

Grade

Asara

ERETZ YISRAEL THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

4



BeTevet



The Northern Challenge

ELLIE GELLMAN





THIS PROJECT WAS MADE POSSIBLE
THROUGH THE VISION AND GENEROSITY OF
EVELYN AND DR. SHMUEL KATZ OF BAL HARBOUR, FLORIDA
AND REFLECTS THEIR GREAT LOVE AND COMMITMENT
TO JEWISH EDUCATION AND THE STATE OF ISRAEL
AND WAS LOVINGLY DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF
JACOB DOV KATZ Z" L
AND SARAH ROHR A" H



ERETZ YISRAEL THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

ASARA BETEVET

THE NORTHERN CHALLENGE

GRADE 4

ELLIE GELLMAN



Lookstein Center Director and Educational Consultant: Stuart Zweiter

Academic Consultant and Curriculum Developer: Michael Grunzweig

Educational Supervisor: Moshe Abelesz

Graphics Coordinator: Michal Finkelberg

Editorial Advisor: Alissa Burstein

Technical Support: Chana German

Graphic Design: Dov Abramson :: Orit Ditur, Avia Fridmann

Illustrations: Dvora Maoz

Front Cover Concept: Ori Rozevich

Project Director: Yonah Fuld

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The Northern Challenge

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This booklet is filled with lots of interesting information. If you only have time to study certain sections in class, we invite you to look at the others in your free time.

INTRODUCTION

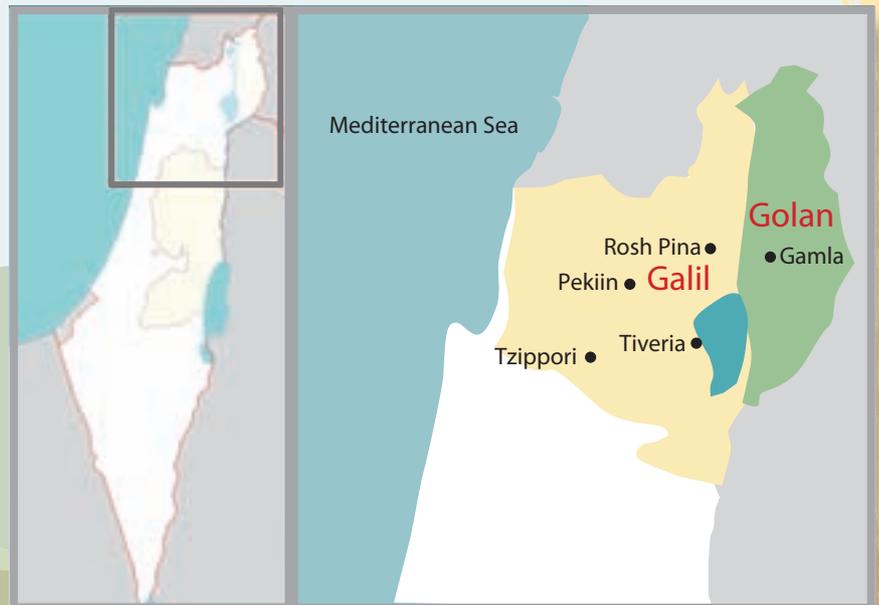
Take the Northern Challenge!

Jews have been living and thriving in the north of Israel for over 3,500 years. In recent years, the remains of ancient Biblical cities such as Hatzor and Megiddo have been uncovered. These cities had huge walls, major industries and royal horse stables. The North has been a place full of adventure and a home to courageous people. In this unit you will meet people and places of the North and share their challenges.

Look at this map. The north of Israel is divided into two areas, the Galil (the Galilee) and Ramat HaGolan (the Golan Heights). We will be visiting some of these places in these lessons.

These are stories of survival and rebuilding. They help us understand what happened to the Jewish people and the Land of Israel since the time of the Temple. They also show us how the Land came to life again in modern times. When we read these stories around the 10th of Tevet, we realize that the destruction was not the end of Jewish life, but a new challenge. The Northern Challenge will show you how the Jews kept their nation alive when times were difficult.

Would you have joined them? Would you have agreed with the hard decisions that they made? Your answers will help you feel the excitement of northern Israel.



Are you ready to **Come and Take the Northern Challenge?**

Our story begins more than 2,000 years ago, when the Temple still stood in Jerusalem, and continues until modern times.

This timeline will help you keep track of the stories.

66CE	The Great Revolt against Rome (The story of Gamla)
70	The Romans destroy the Temple
135	The Bar Kochba Revolt (Pekiin)
200	The writing of the Mishna
300s - 600s	Many small communities and synagogues are built
600s - 1500s	Other nations move into the North
1500s - 1800s	The rebuilding begins - Jews come to the Holy Cities
1800	The beginning of Aliyah - Jews from Europe rebuild the North
1948	The birth of the modern State of Israel

Are you ready for the Northern Challenge?

LESSON 1



TAKE THE GAMLA CHALLENGE

Welcome to Gamla!

You will learn about:

- The events that took place in the hilltop city of Gamla
- How archeologists rediscovered it
- The rebels who fought there long ago

What is Gamla? Where is it? Why is it so important?

The story of Gamla happened approximately 2,000 years ago, four years before the Temple was destroyed. The Roman Empire ruled the Land of Israel. At first the Romans allowed the Jewish people to live as Jews, but at the same time, they forced them to support the Roman rulers. The Jews had to pay heavy taxes to the Romans, bring sacrifices and pray for the success of Rome. The Roman Emperor even appointed the Jewish kings and decided who would be the *Kohen Gadol* of the Temple.

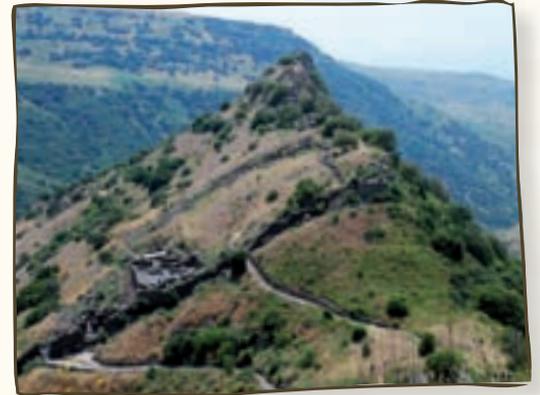
Some Jews demanded that only Jews should make the rules in the Land of Israel. They began to rebel against the Romans. These people were called Zealots, *Kana'im* and they began their rebellion in the North. One of the rebel strongholds was a town called Gamla, a city in the Golan. The rebels thought that because Gamla was high up on a mountain they would be protected from the Romans.



Eventually, the Roman generals attacked the rebels in the Galil and the Golan. Some cities surrendered without a fight, but others, such as Gamla and Yodfat, fought bravely. In the end, they were defeated.

The Northern Challenge: Finding Gamla

If you visit the strangely shaped hill called Gamla today, you can see ruins that tell us about the people who lived and fought there long ago. But fifty years ago if you had visited this hilltop you wouldn't have seen anything special.



Historians knew that there had been a city called Gamla. They also knew that there had been a fierce battle there. But they did not know exactly where the buried city was located.

Activity 1

Gamla is lost! Can you find the site of this very important place? What would you look for?

Choose your plan for finding the missing city.

