereby to self-defence; it is most elementary right of man to take his revenge [...] For good reason the Torah relates that two of its great heroes, Abraham and Moses, took sword in hand to defend their brethren: "And when Abraham heard that his kinsman was taken captive, he led forth his retainers" (Genesis 14:4). "And when Moses saw the Egyptian smite a Jew... he struck down the Egyptian" (Exodus 2:11-12). This behaviour does not contradict the principle of loving kindness and compassion."

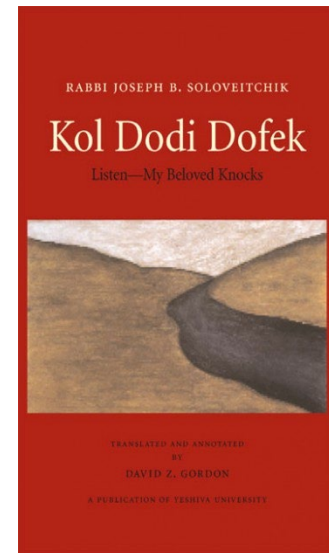
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Yet at the same time he also maintains the need for a religious component:

Let us publicly and frankly confess: we complain about certain Israeli leaders and their attitude toward the values of our tradition and religious practice. The complaints are justified. We have serious charges against the secular leadership of the Land of Israel. However, are only they to be blamed, and are we as faultless and pure as the heavenly angels? Such an assumption is without foundation. We could have extended our influence and done something to shape the spiritual character of the Land if we had but hurried to awaken from our slumber and open the door for the Beloved who is knocking. I fear that we Orthodox Jews are still enveloped in sweet slumber. If we were to establish more religious kibbutzim, if we were to build more housing for religious immigrants, if we were to establish an extensive system of schools, our situation would be completely different. Then there would be no need to come forward with complaints against the leaders of other movements.



Lately, we have become experts at criticism and fault-finding. ("And the priest shall look on him, and pronounce him unclean" [Leviticus 13:3]). We know well how to criticize, to look for blemishes and to express opinions as self-styled experts. One thing, however, escapes us, and that is that the priest who pronounces defilement must leave the encampment to be with the afflicted sufferer so as to purify him. "And the priest shall leave the encampment ... and the priest shall command" (Leviticus 14:3-4). We must build not just a few small nooks, whose impact is unfelt, but central institutions throughout the length and breadth of America and the Land of Israel. We have an obligation to purify those who are "outside the encampment," who are situated in the huge camp of ignorance.

... Do we not hear in our trembling over the safety and tranquility of the Land of Israel in our day, the beckoning of the Beloved who begs the Lover to let Him in? He has already been beckoning for eight years, and still He has not been properly responded to. Nonetheless, He continues to beckon. To our good fortune, our inherited Land has become more beautiful. The Beloved has not shown the Lover any favoritism, but He has compassion for her. The Beloved beckoned for only a short moment that night and disappeared, yet with us He has exhibited extraordinary patience. It is eight years that he has continued to beckon. Hopefully, we will not miss the opportunity!

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K2: Destruction and Reaction: Loss of the Beit haMikdash

DISCUSSION POINTS – What response should we take living in the Diaspora?

Is there a correct and incorrect response?

Is one more suitable for times of Galut and the other for times of Geula?

Should we be taking a more active or passive response now?

Can Rabban Yochanan's actions be seen as sacrificing the physical unity and nationhood of Am Yisrael for the survival of Torah Judaism?

Summary of K2

We've explored the destruction of the Batei Mikdash, as well as the loss we should feel as a result. We discussed the responses of Rabban Yochanan ben Zakai and Bar Kochba at the time, and tried to extrapolate from this what our reaction should be to the lack of a Beit haMikdash.

K3: From Confusion to Clarity: New Perspectives and the Oral Torah



Aims:

1. **Understand** the difference between the Oral and Written Torah.
2. **Discover** how the Jewish people developed the Oral Torah to deal with the changes that Galut brought, and why the Oral Torah needed to be written down.
3. **Explore** how Jewish life developed after the Churban.

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Bet Base: From Galut to Geula – מגלות לגאולה

K3: From Confusion to Clarity: New Perspectives and the Oral Torah

Summary

In the last K, we ended with the destruction of the second Beit HaMikdash and immediate reactions to it. In this K, we will be looking at a way in which the Jews were able to react to that destruction and adjust in order to survive, in line with the actions of Rabban Yochanan ben Zakai. By looking at and trying to understand the Oral Torah in depth, we hope to explore how the Jewish religion adapted to the destruction and the implications that it had on the Torah.

This Kvutza will address some of the following questions:

- 📖 What is Torah she'Bichtav?
- 📖 What is Torah she'Baal Peh?
- 📖 What is the Mishna?
- 📖 What is the Gemara?
- 📖 Why is it not all in the Written Torah?
- 📖 Why do we need the Oral Torah?
- 📖 Do we still have an Oral Torah?
- 📖 What is the connection between Torah she'Baal Peh and Galut?



HADRACHA HOT TIP

Print off, or write up the timeline and see if your chanichim are able to put all the events in the correct order!

Timeline

- 📖 **195 C.E** – Rebbe Yehuda haNasi extends the power of the Sanhedrin.
- 📖 **170-200 C.E** – Rebbe Yehuda haNasi presides over the compilation of the Mishna.
- 📖 **259 C.E** – Destruction of Yeshivat Nehardea and rise of Yeshivat Pumbedita.
- 📖 **350 C.E** – Redaction of the Talmud Yerushalmi.
- 📖 **359 C.E** – Jewish calendar calculated (and fixed) by Hillel II.
- 📖 **429 C.E** – Cancellation of position of Nasi.
- 📖 **500 C.E** – Redaction of the Talmud Bavli

On Har Sinai, Moshe received the 'Torah.' We have two 'Torahs' – Torah she'Bichtav (the Written Torah) and Torah she'Baal Peh (the Oral Torah). We believe that Moshe received both at Har Sinai from Hashem.

What is Torah she'Bichtav?

The term Torah She'Bichtav very simply refers to Tanach, which is made up of Torah, Neviim (Prophets) and Ketuvim (Writings).

These were written by prophets or great Jews of the time like David haMelech and are also considered "from G-d", by virtue of the fact that they were written under the influence of Ruach haKodesh, Divine inspiration.

What is Torah she'Baal Peh?

Torah She'Baal Peh is essentially anything that is not included in Torah She'bichtav. This means that anything that is taught beyond the parameters of Tanach can be classified as Oral Torah.

When referring to Torah She'Baal Peh, we are primarily talking about the Mishna and Gemara. We believe that all the laws and details that are included in Torah she'Baal Peh were also given to Moshe at Sinai, in addition to the Chumash.

What is the Mishna?

The word Mishna comes from the Hebrew word שנה 'shnah' - to teach (like 've'shinantam levanecha' in the Shema). It is the oldest part of the Oral Torah and is a collection of teachings of the greatest Rabbis of the time, called Tanaim.

It was written down by Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi by about 200 C.E in Yavneh – about 100 years after the destruction of the Beit haMikdash. It is written in a very precise style, presenting complex subjects in a very concise form and deals with mainly halachic matters.

The 24 Books of Tanach and Their Authors

According to Bava Basra 14b-15a

	The Sefer	The Author
תורה Five Books of Torah	Bereshis	Moshe Rabeinu from the mouth of HaShem
	Shmos	Moshe Rabeinu from the mouth of HaShem
	VaYikra	Moshe Rabeinu from the mouth of HaShem
	BeMidbar	Moshe Rabeinu from the mouth of HaShem
	Devarim	Moshe Rabeinu from the mouth of HaShem
נבאים The Prophets	Yehoshua	Yehoshua
	Shoftim (Judges)	Shmuel HaNavi (the Prophet)
	Shmuel	Shmuel HaNavi (the Prophet)
	Melachim (Kings)	Yirmiyahu
	Yirmiyahu	Yirmiyahu
	Yeshiyahu	Chizkiyahu and his assistants
	Yechezkel	Anshei Kenesses HaGadolah (Sages of the Great Assembly)
	Trei Asar (12 Prophets)	Anshei Kenesses HaGadolah (Sages of the Great Assembly)
כתובים The Writings	Tehillim (Psalms)	Dovid HaMelech (& 10 elders)
	Iyov (Job)	Moshe Rabeinu (or Iyov himself)
	Mishlei (Proverbs)	Shlomo (transcribed by Chizkiyahu and his assistants)
	Daniel	Anshei Kenesses HaGadolah (Sages of the Great Assembly)
	Ezra & Nechemia	Ezra
	Divrei HaYamim (Chronicles)	Ezra & Nechemia
	Megilas Rus	Shmuel HaNavi (the Prophet)
	Megilas Esther	Anshei Kenesses HaGadolah (Sages of the Great Assembly)
	Megilas Eichah	Yirmiyahu
	Koheles	Shlomo (transcribed by Chizkiyahu and his assistants)
	Shir HaShirim	Shlomo (transcribed by Chizkiyahu and his assistants)

The Great Assembly included Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Zerubavel, Mordechai and others

What is the Gemara?

For three and editing of the Mishna, the Amoraim (the generation after the Tanaim) and their students discussed centuries after the compilation and analysed the Mishna. Their questions, discussions and solutions make up the Gemara.



There are two versions of the Gemara – Talmud Bavli, written in Aramaic in Babylon, and the Talmud Yerushalmi written in a confusing combination of Hebrew and Aramaic in Israel (interestingly, it was actually written in Tiberias, the last place where the Sanhedrin sat).

We don't know a huge amount about the development of the Gemara, but it seems that the Torah scholars would gather together at fixed times of the year or would meet by chance. Their conversations and teachings were committed to memory and sometimes recorded in writing in brief notes. This material was eventually collected and written down around the year 500 CE - making up the Gemara.

The formation of the Torah she'Baal Peh is less well known than that of the Torah she'Bichtav. It is simply the Shisha Sidrei Mishna (six orders of the Mishna). The Talmud Bavli does not include all of these masechtot (tractates) as some of them are 'mitzvot she'tluyot ba'aretz' (mitzvot that can only be performed in Israel), and are therefore included in the Talmud Yerushalmi.

זרעים <u>Zeraim</u>	מועד <u>Moed</u>	נשים <u>Nashim</u>	נזיקין <u>Nezikin</u>	קדשים <u>Kodshim</u>	טהרות <u>Taharot</u>
<u>Berakhot</u> · <u>Pe'ah</u> · <u>Demai</u> · <u>Kil'ayim</u> · <u>Shevi'it</u> · <u>Terumot</u> · <u>Ma'aserot</u> · <u>Ma'aser Sheni</u> · <u>Hallah</u> · <u>Orlah</u> · <u>Bikkurim</u>	<u>Shabbat</u> · <u>Eruvin</u> · <u>Pesahim</u> · <u>Shekalim</u> · <u>Yoma</u> · <u>Sukkah</u> · <u>Beitzah</u> · <u>Rosh Hashanah</u> · <u>Ta'anit</u> · <u>Megillah</u> · <u>Mo'ed Katan</u> · <u>Hagigah</u>	<u>Yevamot</u> · <u>Ketubot</u> · <u>Nedarim</u> · <u>Nazir</u> · <u>Sotah</u> · <u>Gittin</u> · <u>Kiddushin</u>	<u>Bava Kamma</u> · <u>Bava Metzia</u> · <u>Bava Batra</u> · <u>Sanhedrin</u> · <u>Makkot</u> · <u>Shevu'ot</u> · <u>Eduyot</u> · <u>Avodah Zarah</u> · <u>Avot</u> · <u>Horayot</u>	<u>Zevachim</u> · <u>Menahot</u> · <u>Hullin</u> · <u>Bekhorot</u> · <u>Arakhin</u> · <u>Temurah</u> · <u>Keritot</u> · <u>Me'ilah</u> · <u>Tamid</u> · <u>Middot</u> · <u>Kinnim</u>	<u>Keilim</u> · <u>Oholot</u> · <u>Nega'im</u> · <u>Parah</u> · <u>Tohorot</u> · <u>Mikva'ot</u> · <u>Niddah</u> · <u>Makhshirin</u> · <u>Zavim</u> · <u>Tevul Yom</u> · <u>Yadayim</u> · <u>Uktzim</u>

**HADRACHA HOT TIP**

See, Run, Build – This is a great game to demonstrate the difference between Torah she'Baal Peh and Torah she'Bichtav! There are three players per team: the 'see-er', the 'runner' and the 'builder.' Create something random out of tziud and hide it behind a towel etc. The see-er sees it, and then describes it to the runner who passes on the information to the builder. The builder must then recreate it as best as possible to win! To demonstrate the difference between Torah she'Baal Peh and Torah she'Bichtav, do the same with a different creation but allow the see-er to make a sketch!

What's the difference between the Oral and Written Torah?

While the word 'Torah' can simply mean the Chamisha Chumshei Torah (Five Books of Moses), as we have seen earlier, there is a much wider meaning as well. What we would call culturally transmitted ideas and practices, in ancient times was Torah she'Baal Peh.

Since society changed much less rapidly than today, and valued the past more, greater value was placed in old traditions. Rabbinic tradition referred to the written Torah as 'Torah she'Bichtav,' (often translated as the Written Law, or Written Tradition) to distinguish it from 'Torah she'Baal Peh,' the Oral Torah.

Rav Kook (Orot haTorah 1:1) suggests that the Written Torah is something that is given to the Jewish people directly from Hashem above. This means that it ultimately has the highest level of holiness possible and affects everything in the world by being above it.

The Oral Torah on the other hand, is something that has the ability to enter our lives in a different way. It is something that we, the Jewish people, are always actively involved in, and have the ability to affect. This means that Torah she'Baal Peh is always changing and comes alive in each new generation.

DISCUSSION POINT – How is Torah she'Baal Peh involved in your day-to-day life?**Surely its all in Torah sheBichtav?**

The written Torah lacks many details of how to actually perform and fulfil mitzvot and therefore requires interpretation. For example, Sefer Devarim (24:1) mentions a 'sefer keritut' [a contract of divorce] required for a divorce, but nowhere hints at what this contract might include.

Similarly, in Shemot (21:24) it says, "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand" - does this actually mean that one needs to cut off a person's hand or gouge out their eye? We therefore require the Oral Torah to explain that this

refers to financial compensation. As different interpretations and beliefs of the Oral Torah developed, the Rabbis felt it imperative to relate these independent 'oral' traditions to the written text. This was necessary both to respond to challenges from alternative sects of Judaism (such as the Karites and the Sadducees), as well as to prove the authority of the Torah she'Baal Peh. Just as the Oral Torah depends on the Written Torah, there can be no real understanding of the Written Torah without an Oral tradition.

We receive the Written Torah through the most elevated and inclusive conception within our souls. From the midst of our souls, we sense the blaze and beauty of that living, encompassing light of all existence. It makes us soar higher than all logic and intellect. We sense a supernal G-dly spirit hovering upon us, touching yet not touching, flying next to our lives and above them, gilding them with its light. This light blazes, sparkles and penetrates everything. It permeates whatever is under the heavens. This great light was not created by the spirit of the Jewish people. Rather, it was created by the spirit of G-d, the Creator of all. This living Torah is the foundation of the creation of all universes. With the oral Torah, we descend to life. We feel that we are receiving the supernal light in the second stream within our soul: the stream that advances toward the life of action. We sense that the spirit of the nation, bound like the flame to the coal with the light of the true Torah, has, with its unique character, fashioned the unique form of the oral Torah. Without a doubt, this Torah of man is encompassed within the Torah of G-d. It



too is the Torah of G-d.

But in the inner form, is it not the case that the Torah is given to Israel for the sake of our inner, supernal unique being? It is this divine, hidden, unique being that caused the Torah to be revealed to us from heaven.

And so in its root the oral Torah is higher than the root of the hidden Torah.

These two lights make one complete world, in which heaven and earth are nourished.

- Rav Kook, Orot haTorah 1:1

Why did it have to be "Baal Peh"?

The Torah contains 613 Mitzvot. Each mitzvah contains all the information needed to apply them in every possible circumstance (e.g. technological innovation and electricity on Shabbat). Included within the mitzvot is the philosophy that connects every Jew to the Torah is the key to inspire each Jew to serve Hashem. There is an

old joke that there are as many different types of Jews as there are Jews. For every type of Jew there is a path to encourage them to be shomrei mitzvot and to be involved in Talmud Torah. Every one of us has a different aspect of the Torah that enthuses us and this should help us find a suitable path to follow.

The reason the Mishna is so brief was for the simple reason that every Jew had to remember its ins and outs. It is compiled in such a way so that one can learn many different things from each line. It is for this reason that when studying Mishna, like topics are grouped together, as are opinions of certain Tannaim and Amoraim. The brief nature of the Mishnah resulted in it being elaborated on in great depth in the Gemara. The Gemara is also written in a style which lends itself to an oral way of learning: it is written in a series of discussions and arguments. To read the Gemara in the same way you read a novel or a guide book would be impossible.

