

# Hadracha Choveret



תנועת בני עקיבא  
**BNEI AKIVA UK**

BNEI AKIVA'S WEEKLY EDUCATIONAL HANDBOOK FOR MADRICHIM

## Veyetze : Exile and Identity



### Concrete Concepts:

1. Jewish Practice is filled with reminders that we are in exile.
2. We can learn how to survive Galut from Yaakov's story.
3. Th exile marked a shift away from national worship and towards individual worship.
4. The state of Israel means we are forced to now think about exile differently.

## Bnei Akiva Svivot 5782: Madrichim Pack

Dear Madrichim.

*This week the Choveret is about exile, using the period that Yaakov Avinu spent in exile working for Lavan as an opportunity to talk about how Am Yisrael have survived in exile over the last 2,000 years, and what exile means to us today. This is a great opportunity to think about how we as British Jews / Jewish Brits relate to our nation and our land.*

Remember we're here to support you in whatever way we can! Adi can be contacted at [svivot@bauk.org](mailto:svivot@bauk.org) or 0208 209 1319 ext. 4, and the Chinuch team (Josh Daniel and Dania Mann-Wineberg) can be contacted at [chinuch@bauk.org](mailto:chinuch@bauk.org) or 0208 209 1319 ext. 5.

Adi Abeles and Josh Daniel  
Svivot & Hadracha and Chinuch

### **Week 7: Exile and Identity**

#### **Intro Video:**

<https://youtu.be/QaVr1NVCbrU>

**Discussion Point 1: The reality of being in exile. Why do you think it's not a concept our chanichim think about that much?**

#### **Yaakov's challenge in Exile:**

Yaakov Avinu spends the entire duration of Parashat Vayetzei outside of Eretz Yisrael. He works for Lavan for 20 years, becomes very rich, marries Lavan's daughters Leah and Rachel, and has eleven sons and one daughter. When he returns to Eretz Yisrael he makes the following reflection (Bereshit32:5):

עם לבן גרתי ואחר עד עתה  
"I have sojourned with Lavan and I have survived until now"

Rashi comments that Yaakov's use of the word גרתי is an allusion to the 613 מitzvot, which he managed to keep in spite of the constant challenges placed in his way by living for two decades in the house of Lavan.

In the sense that the actions of our Avot are a sign for future generations, Yaakov's time spent with Lavan could be viewed as the blueprint for the Jew in exile. Throughout our history we have found ourselves in many places where our hosts have not always made us feel welcome, and thus observance of Mitzvot has become even more difficult than normal.

**Discussion Point 2: What mitzvot do you find it difficult to keep in exile in particular? What can we learn from the story of Yaakov?**

### An (almost) endless cycle:

The destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans in 70 CE was the greatest tragedy that Am Yisrael had ever experienced. Initially, many Jews made their way to Babylonia (Bavel), where they lived in relative safety, gaining wealth and continuing their learning (completing the Talmud). For many centuries the community in Bavel was the centre of Jewish life.



Later, new communities appeared in Northern Africa and Europe. Over the centuries that followed, Jews suffered relentless persecution. Jews were never able to feel fully at home anywhere outside of Eretz Yisrael.

**Discussion Point 3: Make a spider-diagram about the consequences of Galut? What do you think its done to the way we observe Judaism? Has it distorted it in any way?**

### From Nation to individuals:

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

What does the above statement from Chazal imply about Jewish life in exile?

It seems that in exile we are not in our natural situation. The Torah is effectively the story of the establishment of our nation in our land. We need to dwell in our land in order to fulfil our mission on earth.

Throughout the long exile, Jews were scattered all over the world. Without a land, a state, or a government of our own, Jews were reduced from being a fulfilled nation to living in dispersed communities and impoverished ghettos. Our physical life was utterly destroyed, and we lost our true national character. Judaism shifted from a focus on the nation to a focus on the individual and his or her private service of Hashem. This is why Chazal say that in exile Hashem only exists in the four cubits of Halacha alone – i.e. in each individual’s private performance of mitzvot.