- I would look for ruined walls in the shape of a fort
- I would look for a steep hill
- I would look for swords and shields
- I would look for storage rooms where food was kept

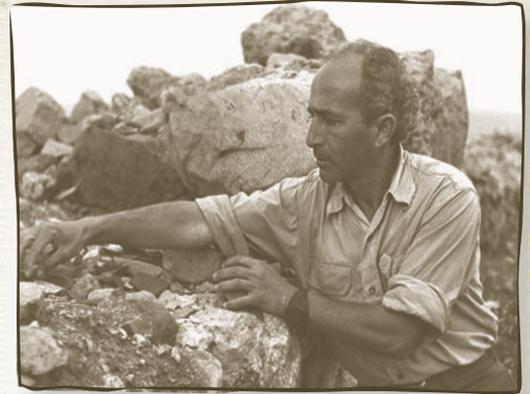


Here is what really happened when archeologists uncovered the city of Gamla.

An archeologist, Shmaryahu Gutmann, discovered Gamla. Let's listen to him explain how he did it.

Why did you look for the city of Gamla?

I am an archeologist who has worked at other sites where Jews fought the Romans. I was fascinated by the story of Gamla. I knew I had to discover it.

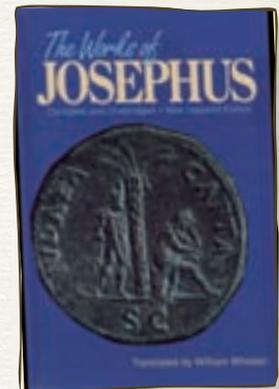


What did we know about Gamla before you discovered the ruins of the city?

Gamla was a small Jewish fortress-city that held out in a battle against the mighty Roman Empire during the Great Revolt in the year 66 CE. At the end of the revolt the city was destroyed. It was never rebuilt. No one knew for sure where it had been...

Then how did we know about Gamla at all?

Yosef Ben Matityahu, who was the commander of the rebel cities, escaped from the battle and surrendered to the Romans. He then changed his name to Josephus Flavius. Many people think he was a traitor. Nonetheless, he gave us something very precious - a book called, *The War of the Jews*. It tells all about that time period. It was a very difficult time to live. The Jewish people could not rule their own country and they could not agree with each other about how to defeat their enemies. Josephus' book helps us to learn about what happened to the Jewish people 2,000 years ago.



So what did he write about Gamla?

Josephus wrote that the Romans attacked Gamla because the Jews rebelled. The people in Gamla tried to defend their city against the mighty Roman army. According to his book, the rebels built a thick wall and fired arrows at the Roman soldiers. Finally though, the Romans broke through the wall by firing giant stones at it. Rather than surrendering, the people of Gamla threw themselves off the cliff.

It sounds like such an important place. How did it get lost?

After a city is destroyed, the walls of the buildings slowly fall apart. The stones that had once been the walls of a home start looking like rocks on a hillside. Eventually they crumble into dirt. The roads leading into the city become covered with mud, grass and plants. Soon, what used to be a city looks like a weed-covered hill. That's what happened to Gamla. After 2,000 years it looked just like all the other green hills in the Golan.



Catapult used to fire the stones

How then were you able to find the ancient city of Gamla, when no one else could?

For many years archeologists looked for Gamla in the wrong place. They didn't understand what Josephus wrote. I read all the details about the battle carefully. Then I looked all around the region for a site that would match. I knew there had to be a steep hill and that the land around the hill was good for farming and fruit trees. Most importantly, we knew that the city was named Gamla because it looked like a camel's hump. So we looked for a place that was steep, had good farming land and looked like the hump of a camel. We found a deserted place with all these features and discovered that the local people called it "The Hump" in Arabic. We started to dig.

Activity 2

Gutmann found this site. Can you see the steep hill, the good farmland and the camel-shaped hump?



After finding the location, Gutmann had to dig until he found evidence of the battle. Once he looked at the evidence he could begin to imagine what really happened there.

Look at the evidence that the archeologists found.

Each of these items tells us more about what really happened in Gamla.

Activity 3

Match the item in each picture to the matching story below.



A: The archeologists found a huge wall with sections that had been broken. The walls should have been thick enough to protect the city, but the Romans broke through.

B: The archeologists found clay storage jars, with thick sides strong enough to store oil.

C: The archeologists found a shallow pool with steps leading down to the

bottom. Its sides were sealed with special material to prevent leakage. They knew that long ago it was filled with water. They realized that it was a *Mikvah*, a special bath used for religious purposes.

D: The archeologists found coins from that time with the words, "For the Redemption of Holy Jerusalem" written on them. These were certainly not made by the Roman emperor. Only the Jews who wanted independence would write such a rebellious slogan on their coins.

E: The archeologists found cannonballs made of rocks, called Ballista stones. The large number of Ballista stones found, shows us how much ammunition the Romans fired at the fighters in Gamla.

F: The archeologists found the remains of a large synagogue. They discovered that it was built in the same manner as other synagogues in the Galil. It was built facing the direction of Jerusalem, had four rows of benches and an alcove carved into the wall which some believe to be the place for the *Aron Hakodesh*. The building was decorated with beautifully carved columns.

You Are in Gamla

Imagine you were in Gamla at the time of the battle. Would you have joined the people who defended Gamla? Would you have surrendered? Read each part of the following story and think about what you would have done!

Stage One: Preparing for Battle

My name is Hanania. I live here in Gamla. My father owns the olive trees that grow on the hill below the city. When times were peaceful I worked making olive oil. We would work all day turning the wheel that pressed the purest oil



out of the olives, and put it into clay jars. It was hard work but my brothers and I were strong, and we made a good living. We even sent some of our oil to the Temple in Jerusalem.

I was planning to get married this year but now there is talk of war. I am not afraid of war. If I am strong enough to work an olive press, I am strong enough to win a battle. I want to fight to keep my city free. I know that soon there will be war, because the people of Gamla do not want to be slaves to a Roman conqueror. We want to rule our own country. We will fight to the death if we have to.

My bride-to-be is named Ada. She and her family came to Gamla from their village nearby, hoping that it would be safe here. They are living in the synagogue with dozens of other refugee families. The floors are already covered with blankets and pots, and the cooking fires of the refugees have made the walls black. It's strange to see our beautifully decorated synagogue turned into a travelers' inn. It is one of the oldest synagogues in the North and I hope that nothing happens to it.

Right now I am on my way up to the lookout tower where my commander has sent me. His name is Yosef Ben Matiyahu and I hope he knows how to lead a battle. He has drafted all the men in the city to build a wall to defend Gamla in case the Romans attack. The wall will be made of stone and will begin at the synagogue and go down the hill all the way to the stream below the city. Yosef Ben Matiyahu has assigned us to take shifts in the watch tower at the top of the hill. I will do what he says but there's something about him that I don't trust. From my conversations with him, I am not sure if he is loyal to the king or the rebels. I don't think he's ready to fight to the death.



An olive press





I am pleased to meet you, but I really am too busy to talk right now. My name is Yosef Ben Matiyahu. I am a Kohen from an important priestly family. We have always been leaders of the Jewish nation and I will continue to lead my people as well as I can. I have been given the task of defending a city that is built on such a steep hill that it almost falls down over itself, even before any battles are fought.

I ordered the men to build a wall around it to delay the attackers so that we can try to surprise them. This is probably our only hope against the great Roman army.

Everyone who is of fighting age must gather now beside the wall. Are you following me? We must take our positions along the ridge behind the fortifications. If we fill the houses that are beside the wall with huge boulders, we can hide behind them and shoot arrows at the Roman soldiers as they climb the hill.

All women and children should take cover in the public buildings. The synagogue is crowded but there is room in the bathhouse and in the storage rooms. Everyone in the city must obey my orders. You must listen to me right away! Don't put your family at risk, do what I say and our soldiers will protect you.