"The Torah was not meant to be just a book lying on the shelf. It was meant to be part of the everyday life of an entire people. Because of this it could only be transmitted by word of mouth. Torah She'Baal Peh was handed down from teacher to pupil for almost 1500 years until the harsh Roman persecutions finally threatened to eradicate it completely. Finally, 1700 years ago, it was written down to form the Talmud."

- Aryeh Kaplan, Tefillin

Therefore, Hashem, in His infinite wisdom, created the Oral Torah, a framework in which not everything was clear cut, one where different interpretations could arise. The framework of the Oral Torah, requiring large sections of the Torah to be passed down verbally, would ensure that the Torah would be kept alive and vibrant through being passed down from father to son, from teacher to student in the homes and Batei Midrash of the Jewish people.

It's possible that Hashem was willing to 'risk' or sacrifice, so to speak, the possibility that mistakes would be made and Halachot might potentially be interpreted differently to how He intended, just in order to keep the Torah alive and vibrant in 'your mouths and the mouths of your children, and the mouths of your children's children for now and evermore' (Yeshayahu 59:21)

If it's Oral Torah, how and why is it written down?

The Oral Torah was controversially written down during times of persecution. Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi (also known as Rebbe) wrote down the basics of the Mishna in a logical order in order for the tradition to be passed on correctly. The Talmud

Who are 'the Rabbis'?

When we are talking about 'The Rabbis' during this Kvtza, we are talking about many different types throughout a long period of time. This time-period begins with the Tannaim who discussed and gave Halachic rulings on everything that is recorded in the Mishna. They were very to the point and when Am Yisrael started to not understand their rulings, the Amoraim came and elaborated by discussing further and recording their discussions in the Gemara.

With Yeridat HaDorot (a concept that a generation is never on the same level as the one preceding it), the Gemara started to become uncertain to people and so the great Rabbis of the 12th to 15th centuries came along and wrote 'peirushim' (explanations) in huge detail to all of the Talmud. These include Rashi, Tosafot, Rambam and the Ramban to name just a few. These Rabbis made up the Rishonim. Lastly the Achronim, who include everyone from Rav Yosef Karo (author of the Shulchan Aruch) up until the present day. Their main task was to make Halachic decisions for the average Jew who was unable to learn whole pieces of Gemara in order to come to an everyday Halachic conclusion.

Does that mean that, now, in the imperfect world in which we live, that we no longer have the real thing? Of course the answer is emphatically NO! Despite the fact that we have printed versions of the Talmud and many other books as well including translations to help us, the Oral Torah is still oral at its essence. Without the guidance of a teacher and the help of a chavruta to battle our ideas with, the Oral Torah still remains relatively inaccessible.

Is there a connection between Torah she'Baal Peh and Galut?

"In exile, these twins were separated. The written Torah rose to the heights of holiness, and the oral Torah descended to the very depths." - Rav Kook, Orot haTorah 1:2

Bavli was similarly written down in times when the Jewish communities had less means to pass on the tradition effectively or correctly.

Since the time of the last Amoraim (those who compiled the Gemara) Rishonim, Achronim and present-day Rabbis have devoted themselves to writing down their explanations of the Mishna and Gemara. Literally libraries of Jewish books, all considered "Torah" in their own right, have been published. This at first glance seems purely a positive thing. However, reading such books in a way that keeps the flavour of a living Torah (i.e. one you've learned from a living teacher who learned from their living teacher who learned from theirs...) ought to be a consideration as well. Therefore, in an ideal world, the oral Torah would have best been kept oral, but as a result of human deficiency and yeridat ha'dorot (the spiritual decline of each generation), we simply could not remember it all.

So do we still have Torah she'Baal Peh?

Here, in the continuation of the piece we read before – Rav Kook makes a clear connection between the land of Israel and the Oral Torah. He says that only in Israel, when we are ruling ourselves and we have a Temple, the Oral Torah will truly flourish. As we explained before, the Oral Torah gives Am Yisrael the potential to become holy by being involved in its creative process. This is no more relevant than is Israel. When we are in Israel, keeping our laws the way we should, building our country, we are directly involved in creating holiness through doing seemingly normal actions. When we fulfil the Oral Torah in Israel, we are fulfilling our potential as a people.

But in the Galut, we do not have the opportunity to fulfil the Oral Torah properly, to grow as a nation and therefore, the Oral Torah cannot properly exist. It therefore had to be written down. When we lost the Beit HaMikdash and the ability to flourish as a people, we also lost the ability for the Oral Torah to flourish as it should.

The writing down of the Oral Torah is a not just a technicality based on practicality, it is a consequence of Am Yisrael not being able to fulfil their proper potential anymore in Israel. In the Galut, we are much more restrained and therefore the Gemara tells us *"From the day of Churban (destruction of the temple), Hashem has nowhere to reside in this world save the 4 Amot of Halacha."* (Brachot 8a)

As we have seen the Oral Torah is always alive and changing as the world grows and changes. There are many aspects of modern-day life which never existed before and therefore never needed to be discussed. When learning the Oral Torah we often find that to answer our question more questions must be asked. Often to know which way to go and which path to take we must delve a little deeper. It is through constantly asking and learning we find out how to live our lives as Jews in a very changing world.

The Oral Torah draws sustenance in a hidden manner from the heavenly, and in a revealed manner from the earthly.

The land of Israel must be built up, with all the people of Israel dwelling upon it in a well-ordered manner: with the Temple and a kingdom, with Kohanim and prophecy, with judges and officers and all their accoutrements. Then the oral Torah will live in all the glow of its beauty. It will flower and bloom. With its entire measure, it will connect to the written Torah.

- Orot haTorah 1:3

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Bet Base: From Galut to Geula - מגלות לגאולה

K3: From Confusion to Clarity: New Perspectives and the Oral Torah

60 Second Fact File – Groups who rejected the Oral Torah

Would you believe it – there are people who don't agree with the Oral Torah! The Pharisees are those credited with the founding of Rabbinic Judaism and they believed that the traditional interpretations received through the Oral Torah were binding. This belief, however, was not accepted amongst all segments of Judaism and other religions which have their roots in Judaism.



Groups such as the Tzaddukim (Sadducees) and Karai'im (Karaites) were made up of Jews who wanted to base their religious life based on the literal understanding of the verses of the Torah. These groups reject the Mishna and Gemara entirely and therefore do crazy things like following the verse *"U'letotafot bein einecha – and they [tefillin] shall be an emblem between your eyes"* to mean that your tefillin actually have to go between your eyes!

60 Second Biography - Rebbe

Rebbe was born in 135 C.E. According to the Midrash he was born on the same day that Rabbi Akiva died a martyr's death. The Gemara (Avodah Zara 10a-b) teaches, Rebbe was very wealthy and greatly respected in Rome. He had a close friendship with Emperor Antoninus. He was known as 'HaNasi' as he came from the royal line of David and was head of the Sanhedrin. Rebbe undertook the task of writing down and editing the Mishna.

DISCUSSION POINTS – What is the importance and value in learning and engaging with Torah she'Baal Peh?

Is it more important than just knowing the facts?

How important is it to keep the Oral Torah alive today?

Should we emphasise our time on 'knowing Halacha' or 'learning Torah'?

Should there be a difference in our emphasis during times of Galut and the Geula?

Summary of K3:

We have seen that there are two 'Torahs' – Torah she'Bichtav and Torah she'Baal Peh. We discussed the differences between them and explored how Torah she'Baal Peh developed on account of Galut. We finally looked at how Jewish life developed after the Churban through the prism of Torah.

K4: From Individuals to Communities: New Roots outside Bavel



Aims:

1. **Explore** the spread of Jews from Bavel and how they got there.
2. **Discover** how the Sephardi, Ashkenazi and Mizrachi communities developed and flourished.
3. **Learn** how the Jews flourished in their new surroundings.

Summary

K4 and K6 both look at how the Jews settled in different lands and the various consequences of moving. K4, this Kvutza, focuses on the settling in Europe, particularly France and Spain and how the Jews developed and flourished there, as well as looking at Jews in Arab lands, with a focus on Yemeni Jews.

This particular Kvutza spans many years from the time of the publication of the Oral Torah (around 300 C.E.) all the way through to 1655 C.E. which was the year that Jews were re-admitted by Oliver Cromwell to England.

This Kvutza will address some of the following questions:

- ❏ What started the movement of people?
- ❏ How did the Torah world develop in the new communities?
- ❏ Did the new communities develop both internally and externally?
- ❏ What was the experience like for Jews in their new locations?



It should be emphasised that despite the hardships and persecution that is commonplace in Jewish history, nonetheless Jewish civilization – religion, customs, and identity – have weathered it all, and have ultimately thrived in spite of it all.

Jews in Bavel

The Babylonian exile, although very traumatic, nevertheless had a great benefit to the Jewish people. There were no more corrupt kings or nobility – in Babylon the Torah scholars had complete authority. Moreover, the Babylonians were not anti-Semites per se; while they only wanted to destroy Judah as an independent political power, they harboured no ill feelings toward the Jewish religion. As such, Jews were given their own cities, where earlier exiled Jews welcomed them warmly. The Talmud tells us that G-d chose Babylon as the place of exile for several reasons: Aramaic, the language of Babylon, was very similar to Hebrew. Abraham was born in Babylon, so the Jews were not regarded as foreigners. And it was easy to make a living from the abundant date trees. All told, then, life was pleasant for the Jews once they reached Babylon.

Despite the relative ease of their exile, the Jews reacted in vastly different ways. Some of them, traumatized by the shock of the Babylonians conquering

Jerusalem, an occurrence they had previously deemed impossible, despaired of a future redemption, saying that G-d had severed His relationship with the Jewish people. Others settled down comfortably and planned to assimilate. Despite the prophet Yechezkel's best efforts to address both groups, nevertheless, many Jews did unfortunately assimilate.

After about 50 years, Cyrus the Great came to power. Cyrus permitted the Jews to go to Jerusalem and rebuild the Beit haMikdash: *"Thus said Cyrus, king of Persia: 'Hashem, G-d of Heaven, has given to me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has commanded me to build Him a Temple in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever there is among you of His entire people - may G-d be with him, and let him go up.'"* (Divrei haYamim Bet, 36:23 - the last passuk in Tanach)

Surprisingly, however, the majority of the Jews in Bavel did not choose to go back to Israel, instead preferring their comfortable lives in Chutz l'Aretz. Sound familiar?

Arba'ah Shevuim – Four Captives

Many, many years later, in 950 CE, four Babylonian scholars and their wives were sent on a mission to Europe to collect money for the Yeshivot in Bavel. On the Mediterranean Sea, their ship was captured by pirates (not Somalian ones). The scholars were valuable prisoners, and their captors knew that Jewish communities would pay generously to buy their freedom.

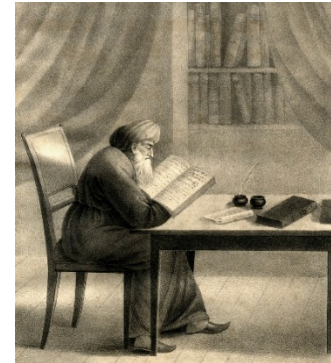


The four couples were brought to the slave market in North Africa and Spain and put up for sale. The Jews from far away came to ransom their people, however this time, they came with a condition. They asked the scholars to remain with them as teachers and Rabbis.

The Jews of Alexandria redeemed Rabbi Sharyahu; the Jews of Kairouan (Tunisia), redeemed Rabbi Chushiel; the Jews of Cordova (Spain), redeemed Rabbi Moshe and his son Rabbi Chanoch. Each Rabbi remained with the community that had freed him, started a Yeshiva and helped it flourish into a new centre for Torah. They brought their families from Bavel, new students arrived, and a new period of growth and learning began.

By this point in time, the constant fighting in the Arab world was causing many problems, and together with the large movement to new countries, the Jewish community in Bavel began to decline. Within one century, almost 150,000 Jews left Bavel and arrived in North Africa. Others went to Western Europe: France, Spain and Germany.

Many books and commentaries were written at this time, for example Rabbi Chananel (son of Rabbi Chushiel) wrote



*FACT FILE: RASHI, RABBI SHLOMO BEN
YITZCHAK (1040 - 1105)*

Rabbi Shlomo ben Yitzchak, best known by the acronym "Rashi", was an early and influential medieval Torah and Talmud commentator. He was born in Troyes, France, and as a young man he studied in the yeshivot of Worms and Mainz.

At the age of twenty-five he returned to Troyes and opened his own yeshiva. He supported his family and his yeshiva by growing grapes and producing and selling wine.

Widely known as the father of all commentators, his commentary on the Bible and Talmud is considered an indispensable tool for Torah study. He described his aim as clarifying the "pshat" or "plain-sense" meaning of each verse. He was also a posek who authored responsa.

Rashi's fame spread beyond the boundaries of northern France and the German provinces of the Rhine. Shortly after his death he was known not only in Provence, but in Spain and even in the East. The Spanish exegetes, among them Abraham ibn Ezra and Ramban, and such Talmudists as Zerahiah Gerondi, recognized his authority, although at first they frequently combatted his opinions. In France itself, however, repeated expulsions by successive kings and the burning of Hebrew books, as at Paris in 1240, scattered the Jews and destroyed their institutions of learning. Throughout these persecutions the Bible and the Talmud, with the commentaries of Rashi, were their inseparable companions, and were often their supreme as well as their only solace, and the chief bond of their religious unity.

the first commentary on the Talmud (Rashi would later use it in his works) and the Rif (Rabbi Yitzchak Alfazi, from Fez, Morocco; see photo) wrote a code of Jewish law, which would be the foundation of later codes such as the Rambam and Shulchan Aruch.

The start of Ashkenaz

By 1000 C.E, time had started to move on, as had the Jewish people. They had followed the Arab nations to trade across the Middle East and North Africa and who by this point had started to move to Europe. Jewish traders also started to come through to Europe and by the 9th century (C.E.) there were communities starting to be set up in France and Germany. The Jewish people called this area "Ashkenaz" and called themselves "Ashkenazim."

The Jews settled and built communities, living their own lives and turning to the leading Babylonian Rabbis for Halachic

guidance. They generally shied away from outside influences and concentrated on internal Jewish sources, ideas and customs. In the early years, the Jews had 3 main places of living:

1) Kingdom of Provence (situated between France and Spain)

FACT FILE: RABBEINU GERSHOM BEN YEHUDA OF MAINZ (960-1040)

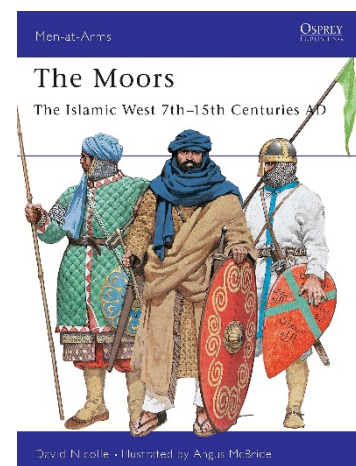
Also known as Me'or Ha'Golah (Light of the Exile), he was born in France in 960. He became the head of a Yeshiva in Mainz in 1000 CE. At that time Rabbeinu Gershom was a leading Rabbi who many consulted on various issues. He passed strict laws to protect the continuation of the Jewish existence. Any Jews transgressing these laws were put into Cherem (exclusion)! Some of the most famous rules that he enacted, was the prohibition against polygamy (marrying more than one wife at a time), a man needs a wife's consent to divorce, anyone who had been forced to turn to Christianity and now wanted to become Jewish, must have the entire communities backing. He commented on the Gemara and was known for his piety, leadership and knowledge.

- 2) In the German communities along the shores of River Rhine
- 3) Around Paris near Troyes

In later years, the Ashkenazi Jews spread out towards countries including Poland and Lithuania. In the 10th and 11th century, the first Ashkenazi Jews were merchants and were treated well because of their trading connections. In the 11th century the Ashkenazi Jews accounted for 3% of the world's Jewish population.

Jews of Spain

It is often claimed that the arrival of the Jews in Spain dates back not to the second exile, but to soon after the Babylonian king Nevuchadnetzar II conquered Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple in 586 BCE. Many Jews settled in the Iberian Peninsula. The area became known by the Hebrew word Sefard, meaning "far away". The Moors (Muslim Arabs from North Africa) invaded Spain in 711 and many Jews helped them to fight the incumbent Catholic leaders. Many Jews from North Africa, Asia and the Middle East followed the Moors to Spain and each Moorish city soon had their own Jewish community. For four hundred years Torah, Jewish philosophy, literature and science all flourished under Moorish rule and the Jews rose to positions of great



SUMMER MACHANE 5781

Bet Base: From Galut to Geula - מגלות לגאולה

K4: From Individuals to Communities: New Roots Outside Bavel

wealth and power. It was described as the 'Golden Age', when Torah, Hebrew language, and philosophy blossomed, and magnificent Shuls, Yeshivot and luxury homes were built. Though Jews were treated as Dhimmis, second-class citizens, they were free to practice as professionals and rise to great positions within the economy and within the society.