## The State of Israel:

### Discussion Point 4: What does Galut mean now that we have the state of Israel? Are we in a state of Galut or Geula?

There is no Torah like the Torah of Eretz Yisrael.” (Bereishit Rabba 16:7)

Returning to Israel is essentially returning to our normal and healthy national state. We must not forget that exile was a punishment from Hashem for our sins (we are told that the Beit Hamikdash was destroyed due to our *sinat chinam* – unfounded hatred for our fellows). The fact that we can live as a nation in our land again, after nearly 2,000 years of relentless wandering, is a sign that our long period of forced exile is over and that our redemption has begun.



Every Pesach for centuries, Jews would say “Next Year in Jerusalem” without any realistic hope of actually returning to Jerusalem. Finally, today we are able to talk about returning to Jerusalem in real terms. Since Medinat Yisrael was established, we no longer have to pray in hope for a redemption that seems a long way off, but rather we can pray in expectation for the completion of a redemption which is already taking

place before our very eyes.

## Some Galut Reminders for us:

It is not only with hindsight that we know that Judaism was never designed for exile. Our Rabbis knew this at the time, and instituted many changes to Jewish life, designed to protect us from the challenges of foreign societies and to remind us constantly that we were not living where we ultimately belonged.

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



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



## Peula Ideas

### Games to do with Exile:

- **Bangers, sausages and mash:** write up the story of Yaakov's time with Lavan. For every word beginning with "S" get the reader to say "sausages", for words beginning with "B" they say "bangers" and for "M" they say "mash".
- **Get Off My Land:** An appropriate week for a game which can be used to show how we have been expelled from many places in our history (could name seats after countries from which we have been expelled) (**Avital Cohen, Sganit @ Woodside park**)
- **Ask the Chanichim where their grandparents** came from and use this to demonstrate how Jews have been in so many different places and moved around so much and that it is only by circumstance that we are in Britain now and that there is nothing permanent about it.
- **Timeline:** Give each year group a period in our history since the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash. You could use the "Medieval Mishaps" column on the next page, too. Each group makes a skit, song or something similar, and presents it a Mifkad... making a very cool timeline!



#### Medieval Mishaps in Europe

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



- **Ask** who they would support if England played Israel in football (or other similar scenarios like spying on England for Israel or Israel for England) and use this to discuss their dual identity of being both British and Jewish and which is more important to them.
- **Smashing the glass** – Sit a chanich(a) on a chair in the middle of room blindfolded. Surround hiim/her with plastic cups or even more difficult put the cups under the chair. Give them a scarf they can swing in the air. Other chanichim need to approach and try to "smash the glass" without being hit by the scarf. Use the game to discuss what we do at weddings to remind us that we're still in exile and why its important that we're reminded we're still in exile.

## Random Games Corner

*Over here each you'll find random games that we've compiled from the days of old. The titles are a bit weird and they're mostly just for fun but you never know when they might connect to an educational message!*

### **MUSICAL CHAIRS--WITHOUT MUSIC #1**

**TYPE: Active** One chair less than the number of players are set up in a line, every other one facing the same direction (see diagram). A "leader" is chosen. The players must walk around the chairs following the leader, doing everything he does (i.e. clapping, jumping, etc.). Whenever the leader sits down everyone must do the same. The player left without a chair is out of the game and takes a chair with him. Play continues until only one player remains.

### **RED LIGHT, GREEN LIGHT**

**TYPE: Active** One player is chosen to stand at one end of the room, everyone else stands in a line, one next to the other at the opposite side of the room. The player turns his back to the group and says: "Red Light, Green Light 1-2-3". While he says it everyone moves toward him, but when he finishes and turns around anyone still moving must go back to the starting line. The first player to reach and tag him, wins and becomes the new caller.