Thick ancient wall

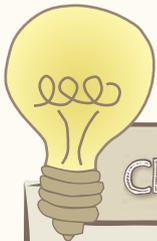
I am Simon, deputy to King Agrippa, king of the Jews. Agrippa is in a very difficult position. He must rule the Jewish people but he must always ask permission from the Emperor in Rome before he does anything. If Agrippa isn't careful, the Roman Emperor will put an end to the Jewish kingdom completely, and he will take over Judea and rule it himself. Yet, sometimes the Jewish citizens accuse the King of being more like a Roman than a Jew. But if he didn't please the Romans, things would be even worse.



I was told to keep an eye on the commander of Gamla, Yosef Ben Matityahu. He is a very shady character. Sometimes he seems to be loyal to the king and the Roman emperor and sometimes he looks ready to rebel against both of them.

I just left Gamla and am traveling to the nearby town of Katzrin. The Roman army has permitted our group to travel, because they know that Agrippa has told the rebels to surrender to Rome. What is happening now? I hear the sounds of a battle. It seems like those foolish rebels of Gamla are fighting back. Where is their commander? Is he leading them or has he run away to save his own life?

I don't like what I hear. It seems like Roman soldiers are climbing up the hill. There are probably hundreds of them! How do the rebels think they can defeat the great power of the Emperor Vespasian? If I were them, I would surrender. We Jews can cooperate with the Roman government and still live a good life. Oh no. I hear the sounds of rocks falling, I wonder what is happening.



Challenge Time! Stop and Think!

- If you agree that the people should rebel against Rome, no matter what happens - you should follow Hanania
- If you trust Yosef Ben Matityahu - then follow his orders
- If you believe that the Jews should stop the rebellion and accept the Romans - then follow the king's deputy, Simon

Choose a partner and discuss your decision. Be sure to support your decision with information you have learned from the stories that Hanania, Yosef Ben Matityahu and Simon told. Be prepared to explain your choice to the class.

Stage Two: The Romans Attack!

Yosef Ben Matityahu: You must listen to me, my loyal troops. I still believe we can do it. Yesterday the mighty Romans charged and tried to climb the hill to capture our city. The houses that you filled with rocks protected us. Perhaps today they will charge again. Are you ready? Can you strike them with a rain of arrows so they will run away from Gamla? Who will be the brave ones to stand above the wall and fire the weapons? Who will be the heroes who defend the city?



Since I am the leader, I must be kept safe so that I can continue to lead my people. I am moving to a hiding place. I will command you from there. I am not leaving you alone, I am just making sure the enemy doesn't capture me and leave you without a leader.

Hanania: I am afraid that we are losing the battle. I have shot all my arrows and huge gusts of wind blew them far off course. I have nothing left to fight with. I see the Roman army below preparing to fire their ballista at the wall we built. My plan is to run to the synagogue to get Ada and her family. Together, we can try to escape to the highest point on the hill. Maybe the army won't reach us there. And if they do, I will wait there until the last moment.



Then I will jump off the cliff. I will never be a slave and I will never let the Romans capture my beautiful bride. I will never surrender Jewish rule on this land. I am proud to fight for my people. I don't think Yosef Ben Matityahu is as proud. I can't find him anywhere. Could it be that he has escaped? I knew we shouldn't have trusted him.

Simon, the King's Deputy: I can't believe my eyes. The hilltop is crowded with people. The steep, sharp back of the hill that looks just like a camel



hump, is now a scene of chaos. Everyone is running, pushing and shoving. It looks like some of the people are trying to push the others, or maybe some of the people are trying to run away and others are in their way. I can see the rebels with their plain robes and the people who used to be the wealthy olive growers in their fancy cloaks. There are families running around with nowhere to go. What will happen to them? The Roman soldiers are almost at the top of the hill. Will they kill them? Will they capture them? Why did the people of Gamla rebel? We tried to tell them it was a bad idea.



Challenge Time! Stop and Think!

- Do you think Hanania and the rebels are right to fight to the bitter end?
- Do you think that Yosef Ben Matityahu is helping his country or saving himself?
- Would you rather surrender according to the advice of King Agrippa?

Some people thought Hanania was right. The rebels died in the battle. They believed they should fight to the bitter end and never surrender, even though they knew that they would die. They felt that their freedom and the independence of the Jewish people were worth dying for. Hanania and his friends became an inspiration to future generations of Jews. They lost the battle of Gamla, but their courage inspired others to win future battles.



Memorial for the Gamla revolt

Some people thought that Yosef Ben Matityahu did the right thing. He began as a leader of his people and he fought until he realized that the battle was



lost. When that happened he switched sides. He changed his name to a Roman name, Josephus Flavius, and worked together with the Romans. Some historians believe that he was a traitor. Other scholars say that he thought he could help the Jewish people by explaining to the Roman Emperor what was good about the Jewish nation. He believed that if the Romans were going to rule the Land of Israel, they would be kinder rulers if they understood Jewish history. Josephus spent the rest of his life living beside the rich and important leaders of Rome. He wrote books about Jewish history that described what happened during the days of the Temple and the years when the Romans ruled in Israel. These books have become important sources of information about life in Israel two thousand years ago. Whether Josephus did the right thing or not is a hard question. But he helped generations of Jews in the future by telling us about the battles, bravery and beliefs of the people of Gamla and the North.

There were Jews who agreed with the king. They felt that there was never any point in rebelling in the first place. Instead they thought that it was important to live as best as possible, even if they had to live under Roman rule, follow Roman laws and worship the Roman gods. Today some historians say that the king was only interested in having power and living a good life. Others say that he was a practical leader who helped the Jewish people survive.

Many of these disagreements did not end after the battle at Gamla was lost.



Activity 4

Write a letter to one of the people whom you have read about. Tell him what you would have done. You can choose someone whom you agree with and tell him why you would have joined him, or someone you disagree with and try to convince him to make a different choice.

OR

Tell Shmaryahu Gutmann what you thought was his most exciting discovery. Suggest what else he might search for, based on the story that you read. Ask him if you could join the next dig and tell him why you think you would do a good job.

In this lesson we learned about the ancient city of Gamla. We learned how it was rediscovered and what happened there during the Great Revolt. If you visit Gamla today you can see the archeological site where the city once stood.

You can also see the nature preserve around Gamla. It is home to several families of eagles. The eagles build their nests in the cliffs around Gamla, and if you visit the area in the early morning or late afternoon you can see the birds hunting and swooping to catch their food. Expert guides will tell you about the eagles while you watch from a lookout point.

The fields and valleys around Gamla are full of hiking paths and trails. You can walk through the river valley where water flows in the winter. In the winter and spring you can see wildflowers in hundreds of colors and sizes. In the summer you will meet hikers from all over the world enjoying the open spaces in the Golan.

In the next lesson we will learn about what happened in other cities in the North after the Romans defeated the Jewish rebels. We will read about a rabbi who continued to defy the Romans, and about others who looked for ways to get along.

LESSON 2



TAKE THE PEKIIN CHALLENGE

Welcome to Pekiin, the town that knows about survival.

In the previous Northern Challenge, you discovered the ancient city of Gamla. You met courageous people who lived there 2,000 years ago as well as the archeologist who uncovered the ruins of the city.

In today's Northern Challenge you will see how the people of the North survived.

Today you will visit the village of Pekiin. In Pekiin you will meet a:

- Rabbi who refused to get along with the Romans
- Family who has lived in Pekiin from the time of the Romans until today
- Rabbi who thought that it was important to develop a new way of study

Where is Pekiin? Why is it so special? Why is it a town that knows about survival?

The story of Pekiin also begins when the Temple was still standing in Jerusalem. Not all Jews lived in Jerusalem; many farmers and businessmen had their homes in northern Israel. Though the Roman Emperor had conquered the Land of Israel, he was willing to let the Jewish people live there, if they paid taxes and helped the Romans. After the Romans put down the rebellion in Gamla, the Emperor hoped that the ordinary people would learn



their lesson and obey Roman law. He soon saw that it would not work. The Jewish people wanted to be completely free. So the Romans decided that they needed to crush the Jewish people. They destroyed the Temple, and the capital, Jerusalem.