By the mid-13th century, religiously-motivated territorial wars resulted in Catholics controlling most of Spain, who were not known for religious tolerance. Increasingly, Jews were forced to convert to Christianity. Those who converted became known as Marranos or New Christians. Marranos are also known as crypto-Jews because they taught their children and practiced Judaism in secret. During this period, Jews were forced to participate in "religious" disputes with Christian counterparts, and many anti-Jewish riots broke out.

In 1474, Queen Isabella I of Castile married King Ferdinand II of Aragon, forming a unified Spain. They revolutionised the country...including starting a period of religious reform and establishing the Spanish Inquisition to persecute non-Catholics. Jews and Marranos were treated with suspicion and tortured or killed if they refused to convert or if their conversion was deemed to be insincere. In 1492, Isabella and Ferdinand commanded that all Jews who refused to convert to Christianity be expelled from Spain.

DISCUSSION POINT – Why would someone agree to a forced conversion?

Spanish Jewry knew both greatness and humiliation. It was a community which produced great Rabbis, distinguished communities, and a rich Torah literature. However, in later periods, it was also a country which knew inquisitions, pogroms, forced conversion, and expulsion. Spanish Jewry has left us a very important Torah inheritance: commentaries on the Torah by the Radat, Ramban, and Ibn Ezra, the Rambam's "Mishne Torah," "Guide to the Perplexed" and commentary on the Mishna, poetry by Ibn Gavriol and Rabbi Yehuda Halevy and his Sefer HaKuzari, to name but a few. This was a great period for Spanish Jewry which left its mark on the whole of the Jewish people.

Where did they go?

Following the expulsion of Jews from Spain in 1492, many Spanish Jews settled in Portugal...until they were also expelled in 1497. A large number of Jews settled in North Africa and in the Ottoman Empire, especially, Turkey and Greece. Spanish exiles brought with them a unique culture, language (Ladino) and traditions. Large Sephardic communities were founded in Venice, Leghorn, London, Bordeaux,

Bayonne and Hamburg. These immigrants spoke Portuguese and Spanish and many adapted mainstream Western European culture. Successful business

FACT FILE: RAMBAM, RABBI MOSHE BEN MAIMON (1135-1204)

Moshe ben Maimon (also known as Rambam and Maimonides) was born in the city of Cordoba, Spain in 1138. His father was a respected Jewish scholar and judge. Like many middle and upper class Jewish boys who lived in Spain under Moslem rule, Moshe received an extensive Jewish and secular education.

In 1148, soon after Moshe became Bar Mitzvah, the situation of the Jews in Cordoba changed drastically. The Almohads, a Muslim group that wanted to restore the pure faith of Islam, conquered the city. They forced the Jews to choose between accepting Islam or leaving. Maimon and his family wandered around Spain for twelve years. Finally, in 1160, the family settled in Fez, Morocco, when Moshe ben Maimon was 25 years old. He studied Torah there with Rabbi Yehuuda HaCohen and medicine with Muslim teachers.

During these years of wandering, Moshe had developed into a scholar. In 1158, he began writing his commentary on the Mishnah. He wrote it in Arabic, the day-to-day language of the Jews under Muslim rule, so that the Mishnah would be understandable to them.

The Maimon family lived in Fez for five years. In 1165, Rambam and his family moved to Fostat (old Cairo) in Egypt. He married and had a son, Abraham, and devoted himself to finishing his commentary on the Mishnah, finally completing it in 1168.

Tragically, his brother died in an accident leaving behind a wife and two children. Maimonides was faced with the problem of supporting his family. Although he could have become a paid official of the Jewish community, he believed that one should not earn money from the knowledge of Torah. Instead, he became a doctor.

In 1185, Maimonides was appointed physician to the court of the advisor to the Sultan, and he achieved international fame as a doctor.

Despite his busy schedule as a doctor and as a community leader, Rambam continued writing books. In 1178, he finished the Mishnah Torah, the fourteen-volume code of Jewish Law. Written in Hebrew, it consists of laws from the Mishnah and the Talmud. Each volume deals with a different topic. Guide for the perplexed, written in Arabic was completed between 1185 and 1190. In the introduction, Rambam wrote that the purpose of the book was to help people who were confused because reason seemed at times to contradict the Torah. All of Rambam's works were recognised as great contributions in his own lifetime. Rambam died in 1204 in Fostat but was buried in Tiberius in Israel. His gravesite is famous to this day. His works were so influential that it has been said about the Rambam; 'From Moses until Moses, there was none like Moses.'

enterprises were started by the Sephardim and their trade networks became famous worldwide.

Jews from Arab lands

The tragedy of the exile of Jews from Arab lands tends to be overshadowed by the sheer scale and unprecedented horrors of the Holocaust. But as a result, the story

of the Jews in Arab lands still forms a major gap in most of the world's knowledge of the history of the Middle East. Jewish presence in what are now Arab lands long predates Islam and the Arab conquest of the Middle East and goes back to Biblical times. In pre-Islamic times, whole Jewish kingdoms existed there, for example Himyar in Yemen.



Up to the 17th century, there were more Jews in the Arab and wider Muslim world than in Europe. In Baghdad, in 1939, 33% of the population were Jews, making it at the time proportionately more Jewish than Warsaw (29%) and New York (27%). Jews had lived in Baghdad since the destruction of the First

Temple in Jerusalem in 586 BCE. Today, only five Jews reportedly remain there. That represents a pattern that is repeated throughout the Arab world: in 1945, there were approximately 866,000 Jews living in communities throughout the Arab world. Today, there are fewer than 7,000. In many Arab states, once thriving Jewish communities have all but disappeared. According to official statistics, 856,000 Jews, persecuted and under duress, were exiled from their homes in Arab countries between 1948 and the early 1970s leaving behind substantial property and other assets. The ethnic cleansing of hundreds of thousands of Jews from the Arab world in the mid-20th century was systematic, absolute and unprovoked, and still remains largely unreported.

There were 38,000 Jews in western Libya before 1945. Now there are none; 47 synagogues are gone, and a highway runs through Libya's main Jewish cemetery. In Algeria, there were 140,000 Jews. Now there are none. In Iraq, there were about 150,000 Jews. Five remain. There were 80,000 Jews in Egypt. Almost all are gone. Many Jewish refugees from the Arab world still suffer the trauma of armed men arriving at their door and being marched away without explanation and without being able to take their possessions.

The provocation for these attacks was the founding of the state of Israel. Furious with the UN Partition Plan, Arab nations took their anger out on their own Jewish populations. Throughout 1947 and 1948, Jews in Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Libya, Morocco, Syria, and Yemen (Aden) were persecuted, their property and belongings were confiscated, and they were subjected to severe anti-Jewish riots instigated by the governments. In Iraq, Zionism was made

a capital crime. In Syria, anti-Jewish pogroms erupted in Aleppo and the government froze all Jewish bank accounts. In Egypt, bombs were detonated in the Jewish quarter, killing dozens. In Algeria, anti-Jewish decrees were swiftly instituted and in Yemen, bloody pogroms led to the death of nearly 100 Jews.

Before they were driven out en masse, the Jews of the Arab world, like Jews in Europe, were often important figures in their societies. The first novel to be published in Iraq was written by a Jew. Iraq's first finance minister was a Jew, Sir Sasson Heskell. The founder of Egypt's first national theatre in Cairo in 1870 was a Jew, Jacob Sauna. Many of the classics of Egyptian cinema were directed by Jews and featured Jewish actors, such as Liliane Levy Cohen (see photo). The pioneer of Tunisian cinema was also Jewish, as was Tunisia's leading female singer.



The history of the Jews of Yemen

The Teimani Jews are an ancient community. Several different legends purport to tell the tale of how they came to live there in the first place: one tradition suggests that Shlomo sent Jewish merchant marines to Yemen to prospect for gold and silver with which to adorn the Bet Hamikdash, another claims that Yemeni tribes converted to Judaism after the Queen of Sheba's visit to Shlomo. The Jews of Sana believe that their ancestors settled in Yemen forty-two years before the destruction of the Bayit Rishon, while some historians suggest they migrated there from Babylon. One legend states that when Ezra commanded the Jews to return to Jerusalem they disobeyed, whereupon he pronounced a ban upon them. As a result of this local tradition, it is said that no Jew of Yemen names their child Ezra.

Archaeological records referring to Judaism in Yemen exist dating back to the Himyarite Kingdom, established in Yemen in 110 BCE. According to local legends, the kingdom's aristocracy converted to Judaism in the 6th century CE – and a Christian missionary, Theophilos, who came to Yemen in the mid-fourth century, complained that he had found too many Jews! Jews became especially numerous and powerful in the southern part of Arabia, a rich and fertile land of incense and spices and a way station on the spice road. In the 6th century, a powerful Jewish tribal leader, Yusuf Asar Yatar, emerged. Not much is known about him, but some historical sources say that he was a militaristic leader who forced Christian villagers to convert to Judaism or be killed.

Following the advent of Islam, Yemen came under Islamic rule. In the early days the Jews were assured freedom of religion in exchange for payment of a tax that afforded them protection by the state as second-class citizens. In the 10th century, the Zaydi clan seized power and began persecuting Jews.

Jewish intellectuals in Yemen wrote in both Hebrew and Arabic and engaged in the same literary endeavours as the Muslim majority. 12th century documents from the Cairo Geniza describe a thriving Jewish community in Aden led by the prominent Bundar family.

DISCUSSION POINT – How does the power afforded Yemenite Jews compare with that of Jews in Europe? Are you surprised by this account?

Yemenite Jews also experienced violent persecution at times. In the late 1160s, the Yemenite ruler Abd-al-Nabi ibn Mahdi left Jews with the choice between conversion to Islam or martyrdom. While a popular local Yemenite Jewish leader called Jews to choose martyrdom, Rambam sent the Iggeret Teiman requesting that they remain faithful to their religion, but if at all possible, not to insult the Muslim leaders (this teshuva is highly significant! Because Islam is a monotheistic faith, Rambam says it is permissible to pretend to convert when threatened with death).

IMPORTANT NOTE!

Despite the K focusing on Yemenite Jews, there are many other Jewish communities who lived and flourished in North Africa and the Middle East.

The Zaydi clan took over Yemen from the Ottomans in 1630. Jews then faced persecution and in 1679 were expelled to Mawza, where two thirds of Jews died of starvation and disease. A year later, they were permitted to return, though their property had been seized, because the Zaydi leaders suddenly realised that they had accidentally expelled all of their craftspeople and artisans (trades such as metalwork, pottery, carpentry, and tailoring were occupations that were exclusively taken by Jews) and the economy was struggling as a result.

Under the Zaydi rule, the Jews were considered to be impure and therefore forbidden to touch a Muslim or a Muslim's food. They were obligated to humble themselves before a Muslim, to walk to the left side, and greet them first. They could not build houses higher than a Muslim's or ride a camel or horse, and when riding on a mule or a donkey, they had to sit sideways. Upon entering the Muslim

quarter a Jew had to take off their shoes and walk barefoot. If attacked with stones or fists by youth, a Jew was not allowed to fight back.

Despite their persecution, Yemenite Jews have retained their own unique food, clothing and marriage customs. Yemenite Hebrew is believed to be the most ancient form of pronunciation and grammar. Yemenite Jews and the Aramaic speaking Kurdish Jews are the only communities who maintain the tradition of reading the Torah in the synagogue in both Hebrew and the Aramaic Targum. Each person who is called up to the Torah leins their own portion.

DISCUSSION POINTS – What is the shared theme of the Jewish experience in France, Germany, Spain and Yemen?

Is this repeated throughout the rest of Jewish history?

Do you think this specifically relates to Galut?

Why did Jewish dispersion prompt the shift from individuals to communities?

Why is the history of 'Mizrachi' Jews so unknown?

How many minhagim are shared between Ashkenazim, Sephardim and Teimanim?

Summary of K4

We've looked at the Jewish community in Bavel, with its strengths and weaknesses, as well as exploring the dispersion of Jews from Bavel to Europe and elsewhere in the Middle East. We discussed the Jewish experience in these new communities, looking at both the highs and the unfortunate lows.

K5: From Persecution to Prosperity: Anglo-Jewry as a Microcosm of Galut



Aims:

1. **Learn** about the beginnings of Anglo-Jewry.
2. **Understand** the development of the Jews in England.
3. **Appreciate** the story of Anglo-Jewry as a microcosm for the story of the Jews in Galut.

Summary

If you cast your mind back to the structure of the Kvutzot and the way that they are built, you will remember that Anglo-Jewry is in the middle of the two halves of the Chomer's concentric structure. That means that the other Kvutzot lead up to and away from it and this K stands at the centre of the structure. This is because this K demonstrates a point which is relevant to all of the other kvutzot. Here we will look at the ups and downs of Anglo Jewry and how Jews and perceptions of them changed in this strange land. We will chart the Jews' beginnings in England and how they developed and changed here, looking particularly as how they moved from a state of "Persecution to Prosperity".

This Kvutza will address some of the following questions:

- 📖 Why were we kicked out of England?
- 📖 When did Jews arrive in England?
- 📖 Why were we let back in?
- 📖 How were Jews accepted here?



Timeline

- 📖 **1070** – First Jews recorded in England.
- 📖 **1144** – First Blood Libels in Norwich
- 📖 **1190** – York Pogrom
- 📖 **1218** – Archbishop of Canterbury ordered Jews to wear a special badge.
- 📖 **1255** – 'Little Saint Hugh of Lincoln' blood libel backed by the Crown.
- 📖 **1290** – Expulsion from England.
- 📖 **1655** – Jews allowed back into England.
- 📖 **1753** – Jewish Naturalisation Act (the "Jew Bill").

What's so special about Anglo-Jewry?

"The story of the Jews of England is of supreme importance to the student of the philosophy of Jewry and of Jewish history. The adage that history repeats itself is well worn, but none the less true. The history of the Jews in England is the history in miniature of the Diaspora.

Since the opening of the Christian era the story of the Jews, everywhere has been the same-continual alternations of prosperity and persecution. As with individuals, the wheel of fortune ever revolves for nations, but with the Jews its progress seems to have been more rapid, for alternations have been more numerous than with any other race.

But with the Jews the wheel lingers during the period of depression and hurries through that of elation in order to recover the time that has been lost. The story of the Jews of England shows all the vicissitudes common these two thousand years to the lot of Jewry."

- Albert M. Hymason; Preface, A History of the Jews in England

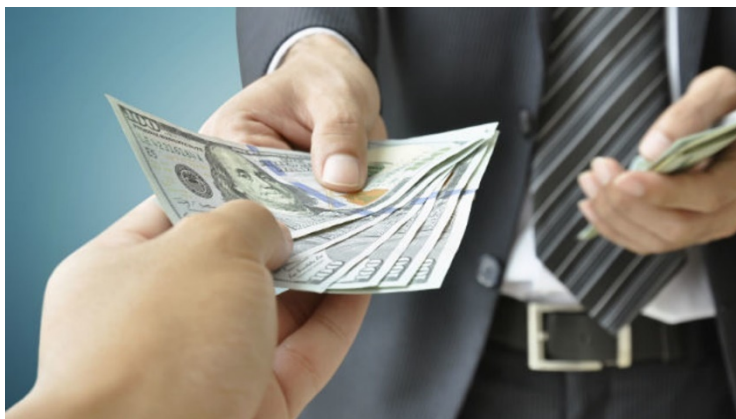
When learning the history of the Jews in Galut, we see the same theme repeated again and again. The Jews seem to be in a constant game of ping pong between turmoil and serenity, worse days and better ones, hard times and happy days. Anglo Jewry is no different to this and, as such, highlights perfectly the journey that the Jews have taken everywhere they have been. Anglo Jewry is a microcosm of the Jews' history in Galut. A history that has seen the Jews at low points and at high points in nearly every place they have been, moving again and again from persecution to prosperity, from Galut to Geula.



In the beginning

The first written account of Jews living in England goes back to the time of William the Conqueror, although Jews may have lived here since Roman times. In 1070, believing that their commercial skills and incoming capital would make England more prosperous, William invited a group of Jews from France to England. This was to mark the beginning of the Jews' tumultuous relationship with dear England.

In the Middle Ages, lending money with interest – usury (or *ribbit* in Halacha) - was considered a sin by Christianity and was forbidden. Although Jews are also not



allowed to lend money with interest, the prohibition does not include lending to non-Jews. Medieval monarchs found it useful that Jews could engage in this practice and used Jews to finance royal spending, adventures and wars – making themselves rich in the process. Jewish

dispersion throughout the country enabled the king to draw upon them as he needed and gained them even more favour amongst the rich ruling classes. During this period in the history of Anglo-Jewry, Jews were not necessarily seen as social or cultural partners by the local Brits, but rather as monetary assets, whose worth was dependent upon the service that they could provide to the country. In fact, a special charter was given to the Jews by Henry I, which granted, amongst other things, the right of movement throughout the kingdom, as if they were the king's own property.