### **RUN SHEEP RUN (Variation of Hide and Go Seek)**

**TYPE: Active** Play in a very large area (i.e. in an entire building) The players are divided into two teams. One team stays at the base while the other team (A) hides. As soon as they are all hidden, the leader of that team returns to the base. The other team (B) then tries to find team A. If team B is about to find team A or if team A shouts "Run, Sheep, Run", then both teams race back to the base. Whichever team gets there first, wins

### **MODERN SCULPTURE (Variation of Hot or Cold)**

**TYPE: Moderate** One player is chosen to leave the room. Five to fifteen players are then chosen to assume statuesque positions. One of these positions is selected by the group as the "secret position." The player reenters and he must try to pick out the player who assumed the "secret position." The group assists him by singing louder or softer depending whether he gets closer or further from the selected player. If the player selects the correct statue on the first attempt, he wins. Variation #1: Instead of having only one chance to pick the correct position, allow up to three chances to pick the correct position. Variation #2: Teams are chosen. One player from each team leaves the room. Only the players from the team of the person who reenters sings. The team whose player finds the "statue" first wins.

### **MUSICAL CHAIRS WITHOUT MUSIC #2**

**TYPE: Moderate** One chair less than the number of players are arranged in a line, with every other one facing the same way (see diagram). As the leader sings, the players walk around the chairs in a line. When the leader stops, everyone tries to get a seat. The one who fails to get a seat must leave the game taking a chair with him. The game continues until only one player is left.

### **JEOPARDY**

**TYPE: Quiet** A game board (see diagram) with an answer and question behind each. Point value is needed. The group is divided into two or three teams. Each team selects four players to represent the group. The first team then selects a category (i.e. Jewish history, potpourri, wars, etc.), for the lowest point value available. The leader reveals the answer (i.e. the

Western Wall was liberated), and the first team to signal has a chance to give the correct question (i.e. What famous place was liberated in the Six Day War?). It must be phrased as a question. If they are correct, they get that number of points under which the question and answer were. If they are incorrect, they lose that number of points, and the second team who signaled has a chance to give the correct question. Play continues with the team who last gave a correct question choosing the next category. Also under one point value in one category is placed a "daily double." This means that the team who chooses that point value is the only one who can supply the question and can also choose the point value for that question and answer. (They can either bid up to as many points as they have or (if it is more) than the original value of that answer and question.) After all of the answers are used, one final answer is selected as the "final" answer. For this answer, each team bids up to as many points as they have and then they are given the answer. They have thirty seconds to give the correct question. If they supply the correct question, they get as many points as they bid. The team with the most points wins. Hint: To allow the most players to play, change off the representatives of each team every five to ten minutes.

### **MAKE A STORY**

**TYPE: Quiet** Play in a circle The leader begins a story by saying something like: "One day I was walking and saw . . ." After that, each player has a turn to add something to the story, stopping the story and having the next person continue

### **IZZY DIZZY RELAY**

**TYPE: Relay** Play with each team in a line Each team stands in its own line. At the signal, the first player from each team runs to the other end of the room and puts a finger on the ground. He must then run around his finger five times, run back to his line, and then the next person has a turn. The first team to finish wins. Variation #1: Instead of running around your finger, have each player carry a baseball bat to the end of the room. Stand the baseball bat on the floor and run around the baseball bat while holding onto the bat. Variation #2: Instead of holding onto the bat with your hand, place your forehead on the top of the bat, and then run around it in that position.

### **RAINMAKER**

**TYPE: Shtick** Play in a circle The leader tells the players that they are going to make rain. But, the only way that they will accomplish this is to follow his directions very carefully and imitate his moves as soon as he passes them by. On his first rotation of the circle, the leader begins by rubbing his hands together vigorously. On his second rotation of the circle, the leader snaps his fingers. On his third rotation of the circle, he clicks his tongue and then on the fourth rotation, he stamps his feet rapidly. Then he goes backwards through the motions until he reaches the rubbing of his hands and then he stops. (The combination of these sounds will simulate the sound of rain.)

### **SHAKE-UP**

**TYPE: Shtick** The leader asks questions to different players which can only be answered by "yes" or "no." But while the player says the answer he must shake his head according to the opposite answer (see diagram). Anyone not doing this is eliminated. Hint: This game is best played when the questions are asked rapidly. Variation: For large groups have more than one person asking questions