Many of the people who once lived in Jerusalem were forced to move to the north of Israel. Among them was Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, who lived around the year 140.

Look around you. You are now in the Galil. It is the spring, the hills are green and water flows in the valleys between the hills. The trees are beginning to blossom and birds swoop past you. What a beautiful place!



But it is not really as wonderful as it seems.

You didn't choose to live here. Not so long ago your family lived in the capital of the Land of Judah, Jerusalem. Then the Roman Empire conquered your land, turned your *Beit Hamikdash* into a temple for idol worship and forced your family to move to the hills of the North.

Yes, it is a beautiful place. But how will you and your family ever get used to living here when you miss Jerusalem so much? How will you ever get used to having the Romans make the laws for you?

How to Survive

Three rabbis discussed life in the Galil after the *Beit Hamikdash* was destroyed. Listen to them:

Rabbi Yehudah: It's not so bad to live in a land ruled by the Romans. The Roman government fixed our roads so that it is easy to go places. They built markets so that we can buy nice things for ourselves and our homes. Those things have helped the Jewish people too.

Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai: I don't like what the Roman government is doing at all! They only want to build roads so that they can move their soldiers into our towns. They only want to build shops so that they can get rich by charging us taxes. They only think of themselves!

Rabbi Yossi Ben Halafta: I don't know what to say. The Romans are not always kind to us but many of the things that they do are helpful. I think I agree with both sides.



The remains of a Roman market

Did You Know?

The Romans built thousands of miles of roads across the countries that they conquered. The roads were all built in the same style, 8 feet wide, using cobblestones for paving and small pebbles to fill in the spaces between the larger stones. Every mile they put up a short pillar called a milestone, to show people how far they had traveled.

Romans called the roads "via" or "strata." Do you recognize the similar English words, "milestone," "via" and "street"?



Activity 1

The Rabbis and the Romans - Write the correct name of the rabbi who would agree with these statements:

- 1) It is not good to live in a country ruled by another nation. _____
- 2) We should learn to appreciate the good things that other people are doing, even if they aren't our good friends. _____
- 3) Things are not very clear. Often there is good and bad in things. _____

How do you feel? Who do you think will best help the Jewish people survive? Complete this sentence.

I agree with Rabbi _____ because I also think that _____.

Activity 2

What the Romans did - The Roman government was very interested in what these three rabbis thought. The Romans knew that the Jewish people listened to their rabbis and if they taught their students to appreciate the Roman government they would, but if they taught them that Torah was more important than the Romans, they would feel that way too.

Here is what the Romans did. Can you figure out what happened to each one of the rabbis? Which rabbi fits in with each sentence?

The Roman government gave _____ a reward.

The Roman government sent soldiers to kill _____.

The Roman government sent _____ to live in Tzippori, because it was a city that was part Jewish and part Roman.

Now answer these questions:

Do you think that the Roman government did some good things for the country?

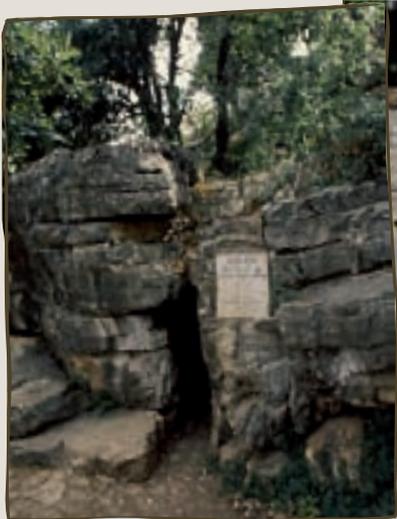
Would you like to live in a city that was half Jewish and half Roman? Would you live in the Jewish neighborhood or the Roman neighborhood? Who would be your friends?

Imagine that you were Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai and the Romans were looking for you. What would you do?

Activity 3

A Place That Is Safe

Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai hid from the Roman soldiers. He hid in the village of Pekiin. Now it is your turn to visit Pekiin and imagine what it was like to hide there. The village is tucked in between two very steep hills. As you walk through the village, try to find the places where Bar Yochai might have hidden. Point to any good hiding places.



Where did you choose to hide? Which of the following sentences describe these pictures?

- A. People say that this was the cave of Bar Yochai. The cave looks very small today. A carob tree grows outside it. According to tradition, the cave used to be much larger and had a tunnel that led to Meron, a village several miles away.
- B. These are the doors to the synagogue in Pekiin. This synagogue was built more than 2,000 years ago. Jewish people have prayed and studied there since the Temple was destroyed.
- C. The spring in this picture now flows through the center of town. The spring is a source of fresh water for the village. It flows from the hills and goes down under some of the streets, until it bubbles up in the village square.
- D. The homes in the village are small and crowded together. The streets are narrow and if you are a stranger it is hard to find your way through the maze.

The story of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai is often told on Lag B'Omer:

Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai did not want to live like a Roman. He knew that the Jewish people were meant to be special and that they had to follow the *mitzvot*. He knew that if he lived the way the Torah told him to, then God would help him.

Rabbi Shimon and his son Rabbi Elazar hid in the Beit Midrash and their family brought them food and water every day. They spent the whole day studying Torah. Roman soldiers began searching in the town, asking the people where they could find Bar Yochai. Rabbi Shimon knew that the soldiers would threaten to harm their families so he took his son and fled to a cave. In the cave a miracle happened. A carob tree grew near the entrance to the

cave and a fresh water spring appeared, giving them food and water so they could live inside the cave. While they were there, they studied Torah day and night. Tradition tells us that they were so wrapped up in Torah study that God revealed many mysteries to them. While he was in the cave Rabbi Shimon wrote a book called the Zohar.

Rabbi Shimon and his son lived in the cave for 12 years, until they heard that the Roman emperor died and they were therefore no longer sentenced to death. When they finally left and returned to their village, they had forgotten how to live with other people. They looked around and saw people going to work, men planting in the fields and women shopping in the market. Rabbi Shimon became angry because people were not studying Torah day and night. God sent Rabbi Shimon and his son back to the cave for another year until they could figure out how to live among people.

Activity 4

Would you like to be like Bar Yochai?

Imagine that you met Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai when he left the cave. He is surprised by everything that you are doing. What would you tell him? How would you help him?

What are you doing?

I am making shoes

Why are you wasting your time, instead of learning Torah?

Don't you want to learn secrets that are hidden in the Torah?

I am very angry at you for enjoying the sun and the flowers and music and good food. You should live only on Torah!

The fact that God sent Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai back to the cave teaches us that while it is very important to learn Torah, it is also important to enjoy and improve the world that God gave us. Why do you think that getting along with people is important to our survival?

Did You Know?

Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai is buried on Mount Meron, one of the highest mountains in Israel. Every year on Lag B'Omer (the anniversary of his death) thousands of people travel to the North to visit his tomb and light bonfires to celebrate his life.



Pekiin Today

Not only Jewish people live in the Galil. Pekiin today is famous for being a Druze village. Israeli Druze are friendly and loyal to Israel. They have their own religion and speak Arabic and Hebrew. They have their own special dress and many of their men grow moustaches. They proudly serve in the army. Some have even become high ranking officers.

"Shalom. My name is Karim. Did you notice the spring in the center of Pekiin?"