An anti-Semitic portrayal of Jewish money-lenders from a 13th-century manuscript.

Blood Libels

Although Jews were seen as useful to the monarchy, this did not protect them from the jealousies, rumours, and aggression of some of their neighbours, and from this point on things start to get pretty bad.

This period of history also witnessed the introduction of blood libels. A blood libel is a false accusation or claim that religious minorities murder children to use their blood in certain aspects of their religious rituals and holidays. The concept of the blood libel appears to have originated in England in 1144 in the case of William of Norwich, in which the death of a 12-year-old apprentice tanner was attributed to the local Jewish community. Similar claims spread from England to France and Spain and throughout Europe in medieval times, resurfacing in Nazi propaganda in the 20th century and even a couple of years ago in Israel by a Hamas cleric!

One of the most notable blood libels in English history was that of 'Little Saint Hugh of Lincoln.' Nine-year-old Hugh disappeared on 31 July 1255, and his body was discovered in a well on 29 August. It was claimed that Jews had imprisoned Hugh, during which time they tortured and eventually crucified him. It was said that the body had been thrown into the well after attempts to bury it failed, when the earth had expelled it.

The chronicler Matthew Paris described the supposed murder, implicating all the Jews in England:

"This year [1255] about the feast of the apostles Peter and Paul [27 July], the Jews of Lincoln stole a boy called Hugh, who was about eight years old. After shutting him up in a secret chamber, where they fed him on milk and other childish food, they sent to almost all the cities of England in which there were Jews, and summoned some of their sect from each city to be present at a sacrifice to take place at Lincoln, in contumely and insult of Jesus Christ. For, as they said, they had a boy concealed for the purpose of being crucified; so a great number of them assembled at Lincoln, and then they appointed a Jew of Lincoln judge, to take the place of Pilate, by whose sentence, and with the concurrence of all, the boy was subjected to various tortures. They scourged him till the blood flowed, they crowned him with thorns, mocked him, and spat upon him; each of them also pierced him with a knife, and they made him drink gall, and scoffed at him with blasphemous insults, and kept gnashing their teeth and calling him Jesus, the false prophet. And after tormenting him in diverse ways they crucified him, and pierced him to the heart with a spear. When the boy was dead, they took the body down from the cross, and for some reason disemboweled it; it is said for the purpose of their magic arts."

This account is almost certainly false, with most contemporary historians describing it as an attempt to discredit the Jewish community and to enable King Henry III to legally claim Jewish property, as he could only do this if Jews were executed, and indeed 91 Jews were taken to the Tower of London as a result, with 18 executed.

Clifford's Tower Massacre

As a result of the Blood Libels, massacres of Jews were staged across England, the most famous of these being the pogrom against the Jews of York (1190). The story recorded by William of Newburgh, an Augustinian canon from Yorkshire, tells of two Jewish citizens from York, called Benedict and Jocus. Together they travelled to London to attend the coronation of Richard I in 1189.

Fact File: The Crusades

The Crusades were a series of religiously motivated military campaigns waged by Christian Europe. The specific crusades to regain control of the "Holy Land" were fought over a period of nearly 200 years, between 1095 and 1291. Although these Crusades aimed to recapture Jerusalem and the Holy Land from Muslim rule, many other religions and political enemies of the Pope were targeted on the way to Israel. A particular target in the Crusades was the Jews, many of whom were massacred as the Crusader mob moved across Europe.

Resentment about the presence of Jews at the coronation was fuelled by anger about taxes to fund the Crusades, leading to riots at the ceremony itself and in Norwich, Stamford, York and Lincoln. A false rumour was even put about that the king had ordered a massacre of the Jews. Benedict was attacked and killed on his way back to York.

Some months later, after the Sheriff of York had left for the Third Crusade, a fire broke out in the city. This was during a time of increasing attacks on Jews throughout England and some citizens took advantage of the chaos to break into Benedict's house in Coney Street. The property was looted and everyone inside killed.

Joceus managed to escape a similar attack and he led the city's Jews to seek protection from 'the keeper of the King's tower' inside the castle, almost certainly the site of the present Clifford's Tower. Meanwhile, the looting continued.

Inside the tower, trust between the Jews and the keeper broke down, and when he left the tower on other business, they refused to allow him back in. They had now challenged the king's authority, and troops joined the mob outside, where they were pelted with stones from the castle walls by the besieged Jews.



Friday 16 March coincided with Shabbat Hagadol, before the Jewish festival of Pesach or Passover. According to several accounts, the Jews realised that they could not hold out against their attackers, and rather than waiting to be killed or forcibly baptised, decided to meet death together. The father of each family killed his wife and children, before taking his own life. Just before their deaths, they also set fire to the possessions they had brought with them; this fire consumed the timber tower. It is not clear how many

Jews were present – estimates range from 20 to 40 families, and a later account in Hebrew suggests about 150 people.

One of the mob's ringleaders, Richard Malebisse, had offered safe passage to any Jews who agreed to convert and leave the tower. A few took this option, only to be murdered as soon as they came out from the burning building. Afterwards, the rioters destroyed the records of debts to the Jews, which had been placed in safe-keeping at York Minster.

The triggers for the massacre were many. The calls to crusade in the Holy Land made many Christians sensitive to the presence of non-Christians in England. These feelings may have been heightened by the approaching celebrations for Easter, when the Church preached that the Jews had connived at the death of Jesus. Some rioters also saw the possibility of clearing themselves of debts to the Jews.

Persecution

in 1218 Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury, brought the requirement for Jews to wear a badge into operation in England. This badge took the form of an oblong white patch of two finger-lengths by four. Additionally, petitions were sent to the king in many instances, calling on him to remove his Jews from the boroughs, and they were expelled from Bury St. Edmunds in 1190, Newcastle in 1234, Wycombe in 1235, Southampton in 1236, Berkhamsted in 1242, Newbury in 1244.



In addition, Henry III passed the Statute of Jewry in 1253, which attempted to stop the construction of synagogues and reinforce the wearing of Jewish badges. Another prohibition was on Christian servants working for Jews so as to reduce the 'risk' of sexual contact, which was also prohibited. However, it remains unclear to what extent this statute was actually implemented by Henry.

Expulsion from England

By 1290 the inevitable happened. After the Pope declared it illegal to borrow money from a Jew and the King found an alternative source of finance, the Jews, a now persecuted and hated people, were banished from England.

For more than 300 years no Jew (officially) existed in the country. It was not until Charles I had his head chopped off that the Jews felt safe to return. In 1655 a Dutch Jew named Menasseh ben Israel, petitioned Oliver Cromwell to allow the mass return of Jews to British Shores.

Back to Blighty

Thus, it was that in the middle of the 17th century, around 300 merchants - Spanish and Portuguese Jews - settled in London. In 1701 they built the country's first purpose-built synagogue, Bevis Marks, the only building in Europe where services have continued without interruption (except for kiddush of course) for more than 300 years.



Resettlement

Just as the relationship between Jews and non-Jews had its ups and down before the expulsion, things were not plain sailing now. Various coalitions of aristocrats, Christians and businessmen tried to re-expel the Jews. But the new Jewish merchants were just too darn useful. They had brought in £1,500,000 with them which had increased by the middle of the century to £5,000,000. Their investment provided one-twelfth of the nation's profits and one-twentieth of its foreign trade.

Finally, by 1890 when there were now 46,000 Jews living in England, all restrictions upon positions in the British Empire, except that of monarch, were removed.

The Development of Anglo-Jewry

At the end of the 19th century, the pogroms in Germany, Poland and Russia were causing many Jews to flee. It was at this point that Jews really started to come to England! These were not Sephardim but Ashkenazi Jews with a more distinct East European and Yiddish culture. They soon outnumbered the Spanish and Portuguese communities in London and elsewhere.

In 30 years, the Jewish population had increased to about 250,000. But these Ashkenazi Jews adapted to English life very differently to those Jews already here, differing even from all other Jews around the world at that time. And it was with this feeling that Minhag Anglia came about.

In 1871, the Jewish Chronicle proudly exclaimed:

"We Jews of England are not only in England; we are of England. We are not only British Jews, we are Jewish Englishmen. It is our boast and our pleasure and our pride that we can claim and fulfil the duties of Britons without sacrificing our Judaism, without neglecting its observances and without abandoning its sacred hopes."



SUMMER MACHANE 5781

Bet Base: From Galut to Geula - מגלות לגאולה

K5: From Persecution to Prosperity: Anglo-Jewry

Minhag Anglia

Minhag Anglia, is the name for particularly British or English customs that have been incorporated into Jewish life. With Jews aspiring to be considered British, sermons started to be given in English and "British sounding" melodies were composed for some prayers.

The Ashkenazim turned into a Jewish version of the Church of England. Clergy were ministers called "The Reverend" and wore clerical collars, chazzanim were "precentors", shamashim were "beadles", and the lay leaders were "wardens". The founding of the United Synagogue in 1870 strengthened the minhag, and the Singer Siddur and Routledge Machzor provided specifically Anglo Jewish prayer books.



Where are we now?

Today, the United Kingdom, with approximately 260,000 Jews, is the largest Jewish population in Europe after France and the sixth largest community in the world! We are world Jewry's number 7!

Hadracha Hot Tip

Print off photos of famous British Jews. Discuss who is our best 'export'. Which one of these individuals, if any, makes you proud to be British? Or Jewish? Or both?

British Jews span a range of religious affiliations including the Charedi communities and a large segment of Jews who are entirely secular. Although many feel that the biggest threat to Jews in England is a rise in Anti-Semitism, it seems that that may be a much more dangerous threat, with recent figures suggesting that up to a third of British Jews marry out.

DISCUSSION POINTS – How is the Jewish experience of England a microcosm for Galut?

Is prosperity in Galut a good thing?

Does the UK's acceptance of Anglo-Jewry indicate British religious tolerance, or Jewish assimilation?

What has been your experience as a Jew in England?

Are you a British Jew or a Jewish Brit?

Is that a good thing?



SUMMER MACHANE 5781

Bet Base: From Galut to Geula - מגלות לגאולה

K5: From Persecution to Prosperity: Anglo-Jewry

Summary of K5

We have seen the Jewish experience in England as a microcosm of the ups and downs of Galut: from getting by, to persecution, to prosperity, and repeat. We've also explored some of the notable events of Anglo-Jewry, both in the Middle-Ages and more recently.

K6: From Individuals to Communities: New Roots in Eastern Europe and the development of Chassidut and Mitnagdut



Aims:

1. **Understand** the settlement of Eastern Europe and how it differed from other places the Jews had been.
2. **Discover** what Shtetl life was.
3. **Explore** the development of Chassidut and the consequent Mitnagdut.

Summary

Like K4, this Kvutza looks at how the Jews settled in new lands and the various consequences of moving. We'll focus on the settlement of the Jews in Eastern Europe after having been forced to leave other places, such as Spain, France and parts of Germany. This Kvutza will discuss the emergence of the Shtetl, as well as the development of Chassidut and their ideological opposition, the Mitnagdim.

This Kvutza will address some of the following questions:

- ❏ Why did the Jews go to Eastern Europe?
- ❏ How were they received there?
- ❏ What was Shtetl life like?
- ❏ What is the basis of Chassidut?
- ❏ How did the Chassidim and the Mitnagdim differ?
- ❏ What would you do if you were a rich man?



Poland – a 'well fair' state for the Jews

Early Jewish Settlement in Poland differed quite considerably from earlier settlements in other European countries such as Spain and Portugal. During their early years in Poland the Jews were given a far higher level of independence than they had ever experienced before. Instead of a life of royal servitude, Jews were now able to practice their trade freely.

Among the first Jews to arrive in Poland (in 1097 or 1098) were those banished from Prague. Additionally, Jews from Bohemia and Germany settled primarily in Silesia. They usually engaged in trade and agriculture and some owned landed estates. By the middle of the 14th century, they had occupied thirty-five Silesian towns' settlers in Warsaw and Krakow date back to 1287 and 1304 respectively.

Under Boleslaus III (1102–1139), the Jews, settled throughout Poland, including over the border in Lithuanian territory as far as Kiev, enjoyed undisturbed peace and prosperity in the many principalities into which the country was then divided; forming the middle class in a country where the general population consisted mainly of Polish nobility and peasants.

In the 14th and 15th centuries the main occupation of Jews in Poland was local and long-distance trade. Owing to their links with Jewish communities in other countries, as well as experience in trade and money lending operations, Jewish merchants gained the advantage over local merchants, both in European and overseas trade.

But of course, all good things must come to an end and in 1454 anti-Jewish riots flared up in Warsaw and other Polish cities. The riots were inspired by the clergy and in 1495, Jews were ordered out of the centre of Krakow and allowed to settle only in 'Jewish towns'. These 'Jewish Towns' were to become the Shtetls in which the Jewish People of Poland were to live over the next several hundred years.



Paradise for Jews

As the centuries progressed, 'Poland' grew, and with the creation of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the 1500s included most of Eastern Europe. And despite the anti-Semitic sentiment and policies, nonetheless this period has been described as, "Poland is heaven for the nobility, hell for the peasants and paradise for Jews." This sentiment was

shared by Jews as well as their neighbours with Rabbi David ben Shmuel haLevi (known as the Taz) writing in 1689 that Poland was a place where "most of the time the gentiles do no harm; on the contrary they do right by Israel."

In 1573, Polish and Lithuanian nobles gathered at Warsaw and signed a document in which representatives of all major religions pledged mutual support and tolerance. The following eight or nine decades of material prosperity and relative security experienced by Polish Jews witnessed the appearance of "a virtual galaxy of sparkling intellectual figures" according to leading Jewish historian Professor Gershon Hundert. Additionally, Poland-Lithuania was the only country in Europe where the Jews cultivated their own farmer's fields.

The Shtetl – a golden age of Yiddishkeit

The Shtetl can be explained as a small town or village in which the Jewish communities of Eastern Europe and the unique culture of the Ashkenazim flourished before World War II. In many a shtetl, most of the inhabitants were Jews; in others, all were Jews. It was in the shtetlach that certain Jewish traditions and values were preserved until they achieved a character distinctly their own.

The residents were poor folk, fundamentalist in faith, earthy, superstitious, stubbornly resisting secularism or change. They wrote in Hebrew or Yiddish, rejecting foreign tongues among themselves. They were dairy workers, cobblers,

tailors, butchers, fishmongers In the Shtetlach, the Jews produced their own culture, an independent style of life and thought, an original gallery of human types, fresh modes of humour, irony, lyricism, paradox - all unlike anything in history. There, Yiddishkeit entered a golden age.

*Gone now are, gone are in Poland the Jewish villages,
in Hrubieszow, Karczew, Brody, Falenica
you look in vain for candlelight in the windows
and listen for song from the wooden synagogue.*

*Disappeared are the last rests, the Jewish possessions,
the blood is covered over by sand, the traces removed,
and the walls whitewashed with lime,
as for a high holiday or after a contagious disease.*

*One moon shines here, cold, pale, alien,
already behind the town, on the road,
when night uncoils its light,
my Jewish relatives, boys with poetic feeling,
will no longer find Chagal's two golden moons.*

*The moons now wander above another planet,
frightened away by grim silence, no trace of them.
Gone now are those little towns where the
shoemaker was a poet,
The watchmaker a philosopher, the barber a
troubadour.*

*Gone now are those little towns where the wind
joined
Biblical songs with Polish tunes and Slavic rue,
Where old Jews in orchards in the shade of cherry
trees
Lamented for the holy walls of Jerusalem.*

*Gone now are those little towns, though the
poetic mists,
The moons, winds, ponds, and stars above them
Have recorded in the blood of centuries the tragic
tales,
The histories of the two saddest nations on earth.*

*- Elegy for the Little Jewish Towns,
Antoni Slonimski*

Many people invariably think of "Fiddler on the Roof" when they think of 19th and early 20th century Shtetl life. While it is true that music and dancing were important components of the Shtetl life, there was far more to it as well.

The Rabbi of the Shtetl always led his congregation with great dignity and was highly respected by all Jews. The people of the Shtetl, lived and worked hard to sustain their poor lives. There were a few well-to-do families, but the majority was poor artisans, storekeepers, and plain poor folk.

Any Jews that could spare time would go to Shul or the Beit Midrash to hear religious words or to read a religious book. Materialism was not common, with Jews managing to get along on very little. The main concern was one's spiritual life. Years passed by and generation after generation carried on the same way: people believed that nothing would ever change.

"Because of our traditions, we've kept our balance for many, many years. Here in Anatevka, we have traditions for everything. How to sleep, how to eat, how to work, how to wear clothes. For instance, we always keep our heads covered, and always wear a little prayer shawl that shows our constant devotion to G-d.

You may ask, "How did this tradition get started?" I'll tell you! ... I don't know. But it's a tradition, and because of our traditions, every one of us knows who he is and what G-d expects him to do".