"It is said to be the same spring that Bar Yochai drank from when he hid from the Romans. Be careful when you walk up the hill! The roads are very steep and the stone pavement is uneven. Be sure to look out for cars on the road. When we first built this village there were only donkeys to ride on, so it didn't matter how steep the road was. Now it is hard for cars to drive here. The streets are so narrow that if two cars meet, one has to back up.



“Please try some of our fresh figs and grapes. We picked them from the vine today. I made the pita this morning, and you can dip it in hummus or olive oil if you like.

“You know, this might be a Druze village, but there is one special lady who started a multi-million dollar company from a small room in her house in Pekiin, who would like to meet you.”

“Shalom. My name is Gamila Hiar, but everyone just calls me Savta Gamila. I make special soaps that are famous all around the world. I am proud of the way that I help my community. Many of my family members and neighbors from Pekiin work in my soap factory. We sell the soaps and oils all over the world and on the internet.

“As a young girl, I spent my days playing in the fields near my house gathering flowers and herbs. The fields and the herbs were my secret garden. Over the years I learned how to mix them together to make special skincare products.

“Do you know how I figured out that my soaps worked? When I first started making soap, my sons were in the Israeli army. They came home for weekend visits and before they returned to the army, I gave them bars of soap from my newest batch. Dozens of soldiers would use the soap during the week, and my sons would report back to me which soaps they liked best. My soaps are probably the only brand of beauty products that have been tested by soldiers!

“My company has now grown and sells beauty products in over 20 different countries. I employ Christian, Druze, Muslim and Jewish women workers.”

Every year on Israel’s Independence Day, the government chooses special people who have built the country, to



light one of twelve torches in honor of the State of Israel. In 2006, Savta Gamila was chosen to light one of the torches, since she serves as an example to her neighbors and the whole country. She is a hardworking woman who learned from the past and had a dream for the future that helped her family, her community and her country.

"I felt very proud. Very proud. And very honored to light the torch," Gamila said after the torch lighting event.

Pekiin, the City That Keeps Surviving

Even though Pekiin today is a Druze village, one Jewish family never left it.

"Shalom. My name is Margalit Zinati. My family has lived in Pekiin for thousands of years, from even before the time of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai.

"My job is to take care of the synagogue. This site has been a synagogue for almost 2,000 years.

"Here is the courtyard of the synagogue. My family built this courtyard hundreds of years ago.

"Let's go inside. It is said that my family rescued two stones from the rubble of the Temple. When they built this synagogue they added them to the walls of this building, so that no one would ever forget the *Beit Hamikdash*. There are many beautiful pieces of decorated stone in the synagogue. I polish the stones and make sure that everyone can see the decorations.

"Here is our home. We decorated it with a *Magen David* to remind everyone that this is a Jewish home. I have an old tree that grows in my house. It reminds me of the roots my family has here in Pekiin."



Activity 5

How Families Remember

Margalit said: "These ancient stones are a reminder of how beautiful the Temple in Jerusalem used to be."



Do you have things in your home that remind you of the Temple in Jerusalem? What are they?

Margalit said, "I have an old tree that grows in my house. It reminds me of the roots my family has here in Pekiin."

Do you have things in your home that remind you of your Jewish roots?

Margalit said, "The *Magen David* on my door reminds everyone who passes by that Jewish families live here."

What do you have in your house that tells your neighbors that it is a Jewish home?



The story of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai showed us how one great rabbi survived in spite of the Roman persecution. Margalit Zinati shows us what one family can do to help the Jewish people survive. What does your family do to help the Jewish people survive?

Ideas That Survive

Do you remember the rabbis who argued with Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai?



Those rabbis had different ideas about how to help the Jewish people survive the Romans. However, they all believed

that helping people keep the *mitzvot* and study the Torah was the way to survival.

The Problem

During the long period of Roman rule, the rabbis saw that the Torah was being forgotten by the Jewish people. People were making mistakes in many laws and customs and were not sure what to do. This was because the Jews were persecuted, spread out in many distant lands and Torah study was restricted by the Romans. They feared that without Torah the Jewish people could not survive.

Rabbi Yehudah Hanasi's Solution

Rabbi Yehudah Hanasi became the leader (*nasi*) of the Sanhedrin, the highest court of Jewish law. The Sanhedrin made the final decision about all the laws and decided the most difficult cases, including those of life and death. Because Rabbi Yehudah was a very important leader he was simply called Rabbi (The Rabbi). He began to write down all Jewish teachings. He put them into a series of books called the *Mishna*. The *Mishna* teaches about all of Jewish law, covering subjects such as Shabbat, the festivals and *kashrut*.



Did You Know?

After the Temple was destroyed the Sanhedrin left Jerusalem and eventually settled in northern Israel. Rabbi Yehudah completed the *Mishna* in the northern city of Tzipori.

How do you think that the writing down of the Mishna helped the Jewish people to survive?

In today's Northern Challenge we met people who lived in northern Israel long ago and people who still live there today. Each of these people contributed in their own way to help the Jewish people survive.



In the next lesson we will learn about the building and rebuilding of northern Israel.



LESSON 3



BUILDING AND REBUILDING

In the previous Northern Challenge you learned about Pekiin and people who knew how to survive.

Your Northern Challenge today is to learn how to build and how to rebuild.

Join the people of the city of Tzippori. There you will meet artists, scholars and ordinary people whose lives in the North were rebuilt in different ways.

After the rebellions against the Romans, life began to calm down in the North. The Romans began to relax their rule over the people. The Jewish communities grew, and the people were able to plant their fields, celebrate their holidays and even study Torah. The Jewish people were still not in charge of their own country, but they began to live comfortably once again according to their own way of life.

Jewish or Roman Designs

You are in Tiveria (Tiberias), walking along the Cardo, the market street that houses the shops in every Roman city. You are behind Nitai and his son, Reuven, two builders, listening to their conversation.

Nitai had been designing public buildings for years. His work was well-known and his regular customers called him back for renovations and for new projects. He and his son are looking to buy new supplies for the building they are working on, but the shopping is not going well.



His son Reuven thought that they could expand their business if they tried to look for younger, more modern customers. Last year he went to learn about the latest Roman building methods in the big city of Scytopolis in northern Israel. His father wasn't sure about using the Roman styles.



Listen to what they are saying:

"What should we buy, Reuven? We have been asked to design a mosaic for the floor in a new synagogue. We could try using the tiny colored pieces that you learned how to work with when you trained in Bet She'an. I have to admit that they are better than what I used for making detailed designs."



"Abba, why don't you call Beit She'an by its Roman name, Scytopolis? When we are in a Roman market you should use the language the Romans speak. They will give us better prices and better quality goods. You can call me Rufus, too, that's what the Roman teachers in Scytopolis called me, not Reuven."



"Reuven. It is one thing for you to have learned how to design buildings in a Roman style, but I do not approve of you learning how to be a Roman! Our people have our own traditions, and even if we have to live under the Roman Empire, we don't have to live the way they do."



"You agree with me that the latest ways of making mosaic floors are much better than what we used to do. What is so bad about learning a little bit about Roman life at the same time? It's not so bad, you know. Some of our greatest rabbis even meet regularly with the Roman leaders."



"Well, you are not a great rabbi. They understand things that you cannot understand. When the Romans destroyed our Temple, the Jewish people moved the Sanhedrin and many *Batei Midrash* to the Galil to save our way of life, and not to become like them. Just remember who you are and who they are."





"Just look at the beautiful colors of the stones, Abba! The Romans brought aqua stones from the south and peach colored stones from across the Jordan River. You could never make such colorful floors before the Romans. When we agree to cooperate with Rome our lives are so much easier. I don't want to be a Roman, but let's use the good things that they have, to make our own world better. We are building a synagogue. Why not make it as beautiful as we can, even if it means using Roman designs and materials?"