The Pale of Settlement

From the end of the 18th century, Poland was no longer an independent state, with the anti-Semitic new Russian rulers instituting the 'Pale of Settlement' – a restricted area in which Jews were forced to live. Jews living in the 'Pale' could not move without approval from the police. Entire local populations could be abruptly "resettled," forced out of their homes, with no more legality than the impulse of a local governor. Jews were forbidden to own land. They were barred from colleges and universities and from even the most humble government jobs. They were not



"I know, I know. We are Your chosen people. But, once in a while, can't you choose someone else?"

allowed to practice certain crafts, skills, and trades. Life in the shtetl was very hard. In some years, thousands literally starved to death.

The world of Jews in Western Europe was vastly different from the world of Shtetl Jews in Poland. The world of the first was pretty similar to that of non-Jews of the same time-period; the world of the second was unique unto itself. City Jews in Eastern, as in Western, Europe were caught up in political and libertarian movements; they were both workers and bourgeoisie; they became trade unionists, social democrats, socialists, revolutionaries. But the shtetl was another world in of itself.

The Gefilte Fish Line

We generally tend to think of the Shtetls as identical villages scattered across Eastern Europe, but despite their similarities there were regional differences and nuances. Most famous of these was the 'Gefilte Fish Line.'

In the mid-1960s, Yiddish language scholar Marvin Herzog was perhaps the first to observe that plotting the boundaries of two of the main Yiddish dialects — the central Polish/Galician (Poylish/Galitzianer), and the more northern Lithuanian (Litvak) — creates a map that lines up exactly with the sweet and savory culinary lines. It's a division that doesn't map to any other political or natural border — a strictly Jewish geography later dubbed "the Gefilte Fish Line."



Litvak/Ukrainian/Belarusian gefilte fish is made with salt (and pepper) and is eaten with horseradish (chrane) but if you travel fifty kilometres to the west of Warsaw, you may find sweet gefilte fish.

The Rise of Chassidut

Chassidut emerged on account of a number of things. One of which being a particularly tragic incident that rocked the Jewish world. Everyone thought that the final redemption was about to come. And then it didn't.

Shabtai Tzvi was a 17th century Sephardi rabbi from Smyrna, Anatolia. He claimed to be the Mashiach. For the Jews who had spent centuries longing for Jerusalem and suffering at the hands of the countries they lived in, this was a golden moment. How many years spent waiting for this to happen! Finally, they could afford to hope. Shabtai Tzvi amassed a large following; Jews sold their homes and everything they owned in preparation for moving to Eretz Yisrael.

In February 1666, upon arriving in Constantinople, Shabtai was imprisoned on the order of the grand vizier on accusations of fomenting sedition. Following some time in prison, Shabtai was given an ultimatum: death by ordeal, or conversion to Islam. Shabtai's commitment to his deception did not go as far as being willing to risk his own life. He converted to Islam, revealing himself to be a false prophet. A few hundred of his followers, unwilling to believe that it had all been a lie, converted with him. The remainder had their dreams crushed. The cruel realisation that they had uprooted their lives to follow a charlatan infused them with a sense of anger, cynicism and hopelessness.

This was the Europe into which Chassidut emerged, an antidote to the depression that gripped the Jews of the time. Chassidut is the movement of Orthodox Judaism that sought to renew the service of G-d so as to include the simple, even illiterate Jews of the Eighteenth Century. At such a time, only the scholars and Rabbis were considered beloved of G-d and actually able to serve Him through their study of the Talmud and the performance of the Mitzvot as they were written in the Shulchan Aruch. Jews were divided between the intellectual elite and the simple folk.



Then came Rabbi Israel ben Eliezer, the Baal Shem Tov. A student of Kabbalah, he stressed personal piety, humility, charity, mystical and ecstatic experience of the

The Baal Shem Tov

The Baal Shem Tov was Born in the region of Podolia (now in Ukraine) and lived between 1700-1760. He was named Israel ben Eliezer, but was called Baal Shem Tov, meaning "master of the Holy Name", because he professed to perform miracles by using the name of G-d. He was also known by the acronym Besht. A rabbi and student of Kabbalah, he stressed inner conversion, personal piety, humility, charity, mystical and ecstatic experience of the divine presence, and a joyful attitude towards life, rather than traditional learning and fixed doctrine. From about 1740 until his death, he lived in Medzhibozh, Podolia, where he attracted a large number of followers. From this group, which numbered about 10,000 at the time of his death, the modern Chasidim developed. Even during his lifetime, the Baal Shem Tov became the subject of many legendary tales. His sayings and the legends about him, preserved orally at first, were committed to writing as the Chasidic movement grew.

Divine presence, and a joyful attitude towards life, rather than traditional learning and fixed doctrine. He sought to inspire the simple Jews, to make them feel like a part of Judaism. He taught them that it's not about what you know. It's about your pride in being a Jew and your simple faith. As long as you have a fear of Heaven that prevents you from transgressing the Halachot then you are no longer on the outside. And if you do a little more, serving G-d with love and Joy, then you are a part of G-d's own inner circle, and have influence in Divine policy making. This powerful concept of trying to infuse one's life with spirituality in all aspects caught on very rapidly and thousands upon thousands of Jews were drawn to the Chassidic movement.

The arrival of the Mitnagdim

Rabbi Eliyahu ben Shlomo Zalman (1720-1797), also known as the Gra (Gaon Rav Eliyahu) or the Vilna Gaon, was the foremost scholar-sage of Lithuanian Jewry in the eighteenth-century and has become the spiritual forefather for much of the non-Chassidic yeshiva world. Known for his greatness in Talmudic and Kabbalistic study, he likewise mastered astronomy, mathematics and music. His system of Talmudic study was highly intellectual and focused on trying to find the true meaning intended by the sages in the text.

The Gra and his followers fiercely opposed Chassidut and were known as 'Mitnagdim', or opponents. Their opposition was based on the beliefs, vigorously denied by Chassidic leaders, that Chassidut took liberties with the oral Torah, that it substituted emotion for intellect in the Study of Torah, that its form of Tefilla departed too far from the traditional form of prayer. In the wake of the Shabtai Tzvi debacle, it was feared that the Chassidim would become another heretical sect. Chassidic traits, such as their laid-back attitude toward the appropriate hours for davening, bitterly provoked their opponents. The Chassidim answered that they couldn't legislate precise hours for each of the three daily tefillot; they prayed with such kavana (intensity) that they couldn't do so while looking at a watch.

"Chassidim advocated using a sharper knife when slaughtering animals than the one used by the Mitnagdim's slaughterers. Such stringency had a socially divisive effect: The Hasidim no longer could eat at the Mitnagdim's houses. The Chasidim also adopted a different Siddur, so that their davening differed somewhat from that of other Jews and had to be conducted separately. Their most brilliant act of "public relations" was labelling themselves Chassidim, the Hebrew word for both "pious" and "saintly," while calling their adversaries Mitnagdim, Hebrew for "opponents." These terms made the Chassidim seem like the more dynamic and positive of the two groups."

- Yaacov Katz, Israeli Historian

The Vilna Gaon

Rabbi Elijah ben Shlomo Zalman (1720-1797), also known as the Gra, was the foremost scholar-sage of Lithuanian Jewry in the eighteenth-century and has become the spiritual forefather for much of the non-Chassidic yeshiva world. Known for his greatness in Talmudic and Kabbalistic study, he likewise mastered astronomy, mathematics, and music. His system of Talmudic study focused on trying to find the true meaning intended by the sages in the text.

Known for fierce opposition to Chassidut, which was initiated in 1736 by the Baal Shem Tov, he and his followers in this anti-Chassidic Movement were known as "Mitnagdim," or opponents. Their opposition was based on the beliefs, vigorously denied by Chassidic leaders, that Chassidut took liberties with the Oral Torah, that it substituted emotion for intellect in the Study of Torah, that its form of Tefilla departed too far from the traditional form of prayer.

SUMMER MACHANE 5781

Bet Base: From Galut to Geula - מגלות לגאולה

K6: From Individuals to Communities: New Roots in Eastern Europe; Chassidut and Mitnagdut



With the passage of time, the Chassidim and Mitnagdlim recognised that their differences were increasingly inconsequential after both groups found themselves facing a common enemy: the nineteenth century Haskala, or Jewish Enlightenment. Jewish parents, who once feared that their Chassidic or Mitnagdish child might go over to the other camp, were now far more afraid that their child might become altogether irreligious.

An additional factor that lessened the Chassidish - Mitnagdish split was nineteenth and twentieth century Chassidut's increasing emphasis on Talmud study. As the movement expanded, it put less emphasis on meditation and hitbodedut (time spent alone with one's thoughts) and more on traditional Jewish learning. As a result, Chassidim today are no longer regarded as revolutionaries; in fact, they are the conservative stronghold of Chareidi Judaism, easily recognised by the eighteenth and nineteenth century black coats and hats worn by most of their male supporters.



Nonetheless, the Chassidic approach to Judaism significantly differs from that of the Mitnagdlim. Chassidut generally places a much greater stress on simcha shel mitzvah — the joy of performing a commandment where the Lithuanian (Mitnagdish) outlook feels that this is an unnecessary requirement.

In hindsight, we see that the Chassidic movement contributed significantly to the revitalisation of Eastern European Jewry. It brought a lot of people back to Judaism who could well have been lost because they didn't have the time or ability to study. Jewish history did not see the fears of the Mitnagdlim materialise. The Chassidic movement did not create a separate religion and while it has developed its own customs, it did not cause a tremendous split.



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Bet Base: From Galut to Geula - מגלות לגאולה

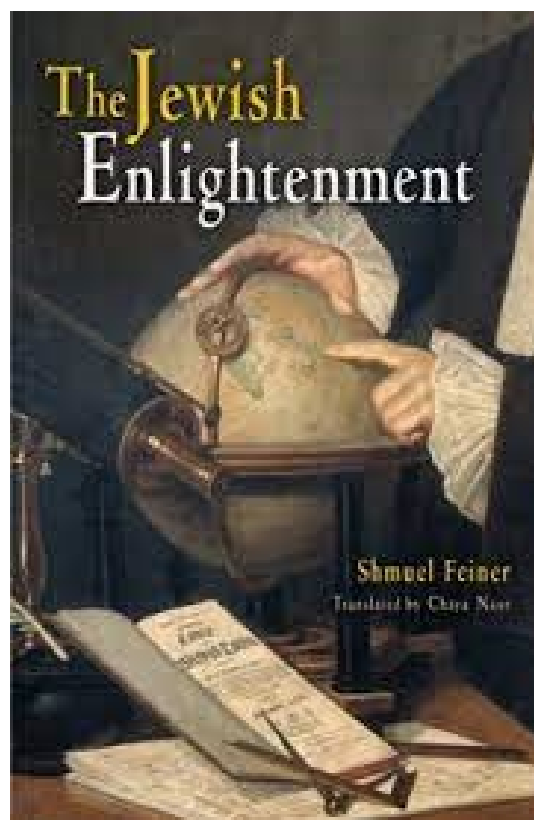
K6: From Individuals to Communities: New Roots in Eastern Europe; Chassidut and Mitnagdut

DISCUSSION POINT – If you were alive then, would you be a Chassid or a Mitnaged? Why?
To what extent have Chassidim and non-Chassidim nowadays been affected by each other's ideologies?
Did Chassidut need Mitnagdish Judaism and vice versa?
Can the disagreements between the Chassidim and Mitnagdim be seen today reflected in contemporary arguments within Orthodox Judaism?
Is this divided reflected in the focus on Kiruv/Chinuch?

Summary of K6

We have seen the development of the Jewish settlement in Eastern Europe, as well as the emergence of the Shtetl. We explored Shtetl life; its ups and downs and finally looked at Chassidut and the Mitnagdim, and how these two ideologies formed two distinct new communities.

K7: From Confusion to Clarity: The Enlightenment and Jewish Reactions



Aims:

1. **Learn** about the Enlightenment.
2. **Identify** the Jews who embraced the Enlightenment.
3. **Understand** the different Jewish reactions to the Enlightenment.

Summary

Both K3 and K7 look at Jewish reactions to new challenges for the continuity of the Torah. In K3 we looked at the challenges facing the continuity of the Oral Law in Galut and how ultimately it was compiled.

In this K, we are looking at the challenges faced by the Jews of the 18th Century with the rise of the "Enlightenment". We will look at what the Enlightenment was, how different Jews of the time reacted to it, and its implications in the grand picture of the Galut.

This Kvutza will address some of the following questions:

- 📖 What was the Enlightenment?
- 📖 What was Jewish society like beforehand?
- 📖 What is Emancipation?
- 📖 What is Assimilation?
- 📖 What did the Enlightenment challenge in contemporary Jewish thought?
- 📖 How did Jews react to the Enlightenment?
- 📖 How does our state of Galut or Geula affect our relationship with secular studies?



German Jewish Society Pre-Haskalah

As early as the 1740's Jewish people living in Germany, Poland and Lithuania had a desire to learn secular education. However up until then, education had in the main been religious and only elite members of society received a broader secular education. In addition, the Jewish people were very removed from modern society, keeping themselves to themselves and living in their isolated shtetls.

In this segregated world, the Rabbi was the primary influence in the community, acting as the leader and as a civil judge in court cases between Jews. Despite this, there were some very wealthy Jews who became very successful businessmen, founded new industries and gave financial assistance to some local rulers.

The Haskalah

The word "Haskalah", loosely translated as "The Enlightenment", was a period in Jewish history between 1770 and 1880. Beginning in Germany, the Haskalah was inspired by the European Enlightenment, also known as the Age of Reason, which in many ways defined the 18th century. Ideas such as democracy, secularism and

rationalism replaced religion's dominant role in society, thereby opening the door for Jews to leave their segregated shtetls and contribute to wider society.

However, the Enlightenment also heralded the arrival of wide-spread assimilation, as Jews began making extra efforts to fit into their newly accepting society. True equality, however, remained elusive and anti-Semitism did not disappear.

Advocates of this movement were called 'Maskilim' (intelligent ones), who believed in the integration of Jews into western culture. Its central advocate was Moses Mendelssohn, who believed that Jews should leave the ghetto mentality. Maskilim encouraged learning German and Hebrew, both languages of culture, as opposed to Yiddish. An example of this was Mendelssohn's translation of the Torah into German for the first time.

There were four main categories of change within society which the Maskilim tried to change.

1) Education

The Maskilim attempted to remove Gemara learning from Jewish education. Rather, studies emphasised secular knowledge, common sense and tolerance, in order to enable Jewish children people to assimilate into regular society.

The first Haskalah school was founded in Berlin in 1778 and called both the Freischule ("Free School") and Hinnukh Ne'arim ("Youth Education"). It provided free education designed for poor children and the curriculum included German, French, arithmetic, geography, history, art, some Bible studies and Hebrew. The school was successful and began with 70 students. Other Haskalah style schools developed in Dessau and Frankfort on the Main, among other places. In all of these schools, Talmud was almost completely abandoned and both Hebrew and general studies were taught. Educators began to write textbooks to guide the new curricula.



There were no Jewish secondary schools and those who continued their studies went to non-Jewish institutions. In Russia, as the hope of emancipation grew, the number of Jewish children studying in Russian secondary schools increased from 2,045 in 1870 to 8,000 in 1880.

2] Language

At the earliest stages of "The Enlightenment" the majority of the Jewish people in European countries spoke Yiddish. However, during this time period, Jews began speaking other European languages, with rich Jews speaking French. Moses Mendelssohn stated that he thought Yiddish was "ridiculous, ungrammatical, and a cause of moral corruption". It was felt by the Maskilim that sometimes Yiddish was used as a code language between the Jewish people.

Interestingly, during this time period a revival of Hebrew, in particular Biblical Hebrew, began. The Haskalah publication "Ha-Me'assef", meaning "The Gatherer", was released in an aim to increase the use of Hebrew. This publication rejected rabbinical Hebrew, instead writing poems, essays and historical accounts in Biblical Hebrew.



By the 1820s, the focus of the Haskalah shifted to the Austrian empire. A new journal, Bikkurei ha-Ittim ("First Fruits of the Times") was published annually in Vienna between 1821 and 1832. It included poetry, literature, biographies and satire of aspects of traditional Judaism that the maskilim opposed. The first Hebrew journal devoted to modern Jewish scholarship was the Kerem Hemed ("Vineyard of Delight") published in Vienna, Prague and Berlin between 1833 and 1856.

In Russia, a Jewish press helped spread Haskalah ideas. Newspapers were founded in the 1860s in both Hebrew and Yiddish that called for an alliance between the Jews and the Russian government. Most maskilim, however, saw Yiddish and even Hebrew as only temporary instruments for spreading ideas, and sought to promote Russian as the dominant language.

3] Literature

Following the reintroduction of the Hebrew language many new novels were written. The novels depicted the ancient Jewish people as lovers and warriors. The implication being that Jews should not be passive, but should actively fight by taking political action.