Activity 1

Do you agree with Reuven? Should they decorate with the newest modern Roman designs? Should they make the new synagogue beautiful with Roman methods? Or should everything stay the way it was before the Temple was destroyed, using the methods their parents, grandparents and great-grandparents taught them? Complete the sentence that you agree with:

I think that they should choose designs, stones and colors from the older style because...

I think that they should choose designs, stones and colors that are new and in style because...

Mosaics Have Designs and Decorations

"I think that we should make a zodiac mosaic on our floor," said Reuven. "Everyone is doing it."

"What is a zodiac, Reuven?"

"Long ago, people told many stories about the shapes of the stars they saw in the

sky. They looked at groups of stars and imagined that they saw people, animals and objects. These groups of stars were called constellations.

“Some groups of stars could only be seen during a certain time of the year. Twelve such shapes of stars were matched with the twelve months of the year. Some were animals, like a lion or a crab, and some were people like twin boys or a young woman. The 12 constellations were often drawn in a circle in the order that they appeared in the sky. That circle was called the zodiac. Each of the Hebrew months matches one of the constellations of the zodiac.”

Tishrei	scales
Heshvan	scorpion
Kislev	bow and arrow
Tevet	goat
Shvat	bucket
Adar	fish
Nisan	ram
Iyar	bull
Sivan	twins
Tammuz	crab
Av	lion
Elul	young woman



Can you identify each Hebrew month in this picture of the zodiac found on the floor of a synagogue in Beit Alfa?

“But Reuven, my son. We have always used only Jewish symbols in our work. Think about the Menorah that your grandfather decorated on the floor of the synagogue in Korazin. The branches of that Menorah looked like pomegranates, and their flames burned brightly. Pomegranates decorated the robe that the *Kohen Gadol* wore in the *Beit Hamikdash*. I remember your

- grandfather telling me that he wanted his floor to show that the light of the Jewish people would never go out."

"There is a beautiful menorah and also a zodiac in the synagogues in both Hamat Tiveria and Beit Alfa. The people say that this picture helps them pray better – it reminds them how God controls the seasons of the year. So, why can't we create a mosaic in the latest style so that the young people will want to come to the synagogue? We can still include some decorations in the old style around the borders, for the 'grownups' - maybe put some pomegranates and etrogim in the corners of the picture."

Activity 2

Help Nitai and Reuven Choose a Design for Their Mosaic

Look at the mosaics that were found in an ancient synagogue in the Galil. See if you can find some of the following designs in the pictures.

Shofar | Menorah | *Etrog* | Basket of fruit | *Lulav* | Flowers | Geometric pattern | Lions | Months | *Aron kodesh* | Seasons



Pictures can help people pray.

What would YOU think about if you saw these designs?

A *shofar* reminds me of...

An *etrog* reminds me of...

A *lulav* reminds me of...

A menorah reminds me of...

The seasons remind me of...

An *aron kodesh* reminds me of...

The fruit and flowers remind me of...

Activity 3

What do you think?

Should Nitai include only designs that come from the Torah? Would those designs help people feel comfortable in the synagogue? Should Nitai let Reuven include the latest Roman decorations? How could those designs help people feel more comfortable in the synagogue?

Mosaics Tell a Story

Many of the mosaic floors that have been discovered have large pictures in the center that tell stories.

Nitai and Reuven are trying to decide what to put in the center of the floor of the new Beit Knesset that they are building. Nitai has already told us that the Menorah he saw in the Beit Knesset in Korazin shows how the light of the Jewish people will never go out. Now Nitai and Reuven have to think of what story their floor will tell.

Let's look again at the mosaics from other synagogues in the Galil and see what stories they tell. Maybe we can hear the people of the towns talking about the mosaics in their synagogues.

Miriam from Beit Alfa

"I like to look at the story of the Sacrifice of Isaac on our synagogue floor. When I see the mosaic, it reminds me of the way people felt just after the Temple was destroyed. Avraham obeyed God's command even though it was very difficult. When I was a little girl the Romans would not allow us to study or gather in synagogues, and punished those who did. Still, we followed God's *mitzvot*. Just as God helped Avraham, God helped us. Now it is safe to follow our beliefs. The mosaic reminds me to follow the *mitzvot* even in hard times."

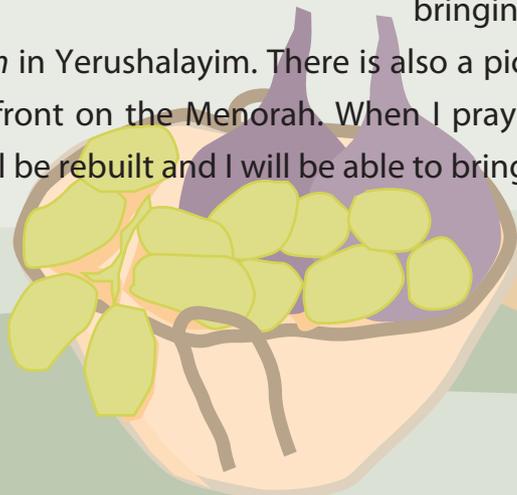


Yosef the Baker from Tzipori



Beit Hamikdash in Yerushalayim. There is also a picture of the basket of bread that stood in front on the Menorah. When I pray I ask that one day the *Beit Hamikdash* will be rebuilt and I will be able to bring my bread there."

"The mosaic in our *Beit Knesset* tells a story with three chapters. I can't read so I like to look at the pictures to learn how the Jewish people used to serve God. In the desert the Jewish people brought sacrifices in the *Mishkan*, and our floor shows how the *Kohanim* worked in the *Mishkan*. I like the picture of people bringing their first fruits to the



Activity 4

Choosing a Story for the Mosaic

You can help Nitai and Reuven plan their mosaic. Which of the following stories would you choose for your mosaic? Explain why you made that choice.

- Yaakov dreaming about a ladder that reaches heaven
- Crossing the Red Sea
- Receiving the Torah on Har Sinai
- The *Leviim* singing in the *Beit Hamikdash*
- The seven fruits and grains associated with Eretz Yisrael (*Shivat Haminim*)
- I have my own idea

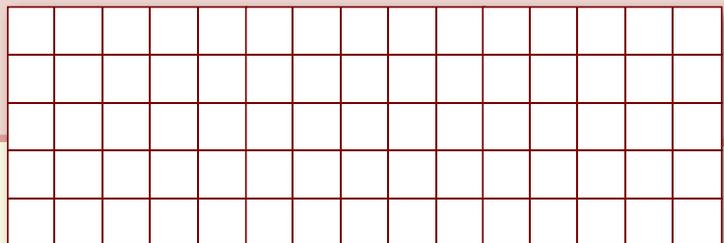
Optional Activity

Imagine that Reuven and Nitai have accepted your choice and have invited you to join them in designing the mosaic floor.

- Think about the colors you would use in the story
- Think about the colors you would use in the background

Make a full page grid similar to this one

Either cut out small colored squares and glue them on to make the mosaic or color in the grid.



Optional Activity

There were many other beautiful cities and settlements in the Galil and Golan. They show the rich Jewish life that was once there. Search the internet to find pictures of the remains of beautiful synagogues, mosaics, carvings, decorated entrances and arches, in the following places:

Hamat Tiberias, Tzippori, Bar'am, Korazim, Kfar Nahum (Capernaum).

In this lesson we saw how Jews rebuilt their lives in the North after the destruction of the Temple and some of the challenges they faced. In the next lesson we will see how the Jews of the modern era rebuilt the North.