They wrote in Hebrew for the intellectuals, though they still used Yiddish for the masses. In theory, German writings in Yiddish were addressed to women (who were not taught Hebrew) and uneducated men. The Yiddish writers generally wrote fiction while the Hebrew writers composed essays and poetry. The Yiddish writers developed from the early Hebrew romanticism into realism.

During the 1860s and 1870s many Hebrew writers turned to literary and social criticism. Later texts were used by the Maskilim to denounce the practices of Chassidim and the Orthodox.

4) Jobs

The Maskilim encouraged a switch in Jewish professions. Jews moved from commercial jobs such as money lending and trade to more skilled jobs such as crafts and agriculture. The Maskilim thought this would improve both the character and the position of Jews in society. Some German schools taught their students crafts, and then found the boys apprenticeships with Christian craftsman.

After the 1812 emancipation law in Prussia, a society for the Promotion of Industry was formed. This was a Jewish group that stood up for the interests of Jewish apprentices and supported Jewish creativity. Some Maskilim also advocated manual labour because they felt it taught morality.

Moses Mendelssohn

Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1789) was born in Dessau in Germany and is commonly known as the father of the Haskalah movement. Many of his ideas were brought from the secular Enlightenment, particularly from Christian Wolff (a prominent philosopher of the Enlightenment) and Gottfried Leibnitz (a European rationalist). He combined Judaism with the rationalism of the Enlightenment, becoming one of the principal figures in the Haskalah.



Mendelssohn valued reason and felt that anyone could arrive logically at religious truths. For some people he was even the 3rd Moshe - after Moshe Rabbeinu and Rambam (Moshe Maimonides). For other people his ideas led to assimilation, a loss of Jewish identity and a dilution of Jewish traditions. He was also the man behind the first Jewish school for boys which included secular and religious lessons.

Jewish Reactions to the Haskalah

1) Mussar Movement

Rabbi Yisroel Salanter established the Mussar Movement, which emphasises the study and practice Jewish values and ethics. The concept that greatness could be achieved through building of character became more recognized as it provided the oppressed masses of Eastern Europe, who were not able to achieve greatness through Torah scholarship, with a sense of self-worth and an achievable aim.

Rabbi Salanter emphasizing the difference between his movement and the Reform. "The Reform is out to change Judaism. I am merely out to change Jews." Due to his sincerity, personal great scholarship, and the truth of his words, Mussar eventually wins out and its study is incorporated into the curriculum of many Yeshivot.

2) Reform

Leaders such as Israel Jacobson and Abraham Geiger started the Reform movement in the early 19th Century in Germany from where it eventually spread across Europe. Their aim was to change Jewish belief and practice in order to take the opportunity to 'fit in' more with modern enlightened German society. They believed in eradicating Jewish national identity and prayers for the return to Zion. Reform 'temples' (so called because they replaced visions of a rebuilt Temple) featured organs, German songs and aimed to resemble a church service.

Some Reform Jewish leaders came to Reform for theological reasons, viewing Judaism as a religion which constantly needed Reform in order to progress and be the enlightened religion of the times whereas others went for historical reasons, believing that in the age of the enlightenment, the need for Judaism and the separateness of a Jewish people was no longer necessary and Jews should take the opportunity to become more German.



Soon, Shabbat was observed on Sunday, the divinity of the Torah was denied and circumcision was dropped, as was the shofar, kippot and other religious items. These 'Germans of the Mosaic persuasion', said that 'Berlin is the new Jerusalem'.

Torah im Derech Eretz

Rav Shimshon Rafael Hirsch was the leader of this movement along with other Rabbis including Rabbi Azriel Hildesheimer and was a major critic of the reformers. Rav Hirsch moved to Frankfurt, a place where the banning of shechita, learning Torah and the mikveh by Reformers had almost destroyed the religious community and re-invigorated Orthodox Judaism there and throughout Germany. He succeeded in establishing a shul and argued that "An excellent thing is study of Torah combined with the ways of the world (Derech Eretz)", meaning that integration into European life should enhance a Torah lifestyle.



He argued and showed that one could be a good member of secular society with a secular education and a profession; taking advantage of all the best of the enlightenment whilst still maintaining authentic Halachic Orthodox Judaism. The belief that there is no contradiction between true Orthodox Judaism and playing a part in society is the main influence behind today's Modern Orthodoxy.

Chadash Asur min haTorah

Rabbi Moshe Schreiber [Sofer] - the Chatam Sofer - was the leading Rabbi in Pressburg [Bratislava] and was one of the leading proponents against Reform Judaism and any changes in Judaism more generally. In response to the Reform movement, he argued that any interaction with the secular world would lead to assimilation and the best approach was to remain isolated, as "New things are forbidden by the Torah".

This has been the guiding principle for today's strictly Charedi community. In many ways, Charedi Judaism as we know it has been formed as a result of the Chatam Sofer and his school of thoughts response to and rejection of the Enlightenment and the more isolationist response they took compared to those such as Rav Hirsch.

The Result of the Haskalah

The results of the Haskalah were astounding. Many Jewish people started assimilating and stopped keeping Halacha. The Haskalah also triggered Jewish emigration to America, Palestine and other places away from the Shtetl and 'Der Heim.' In Russia, the Haskalah also prompted the formation of the Chibbat Zion

movement. Chibbat Zion was a pre-Zionist movement, beginning in the 1880s, advocating revival of Jewish life in the Land of Israel. Its adherents worked toward the physical development of the Land, and founded agricultural settlements in Palestine. By the time the First Zionist Congress met in 1897, they had already begun to transform the face of the Palestine.

It is undeniable that the Haskalah changed the face of Judaism. Not only did it largely contribute towards the revival of the Zionist movement, but education, language, literature and employment were all affected. Indeed, the influence of the Haskalah movement on World Jewry can still be seen today.

DISCUSSION POINT – How much interaction should we have with modern secular society?

What school of thought would you have chosen to follow at the time?

Was Rav Hirsch's school of thought correct?

Are there any dangers with the Torah im Derech Eretz approach?

Are some approaches less risky than others?

How much are we influenced by these schools of thought today?

Summary of K7

We have seen the background to the Haskalah and the areas that the Maskilm particularly focused on. We also looked at four different reactions to the Haskalah and finally explored its impact.

K8: Destruction and Reaction: The Holocaust



Aims:

1. **Discover** what Jewish life was like in Germany before the Nazis.
2. **Learn** about the progression from normal life to the ghettos, to concentration and extermination camps.
3. **Explore** the acts of heroism amidst the annihilation.

Summary

It would be impossible to chart the Jewish people's history from the Destruction of the Temple until now without including a Kvutza on the most horrific period of our history. There is so much to learn on the Holocaust and this K just touches on some of the points. As well as looking at the tragedy itself, we will also be looking at Jewish life before, and some of the acts of strength and courage that came out of the Holocaust.

This Kvutza will address some of the following questions:

- ❏ What was the Enlightenment?
- ❏ What was Jewish society like beforehand?
- ❏ What is Emancipation?
- ❏ What is Assimilation?
- ❏ What did the Enlightenment challenge in contemporary Jewish thought?
- ❏ How did Jews react to the Enlightenment?
- ❏ How does our state of Galut or Geula affect our relationship with secular studies?



Jewish life pre-Holocaust

Napoleon emancipated the Jews across Europe, but with Napoleon's fall in 1815, growing nationalism resulted in increasing oppression. In 1819, Hep-Hep riots (pogroms) in Bavaria destroyed Jewish property and killed many Jews. The Revolution of 1848 swung the pendulum back towards freedom for the Jews, and in 1871, with the unification of Germany by Bismarck, came their emancipation, but the financial crisis of 1873 created another era of repression.



Starting in the 1870s, anti-Semites of the Völkisch (German ethno-nationalistic) movement were the first to describe themselves as such, because they viewed Jews as part of a Semitic race that could never be properly assimilated into German society. Such was the ferocity of the anti-Jewish feeling of the Völkisch movement that by 1900 the term 'anti-Semitic' had entered English to describe anyone who had anti-Jewish feelings. However, despite massive protests and petitions, the Völkisch movement failed to persuade the government to revoke Jewish emancipation, and in the 1912 Reichstag elections, the parties with Völkisch movement sympathies suffered a temporary defeat.

Jews experienced a period of seemingly legal equality from 1848 until the rise of Nazi Germany. In the opinion of historian Fritz Stern, by the end of the 19th century, what had emerged was a Jewish-German relationship, where German Jews had merged elements of German and Jewish culture into a unique new one. However, legal equality and actual practice did not coincide.

A higher percentage of German Jews fought in World War I than that of any other ethnic, religious or political group in Germany—in fact, some 12,000 died for their country. Ironically, it was a Jewish lieutenant, Hugo Gutmann, who awarded the Iron Cross, First Class, to a 29-year-old corporal named Adolf Hitler. Interestingly, when Hitler came to power in 1933, Gutmann left Germany and escaped to the United States.

In October 1916, the German Military High Command administered Judenzählung (census of Jews). Designed to confirm accusations of the lack of patriotism among German Jews, the census disproved the charges, but its results were not made public. Denounced as a “statistical monstrosity”, the census was a catalyst to intensified antisemitism and social myths such as the “stab-in-the-back legend” (Dolchstosslegende).

Following World War I, many German Jews received high political positions such as foreign minister and vice chancellor in the Weimar Republic. The Weimar constitution was the work of a German Jew, Hugo Preuss, who later became minister of the interior. Marriages between Jews and non-Jews became somewhat common from the 19th century; for example, the wife of German Chancellor Gustav Stresemann was Jewish.

The shift to racial anti-Semitism

Anti-Semitism must be understood in its entirety before its role in the Holocaust can be understood. In many different forms, it has been in existence for up to 4,000 years, long before the rise of Christianity. Contempt against the Jews has ranged from religious hatred to social hatred and, finally, to racial hatred. From the beginning of Jewish history, the Jewish people have been very community and family-orientated, even exclusive, believing themselves to be specifically chosen by G-d to be “*a kingdom of priests and a holy nation*” (Shemot 19:6).

Religious hatred developed in the Middle Ages where Jews were called the “killers of Jesus” and usurers (money lenders who charge interest at unfair rates), evil and impure, among many other insults. They were said to be committers of deicide, as it was felt that all Jews were responsible for the murder of Jesus. Since

Christian ethics forbade usury, or money-lending for profit, the Christians turned to the Jewish when they needed monetary assistance. However, they quickly forgot their own borrowing when it became convenient to label the Jews as sinners for their usury.

Over time, this hatred developed a myth in which the hope of the Jews was to take over the world. This myth, along with the stereotypes placed on Jewish people, led many to fear the far-reaching Jewish dispersion into Europe and other parts of the world.

This mutated into racial hatred in the 20th century as Hitler developed and encouraged it, as Jews were "polluting" superior races by spreading into the communities of European countries and "defiling" the "pure" races.

The Nazi rise to power

From the beginning of the Nazi rise to power, one of the top priorities on the Nazi agenda was the elimination of Jews from German lands. This was a crucial aspect of the Nazi movement, as Hitler's eventual plan was to rearm Germany and build up a force to invade other countries and spread the pure Aryan race. Therefore, in Hitler's hope for absolute control, he needed to evoke strong feelings in the masses and in the minds of his soldiers so that he would be able to build up a "mob mentality" and gain vast support for his movement. German Nationalism was to be one of his major tools.

Hitler realised quite markedly that after the Treaty of Versailles, in which the German state had been ridiculed, as well as in the following economic crisis, the Germans were desperate for a symbol that would pull them back together and bring pride to their country. However, strong nationalism, in the form Hitler planned, required a common enemy for the people, or a scapegoat. While he found this enemy in many groups, the most prominent was the Jewish community which he had so long detested. The Jews were blamed for the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, Germany's consequent embarrassment and were also said to be responsible for all economic problems the country had endured. Further, the Jews, as Hitler described it, were planning a world take over by the "poisoning" of pure races with Jewish blood.

As soon as Hitler came to power in 1933, the Nazi government moved to eradicate Jewish influence in German political and business spheres. Law followed law as Hitler attempted to remove the Jews from any type of power, but he was also eager to completely eliminate them from his National Socialist country. When

Hitler invaded Poland in 1939, Germany already had many Jews of its own, and each time he conquered land he was faced with the "problem" of more Jews, first in Poland, then Holland and Belgium, and finally Norway, France and Russia, not to mention a significant number of Jews from other countries of Europe.

To segregate the Jews from the pure Aryan race, the Nazis re-established the Jewish ghettos in Poland and other countries, which had long fallen out of use, and in which the Jewish families were forced to live. Piece by piece, all Jewish rights were removed. The Jews were eventually forbidden to attend theatres and schools, then forced to wear the Star of David at all times so that those of "pure Aryan blood" would immediately recognize them as Jews and thus avoid them. Finally, they were forbidden to walk on the sidewalks of German cities, and the ghettos quickly became large prisons for entire communities.

Even with the development of the ghettos, however, the number of Jews that lived in Nazi lands could not be "brought under control." They were simply too many, and Hitler was not sure what to do with them. In fact, the Allied nations had met at the Evian Conference in July of 1938 to discuss the problem of Jewish immigration and revise the number of Jews allowed into their countries. For all the apparent effort, however, no nation could seem to agree to take on the burden, and the world turned away from Hitler and his "Jewish Problem."

Life in the Ghetto

Life in the ghettos was usually unbearable. Overcrowding was common. One apartment might have several families living in it. Plumbing broke down, and human waste was thrown in the streets along with the garbage. Contagious diseases spread rapidly in such cramped, unsanitary housing. People were always hungry. Germans deliberately tried to starve residents by allowing them to purchase only a small amount of bread, potatoes, and fat. Some residents had some money or valuables they could trade for food smuggled into the ghetto; others were forced to beg or steal to survive.

During the long winters, heating fuel was scarce, and many people lacked adequate clothing. People weakened by hunger and exposure to the cold became easy victims of disease; tens of thousands died in the ghettos from illness, starvation, or cold. Some individuals killed themselves to escape their hopeless lives.

In order to survive, children had to be resourceful and make themselves useful. Small children in the Warsaw ghetto sometimes helped smuggle food to their

families and friends by crawling through narrow openings in the ghetto wall. They did so at great risk, as smugglers who were caught were severely punished. Many young people tried to continue their education by attending school classes organized by adults in many ghettos. Since such classes were usually held secretly, in defiance of the Nazis, pupils learned to hide books under their clothes when necessary, to avoid being caught.

Although suffering and death were all around them, children did not stop playing with toys. Some had beloved dolls or trucks they brought into the ghetto with them. Children also made toys, using whatever bits of cloth and wood they could find. In the Lodz ghetto, children turned the tops of empty cigarette boxes into playing cards.

The Start of the Genocide

Those Jews who were not in the ghettos were placed in forced labour camps or similar institutions designed to get them out of the way of the German plan. When Hitler invaded Russia in 1941, many Jews were simply killed by mobile killing squads known as the Einsatzgruppen, who swept in behind the army and eliminated as many "undesirables" as possible in mass killings. Hundreds of the thousands of Jews and other "inferiors" were killed in this manner, but the majority of them were the Jews who had nowhere else to go and stood in Hitler's way of creating lebensraum (living space) for the pure Aryan race he dreamed of.

Life in the ghettos and concentration camps was harsh from the beginning, as there was no desire to provide for the Jews any more than was necessary, and in most cases less than that. The victims in concentration camps were, as the German soldiers termed it, "dehumanized," so that the camp leaders and workers would feel no remorse at watching them die. They were forced to give up all individual possessions, their heads were shaved, they were given uniforms, and their names were replaced with tattooed numbers. Many died in the ghettos due to starvation, rampant disease, or even dehydration.

The Final Solution

Finally, in January of 1942, fifteen prominent men of the Nazi government met to discuss a "Final Solution to the Jewish Problem." From this conference, known as the Wannsee Conference, the decision was made after little debate to exterminate all of the Jews that could be of no use to the Nazis in labour camps. Thus began the "elimination" of almost six million Jewish people and over five million others of "undesirable" genetic or racial backgrounds. The Nazis hoped to rid themselves of the filthy ghettos by sending the Jews to extermination camps, concentration

camps organized for the explicit purpose of efficiently murdering in mass numbers.

Within these camps the infamous gas chambers were built, in which hundreds at a time could be asphyxiated with Zyklon B, and their bodies cremated in nearby ovens. This decision, this "Final Solution to the Jewish Problem," had made it state policy to simply eliminate the "inferior" people by mass murder.

Was it all just destruction? The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

Many Jews in ghettos across eastern Europe tried to organize resistance against the Germans and to arm themselves with smuggled and homemade weapons. Between 1941 and 1943, underground resistance movements formed in about 100 Jewish groups. The most famous attempt by Jews to resist the Germans in armed fighting occurred in the Warsaw Ghetto.

Mordechai Anielewicz

Anielewicz was born in 1919 into a poor family living in Warsaw. After finishing secondary school, Anielewicz soon joined the Zionist movement ha-Shomer ha-Tsa'ir, where he distinguished himself as an organizer and leader. In early 1940 he was a full-time underground activist, setting up youth groups and underground newspapers. By mid-1941, Anielewicz began concentrating on transforming the underground youth movements into an armed resistance movement. He also began creating self-defence organizations in the ghetto.

During the beginning of the uprising, Anielewicz was in the midst of the main fighting forces. When the street fighting ended and the Germans introduced a large military force against the few hundred Jewish fighters, he and some of his staff retreated into the bunker at 18 Mila Street. The Germans proceeded to burn down the ghetto, block by block. On May 8, 1943, Anielewicz and most of the main group of ZOB were killed in the bunker.

In the summer of 1942, about 300,000 Jews were deported from Warsaw to Treblinka. When reports of mass murder in the killing centre leaked back to the Warsaw ghetto, a surviving group of mostly young people formed an organization called the Z.O.B. (for the Polish name, Żydowska Organizacja Bojowa, which means Jewish Fighting Organization).

The Z.O.B., led by 23-year-old Mordechai Anielewicz, issued a proclamation calling for the Jewish people to resist going to the railroad cars. In January 1943, Warsaw ghetto fighters fired upon German troops as they tried to round up another group of Jews for deportation. Fighters used a small supply of weapons that had been smuggled into the ghetto. After a few days, the troops retreated. This small victory inspired the ghetto fighters to prepare for future resistance.

In addition to the ZOB, there was another resistance group, the Żydowski Związek Wojskowy (Jewish Military Union, ZZW). The ZZW was formed by activists of the National Zionist Organisation and its youth wing, Betar. The organisation was formed after Revisionist Zionists were declined the possibility to join the ranks of the Jewish Combat Organisation due to deep-running political disagreements dating back to the pre-war period. By virtue of the fact that almost all of the estimated 150-260 members of the ZZW were killed in the Uprising, or shortly after, as well as its existence being suppressed by the Soviet Union after the war, very little is known of the ZZW's activities.

On April 19, 1943, the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising began after German troops and police entered the ghetto to deport its surviving inhabitants. Seven hundred and fifty fighters fought the heavily armed and well-trained Germans. The ghetto fighters were able to hold out for nearly a month, but on May 16, 1943, the revolt ended. The Germans had slowly crushed the resistance. Of the more than 56,000 Jews captured, about 7,000 were shot, and the remainder were deported to killing centres or concentration camps.

What is known, is that during the uprising, ZZW insurgents were engaged in fierce fights in defence of the fortified base at 7 Muranowska Street and other houses at Muranowski Square. The Polish and Zionist flag hoisted by the ZZW on one of the high tenement houses near Muranowski Square became a symbol of the uprising. The flags were even visible outside the ghetto walls.



After three days of fighting, ZZW combatants escaped from the ghetto through a tunnel dug under Muranowska Street and hid in the house at 6 Muranowska Street.

They were eventually denounced and discovered by Germans and many fell in the resulting battle. Some managed to reach Michalin, but after being discovered by the Blue Police and gendarmerie, they dispersed, and many were killed in a roundup. After the death of its leaders, the ZZW ceased to exist. Several of its members went into hiding in Warsaw. Only three names of ZZW privates who survived the 1944 Warsaw Uprising are known.

Hannah Szenes

Hannah Szenes (or Chana Senesh) was born in Hungary on July 17th, 1921. Senesh came from an assimilated Hungarian Jewish family and studied at a Protestant school open to Catholics and Jews. Meeting anti-Semitism there, she joined the Maccabiah Zionist youth group while in high school. After she graduated in 1939, she made aliyah and trained in an agricultural school in Nahalal and then joined Kibbutz Sdot Yam in 1941. She also joined the Haganah. Then her wish came true. The British finally consented to form units for Jews from Palestine in the framework of the SOE (Special Operations Units also known as the "Baker Street Irregulars"), and in 1943 Senesh was sent to Egypt for parachute training.



On March 14, 1944, she and two colleagues were parachuted into Yugoslavia and joined a partisan group. After landing, they learned the Germans had already occupied Hungary, so the men decided to call off the mission as too dangerous.

Hadracha Hot Tip

Channah Senesh was also a poet and diarist. Her most famous poem is titled 'A Walk to Caesarea' but known as E-li, E-li (My G-d, my G-d). This is a good opportunity to teach your chanichim the version of this poem which has been put to music.



Senesh continued on and headed for the Hungarian border. At the border, she and her companions were arrested by Hungarian gendarmes, who found her British military transmitter, used to communicate with the SOE and other partisans. She was taken to a prison, stripped, tied to a chair, and tortured.

The guards wanted to know the code for her transmitter so they could find out who the parachutists were and trap others. Transferred to a Budapest prison, Senesh was repeatedly interrogated and tortured, but only revealed her name and refused to provide the transmitter code, even when her mother was also arrested. They threatened to kill her mother if she did not cooperate, but she refused.

While in prison, Senesh used a mirror to flash signals out of the window to prisoners in other cells and communicated using large cut-out letters that she placed in her cell window one at a time and by drawing the Magen David in the dust.

She was tried for treason in Hungary on 28 October 1944 and was executed by firing squad on 7 November 1944.

The Other Type of Heroism

In Bergen Belsen concentration camp, after a day of random selections of victims to be brutally murdered, night fell. A wooden clog of one of the inmates was placed not far from the heaps of bodies. Shoe polish used by inmates to shine soldier's shoes was put inside the wooden clog. A piece of thread pulled from the thin uniforms of the inmates was carefully stuck into the polish, because tonight was Chanukah, and on Chanukah we light the Chanukiah.

The Rabbi of Bluzhov lit the light and recited the first two blessing in the festive chant, which tonight was covered with sorrow and pain. When he reached the third blessing he paused. He looked around him as if he were searching for something, then immediately turned back and recited the third blessing. "Blessed are you, Lord our G-d, King of the universe, who has kept us alive and has preserved us and enabled us to reach this season."

Among the living skeletons gathered to witness the lighting of the Chanukiah was Mr. Zamietchkowski. After the rabbi had finished Mr. Zamietchkowski, a man with a passion for discussing matters of religion and faith, went up to the rabbi and said "I understand your need to light the Chanukiah here in the gates of hell, But how can you say the third blessing thanking G-d for bringing us here to this season, when hundreds of dead Jewish bodies are lying in the shadows of the Chanukah lights? When thousands of living Jewish skeletons are walking around the camp and millions more are being massacred all over Europe? For this you are thanking G-d? This is what you call 'keeping us alive'?"



"Mr. Zamietchkowski" said the rabbi "You are completely correct. I too when I reached that bracha paused and asked myself what I should do with this blessing. I turned my head in order to ask the Rabbi of Zaner and other distinguished Rabbis who were standing near me. But as I turned my head, I saw a crowd of living Jews, expressing faith, devotion and concentration as they were listening to the kindling of the Chanukah lights. I said to myself, if G-d has a nation that at times like these, when lighting the Chanukah candles there are heaps of dead bodies lying around them and death lurks at every corner, if despite all of that, they stand with devotion and listen to the blessings, then indeed the third bracha is true and I am under special obligation to recite it."



There are many stories of people finding and keeping the faith during the Holocaust. Many stories of people going to extra lengths to keep the mitzvot where they can and deny the Nazi's from taking their faith. These stories, arguably, are the true resistance of the Jewish people in the Holocaust. No matter where they are, no matter how many of their family they have seen murdered in front of their eyes, they search with devotion the materials needed to fulfil the mitzvot Hashem commanded us. The Nazi's could take away their clothes, they could take away their possessions, they could even take away their right to live as a human being but the one thing they could not take away was our faith and trust in Hashem. If only we had that eagerness to fulfil the mitzvot today, when we are free and have access to any resources we need to make the mitzvah as 'beautiful' as possible.

Not just Jews

It is important to remember that although Jews were the primary victims of the Nazi's evil, many other groups were targeted based on both racial and political grounds. Other groups singled out by the Nazis included LGBTQ individuals, the physically and mentally disabled, Roma (gypsies), Poles and other Slavic peoples, Jehovah's Witnesses, and members of political opposition groups.

What Stands as a Memorial to the Holocaust today in Israel?

In Israel today, there are two main Holocaust museums. One is Yad Vashem, the other, nowadays slightly less well known is the Lochamey HaGeta'ot Museum. In

many ways these two museums represent two aspects of remembering the Holocaust. Yad Vashem emphasises the human tragedy of the Holocaust, the millions killed, and the communities destroyed. LoChamey HaGeta'ot (*The Ghetto Fighters, see photo*) does as its name suggests, focuses on the Jews who, as explained above, fought back in Warsaw and in other Ghettos and partisan groups who fought against the Nazis and their collaborators.



It is interesting to note that Israel's Holocaust Memorial Day's official name is 'Yom HaShoah v'HaGevura' – 'Holocaust and Strength Day'. The State of Israel and the Zionist Movement very much believed in viewing ourselves as the 'New Jew', no longer powerless people going to the slaughter, but people who could and would defend ourselves and take charge of our own destiny – The Geula Jew as opposed to the Galut Jew. As a result, the State of Israel in its early years chose to emphasise the memory those who fought back over those who were murdered in extermination camps.

Though this approach may seem a bit harsh, it can be understandable as the part played by the Jews who fought back cannot be underestimated. It is interesting to note that it took the German army just three weeks to invade, conquer and subjugate the whole of France, Belgium, Holland, and Luxembourg, yet it took them four weeks to take the Warsaw Ghetto.

DISCUSSION POINT – Which of these heroic acts of opposition do you think was more courageous?

- Do these acts parallel the actions taken following the destruction of the Bet haMikdash?**
- Do you think it was necessary to stand up and cause a commotion when you knew there was no way of stopping what was happening?**
- Was it worth making a stand, knowing that the repercussions would be very harsh?**

Summary of K8

We've looked at life for German Jewry prior to the Nazis rise to power, as well as the shift towards racial Jew-hatred at the beginning of the 20th century. We learned about the Nazis rise to power and how under their regime the Jews were sent to ghettos and concentration and extermination camps. We explored life in the ghetto, and acts of heroism amidst the annihilation.

K9: Galut and Geula: Israel



Aims:

1. **Understand** the Geula as a process.
2. **Realise** that this process has already begun.
3. **Explore** Kibbutz Galuyot and Aliyah.

Summary

As you know by now, (and if not – um where have you been?) the entire theme of machane has been Galut and Geula. We've been looking at various events and time periods in Jewish history as one big process moving towards the ultimate goal of Geula.

In this Kvutza, we will look at how the Geula itself is a process with its own stages and how at the heart of this process is Israel. To finish off the machane, we will look at how we can play a part in this process and the Geula of the Jewish people.

This Kvutza will address some of the following questions:

- ❏ How will redemption come?
- ❏ What are the stages?
- ❏ Is this the same as before?
- ❏ How do we know miracles have happened to us?
- ❏ Where do we go from here?
- ❏ What is our role?
- ❏ Is making Aliyah a mitzva?



What is the redemptive process?

Often, people picture "the redemption" or the coming of the Mashiach as a one-moment miraculous event. They imagine that they will hear the shofar and then the Beit HaMikdash will fall from heaven, Mashiach will come riding on a donkey, and all the Jews will immediately come to Israel, where we will be the dominant nation of the world. It is true that some midrashim describe the redemption in these terms. However, many sources describe it quite differently, with redemption coming 'cloaked in nature' instead of it being nature-defying.

"Once Rabbi Chiyya the Great and Rabbi Shimon ben Chalafta were walking in the valley of Arbel at daybreak and they saw the first rays of dawn as the daylight broke forth into the sky. Said Rabbi Chiyya the Great to Rabbi Shimon ben Chalafta ben Rebbe, "Like the break of day so is the redemption of Israel. It begins little by little and, as it proceeds, it grows greater and greater." Talmud Yerushalmi, Brachot 1:1 (4b)

Religious Zionism believes that the ultimate redemption to be a gradual process which we are currently in undergoing. We believe that this Geula is not something that will just happen after intense prayer, but that it takes time and human effort to bring it about. We believe that the events of history have been leading towards

the point of redemption, and that recent events surrounding the creation of the state of Israel are the beginning of the Geula - what is known as "*Reishit Semichat Geulateinu*", "The First Flowerings of our Redemption."



The Gemara in Sanhedrin (98a) explains that there are two models for redemption: "If [we] are worthy - [it will come] 'with the clouds of heaven (Daniel 7:3).' If [we] are unworthy - [Mashiach will come] 'poor and riding upon a donkey (Zechariah 9:9).'" The former refers to a miraculous, speedy redemption whereas the latter is a reference to a redemption cloaked in nature, a slower process, as the Or HaChaim HaKadosh explains (Vayikra 25:27).

Religious Zionists believe that we have been blessed to have witnessed, in the last century, the birth and development of the State of Israel, the most significant event in the "flowerings of our redemption". Whilst each significant event at its time seemed miraculous and beyond human comprehension - that a people emerging from the tragedy and devastation of the Holocaust could establish a flourishing state - with hindsight we can logically explain each miracle as being cloaked in nature, and not an unadulterated revelation of the Divine Will at work. This is not to say that the establishment of the State of Israel and its subsequent development was not miraculous, rather each event was a small, slow step in G-d's greater plan towards the final redemption as opposed to sudden descent of the 'clouds of heaven.'

Based on the belief that a slow, gradual Geula that needs physical effort to make it happen, we believe that we are fortunate to be a part of the redemptive process and that it is something we can help to move along.

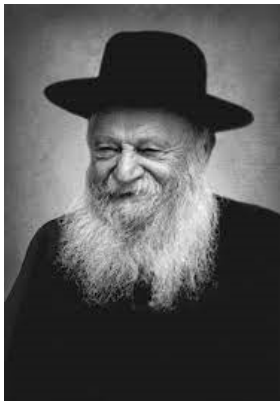
"Geula is the opposite of Galut. What is Galut? An abnormality. For instance, in our normal state, we need to be here, the entire nation of Israel, in the Land of Israel. And all of Eretz Yisrael needs to be in our hands. Thank G-d, Hashem's light is now shining upon us, and increasing, little by little, in gradual stages.

How different things were before the establishment of the State of Israel, when we were outside the Land, and the gentiles were in it, and the possibility for a Jew to enter Eretz Yisrael rested in foreign hands. This was a time of Galut.

SUMMER MACHANE 5781

Bet Base: From Galut to Geula - מגלות לגאולה

K9: Galut and Geula: Israel



We've progressed a bit since then and are returning to a normal condition: Eretz Yisrael is now in our hands! Jerusalem is now in our hands! And we are now independent! This process unfolds in stages. Just as Hashem can bring the redemption through miracles, He can do it without miracles, in a simpler way, through a natural process, via the conquest and settlement of Eretz Yisrael. The redemption which is unfolding before us appears in stages - not all at once."

- Rav Tzvi Yehuda haKohen Kook

The Redemption from Egypt

Our previous redemptions also occurred gradually. When Hashem took the Jews out of Egypt, the nation achieved physical independence without improving its spiritual standing; a first stage. The ultimate goal of this redemption – to transform Israel into a G-dly nation – only came about 49 days later when they received the Torah at Har Sinai, and they only entered Israel 40 years later!

The Redemption from Bavel

In K4 we looked at the Jewish dispersion to Bavel, and the subsequent return to Eretz Yisrael. This Geula after the destruction of the first Temple was also a slow process. At first, the exiles returned to Eretz Yisrael and established a small Jewish state, despite the fact that most of them did not keep mitzvot. In this state, they violated Shabbat, designating it as the market day in Jerusalem. Still, there is no doubt that this process was the beginning of the second redemption. Israel did not achieve full sovereignty, nor improve its spiritual state until the time of the Chanukah story 200 years later!

Purim

The Purim redemption also occurred in a similar way. First there was a small measure of political deliverance with Mordechai being given a position of authority. Later, Ester put Mordechai in charge of Haman's estate, but the decree to annihilate the Jews was still not annulled. Finally, towards the end of the process, the Jews reaffirmed their loyalty to G-d and eventually they were all saved.



Speedily in our days

Having looked at our history over the past 8 Kvutzot, to some extent, simple logic tells us that we are living in a very special era of Jewish existence.

The Jewish people were exiled from their Land 2000 years ago and have been subjugated and oppressed by nearly every nation that we have lived with since. The Prophets of Tanach assured us that we would eventually return to the Land and regain sovereignty over it. Kibbutz Galuyot (the ingathering of exiles) and the resettlement of the Land are clear components of the redemption we talk of, and it has all begun to occur in the last few generations.

One who truly contemplates the events of the past century will recognise the great miracles that have transpired and the hand of G-d that has brought it all about.

Kibbutz Galuyot

Since the founding of the Jewish state, many peoples have come together in one place; Am Yisrael is returning home.