LESSON 4



NEW CITIES, TOWNS AND VILLAGES

In the last lesson we learned how the Jews rebuilt their lives in northern Israel, long long ago. After hundreds of years, persecution and poverty forced many Jews to leave these communities and even the Land of Israel. Those who remained, settled mainly in the Four Holy Cities. Not so long ago, Jews began to return and rebuild the north of Israel once again.

In this lesson, you are going to visit one new community in the North—and there you will find the last Northern Challenge. What would you have done to help strengthen the communities? What can you do today?

In the 1800s, groups of Jews began to return to the Land of Israel. Jews from Europe decided to rebuild the Jewish country by working the land and becoming farmers. They built many small villages, called *moshavot* and *kibbutzim*. These Jews were called *chalutzim*, pioneers. Many of these *moshavot* and *kibbutzim* are still thriving today.

However, in those days it was not easy to live in the Land of Israel. Some wealthy European Jews helped the farmers in the *moshavot* get started.

In the places where there used to be swamps and rocky hills, now you can see green fields. How did it change? How did the people of the North make their land so beautiful?



Rosh Pina—a Village in the Galil

The year: 1878

The place: A hillside in the Galil. It is almost spring. The hills are green and water flows in the valleys. The trees are beginning to blossom and birds swoop past you when you stand near the cliff.

The problem: The hills have good ground but you can't farm them. The water flows but you can't use it. The Turkish Empire rules the Land of Israel. You want to work hard to rebuild this land, but the rulers make laws against you. They charge high taxes and make it very difficult for Jews to buy land.

What can you do? Listen to the first group of farmers. You might want to join them.

"My name is Aharon Keller. I was born in the city of Tzfat, where I lived with my six brothers and sisters in a small house near the synagogue. My grandfather and father are rabbis who study Torah. They spend all day in the *Beit Knesset* and come home very late.

"My father and grandfather want me to be a rabbi too and I have been studying in a *yeshiva*. But I have different plans. I want to farm this land.



"My friend, Eliezer Rokach, has decided to move out of Tzfat. He has gathered a group of people to buy land on Har Canaan, a hill not far from Tzfat, and farm the land. I want to join that group. I think it's most important for our people to work this land, and bring it back to life."

Activity 1

Would you join this group? Would you choose to work hard planting crops instead of studying Torah? Complete the sentence that best describes what you would choose to do:

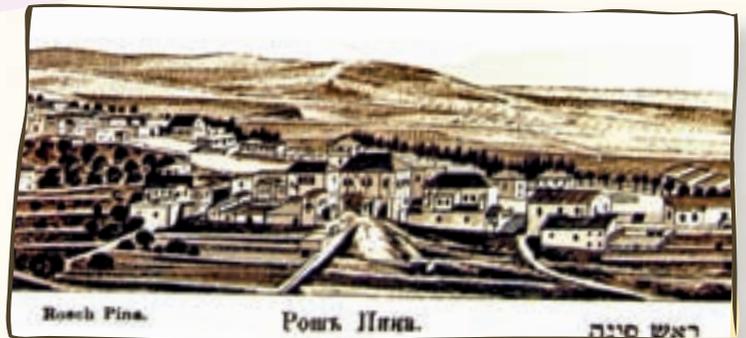
- a) I would do what my father and grandfather want me to do because.....
- b) I would move to Har Canaan and farm the land because
- c) I would give them money to start a farm but I wouldn't move there myself because.....

The group of yeshiva students bought fields from an Arab village and called it Gai Oni, "The Valley of My Hard Work." They failed. They did not really know how to be farmers. What happened next?

The year: 1883

The place: The same hill in the Galil.

The event: Jewish villagers have rebuilt the village on Har Canaan. They gave it a new name, Rosh Pina.



Do you recognize the phrase Rosh Pina? It means "the cornerstone." It comes from *Tehilim*, and we sing it in the *Hallel* on holidays and *Rosh Hodesh*. See if you can remember a tune to these words: אבן מאסו הבונים היתה לראש פינה.

The problem: The village has a shop, a few businesses and some fields. But the people who live in Rosh Pina are not very organized and once again, are having a difficult time. They don't have enough money to pay the bills and

neighbors are all arguing with each other about whose fault it is.

What can you do? Listen to the visitor who has come to town. Do you agree with him? Will you help him?

"My name is Peretz. I have been sent here by Baron Rothschild, a wealthy European Jew who wants to help build the country. He has heard that your village is having trouble getting started. Baron Rothschild is a very kind man who will donate money to help build homes and shops and a synagogue in your town. I am an expert in grape farming and I will teach you how to grow grapes and make wine. Would you like to get help from Baron Rothschild? If you want our help you must agree to listen to our advice."

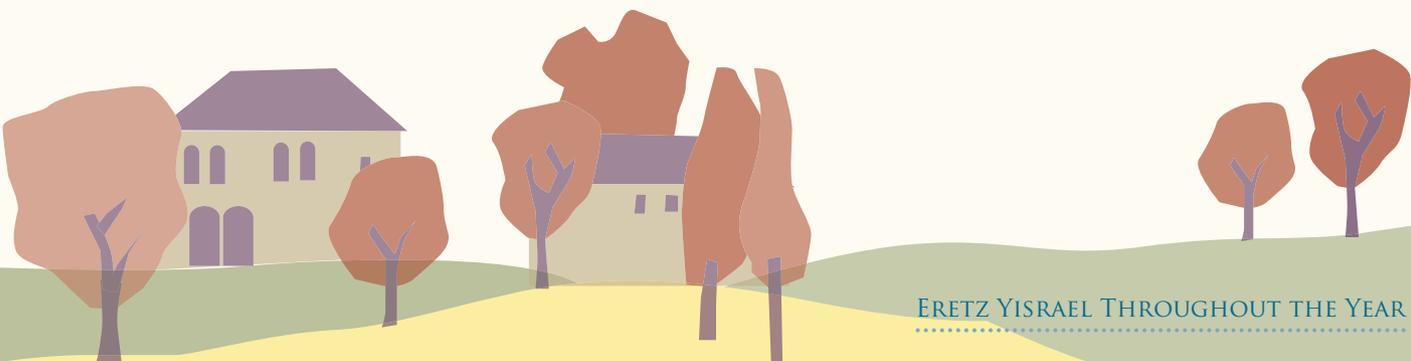


Baron Rothschild

Activity 2

Would you let this man take charge of your village? Would you be happy to have a rich banker give you money to help the town grow? Would you rather make your own decisions? Complete the sentence that best describes what you would choose to do.

- a) I would welcome him into the village because
- b) I would tell him thank you but no thanks because I don't want
- c) I would have to ask the other people who live in the village. I am not sure if it is a good idea to....



The people accepted Baron Rothschild's help. He helped pay for their land and their farming tools and his people taught the *chalutzim* how to plant and farm vineyards. He also built a magnificent garden there. It remains until today and is visited by thousands of people every year.



The year: 1929

The place: The valley below Rosh Pina. It is named the Hula Valley. It could be a wonderful place to plant crops and settle.

The problem: Malaria! The farmers in the Galil have become sick with this dangerous illness. It is spread by mosquito bites, and the swampy land in the Hula Valley, near Rosh Pina, is full of mosquitoes. Malaria causes high fevers and terrible chills and many people who live in the area around the Hula have died from it.



What can you do? Listen to the doctor who has come with a suggestion.

"Hello, my name is Dr. Gidon Mer. I am an expert in treating sicknesses that are spread by insects. The farms of northern Israel are in big trouble, because the farmers are becoming ill with malaria. Their farmers have done well and they want to work on larger fields, but the land is covered with swamps. I have studied how mosquitoes spread malaria when they bite. I think that if I spend time in a lab doing research, I can find a way to cure and prevent the disease from spreading."