The oldest, modern wave of Aliyah took place in the 18th and 19th centuries with the immigration of Chassidic and Kabbalistic Rabbis and their disciples, and the messianic dreams of the Vilna Gaon inspired hundreds of his disciples to make Aliyah as well.

The next wave of Aliyah (confusingly called the 'First Aliyah') occurred between 1881 and 1903. An estimated 25,000–35,000 Jews immigrated in this wave came mostly from Eastern Europe and from Yemen. Many of the European Jewish immigrants during the late 19th-early 20th century period gave up after a few months and went back to their country of origin, often suffering from hunger and disease. The success of this wave is debated: some Jews were able to succeed in Eretz Yisrael, and the Old Yishuv was founded, but at the same time, many Jews could not make it work.



The 'Second Aliyah' took place between 1904 and 1914, during which approximately 35,000 Jews immigrated mainly from the Russian empire and Yemen. The Second Aliyah is largely credited with the revival of the Hebrew language and establishing it as the standard language for Jews in Israel. Eliezer Ben-Yehuda contributed to the creation of the first modern Hebrew dictionary. Although he was an immigrant of the First Aliyah, his work mostly bore fruit during the second.

Most of the Second Aliyah's members were young people inspired by socialist ideals. The first kibbutz, Degania (1909), and Ha-Shomer, the first Jewish self-defence organization in Palestine were founded in this period, as was the Ahuzat Bayit neighbourhood, established as a suburb of Jaffa, which developed into Tel Aviv, the first modern all-Jewish city.



The 'Third Aliyah' lasted from 1919, after the end of WWI, until 1923. Of the approximately 40,000 Jews of this wave, almost all of them were from Eastern Europe. Most of the newcomers were young chalutzim (pioneers), who built roads and towns and began the draining of marshes in the Jezreel Valley and the Hefer Plain. Although the British Mandate imposed Aliyah quotas, the Yishuv numbered 90,000 by the end of this period.

The 'Fourth Aliyah' was a direct result of the economic crisis and anti-Jewish policies in Poland, along with the introduction of stiff immigration quotas by the United States. Most of the immigrants belonged to the middle class and brought modest sums of capital with which they established small businesses and workshops. Tel Aviv grew. Notwithstanding the Yishuv's economic woes, with an economic crisis in 1926-1928, the Fourth Aliyah did much to strengthen the towns, further industrial development and reinstate Jewish labour in the villages. In all, the Fourth Aliyah brought 82,000 Jews to Palestine, of whom 23,000 left.

The signal event of the 'Fifth Aliyah' was the Nazi accession to power in Germany in 1933. Persecution and the Jews' worsening situation caused aliyah from Germany to increase, and aliyah from Eastern Europe to resume. Many of the immigrants from Germany were professionals; their impact was to be felt in many fields of endeavour. Within a four-year period (1933-1936), 174,000 Jews settled in the country. The towns flourished as new industrial enterprises were founded and construction of the Haifa port and the oil refineries was completed. Throughout the country, "stockade and tower" settlements were established. During this period - in 1929 and again in 1936-39 - violent Arab attacks on the Jewish population took place, called "disturbances" by the British.

By 1940, nearly 250,000 Jews had arrived during the Fifth Aliyah (20,000 of them left later) and the Yishuv's population reached 450,000. From this time on, the practice of "numbering" the waves of immigration was discontinued.

Aliyah Bet

During World War II, the aliyah (immigration) effort focused on rescuing Jews from Nazi-occupied Europe. Some olim entered the country on visas issued under the White Paper quota but the majority came as illegal immigrants (Ma'apilim). This immigration, called Aliyah Bet, arrived by land and by sea, from Europe and the Middle East, in contravention of the British Mandatory government's orders.



From the end of World War II until the establishment of Israel (1945-1948), illegal immigration was the major method of immigration, because the British virtually terminated the option of legal immigration by setting the quota at a mere 18,000 Jews per year. During the years 1944-1948, the Jews in Eastern Europe sought to leave that continent

by any means. Emissaries from the Yishuv, Jewish partisans and Zionist youth movements cooperated in establishing the Beriha (escape) organization, which helped nearly 200,000 Jews leave Europe. The majority settled in Palestine.

"Illegal" immigration (Ha'apala) was also organized by the Mossad L'aliyah Bet, a branch of the Haganah. The Palyam, a marine branch of the Palmach, was given responsibility for commanding and sailing ships. Sixty-six illegal immigration sailings carrying 70,000 immigrants were organized during these years, but only a few managed to penetrate the British blockade and bring their passengers ashore. In 1947, 4,500 immigrants on the Exodus were sent back to Europe by the mandatory government. The British also stopped vessels carrying immigrants at sea and interned the captured immigrants in camps in Cyprus. Most of these people only arrived in Israel after the establishment of the state.



In total, it is estimated that between 1939 and 1948 approximately 110,000 Jewish immigrants had participated in Aliyah Bet by sailing to the territory of the British Mandate. The number of immigrants during the entire mandate period, legal and illegal alike, was approximately 480,000, close to 90% of them from Europe. The

population of the Yishuv expanded to 650,000 by the time statehood was proclaimed in 1948.

Operation Magic Carpet

Following the Partition Plan, Arab Muslim rioters, assisted by the local police force, engaged in a pogrom in Aden, Yemen, that killed 82 Jews and destroyed hundreds of Jewish homes. Aden's Jewish community was economically paralyzed, as most of the Jewish stores and businesses were destroyed. The increasingly perilous situation led to the emigration of virtually the entire Yemenite Jewish community between June 1949 and September 1950 in Operation Magic Carpet. During this period, over 50,000 Jews immigrated to Israel. The plan was for the Jews from all over Yemen to make their way to the Aden area. Over the course of the operation, hundreds of migrants died in Hashed Camp.



"I had no idea what I was getting into, absolutely none. It was pretty much seat-of-the-pants flying in those days. Navigation was by dead reckoning and eyesight. Planes were getting shot at. The airport in Tel Aviv was getting bombed all the time. We had to put extra fuel tanks in the planes so we had the range to avoid landing in Arab territory."

- Warren Metzger, pilot of Operation Magic Carpet

Aliyah from the Soviet Union

The 1970s Soviet Union aliyah was the mass immigration of Soviet Jews to Israel after the Soviet Union lifted its ban on Jewish refusenik emigration in 1971. More than 150,000 Soviet Jews immigrated during this period, motivated variously by religious or ideological aspiration, economic opportunity, and a desire to escape anti-Semitic discrimination.

Between 1989 and 2006, about 1.6 million Soviet Jews and their non-Jewish relatives and spouses, as defined by the Law of Return, emigrated from the former Soviet Union. About 979,000, or 61%, migrated to Israel. Another 325,000 migrated to the United States, and 219,000 migrated to Germany.

The majority of the immigrant wave were Ashkenazi Jews; however, a significant proportion were Mizrahi groups such as the Mountain Jews, Georgian Jews, and Bukharan Jews – with each ethnic group bringing its own distinctive culture to

Israel. The group successfully integrated economically into Israel: in 2012, the average salary of Former Soviet Union immigrants was comparable to that of native-born Israeli Jews.

What are the stages of Geula?

We've discussed that Geula will occur 'naturally' in stages. So what are they? The Gemara in Megillah (17b-18a) explains that the brachot in the Shmona Esrei were placed in their specific order to correspond with the order that the Geula will come and say that the order will be:



1. War will break out (Goel Yisrael)
2. Eretz Yisrael bearing fruits after being desolate (Mevarech haShanim)
3. The exiled will return to the Land (Teku beShofar)
4. Judges will bring wicked ones to Justice (Hashiva Shofteinu)
5. Sinners will perish (veLamalshinim)
6. The righteous will be praised (Al haTzaddikim)
7. Jerusalem will return to it's glory days (Velirushalayim)
8. Mashiach will come (Et Tzemach David)
9. Prayer will be returned (Shema Koleinu)
10. Divine service will be returned (Retzei)
11. We will give thanks to Hashem (Modeh)

How do we know that is it happening now?

On Yom Ha'Atzmaut 1956, just eight years after the establishment of the state, Rav Soloveitchik gave one of his most famous addresses later published as 'Kol Dodi Dofek: Listen - My Beloved Knocks'.



The title is taken from Shir HaShirim (Song of Songs 5:2), it tells the story of two lovers. The boy has been chasing the girl for a long time and treks many miles in order to find her. He finally arrives at her house in the middle of the night. He knocks on the door and she awakes but she stirs slowly. As he knocks on the door she slowly gets out of bed and gets dressed. In her slumber she finally arrives at the door only to find that her beloved has given up and has already left.

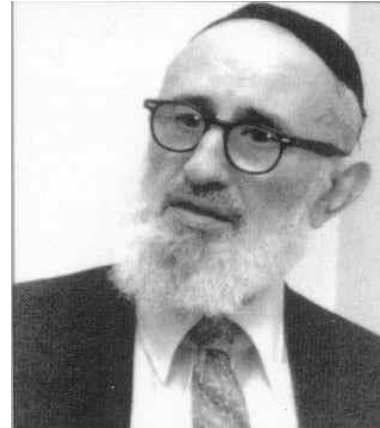
Rav Soloveitchik compares this relationship to that of G-d and the Jewish people. He shows how the State of Israel represents a series of knocks by G-d at the door of the Jewish People. He is asking us to recognise Him and to appreciate the

enormity of what is happening in our lifetime. It is the story of opportunity knocking.

The Rav spoke of six knocks:

1) **Political:** The issue of recognising the State of Israel was the only time the United States and the Soviet Union EVER agreed on anything in the United Nations. In fact, the two were racing to see which would be first to recognise Israel.

2) **War:** Israel's weak, ragtag, amateur army defeated the professional armed forces of SIX Arab nations, just like in the Chanukah story.



3) **Theological:** The Catholics teach that the Jews forfeited their right to Israel by denying Jesus. The return of Jews to Israel is the most blatant proof that they are wrong.

4) **Sociological:** Israel's existence has saved millions of Jews from assimilation. Among Reform and Conservative Jews, the State of Israel gives them an identity which they did not feel from the religious aspects of Judaism.

5) **Defence:** We stopped turning the other cheek whenever somebody attacks Jews. Now Jews have a state, which will speak up and retaliate when Jews are attacked. A Jewish army and a Jewish state can proclaim for the first time in two thousand years that Jewish blood is not free for the taking.

6) **Inclusion:** The first act of the State of Israel after declaring independence was to abolish the White Paper (which restricted Jewish immigration to Israel under the British), and establish the right of return, that any Jew anywhere could become a citizen.

DISCUSSION POINT – Rav Soloveitchik wrote these six knocks in 1956. Since then, would you add any knocks? If so, what would they be?

Kol Dodi Dofek makes us aware of just how amazing these events really are. For Jews to be able to live in our holy city is a privilege but to proclaim it as the capital of our own state is something which our ancestors could but dream of. Most of us are lucky enough to have visited Israel and to have prayed in Jerusalem.

Imagine how hard it would be to constantly face a city in prayer which you had never seen. For generations of Jews the Land of Israel was letters on paper or words in a song. Our people have merited to see, touch, live and feel a Jewish existence in the Jewish homeland. If we allow ourselves to take this for granted or forget what preceded it then we lose our right to have it.

The message of Kol Dodi Dofek is teach us to hear the knocking, not to remain to deaf and ignore when Hashem comes to our door. If we look back at the last century to all that has happened in Israel, is not clear that Hashem has been Knocking at our doors, telling us to get and go?

Doing Our Bit: Making Aliyah

Aliyah is one of the greatest Jewish phenomena of the past hundred years. For two millennia Jews across the world have been yearning to return to the Land of their ancestors. All prayers were directed to the land and thrice daily they prayed to return. But what is the nature of our connection to the land? Is it just a nice place to live with clean beaches and kosher cuisine or is there something more?

The land of Israel is not some external entity. It is not merely an external acquisition for the Jewish people. It is not merely a means of uniting the populace. It is not merely a means of strengthening our physical existence. It is not even merely a means of strengthening our spiritual existence.

Rather, the land of Israel has an intrinsic meaning. It is connected to the Jewish people with the knot of life. Its very being is suffused with extraordinary qualities.

The extraordinary qualities of the land of Israel and the extraordinary qualities of the Jewish people are two halves of a whole.

Orot 1:1

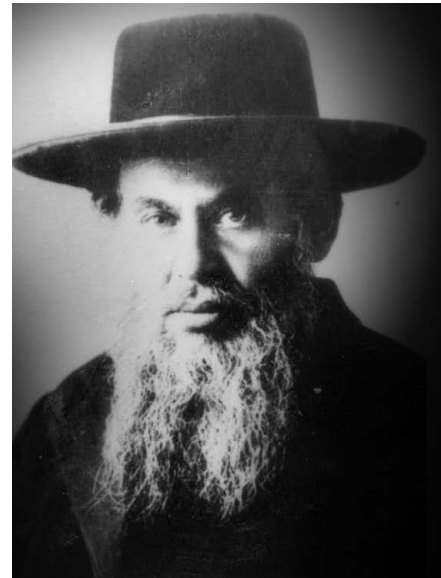
The Mitzva of Aliyah

Whilst many people count settling in Israel as an obvious mitzvah, there are those who missed it out from their lists of Mitzvot. The most famous work to omit settling the Land of Israel as a mitzvah was the Rambam in his magnum opus the Mishneh Torah. In it, he codified every single Halacha, including those to do with Temple Service which did not apply in his day; however, he did not mention living in the Land as one of his mitzvot. Nevertheless, many explain that this was not an omission but rather such a fundamental Torah principle that it could not be counted alone.

The Rambam considers the settlement of our Holy Land an essential foundation [of our faith]. His statement teaches that the existence of the entire holy nation is bound to the settlement of the land to such a degree that the entire nation would dissolve if the Jewish People would cease to exist in Eretz Yisrael, G-d forbid... Eretz Yisrael is the heart of the Jewish nation and its life-giving force.

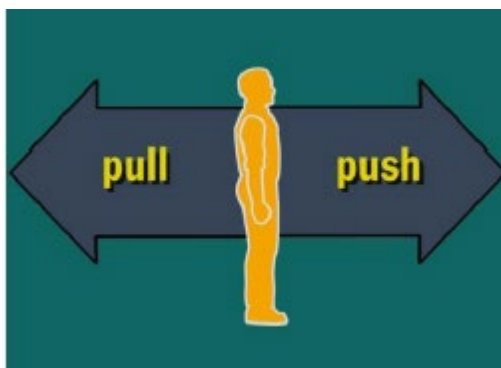
Now, given that the Rambam values settling the land so much that he considers it the soul of the Jewish nation, how can any intelligent person entertain the thought that according to him there is no mitzvah nowadays to settle the land and that it is even forbidden to do so? The fourth rule that the Rambam sets down in Sefer HaMitzvot is: Commandments which encompass the entire Torah are not to be counted. Now, settling in Eretz Yisrael is an extremely precious mitzvah. It is the sum total of all other mitzvot, and it encompasses the entire Torah... Our nation's entire existence depends on it. Therefore it is not included in the enumeration of the mitzvot, for only particular mitzvot are counted, and this mitzvah is a general one.

*- HaRav Yisachar Shlomo Teichtal,
Eim HaBanim Semeicha*



Reasons for Aliyah

Aside from the religious aspect there are many reasons that persuade Jews across the world to, or not to make Aliyah. Despite the millions who have made the move there are many millions who haven't done so yet.



The push-pull theory stipulates that migrants require two forces in order to act - a push away from their current location and status quo, and a pull towards their new venue. Push forces could include famine, war, unemployment, a lack of suitable farmland, anti-Semitism, a feeling that you are not progressing in life, or poverty. Pull forces could be a greater availability of food, peace, a better economy, favourable immigration

laws, a desire to return to one's homeland, religious factors, or available agricultural land in the target region or country.

However, how much better to make Aliyah out of total free-will! To actively choose to be a part of the Jewish future without feeling pushed-out of England!

וַיִּשְׂתַּקְוָה לְאַחֲרֵיתְךָ נְאֻם־ה'
וְשָׁבוּ בָנִים לְגְבוּלָם:

**“And there is hope for your future, declares Hashem:
Your children shall return to their country.”**

[Yirmeyah 31:17]

DISCUSSION POINT – Is Aliya the End? Or perhaps just the beginning of the end?

Is it the end of the mi'Galut l'Geula process or just Reishit Tzmichat Geulateinu?

Is this the final step?

Are we still in the 'Vision' stage or are we now in the stage of 'Reality'?

If so or if not, what does that mean for us?

What are our responsibilities?

Summary of K9

We've seen that Geula is a process and we're living through it. We explored Kibbutz Galuyot and the waves of Aliyah, as well as thinking about how we know we're in the stage of Reishit Semichat Geulateinu. Finally, we looked at the mitzvah of aliyah and reasons to make aliyah (visit www.bauk.org/aliyah for more information!).