Eventually Dr. Mer discovered a way to prevent the disease, by getting rid of the mosquito eggs before they could grow. The farmers were able to continue working on the land, and the fields below Rosh Pina slowly became wonderful farmland. Dr. Mer joined the medical staff at Hebrew University, and became famous around the world for his discoveries about malaria. He returned to live in Rosh Pina and is buried there.



Dr. Mer's laboratory

When You Visit Rosh Pina Today

- Come visit the first hotel ever built in the Galil. Today artists sell their artwork there.
- Walk into a synagogue that was built when the village was first settled. It is built in the same place where Eliezer Rokach and his group had their synagogue.
- Look inside the home of the teacher who taught the children of Rosh Pina a hundred years ago. This school was one of the first schools that taught children in the Hebrew language. Before that, children in Israel learned in French or German, or the language of the country their parents came from.
- Listen to a concert in the Baron's garden in the center of the city. Maybe you will hear the Young Musicians Ensemble from the Rosh Pina high school.
- Look inside the laboratory where Dr. Mer did his experiments and discovered ways to prevent malaria. Did you know he even experimented on himself?
- Be sure you take the time to climb up to a view point on Har Canaan. From there you can see hundreds of fields below, filling the Hula valley with the crops that the early settlers dreamed about.



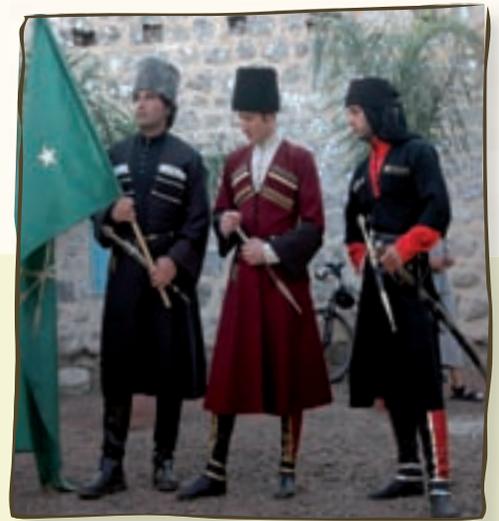
The Circassians

In the previous lesson we learned about the Druze. We will now learn about the Circassians, another people that live in the north of Israel. Maybe you have never heard of them, but you might find that they are more like you than you can imagine.

A short drive away from Pekiin is Rehaniya. Riad is waiting to greet us. As we listen to him, think about ways that his community is like ours.

Who are the Circassians?

“Shalom. Salaam. Hello. Pechadiz foow. I can say hello to you in four languages, as can any 4th grade student in our school. We Circassians speak many languages. It helps us to get along with our neighbors. The language of the Circassians is very special, we have more than 50 letters and many different sounds that other languages don’t have. I am a 4th grade teacher in the Circassian school here in Rehaniya.



“We Circassians came here in the 1800s from Russia. The Russian government did not want people who were different to live in their country and treated them badly and forced us to leave. We settled in Jordan, Syria and Israel. Our children have names in Circassian, and often also have names in Hebrew, English or Arabic.

“Circassians are Muslims, but our mosques look more like Russian brick houses than Arab mosques.

“We Circassians have a beautiful and rich culture that we are proud to pass on to our children. We are famous for our colorful national costumes, dramatic dances and our strong flavored Circassian cheese treats. We have special songs from Circassia and a unique style of dancing.

"You are lucky you arrived today. We are having a town festival! Soon the young men will ride down the main street on their horses and the children will dress in our folk costumes. You can try on the hats if you want. The men's hats are made of wool and the women's have long veils. Circassians are known as great horsemen and fierce warriors. In our homeland long ago, we had a strong army. Now we are Israeli citizens and are proud to serve in the Israeli army. I was an officer in the army when I was younger.

"We Circassians work hard to keep our traditions alive."

Are there minorities that live in your community? Can you think of ways that minorities share their special talents with the communities that they live in?



Activity 3

Are We the Same?

Do you think that the Circassians are similar to you? Look at this list of facts about the Circassian community that you learned from Riad. Which ones remind you of your community?

- Long ago their people lived in another country
- They teach their children the language of their new country and also the traditional language of their people
- They have music, dances, foods and traditions that are special to their community

- They have special talents that they share with the country in which they live

In many ways the Circassian children are like Jewish children living in many different countries. They are happy to be citizens of the country where they live, and at the same time, they want to keep their community special. No wonder they feel comfortable living in Israel.

Wrap up Activity

What is the Secret?

Today you met Aharon Keller and Dr. Gidon Mer in Rosh Pina, and Riad from Rehaniya. All of them are people who helped their communities grow and survive.

In other lessons in this unit you met people from the past who fought for the survival of their communities, and others who thought about new ways to help their people live.

To wrap up your virtual visit to northern Israel, here is your final challenge:

What do they know that you could learn?

Below is a Name Bank followed by sentences. Think of the person who taught us the idea in each sentence. Some sentences might remind you of more than one person.

Yosef Ben Matityahu, Savta Gamila, Rabbi Yehudah Hanasi, Reuven and Nitai, Margalit Zinati, Shmaryahu Gutmann, Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, Riad, Dr. Gidon Mer, Hanania

- **It is important to remember the past.**

This sentence reminds me of _____ because _____

- **You must treasure things that remind you of your community's history.**

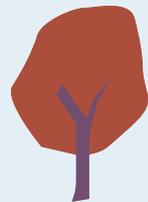
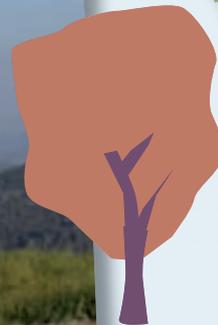
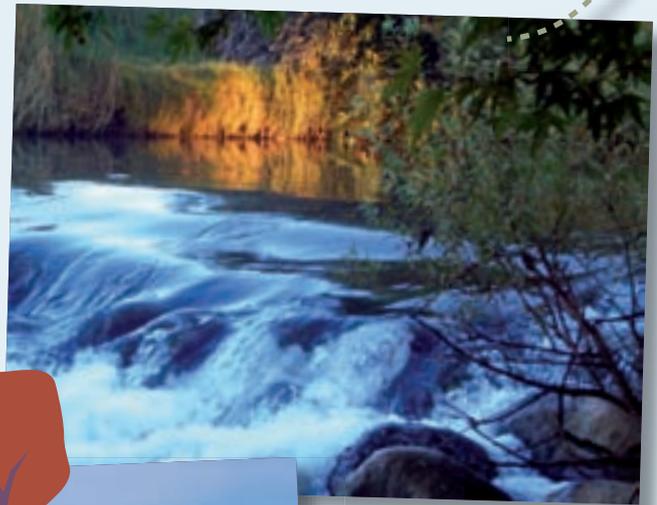
This sentence reminds me of _____ because _____

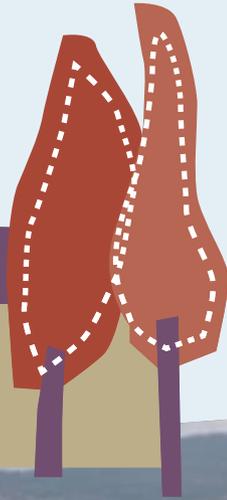
- **It is important to build your future in the same place where your people lived long ago.**

This sentence reminds me of _____ because _____

During these lessons we saw how Jews of the past and present lived in northern Israel. There are so many other wonderful things to do and see in the North. Why don't you come and visit?









The Lookstein Center for Jewish Education

School of Education, Bar-Ilan University, Ramat-Gan, 52900 Israel

Tel: 972-3-531-8199 | Fax: 972-3-535-1912

info@lookstein.org www.lookstein.org